University of Alberta

Governing single mothers through personalized planning programs

by

Michelle Anne Brady

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Sociology

Fall 2011

Edmonton, Alberta

For Cosmo, Saoirse, Neil and Louise

Abstract

This thesis examines three major personalized planning programs directed at Australian single parents receiving income support. Personalized planning programs are to contemporary welfare systems in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia what subsidized training and public employment programs were to the post-war welfare state. They came into being around 25 years ago and are increasingly the central policy tool governments use to administer access to income supports and additional services. Personalized planning programs involve income support recipients participating in one-on-one meetings with individual advisers in order to develop plans for their futures. Despite their prevalence there are no studies directed at systematically examining personalized planning technologies across time. This thesis provides a genealogy of personalized planning programs targeted at single mothers and focuses on three programs that operated in the period 1989 to 2009.

The study has three closely related aims. The first is to understand the different ways in which the relationship between Australian single parents/mothers and income support has been problematized since the emergence of the post-war welfare state. Second, it seeks to understand why personalized planning programs are now the dominant solution to the problematic of single parents on income support. The third aim is to understand the spaces of freedom and constraint that these personalized planning programs and associated work requirements opened up and closed down. This thesis takes theoretical inspiration from Michel Foucault and Amartya Sen, and methodological inspiration from Foucault's genealogical methods and the governmentality literature. It combines textual analysis with ethnographic methods in order to simultaneously examine official government rationalities and the 'witches' brew' of actual practices.

A key finding is that the spaces of freedom and constraint these programs produced were not established in advance within official program rationalities. Instead, they were actively interpreted, taken up, used and sometimes resisted by single mothers and those responsible for delivering the programs. Drawing on Michel Foucault's and Amartya Sen's works, I illustrate that single mothers' abilities to undertake activities they valued were dependent upon the assistance they received from personalized planning programs. At the same time all three programs, at least in some instances, restricted individual freedoms and autonomy through normalizing practices that relied upon clients playing a passive role within the program.

Acknowledgements

My acknowledgements must begin with my partner Cosmo Howard who not only read the thesis but provided extensive editorial comments and advice. Importantly he also offered the support and space that enabled me to complete this project.

I would like to thank my supervisor Sara Dorow for her intellectual guidance. My committee members George Pavlich and Janine Brodie also provided me with very valuable encouragement and critique during the thesis process and during my PhD coursework. I also wish to extend my deepest thanks to the many women who gave generously of their time to share their experiences of mothering and income support. Without their generosity this research would not have been possible.

I would like to acknowledge Louise Brady for her assistance with transcription, and Neil Brady for assistance with obtaining copies of pre-1970s policy documents. I would like to thank the *Wednesday Grad Forum* comprised of Heather Schmidt, Stephen Speake, Goze Dogu, Marie Leduc and Barbara Milmine. I would especially like to thank Heather for her attention to the important little details and Stephen for his good humoured persistence when we disagreed. I would also like to thank Lane Mandlis, Tonya Davidson, and Greg Bowden who read many chapters and provided very useful comments. My friend Chiara Ruffa deserves special thanks for reading drafts of many of the chapters and providing me with the encouragement and laughter that kept me going through the messy middle of this process. My deepest thanks also to Professor Patricia Harris of Murdoch University, whose interest and encouragement were extremely valuable during my fieldwork.

I would also like to thank various institutions who made this research possible by providing funding and other assistance. These include the Canada Research Chair Derek Sayer, the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Alberta. A very special thanks to The Centre for Social and Community Research (CSCR) at Murdoch University, which generously provided office space and administrative support and full access to computing, printing and photocopying facilities during each of the three spells of fieldwork.

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Symbols and Abbreviations

(p)……..……..…….....….substantial pause in speech
//……..……indicates interruptions by either the interviewee or interviewer
AWT…….....…….……Australians Working Together
CES…….....……..…….Commonwealth Employment Service
EEP…….....…….……..Centrelink Employment Pathway Plan
EES…….....…….…..…….. European Employment Strategy
EP…….....…….... Employment Preparation program (2006 onwards)
EU…….....……..…….……..European Union
FaCS…….....……..……Department of Family and Community Services
IAJST…….....……..…….Intensive Assistance Job Search Training
JET…….....…….…..Jobs, Education and Training program (1989-2006)
JN…….....…….……Job Network
NCSMC……...….....……..…National Council of Single Mothers and their Children
PA…….…….…….Personal Adviser program (2003-2006)
PgA.....Parenting Allowance
PP…….....…….……Parenting Payment
SPP…….....…….Sole Parent Pension
TAFE…….....…….....……..Technical and Further Education

Contents

Introduction

The temporal and geographic reach and impact of personalized planning programs is large. Personalized planning programs came into being over two decades ago in the United States and their use has grown enormously since this time. Extensive use is made of these programs within Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Program participants comprise a wide range of income support recipients including the young and long term unemployed, people on disability payments, and single parents.

Given the very important role that personalized planning programs play within contemporary welfare states, there is a clear need for systematic research on these programs. While there are a number of studies that explore particular aspects of one or more specific programs, there are no studies that systematically examine and compare the "micro" features of multiple personalized planning programs and locate them within broader historical debates on the welfare state, as well as national imaginaries and practices. It is important to do this because, as this study will illustrate, the broader social context shapes program participants' experiences. Furthermore, while there has been considerable research on the effect that neoliberal welfare state restructuring has had on women, there are only a small number of studies that specifically focus on personalized planning programs targeted at this group. Yet, around the industrialized world personalized planning programs have been targeted extensively at women, especially single mothers. Some prominent examples include the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program in Los Angeles and Riverside County, California, the Personal Adviser Program in the United Kingdom, the Personal Adviser Program in Australia, and the Career and Employment Counsellor program in Alberta, Canada. This thesis focuses on three major personalized planning programs directed at Australian single parents receiving income support, who in the vast majority (over 90 percent) of cases are single mothers. These are the Jobs, Educations Training (JET) program, the Personal Adviser (PA) program and the Employment Preparation (EP) program.

Recent social policy reforms, such as cuts to subsidized training and employment, and the development of new personalized planning programs and work requirements, are partly driven by the goal of cutting social spending. These shifts also reflect growing concerns with 'welfare dependency' - the argument by policy makers and politicians that the key barrier facing income support recipients is not a lack of employment skills or opportunities, or parents' caring commitments, but a more basic inability to set personal goals and plan for the future. This idea has been increasingly articulated in the arguments that receipt of income support can result in a "psychology of dependency", which prevents people from moving off payments and into employment (c.f. Mead 1997).

Given the geographic and temporal pervasiveness of personalized planning programs and the ways they are tied into problematizations of the post-war welfare state, I argue that they are more than programs and are instead a *diagram*. In the same way that the logic of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon underlay the architecture and organization of disciplinary institutions, such as schools, factories and prisons, personalized planning programs are a *diagram*, or an 'abstract machine' (Deleuze 1988) that pervades every aspect of the contemporary welfare state. While the logic of a particular policy are usually transparent, a diagram's logic operates "at a level that usually places [it] beyond our apprehension" (Walters 2006, 173). Personalized planning programs are *abstract* in that they are detached from any specific use. They have been put to work with a range of populations and within diverse policy circumstances and geographical locations. Personalized planning programs are a *machine* in that they involve a particular set of force relations. They are simultaneously "an ensemble of institutions" and also the principle through which society conceives how to regulate social relations and institutions (Foucault 1991a, 210). Personalized planning programs are both a way of thinking about the organization and regulation of income support recipients and related services and a specific assemblage of institutions and technologies. They involve a way of thinking about who income support recipients are, who they should be, and how best to produce this transformation. Technologies of personalized planning always involve certain technologies including an individual relationship between an income support recipient and a guide, a written plan[1], but

1 For instance the 'Career and Employment Consultants' (CEC) program, which part of the 'Alberta Works' program1 in the province of Alberta, Canada, requires individuals to complete a 'Client Investment Plan', in which they, together with the CECs, will "plan a series of steps that [they] agree to take so [they] can return to work as soon as possible" (Government of Alberta 2004). The idea of a plan, which is negotiated between the client and their adviser, is also pivotal to the concept of the active engagement of individuals in the following programs: Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program in Riverside County, California, the GAIN program in Los-Angles, the

these are assembled in different ways.

Written plans that clients of personalized planning programs are required to develop have a quasi-contractual status, in the sense that individuals are expected to take the steps outlined in their plan in order to reach their stated goals and risk penalties if they do not. Personalized plans are understood by policy makers to result from collaboration and negotiation between the adviser and the client rather than being unilaterally imposed by the adviser. However, clients' experiences are not necessarily consistent with these official discourses. One-on-one meetings and the process of developing written plans are also hypothesized by policy makers to be transformative. In practice this means clients are expected to adopt new subjectivities and attitudes: for example, single mothers are encouraged to see themselves as entrepreneurs who are personally responsible for promoting their skills in the labour market.

Aim of the thesis

The key aim of this study is to understand the spaces of freedom and constraint opened up and closed down by the three major Australian Federal Government personalized planning programs: JET, PA and EP. Through an examination of a wide range of material from parliamentary debates, policy documents, newspaper articles, ethnographic observation and interviews it seeks to illustrate the spaces for the practice of freedom and constraint that were closed down and opened up by these widely criticized programs and associated work requirements. While the primary focus is the period 2005 to 2007, a time of massive flux in the Australian system of income support for single parents, I also locate this narrow episode within the broader history of the Australian income support system. Secondary aims of this thesis are to 1) understand the different ways in which the relationship between single parents/mothers and income support has been problematized since the emergence of the post-war welfare state, and 2) understand why, beginning in the late 1980s, personalized planning programs were established as the dominant solution to the problematic of single parents on income support. An overarching motivation for this study is to raise questions about the wide range of personalized planning programs that are currently operating across Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, China and other countries. By illustrating the limitations of current understandings of Australian programs, this thesis aims to induce readers familiar with other jurisdictions to ask if similar oversights and limitations have also occurred in

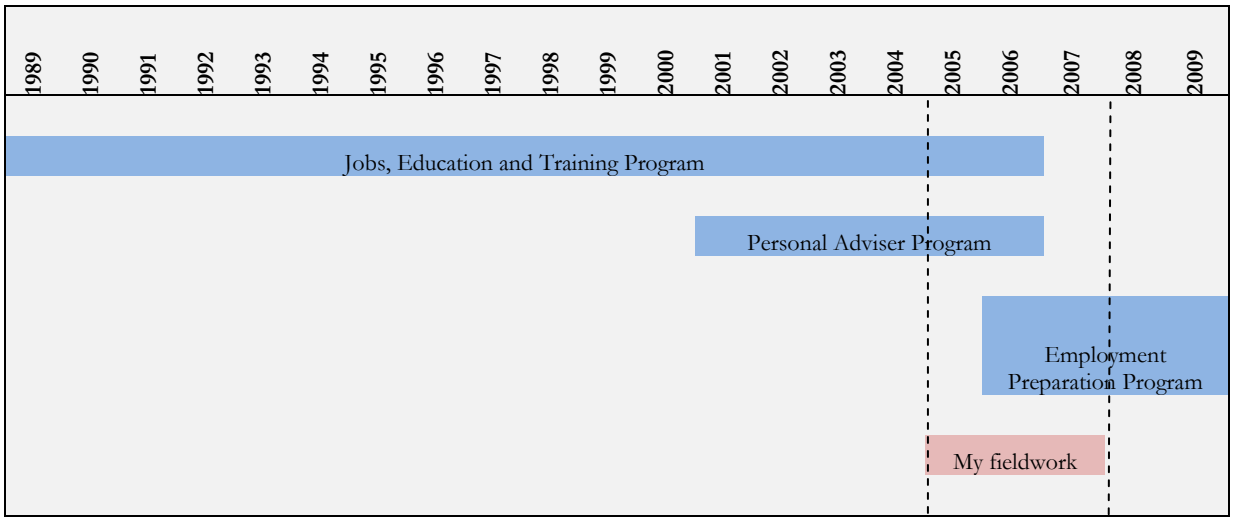
---

Personal Adviser Programs in the United Kingdom and Australia (Government of Alberta 2004).

these cases.

During the short period 2005 to 2007 the Australian government announced a major new personalized planning program called Employment Preparation, as well as new work requirements for single parents receiving the Parenting Payment. In the same period they terminated two major personalized planning programs that were targeted at single parents. Each of these programs had quite different aims and put personalized planning into practice through markedly different methods. This variety and flux in personalized planning programs generated a rich array of spaces in which single mothers were urged to develop their capacities. The Jobs, Education and Training (JET) program, which operated from 1989 until 2006, aimed to equip sole parents to join the workforce through a combination of counselling, subsidized training and child care subsidies. Participation in the JET program was voluntary. In contrast, participation in the Personal Adviser (PA) program, which commenced in 2003, was compulsory for many Parenting Payment recipients. This program assisted these individuals to identify their barriers to paid work, to develop a written plan to overcome these, and in the case of those with older children, monitored their adherence to these plans. In contrast to JET, PA did not offer any additional material assistance such as subsidized training or child care. Finally, the Employment Preparation (EP) program, which operated from 2006 to 2009, was a compulsory program that provided basic help with resume writing, job search techniques, and one-on-one meetings with an employment adviser in the Job Network. The Job Network is a network of private for-profit and not-for-profit agencies contracted by the Australian government to provide employment services. Unlike the first two programs, Employment Preparation overwhelmingly emphasized paid work rather than participation in voluntary work or education/training.

Table 1 Timeline of personalized planning programs for Australian single parents



Theoretical framework

The questions that this thesis explores, and the critiques it advances, are rooted in an engagement with Michel Foucault's and Amartya Sen's reflections on capacities, capabilities, freedom and social policy. Feminist welfare state researchers have strongly engaged with the works of both of these thinkers, simultaneously finding many of their concepts very useful and some aspects of their work lacking, including their treatment of gender, power and freedom (Brodie 2007, Lewis, Giullari 2005).

Foucault and Sen both offer significant insights regarding the relationship between the individual practice of freedom and public policies, such as personalized planning programs, which aim to develop individuals' capacities. Both thinkers begin from the position that freedom is itself a good aside from the outcomes it generates in terms of specific types of well-being. Yet at the same time they retain a concern with individuals' abilities to achieve specific forms of well-being that they personally value. Further, both thinkers have a deep antagonism towards the idea that freedom can be *a priori* linked to any particular political order or policy structure (Prozorov 2007, 2). While Sen and Foucault both clearly acknowledge that institutions play an important role in securing certain freedoms, they nevertheless maintain that any arguments which attempt to establish that a specific set of institutional or political arrangements are inherently free are both naïve and dangerous (Prozorov 2007, 2). To elaborate, this means they are against what Prozorov calls "the illusion of a perfect [political or institutional] order" and the idea that freedom is something that can be guaranteed in advance. They are against any idea of freedom as being "an abstract endowment, a

constitutionally guaranteed right, rather than a concrete experience or a practice" (Prozorov 2007, 2-3). When freedom is understood as something that is the attribute of an institutional arrangement or a political order, the question becomes: is this institution or political order free? At the same time, the question of whether or not people governed by that political order or institution are free disappears as a subject of concern. Both thinkers recognize that when we cease to view freedom as the concrete condition of individuals who exist within a society, and instead as the attribute of a political order or institution, it is possible for all forms of tyranny, pressure and oppression imaginable to be carried out in the name of the freedom of a 'free society' (Prozorov 2007, 2-5). Given this danger, both thinkers argue for the importance of attending to individuals' concrete experiences and to the range of possibilities for freedom that exist in historically specific and actually existing political orders.

Michel Foucault's concern with capacity building programs is primarily connected to an interest in the role that power relations, and particularly "micro power" relations, play in the exercise of individual freedom. While Foucault expressed the opinion that state funded supports such as social security play a crucial role in the practice of individual freedom, his own research does not address this issue. This silence is largely replicated within neo-Foucauldian governmentality studies on social policies, exemplified by researchers such as Dean (1995, 1998, 1998, 1999), Walters (2000, 2005, 2006) and Rose (1999b). This silence is striking because investigations into the range of financial resources that specific social groups have access to and the adequacy of these resources are a traditional cornerstone of the critical social policy literature and feminist studies of the welfare state (Edwards, Magerey 1995, Lewis 1992). The inattention that governmentality studies of social policies have paid to issues such as equity of access to education, training and child care subsidies and the adequacy of material resources available to different social groups is problematic given their stated concern with the problem of freedom. Yet, as I will discuss throughout this thesis, access to financial resources plays a significant role in individuals' freedom.

In contrast to Foucault and the neo-Foucauldian literature, Amartya Sen is primarily concerned with the role that material conditions play in enhancing individuals' capabilities. Sen's focus on capacity building programs is primarily linked to his argument that the objective of public action should be capability expansion, meaning that the objective of public action should be to enhance "the capability of people to undertake valuable and valued doings and beings" (Dreze, Sen 1989, 12). While Sen and his followers acknowledge that power relations constrain individuals' abilities to be self-determining, they do not follow through on this recognition. They devote very

little analytical attention to power relations, particularly at the "micro" level (see Lewis, Giullari 2005, Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003).

This thesis brings Foucault and the Foucauldian governmentality literature into conversation with Sen's work on capabilities and the Senian social policy capabilities literature, and brings feminist concerns to bear on both. My argument is that when these literatures, which have rarely engaged one another, are brought together but not pressed into a singular framework we will have a more complete understanding of contemporary personalized planning programs and the role social policy plays in supporting and constraining individuals' abilities to be self-determining.

Existing literature

Existing bodies of research have demonstrated that many aspects of personalized planning programs are normalizing and disciplining (see Cruikshank 1996, Cruikshank 1999, Dean, Bonvin, Vielle, and Farvaque 2005, Dean 1995, Dean 1998, McDonald, Marston 2005). However, they have invested considerably less energy in asking whether there are points at which these initiatives can be separated from processes of normalization and whether such programs are opening up some new spaces for the practice of freedom. Contemporary neoliberal personalized planning programs are argued to be normalizing because, while these programs may greatly increase an income support recipient's ability to undertake certain activities, they also restrict the behavioural options open to this individual (see Cruikshank 1996, Cruikshank 1999, Dean, Bonvin, Vielle, and Farvaque 2005, Dean 1995, Dean 1998, McDonald, Marston 2005). For example, these programs might greatly increase an individual's ability to write a job application letter that sells their employment attributes. At the same time, this individual may lose the ability to imagine themselves as a subject that is not consistent with neoliberal political rationalities, in which individuals and families are financially self reliant and all institutions are organized in the form of a market. That is, they "narrow behavioral options" (McWhorter 1999, 180). Implicitly this critique is an embrace of a certain universalism, the idea that "a potentiality for being otherwise … is inherent in and available to all human beings" and that "freedom is an ontological condition of human being" (Prozorov 2007, 2).

Other critics of Australian personalized planning programs have argued that these programs and associated requirements penalize the vulnerable (Howard, Fenger 2004), ignore the special challenges faced by groups such as single parents, and lack necessary material supports, such as transport or child care subsidies (Goodin 2001, Howard, Fenger 2004, Humpage 2006, Humpage 2007), are paternalistic and intrude into clients' lives (Shaver 2002), do not address problems within

the macro economy (Cowling, LaJeunesse, Mitchell, and Watts 2006), and fail to adequately invest in employment and training (Davidson 2007a, Davidson 2007b). These critiques provide important insights into the shortcomings of the programs implemented over the last two decades. These researchers have convincingly established that successive Australian governments have significantly under-invested in education and training for income support recipients and that many aspects of the state's personalized planning programs are normalizing and disciplining. This thesis does not aim to dispute these findings. Instead it demonstrates the importance of asking whether there are points at which contemporary personalized planning initiatives can be separated from processes of normalization. If as researchers we only examine these programs through the lens of dominant normalizing discourses and disciplinary practices, then these questions are not asked and the possibility that such spaces may exist or are being opened up is not considered. Utilizing Foucault's later works on the care of the self and Sen's work on capabilities enables this thesis to ask these questions and to consider these possibilities, without losing the important insight that such programs may involve practices of normalization and discipline.

Another key feature of the existing research on capability building and personalized planning programs is that much of it is framed in terms of ruptures, great transformations, "epochs, stages and other kinds of paradigm shift[s]" and assumes too much coherence and order in the present (Walters 2006, 167-72). Such research frequently refers to clear shifts from a welfarist or Fordist or social liberal welfare state to new neoliberal or advanced liberal modes of governing (see Cruikshank 1996, Cruikshank 1999, Dean, Bonvin, Vielle, and Farvaque 2005, Dean 1995, Dean 1998, McDonald, Marston 2005, Walters 2000) or a shift from governance of carer-mother citizens to governance of gender-neutral citizen parents (Blaxland 2010, 132). These breaks are discerned through the examination of documentary material and most commonly this material is produced by the state. I argue that in the case of personalized planning programs directed at Australian single parents, it is possible to perceive such a sharp shift or break in governing rationalities only if one confines their gaze to official Australian Government publications regarding new personalized planning programs. However, if one recognizes that new personalized planning programs directed at single parents occurred concurrently with older personalized planning programs, and lets one's gaze move to actual practices of governing and women's experiences of these, it is clear that there has been no such clear shift. Rather, single mothers are currently negotiating heterogeneous networks of personalized planning programs that "combine elements from many different times" (Walters 2006, 167-72).

The current literature on capability building and personalized planning programs is excessively limited in the data sources it utilizes. As Lippert (2005) points out, sometimes it is only within talk or everyday discourse that certain political rationalities and power relations are apparent. Lippert (2005) makes this point in this study of sanctuary incidents in Canada. While a rationality of government relates directly to the state, because it is "a way of thinking about the problems involved in governing a state and its population and about the resources that could be employed for this purpose" (Hindess 2006, 119), at the same time "government of the state is not restricted to the activities of the state itself or even to developments within its borders" (Hindess 2006, 116). Yet the governmentality literature has tended to ignore the relations between rationalities produced by the state itself, and the rationalities produced by actors and institutions 'outside' the state itself.

Another important limitation of the current literature is the relative lack of contemporary research on policies affecting Australian single parents. While in the United States, New Zealand and Canada, policy efforts to restructure the post-war welfare state have focused on single parents, until 2005 Australian policy efforts primarily focused on the long-term unemployed while relatively small policy initiatives were directed at sole parents (McDonald, Marston 2005, 375). The academic literature of the last 15 years has largely followed this emphasis. Thus, although there is a relatively large critical social policy literature on policy changes affecting the unemployed (See Breunig, R., Cobb-Clark, D.A., Dunlop, Y. and Terrill, M. 2003, Carney 2007a, Carney 2006, Carney 2007b, Dean 1995, Dean 1998, Eardley 1997, Harris 2001, Harris. P. 2002, Henman 2004b, Howard, Fenger 2004, McDonald, Marston, and Buckley 2003, McDonald, Marston 2005) the critical social policy literature on changes to payments to single parents in Australia over the last 20 years is relatively small. Furthermore, the literature on policy changes affecting single parents concentrates on a narrow set of issues. Issues addressed include estimates of financial impacts of program changes (Harding, Vu, Percival, and Beer 2005a, Harding, Vu, Percival, and Beer 2005b), studies of program populations dynamics (Barrett 2002, Cai, Kalb, Tseng, and Vu 2008, Tseng, Vu, and Wilkins 2008), policy commentaries that rely upon studies of overseas reforms due to the lack of Australian empirical research (Cortis, Meagher 2009), and finally assessments of the labour supply impacts of policy pilots (Barrett, Cobb-Clark 2001), proposed policy changes (Duncan, Harris 2002), and actual policy changes (Cai, Kalb, Tseng, and Vu 2008, Gregory, Klug, and Thapa 2008).[2]

2 There is also a literature that examines the characteristics and attitudes of the sole parent population without any specific reference to the welfare reform initiatives and programs that have been in operation over the last decade

There are to date only two studies that specifically examine personalized planning programs directed at Australian single mothers (Blaxland 2010, Gardiner 1999), and a few studies that make relatively brief, sometimes fleeting, references to these programs (c.f. Baker 1998, Shaver 2002). Gardiner argues in her 1999 article on the Jobs, Education and Training scheme that it "ascribe[s] and regulate[s] female identity and maintain[s] the gendered subjugation of single mothers, confirming rather than decreasing their dependence on welfare" (Gardiner 1999, 43). Single mothers' dependence is entrenched through the program's emphasis on facilitating their movement into low paid part-time employment (Gardiner 1999, 43). More recent programs directed at single parents, such as the PA and EP programs, are not addressed by Gardiner's study.

A more recent study has been undertaken by Blaxland who examined the Personal Adviser program (2002-2005) (Blaxland 2009, Blaxland 2010). She argues that policy makers justified the PA initiative by misrepresenting single mothers as unmotivated, poor role models and constructing them as unemployed rather than as undertaking culturally valued carework (Blaxland 2010). Blaxland's study exemplifies the focus on epochs and great ruptures of which Walters is so critical (Walters 2006, 167-72). Her study claims that in 2002 policy makers broke sharply from the previous state of affairs in which "caring for children was mothers' work and by being *good* mothers women executed their citizenship responsibilities" (Emphasis in original Blaxland 2010, 131). Further, it claims that until 2002 "full-time care for children was regarded by the Australian welfare regime as constituting a legitimate basis for a claim for social security benefits among parents" (Blaxland 2010, 131). Such sweeping statements ignore whole aspects of the history of income support for single parents and mothers. As chapters two and three of this thesis explain in more detail, since the late 1980s parents of dependent children 16 years or older have not been eligible for parenting-based payments and are only eligible for unemployment payments which require recipients to actively seek fulltime employment. It also ignores the point that policy makers did not justify the absence of work requirements for parents with children aged less than sixteen years on the basis that these caring responsibilities gave these individuals a legitimate basis for claiming income support for up to sixteen years. Instead, since the 1980s policy makers have justified the lack of work requirements on the basis that on average single mothers only claimed payments for a short period (3 years) and thus there was no need to actively require them to seek paid work. Blaxland also claims that since 2002 "parents on income support have been increasingly encouraged to be both citizen workers and gender-neutral citizen parents, not mothers" (Blaxland 2010, 132). Such claims ignore the fact that the Personal Adviser program explicitly identified Parenting Payment recipients as mothers, not as

gender neutral parents. Chapters two and three provide more detail on this.

Recent Australian research on broader social issues such as maternal employment and gendered relations within the family frequently ignores contemporary income support policies for single parents (Craig, Mullan, and Blaxland 2010). Broader studies that do address policy directed at single parents under the Howard Coalition (1996-2008) do so fleetingly (Brennan 2007, Hill 2006). However, these studies agree that the general direction of the Howard Coalition's policies was to discourage partnered mothers with young children from participating in the labour force while encouraging or compelling single mothers to participate in paid work (Brennan 2007, Hill 2006). While these are accurate descriptions of the broad policy direction, they do not tell us much about the specifics of policies for single mothers and their effects on single mothers. Nor do they explain why divergent policies for single and partnered mothers emerged.

Having established how this study is located within the current literature, the following section explains how the methodology used in this thesis takes inspiration from the current literature but goes beyond it.

Methodology

Taking theoretical inspiration from what Thomas Lemke has entitled the Anglo Saxon governmentality literature in sociology and political science (Dean 1999, Lemke 2003, Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde 2006), this project seeks to throw new light on the contemporary problem of personalized planning programs (such as welfare to work programs), to understand the current limits of thinking and practice, and to loosen the grip of ways of thinking and acting that have become sedimented. It does this by taking up Foucault's genealogical methods, along with concepts developed within the governmentality literature, and combining these approaches with ethnographic methods. This combination of approaches enables the simultaneous examination of official government rationalities and that which Foucault referred to as the 'witches' brew' of actual practices (Foucault 1991b, 81).

The historical (genealogical) methods developed by Foucault and the governmentality literature provide many of the tools used in this project. They assist in achieving this thesis' aim of highlighting concrete ways of thinking and acting differently. Chapters two and three of this thesis follow Foucault's genealogical method by seeking

> to show how the coupling of a set of practices and a regime of truth form an apparatus

> (dispositive) of knowledge-power that effectively makes out in reality that which does not exist and legitimately submits it to the division between true and false (Foucault 2008, 19).

Genealogical studies aim to reveal the destructive tendencies of present ways of being through contrasts between how the body is lived now and how it has been lived differently at other times, and they seek to stimulate this critical relation by making "those things [in] our present experience" that are given to us "as if they were timeless, natural, unquestionable" seem strange and not inevitable (Rose 1999b, 20).

The thesis also focuses on the concrete practices through which governance is enacted. Such a focus is enabled by governmentality studies' and Foucault's emphasis on government as 'the conduct of conduct', meaning any more or less calculated methods of directing how others behave and act. Their emphasis highlights the point that governance is an activity that is both practical and grounded in reflection (Foucault 2003a). Further, governmentality studies' argument that all forms of political thought and action are grounded in particular ways of thinking about the types of problems that various authorities can and should address (and cannot and should not address) enabled an emphasis on the language, practices and forms of thought through which the problem of capacities arose and solutions to this problem were developed and implemented (Foucault 2008). Also, the governmentality literature's focus on the conducting of the conduct of individuals, rather than only methods of coercion or prohibitions (through laws and regulations), draws attention to the nexus between political rationalities and subjectivities (Read 2009). For instance, the development of market-based approaches to governing over the last 30 years has involved the state attempting to foster enterprising subjectivities, attitudes and dispositions among citizens (Foucault 2008, Rose 1992, Rose 1999b). Finally, the governmentality literature also provides tools for illuminating how certain forms of thought, practices, and subjectivities that exist in the present became established as natural and necessary, and for opening up a critical space around these. Through contrasts between current problematizations and previous understandings of capacities, these genealogical tools enable me to provide readers with a critical relation to the present.

Foucault's work also underpins this thesis' approach to analyzing power, which contrasts with Marxist and state-centered approaches (Foucault 1990a, 92). His ideas that 1) modern power is capillary in nature; 2) power relations are also part of other types of relations such as knowledge relationships or sexual relationships; 3) power is not simply repressive; it is also productive; and 4) there is always resistance to power relations (Foucault 1990a, 94) have been highly influential within contemporary political and social theory and post-structuralist approaches to social policy. While

Foucault's argument against a state centered methodological approach is frequently cited within governmentality studies, Lippert notes that many studies of political rationalities and technologies of governance confine their analyses almost entirely to texts produced by official state institutions, rather than examining texts or 'talk' produced outside of the state (Lippert 2005, 10). This is particularly the case when social policies are the subject of study.[3] For example, while Dean's governmentality study of the governance of unemployment points out that:

> the means of government of the unemployed are not simply formally located within the institutions and practices of local, regional, national or transnational states. They consist…in the rather complex linking of state bodies with hetromorphic practices, authorities, agencies and insititutions….[B]usiness, employers, consultants, academics, community associations, technical colleges …and so on are employed in a variety of ways to fulfil the objectives of labour-market and job-retraining programs, to define and bring into play domains of expertise…

he does not actually examine practices, texts or talk from "business, employers, consultants, academics, community associations, [or] technical colleges" (Dean 1995, 571).

Some who work with Foucault's thought have re-iterated his arguments against state centered conceptions of power and pointed out that others working with Foucault have re-introduced forms of state centered thinking into their analyses. With reference to the Foucauldian literature, Binkley argues it is important to devote attention to discourses that occur outside of the state, in addition to those that occur within it, so as to avoid "a depiction of the production of the subject before power as a fundamentally top-down process of subjection/subordination" (Binkley 2009, 65). While the production of the subject may in some cases mostly be a top-down process, it is important not to use a methodology whose very nature ensures that subject production will inevitably appear to occur in this fashion. Likewise, we should not ignore the role the state apparatus frequently does play in the production of subjects, as some governmentality studies do.[4]

The dominant focus within the governmentality literature on official texts provided a starting

---

3 For example the empirical basis of (Fejes 2008) "consists of 30 governmental White Papers produced by the Swedish Ministry of Education," similarly (Wool 2007) focuses solely on a series of Department of Defense documents entitled Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq (MSSI), and relies upon interviews with Special Education Needs administrators within Local Education Authorities and a key policy document produced by the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families.

4 There are also a large number of studies in the governmentality field that exclusively confine their analysis to texts produced outside the state apparatus. For examples see Klesse (2007) who examines 18 relationship manuals marketed to gay persons.

point for this study, but this approach on its own was insufficient to generate an understanding of the current limits of thought and practice in relation to personalized planning programs. Supplementing this focus with ethnographic analysis assisted in overcoming two key limitations within the current literature. The first problematic tendency, as Li argues, is that while governmentality studies emphasize practices and thought, "the practices that tend to take centre stage ... are problematizations" - the ways that diverse difficulties are assembled into a singular problem – and the resulting *dispositive*, apparatus or technologies of government that are assembled to govern this 'urgent need' (Li 2007a, 263-4). This focus downplays other sets of practices that are also key to governmentalities, including managing failures and contradictions, linking together the objectives of "those who aspire to govern conduct and those whose conduct is to be conducted" and containing critiques (Foucault 1991b, Li 2007a, 265). As others have observed, a second and very much related problematic tendency is the overwhelming focus on pronouncements in official texts and the abstraction of analysis from actually existing spaces and subjects (see Lippert 2005, Mitchell 2006, O'Malley, Weir, and Shearing 1997).

The impulse to focus on the practice of problematizations and on pronouncements is even more marked among Anglo Saxon governmentality research than it is within Foucault's own work. Leading governmentality scholars have been insistent that studies of governmentality are completely distinct from sociologies of practices of governance (Dean 1999, Rose, Miller 2010, 275).

Governmentality research on capacity building and personalized planning programs tends to focus exclusively on 'mentalities of governance' (Rose, Miller 2010), or problematizations - ways of thinking about governance and associated technical solutions laid down in official plans for governing (Cruikshank 1996, Cruikshank 1999, McDonald, Marston, and Buckley 2003, Walters 2000). In doing so it focuses on how the issue of individuals' abilities to plan has become a problem for the state and the technical solutions, the diagrams devised by the state which link a specific problem with specific interventions and a resulting solution. In focusing on official plans there is a tendency to focus on the resultant formation (the apparatus, the technologies of government) rather than on the complicated processes involved in establishing particular problematizations, including marginalizing competing explanations, rendering a problem technical rather than political, devising compromises, and producing a diagram for governance (Li 2007a).

Another result is that problematizations and practices of governance appear settled and sometimes even complete in ways that they are not. By rendering diagrams and problematics as complete and coherent and focusing on official pronouncements, power relations appear seamless,

"inexorable and inescapable" (Mitchell 2006, 320). Rather than depicting things in our present as strange and avoidable, as an analytics of governmentalities ostensibly aims to do, this rendering of power relations as seemingly complete, seamless and inexorable makes it hard to imagine how things could possibly be otherwise.

In response to these problems, in recent years a small number of researchers in the diverse fields of anthropology, criminology, social policy, social work and geography have attempted to incorporate ethnographic methods into governmentality studies (Li 2007b, Lippert 2005, McDonald, Marston 2005, McDonald, Marston, and Buckley 2003, Mitchell 2006). Ethnographic methods bring to governmentality studies an ability to conduct 'bottom up' analyses that focus on responses to new political rationalities and technologies including the evasions and resistances, and the excluded forms of action that continue to occur alongside new forms of governance. The best of these focus not only on talk or everyday discourse but also recognize the importance of paying attention to the state apparatus and changes in its laws. For example, within his own work on refugees in Canada, Lippert tackles practices and rationalities of governance that pass through the state apparatus, as well as those that do not and those that sit in spaces that are neither entirely inside the state apparatus nor entirely outside of it. In analyzing text and talk, rather than just documents, Lippert addresses a significant gap in the existing literature; but perhaps the most significant aspect of his approach is that it simultaneously examines a variety of spaces within the institutional state apparatus, outside of it, and in-between.

Simultaneous examination of talk and texts produced within the state and outside of it helps to prevent attributing a false coherence to new political rationalities and programs of governance. While ethnographic methods can contribute to studies of governmentalities, I agree with Rose that sociologies of what happened and studies of political rationalities are distinct types of inquiry and require different tools. At the same time, I disagree with Rose (Rose 1999b, 20) that these approaches must be kept separate. Rather I argue, along with Li (2007b, 27), that these approaches can be fruitfully employed together. Analyses of how state actors define problems, new state technologies, and what authorities wanted to happen can be undertaken alongside analyses of what happens when these plans meet the worlds, subjects, and processes they aim to transform. Ethnographic material provides insights into how these programs are produced, lived and contested.

While this thesis is not directly based upon Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography (IE) methodology (Campbell, M.L., Gregor, F. 2004), it nevertheless takes inspiration from IE's concern to use individual experience as an entry into understanding how social relations are organized

through institutional processes. My approach also aligns with IE's Foucauldian inspired understanding of the role that institutions play within relations of power, including their role in legitimating and reproducing discourses, as well as its attention to the ways that texts organize institutional processes (Campbell, M.L., Gregor, F. 2004).

My governmentality-inspired methodology, which incorporates ethnographic analysis, enables this thesis to illustrate what happens when plans to govern meet the processes and subjects they seek to transform, and to highlight the existence of a multiplicity of rationalities and practices. This multiplicity would be downplayed if my analysis focused almost exclusively upon official problematizations and plans. Analysis based on the ethnographic material collected in this project highlights multiplicity in two interrelated ways. Firstly, it brings to the fore that programs of governance are brought into effect within a complex social fabric that includes a heterogeneous mix of pre-existing political discourses, including historically specific national discourses (Larner, Walters 2000). New programs never completely dis-embed existing practices and forms of thought but instead mix together with them. Existing assemblages of governance in any period combine practices and forms of thought from many different times (Walters 2006). Secondly, the ethnographic analysis highlights some forms of power "beyond liberalism" which are most apparent in everyday discourse or talk, and not in state texts (Lippert 2005, 10).

Data collection

To understand the nature of these personalized planning programs, their possibilities and their dangers, I conducted wide-ranging empirical research. This included an examination of archival material relating to Australian single mothers, income support payments targeted at widows, sole/lone/single mothers and parents, and personalized planning programs targeted at these groups. It also included longitudinal interviews with 30 single mothers with young children, along with observations and interviews at nine agencies who deliver the Employment Preparation program. I also conducted two interviews with Personal Advisers but have not included this data because it was difficult to incorporate data from only two advisers. I was unable to arrange interviews with additional advisers because Centrelink was unwilling to facilitate access and advisers I emailed independently failed to respond to my invitation.

Documents

The genealogical analysis and studies of contemporary governmentalities in this thesis rely

upon an analysis of a wide range of documents. These include academic works on the history of the Australian welfare state and analysis of contemporary (to them) changes in the system of income support directed at lone/sole/single parents/mothers. It also includes a review of all major research reports produced by the Australian Department of Social Security (DSS) since 1980, as well as documents produced as part of major reviews of the social security system including the Social Security Review, the Welfare Reform Reference Group, the Working Age Taskforce, and as part of major sets of legislative changes including Australians Working Together and Welfare to Work. I reviewed all policy publicity material distributed to recipients of parenting-related payments since 1980, as well as ministerial and departmental press releases related to new legislation, research, policies and programs. Finally, I reviewed the Australian Government's practical policy guides and tools including *The Guide to the Social Security Act* which outlines procedures associated with administering income support payments and associated programs, and the electronic planning tool, the *Participation Toolset*. During my fieldwork with Job Network providers I collected copies of program material that was provided in the public areas of the agency and where the agency was willing copies of training material and workbooks. This is discussed in more detail below.

I conducted a selective review of Australian Parliamentary Hansard since 1914, concentrating on periods of legislative changes relating to sole/lone/single parents. These periods are the introduction of the War Pensions Act of 1914, the introduction of a range of benefits to civilian widows (in the Widow's Pension Act of 1942), the introduction of Supporting Mother's benefit in 1973 and Supporting Parent's benefits in 1977, debates around the Social Security Review and legislation flowing from this review between 1987-89, the legislative debates in 2001 that formed part of the Australians Working Together package of changes, and the legislation in 2005 that formed part of the Welfare to Work changes.

Finally, the document-based research included a review of major Australian newspapers from 1977 to 2008. These articles were located via a search of the database Factiva and the Google newspaper archive using keywords related to single mothers and income support.[5]

The documents were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach and N'Vivo software. For the interviews I developed an initial coding frame based on the interview instruments. The thematic

5 Sole mother*; sole mum; sole parent*; lone mother*; lone mum; lone parent*; sole mother*; sole mum; sole parent*; single mother*; single mum; single parent*; teenage mother*; teenage mum; teenage parent*; sole parent pension, parenting payment, supporting mothers benefit, supporting parent's benefit; * = search for words with different endings.

categories were collapsed, refined and reorganized as the analysis progressed. The codes for the documents were based on an initial reading of the themes, and they were also re-organized as I proceeded with the analysis.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted in Perth, Australia. Perth is one of the most isolated metropolitan areas in the world. The nearest city with a population larger than 1 million is Adelaide, over 2,000 kilometres away; Perth is located approximately 4,000 kilometres from Australia's capital and the major cities of Sydney and Melbourne. For this reason, the Australian Government almost never funds and conducts social policy research in Perth but instead concentrates its research activity in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide. This study provides insights into experiences of income support recipients in a city that is virtually never the subject of social policy research. At the same time, the structure of Perth's economy reflects that of many of the large regional centers across Australia where a large number of Australian single mothers live.

Like most Australian capital cities, Perth is a sprawling metropolis with very little high density housing near the centre of the city. Perth's population of 1.6 million is spread over an area of 6,100 square km. Economically the city is primarily a service centre for the major mining, petroleum and agricultural industries located across the vast state of Western Australia, and around half of the state's resource sector employees live in Perth but work on the mines on a "fly in, fly out" basis (Taylor 2008). Due to its isolation, Perth does not have a significant tourist industry nor any significant manufacturing. In terms of employment, the resource and agricultural base of the economy is orientated towards well paid full time male employment with fewer opportunities for women, those who wish to work part-time, and people who do not wish to work in strenuous manual occupations or who do not wish to be employed on a fly in, fly out basis. In part because of this, the gap between average male fulltime earnings and average female full-time earnings in Western Australia is 22.6%, a figure that is much higher than the national gender wage gap of 15.2%. Many aspects of daily life in Perth are organized around the assumption of a stay-at-home wife/mother and a full time male worker. A striking example during the course of my fieldwork was the regulation of shops' trading hours within Perth metropolitan area. Major supermarkets and shopping centers were not allowed to trade after 6pm Monday to Saturday, meaning that shopping must be done during working hours or on a Saturday (when shops are very busy). Despite the difficulties this creates for people who cannot fit into this schedule, voters in Perth rejected a 2005

referendum which asked two questions: whether they wanted shops to be allowed to open longer on weekdays and whether they wanted to allow retailers to trade on Sundays (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2005a).

While Perth is more dependent upon employment in the resource sector than the Eastern state capitals such as Melbourne and Sydney, it nevertheless reflects the overall dependence of Australia's economy on employment in the resource sector. Over half of Australia's exports are natural resources. It is the world's third-largest exporter of wheat and the top exporter of iron ore and coal, but Australia produces and exports very little in terms of 'elaborately transformed manufactures'. These factors are part of the reason why Australia has one of the most sex-segregated labour markets and lowest labour market participation rates of women in the OECD. As a research site, Perth illustrates challenges that many single mothers outside of the major cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra face: geographic isolation, poor public transportation, a sex-segregated labour market and full-time wages that are substantially lower than those received by males.

Interviews with single mothers

A significant part of my fieldwork involved three years of interviews with single mothers with young children living in the greater Perth area and receiving Parenting Payment "single rate" (PPS). While at the commencement of my study single women with a dependent child aged 0 to 15 years were eligible to claim PPS, I chose to interview only those mothers with a child aged less than seven years. I was interested in how women experience the relationship between mothering and paid work during a period of their life-course when policy placed no activity requirements upon them. Thus at the time of their first interview all mothers had at least one child aged less than seven years.

At the time I commenced my study there were 416,246 Australian single mothers receiving PPS, and of these 42,076 were living in Western Australia. The vast majority (92.3 percent) of all PPS claimants at this time were mothers (and still are) (Australian Government: FaHCSIA 2009). The first interviews were conducted in June and July 2005, with follow up interviews occurring approximately 12 and 24 months later. Thirty single mothers participated in the first interview and only one did not participate in subsequent interviews.

The interviewees were recruited through a range of methods because my aim was to obtain a sample that reflected the range of diversity in the population of interest. I contacted many interviewees through a press release which was picked up by local newspapers and a local radio station. I also participated in a radio interview, attended a teenage mothers' support group, and had

posters placed in shopping centers, medical clinics, indigenous women's health centres, child care centres, and libraries in the month prior to the commencement of my fieldwork. I also contacted potential interviewees via electronic means through the placement of notices on Australian single mother web-boards, and finally through the email list of the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, and affiliated state organizations.

While this is a qualitative study that does not aim to make statistical inferences to the general population, I do argue that the experiences of these women represent much of the diversity of single mothers' experiences and can to some degree be generalized to the population of mothers with young children receiving PPS. The following provides a brief picture of the demographic characteristics of my interviewees and places this in the context of the populations of Australian lone parents, lone mothers and PPS recipients. Although one cannot neatly extrapolate from demographics to experiences, the analysis in this thesis suggests characteristics such as education and age do shape single mothers' experiences of personalized planning programs.

The average age of my interviewees was 30 years, with an age range of 20 to 41 years. Given that I selected participants with young children, it is not surprising that this is a little lower than the estimated average among all PPS recipients (34 years) (Barrett 2002, 7). Reflecting the very small proportion of all PPS recipients aged less than 20 (2.3 percent) none of my interviewees were aged less than 20 years (Barrett 2002, 7).

Interviewees had an average of 1.5 children which was a little lower than the PPS population average of 1.75 children. However, my sample was consistent with the average number of children aged under 13 years in the PPS population (average 1.4 children) (Barrett 2002, 7). Thirteen percent of the sample had three children, 20% had two children and the remainder (66%) had one child. The age of youngest child ranged from newborns to almost seven years of age. Fifty percent of interviewees had a youngest child aged zero to three years and the remainder had a youngest child aged four to six years of age.

FaCS does not collect statistics on the education level of PPS recipients. The only available data is on the total population of single mothers. The sample in my study had a level of education that was on average higher than the total single mother population. A third of my interviewees had a bachelor degree (or higher) while the proportion of all single mothers with a degree is estimated to be around half that rate. However, the proportion of my interviewees who had low education was consistent with the entire single mother population. Approximately 40 percent of my interviewees had not completed high school and in 2006 it was estimated that 39 percent of all lone parents (both

lone mothers and fathers) had not completed high school (Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2008). Thus while it is not possible to say exactly how different the educational attainment of my interviewees is from the PPS population, these figures suggest that single mothers with high school education were under-represented while single mothers with a degree were over-represented. This difference is taken into account in the analysis, which focuses on differences in experiences and the range of experiences, rather than on average or median experience.

There are no statistics available on PPS recipients' rate of participation in education. Again there are only statistics available for the entire population of lone parents (male and female). Fifty percent of my interviewees were undertaking study while in 2006 it was estimated that 14 percent of lone parents (of both sexes) were undertaking current study at an educational institution (Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2008). Part of this difference may be because I counted participation in correspondence courses with private educators, and any participation that had occurred in the last 12 months. It is also likely that part of this difference is because PPS recipients are participating in education at a higher rate than the total lone parent population. However, it is also likely reflective of the types of individuals who are more likely to volunteer to participate in a qualitative academic study.

There is also no data available on PPS recipients' labour force status as such. However, there is data on whether they report earned income. In 2001 Barrett estimated that in an average fortnight 27 percent of PPS recipients reported earned income. At the time of the first interview (June-July 2005) just under half of interviewees reported that they were engaged in some form of paid work, although in some cases they had not earned income in the last fortnight. Overall, the labour force participation rate of my interviewees appears to be closer to the participation rate of the population of Australian single mothers (51 percent) than of the population of PPS recipients. However, they were more likely than the overall population to be employed part-time. Given that the single mothers I interviewed were receiving PPS and had young children this is not surprising. In 2006 it was estimated that around a third (32 percent) of all lone mothers were employed part-time and 19 percent were employed full time (Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2008). Among my interviewees only two were employed full time, and the remainder were employed on a casual or permanent part-time basis.

There was also diversity in interviewees' housing circumstances. One quarter were living in their own homes, sixty percent were living in private rental accommodation while the remainder were renting from family, boarding with parents or in public housing. These circumstances were

largely reflective of the patterns evident in the administrative data that FaCS provided me with on the housing circumstances of female PPS recipients living in Perth. In the last quarter of 2004 their records indicated that 49 percent of PPS recipients were living in private rental, 22 percent were home-owners, while 29 percent were boarding, had free rent or were living in public housing.

Among the female PPS population around a fifth (20.1 percent) were born outside of Australia (Australian Government: FaHCSIA 2009). Of this 20.1 percent a third were born in Ireland, the UK, or New Zealand. Largely in line with these population characteristics, a quarter of my interviewees were born outside of Australia. It is estimated that 5 percent of PPS claimants are indigenous. Despite my efforts and those of Indigenous Australian agencies I was not able to get any Indigenous women to participate in my study.

In selecting the sample I strove to obtain geographic diversity within the Perth Metropolitan Area and I was successful in achieving this as the final 30 participants lived in all corners of Perth and throughout. Seven interviewees lived in the far southern port cities of Rockingham and Port Kenny located 55 kilometres from Perth's central business district (CBD). In part due to the low cost of housing, these areas contain a relatively large population of single mothers. Six interviewees lived in some of the most expensive and oldest established suburbs located just north of the CBD, around Perth's Swan River, and just south of Perth. Four lived in modest suburbs located approximately 20 kilometres north or south of the CBD. The remaining interviewees lived in lower cost suburbs located at the far northern or western reaches of Perth (40 and 25 kilometres from the CBD respectively) or between Perth CBD and the southern cities of Rockingham/Port Kenny. The majority of Perth's current and former public housing stock is located in these suburbs.

As existing research has shown, the PPS population is highly dynamic (Barrett 2002, Gregory R.G. & Klug, E. 2004). When Barrett analyzed four years of longitudinal data, he found that only 15 percent of PPS claimants received benefits for the entire four years (Barrett 2002). Reflecting this dynamism, by the time of my third interview (in 2007) half of my interviewees had left PPS. In a third of cases these women left payments because they re-partnered, while in the remaining two thirds of cases their own earnings were sufficiently high to preclude them from receiving PPS. To be ineligible for PPS on the basis of earned income a recipient had to earn at least $1,459 per fortnight (an annual income of at least $37,940.50) for at least 12 weeks (Australian Government: Centrelink. 2006).

In the first interview participants were asked about a range of topics related to experiences of receiving Parenting Payment, motherhood, paid work, education and participation in personalized

planning programs. Questions in the first interview included what they did in a typical day caring for their children, beliefs about the most appropriate way to care for their children, feelings about the importance of money to parenting, identity as a mother, labour market and education history, identity as a paid worker, the importance of a career to them, who (aside from themselves) cared for their children, the time that they had to care for themselves and what caring for themselves meant to them.

To date there has been relatively little ethnographic research conducted with Australian single mothers. This meant that when I entered the field for the first time I was very unsure as to the likely range of experiences, attitudes and beliefs and the topics most pertinent to single mothers' experiences. In part for this reason, the questions in the first interview were very general and I allowed interviewees to raise a range of issues outside of my topic guide. Topics that many mothers raised, but which I had not planned on discussing, included their feelings about media portrayals of single mothers, their own prejudices about single mothers and how they had come to terms with these when they themselves became single mothers due to divorce or separation. Another topic that was commonly raised was the childcare support provided by their own families, in particular their own mothers, and their desire for their partners to provide more childcare than they currently did. A few single mothers also commented at the end of the interview that I could "check next year if they had done as planned", reflecting the way in which the timing of my interview in part replicated the design of the personalized planning programs that were the focus of my research.

In the second and third interviews I addressed a similar range of topics but added questions about interviewees' experiences of personalized planning programs including the material assistance, the guide, the benefits (if any) gained from the program, as well as questions about child support, community prejudices and media portrayals of single mothers. I also focused specifically on how things had changed for interviewees over the preceding 12 months, the events leading up to these changes and their feelings about the changes. An unanticipated topic raised by single mothers during the second and third interview was their feelings about participating in the interview. In particular my questions concerning the time that mothers devoted to themselves spurred the most intense reflection on the experience of participating in interviews with me. As the final chapter of this thesis discusses, interviewees' plans to spend more time on themselves was the goal that most commonly did not come to fruition over the course of the study and led to deep reflections on their prior responses and why their reported plans had not been realized.

Interviews with Job Network providers

I conducted fieldwork with the Job Network (JN) agencies responsible for delivering the Welfare to Work programs for single parents announced in 2005 and implemented in 2006. As discussed in detail in chapter three, the Australian government established the Job Network in 1998 in order to contract out employment services that had since 1946 been solely provided by the Australian Government Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). In 2009 the JN was renamed Jobs Services Australia. JN/JSA providers are contracted to provide three levels of assistance 1) Job Matching 2) Job Search Training and 3) Intensive Assistance. Providers receive some funds for simply providing a service, such as Job Search Training, but a significant part of their funding is provided in the form of payments for placing clients in sustained employment, with a lesser payment for placement in education.

My research with the JN involved exploratory fieldwork with three agencies in 2006, and formal interviews as well as observations with nine agencies in 2007. These interviews were prompted by my finding during 2005 that it was not possible to identify the details of the micro technologies of the new Welfare to Work program called Employment Preparation from official documents as I had done with the Personal Adviser and Jobs, Education and Training programs. The fact that these micro program technologies were no longer centrally determined and specified within official documents is indicative of the new type of decentralized, networked program delivery that EP represents. To find out details of these new programs, it was necessary for me to contact individual JN agencies who were contracted to deliver this program and conduct field research at these sites.

A total of 19 JN employees participated in structured interviews while an additional four allowed me to follow them through their workday but did not participate in formal interviews.[6] Two of the JN agencies were for profit, while the remaining seven were not for profits (of these three were Christian affiliated organizations). Two agencies were specialist disability employment services[7]

6 For reasons of client confidentiality I was not present for any one-on-one interviews between JN advisers and their clients which involved the exchange of client information.

7 This service was part of the Disability Employment Network. "A job seeker can be referred to DEN if they: have a permanent (or likely to be permanent) disability and have a reduced capacity for communication, learning or mobility and require support for more than six months after placement in employment" (Australian Government: Employment and Workplace Relations 2010). Unlike mainstream Job Network providers DENs also provide on-going on the job support to help individuals maintain their employment.

while the remaining seven were mainstream services.

Thesis outline

Within the following chapters of this thesis I will explore the question: what are the spaces of freedom and constraint produced by Australian personalized planning programs directed at single mothers? They answer this question by asking and answering two secondary questions. First, how has the relationship between single parents/mothers been problematized since the emergence of the post-war welfare state? Second, how did personalized planning programs become the dominant solution to the problematic of single parents on income support?

The first chapter of this thesis posits that we can obtain a richer understanding of the spaces of freedom and constraint opened up and closed down by Australian personalized planning programs by drawing on the works of Amartya Sen and Michel Foucault. Chapter one's key argument is that Sen's reflections on *capabilities* bring to the neo-Foucauldian literature a reminder that economic resources play an important role in individuals' abilities to choose to be what they value. At the same time, the Foucauldian and neo-Foucauldian governmentality literature brings to the Senian social policy literature a richer understanding of power. Sen's capabilities approach has been critiqued for its inadequate grasp of how power operates. The Foucauldian and neo-Foucauldian literatures bring an understanding of power as domination, power as governance, and the microphysics of power to the Senian capabilities literature. This chapter concludes that the Senian and Foucauldian literatures together provide a rich theoretical matrix for examining personalized planning programs.

In chapters two through six I used this matrix to examine the history, emergence and operation of three personalized planning programs directed at single parents. Chapters two and three illustrate how personalized planning programs directed at Australian single parents are located within and shaped by long standing social imaginaries of 'motherhood' and single mothers. Using a genealogical approach, chapter two argues that the social collective known as single parents or single mothers emerged in the late 1970s, well after the establishment of the post-war welfare state. I illustrate that this new social category of single parents or mothers never fully replaced the social hierarchies of widows, abandoned wives and unmarried mothers. Instead the social hierarchies of legitimate widows, abandoned wives and illegitimate unmarried mothers continue to live on in social

imaginaries and to haunt policy debates. A key arena where these social imaginaries are played out is the high rating tabloid media. Since the 1970s the Australian tabloid media has produced a largely unchanging image of single mothers as young, sexually deviant, lazy, and providing poor care for their children. These chapters also return to the theoretical matrix to highlight the child centred focus of the Australian system of income support directed at widows and single mothers. I use both Sen's and Foucault's observations on capacities and capabilities to illustrate the ways that the income support system for widows and single mothers historically reinforced the link between good motherhood and practices of self-abdication.

Having set out the broad context within which personalized planning programs emerged, and the long standing emphases of the Australian system of income support, chapters four and five focus in on the specific features of the three major personalized planning programs - the Jobs, Education and Training program, the Personal Adviser Program and the Employment Preparation program. In these chapters I use the theoretical matrix to interrogate the spaces of freedom and constraint produced by these programs. Chapter four approaches this question regarding spaces of freedom and constraint from a top-down perspective and argues that dominant official understandings regarding the best way to transform Parenting Payment recipients shifted over the period 1980 to 2007. Dominant understandings shifted away from an emphasis on increasing educational and vocational qualifications among payment recipients to an emphasis on inciting and supporting these individuals to develop generic personal attributes such as confidence and self-esteem, as well as skills in goal-setting. In contrast, chapter five simultaneously undertakes what Katharyne Mitchell refers to as "excavations of neoliberal governmentality" from top-down perspectives and bottom-up realms (Mitchell 2006, 390). Drawing on Foucault's observations on resistance, this chapter argues that the spaces of freedom and constraint produced by these programs were not set out in advance within official program rationalities. It illustrates the ways that these programs were actively interpreted, taken up, used and sometimes resisted by single mothers and those responsible for delivering the programs.

The final substantive chapter of this thesis focuses on the ways that politicians, advocacy groups, service providers, and single mothers have contested personalized planning programs. This analysis of contestation is framed by Foucault's arguments regarding resistance, counter discourses and subjugated discourses, and Sen's arguments regarding capabilities. Following Foucault's invocation against speaking for others, as well as his concern to support the re/appearance of subjugated knowledges and those directly affected by systems of power, I focus primarily on

contestations produced by single parents. Within this chapter I argue that single mothers framed their contestations in terms of their freedom to be and do what they value (*capabilities*), while advocacy groups and opposition parties challenged welfare reforms on the grounds of inadequate attention to developing specific *capacities* or children's well-being or economic efficiency. Specifically, I argue that advocacy groups' arguments that the Coalition's work-first approach would be 'ineffective' remained well within the limits of neoliberal rationalities.

Chapter one: Conditions of autonomy and freedom: two approaches

> People should have as much choice as possible about the way in which they contribute. Expectations should be consistent with people's own aspirations and take account of local opportunities for participation. Australian Reference Group on Welfare Reform Interim Report, 2000

> [Adults] must be in charge of their own well-being; it is for them to decide how to use their capabilities. But the capabilities that a person does actually have (and not merely theoretically enjoys) depend on the nature of social arrangements, which can be crucial for individual freedoms. And there the state and the society cannot escape responsibility. Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom

> Relations between the growth of capabilities [capacités] and the growth of autonomy are not as simple as the eighteenth century may have believed. Michel Foucault, What is Enlightenment?

Introduction

This thesis aims to grasp the spaces of freedom and constraint that are opened up and closed down by Australian government personalized planning programs directed at PPS recipients (in most cases single mothers). Within this chapter and the remainder of the thesis I proceed on the assumption that individual freedom is in itself a political good that should be supported. What is at stake is absolutely not freedom of the individual conceived as an atomistic and self-sufficient rational actor, or as a natural liberal subject. Rather, it is the freedom of individual persons who are always necessarily embedded in relations with others, whose identities are always being produced through discourses and yet whose subjectivities are always something more than these identities. As Foucault argues this something more is the potentiality that is never completely captured within any single discourse.

The thesis also takes up economist Amartya Sen's idea that freedom should be conceived in terms of what an individual is actually able to do or be. In advancing this argument Sen, like Foucault, is rejecting the idea that certain political or social systems are inherently free, or that it is

possible to create a blueprint of a future free society or system. Both Sen and Foucault hold that ideas about inherently free political systems are dangerous and unproductive. They are dangerous because they lead to justifications for various forms of coercions and violence in the name of a free political and social order, and unproductive because they lead to the actual concrete experience of freedom being erased (Prozorov 2007).

In subsequent chapters I will illustrate that an Australian single mother's freedom to be or do what she has reason to value, what she desires to be or do, is dependent upon access to certain resources. Specifically, her freedoms are contingent upon her access to material resources, such as child care, education subsidies, adequate housing and transport. Her freedoms are also dependent upon linguistic and physical spaces that enable her to critically reflect upon the identities through which she is constantly produced (such as single mother, welfare recipient, productive citizen) and to make choices about her subjectivities. The argument of this thesis is that income support policy should be reformulated so as to facilitate the ability of single mothers to choose to be otherwise than they are now, and to fulfill their desires to choose different ways of organizing care for their children. But importantly this thesis is not positing that these arguments should define the limits of ways of thinking about freedom, or that these changes to systems of support will fix for once and for all the question of single mothers' freedoms. Instead, the argument is that current arrangements are a problem for those single mothers who experience them, and these arrangements need to be reformulated in ways that attend to these problems. This line of argument also recognizes that Australian income support systems will need to be constantly reworked and rethought in the future.

In the last two decades in Australia, some personalized planning programs directed at PPS recipients have provided access to material supports such as child care subsidies and education, together with the assistance of a guide (an adviser). Other personalized planning programs have only provided the assistance of a guide (variously called a "personal adviser" or "case manager"). PPS clients of these programs have been governed through specific social identities and lifecourse trajectories. Social identities of single mothers, single parents and workless families have been produced and sedimented by these programs, the broader income support system and related programs. These personalized planning programs open up some spaces for PPS recipients to practice their freedom and simultaneously close down others; in some respects they support the freedom of these individuals to be and do what they value, while in others they constrain this ability.

To understand how these initiatives simultaneously open up and close down spaces of freedom, this chapter develops a conceptual matrix of tools for interpreting personalized planning

programs. It produces this matrix using the existing literature on capacities, freedom and the state inspired by the works of Amartya Sen and Michel Foucault. I use the concept of a matrix, rather than a framework or similar, because it is the source from which my questions, analysis and critiques that I pursue through this thesis are generated, but it is not a frame that constrains and limits them. Specifically, my matrix is the source of the questions I ask about the role the Australian government plays in facilitating individuals' access to material resources, the types of micro program tools (such as interviews and training material) that these programs utilized, the role that the personal adviser and their client are expected to play within these programs and the discursive spaces these programs produce and close down. Within chapters two through six the matrix provides the source for my critiques of the various logics and practices of personalized planning that have existed in Australia during the last 25 years.

Tracing the practices and logics of personalized planning is necessary and valuable in part because of the widespread support enjoyed by coercive and punitive personalized planning programs. Politicians and policy makers argue that these programs are not punitive but instead develop individuals' 'capacities' and 'freedom.' A considerable amount of the support for personalized planning programs appears to stem from the malleability of concepts like 'capacity building,' 'capabilities,' 'capacities,' and 'freedom.' These concepts have been used in vastly different ways within different social programs directed at recipients of single Parenting Pension/single rate Parenting Payment. Not only have different programs defined capacities, capabilities and freedom differently, but they have also operated with starkly contrasting views on the role of social policy in promoting individual freedom.

The wide variance in policy makers' and politicians' understandings of the concepts of capacities and freedom, and the multiple practices of personalized planning can be demonstrated through a comparison of the welfare reform policies of the left-of-centre Australian Labor government (1983-1996) and the approach of the right-of-centre Liberal/National Coalition government (1996-2007). Personalized planning programs implemented under the Labor government focused on providing individuals with structured choices and developing their human capital so as to increase their success in the labour market. Labor gave recipients of PPS (in most cases mothers) a menu of opportunities to develop their capacities, and emphasized the importance of providing single mothers with 'real choices'[8] around caring and paid work. Underlying this

8 The idea of real choices that they were using is similar to Sen's concept of increasing individual's 'real freedom' through enhancing their

program design was the hope that if single mothers were given access to subsidized or free services (child care, education, training and personal counselling) in addition to income support, they would choose to take up paid work. Although a clear motivation for these policies was to develop income support recipients' human capital so as to increase their success in the labour market, aspects of these policies still had affinities with what Amartya Sen calls a 'capability approach' to development. Within a capability approach, freedom is conceived as the 'real freedom' an individual has to be or do what they have reason to value. By arguing for 'real freedom', Sen intends to distance himself from classical liberal versions of freedom, or what Isaiah Berlin in his famous essay 'Two concepts of liberty' entitled a negative conception of freedom, and to embrace a positive conception of freedom. In other words, Sen distances himself from 'freedom from obstacles' approaches and embraces 'freedom to' approaches.

A concern with positive freedom is evident within Labor Member of Parliament (MP) Mary Crawford's speech in support of the JET program at the time of the program's introduction. She emphasizes the importance of providing individuals with an ability to participate in work or education based on their desires. Specifically, she argues that:

> Fairness is about ensuring that every single individual in this community has access to the economic advantages of Australia; that is, access to education, work and the ability to participate in whatever programs she likes (Australian House of Representatives 1989, 1721).

Thus, Labor's approach to welfare reform emphasized increasing individuals' abilities to function in ways they personally valued. In Sen's language they focused on increasing individuals' *capabilities*.

In contrast, the Liberal/National Coalition (1996-2008) focused less on providing individuals with 'access to economic advantages' or the opportunity to choose programs they liked, and more on ensuring that single mothers had the capacity to be financially self-reliant.[9] Its policies compelled many single mothers to develop or demonstrate *capacities* (such as punctuality and work ethic) that the Howard Coalition argued would increase their attractiveness to employers. After 2002, the Coalition also required some single mothers to seek paid work and participate in additional 'activity

---

capability "to undertake valuable and valued doings and beings' (Dreze, Sen 198912).

9 See for example the Australian Government Department of Family (FaCS) 2005 conference paper 'Parents on Low Income Study – factors that promote self-reliance' (Pearce 2005). However, there were also counter discourses. For example the Australian government's Reference Group on Welfare Reform wrote that "social support system should seek to optimize their capacity for participation" (Reference Group on Welfare Reform 2000b).

test' requirements including a workfare program called Work for the Dole. Moving single mothers into paid work, and where necessary increasing their ability to obtain paid work, were the primary goals of the Coalition's income support policies and personalized planning programs. In the terminology of Sen, these policies were concerned with increasing specific *functionings* or *capacities* with little or no regard for the extent to which the individuals concerned valued these functionings. Or, in the terminology of Michel Foucault, these programs were concerned with specific individual *capacités* (capacities) among the single parent population. I use the original French here to highlight the fact that while Foucault's term *capacités* is sometimes translated as *capabilities*, the closest English translation is actually *capacities*. This point on translation is important because the term *capabilities* refers to a person's general power or ability to do things, while *capacities* refers more specifically to a person's fitness for, or ability to undertake, a specified activity. The translation of *capacités* into capabilities makes it more difficult to grasp that the object of Foucault's critique is practices that narrow behavioural options through the promotion of specific capacities at the expense of other possibilities, and not attempts to increase a person's general ability to do things.

The conceptual matrix developed in this chapter is produced out of a simultaneous engagement with two distinct bodies of literature. The first is Amartya Sen's work on capabilities and the social policy capabilities literature which has developed from it. Research in the social policy capabilities literature that draws on Sen's work includes Lewis and Giullari's (2005) critique of social policies developed around the 'adult worker model' and Dean *et al's* (2005) critique of welfare to work policies for the unemployed in Britain and a number of commentaries on work-life balance (Den Dulk, Peper, Černigoj Sadar, Lewis, Smithson, and Van Doorne-Huiskes 2011, Hobson, Fahlén 2009, Hobson 2011, Hobson, Fahlén, and Takács 2011, Kanjuo Mrčela, Černigoj Sadar 2011). The second literature is the work of Michel Foucault on technologies of the self and governmentality (Foucault 2003a, Foucault 2005a, Foucault 2007, Foucault 2008) and the subsequent bodies of work - particularly the governmentality literature - that have developed out of these writings. Prominent examples of governmentality studies addressing capacity building and personalized planning programs include Cruikshank's (1996) work on the *California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility* and Dean's work on the Australian *Mutual Obligation* program for the unemployed (1995, 1998)

I turn to these two bodies of literature because they contain the most substantial existing empirical studies of personalized planning programs and capacity building programs. Furthermore, these literatures provide important insights regarding the functioning of these programs, including

their beneficial and detrimental impacts. To date these literatures have rarely engaged one another. Indeed, my attempt to initiate such an engagement may appear strange given that recent works within these distinct literatures address theoretical assumptions and concerns so divergent that they talk past each other. While there are significant differences, the two literatures have substantial affinities which extend beyond their shared object of empirical concern. Across the two bodies of work there are significant areas of agreement regarding the concepts of capacities, capabilities, personal identity and freedom, and a shared concern with freedom as a concrete experience or practice, as I will illustrate in the remainder of this chapter.[10] Engaging these two literatures in a conversation can illustrate problems within each body of work that otherwise would not be evident and extend insights in ways that otherwise would not be possible. My argument is that taken together but not forced into a singular framework the insights produced in these two literatures help us build a more thorough understanding of contemporary capacity building programs and the role that social policy can and does play in supporting individuals to be self-determining. Taken together, these insights can also help us to avoid weaknesses within the separate literatures. For example, while Amartya Sen and his followers acknowledge that power relations constrain individuals' abilities to be self determining, they pay relatively little attention to relations of power, particularly at the 'micro' level (See Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003). Importantly, Sen ignores the role of liberal governance in the creation of specific kinds of subjective identity and the ways in which it prescribes particular 'practices of freedom.'

Conversely, when Foucault is read in the light of Sen's insistence that public policy must simultaneously respect individuals' wills and provide them with access to the resources they need to develop their capacities, one is prompted to ask how Foucault might respond to Sen's proposals for certain forms of public action. After all, Foucault is commonly understood to reject proposals for public action. However, reviewing again Foucault's discussion of issues regarding processes of desubjectivation, the role of public policy, new programs or proposals for public policy, and our ethical obligations to assist others, it is clear that Foucault did recognize individuals as sometimes needy, and sometimes capable, and simultaneously capable and needy (Tobias 2005). Such a line of thinking opens up ways of considering how Foucault's thought can be used to examine the role of

10 I am not trying to suggest that Sen and Foucault are essentially in theoretical accord, and thus their works can be brought together within a single coherent framework. Clearly such an enterprise would be fraught with substantial difficulties given the authors' disagreements on significant issues, such as the degree of centeredness of the individual subject.

public policy beyond a condemnation of the exercise of power through governing.

Practices of freedom, the governing of freedom, and spaces of freedom are key concerns examined in the process of developing the theoretical matrix which will be used in subsequent chapters to guide the questions I ask about personalized planning programs and to illuminate the dangers associated with different logics and techniques of capacity building. The matrix created does not establish a single definition of freedom against which I subsequently access current programs and policies. Instead it enables me to map out within subsequent chapters the various ways in which freedom has been defined within the income support programs that have governed Australian widows and single mothers. Yet this does not mean that this thesis takes a relativist position in which anyone can name any practice a 'practice of freedom' and on that basis shield that practice from critique. Instead, the thesis suggests that the various ways in which freedom have been defined and put into practice have costs and benefits to those who experience them. It argues that these costs and benefits can only be fully appreciated if multiple possible definitions and practices are considered as potentially individually and socially valuable and legitimate..

This chapter begins this process by examining how the concepts of freedom, capabilities and capacities have been defined within the governmentality and capabilities literatures, as well as within political rationalities in Australia. It illustrates how distinct definitions of freedom, capabilities and capacities are linked to differing conclusions about the social and individual benefits of specific social policy interventions. For example, as I elaborate in much more detail later in this chapter, if we consider that public policy enhances individual freedom when it helps to obtain specific *capacities* (functionings) such as occupational skills needed to obtain well-paid employment, then employment skill development programs, such as those implemented by the Labor government as part of *Working Nation,* enhance individual freedom. But if we consider that public policy enhances individual freedom only when it assists individuals to achieve something they value, then the obligatory element of these programs may be considered not to have enhanced individual freedom. Thus the matrix is neither a universal normative theory nor a tool for categorizing all capacity building programs. Instead it is a collection of tools that help in understanding current programs and possible alternatives, and in generating questions about them.

The structure of the remainder of this chapter is as follows: in section one I read the Senian capabilities literature through the Foucauldian literature focusing on the ways Foucault's work on power challenges the Senian literature. In section two I conversely read the Foucauldian literature on the relationship between capacities, power and processes of normalization through the Senian

literature which highlights instances in which individuals are needy and vulnerable. In the conclusion I make some preliminary remarks about my theoretical matrix and the ways it is utilized in later chapters.

Sen and the capabilities approach

In his work on capabilities, Sen proposes that when considering issues of justice, our concern should be with inequalities in *capabilities* rather than inequalities in utilities or resources (*means)* (Nussbaum 2003, 200) or measures of individual utility (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 88).[11] Sen defines *capabilities* as the *potential functioning* of an individual or the freedom an individual has to achieve something, as opposed to an imposed *functioning* (capacity) (Nussbaum 2003, 200). Thus his focus is the unequal freedom that individuals have to choose and achieve 'beings and doings' that they value.[12] Sen's emphasis is on equality of 'real freedom' of choice, rather than equality of a particular *functioning* (such as paid work) or equality of resources (Nussbaum 2003, 200). This focus is underscored by his distinction between *capabilities* and *capacities*. He defines *capabilities* as potential functionings, or the freedom to achieve something, and contrasts these with *capacities* (or *functionings*) which are a specific achievement or being and doing, such as doing paid work (Nussbaum 2003, 200).

While Sen's distinction between *capabilities* and *capacities* is reasonably clear, his arguments regarding the types of *capabilities* public action should aim to enhance are slightly ambiguous. At times he is very explicit that the object of public action should be to enhance "what a person can do *in line with his or her conception of the good*" (Sen 1985, 102, emphasis added). But in other places Sen does not emphasize the role of the individual's own values and he fails to specify who should value the beings and doings that are publicly supported. For example, in one work he suggests the objective of public action should be to enhance "the capability of people to undertake valuable and valued doings and beings" (Dreze, Sen 1989, 12). Most researchers who have engaged with Sen's work have interpreted him to mean that the objective of public action should be providing

11 Utilitarian approaches access the appropriateness and success of policy by asking people what their current preferences are, and how satisfied they are with current arrangements. The best policy action is that "which procures the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (Bentham, Bowring 1843, 138). Sen rejects this utilitarian argument as the object of public action on the basis that subordinate groups such as 'women frequently exhibit "adaptive preferences," which have adjusted to their second-class status' (Nussbaum 2003, 200).

12 "The 'capability approach' "sees human life as a set of "doings and beings" - we may call them 'functionings' - and it relates the evaluation of the quality of life to the assessment of the capability to function (Hamilton N.D.).

individuals with real freedom to choose beings and doings that they personally value (Carney 2007b, Robeyns 2006) or have reason to value (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 88, 90, 92, Nussbaum 2003, 54, Robeyns 2006, 251). However, his statements can also be interpreted as meaning individuals should have real freedom (but not be forced) to choose beings and doings that are valued in the society within which they are located, but which they may not personally value. This latter interpretation, that individuals should have real opportunities to undertake socially valued beings and doings, is most consistent with Sen's comments regarding adaptive preferences, which as I will elaborate below are based upon Marx's notion of "false consciousness." It is also consistent with his rejection of preference theory which bases normative frameworks on individuals' current preferences. At the same time, the interpretation that fits most closely with Sen's overall arguments (that individual freedom of choice is a good thing and this good goes beyond any role this freedom may play in securing an individual's well-being) is one in which the object of public action should be to support an individual's ability to undertake beings and doings that they personally value.

Sen rejects common social justice approaches that focus upon equality of resources, because he argues that in order for individuals to achieve equality in their freedom to choose, and achieve capacities (functionings), different individuals require access to different kinds of resources. He uses the notion of environmental, personal, and social *conversion factors* to focus on the "fact that people have different capacities to gain access to the same resource and different potentials for converting resources into chosen functionings" (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 90). An additional dimension of Sen's argument is that public action should concern itself with providing a space in which individuals have real freedom to choose what to be, and what to do, rather than with the individual well-being that results from those choices. Thus Sen rejects what he labels 'well-being' normative frameworks (Sen 1985). Drawing a distinction between well-being freedom, and 'agency freedom' which he is concerned with, he argues that individuals should have a real freedom to choose regardless of whether or not their choices would actually be to their advantage (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 88, Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003).

In their discussion of this aspect of Sen's theory and its implications for social policy related to maternal employment, Lewis and Giullari (2005) point out that advocates of the capability approach who examined "the case of a woman who forgoes paid employment to undertake care work, in order to comply with her own conception of 'the good'… would argue that…the well-being outcomes of her choice should not be of ethical concern" (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 89). Such a line of argument runs contrary to the stance of many feminist welfare state researchers who are most

concerned with the financial and emotional implications of women's choices around caring and paid work (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 89). The capability approach's emphasis on individual freedom rather than community or individual well-being is consistent with its foundation in liberal political philosophy, which "emphasizes the freedom of the individual to do as (s)he wills" (Yeatman 2002a, 70). While Sen's capability approach continues classical liberalism's concern with individual freedom, it significantly diverges from the liberal normative framework and ontology by emphasizing that individuals cannot always be financially self-reliant, and emphasizing the role of public action in providing financial assistance to individuals. Sen's break with classical liberal thought is underscored by Yeatman's reflections on classical liberal conceptions of freedom and dependence. Yeatman claims classical liberal philosophy is based upon a very specific notion of the human subject, in which the human subject that should be free to choose:

> is an already fully formed individual who possesses mature contractual capacity and who exercises this capacity on behalf of his and (as it now is) her freedom to be both self-governing and self-reliant (Yeatman 2002a, 70).

Such a conception of the human subject does not reflect material reality. As Yeatman argues, classical liberal thought admits this in a very limited way. While classical liberal thought does acknowledge that individuals need the assistance of others, it does this in a "way that sustains the private propertied atomism of the individual" (2002b, 70). Only two types of dependence are admitted within classical liberalism (or what Yeatman calls patrimonial liberalism). The first type of dependence is exchanges between individuals that "[confirm] each in his or her standing as private individuals free to do as they will" and the second is private relationships where "others are positioned as subject to the will of the self-governing individual. Historically, these others have been wives, children and employees" (Yeatman 2002b, 70).

While Sen's *capabilities* approach is founded in liberalism and is concerned with ensuring the freedom of the individual to do as he or she wills, his approach falls into neither of the categories described by Yeatman. Cognizant of Isaiah Berlin's (and others') concerns that positive conceptions of freedom carry a great danger of justifying authoritarianism, Sen argues that when individuals receive assistance from the public, they should not be subject to the will of others. For instance, individuals who are provided with income support should not be forced to participate in workfare programs. Instead, through his distinction between *capacities* and *capabilities*, Sen explicitly advances the notion that the individual who is assisted through public action should retain the freedom to do as he or she wills. Sen attributes his development of these ideas on the one hand to his personal

experiences with the forms of injustice that people experience within the world, and on the other to Adam Smith whose ideas he argues have been radically simplified by contemporary mainstream economics. Contrary to many popular interpretations, Sen suggests Adam Smith recognized that the market economy is neither autonomous nor self-regulating and instead needs support from other institutions (Sen 2009).

Sen uses his distinction between *capacities* and *capabilities* to illustrate that an increase in an individual's capacities does not necessarily increase their freedom. This is an important insight and one that he shares with Foucault. Foucault challenges the widely accepted liberal view that the enhancement of personal capacities necessarily leads to the expansion of individual autonomy and freedom. In his essay 'What is Enlightenment?' Foucault argues that "the acquisition of [capacités] and the struggle for freedom have constituted permanent elements" in Western history but the "relations between the growth of [capacités][13] and the growth of autonomy are not as simple as the eighteenth century may have believed" (Foucault 1994). While Sen and Foucault are in theoretical agreement on this specific point regarding the relationship between capacities and freedom - that increasing an individual's capacities does not necessarily increase their freedom - it would be misleading to suggest that they are both advancing essentially the same argument using different terminology. These thinkers develop their shared insight in distinctly different ways. Sen seeks to answer the question: what forms should public action take when it aims to support individual freedom, and what theories of justice should these initiatives be based upon? In contrast, Foucault seeks to answer a different question: how in the history of the West have the promotion of specific freedoms and the enhancement of certain capacities through relations of power blocked "many other viable forms of life"? (Hoy 2004, 66). In the process of answering this question, Foucault illustrates why those who are concerned with increasing individual freedom should not place their faith in the promotion of specific capacities. He demonstrates that while "normalizing disciplinary practices may tremendously enhance a person's ability to perform certain kinds of functions or accomplish certain kinds of task" these practices simultaneously "decrease the number of different ways a person might be able to respond in a given situation; they narrow behavioural options" (McWhorter 1999, 79-80).

Despite this rarely recognized but very important area of agreement between Sen and

13 Foucault uses the word capacités which is usually translated into English as capacities, but here and in some other cases it is instead translated as capabilities. Here I have modified the quote to replace the English word capabilities with the original word capacités.

Foucault, it is also apparent that these two thinkers implicitly disagree on the practical distinction between making the object of public action *capabilities* versus *capacities*. Sen's approach is to draw a sharp theoretical and practical line between capacities (functionings) and capabilities. As Nussbaum argues, Sen seeks to "communicate the idea that there is a big difference between pushing people into functioning [capacities] in ways you consider valuable and leaving the choice up to them" (Nussbaum 2003, 200). While Foucault suggested there is a distinction between pushing people to choose certain things and leaving the choice to them, he also recognized that this line can be fuzzy in practice. His belief that such a distinction can be drawn is evidenced in various writings including an interview in which he expressed an interest in and a concern with the provision of social security (income support) in ways that guarantee "to each individual a real autonomy" (Foucault 1988c). At the same time, Foucault's works suggest that the sharp distinction Sen draws between *capabilities* and *capacities* is not empirically defensible. A major implication of Foucault's genealogical studies is that the line between capacities and capabilities and thus between freedom and constraint is blurry within social and historical practice. His studies on governance and disciplinary power illustrate that individuals always make *free* choices within particular power and knowledge relationships.

Contemporary practices and discourses around mothering also illustrate this blurry line. Today a new Canadian mother makes the choice to breastfeed, or not to breastfeed, in a social context where public health officials recommend that infants should be exclusively breastfeed for at least the first six months of their lives. Furthermore, the Breast Feeding Committee of Canada certifies hospitals as Baby Friendly™ only if they adhere to a strict list of practices including prohibiting "postnatal group instruction on breast milk substitute use" (Breastfeeding Committee for Canada 2004). It is also a context where being a good mother means putting the optimization of an infant's physical and mental wellbeing before all other considerations, and it is argued that breast milk reduces the incidence of SIDs, infections, and allergies. It is correct to say that a new mother in Canada can freely choose not to breastfeed, insofar as she will not be physically forced to do otherwise, nor will she suffer legal penalties. Yet her choice is highly structured and constrained in so far as she makes it within the context of practices of normalizing judgment, and disciplinary relations of power and knowledge. As I elaborate in more detail below, it is the spaces and contact points between compulsion and freedom, rather than the hard line between them that Foucault suggests we need to pay closer attention to.

Sen and the social policy capabilities literature

Sen's work on capabilities has attracted significant attention in the social policy literature. Within the Australian social policy literature there are a number of researchers who use Sen's concepts, but do so in a way that downplays his over-riding concern with individual freedom of choice. As I have explained so far, Sen's concern is with making *capabilities* the object of public action, and not with *capacities* (functionings). This point appears to be missed by social policy researchers such as Carney (2006, 2007b) and Davidson (Davidson 2007a, Davidson 2007b), who make specific *capacities* (functionings) such as the ability to obtain well paid employment the object of ethical concern. Carney and Davidson are concerned that policies directed at jobless Australians are not very successful in achieving their stated aim of assisting these individuals to obtain employment. They argue that policies created as part of the 2005 Welfare to Work budget package are unreasonable, because individuals are forced to build "portfolios of virtually meaningless qualifications," but not given support to develop the qualifications necessary to obtain skilled employment (Dean, Bonvin, Vielle, and Farvaque 2005, 78). Even when unemployed individuals manage to obtain employment, it is usually low paid employment that does not increase their standard of living. Carney and Davidson argue this policy approach should be abandoned and replaced with programs that "assist jobless people to improve their living standards and choices in life through paid employment" (Davidson 2007a, Davidson 2007b). The core of these arguments is that current policies do not help individuals gain well paid employment because they do not address social and work barriers. Flowing from this is the recommendation that the state needs to provide jobless individuals with specific social and work skills by investing in meaningful education and training. Because Carney's and Davidson's arguments do not engage with the broader issue regarding the degree to which the state should coerce individuals into engaging in activities in exchange for income support, they are not faithful engagements with Sen's approach. Given that they sidestep Sen's over-riding concern with individual freedom, their analyses can more properly be described as traditional social democratic arguments for state support of a specific set of social capacities (functionings). While their arguments represent important strategic claims for resources that are likely to increase jobless individuals' well-being, they nevertheless do not properly belong within the Senian capabilities literature. Thus I will not consider them further within this chapter.

For the remainder of this section I address works that fully engage with Sen's concerns about *capabilities,* although not necessarily completely accepting them. Lewis and Giullari's (2005)

analysis of the commodification of care, and H. Dean *et al's* analysis of the European Union (EU) European Employment Strategy (EES) (2005) are informed by Sen's *capabilities* approach and also engage with the issue of individual freedom.

Lewis and Giullari's (2005, 78) article argues against the current "pursuit of a full adult worker model based on the commodification of care" and for a social system that enables genuine choices to undertake paid work, unpaid care work or both. They argue that the capabilities approach's "universal equality model rooted in the recognition of human diversity" has clear strengths for those who want to address "the problem of gender equality in relation to paid work and care" (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 90). Unlike care-centered approaches, it avoids biological essentialism and accounts "for the significance of human diversity in terms of diverse preferences," while also recognizing that preferences are "formed in the context of unequal conditions" (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 90). This is significant because while preference theory (commonly employed in neoclassical economics) emphasizes the importance of enabling individual choice, those utilizing the preference approach commonly take "no notice of the way in which preferences are socially embedded" (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 90). In other words, preference theory is based upon an asocial, rationalistic conception of the individual. Sen in contrast views individual choice as socially embedded. This is reflected in his notion of *conversion factors,* which recognizes that even if the same amount of "income is given to a man and to a woman, the woman's freedom to choose employment and care is still going to be unequal to that of a man" (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 91).

While Lewis and Giullari find Sen's capabilities approach useful, they are critical of the lack of attention he devotes to the concept of power as domination. Sen only addresses the issue of power asymmetries through terms such as capabilities, agency, empowerment and freedom, thus conceiving of power exclusively as a generative concept (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 95, Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003). I would add to Lewis and Giullari's critique a further point, which is that Sen devotes inadequate attention to the issue of embedded feminine identities. While Lewis and Giullari briefly raise this issue, they quickly set it aside without any resolution. As they point out, women's disproportionate burden of care work can be partly attributed to embedded gendered identities within which 'caring remains "the proper thing to do" for women but not for men' (2005, 94). Although Lewis and Giullari do not point this out, Sen addresses the issue of embedded identities firstly through his problematic concept of *adaptive* preferences and secondly through his equally problematic argument that identities are not natural, but freely chosen. I will address Sen's responses to the issue of embedded identities and their problems in turn.

Underlying Sen's concept of adaptive preferences is Marx's notion of "false consciousness." For Sen, Marx's concept appropriately describes many women's "spurious perceptions regarding gender inequality" (Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003, 328-9). It explains "how it comes about that many deprived women readily accept the fog of pro-inequality apologia as a true description of reality" (Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003, 328-9). According to Sen the solution to false consciousness is the provision of sufficient material *means*. Once these are made available, this ideological smog and individuals' *adaptive* preferences will fall away and their capabilities (real freedom to choose) will be expanded. Sen's articulation of the problem (adaptive preferences) and solution (material resources) are equally problematic. While discourses and identities clearly shape individuals' acceptance of different forms of inequality, it is not clear that there is any single reality of gender inequality that Sen can clearly observe, but which some women cannot due to ideological smog. His proposed solution is naive for it ignores that identities constrain freedom even in the presence of ample material *means*. Or in other words, Sen associates power relations *solely* with control over and access to material resources.

Sen's second approach to the issue of identities, which is to argue that identities are not 'a matter of "discovery"' but instead something we choose, is equally problematic because it overestimates the ability of individuals to reshape and choose their identities (Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003, 328). The extreme voluntarism of Sen's position is clear in his argument that individuals never have a single and true identity which they can discover but instead individual identity is "a matter of choice – and of ethics – for us to determine what importance we want to (and have reason to) attach to one or other of the many identities that we simultaneously have" (Sen, Agarwal, Humphries, and Robeyns 2003, 328-9).

In advancing this argument, Sen ignores that specific identities or subjectivities are always produced within relations of power. Particular identities become naturalized and embodied within spatial and historical contexts in ways that frequently resist conscious reflection. In contrast to Sen's assumption that individuals are transparent to themselves, Foucault illustrates that "much of what we do is conditioned by embodied social background practices that we do not and perhaps cannot bring fully to consciousness" (Hoy 2004, 13). As McNay argues, drawing on Bourdieu, "men and women have deep-seated, often unconscious investments in conventional images of masculinity and femininity which cannot easily be reshaped" (McNay 1999, 103).[14] Dominant discourses of sexuality,

14 McNay suggests that for Foucault individuals are transparent to themselves while Bourdieu suggests that many "dimensions of embodied

gender, race and their associated practices invite individuals to make themselves objects of these discourses in ways that individuals cannot easily ignore. For example, the discourse of sexuality charted in *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1990a) incites some individuals to understand themselves as homosexual, and thus within these discourses some options are opened up and others are closed down. Foucault's work not only challenges Sen's capability approach but offers a way of extending it. His genealogical approach simultaneously acknowledges that identity is not essential, problematizes Sen's assumption that identities are fully amenable to conscious reflection, and provides tools that address the limits social identities or subjectivities may impose upon the practice of freedom.

Because of his recognition that dominant identities constrain choice, Foucault's approach to social activism takes into account that the practice of freedom requires the opening up of discursive spaces within which social mechanisms and the discursive production of identity are made apparent. For example, the allocation of caring work is unlikely to change in the absence of challenges to dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity. Thus Foucault advocates a form of social activism that involves:

> . . . showing how social mechanisms . . . have been able to work, how forms of repression and constraint have acted, and then starting from there . . . one [leaves] . . . to the people themselves, knowing all the above, the frontier possibility of self-determination (Foucault 1996, 452).

This is a form of social activism in which genealogical analyses of systems of power enable individuals to question the self-evidence of their identities and preferences, and help open new spaces for social action.

A second study that engages with Sen's concern with individual freedom is Dean's discussion of the "co-ordinated European Employment Strategy (EES) of the European Union (EU)." This strategy advocates "welfare-to-work type policies by which to re-commodify a range of workers otherwise excluded from the labour market" (Dean, Bonvin, Vielle, and Farvaque 2005, 4). Along similar theoretical lines to Lewis and Giullari, he argues that this EES 'is best understood as a strategy for the "re-commodification" of labour' and critiques this strategy for excessively constraining individuals' voice and choice (Dean, Bonvin, Vielle, and Farvaque 2005). Dean concludes that what is needed is a move away from human capital-focused 'work first approaches,'

---

experiences...escape.... reflexive self-monitoring." My reading of these theorists follows Hoy's (2004) interpretation which is that both scholars assume that at least some dimensions of our experience are embodied in ways that escape conscious reflection.

and towards 'life first' approaches and legislation 'for a genuine and substantive right to work, though not an obligation to "work"' (Dean, Bonvin, Vielle, and Farvaque 2005, 100). Dean's conclusions are very similar to those outlined by Lewis and Giullari, which is that there is a need for legislation which ensures: "Time: working time and time to care; Money: cash to buy care, cash for carers; Services: for (child and elder) care" (Lewis, Giullari 2005, 97).

The weakness of Lewis and Giullari's and Dean's conclusions lies in their poor analytical grasp of the "programmatic schemata" through which policy dreams of capacity building are currently "translated into practical government" (O'Malley, Weir, and Shearing 1997, 501-2). Unlike many governmentality studies which focus on beliefs and ideas, as well as "the technologies and assemblages of practices, materials, agents and techniques that are deployed to put…abstract programs into effect" (O'Malley, Weir, and Shearing 1997, 502), the social policy capabilities literature focuses solely upon macro-level legislative and institutional change. Its exclusive macro institutional focus renders it incapable of grasping the micro relations of power through which social programs operate. It misses many of the processes and technologies that shape individuals' experiences of these programs. In contrast, the strength of the governmentality literature is its ability to illuminate and grasp the ways mundane practical techniques of governance are linked into particular relations of power and political rationalities. Governmentality researchers highlight forms of knowledge and techniques (such as the spatial organization of offices and the content of job-search workbooks) embedded in attempts to govern and the attendant relations of power.[15] In this way the governmentality literature casts an analytical light on the micro power relations through which many governmental practices operate. The capabilities social policy literature also ignores that states increasingly mobilize the quest for freedom and autonomy paradoxically as a duty:

> The self is to be a subjective being, it is to aspire to autonomy, it is to strive for personal fulfillment in its earthly life, it is to interpret its reality and destiny as a matter of individual responsibility, it is to find meaning in existence by shaping its life through acts of choice (Rose 1996, 151).

15 Examples include Barbara Cruikshank's (1996, 1999) study of the Californian Personal Responsibility Act and Sanford Schram (Schram 2002) research on the US Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (1996). Studies in the United Kingdom include Walters' (2000)study of unemployment. In Australia studies of this nature include Mitchel Dean's (Dean 1995, Dean 1998), analysis of the Australian system of income support for the unemployed, Catherine McDonald, Greg Marston and Emma Buckley's (2003)study state funded employment services.

Slavoj Zizek (2009, 310) identifies this as an ironic reversal of the Kantian ethical imperative; "you can because you must" becomes "You must, because you can!" While Sen strongly condemns the idea that people must choose simply because they can, he nevertheless appears unaware of the ways in which states increasingly mobilize freedom and autonomy as a duty. This brings us to the second section of this chapter which reviews Foucault's reflections on capacities and capabilities, and the literature on personalized planning programs and capacity building programs that has emerged from his work.

Foucault, capacities, governmentalities and genealogies

Foucault's most concise articulation of his views on capacities, and what he calls 'the paradox of the relations of capacity and power' are contained within his essay 'What is Enlightenment?' He argues:

> We know that the great promise or the great hope of the eighteenth century, or a part of the eighteenth century, lay in the simultaneous and proportional growth of individuals with respect to one another. And, moreover, we can see that throughout the entire history of Western societies…the acquisition of capabilities [capacités] and the struggle for freedom have constituted permanent elements. Now, the relations between the growth of capabilities and the growth of autonomy are not as simple as the eighteenth century may have believed. And we have been able to see what forms of power relation were conveyed by various technologies ...: disciplines, both collective and individual, procedures of normalization exercised in the name of the power of the state, demands of society or of population zones, are examples. What is at stake, then, is this: how can the growth of capabilities [capacités] be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?(Foucault 1994, emphasis added)

Foucault's response to this question, as briefly explained in the previous section, is that there is a need for a form of critique that focuses upon concrete historical practices, and is both a "historical analysis of the limits imposed... on us and an experiment with... going beyond them" (Foucault 1994, 305).

Governmentality studies of capacity building programs, such as Walters' study of unemployment (2000), Dean's study of income support for the unemployed (1995b, 1998) and Rose's study of liberal practices of governance (1999b) have operationalized this form of critique in the area of social policy. Governmentality studies, which draw upon Foucault's famous definition of

government or governance as the 'conduct of conduct',[16] differ from mainstream policy studies in their explicit refusal to assess government policy against formal criteria. Governmentality scholars refuse to assess programs against criteria such as effectiveness (in achieving aims), or against normative criteria, such as 'real freedom,' and they refuse to assess some types of policies or techniques for governing as more effective or ethically superior to others. Because 'freedom' and 'truth' are understood as objects that are internal to a particular diagram of governmentality, "it is logically impossible to adjudicate between these constructions, without fallaciously deploying a particular (e.g. liberal) modality of freedom as a universal normative criterion" (Prozorov 2007, 31). As Prozorov explains, "acts of power, implicated in the formation of any diagram, are effaced by their re-inscription as instruments of liberation" (Prozorov 2007, 31). For example, Nikolas Rose's book *Powers of Freedom* aims to examine how "the values of freedom have been made real within practices for the government of conduct" (Rose 1999b, 10). But Rose refuses to be explicitly critical of specific technologies of freedom used within programs of governance, or to assess some technologies as ethically preferable to others. As I discuss below, Rose's refusal runs against Foucault's stated position that some technologies are ethically preferable to others.

Instead of assessing programs against universal criteria these studies aim to induce in their readers "an open and critical relation to strategies for governing" (Rose 1999b, 19). In common with Foucault, whose genealogical and archaeological studies aimed to reveal the destructive tendencies of present ways of being, through contrasts between how the body is lived now and how it has been lived differently at other times, governmentality scholars seek to stimulate this critical relation by making "those things [in] our present experience" that are given to us "as if they were timeless, natural, unquestionable" seem strange and not inevitable (Rose 1999b, 20).

Nexus between governmentalities and subjectivities

Governmentality studies of capacity building programs and personalized planning programs also incorporate Foucault's concern with "the nexus between the production of a particular conception of human nature, a particular formation of subjectivity, and a particular political ideology" (Read 2009, 26).[17] For instance, neoliberal political rationalities are linked to new

16 By this he meant that government is any more or less rational and calculated activity that seeks to shape the conduct of others (Dean 1999, 10)

17 See also Lemke "Governmentality is introduced by Foucault to study the "autonomous" individual's capacity for self-control and how this

understandings of human nature and new subjectivities, such as the enterprising subject, through specific political technologies and practices, such as contracts and quasi markets. While this nexus has been the subject of a large number of recent governmentality studies, Foucault did not directly address it in his published works (although he did within his lecture series *The Birth of Bio-Politics* at the College de France).[18] A highly influential study which examines neoliberal subjectivities is Barbara Cruikshank's work on the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility published in *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (Cruikshank 1996, Cruikshank 1999). Cruikshank illustrates how a specific set of neoliberal capacity building programs, the self-esteem movement within Californian welfare reform, entice individuals to constitute themselves as objects and domains of knowledge. By getting people to write and tell their personal narratives, they elicit individuals' "personal stories and struggles with their lack of self-esteem" (Cruikshank 1996, 233). Through these writing practices the personal and the greater political good are linked because "in writing these with an eye to the social good, people see that their personal lives are intrinsically linked to what is good for all" (Cruikshank 1996). Individuals are encouraged to objectify themselves in a true discourse which, as Cruikshank illustrates, is not natural but rather contingent. Individuals are invited to constitute themselves as objects in relation to a body of knowledge that specifies what self-esteem is, and shows individuals how to diagnose their lack of self-esteem. As suggested above, the argument that Cruikshank makes is one that is not possible within Sen's *capabilities* approach which ignores the micro practices through which relations of power operate.

Cruikshank's study makes a unique contribution to our understanding of elements of the contemporary relationship between governance and self-knowledge. It illuminates how new understandings of subjectivities are linked to specific political rationalities through concepts such as 'self-esteem' and specific political practices such as writing. But the logic of her critique, which is that the forms of knowledge this program promotes as natural and timeless are actually contingent and thus the way that this program narrows behavioural options is a form of violence, follows a very similar line to other studies influenced by Foucault, and particularly governmentality studies (McWhorter 1999, Schram 2002, 122).[19] In contrast to the critiques offered within the social policy

---

is linked to forms of political rule and economic exploitation"(Lemke 2000, 4).

18 Instead Foucault's work focused on ancient Greece, and developments in Europe from that period until the 19 century.

19 Another example is Schram's studies which argues that US welfare to work programs promote a subjectivity that takes the form of an

capabilities literature (Carney 2007b, Davidson 2007a, Davidson 2007b, Lewis, Giullari 2005), Cruikshank does not argue that these programs are unjust or unsuccessful at helping people find employment. Instead she, as Dean starkly expressed it, illustrates the violence of actions that promise to "assist you to practice your freedom as long as you practice it our way" (Dean 1998, 217).

This line of argument is consistent with Foucault's work on governmentality, and more broadly dominant interpretations of his "ethico-political sensibility." William Connolly argues Foucault's sensibility contains the following key elements:

> genealogies that dissolve apparent necessities into contingent formations; cultivation of care for possibilities of life that challenge claims to an intrinsic moral order; democratic disturbances of sedimented identities that conceal violence in their terms of closure; practices that enable multifarious styles of life to coexist on the same territory; and a plurality of political identifications extending beyond the state to break up the monopolies of state-centered politics (Connolly 1993, 381)

The problem with this summary is not that it is wrong, but rather it is a narrow interpretation. Tobias (2005, 68) convincingly argues Foucault's ethico-political perspective is wider and more complex than this.[20] But before showing why Connolly's interpretation is unnecessarily narrow, I will elaborate upon his condensed comments.

---

individual who monitors his or her performance against internalized neoliberal values of financial independence and the market value of one's personal attributes and skills. Thus subjects of welfare reform might gain employment but they lose the ability to imagine themselves as subjects that are not consistent with neoliberal political rationalities in which individuals and families are financially self reliant and all institutions are organized in the form of a market. As Schram argues, transformations in social welfare systems are part of a broader move by the state to: "encourage the development of particular populations of individuals who … practice various forms of self-discipline, self-monitoring, and self-surveillance appropriate to their population and necessary for producing a self-regulating society" (Schram 2002, 122).

20 Despite the narrowness of these interpretations some within governmentality studies pursue a form of critique that is even narrower. For instance, Mitchel Dean Governmentality: power and rule in modern society rejects the idea of making a distinction between relations of domination and governing through freedom the basis for critique maintaining instead that this line is also blurry. Even individuals who are condemned to death and tortured "remain a loci of freedom" he argues because even in these circumstances individuals can "exercise a capacity to think" (Dean 1999, 14-15). Such an argument runs contrary to Foucault's clearly articulated position that while individuals within a relation of domination may be able to engage in practices of freedom within such a state these practices are extremely constrained and limited (Foucault 1988a, 3). Taking the example of the conjugal relation in the 18th and 19th Centuries, Foucault says: "We cannot say that there was only male power; the woman herself could do a lot of things: be unfaithful to him; extract money from him; refuse him sexually. She was however subject to a state of domination, in the measure where all that was finally no more than a certain number of tricks which never brought about a reversal of the situation" (Foucault 1988a, 12).

Firstly, Connolly's emphasis upon dissolving the sedimented and apparent necessities of political life into contingent formations is based upon a view that the distinction between relations of power and relations of domination is for Foucault the "defining opposition of political life and… the normative basis for political action" (Dumm 1996, Hindess 1998, Tobias 2005, 68). Foucault's positive contribution to politics is interpreted as the idea that political action must be directed at breaking down power relations which no longer have flexibility and mutability and have instead solidified into relations of domination. Secondly, it is argued that "analytical critique and vigilance" in the form of genealogies have emancipatory potential (Connolly 1993, 367, Tobias 2005, 68). Thirdly, and this is not clearly stated in Connolly's summary, Foucault's conceptualization of freedom is commonly, though not always, understood in individualist frames where the individual pursues projects of self-realization and self fashioning through resistance and transgressive experiences that have no clear implications for relations with others (McNay 1992, Tobias 2005, 68, White, Hunt 2000, 100). Relatedly, this "desubjectivation is conceptualized as a positive transgressive act" (Tobias 2005, 68). While these dominant readings of Foucault's sensibilities are reasonable, thoughtful and useful, they are, as I will elaborate below, unnecessarily narrow interpretations of Foucault's wider, more complex and hesitant ethico-political perspective.

In the following I focus on three key areas where dominant readings emphasize certain aspects of Foucault's thought and silence others and do this in ways that unnecessarily limit the usefulness of his work for understanding relations between freedom and capacity building programs or, more broadly, the relationship between freedom and new programs of proposals. I focus on processes of desubjectivation, governmentality, and finally practices of caring for the self and new programs of proposals.

Desubjectivation

Within governmentality and Foucauldian studies, relations of domination are frequently viewed through processes of subjectivation, while processes of liberation are commonly viewed through individualistic practices of desubjectivation. Foucault conceived of processes of desubjectivation (desubjugation) as "limit-experiences through which the subject escapes from itself" (Foucault 2000) or, as Milchman states, escapes "from the prevailing modes of subjectivity" (Milchman 2009, 80). In the following quote Foucault connects processes of desubjugation to critiques of governmentalization. He argues that if

governmentalization is indeed this movement through which individuals are subjugated in

> the reality of a social practice through mechanisms of power that adhere to a truth [then critique is] the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability. Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we could call the politics of truth (Foucault 2003c, 166)

Within dominant interpretations this 'voluntary insubordination' is viewed as a "liberating self transcendence," but as Tobias points out Foucault was more ambivalent than this regarding processes of desubjectivation, and as discussed in the following section viewed processes of 'liberation' through a less individualistic frame (Tobias 2005, 77). Reflecting the dominant view that desubjectivation is a liberating process, Butler concludes her chapter on bodies and power by arguing:

> The question Foucault opens is…how desire might become produced beyond norms of recognition. And here he seems to find the seeds of transformation in the life of passion that lives and thrives at the borders of recognizability, which still has the limited freedom of not yet being false or true (Butler 2004, 193).[21]

But as Tobias points out, these readings downplay Foucault's ambivalence about processes of desubjectivation. The destructive elements of "a project of desubjectivation" are evident in Foucault's allusions to images of death, physical annihilation and psychological disintegration (Foucault 2000, 241, Tobias 2005, 255-56). Contrary to the idea that Foucault only saw the seeds of transformation lying at the borders of recognisability, it is clear he also recognized that because these experiences of desubjectivation transgress "the limits of coherent subjectivity as it functions in everyday life," they threaten "the very possibility of life - or rather the life of the individual - itself" (Jay 2006, 258). We are recognized, and produced as "knowing, active subjects in the world to the extent that we relate to, and participate in, the regimes of knowledge and praxis that orientate us as rational, sexual, cultural, biological and economic beings" (Tobias 2005, 77). This recognition of the possibilities *and* destructiveness within projects of desubjectivation resonates with Sen's concern to recognize individuals as both capable *and* fragile (Tobias 2005, 77).

The fragility of individuals due to their inherent dependence upon relations with others is downplayed by Foucauldians that emphasize the liberating aspects of desubjectivation. They focus

---

21 Similarly Bowden (2008) writes "What are the limits of my subjectivity? Can I transgress those limits and become otherwise?...the athlete is confronted with an apparent limit and, by questioning that limit, redefines the structural distinctions that constitute his or her boundary." Also in a similar vein Caputo writes freedom for "Foucault is a kind of irrepressibility, a refusal to contract into an identity, a continually twisting loose from this historical forms of life by which it is always already shaped. ..a capacity to move beyond a particular historical constitution" (Caputo 2000, 255).

on how social and political technologies and bodies of knowledge normalize an individual by defining and fixing "his/her place in the fabric of social and political relations" but downplay the ways these same processes are also implicated in the process of desubjectivation (Tobias 2005, 77). That is, normalizing and dividing processes, which can fix certain subjects as particular types of sexual, cultural or economic beings, can likewise subject others to processes whereby they are not recognized as active and rational parts of culture or sexual beings.

As Tobias insightfully points out, while Foucault was "sensitive to the degree to which" the definition of reason "is discursively and institutionally determined" he nevertheless gives a clear sense that:

> incapacity to participate in reasonable discourse [however historically, and culturally defined] undermines the ability of the subject to engage in the kind of critical interrogation of power and productive self-creation that Foucault upholds as the model of active ethical and political practice (Tobias 2005, 78).

Foucault's own involvement in psychiatric reform also points to his recognition that 'for the "insane", the assuming of active agency depends on the reinsertion of the mentally "ill" into the circuits of communication' (Tobias 2005, 77). Ethical practices of the type that Foucault promotes are only possible if processes of desubjectivation, the breaking away from dominant modes of subjectivity, such as dominant modes of femininity, are proceeded by new forms of coherent subjectivity (Tobias 2005, 77). This latter sense of the term highlights the point that the ability of the individual to engage in self-creation and critically interrogate existing power relations depends upon the existence of discourses within which individuals can be understood as both human and rational. Individuals are fragile because their existence is dependent upon remaining intelligible to others within the historical and social context in which they are located. Built into this recognition is Foucault's acknowledgement that sometimes individuals do not have the capability to resist power relations, or their capacity is very limited. This recognition also resonates with Sen's concerns about the need for public action to support individuals' capabilities, but Foucault to a much greater degree than Sen recognizes how individuals' capabilities are discursively determined.

While I agree with Tobias that Foucault did not unequivocally laud processes of desubjectivation, and that the practices of self creation and freedom Foucault promotes require processes of both subjectivation and desubjectivation, I would suggest it is not coincidental that these ideas are most evident within his interviews and activist work, in particular in his work with the Group for Information on Prisons (GIP) (Brich 2005, Brich 2008). Unlike Sen's work on *capabilities*

which highlights the ways individuals are fragile and needy, as well as capable, Foucault's historical studies provide little material that illustrates the complex costs and benefits of processes of subjectivation and desubjectivation. Tobias' use of interviews with Foucault, and references to his activist work, do not highlight aspects of Foucault's historical studies that are clearly developed but have been overlooked or obscured. Instead, Tobias and others are presenting views that Foucault espoused but which are not clearly articulated within his genealogical works. As subsequent chapters will argue in more detail, Foucault's genealogical methods cannot easily view the costs to existence where individuals have limited ability to participate in circuits of communication in which they are not just at the "borders of recognizability" but are unrecognizable (Butler 2004, 193). As discussed in the introductory chapter, a key theme of this thesis is that while documentary analysis and abstract philosophical reflections are important, these methodologies are not as suitable as ethnographic research for documenting these costs to existence. Chapters three and four return to this subject in greater detail.

Governmentality and practices of caring for the self

Foucault's explorations of ancient Greek and Roman practices of the self reflect his recognition that processes of desubjectivation, the breaking away from dominant modes of subjectivity, such as dominant modes of femininity, must be followed by processes in which new subjectivities and practices are instated in a coherent form. Foucault's lectures on these ancient practices continue his concern with structures that sustain individual expression and meaning, but this time not from the perspective of the dominant modes that constrain us (Luxon 2008, 384). Instead these were explorations of possible alternatives to dominant contemporary models. Since around 2005 there has been a marked increase in the attention Foucauldian scholars are devoting to these later lectures. However, most of this attention has been in the form of philosophical commentaries,[22] and within governmentality studies, and empirical applications of Foucault's work there has been very little engagement with these themes. There are two aspects to this limited application. Firstly, very few researchers in these areas of Foucauldian scholarship are engaging with these later works. Secondly, the small numbers of empirical researchers engaging with these works

22 Recent examples of philosophical reflections on these works on the ancients include (Flynn 2005, Gros 2005, Harrer 2007, Luxon 2004, Luxon 2008, McGushin 2005, Milchman, Rosenberg 2007, Miller 2007, Peters 2003, Sharpe 2007, Ure 2007, Veyne, Porter, and Davidson 1993).

for the most part utilize Foucault's reflections in limited ways.

It is important to develop stronger links between Foucault's highly influential studies of neoliberal and pastoral governmentalities, and his less influential studies of ancients. While Foucault did not draw clear links between his work on the ancients and his work on governmentality it is clear that his works on the ancients develop his thinking on governance and governmentality in important ways.[23] An important development is that he takes seriously forms of governing the self and others that cannot be understood in terms of his historical models of normalization or discipline. Further, within his studies of the ancients he simultaneously opened up a critical relation towards the modern relationship between the subject and the truth and suggested alternatives (Flax 2007, 82). Both of these developments link directly into Foucault's contention, described above, that what is at stake in contemporary politics is "how . . . the growth of capabilities [*capacités*] . . . [can] be disconnected from the intensification of power relations" (Foucault 1994, 55). Within these studies of the ancients Foucault explored the potential of a politics of creation rather than a politics primarily concerned with condemning existing structures. He conceived a politics of creation as neither the invention of entirely new practices nor the revival of ancient ones (Markula 2004). Expressing a clear stand against reviving ancient practices, Foucault identifies many Hellenistic obsessions, including with dominating others, as "quite disgusting" and undesirable. But he was fascinated by the possibility that some elements of the idea of the self working upon the self in order to create oneself may reacquire a contemporary meaning (Veyne 1997, 231). And it is this possibility that he explores in his late lecture series *Hermeneutics of the Subject*.

Foucault's reflections upon these ancient practices have been largely overlooked by Foucauldian influenced studies that examine capacity building and personalized planning programs

---

23 This is supported both by the content of the work and the temporal sequence in which they were produced: Foucault introduced the concept of governmentality in his 1977-78 Lecture series at the College de France Security, territory, population. This was followed by an elaboration of neoliberal governmentality in the 1978-79 lecture series The birth of bio-politics. The next year he shifted his focus to an earlier historical period; Foucault used the general framework of government to study "the problem of self examination and confession" in early Christianity(1979-1980 lecture series entitled On the Government of the Living). During the next two years Foucault developed this theme of the government of oneself. He began (in the 1980-81 lectures, Subjectivity and Truth) by conducting research into "instituted models of self knowledge and their history" a project which he located at the intersection of his work on governmentality and disciplinary power/knowledge (Foucault 1997b, 87). More specifically he examined Hellenistic and ancient Roman practices of the self, and particularly the practice of caring for the self, "in their relation with the regime of the aphrodisia) (Foucault 1997b, 89-90). The following year he examined these same practices but this time separate from their relation to the aphrodisiac formed (Foucault 2005a).

funded by the state. As a result, these bodies of work limit their critiques to questioning what currently exists and they fail to address what could be. The most frequent line of critique in these studies is the way that contemporary practices aim to tie individuals to assumptions (or truths) about their pre-existing, essential selves. By limiting their critiques in this way researchers fail to fully appreciate the historical specificity of this relationship between the subject and truth, and to illustrate how the structure itself can be rethought. This is what Foucault did. He showed how ancient Hellenistic practices of the self always subordinated the injunction to 'know oneself' to an imperative to 'care for the self.' It was through regular practices of caring for oneself within communities of practices that the individual came to know himself. Contemporary practices of the self, such as those examined by Cruikshank (1996), most commonly invert this schema, exhorting us to discover the truth about ourselves in order to care for ourselves. In the case examined by Cruikshank (1996) these practices exhort individuals to discover the truth of their lack of self-esteem in order to learn how to care for themselves. While a few governmentality scholars have reflected theoretically upon Foucault's work on ancient practices of caring for the self, very little attention is paid to these concepts within actual genealogies or empirical studies of governmentalities.[24]

Most empirically-oriented studies that do engage with Foucault's historical studies on practices of caring for the self or the ethos of the self either discuss care of the self as a rhetorical strategy (Bates 2006) or interpret these concepts in highly individualist ways, for instance asking if an individual engaging in a particular practice is practicing care of the self, or self discipline. [25] Alternatively, they use these works in vague and unclear ways.[26] Those studies that explicitly

---

24 For example in 'Experience and Truth Telling in a Post-Humanist World' the governmentality researcher Valverde makes wide-ranging reflections on feminism, and truth telling in light of Foucault's late works on care of the self.

25 For instance Markula examines whether or not instructors of hybrid, mindful fitness are engaging in practices of ethics of self care or disciplinary bodily practices. She argues that they are not because these instructors do not "problematize the dominant discursive construction of gender and actively reconstruct their selves [so as to] transgress the limitations of the "natural" (feminine) identity" (Markula 2004).

26 For instance in Bate's article 'Foucault, truth telling and technologies of the self in schools' it is unclear how she thinks we should put these historical studies about 'care of the self' to work. Specifically is unclear how she understands this concept 'care of the self.' At times she appears to confuse the everyday sense of the phrase 'take care of yourself' and Foucault's more specific use of the phrase (Besley 2005). Another example is White and Hunt who begin their paper by arguing that they want "to challenge the idea that focusing on the 'care of the self' requires a withdrawal into individualistic even narcissistic concerns with the self" and "The care of the self involves one in the government of the self in conjunction with the government of others" (White, Hunt 2000, 94). However, half way through their paper they then argue "But at the end of the day, Foucault fails us because of his theoretical and personal retreat into an individualist preoccupation with what should be regarded as a truncated ethics that has little to tell us about our relations with others" (White, Hunt 2000, 100).

understand practices of caring for the self as necessarily embedded within social relations and practices, such as Heyes' (2007b, 2006b) studies of practices of bodily transformation, are very much in the minority.

Yet within his genealogies of ancient practices of the self, Foucault is at pains to underscore that within life in ancient Greek cities, the precept of being concerned with oneself was "one of the main rules for social and personal conduct," and was explicitly linked to participation in political life. Thus these were not individualist or apolitical practices (although they were certainly elite, male practices), but instead formed an important moral principle that guided action within social and political life (Foucault 1988e, 19). As Rabinow elaborates:

> Although this preparation and this exercise focused on the care of the self it was far from being a solitary affair. In fact, the practice of the care of the self passed through an elaborate network of relationships with others. The care of the self was highly social, and it was oriented from the self outward to others, to things, to events, and then back to the self (Rabinow 2003, 10).

As I discuss in more detail in the following section, the important role played by guides in these practices of caring for the self also underscores the social nature of this activity.

Despite this, many contemporary scholars continue to reject or critique these works on the basis of their individualism, or their valorisation of individual creative activity (Rorty 1992, Wolin 1994). For example, White and Hunt state that "at the end of the day, Foucault fails us because of his theoretical and personal retreat into an individualist preoccupation with what should be regarded as a truncated ethics that has little to tell us about our relations with others" (White, Hunt 2000, 100). Murtagh echoes these concerns, although she directs her concerns at applications of Foucault's work by Stuart Murray (2007) rather than Foucault's own research, arguing that:

> First, the concept of 'care of the self' used by Murray and others is voluntaristic, one that enjoins the individual to make of themselves a project and a place for reflection, to engage in an 'aesthetics of the self'. This involves conscious and critical reflection on the social world and engagement on one's own terms rather than those laid down in advance as rules of conduct: an upending of those rules and a creation, through active and thoughtful reflection, of a new mode of conduct … Importantly, the 'care of the self' articulated through the self promotes an ethics that in its individualism may fail to account for the interaction of the individual in society; (Murtagh 2008, np).

While agreeing with Murtagh that the concept of caring for the self is commonly deployed in these ways, and that such theorizing is problematic, I also posit that such deployments of these concepts are unnecessary. Across interviews, lectures and articles Foucault made numerous references to

individuals engaging in critical reflections upon the social world not as solitary individuals but as part of social collectives. Further these individuals undertook the work of engaging with rules of conduct laid down and producing new modes of conduct, not as heroic individuals, but through their links with social groups, such as the feminist movement. As Luxon argues, what Foucault develops in these lectures is not an "aesthetic turn inwards to quietistic practices of the self" but instead a model in which the subject is "defined through expressive practices sustained by a simultaneous relationship to herself and to others" (Luxon 2008, 384).[27] This is why, when Feher hears Foucault calling us "to accept and inhabit a certain mode of subjection in order to redirect it or turn it against its instigators", he understands this work as occurring within political and social collectives (Feher 2009). This is an interpretation with which I strongly concur. However researchers such as McNay remain unconvinced arguing that the ideas around which an ethics of caring for the self revolves are uncomfortably close to neoliberal governance through the production of the enterprising self (McNay 2009, p.57). Given this resonance she posits that it is not clear how practices of caring for the self can pose any serious challenge to neoliberal practices of governance (McNay 2009, 57).

Murtagh's and others' concerns with the practice of caring for the self as an ethical frame go even further.[28] She argues:

> The outcome of such an ethics [of caring for the self] is the opportunity for individuals to change their relationship to the symbolic order; … a way out of the constraints of socially constructed conceptions of, for example, femininity and masculinity … It does not, however, account for the material constraints and the social circumstances that allow different opportunities for individuals. In so doing it potentially reproduces existing social inequalities (Murtagh 2008 np).

Tobias makes a similar argument in 'Foucault on Freedom and Capabilities.' He argues that contemporary Foucauldian scholars pay inadequate attention to material constraints but also points out that there are strong grounds on which to understand considerations of material constraints as compatible with Foucault's project, which addresses the questions of "the basic conditions under

---

27 Interestingly Luxon uses the female pronoun even though Foucault is explicitly concerned with male practices. While Luxon does not explain her decision she seems to be making an effort to claim these reflections for feminist theory.

28 This seems to be what McNay is arguing in Gender and agency: Reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory when she accuses Foucault of ignoring the ways that agency is shaped both materially and symbolically. As Foucault's work does recognize that subjectivity is shaped by material and symbolic elements of the social world it seems that what she is pointing to is the lack of attention he pays to the ways access to certain material goods, such as shelter, food, healthcare, shapes and supports individual's ability to act within the social world.

which a project of self determination can be attempted" (Tobias 2005, 205).

While considerations of material constraints on self determination may be compatible with Foucault's project, it is Sen's work on capabilities and the secondary literature that has developed around it that has most strongly engaged with the role that public policy may play when "pain, illness and extreme economic and social deprivation … erode the capacity of the subject to function as an active agent within the networks of power (Tobias 2005, 205). The Senian capabilities literature's emphasis on material conditions and the role of public action in producing these conditions is strongly related to Sen's acknowledged emphasis that humans are *both* capable and needy. Conversely, the way that the Foucauldian literature tends not to emphasize a need for public action directed towards facilitating certain material conditions is related to an interpretation that Foucault viewed humans as capable but not needy. Yet, as Tobias shows, there is much in Foucault's work that complicates the idea that he failed to recognize the myriad ways in which humans are needy (Tobias 2005).

Another important critique of Foucault's reflections upon ancient practices of caring for the self is that like his earlier works this analysis was conducted with a rather gender blind lens (Foxhall 1998, Richlin 1998a). Within *History of Sexuality* Volume II Foucault attempted a disclaimer for his lack of attention to gender by stating that ancient Greek sexual ethics were "not addressed to women. It was an ethics for men: an ethics thought, written, and taught by men, and addressed to men - to free men, obviously. A male ethics, consequently, in which women figured only as objects" (Foucault 1990b, 22). Thus Foucault attempts to excuse his sidelining of women by attributing this absence to the content of the texts he is examining. Even if we accept this underlying approach to reading these texts uncritically and on their own terms - and I think there are many reasons not to - Foucault's position is still problematic, since feminist authors in classical studies have pointed out that the ancient texts he analyzed do discuss women and gender relations (Richlin 1998b).

A further problem is that while Foucault at times (as in the quote above) acknowledges that the ethics, and type of model of guidance he studies are actually ethics and practices that guided wealthy, slave-owning males and relations between them, he only does this occasionally.[29] Across his texts the more common thrust of argument is that these Hellenistic practices of guidance and

29 As White and Hunt argument the notion of caring for the self existed "in another social and historical domain where the freedom to engage in projects of self-transformation was confined to a highly restricted pool of Athenian-born men" (2000, 100).

caring for oneself were the practices of "ordinary individuals" or "everyone" (Richlin 1998b, 144). In presenting this line of argument, Foucault appears to wish to avoid acknowledging just how particular to certain social groups these practices were and to consider how this might limit some of the claims he makes about the usefulness of these ethics and practices for contemporary life. Thus there are dual possible concerns for those using Foucault's work on practices of caring for the self. The classical texts which he analyzes are to a large extent male-centred and philosophically support the domination of women, but Foucault is uncritical of these elements of ancient practices and discourses. Further, Foucault's own selection of texts, and the elements of those texts he focuses upon, appear to be systematically skewed in ways that enabled him to avoid analyzing the relationship between the practices of caring for the self and the operation of gender relations within ancient Greece and Rome. The practices of guidance that Foucault focused on were, as he at times explicitly recognizes, practices whereby males guided younger slave owning males rather than practices for everyone, including guiding females or poor non-slave owning males. This tendency is problematic in that by avoiding fully acknowledging the ways these practices were socially imbedded in hierarchical social relations, Foucault also avoids considering how these particularities might limit some of the claims he makes about the utility of these ethics and practices as inspiration for developing new contemporary practices. The question as to whether or not Foucault's reflections upon the ancients' practices of caring for the self can make sense of the experience of contemporary women (or even non-slave owning men) cannot be answered definitively. Instead it should be determined by putting these lines of thought to work. Despite the concerns that Richlin, Foxhall and others raise, some feminists, such as the contributors to *Feminism and the Final Foucault*, see these later works as valuable resources for feminist theory and practice (Taylor, Vintges 2004). In subsequent chapters I keep in mind the historical particularity of the practices as I examine their possible utility for rethinking programs primarily directed at poor women.[30]

30 Others see Foucault's return to the ancient Greeks as unnecessary and argue that he should have focused instead on feminist ethics. Simons argues that Foucault's concern with uncovering an alternative ethic of constituting another, an ethic orientated by the aim of making the other autonomous, ignores that contemporary mothering is orientated by such an ethic (Simons 1996). I tend to disagree with Simons, because central to the practice of contemporary mothering is the idea that mothers should subordinate their needs to the needs of their children, and in this way I would suggest that contemporary 'mothering' practices are closer to Christian ethics that Foucault examines elsewhere, in which the individual is encouraged not to care for his/her self, but to subordinate themselves to the care of others.

Role of professional advisers and guides: disciplinary and normalizing?

Foucault's work and literature inspired by his work has frequently critiqued what are often referred to as the caring professions - doctors, social workers, psychologists, and so on - for their involvement in practices of discipline and normalization. While professions within these fields may argue that their actions support the freedom and autonomy of individuals, Foucault and Foucauldians argue that they actually bind their clients ever more tightly into relations of normalization and discipline. Rose argues that individuals are "bound into the language and evaluations of expertise at the very moment that they are assured of their freedom and autonomy" (Rose 1990, 203). Foucault's published works are strongly critical of the knowledge claims and practices of guidance carried out within psychiatry and psychology (Taylor 2008). His studies of early Christianity were similarly critical of the practices of guidance carried out by abbots and priests (Foucault 1988e). In his early works Foucault's views of the caring professions were consistent with Immanuel Kant's view that individuals' "relationships to priests, doctors, and books" are ones of dependence" (Luxon 2008). Scholarship on the caring professions inspired by Foucault has overwhelmingly followed these earlier works, which focus on the ways that relationships of guidance are tied into relationships of normalization.

One of the key targets in Foucault's critiques of the caring professions was the singular truths that professions produced and sought to reproduce (Luxon 2004). He argued that these singular truths produce norms against which professionals attempt to align their patients, clients, or students. And as Heyes argues, these norms that are established are not absolutes but rather, "developmental standards for populations are deployed to both measure and enforce conformity at the same time as they generate individuality"(2007a, 55). Thus professional knowledge was a key way in which individuals were bound into relations of discipline. By relations of discipline Foucault meant something quite specific. He conceived of disciplinary power as simultaneously totalizing and individualizing, with each individual expected to conform in a way that takes into account their individuality (Foucault 1977). As a socially and historically specific matrix of practices, this form of power involves the establishment of disciplinary norms, constant surveillance, hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination (Foucault 1977). Within this diagram of power the guide is involved in producing norms, in surveillance and observation of populations and in the judgment and examination of these populations against established norms (Foucault 1977).

In Foucault's later works he explored ancient practices of guidance which do not clearly fit

within this disciplinary framework. As Luxon argues, in these genealogies of ancient practices of the self and later writings on Immanuel Kant, Foucault's arguments regarding practices of guidance diverge from the position taken in his earlier works. These later studies take an interest in the possibilities of relationships of guidance for educating individuals to negotiate the "variegated terrain of ethical responsibility" and assisting them to become autonomous (Luxon 2008, 383). Foucault viewed these ancient relations of guidance as distinctly different from the practices of guidance tied into relations of normalization and discipline that formed the principal focus of these earlier works (Luxon 2008, Rabinow 2003). Through in-depth engagements with ancient practices of caring for the self and *parrhesia,* Foucault developed a concern with what Luxon aptly calls the "messy middle" of relationships and personal interactions. These are relations "yet unstructured by their endpoint and not predefined by their beginnings" (Luxon 2008, 383).

These reflections on the role of guides in practices of caring for the self can assist in exploring the degree to which advisers within contemporary personalized planning and capacity building programs play a disciplinary role and the degree to which they are oriented towards respecting the autonomy of the one who is guided and providing tools to develop this autonomy. Within chapter four I put Foucault's reflections on guides to work in order to understand single mothers' experiences of three different personalized planning programs.

Foucault and programs of new proposals

Foucauldian scholarship suggests that "state institutions and policies should be engaged, negotiated and, where necessary, resisted or transgressed" and that it is not possible to take from Foucault "a position on social policy without compromising the critical import of his thought" (Tobias 2005, 205). Equally entrenched within Foucauldian scholarship is the argument that academic research should confine itself to the work of critiquing existing conditions by exposing existing relations of power and domination. To go beyond this and make proposals for a new course of action is argued to be dangerous. Reflecting this line of thinking, the Foucauldian scholar Kingston quotes Foucault arguing that in terms of gay activism, "[t]he idea of a program of new proposals is dangerous. As soon as a program is presented, it becomes a law, and there's a prohibition against inventing" (Kingston 2009, 12). Kingston interprets Foucault's words on the dangers of a program of proposals to mean that he believes academics should not direct their efforts towards the development of new programs and laws.

Kingston's interpretation is consistent with dominant interpretations within the literature but

is nevertheless misplaced. Certainly Foucault cautioned against conceiving of institutions and laws as a guarantee of freedom. Like Sen he argues that "no project, no institution can, simply by its nature ensure that people will have liberty automatically" (Foucault 2000b, 134). Institutions and laws intended to serve freedom can be turned around (Foucault 2000b). However, Foucault did not argue that we should never pursue dangerous courses of action or that a dangerous course of action is the same as a bad course of action. On this issue he notes:

> My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make each day is to determine which is the main danger" (Foucault 1997b).

He repeated this argument, that while everything is dangerous this does not mean that we should not act, in a discussion at Berkeley in 1983. Instead of allowing the recognition that everything is dangerous to paralyze action, we should understand that the main danger is constantly changing and therefore the guiding concern should be to act against the main danger. Specifically he stated:

> I disagree with Richard Rorty that everything is O.K., and that all truth games and political games are equally good . . . for me, nothing is very good; everything is dangerous; but everything is not equally dangerous.[31]

The point here is that engagement with politics and policies is always inexact, fluid and contained within the limits of existing political rationalities. No course of action will ever be 'very good' but it is possible to identify courses of action that address specific threats that appear to be 'the main danger.' One also has to recognize that this course of action will not remain the most appropriate for all time, and neither may it be the most appropriate course of action in other contexts.

These arguments put Foucault's comments regarding gay activism and the dangers of codification in a rather different light. Read in this wider context, Foucault's cautions about the dangers of producing new programs which will become law should be interpreted as a caution that this course of action carries certain risks. It should not be interpreted to mean, as Kingston argues, that one should never act towards efforts at codification or the development of new programs. As I

He makes argument that we have to make a choice about what is the main danger in the context of a discussion of the antipsychiatry movement. Foucault argues that people were right to criticize the mental hospitals because at the time they were the danger, though now that many mental hospitals have closed there are new and different problems (dangers).

argue in subsequent chapters of this thesis, within the current context perhaps the main 'danger' facing Australian single mothers is the risk of severe poverty due to changes to the income support and industrial relations systems. In this context it can be argued that the main danger is the unpredictability of the labour market due to a lack of adequate codification, and the lack of income support programs for single parents with older children (aged eight years and over).

Foucault's reflections on the dangers of codification also need to be considered in the context of the important difference between proposing a new program for an entire society, or entire social group, and more modest proposals for new social programs and laws. Foucault was unequivocal that freedom should not be equated with a specific political order, including "the structure of [a] political system, and its rationalities of government" (Prozorov 2007, 3,5). When real freedom is equated with a particular social or political order, it becomes impossible to ask about the actual freedoms that people experience within that system (Prozorov 2007, 3,5). But an attempt to create "a blue print for a perfect order" is distinctly different from the development of specific programs and laws in order to address specific problems of freedom that arise within a specific context.

Overall, Foucault's position on new programs of public action is very close to Sen's. While cautioning against the dangers associated with various forms of public action including codification, institutions and laws, Foucault nevertheless repeatedly took a strong positive position on issues of public action and policy. For instance, on the issue of public action to assist those who are disadvantaged, he expressed abhorrence for the idea "that one may as well leave people in the slums thinking that they can simply exercise their rights there" (Foucault 2000a, 354-5). Similarly, within an interview on the topic of reforming the health care and social security system he lends support to some form of state provision of health and social security and stands against "any kind of wild liberalism that would lead to individual coverage for those with the means and an absence of coverage for the rest" (Foucault 1988d, 175). He suggested that it was possible to develop "a [social] security that opens the way to richer, more numerous, more diverse, and more flexible relations with oneself and with one's environment, while guaranteeing to each individual a real autonomy" (Foucault 1988c, 161). Developing this idea, he suggested that there was a need for work that renewed dominant conceptual categories which frame the ways we approach problems of social security (income support) because these categories had remained largely unchanged since they were created by Beveridge (Foucault 1988c, 161).

These interviews, together with Foucault's own activist work, such as his selected

interventions in debates about immigration as well as on-going work with prisoners and the mentally ill, suggest two important things. Firstly they suggest a clear recognition that ethics and politics sometimes require communities and political collectives to work on behalf of others to help them gain access to the material resources they require to practice freedom. Secondly, they suggest he clearly held it as appropriate to work towards a new program of proposals to address the most important 'dangers' within contemporary life.

My argument here runs against the stance of prominent researchers within governmentality studies such as Nikolas Rose and Mitchell Dean. As discussed at the beginning of part two of this chapter, Rose refuses to assess certain contemporary practices of freedom as preferable to others, and states he is only concerned with illustrating how particular practices of freedom have been made real (Rose 1999b, 10). Along similar lines, Mitchell Dean in his highly influential text *Governmentality: power and rule in modern society* rejects the idea that it is possible to make a distinction between relations of domination and governing through freedom, or to make this distinction the basis of critique. Instead he takes the extreme position that even individuals who are condemned to death and tortured "remain a loci of freedom" because even in these circumstances individuals can "exercise a capacity to think" (Dean 1999, 14-5). The primary implication of my review of Foucault's reflections on public policy and new proposals is that claims that Rose and Dean's strictly neutral position on contemporary policy is a strongly rooted and integral part of Foucault's are not tenable. The position of these scholars simplifies Foucault's nuanced arguments regarding the dangers of certain types of political activism into an ultimately conservative position that academics should remain ambivalent on all contemporary policy issues, and confine themselves to purely descriptive analysis.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced out a theoretical matrix that I will use to interrogate the possibilities and dangers of different forms of capacity building programs targeted at Parenting Payment single rate/Sole Parent Pension recipients over the last two decades. This matrix enables me to illuminate, how at the level of concrete practices, personalized planning programs operate and how they may operate otherwise. In the following chapter this matrix guides the questions I ask of personalized planning programs, and the kinds of critiques I focus on.

In the process of creating this matrix I have shown that Foucault's positive contribution to politics extends beyond pointing out that apparent necessities are actually contingent formations,

promoting the disturbance of sedimented subjectivities, individual practices of self fashioning through resistance and transgressive experiences, and breaking up state centered politics. In addition to these contributions, Foucault's work also recognizes that individuals are sometimes needy and dependent upon others in ways that cannot be reduced simply to relations of domination. Further, his work recognizes that individuals have an ethical obligation to help to establish the conditions for others' freedom. Yet, it is also clear that while his later works touch on these themes, Foucault never explicitly developed them. It is Sen's capability approach that develops these lines of thought. Sen suggests it is possible to orientate public action so as to recognize individuals are capable of acting on their own behalf and at the same time recognize that individuals sometimes require access to resources that they cannot obtain on their own. In turn, when Sen's capabilities approach is read in the light of Foucault's work, it is evident that public action must be sensitive to existing micro relations of power. Such sensitivity includes an awareness of these relations, and a concern with the ways that public action may entrench certain dangerous relations of power. Together Sen's and Foucault's works on capabilities, capacities and freedom suggest that in some cases public action directed at supporting individuals' abilities to act is necessary. Simultaneously they caution us that any such public action must be attentive to the ways that discursive practices, lack of access to material resources, and micro relations of power all work together to restrict individuals' abilities to practice freedom.

This chapter has only sketched out a theoretical matrix but has not developed the specific tools that are needed to examine connections between the practice of individual freedom and the role of the nation-state in promoting capacity building through social policy tools. Subsequent chapters use this matrix as the source for developing more specific tools to examine three federally funded programs; the JET program (1989-2006), the Personal Adviser (PA) initiative (2002-2005) and the Employment Preparation (EP) program (2006 to 2009). The first two programs were delivered by Australian government agencies while EP was delivered by a group of private agencies contracted by the Australian government. All three programs have attempted to act upon the passivity and dependency they claim the post-war welfare state produced among parents and single parents in particular. Within chapters two and three I provide a genealogy of the Australian system of income support for single mothers, and the social category of single mothers. My approach differs from many governmentality studies described in section two of this chapter by examining popular images in addition to problematizations and political rationalities. This approach is driven by the desire of this thesis to engage with the complex costs to individuals of personalized planning

programs. In contrast to the broad historical view of chapters two and three, chapters four and five focus in on the three personalized planning programs, JET, PA and EP. Within these chapters I build on the matrix developed here by producing a specific set of tools for examining personalized planning. I do this by focusing in on specific elements of Sen's capabilities approach, and Foucault's reflections on ancient practices of self care and guidance. Finally in chapter six, I return again to the matrix to assist in understanding the various ways in which these three personalized planning programs have been contested and resisted.

Chapter two: The origins of the single mother and popular images surrounding her

The rationalities and practices of personalized planning programs that I am concerned with in this thesis emerged out of specific sets of problematizations. Diverse problems in Australia, including rising rates of income support receipt, child poverty and long term unemployment, demographic shifts, as well as changes in family formation, the labour market, and the international economy, were gradually transformed from the late 1970s onwards into general problems of globalization, national economic inefficiency, an outmoded income support system, and welfare dependency. Australia shares these general problematizations with many other developed Western nations. In Australia, like many other countries, neoliberal political rationalities and technologies emerged to provide a generalized response to these problematizations (Beeson, Firth 1998).

Yet, the particular forms these problematizations, political rationalities and technologies took within Australia were shaped by popular images of single mothers, political contingencies (including the political inflection of the party in power) , and pre-existing political rationalities and practices, as well as other factors. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis while the government of the state involves activities carried out by those outside the state itself, and power does not emanate from a central point (the state) it is nevertheless the case that political rationalities always relate directly to ways of thinking about "governing a state and its population" (Hindess 2006, 119). The concept of political rationalities recognizes that "government of the state is not restricted to the activities of the state itself or even to developments within its borders" (Hindess 2006, 116). Further the act of governing a state is taken to involve the 'conduct of conduct', meaning any more or less calculated methods of directing how others behave and act.

When political rationalities are defined in this way it is clear that they can be distinguished analytically from other types of social discourses and practices, including 'social imaginaries,' although they must be considered in close relation to each other.

an "elusive set of self understandings, background practices, and horizons of common expectations …that give a people a sense of a shared group life" (Crocker 2005) and popular medial images. In developing this definition of political rationalities I draw on Hindess' (1998, 2006)and Beeson and Firth's (1998) definition that recognizes a distinct role for the state. At the same time I reject the more amorphous, but highly influential, definition provided by Rose and Miller (Rose, Miller 2010) in which political rationalities appear to relate to all attempts to conduct the conduct of

others (see critique by Curtis 1995). Social imaginaries and popular media images link together and form matrices, "…out of which identities and their divisions emerge" (Povinelli 2006, 3). 'Social imaginaries,' 'popular media images' and 'political rationalities' are deeply imbricated in each other with political rationalities often picking up elements of popular images, and social imaginaries and working through them. Thus, for example the popular image of the single mother as an unmarried promiscuous teenager living in public housing produced by the tabloid media are not rationalities for ways of governing a state and its population. At the same time these images shape the ways in which single mothers experience personalized planning programs, and they allow them to imagine themselves as being a single mother that requires help, or a single mother who is different from the norm and hence not in need of assistance. Popular images, and social imaginaries often link up with each other and inform and insert themselves into political rationalities. For example, the image of the unmarried promiscuous teenager has linked up with neoliberal political rationalities that are concern with disembedding the dependency that it is claimed the post-war welfare state created.

At the same time the political rationalities that shape personalized planning programs include an amalgam of theoretical and forms of knowledge produced 'inside' and 'outside' the state. An important piece of knowledge is narratives about the welfare state itself. For example, both critics and advocates of contemporary reforms to the income support system describe the post-war welfare state as a static entity which supported single parents' isolation from the labour market. Government reports from the 1970s through to the 2000s argued that the Australian welfare state (established in the 1940s) was based on the assumption of a male breadwinner and a full-time mother, and that this assumption had remained unchanged despite changing gender roles within the wider society. Critics of neoliberal transformations (from the 1980s onwards) argued that these changes represented a move away from the recognition of women's care-work that was embedded in the social security system established in the 1940s (Blaxland 2010, Shaver, Bradshaw 1995). However, this chapter will show that the welfare system that emerged in the 1940s was not a static entity that suddenly changed in the 1980s (or more recently) but rather changed constantly during the last seven decades.

Social imaginaries, contemporary political rationalities and popular images all shape single mothers' interpretations and experiences of personalized planning programs. While political rationalities inform service providers, policy makers, the general public and single mothers as to what the problems are, the nature of the objects that are being governed, and those domains that may be shaped through activities of governance and those that may not, popular images and social imaginaries may never be explicitly articulated as a rationale for particular forms of governing.

Further, if social imaginaries or popular images are recognized by the state, it may only be to reject their validity. Social imaginaries and popular images may continue to reproduce substantial elements from older political rationalities that have been marginalized by contemporary political rationalities, and which are no longer the basis on which governance is rationalized. As an example, the problematic of welfare dependency produced by the Australian government suggests that personalized planning programs need to help develop enterprising attitudes and confidence among income support recipients to counter the passivity of welfare dependency. But the Australian Government has never argued that some single mothers, such as older divorced or separated women, are capable of governing themselves, while others, such as teenage mothers and unmarried mothers, need to be strictly governed. In contrast, the identities and divisions of motherhood within social imaginaries and popular suggest that this is the case, and it is through these social imaginaries that service providers and single mothers interpret contemporary welfare reforms.

While recognizing the distinction between political rationalities, popular images and political rationalities, the key focus in this chapter is popular images produced and sustained by the mainstream media from the 1970s onwards, and the political rationalities, and social categories created in the early decades of the Australian welfare state (1940s-60s). Importantly, many of the administrative and policy categories (such as deserted de jure wife, widow, unmarried mother, divorced mother and sole parent) that remained within the income support system until the late 1990s were established in the first decades of the Australian income support system. In section one of this chapter, entitled 'The origin of the single mother', I argue that the social collective of single parents or single mothers emerged alongside the development of social neoliberal political rationalities from the late 1970s. Within official problematizations from the late 1980s onwards, the social collective of single parents or mothers largely replaced prior social collectives which included widows, unmarried mothers, and deserted wives. By social collective or group, I mean identifiers that locate an individual's position within the social body. Importantly, it is widely assumed that individuals sharing these identifiers also have much in common in terms of their experiences. Under this definition, some important contemporary social groups include males, females, heterosexuals, homosexuals, immigrants, teenagers, and single parents.

In the second section of this chapter I examine popular images of the single mother produced by the high rating tabloid media since the late 1970s. I argue that these outlets have produced a largely unchanging image of single mothers as young, sexually deviant, lazy, and providing poor care for their children. I illustrate with reference to interview material that these

images shape single mothers' understandings of the aims of contemporary welfare reforms and their everyday experience as single mothers.

The origins of the single mother

During the Twentieth Century, and particularly its second half, there was general agreement within the Australian populace, government agencies, the media, and advocacy groups that the caring obligations of socially sanctioned motherhood, that is, childbearing that occurred within the confines of marriage, were incompatible with paid work, although what this exactly meant underwent constant revisions (Henningham 2001, Stokes 2004, Swain 2007, Twomey 1997, Wells 1998). Institutions and social practices assumed that in most cases a mother would have a male partner who would fully financially support her through his participation in full time employment, and at the same time they worked to ensure that this was the case. This assumption that socially sanctioned motherhood was incompatible with paid work came together to form what I refer to as a maternalist, patriarchal discourse. In this period two major bodies of law - labour law and social security law - governed the relationship between motherhood and the labour market. The 1907 Harvester Judgment of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration enshrined a maternalist discourse in labour law by ensuring that the average male worker's wages were sufficient to enable a married man to support a wife and three children. Although this judgment was contested at the time, and thus not immediately brought into practice, it did eventually become the basis for the Australian wage-labour system, which assumed women with children would remain out of the labour market, and ensured that male wages would be sufficient to support them to do so.

The maternalist emphasis of the wage-labour system was further bolstered by the Australian government system of income support payments introduced from 1914 onwards. This system, like that which developed in Canada and other nations, provided women with access to benefits on the basis of their role as mothers. At the same time, unlike other most other Western countries that developed an insurance based system of disability and unemployment assistance that disproportionately assisted men, and a less generous and more stigmatizing system of general social assistance that disproportionately assisted women, Australia created a single non-insurance based means-tested system of social assistance funded out of general revenue.

War widows were the first women to receive income support benefits from the Australian government, as part of the War Pensions Act of 1914 (Australian Government: Department of

Social Security 1980a, 4).[32] Three decades later the benefits provided to War Widows were extended to civilian widows in the Widow's Pension Act of 1942. The social imaginary of a strict gendered division of labour for those who bore children within marriage meant that it was seen as unreasonable to expect a married woman with children who lost her husband through death to enter the labour market. As a later Australian Government Department of Social Security report notes, the assumption underlying this act was that "fathers worked, [while] mothers kept house and cared for children" (Australian Government: Department of Social Security 1980b, 4). Speaking in support of the 1942 Act, then Labor Prime Minister John Curtin emphasized that the state would become a widow's de-facto breadwinner. Curtin argued:

> The burden of becoming a wage-earner in addition to her maternal obligations is too grievous a load for any nation to impose upon her. The price that she must pay is also the price which her children must pay. They suffer in consequence, and where the children of a nation suffer, inevitably the nation itself is weakened. I conclude by identifying myself with this measure (Australian House of Representatives. 1942).

Despite this concern with maternal obligations, the act did not support those who bore children outside a legal marriage, who were abandoned by their husbands or who left their husbands. Thus the concern was specifically with maternal obligations taken on in the context of a legal marriage and the loss of a spouse due to death. An income support payment for unmarried mothers, deserted de-facto wives and de-facto wives of prisoners was introduced thirty years later in 1973, when the government introduced Supporting Mother's benefit. A few years later (in 1977) it was renamed Supporting Parent's Benefits (SPB) and eligibility was extended to men. In 1989 SPB was amalgamated with the Widow's Pension and renamed Sole Parent Pension (SPP). Finally in 1998 a new Parenting Payment was introduced which amalgamated SPP with Parenting Allowance (PgA), which was paid to low income partnered parents whose primary responsibility was care of a child aged less than 16 years. Parenting Payment was paid at a higher pension rate for single parents, and a lower allowance rate for partnered parents.

Histories of Parenting Payment (PP) produced by the Australian Government and academics during the last 25 years frequently interpret the 1942 Act as the beginning of a system of support for

32 The Australian government established pension rights for widows of men who died in military service "In relation to war or war-related sole parenthood the 1903 Defence Act, the 1914 War Pensions Act, the various Australian Soldiers Repatriation Acts, the Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Act 1943 and the Seamen's War Pension and Allowances Act of 1940 have all in various ways provided for the dependants of members of the Forces." (Hammond, Australia Dept. of Social Security. 1980, 3).

single parents. For example, the history in the Social Security Journal states:

> In Australia, assistance for sole parents has been available, in varying forms, since 1942. Sole Parent Pension was introduced in 1989 when the then Supporting Parent's Benefit was amalgamated with Widow's Pension. This payment is available to both male and female lone parents who have the primary responsibility for the care of children aged under 16 years (Carberry, Chan, and Heyworth 1996, 108).

Importantly this historical narrative, which is repeated across numerous texts, downplays some very significant aspects of the history of income support for women without a male bread winner (See also Australian Government: Department of Social Security 1980b). Firstly, the dominant narrative asserts that the Australian system of income support for 'single parents' or 'single mothers' began with the 1942 Act and eligibility was slowly extended to include a more diverse range of individuals. This argument ignores that the pension provided to civilian widows was not later opened up to a more diverse range of individuals. Instead, over time the Australian government developed a range of different payments with different conditions that distinguished between individuals according to the route by which they came to have a dependent child and be single or separated (Hammond, Australia Dept. of Social Security. 1980).[33] Secondly, this conventional history ignores that until the 1970s policy makers and advocates did not consider the diverse individuals captured in the contemporary category of 'single parents' or 'single mothers' to constitute a meaningful administrative or social grouping. The social and administrative category of 'single mother' was produced in the late 1970s through specific sets of governmental practices, and activism by groups representing unmarried mothers (Foucault 2008). These aspects of Australian income support history are significant because, as I will illustrate, the contemporary administrative and social categories of single parents/single mothers continue to be haunted by the social and administrative categories of mothers that were created in the early decades of the Australian welfare state.

Eligibility conditions enacted in the 1942 Widow's Pension Act created a moral hierarchy of mothers. Those who were married were deemed most deserving and thus eligible for immediate

---

33 In 1973, the Australian government introduced the Supporting Mother's Benefit for those mothers who were not eligible for the Widow Pension. The introduction of this benefit provided "unmarried mothers, deserted de facto wives, women whose de facto husbands were in prison and other separated wives not eligible for widows' pension" with a benefit payable, at the same rate and subject to the same means test as Class A widows' pension (Australian Government: Department of Social Security 1980a, 4). However women were only eligible for these benefits after month waiting period from the date of separation or birth (McDonald, Spindler 1988). In 1977 it also renamed the benefit Supporting Parent's Benefit and extended eligibility to male sole parents (Daniels 1995). In 1980 the government introduced immediate eligibility.

assistance. Those who had a male partner but were not legally married were deemed less deserving of state support and therefore only eligible for assistance after serving a waiting period. Finally, those who had never been supported by a male partner were deemed undeserving of any benefits from the Australian Government.[34] In terms of the last category, it is noteworthy that the speeches around the 1942 Widow Pension Act do not explicitly argue that never-married mothers should not be provided with assistance. Instead they do not even recognize the existence of such women. With this Act, the Australian Government established its role as a replacement male breadwinner but did not seek to stand in for a male breadwinner where one had never existed. Underlining the state's role of replacing male breadwinners that were 'lost,' but not supplanting a male bread winner, a deserted wife or divorcee was not eligible "for a pension unless she had taken reasonable action to obtain maintenance or alimony" (Hammond, Australia Dept. of Social Security. 1980, 4). The state also presumed to take on the role of the moral head of the household through the Act's provision that all applicants for Widow's Pension must be "of good character and deserving of a pension" (Hammond, Australia Dept. of Social Security. 1980, 4).

The unified social grouping of "sole parents" and "sole/lone/single mothers", which Australian social policies have acted upon since the early 1980s, emerged from a concerted policy effort in the late 1970s to locate and produce data that would identify all those women who were not living with a partner or married but had a dependent child, as well as all those women who were receiving income support benefits from either the Australian government or one of Australia's six state governments on the basis of their parental responsibilities. These categories also emerged out of the efforts of newly formed advocacy groups to gain recognition and rights for unmarried mothers. Prior to the 1970s, advocacy groups did not represent the interests of sole mothers but instead the interests of widows. For instance, the Association of Civilian Widows of Australia (established in 1949) advocated for widows not 'sole mothers' and the Australian Council of Social Services published a comprehensive study into poverty among widows (*Widows in Australia*) in 1962, which does not consider the poverty of 'sole mothers' (Keen 1999, 654).[35] Advocacy groups for unmarried mothers emerged in the 1970s with the establishment of various state-based single mother councils and The National Council of Single Mothers and Their Children (NCSMC). These

34 The 1942 Widow's Pension Act only provided immediate financial assistance to a legally married woman who lost her husband through death. On the other hand unmarried mothers were not eligible for any assistance and other women such as deserted de jure wives or the wife of a prisoner were only eligible for assistance after six months of separation.

35 This report is credited with resulting in a very significant increase in pension rates.

organizations sought changes in the legal status of single mothers' children and these women's access to income support (NCSMC. 2010).

It is now widely recognized that statistical categories are socially and discursively produced and that social statistics play a very important role in this process, rendering some populations visible, and others invisible (Scheper-Hughes 1993, Starr 1987). In 1974 the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which forms part of the Australian Government bureaucracy, conducted its first *Family Survey,* which estimated that there were 183,100 sole parents (Daniels 1995). Less than a decade earlier the Census had for the first time collected data on sole parents (Daniels 1995). Enormous efforts were undertaken by the Australian government in the late 1970s to transform and organize the available administrative data so as to make the population of sole mothers visible. *Characteristics of Sole Mothers Receiving State Assistance Subsidised under the States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act* (1980a) describes difficulties in generating estimates of the population assisted under State Grants and presents lengthy descriptions of obstacles encountered. For example, they were unable to analyze the numbers in New South Wales "because of technical problems in accessing and processing the data" and they found it was "not possible to obtain data on the number of sole mothers who also received emergency assistance by the States" (Australian Government: Department of Social Security 1980a). Similarly, *A Review of the Characteristics of Sole Parents Assisted Under the Social Services Act* (Hammond, Australia Dept. of Social Security. 1980) released in the same year illuminates the exasperations, intense labours and complexities involved in finding appropriate data-sources and reconciling large discrepancies in the estimates obtained. Similar reports published throughout that decade and into the 1990s reveal the patient labour undertaken by policy makers and researchers in order to locate explanations for data discrepancies and to align divergent data definitions across different sources.

As the Australian Government began to view sole/lone mothers as a single social group, there was a decreased interest in the life events that brought them to the situation of being a mother without a breadwinner or their moral character - although the state has continued to retain some concern about the life events which lead a parent to claim income support. At the same time they developed new interests in understanding the demographic characteristics of this group, such as age distribution, health status, labour force experience, and education. The Social Security Review (1986 to 1988) produced the first detailed statistical picture of sole/lone mothers by gathering together extensive statistics on lone parents produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other sources as well as compiling administrative data from Department of Social Security claimant records. All of

this makes it clear that neither 'sole mothers' nor 'sole parents' were given access to payments in 1942. Instead they were only recognized as the self evident social (policy) groups they are today because of enormous, sustained social labour within multiple sites inside and outside the Australian government.

By the early 1980s the social categories of lone/sole mothers/parents had become self-evident. They were the categories through which policy was increasingly organizing itself, and attempting to govern. Importantly, they were also producing an ordered policy space, a certain 'regime of truth' which made possible relatively stable identities and moral obligations (Prozorov 2007, 6). Significantly embedded within this new administrative category was an uneasy slippage regarding gender; a slippage that has remained until this day. Within income support policy, gender is made visible in some situations and invisible in others. This slippage is evident in the initial Australian government publications that express a concern regarding the growth in sole parent families. Produced as part of the major two-year Australian Government Social Security Review, (1986 to 1988) the report *Bringing Up Children Alone: Policies for Sole Parents* had as its subject, or so its title suggests, male and female sole parents (Raymond 1987).[36] But within the opening pages it immediately establishes 'sole mothers' as the concern. It opens: "[o]ver the past 20 years there has been a marked shift in attitudes towards the participation of married women and women with children in the labour market" (Raymond 1987, 3). Continuing along these lines, it argues that "in examining workforce barriers [of sole parents] it should be borne in mind that many of the problems confronting sole mothers are those facing women generally." While Widow Pension (established in 1942) is clearly a payment for women, the category of sole/lone parents is ambiguously gendered. Here, and in policy debates that have occurred since, gender is evoked selectively and at particular sites. A sole parent is sometimes an un-gendered parent, but at other times a mother, or a woman lacking self-esteem and confidence, or a jobless parent. In the early 2000s Australian Government narratives referred to lone/sole/single parents as mothers who are reluctant to work because of concern about their children, but they never referred to the difficulties a woman may have gaining

36 In February 1986 the Hon. Brian Howe, M.P who was the current Minister for Social Security established the Social Security Review. The government funded the review for two years and charged it with developing "a long-term perspective future priorities and if necessary new directions for income security. The review covered all the major areas of the income support system and produced six major issues papers and 31 research and discussion papers" (Yeend 2002, Yeend 2002).

employment because of sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination. Female gender is also invoked during discussions of problems of self confidence or self-esteem, but male gender never is. And while there is much discussion regarding some problems that are apparently specific to women (such as confidence), there is little discussion of other problems, such as domestic violence, that are more commonly experienced by women than men.

The remainder of this chapter examines the narrative and pictorial images of single mothers and single parents produced by the high rating tabloid media. These images constantly produce and reproduce questions such as: who are those who receive Sole Parent Pension, Widow's Allowance or Parenting Payment? Who are the women who have children but no male breadwinner? What series of life events has brought her to this circumstance? What are her personal characteristics? Is such a woman a virtuous citizen deserving of state financial support, or are only certain types of such women deserving of support? If so, which types?

Images of the single mother in high rating print and television tabloid media

> Marie, single mother, 2005: I think there is a huge stereotype of the dole bludging,[37] welfare, chain-smoking, watching Oprah and Jerry Springer while the baby is … You know, I don't know anyone like that! Did you see Today Tonight last week?

Here Marie explains to me her position on the 2005 Welfare to Work changes through the lens of Today Tonight, a high rating tabloid current affairs show that airs nationally in the early evening on weekdays. Marie was far from alone in interpreting 'welfare reforms,' her own identity as a single mother and service providers' actions through the lens of the images produced within Today Tonight and similar tabloid news sources. When I asked interviewees whether or not they had been following the progression of the new Welfare to Work legislation in the newspapers or on television, their responses commonly included a reference to negative images produced by tabloid media.

In this context I define tabloid media as newspapers and current affairs shows that, as Goldwothy argues, promote "adversarial, punitive, self-righteous, us-and-them view of the world. 'We are the law-abiding, honest Australian citizens and taxpayers; 'they' are everybody else" (Goldsworthy 2005). Both television and print tabloid media present extreme representations and focus on sensational stories. Further, tabloid newspapers can be identified by their small format in

37 In the Australian vernacular the dole means income support and bludging means to scrounge from someone. The dole is a slang term for income support.

contrast to the broadsheets. In Australia, the high circulation tabloid newspapers include the *Sun Herald, Courier Mail* and *Daily Telegraph,* while the only major newspaper produced in Perth, *The West Australian,* is tabloid in format and its presentation of news stories. In terms of current affairs television shows, the two top rating tabloid shows are *Today Tonight* and *A Current Affair*. Both are usually among the top-rated television shows during ratings season.

Despite the high ratings that these programs attract, and the high circulation numbers achieved by such newspapers, for a variety of reasons these shows and newspapers held a marginal place in my life during the 15 years I lived in Australia. I was not fully conscious of how mainstream these media were and instead understood them largely as fringe discourses that, unlike policy debates in the United States, did not reflect the position of the major political parties, policy official or the general public. Thus, I did not expect these negative discourses and images to strongly shape single mothers' experiences of welfare reforms. But early into my fieldwork I realized that the images produced by these venues held a prominent place in the consciousness of the single mothers I interviewed and strongly shaped their understanding of the welfare reform package announced in 2005. As Maria who is quoted at the opening of this section explained:

> on …Monday night …it [Today Tonight] was about the welfare reform, they showed. [The single mothers] all looked about 18, had about two kids, single mums living in government housing. They said "We can't go back to work, we are not skilled, we don't want to work" and then two nights later they showed working mothers, single mothers, and both of them ... They … most people fall in the middle somewhere but I think, yes, there is a huge stereotype that the single mothers are living off the system and [people think] "Why should my taxes go to support them to stay home" and I think people don't really know, they jump on the bandwagon without actually, with not knowing all the facts, you know" (Marie, single mother, 2005).

Similarly, when I attempted to gauge another mum's awareness of the changes by asking "have you been able to follow the reforms in the newspapers or on television?" she replied:

> I mean, yeah, just the media portrayal that's come along and (p) it's quite disgusting, the way it was portrayed in the media. The reality of a sole parent, and the sole parent they portray on the news are always very biased…But, I mean on the news I think they showed a sole parent who had three children to different fathers and she had a mental illness and tried to ostracize her and made her look ridiculous on the TV. I mean these people just sponging of the welfare system, and it was very…one sided, nothing there from the other perspective. So yeah, that was nice [laughs] and then all the hot topics came up again about child abuse, and people in high risk situations, apparently sole parents are one of those-which I definitely find hard to imagine…So I guess that was going on at the same time, so that was part of why that was happening. But hearing politicians arguing that it was when your child turns five and then it got extended to seven and then, it was 15 hours paid work. They are the details I

picked up along the way (Marsha, 2006).

Like Marsha and Marie quoted here, the majority of the single mothers I interviewed referred to the shows and specific episodes at least once. These references most frequently arose in the context of my questions around their preferences regarding paid work and their opinions regarding the reasonableness of the 2005 Welfare to Work package. This linking of welfare reforms and negative images of single mothers was so strong that while I was carrying out the first set of interviews I began examining archives of Australian newspapers and current affairs shows. Once I had finished the first set of interviews I began to systematically examine the Australian tabloid media, including newspapers such as the Sun Herald, Daily Telegraph, The West Australian and Hobart Mercury, the high-rating weeknight current affairs TV shows Today Tonight, and A Current Affair, as well as non-tabloid high circulation newspapers produced since 1980.[38] Having analyzed the discourses within these texts, it became clear that over this period of time tabloid media outlets have produced a largely unchanged image of single mothers as sexually deviant or 'loose', lazy, and raising unhealthy, deviant and welfare dependent children. As chapter three of this thesis will illustrate, it also became clear that during the 1980s and right up until 2002 the Australian government consistently and vigorously defended single mothers against these negative images through statements to the media and publications, but then suddenly ceased these activities.

Within the tabloid media there is a repeated concern with the sexual morality of single mothers. Over the last 25 years they have consistently argued that many single mothers have children by different fathers, conduct sexual relations with many men simultaneously and take inadequate care of their children. For instance, in the mid 1980s, during the period of the major Social Security Review, the Sun Herald published an article on the topic of the key issues worrying female voters. It quoted one woman who suggested that many women conduct sexual relations with multiple men while claiming single parent benefit:

> I worked in a hospital where women would come in to have a baby and they'd collect social services as a single mother but were living with a chap, or even about five other chaps. There's a lot of that going on. It's about time it stopped.

This same theme was raised again in an article in 1986 entitled 'Single mother (of 7) answers pension

38 As discussed in the introduction to the thesis I searched for the following terms: Sole mother*; sole mum; sole parent*; lone mother*; lone mum; lone parent*; sole mother*; sole mum; sole parent*; single mother*; single mum; single parent*; teenage mother*; teenage mum; teenage parent*; sole parent pension, parenting payment, supporting mothers benefit, supporting parent's benefit; * = search for words with different endings.

critics', which opened:

> With seven children by six fathers, none of whom she married, Gerry Lomas disagrees with the Queensland Government's call to clamp down on the single mother's pension. In fact Ms Lomas thinks she deserves another "few hundred dollars" a fortnight in benefits (Sydney Morning Herald 1986a)

Ms Lomas was quoted as a response to comments by Queensland's Welfare Services Minister, Yvonne Chapman, about single mothers. Taking up the topic of Ms Chapman's comments again several months later an article stated that:

> Far right-wing political identities such as Queensland's Welfare Services Minister, Yvonne Chapman, even claim some women are deliberately getting pregnant to make themselves eligible for $118 a week pension…Peter Sawyer, author of the book Dole Bludging for Beginners claimed on TV last week that a recurring story in social security offices was of the deserted mother successfully claiming benefits at the counter while the father gunned the motor of the getaway car outside (Mollor, Taylor, J. Bonham, B. Howlett, S. 1986, 12).

Within the same article the paper reported the results of their poll of 2000 readers asking what groups most needed support. Their poll found that single mums were at the bottom of the list, with only 4 percent voting that this group needed support.

During the 1990s, concerns about single mothers' 'sexual deviance' were repeatedly articulated by Pauline Hanson, the founder of the radical far-right party One Nation who became a member of the Australian Parliament in 1996. In a press release, Ms Hanson argued that some single mothers "start young with children out of wedlock ... go on to have more children from different fathers and then finish up in a de facto relationship with a man not related to any of them" (Saunders 1998, 3). Ms Hanson's arguments were widely circulated within the tabloid and mainstream press.

These themes continued with little variation into the early 2000s. A few months following the announcement of new work requirements for single mothers with a youngest child aged over seven years, the tabloid current affairs television show *Today Tonight* screened a story about "Australia's Serial Single Mum." Reporter David Richardson approached a single mother named Marie-Anne in a car park (see figure 1) and sought to find out how many different men had fathered her five children:

> David: Listen I just want to ask you a couple of questions, how many kids have you got?
> Mary-Anne: 5

David: How many dads have you got?
Mary-Anne: Oh, I don't want to do this, thank you, no ...
David: How many, darling?

The presenter went on to state that since splitting with her partner Les, she "had two more children to two more men" *(Today Tonight,* Australia's serial single mum, 18 July 2005).

Figure 1: 'Australia's serial single mum' from *Today Tonight*, aired 18 July 2005

Figure 2: 'Extreme example of a teenage mum' from Teenage mums forum, 21 November 2006 from *Today Tonight*

Next to the charge of sexual promiscuousness, the accusation of laziness is probably the most frequent criticism levelled against single mothers. It is often claimed, or implied, that the majority of single mothers have children so as to obtain taxpayer funded income support and avoid the need to support themselves through participation in paid work. Further, these stories claim that once these woman gain access to income support benefits they fail to care for their children or themselves. An example from the late 1980s is a story in the *Sun Herald* which quoted a nurse stating that the issue she was most concerned about in terms of the upcoming Federal election was "…single mothers being encouraged to keep their children and then not looking after them. Some single mothers do a very good job, but I'm talking about the majority who don't. The mothers are receiving the benefits which in turn are not being spent on the children" (Wathen 1987). A decade later in 1998, the Queensland Police Commissioner was quoted as saying that single mothers' attitudes were, "Don't worry about the upbringing, get the allowances" (Parnell 1998). In the same period there was extensive coverage of Queensland General Practitioner Dr. Strokes' criticisms of PPS (Courier Mail 1998, Jefford, Groessler, Stratford-Smith. L., and Williams. H. 1998, Murphy

1998, Stokes 1998a, Stokes 1998b, Sunday Telegraph 1998). She argued that "[f]aced with unemployment or further education they [young women] take the opportunity of becoming mothers because it seems like an honourable alternative to dole bludging" (Daily Telegraph. 1998), and similarly that "Because they know they will not get a job, their life plan is only focused on bringing up a baby" (Sunday Telegraph 1998, 20).

These charges escalated in 2002 when the Howard Coalition government introduced the Baby Bonus, a refundable tax offset of a minimum of $500 and a maximum of $2500 that was paid upon the birth or adoption of a child (Australian Government 2002). In 2006 *A Current Affair* aired a segment that they described as a forum where they brought "young mums face-to-face with their critics" (aired November 21, 2006). The segment opens with the presenter saying:

> Let's show you an extreme example of a teenage mum who openly admits to having children for the money. [screen goes the young mother] "I did have them for the money. I reckon that a lot of teenage mothers would be out there having children for the money just so they don't have to go to work." (See screen shot figure 2).

The *Today Tonight* story on *Australia's serial single mum,* similarly focused on how much money single mothers received. *Today Tonight* quoted the woman's ex-partner saying "I think she's pulling a huge amount, an absolute fortune from the government, and she shouldn't just be on an easy street receiving government benefits while she's sitting at home." Further, the reporter added that the woman's ex-partner "pays nearly $7,000 a year in child support but since splitting with Mary-Anne and as a single mother, she can take advantage of everything the government has to offer" (18 July 2005).

Finally, tabloid media repeatedly reports that single mothers produce unhealthy and deviant children who become criminals, or end up homeless, and perpetuate a cycle of poverty and dependency. In newspaper reports regarding troubled youth, there is frequently mention made of single parent families. A profile published in the SMH in the mid 1980s entitled 'Witness the birth of a new breed of children of despair' focuses on homeless children and primarily single mothers. It profiles a single mother in the following terms:

> mother, 17, ran away from home at 14 to escape incest; she was given a housing commission flat after the birth of her son and began the fight against her own heroin addiction. The mother has no contact with her parents and no income save a single mother's pension. Her son's chances of growing up to live a normal, productive life are considered slim by social workers like Ms Banks (Sydney Morning Herald 1986b, 13).

Similarly an article on the Salvation Army Outreach Centre published in the Sun Herald notes that:

> The Outreach Centre was set up in 1982, operating from a three-storey terrace house. The Salvos[39] estimate that there are as many as 2,000 homeless youths in Kings Cross alone. They are mostly aged between 15 and 18, from broken homes, single parent or de facto families, low income or unemployed with little education or no basic skills (Conway 1987).

At other times the accusation that single parent families produce troubled and criminal children is even more direct and detailed. In 1998, the *Courier Mail* quoted the Queensland Police Commissioner arguing that the "'horrendous" breakdown of family values was to blame for much of Queensland's crime problem…. [he said] something needed to be done to break the cycle where children raised in dysfunctional families committed crime and started their own dysfunctional families' (Parnell 1998).

In summary, the tabloid media presents an image of single mothers as young, poorly educated, lazy and sexually promiscuous. These accusations that single mothers are sexually immoral and promiscuous, do not use payments for the benefit of their children, have children so as to avoid paid work and care for their children inadequately have been circulated within the tabloid media in an almost unchanged form since the mid 1980s.

Such enduring and strikingly consistent images strongly shape single mothers' subjectivities and, as I will elaborate in the following chapter, their experiences of personalized planning programs. At the same time, the women I interviewed did not experience these images in a singular way. Their class background, education, work status, and ethnicity all shaped their relationship to these images. Trish, a white woman with a graduate degree, explained her feelings about other people's impressions of single mothers in terms of an unfamiliar and uncomfortable feeling of being made visible in ways that she did not wish to be. She connected this to the experiences of other marginalized groups (which she refers to as 'minority groups'):

> I'm also aware of it because you hear about it in the media. I suppose I've never really been part of a minority group. And now I feel like I'm part of a minority group that is pointed out in the media. Like, say homosexual people, or something.

On the one hand this experience of being part of a socially marginalized group gave her a sense of solidarity with others in the same situation, but at the same time she felt a desire to distance herself from certain perceptions.

> It's so (p), it's so strange, and in a way it can kind of be (p) you know, you sort of share a bit of a solidarity with other women in your position. But, also you kind of, wish you weren't part of it at the same time.

---

39 Salvation Army

While as an individual trained in social sciences and humanities she could see that these images of single mothers were not natural but socially produced, she nevertheless experienced a wish to distance herself from them.

> Interviewer (Michelle): To differentiate, is that what you mean? The feeling of wanting to distance yourself?
>
> Um, more from that it's more a distancing from the way that the category is understood and perceived. Like, I mean you look at in some Aboriginal cultures in Australia the single mother is constructed in a completely different way. You know? And because of that sort of thing. Like I do reading about family types and all that stuff. Like you realize how much the single mother is, socially constructed as quite negative in Australian society. So, I guess I'm probably quite aware of it. Trish, 2006

Despite an awareness of the stereotypes, these ideas about single mothers being young and uneducated nevertheless shaped Trish's assumptions about individuals she met. And as she admitted the following year, she found that she was not "immune from making those assumptions" herself. For instance, she stated that while "it sounds terrible" she had been surprised or shocked that certain people were not single parents, "and then I think to myself, "why did I assume that person was a single parent? Well, because she is really young to have a child', you know? So I sometimes catch myself doing that, which you know, and being a single parent myself you realize how prevalent those assumptions are, and the assumptions that people do make about single parents" (Trish, 2007).

Another woman (Isabella) who was white, had some university education and was working in low paid casual caring work did not argue that these images were socially constructed and appeared to feel more strongly the need to justify to others that her circumstances were distinctly different from the negative stereotypes. While Trish felt some solidarity with other women who were single mothers, Isabella refused any affiliation, declining even to use the label: "I never use it, single mum. I like single parent 'cause that's really stereotyping. You never say single dad." Her paid work involved interactions with the elderly and she found that they were very likely to judge single mothers such as herself. They associated the poor economic status of many single parents with "where you might be living, what sort of job you've got, your intelligence level, partnering status." Referring back again to the media, she pointed to the assumption that single mothers were promiscuous: "It's kind of like who is the dad? Does he see his daughter? it's kind of like in the media the assumption that, I don't know what, I have to almost justify that like we were engaged, we

were in a house. It's like why do I have to justify?" (Isabella, 2007). Isabella did not identify as a single mother, and within the interview argued that most single mothers have a "welfare dependent mentality", but she recognized that this was how others viewed her: "we're slotted in due to Centrelink and the media and people's view of us. But within myself, no." (Isabella, 2007).

A factor that strongly influenced women's negotiation of these negative images was the degree to which they could distance themselves from them by pointing to elements of their own life that ran contrary to the negative stereotype. Over the course of my study many of the women appeared to feel personally less strongly affected by the images. In some cases it was because they could more easily point to elements of their life that no longer fitted the negative image. Noticing this seemed to be the case with one mother, Marie, I asked "do you think that the degree to which it affects you has changed over time? Because I think when we talked two years ago you felt quite affected." She indicated that the fact she no longer received payments and was working full-time meant that she could clearly differentiate herself. She responded: "yeah I'm over it now. Especially now that I'm working full time. I'm really proud that I don't qualify for a single parent pension now. I guess the less I feel that I fit the stereotype the less it bothers me. When I was not working and on a pension it was like 'yea I am one of those, I'm fitting the stereo type'. Now I'm not" (Marie, 2007). Thus Marie did not reject the stereotype but instead relied differences between elements of the stereotype and her life circumstances to distance herself from it. Thus, in a sense, they relied upon the stereotypes in order to defend themselves against the prevailing negative images.

In other cases the interviewees came over time to create new narratives that involved rejecting these stereotypes. While the change in Marie's feelings about being a single mother occurred in parallel with gaining employment and leaving the pension, others rejected the discourses in which they were judged on the basis of their labour force participation. Phillis spoke of feeling "good when I picked up the kids and I was wearing my uniform because I didn't want people to think that I was just a single mother, and I think that was a big part of it, that …I wasn't just a mum." But she went on to say that with time she had stopped thinking in this way: "although that doesn't bother me anymore. …before I was a single mother I was very judgmental and I had the mindset that a lot of people have that single mothers are bludgers and so on and I think it takes quite a few years to get past that to where I think differently" (Phillis, 2005).

Those who had demographic characteristics (age, education, prior marital status) that put them close to the stereotype talked about feeling most affected in their day to day actions and experience, and about actively monitoring their presentation in public. The three women in my study

who were young and unmarried when they gave birth and claimed benefits all emphasized how they made sure that they were 'dressed nicely' before leaving the house and made sure that their children were also "always looking their best" and "healthy and clean." Anne-Marie stated "if I'm not dressed nicely then they're going to assume that I'm a young (long pause) single mum who can't look after herself" (Anne-Marie, 2006) while Josie explained she dresses well so people do not assume "you know she's a bum unemployed kind of a thing… like she's typical, you know, Centrelink person" (Josie, 2005).

Thus, while all interviewees' everyday experiences of being single mothers were to some degree shaped by negative images of single mothers circulated and produced by the Australian media, the specifics of these experiences varied depending on their social position. A few interviewees were able to view these images as social constructions, and while they still felt personally affected by them they were nevertheless able to take a critical position on how the images were produced. But many single mothers remained trapped within these discourses and defended themselves against negative images by reference to the ways in which their demographic or moral characteristics differentiated them. These interviewees accepted that the negative images were accurate and fair descriptions of some single mothers and defended themselves through their own distinguishing characteristics. For most it was their previous marital status or participation in paid work or study that they felt differentiated them from and defended them against negative subjectivities. For some, especially the teen mothers, defence and distancing required concerted attention to personal presentation and the appearance of their children.

These negotiations reflect the spaces of freedom and constraint that exist for mothers differentially placed within the social body. Discourses within the Australian media establish the problem of lazy, sexually deviant, young and uneducated mothers. The question then becomes: are single mothers like this or are they not? And the choice becomes, find paid work, get married, be older, get an education, or do none of things and accept that you are part of this derided group. Importantly, these discourses shape debates on welfare reforms and mothers' experiences of them. There is very little if any space in these media narratives for a consideration of single mothers' well-being, aspirations, choices, and freedom. In turn, questions about whether or not personalized planning programs and income support requirements support single parents' choices, wellbeing and freedom cannot be asked. Instead, dominant popular images frame questions about welfare reform in terms of whether or not changes will address the 'problem' of single mothers.

Conclusion

Despite a significant body of work on the sociology of statistics, within social policy debates social categories such as single mothers and single parents are used as if they are trans-historical and self-evident. In contrast, this chapter has illuminated the vast labour across multiple sites that went into producing these categories. Furthermore, it has illustrated an uneasy slippage regarding gender embedded in the new category of single parents. As I will illustrate in more detail in chapters three and four, gender is both hyper visible and silenced in personalized planning programs targeted at PPS recipients. For example, Welfare to Work emphasizes the image of the young teenage single mother through the language of intergenerational welfare dependency, but there is silence around the highly sex-segregated nature of Australia's labour market.

Chapter three: Problematizing lone/single/sole parent mother and her lifecourse

This chapter continues the genealogy of Australian single mothers and the practices through which they are governed by examining the rationalities and practices of personalized planning programs which emerged in Australia during the 1980s and developed throughout the course of the 1990s and 2000s. This historical period coincides with the emergence of neoliberal political rationalities, and with the rise of personalized planning programs as the key technology for governing Australian single mothers.

Section one of this chapter examines problematizations of the relationship between single parents and income support that occurred during the period 1980 to 2007, and the ways these problematizations engaged with existing social hierarchies and popular images. As argued in chapter two, from the 1940s to the 1970s the Australian welfare state apparatus institutionally embedded a hierarchy of single mothers, while the tabloid media from the 1970s until the present produced a largely unchanging image of single mothers as lazy and sexually deviant. I focused on the 1970s onwards as this is the period when benefits were extended to unmarried mothers. Within this chapter I argue that during the 1980s and 1990s the Australian Government sought to actively dismantle embedded hierarchies of single mothers and to explicitly counter these images produced within the tabloid media. Furthermore, in the years coinciding with the implementation of Welfare to Work (2005 onwards) the government ceased defending single mothers, and stopped emphasizing their caring work. As I illustrated in chapter two, one of the effects of this was that my interviewees interpreted Welfare to Work as designed to reform single mothers who fitted the negative stereotype. Yet, even as the Australian government has moved away from acknowledging Parenting Payment (single) (PPS) recipients' caring work they have nevertheless continued to justify income support conditions with reference to children's future wellbeing. While feminist welfare state theorists in Canada and the United Kingdom (Brodie 2010, Dobrowolsky, Jenson 2004, Lister 2006, McKeen 2006) have argued that this emphasis on the well-being of children and erasure of the independent needs of women has coincided with the emergence of neoliberal political rationalities,[40] I argue that this emphasis has been a consistent feature of the Australian system since the 1940s,

40 As Brodie argues in Canada "…amidst ever louder neoliberal rhetoric, children had become almost the sole remaining group that could legitimately make claims on the state for financial support (Brodie 2010, 1597).

although the way it has manifested in policy has varied.

Section two of this chapter examines the governance of the single mother's lifecourse. While Australian policy has always been formed with reference to imaginaries regarding women's lifecourses, I argue that these imaginaries of a lifecourse have become a more important object of governance in recent decades. Such a shift in the object of governance has brought about an increased use of anticipatory modes of power (Shields 2010) that attempt to act upon how the lifecourse unfolds. Within policy the object of governance is less problems occurring in the concrete present and more the imagined unfolding of a lifecourse. Thus governance attempts to interrupt and redirect certain flows which, it is imagined, will result in futures of welfare dependency, intergenerational welfare dependency and unsustainable welfare systems.

Problematics of the income support system

Since the 1980s new problematics have emerged to link various developing problems within the income support system to popular images of single mothers, as well as to engage in a process of writing and rewriting the history of the Australian income support system. In 2005 when I began to work on this project the Australian government had just released its Welfare to Work budget package. Official documents associated with the package argued that such changes were necessary because the income support system contained outdated presumptions, was unsustainable and promoted welfare dependency. Welfare to Work 'reforms' were targeted at 'parents' and made no specific reference to mothers or single parents. Welfare to Work's particular rendering of the history the Australian income support system and its effects rationalized the changes it proposed, just as previous renderings had justified earlier sets of changes. These histories of the welfare state helped to establish the grounds on which current policies can be contested, the sets of facts that are relevant to the debate (Foucault 1990a).

In terms of Welfare to Work, the sets of facts whose truth or falsity could be debated were the sustainability of the system, whether or not children will suffer if Parenting Payment recipients are required to undertake paid work and whether or not the provision of income support in the absence of work requirements leads to dependency. An example of this is the ways that advocacy groups' critiques of Welfare to Work ended up reinforcing many of the grounds on which these changes were made. The National Council of Single Mothers and their Children (NCSM) argued that these changes would be detrimental to children, hence attempting to counter the claim that assumptions underpinning the income support system were outdated. They also challenged the claim

of welfare dependency by arguing that most single parents work or study (or both) while they are receiving support. The limits of the debate were captured in an exchange between the chair of a senate committee on Welfare to Work and member of the NSCMC Dr McInnes:

> CHAIR —Could I come back to the comment that you made about the legislation being either silent about children or, as you put it in your submission, antichild. I put it to you that 700,000 children in Australia are growing up in jobless households is antichild.
>
> Dr McInnes —Babies like parents who do not work.
>
> CHAIR —Can I ask you to let me finish.
>
> Dr McInnes —Sorry, I thought you had finished.
>
> CHAIR —Young people who are living with parents on income support are statistically much more likely to leave school early, to become unemployed, to become teenage parents and to end up on income support themselves. People in households where families are working do not experience those outcomes to the same degree. Is it not appropriate that that is the target of this legislation: to provide role models in families where, at the moment, jobs just are not present?
>
> Dr McInnes —I think it misrecognises that this is an issue of role modelling. Quite often people who are living on income support are forced to live in areas where there are fewer jobs because they can afford the housing. The opportunities in the education system for people who grow up in poverty are always worse than for those who grow up with adequate income in the household. When you talk about children growing up in jobless families, the figures that you cite include the parents of infant children. Infant children tend to do better with consistent parental care and child care that suits the families' needs (Australia. Senate. 2005a).

Here the Senator's argument that a child's well-being suffers when his/her single mother does not work engage in paid work, stands in direct contrast to Prime Minister Curtin's 1942 statement that a child suffers when his/her mother has to engage in paid work. To understand how this shift occurred, this section examines how the Australian government over the last thirty years has imagined and re-imagined sole/lone/single parents and the history of the income support system.

Foucault's later work on practices of the self, which formed part of the theoretical matrix set out in chapter one, is useful for framing and illuminating relationship between mothering/parenting and paid work, and spaces for the practice of freedom. As described in chapter one, Foucault posited that contemporary practices of the self were focused either on practices of self-renunciation or on uncovering singular truths about oneself, in contrast with ancient practices of the self. His observations on the ways that within Christian practices "love of the self becomes suspect and comes to be perceived as one of the roots of various moral offenses" (Foucault 1997a, 288) parallels suspicions that good mothering cannot co-exist with self love. As mothering scholars have clearly shown, within contemporary discourses renunciation of self love and concern is

commonly conflated with good mothering. Being a good mother often involves an individual being satisfied with not being recognized as a complex human being but instead "reduced to a function, to a thing for use" (Christian 1994, 117). In some contexts there is an expectation that mothers will be so selfless that they will no-longer cherish life (Christian 1994, 117). Similarly Bassin argues from the perspective of mothering in North America that the mother is portrayed as self sacrificing and "not a subject with her own needs and interests" (Bassin, Honey, and Kaplan 1996, 2). Such narratives suggest that a mother's concern with herself is problematic insofar as it may lead her to neglect the care of her children. Within the following I examine how personalized planning programs directed at PPS recipients linked this discourse on good mothering with a neoliberal emphasis on developing an enterprising subjectivity.

I begin this history with the Social Security Review (SSR), which the then Minister for Social Security, Brian Howe MP, established in 1986. Minister Howe funded the review for two years and commissioned it:

> to develop a long-term perspective on priorities and, where needed, new directions for income security, focussing on three main areas:
> income support for families with children
> social security and workforce issues
> income support for the aged (Yeend 2002).

The SSR devoted considerable attention to the issue of income support for lone parents, especially through the publication *Bringing up Children Alone: policies for lone parents*. This report identified many different problems and difficulties, such a high rates of poverty among lone parents, low participation rates in education and training. Importantly however, the final report failed to translate these "into a general problem" that could be addressed through diverse solutions; a singular problematic (Foucault 1997c, 117-8). Unlike the 2005 Welfare to Work package which, as I elaborate below, clearly ties various difficulties including an aging population and increasing rates of receipt of income support among those of workforce age to a general problem of 'welfare dependency', the SSR failed to establish a general problematic that tied together the diverse difficulties that had arisen in the relationship between lone parents and income support.

Yet the SSR is very important because it developed many of the grounds that would later come together into a coherent problematic of welfare dependency. SSR established a body of evidence showing there had been a rapid increase in the lone parent population and the number of people

claiming income support payments for lone parents. The review established that over a thirteen year period (1974 to 1985) there was a 73 percent increase in the number of sole parents and a resulting increase in the proportion of all families who were sole parents families (from 9.2 to 14.4 percent). This rapid increase was primarily attributed the Family Law Act in 1976 which, unlike the previous Matrimonial Causes Act, provided the possibility of 'no fault' divorce and enabled shorter periods of separation prior to divorce (Raymond 1987). SSR also established that the numbers of sole parents receiving sole parent related pensions and benefits had grown even more quickly than the increase in sole parent families. Between 1976 and 1986 the number of claimants increased by 255% (from 105,100 to 268,400), and "total outlays on sole parent pensions increased by 230% in real terms" (Raymond 1987, 28). While in 1974 only 57 percent of all sole parents received a pension or benefit from the Australian government, 12 years later 83 percent did. The increase in the proportion of sole parents receiving benefits was largely attributed to the introduction of Supporting Mother's benefit in 1973, the extension of assistance to supporting fathers in 1977 and the abolition of the six-month waiting period for Supporting Parent Benefit from November 1980 (Raymond 1987, 28). However, the review also attributed this increase in the number of recipients to the steady increase in the average length of spells on payment, which it primarily linked to the decline in sole parents' labour force participation rate since 1974:

> The labour force participation rate for sole mothers has declined from levels of 45% in 1974 and 48% in 1975 to 41% in 1985 while the participation rate for sole fathers has declined from 95% in 1974 to 79% in 1985 (Raymond 1987, 28).

The decline in labour force participation among sole parents was in turn attributed to both the downturn in economic conditions over this period and the rapid "increase in total numbers of sole parents in the population" (Raymond 1987, 28). Authors of the *Bringing up Children Alone* report explained "Given that it must take some time to adjust to sole parenthood, it is probably not surprising that labour force participation will fall during a period when numbers of sole parents are rapidly increasing" (Raymond 1987, 28). In all of these lines of argument it is clear that the SSR, unlike Welfare to Work, did not establish a clear problematic related to sole parents. SSR attributed the large increase in the number of single parents receiving assistance to a diverse set of social and economic changes. In contrast, statements preceding and surrounding Welfare to Work establish a single problematic: this increase is due to the growth in jobless families, which is due to increased

welfare dependence among workforce age individuals.

In addition to quantifying the magnitude of the growth in the single parent and beneficiary populations and the factors influencing this growth, the SSR also established evidence for a number of other difficulties in the relationship between single parents and the income support system. They argued that the structure of Australian income support payments for sole parents resulted in a low labour force participation rate and a high poverty rate for this group. Reflecting emerging concerns with ensuring that all income support regulations fostered enterprising dispositions among beneficiaries, the SSR cited concerns about high marginal tax benefits, and an absence of earnings concessions, which prevented people from receiving financial benefits from labour market participation. Poverty levels were blamed on low benefit levels and the lack of incentive to participate in the labour market.[41] Paralleling the multiple lines of argument that the SSR review explored in relation to the growth in the lone parent population, the review also attributed the very high poverty rates among lone parent families (37% below the poverty line in 1973-4 and 36% in 1978-9) to declines in benefit rates under the previous Fraser Liberal government (1973-83) and the failure of most non-custodial parents to provide their children with any financial support (Raymond 1987, 28). Given these wide-ranging and exploratory lines of argument, it is not surprising that the SSR's final recommendations were rather tentative. While the authors of the Bringing Up Children Alone argue it is important for lone parents to increase their labour force participation, they also suggest that a range of factors make it difficult to succeed in moving larger numbers into paid work. Firstly, lone parents face a range of workforce barriers that policy could not quickly or easily address including sole responsibility for a child, low wages, lack of educational qualifications, geographical location, low self-esteem, poverty rates and costs of working. Secondly, sole parents have diverse characteristics (health, housing and support networks) which affect their ability to undertake paid work. This makes it difficult to establish singular work requirements that would be reasonable for all (Raymond 1987, 28).

At the same time, the SSR held out hope that many difficulties would simply resolve themselves. For instance, they pointed out that the average number of children in sole parent pensioner families had fallen recently, as had the proportion of recipients in older age groups (40

41 As evidence for this claim it argues that countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom that "provide relatively modest but non-work-tested benefits, have high marginal tax rates and provide fewer earnings concessions [and] less assistance than other countries via the tax system" have much lower participation rates than other countries (Raymond 1987, 28).

years plus). These trends suggested that in the future, sole parents would generally find it easier to move into the workforce than they had in the past.

In its conclusion, Bringing Up Children Alone makes a number of tentative recommendations for reform including increased benefit levels for single parents, the continuation of single parent payments for a short period after parents lose eligibility due to paid work, and "intervention at an early stage, to help sole parents with improving their levels of skills and confidence, to provide job search assistance, and to provide access to suitable child care at a reasonable cost" (Raymond 1987, 129). Importantly, this final recommendation regarding early interventions is not clearly linked to deliberations within the report but instead connects to concerns articulated within other SSR documents that reforms must create an active system of income support and foster enterprising subjects (Dean 1995, 568).

SSR's 'active society' line of argument drew upon and broadly corresponded with the OECD's concept of the "active society" outlined in most detail within the OECD publication *The Future of Social Protection* (Dean 1998, Dean 1995a).[42] Briefly, the active society argument posited that due to "challenges presented by more open markets, new technologies and changing patterns of world trade" income support policies "should not 'passively' support people during periods of unemployment, but should have an active role, more closely integrated with education and training policies, in developing the skills and characteristics which would improve the labour market opportunities of the individual" (OECD. 1988, 7). Rejecting the principles underpinning the post-war welfare state the OECD argues that the provision of a financial safety net should no longer be the key objective of social protection. Instead "the objective of social protection policy must be to ensure that each member of society the possibility of an active role and participation in that society" (OECD. 1988, 7). It argued that such changes were imperative due to changes in demography, social structure, levels of affluence and the labour market. Employment, income support and child care structures needed to adapt to the increased number of lone parent families, with over 10 percent of families with children in many OECD countries being lone parent families, and to increases in long term dependency upon income support and public housing. Contemporary mechanisms of income support for the working age had been designed with the idea that this assistance would be

42 A variation of this idea that social policy should equip individuals to participate in the public sphere was key to the recommendations of the 2000 McClure Welfare Reform Reference Group which argued that the Australian government should take a 'participation support' approach to welfare reform.

transitional and not long term. It was

> therefore a matter of concern both that some people are dependent upon such relatively low incomes for long periods, and that income support mechanisms sometimes function in such a way as to create so called poverty traps….this long term dependence presents the challenge of how to eliminate this pattern of exclusion from activity, opportunity and mobility (OECD. 1988, 7).

Finally, while most social security systems were designed on the assumption that "males [would be] in steady, full-time organized employment with economically inactive wives" the world has changed so that there has been a sharp increase in the labour market participation of married women and full-time organized employment is less common among males of workforce age due to longer periods in education and increases in contract, part-time and other irregular forms of employment (OECD. 1988, 7). This reasoning reflected the idea that income support should enable the unemployed "to live in such a way that he can always be available for possible work, if market conditions require it" (Foucault 2008, 207).

The Future of Social Protection emphasizes that social policy must no longer be something separate from economic policy but rather must be integrated with it. In contrast to seminal policy initiatives of the welfare state era such as the New Deal and the Beveridge plan, which held that "generous social policy… [should be] a kind of reward or compensation" for strong economic growth, the OECD argued that social policy should be designed to facilitate economic growth (Foucault 2008, 142). Thus the OECD argued that while social policy should not be subordinated to economic policies", social "policy instruments should be so designed as not to undercut or impeded the capacity of the economy to adapt and adjust to wider changes" (OECD. 1988, 7). Or in positive terms, the improvement of economic performance should be one of the functions of social policy: "social policies should in a sense be concerned with the effective functioning of the supply side of the economy as one way to achieve important social aims" (OECD. 1988, 7). Social policy makers since 1945 had, they tell us, taken "economic growth and performance for granted" and assumed that "growth would provide the resources for expanding social programs, and any detrimental consequences could be discounted" (OECD. 1988, 7). But the report warns us that the recessions of the 1980s have demonstrated that such growth cannot be taken for granted. It warns that the achievement of "particular policy aims may hinder broader social objectives": income security may limit income growth, social housing may inhibit labour mobility, support for home ownership may lead to overinvestment in housing, and employment protection may inhibit employment growth. Implicitly contrasting their position with laissez-faire capitalism, the OECD argues that social policy

should not be subordinated to economic policies. Nevertheless, it makes clear that the effect of social policies on the market must be assessed, but not vice versa. Social policy makers must cease viewing programs as themselves *outcomes* and instead focus attention upon "the questions of the optimal *contribution* of public policies" to society (OECD. 1988, 7). In other words, social policy must contribute to the economy through fostering the enterprise form throughout it.

Influenced by the 'active society' argument of the OECD, the SSR argued that because unemployment was increasingly 'structural' rather than 'frictional', the social support system needed to focus on training income support recipients.[43] Training would play a dual role of retraining individuals for new positions and keeping them active, thus inoculating them against social exclusion (Dean 1995, Dean 1998). Paralleling the argument in the OECD's *Future of Social Protection* that social policy must move away from enabling the inactivity and dependency of groups such as widows and sole parents as the post war welfare state had done, the SSR argued it was necessary activate these 'inactive' groups through increasing their access to education and training.

In advancing this argument, the SSR ignored that the post war welfare state launched a number of training schemes for these groups, which were dismantled only a decade prior to the review. In 1952 the Australian government implemented a War Widows and Defense Widows training scheme and in September 1968 it launched the Training Scheme for Widows (TSW) (Australian Government: Department of Social Security 1980b). TSW aimed "to help widow pensioners acquire vocational skills which will enable them to undertake gainful employment. Training may take the form of refresher courses or it may involve training for new skills" (Australian Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics 1969, 453-4). This program offered very generous benefits, including the payment of fees and expenses related to education and training (including the cost of textbooks), and these far exceeded benefits providing through training schemes implemented after the SSR. TSW participants could also receive a weekly $5 living away from home allowance and an additional $4 per week training allowance on top of the participants' usual pension payment (Australian Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics 1969, 453-4). Four months after the program's launch 3,000 widows had applied to participate and three years later (in June 1971) 2,022 women were training under the program (Toshack 1972, 3). Newspaper coverage reported that participants had obtained a range of qualifications including School Certificates, primary teaching qualifications, university degrees, and art college diplomas, as well as certificates in typing,

43 Unemployment that occurs when a worker moves from one job to the other and there is a break in between.

shorthand, and cooking (Sydney Morning Herald 1969, 12). TSW was closed in 1974 and rolled into a general training scheme for all Australians (the National Employment and Training (NEAT) scheme.) While sole parents were a target group for the NEAT scheme there was no longer any specific programs tailored to them.

SSR and subsequent income support reviews ignored this historical concern with training widows in favour of a welfare state history in which the post-war Australian income support system assumed women cared and men worked. This image of the welfare state as producing inactivity and social dependency enabled the SSR to question the contemporary applicability of these assumptions given the increases in married women's labour force participation rates, the increasing number of sole parent families, and increased durations on income support among workforce age individuals. In contrast, a history in which widows enthusiastically took up comprehensive supports for training and education would raise questions about why such programs were cut, and what this told us about the costs and challenges of these programs for government.

Another important feature of the SSR was its attempts to disembed images of Supporting Parent Benefit beneficiaries as unmarried teenage mothers. Reviewing the documents surrounding the SSR, including press releases and newspaper articles, one is struck by how explicitly those involved in the review attempted to counter public perceptions that the availability of this benefit encouraged young women to become single parents. They used statistics to emphasize that very few single mothers were teenage mothers, that the rates of births to teenagers had remained constant over time and that most women claimed this benefit due to separation or divorce. The age and marital status of single mothers were not peripheral issues for the review but constituted some of its core messages. One of the key newspaper articles covering the release of the *SSR* discussion paper *Bringing up Children Alone: policies for lone parents* shouts in its headline: "It's a myth girls have babies to get pension, says [Minister] Howe"[44] and it opens with the sentence "Australia has 7,400 teenage single parents but the notion that teenage girls are having babies specifically to claim the supporting parent's benefit is largely a myth, according to a Government review."[45] The article goes on to quote the Minister for Social Security, Mr Howe, arguing "[t]his thorough analysis of sole parent families shows that much of what the community thinks about sole parents is fiction." And the newspaper

44 Brian Howe, Minister for Social Security, 1984-1990.

45 This explicit attempt to counter negative stereotypes ran counter to US welfare reforms where radicalization was used to garner support for reforms.

article quotes *Bringing up Children Alone's* argument that "[i]f motherhood is the most appealing option to some teenage girls, then a broader range of educational and employment programs may be needed for them" (see also LoPo 1987, Williams 1987b). Later the same year the Minister (Howe) gave a speech to the National Council of Women conference on marriage in which he stated that

> I have an enormous admiration for many of these single parents who left an intolerable domestic situation and have battled to maintain their morale and a future for their child or children…to create a good atmosphere for growing children… These women experience great loneliness. They are too often shunned by the traditional family as if their condition were catching. State Governments should turn their attention to the implications of reinforcing their isolation by providing distant housing and limited public transport and community facilities… A family manifesting poverty is something of an outcast as are the children who lack the possessions of other children. If the children are in trouble, it is immediately linked to the single-parent status.

During the passing of legislation following the SSR, members of the government also explicitly rejected these images. The MP for Darling argued:

> I am happy to take this opportunity to comment on one program which the Government introduced in yesterday's Budget; that is, the jobs, education and training program, the JET help program for sole parents. It is high time a government took a stance such as this, putting forward a constructive answer to the concerns and problems facing sole parents, instead of their being blamed, as victims, for society's ills. I have been particularly concerned at a recent trend which tends to fall back on ostracising sole parents at a time when they are bringing up families alone and going through the trauma of quite recently having lost a spouse, or the trauma of marital breakup (Australian House of Representatives 1988b, 307).

In advancing this argument the MP for Darling suggests that training programs and education are neutral mechanisms in contrast to the moralizing arguments of the tabloid media. Her statement also produces single parents and mothers as subjects that are capable of making good decisions.

A year after the release of the SSR 's final report the government sought to further dismantle the hierarchies of single mothers by collapsing the Supporting Parent's Benefit (the income support benefit available to unmarried mothers and all single fathers) and the Widow A Pension (available to widowed, separated and divorced women) into the Sole Parent Pension (SPP). Speaking in support of the changes, Social Security Minister Senator Graham Richardson argued:

> This change rids the social security system of categories of benefit based on moral judgments of the worth of individuals and provides a pension which acknowledges the present need for support of sole parents, regardless of the cause of the sole parenthood (Richardson 1988).

In making this argument he closely echoed an earlier statement of Bill Hayden, the Whitlam Labor Government's Social Security Minister, that the new Supporting Mothers Benefits introduced in 1973 'would place all supporting mothers with children in the same position as widows and would remove the "unjustifiable discrimination" (Sydney Morning Herald 1973).

SSR's ideas and problematizations underwent further development as its recommendations were translated into concrete policies and practices. Through the drafting of legislation, legislative debates, evaluation reports, and responses from advocacy groups and other political parties, the problems regarding the relationship between single parents and income support were refined into an increasingly coherent set of problems, a more unified policy problematic. Of the multiple themes identified by the SSR, the key themes embraced by policy makers and the Australian government were concerns with sole parents' qualifications, confidence, job search skills and access to reasonably priced child care. Within the final legislative package the Labor government argued that new education and training subsidies and low cost child care, together with the practical and supportive advice of an education and training adviser would result in more single mothers moving into employment. Changes for sole parents implemented from 1989 onwards included a new Pensioner Education Supplement ($60 per fortnight) and a $200 education entry payment introduced in 1991 (Daprè 2006). But the most prominent change was the introduction of the JET program, which aimed to "equip sole parents to join the work force through a combination of counselling, training and child care subsidies" (Australian Senate 1988, 4016). Labor declared this new program would provide "special counselling and individual guidance to sole parents choosing their future direction" (Australian Senate 1988, 4016). But it emphasized material assistance even more strongly than counselling by arguing that it would

> . . . be conducted by possibly a history-making combination of the resources… and…It will focus on skills, income support and child care, providing an integrated approach to encourage and equip sole parents to join the workforce (Australian Senate 1988, 4016).

The new JET program was further rationalized on the basis of child poverty. During the passing of the JET legislation, many of the speeches from government members located discussion of the new program with reference to child poverty. They argued that this problem had in part been addressed through the new family allowance supplement, but that in order to effect further reductions in child poverty the areas of housing and employment now had to be addressed. As MP Jenkins argued in legislative debates following the SSR:

> It is recognised that sole parents are particularly disadvantaged in their efforts to find work. As a direct consequence of this disadvantage, it is estimated that more than half the Australian children living in poverty are in single parent families. In 1981-82 the incidence of poverty was higher for the children of sole parents than for any other household type. Of all sole parent households, 46 per cent were below the poverty line. Seventy per cent of sole parent households with three children were below the poverty line. Ninety-one per cent of sole parent households with four or more children were living in poverty. In the Budget the Government announced a major new program-the jobs, education and training program (JET) - which is aimed at assisting sole parents into the work force and lifting themselves and their children out of poverty (Australian House of Representatives. 1988).[46]

As chapter four will elaborate in more detail, the new assistance provided by the Australian government was not tied to 'work first' type regulations, whereby policy makers focus on work requirements and giving individuals the minimum level of skills necessary to enable them to obtain employment. This is illustrated in part by the fact that individuals who already had marketable skills were not denied further assistance, even though the new assistance was primarily designed to address a lack of labour market skills within the sole parent population.

JET arose primarily in response to a concern with lone parents' poverty rates and the increasing number claiming benefits. Maternal employment was understood as the best way to address these problems and JET sought to reduce what were understood as the primary barriers to maternal employment - skills, initial costs of entering employment and child care. But the economic assistance provided to meet these costs differed from the TSW in both its level of generosity and form. While TSW had an officer who paid for the participant's textbooks and fees in addition to providing a training allowance, and if necessary a living away from home allowance, recipients of this post-SSR assistance had to figure out for themselves how to meet their costs with the assistance of relatively low, fixed level supplements.

But these new programs were consistent with TSW in that while increased employment among sole parents was understood as necessary to address various problems, it was believed that maternal employment could not be imposed, but must be freely chosen. Participation in JET was thus completely voluntary, as it was assumed that mothers were the best judges of whether or not

---

46 Similarly Senator Crowley argues that "We have established…the jobs, education and training (JET) program specifically targeted…to sole parent beneficiaries. We have said…: 'We think the best way out of poverty is the income security of a job. To get a job we know that you need education, bridging courses, or other assistance"'

they required assistance, and when was the most appropriate time to access it.

During the 1990s these understandings changed very little. Policy attention shifted away from single parents[47] and focused primarily on the long term unemployed whose numbers increased rapidly during the early 1990s recession. This lack of policy interest continued when the Howard liberal-national coalition government was elected to government in 1996, and during their first term in office (1996-1998). Yet importantly the institutions, policy technologies, and problematics the Labor government and the Howard Coalition developed through policy attention directed at the unemployed would later be applied to parents and other groups.

The Howard Coalition established the problematic of unemployment as institutional mechanisms and regulations that did not adequately encourage enterprising attitudes among the unemployed or service providers. Existing structures were diagnosed as economically inefficient and ineffective in bringing about the ultimate outcome of moving the unemployed off income support payments and into employment, and charged with stifling enterprising dispositions among the unemployed. It was argued that the only way to remedy these deficits was to redesign the structure of income support payments, employment services and the organizations that administered and delivered these payments and services according to market principles (Eardley 1997). Importantly the Howard Coalition did not seek to hand these services over to the market conceived as a domain distinct from the state. Rather it was, as Foucault argues in relation to the development of early neoliberalism in Germany, the idea that "the market, or rather pure competition, which is the essence of the market, can only appear if it is produced…by an active governmentality" (Foucault 2008, 121). As he elaborates, according to neoliberal reasoning:

> Competition is an essence…an *edos*…a principle of formalization. Competition has an internal logic; it has its own structure. Its effects are only produced if this logic is respected. It is…a formal game between inequalities; it is not a natural game between individuals and behaviors (Foucault 2008, 121).

Australian Government income support and training services for the unemployed were completely reorganized by the Coalition Government so as to encourage the enterprise form within employment services and enterprising dispositions among the unemployed. Firstly, it established the Job Network through which it would contract employment services that since 1946 had been solely

47 With the change to Parenting Payment, single and partnered rate, the government used the new terminology "single parents."

provided by the Australian Government Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). Creation of the Job Network involved separating the Department of Social Security into two departments. Social Security policy functions were forthwith to be delivered by a new department, the Department of Family and Community Services, and this department would contract its former service delivery division (renamed Centrelink) to deliver income support administration functions. Secondly CES offices that had registered, assessed and referred the unemployed to other services were closed and merged with the new Centrelink agency. Finally the case-management arm of the CES was reorganized into a government owned enterprise named Employment National that would now bid alongside private enterprises for government contracts (Eardley 2003). Those who successfully bid for these new contracts would be part of the new Job Network.

Reflecting Foucault's observations on the contrasts between neoliberalism and the classical liberalism of Adam Smith and the 18th Century, these reforms were concerned with governing the provision of employment services on the basis of market forms but not about creating within Australia space for a free employment services market that the state should not touch (Foucault 2008, 131). Neoliberal political rationalities involve disassociating the market form from the classical liberal political principle of "laissez-faire", whereby the market was understood as a self-regulating realm that the state should not interfere with. Within neoliberal political rationalities the market is understood as a rigorous formal structure whose historical existence is fragile and thus requires the state to vigilantly protect and govern it. It is argued that the state can touch the market but the important thing is how they touch it; their activity must respect the internal structure of competition. Neoliberal practices of governance since the late 1970s, and in the Australia since the mid 1980s, have involved the creation of quasi markets for services and goods formerly provided by the state and ongoing active management of these markets in contrast to a classical liberal concern with leaving a free space for the market. Creation of the social policy agency FaCS which contracted the service delivery agency Centrelink reflected this concern with a practice of governance that was not "laissez-faire" but was nevertheless based on market forms. Common forms include contracts between government agencies (such as between FaCS and Centrelink), contracting out of government services, or the breaking up of government owned enterprises and creation of quasi markets where the new enterprises compete against each other for market share (such as the Job Network).

The new market in employment services (the Job Network), was carefully designed so as to enable the competition function to produce the desired results of reduced administrative costs and improved outcomes, although these did not immediately occur. The Australian Government established three levels of employment assistance 1) Job Matching 2) Job Search Training and 3) Intensive Assistance and put these services out to tender. Private and not-for-profit organizations as well as the publicly owned Employment National bid for the right to deliver these services. By 2003 the Australian government had closed the public Employment National leaving all contracts in the hands of private and not-for-profit providers. One of the criteria for assessing bids to provide the two lower levels of assistance (job matching and job search training) was price competitiveness. However, Intensive Assistance was to be funded on the basis of a fixed price with payments primarily payable when providers placed clients in sustained employment or training (Eardley 2003). Furthermore, outcome payments for placing clients in sustained employment were much larger than outcome payments for playing clients in education or training. The Howard Coalition's rationalizations for these changes were seen by many commentators as contradictory. On the one hand the government was concerned with fostering competition, which commentators interpreted to mean a free market structure, while on the other hand commentators found it hard to see "the new arrangements as representing anything like a free market. It remained a highly constrained and artificial structure, created by government and retaining a high degree of government regulation and control" (Eardley 2003, 6). But if one looks closer it is evident that the government was not concerned with the revival of the classical liberal idea of a free market understood as a natural entity. Instead, in line with Foucault's observations, they were concerned with competition understood as a formal structure for governing which has its own internal logic and structure that must be respected, but yet must be protected and fostered by an active governmentality (Foucault 2008, 121)

An important consequence of these changes was that employment services were no longer open to all Australian residents as the CES had been. Services were henceforth only open to those for whom the Australian government was willing to pay. Initially the only groups covered were those receiving unemployment payments and those receiving other income support payments who were seeking full-time work, although the government later extended assistance to dependent spouses who had been out of the workforce for two or more years due to caring responsibilities. A second important consequence of this focus on competition was that approaches to governing unemployment which were associated with 'state planning' as opposed to fostering competition

were cut. State planning, as opposed to carefully created and managed market mechanisms, was argued to be inefficient and ineffective at producing enterprising attitudes and achieving outcomes. Training programs (Skillshare centres), and wage subsidy programs (Jobstart Wage Subsidy Program) that the Keating Labor government had introduced in 1994 as part of the Working Nation initiative to tackle rising rates of long term unemployment were argued to be ineffective and inefficient and were disbanded.

In the three years following the Howard Coalition's election to office (1996-1999) unemployment payments were redesigned according to the principle of 'Mutual Obligation', which expanded the scope of the previous Labor government's Reciprocal Obligation initiative and aimed to foster enterprising attitudes and dispositions among the unemployed. The Mutual Obligation Initiative was introduced in 1998 and required individuals to meet specific activity requirements after receiving payments for a length of time in addition to continuing active job search. Active client choice, although highly constrained, was a key principle of Mutual Obligation. Job seekers participating in Mutual Obligation were required to select their activities from an approved list and sign a Preparing for Work Agreement.[48] But this focus on choice was twinned with compulsion and penalties - those who failed to choose were referred to a new work-based welfare program called Work for the Dole and usually received a financial sanction.

From 1996 to 2002 the Howard Coalition did not make any changes to the conditions attached to the Sole Parent Pension, though it did seek to further collapse the hierarchy of parents within the income support system and to defend single parents against attacks. One move in this respect was the renaming of Parenting Allowance (available to the partners of an income support benefit who had dependent children) and the Sole Parent Pension to Parenting Payment (partnered rate) and Parenting Payment (single rate). The explanatory memorandum attached to the bill explained that these changes sought to simplify the existing income support system and also to "reduce the social stigma that is sometimes associated with being a recipient of SPP [Sole Parent Pension]" (Sutherland, Anforth 2005, 244). While under this new system single and partnered

48 The approved list of activities included: Army Reserves; Part-time paid work; Work for the Dole; Community Development; Employment Projects; Voluntary work; Green Corps; Relocation; Approved Literacy and Numeracy Training; Part-time study; New Apprenticeships Access Programme; Job Search Training; Advanced English for Migrants Programme; Intensive Assistance; Jobs Pathways Programme; Job Placement, Employment and Training programme; Career Counselling

parents now received a payment with the same name, single and partnered women continued to face significantly different entitlement conditions. Single parents still received the considerably more generous pension payments while partnered parents continued to get the much less generous "allowance" based payments. The distinction between pensions and allowances is the key distinction in the Australian income support system, in contrast to other countries where the key difference is between insurance based payments (such as disability and unemployment) and means tested universal benefits (such a welfare assistance for single parents). Allowances in Australia have very strict means, asset and income tests, and entitle beneficiaries to a very limited range of additional concessions (such as additional health care benefits). Pensions are paid at a higher rate and have much more generous means, assets, and income tests and entitle beneficiaries to a larger range of additional concessions (such as transport, water, electricity, telephone, child care and health care concessions).[49]

In the following year the Australian government sought to defend single mothers and their families through the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) publication *Some Common Questions about Lone Parents Answered* (henceforth referred to as *Some Common Questions*) (Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services 1999). *Some Common Questions* was widely interpreted as a direct response to a resurgence in moral panic and political criticism of single mothers driven by Pauline Hanson, leader of the One Nation party(Maddox 2005, see also chapter two of this thesis(Maddox 2005). Within *Some Common Questions* policy makers argued that PPS did not encourage illegitimacy and teenage parenthood, that very few single parents had more children while on payment and that most beneficiaries did not remain on payments for long periods. I have included some excerpts from this publication in Table 2 below. In these excerpts the authors address the themes of laziness, sexual immorality and 'illegitimacy', supposedly reflected in teenage motherhood, multiple births while receiving payments, and long spells on welfare, that have circulated consistently through the tabloid media since at least the 1970s. At the same time they address the hierarchies of good motherhood that were embedded within the income support system created between 1942 and the late 1970s through further collapsing payment

49 In addition to potentially reducing the stigma associated with receiving a sole parent payment, the renaming of the payment tied single and partnered parents together politically. Any requirements that the government sought to attach to single parents had to be requirements that it would be politically acceptable to attach to partnered parents.

categories. This defence of PPS recipients continued from 1999 to 2003, during which time the government launched a review into the income support system and implemented changes to the conditions attached to receipt of PPS.

Table 2: selected questions from "Some Common Questions about Lone Parents Answered"

"**Q. 2** Does the fact that lone parents may receive Parenting Payment encourage illegitimacy? **Answer:** The majority of sole parent families are formed by the breakdown of marriages and de facto relationships, rather than births outside of marriage… **Q3** Does the fact that Parenting Payment is available to lone parents encourage teenagers to have children? **Answer:** There is no evidence that the availability of Parenting Payment is encouraging teenagers to have children." **Q4** Is it true that many lone parents have further children while on the pension? **Answer**: Only a minority of lone parents have further children while receiving Parenting Payment. …… **Q6:** Do most lone parents stay on pension for long periods? **Answer:** Parenting Payment is, for most single recipients, a short-term payment that helps them re-establish themselves after family breakdown. (Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services 1999, 7)

In 1999 the Howard Coalition began focusing on workforce age income support recipients not receiving an unemployment payment. Taking up many of the concerns of the 1980s SSR, the responsible minister, Senator Jocelyn Newman, argued that the rapid growth in the numbers of people receiving PPS and Disability Support pension were unsustainable, particularly given the reality of economic globalization which forced countries to lower tax rates and reconsider 'generous' welfare programs. But in contrast to the earlier SSR, the minister's discussion paper, *The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century,* blamed existing systems of support for entrenching intergenerational welfare dependency. This idiom of 'welfare dependency' had resonances with concerns over 'social exclusion' that had formed part of the OECD concept of the active society, but it differed in its singular emphasis on a lack of paid work rather than the broader concept of social and economic participation. Minister Newman established a review to be lead by the Reference Group on Welfare Reform. The reference group was composed of academics, consultants and leaders of key charities and was tasked with conducting a short but wide-ranging review of income support for workforce age persons. While Minister Newman launched the review with a paper that emphasized the concept of 'welfare dependency', the Reference Group downplayed this language, releasing two reports with titles that emphasized the concept of 'participation', including an interim report entitled *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society* in March and a final report with the same title in July 2000. In style and content these two reports contrast strikingly with the SSR reports. While the SSR reports are dense volumes packed with extensive historical research,

reviews of policies in other jurisdictions and statistical analyses, the reference group's reports are two slim volumes with flowing narrative, selective presentation of existing research and boxed vignettes of fictional individuals' hypothetical experiences under the proposed participation support system. In many respects the review was less an investigation into what was needed and more of an opportunity for policy makers and politicians to convince the boarder public of the need for changes. Both the interim and final reports framed the problem of single parents and income support as a manifestation of a broader problem of jobless families and households who relied heavily upon income support benefits, and bequeathed this reliance to their children. The Reference Group on Welfare Reform suggested that the solution was a system in which those who could participate in paid work were given incentives to do so, while those who could not currently participate were compelled to plan and prepare for future participation.

While emphasizing 'jobless families' and 'heavy reliance on income support' the review also attempted to avoid drawing upon the types of neoliberal practices through which US welfare reforms have been enacted, including stigmatizing welfare recipients, introducing time-limits, and a 'jobs first' focus. Instead, within its final report the reference group argued that assistance should be reorganized around five pillars: individualized service delivery (the tailoring of assistance to meet individual needs); simple and responsive income support structure; incentives and financial assistance; mutual obligations; and social partnerships – building community capacity (Reference Group on Welfare Reform 2000a).[50] The report also explicitly sought to avoid stigmatizing those on income support by severing the link between having a job and contributing to society:

> The Reference Group believes that there is value in recognizing more explicitly the contributions that people on income support already make. This recognition is important both to validate social participation and to counter the popular stereotype of people receiving income support as passive non-contributors (McClure 2000, 13).

These attempts continued when a year later the Australian Government released a new edition of *Some Common Questions* which again sought to counter negative images with the presentation of accurate facts and figures on the PPS population.

---

50 This deviated from the interim report which suggests many income support recipients would be subject to continuous monitoring by a case manager through the implementation of a one to one service delivery in Centrelink would coordinate and monitor assistance and participation requirements involving, the school system, physical rehabilitation, addictions and mental health services, housing support and many other systems delivered at the local, state and federal level (Reference Group on Welfare Reform 2000b).

Highlighting the idea that joblessness should be addressed through partnerships and strengthening community capacity, the policy changes flowing out of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform were packaged and released in May 2001 as the Australians Working Together (AWT) budget initiative. Reflecting an increasing move toward the use of anticipatory modes of power, the changes to PPS focused less on affecting what parents were currently doing and more on affecting what parents would do in the future. Through the AWT changes, Parenting Payment was transformed from a payment available under the same conditions to all with a youngest child aged under 16 years to a payment whose eligibility conditions varied according to the age of the recipient's youngest child. As I elaborate in more detail in the following section, policy makers sought to act upon, shape and transform how a PPS recipient's lifecourse would unfold. As the responsible Minister Amanda Vanstone announced,

> PAs will assist people identify [*sic*] their barriers to work and help them develop a plan to overcome these obstructions. The assistance will take into account a customer's goals and aspirations, their existing skills and education, their health and other personal circumstances, their family situation and caring responsibilities (Vanstone 2002).

Personal Advisers were not intended to replace JET advisers but rather to exist alongside them, with JET advisers remaining specialists and PAs taking on a new non-specialist adviser role. Henceforth, beneficiaries with primary school aged children (aged 6 to 11 years) had to participate in an annual planning interview with a Personal Adviser and record a plan directed toward their eventual 'return' to paid work. Importantly, beneficiaries were not required to carry out additional activities (other than attend an interview).

Policy intention was therefore primarily directed at encouraging single parents to change their orientations and dispositions toward the future from one in which they failed to think about their future, or plan for it, to one in which their trajectory from welfare to the labour market was clearly mapped. Personal advisers were to act upon "residual social temporalities" of inertia which persisted as a trace in PPS recipients' dispositions that the welfare state had created (Binkley 2009). Requirements for PPS beneficiaries with older children (aged 12 to 15 years) also reflected a concern with shaping dispositions and future actions. While this group was given a new compulsory participation requirement, it was very flexible, allowing beneficiaries to choose between paid work, voluntary work or education, and only required an average of six hours a week of activity. Nevertheless non-compliance was to be taken seriously and sanctioned with loss of eligibility for Parenting Payment.

While policy makers did not necessarily consciously plan for the PA initiative to be a temporary policy that was simply a transition on the path towards much stricter work requirements for Parenting Payment recipients, the program ended up playing this role. In a series of ways the PA program was instrumental in setting up compulsory work requirements for all those with school age children as an inevitable and necessary next policy step. Prior to the 2001 AWT package, which contained the PA initiative, this model had been piloted through the 1999 Parenting Payment Intervention Pilot. While evaluations of this pilot indicated that it had not been successful in moving Parenting Payment recipients into paid work, policy makers nevertheless proceeded to develop it into the full scale Personal Adviser program. The final evaluation of this pilot was never publically released but the academic researchers who conducted the evaluation concluded, in an independent academic publication, that "Using different estimators and several indicators of outcomes, the evidence for the program having a positive effect on outcomes is very weak." More specifically they noted:

> Although the treatment encouraged claimants to plan for moving into paid work, these plans were only translated into improved outcomes for claimants who faced no barriers. Activating claimants, by encouraging them to plan to move into work is no doubt a necessary first step of any program. However, when persons face significant barriers, as is the case for single parents, the further assistance needs to reduce these barriers for a program to be effective. Since this pilot study was undertaken, the Government has implemented a program to encourage single parents to plan to move into paid work and to assist them in doing so. Thus, claimants whose youngest child is aged 6-12 are required to attend an annual interview to discuss their future. For those with children aged 13-15, there is a further requirement to develop a plan for moving into paid work. At the same time it is recognised that obligations imposed on claimants need to be matched with improved assistance. Thus the Government has stated that funding of the main program, the Job, Education and Training program, will be increased and the services to help claimants prepare for a return to work improved. The analysis in this paper suggests that the success of this approach will depend mainly on how well the Government meets its part of the bargain (Dockery, Stromback 2004, 441).

Unsurprisingly, given that the government did not follow this recommendation and instead only marginally increased spending on JET when it launched the Personal Adviser program in 2003, this full-scale program also failed to move parents into employment. Echoing the earlier evaluation of the Parenting Payment Intervention Pilot, the evaluators of the PA program in 2005 found that:

> In the Personal Adviser Evaluation survey, most parents who had attended an interview with a Personal Adviser, reported that they valued the personalised assistance they received. However, despite the positive motivational elements of the Personal Adviser service, the assistance was generally not enough to encourage people to find paid work and become less

reliant on income support (Australian Government: DEWR. 2005).

In not producing the effects that it named - the transformation of individuals and their movement off payment - the PA program set the scene for more radical changes. Evaluations of the PA program illustrated that interpersonal assistance from an individual guide in the absence of work requirements was ineffective in moving parents off payments and this evidence provided grounds for policy makers and politicians to argue that stricter work requirements were a necessary next step. By acting in this way the PA program worked as what Ahmed has termed a 'nonperformative' (Ahmed 2006). Ahmed's concept of a 'nonperformative' can be contrasted to Judith Butler's arguments around performativity. Butler argues that performativity is the "reiterative and citational practice by which discourse *produces the effects that it names*" (such as a male/female binary) (Butler 1993, 2). In contrast, Ahmed argues that nonperformatives are speech acts that "'work" precisely by not bringing about the effects that they name' (Ahmed 2006, 159). In her model "the failure of the speech act to do what it says is not a failure of intent or even circumstance, but it is actually what the speech act is doing" (Ahmed 2006, 159). A nonperformative fails not because some circumstances that are external to the speech act and required for the act to succeed are not in place - for example, the people who implement the policy do not implement it as it is described. Along these lines the PA program did not 'fail' to do what it said for any of the reasons that policies typically 'fail.' PA was implemented as described, its funding was not reduced, and there was no unexpected change in external circumstances between the planning and implementation stage. The full scale PA program achieved a level of success that was entirely consistent with the findings of the pilot program. Thus, the PA program worked by failing to achieve what it was claimed it would achieve. It claimed that helping parents to plan and referring them to services would increase their participation in paid work. The PA program was explicitly established within policy debates as a 'soft' alternative to US style welfare to work requirements. When it failed to make a difference to participation rates, it provided grounds for policy makers to argue that what was necessary was to force parents to work.

The 2005 evaluation of the PA program was released at the same time was a new package of changes, entitled Welfare to Work were released. Welfare to Work represented a strong break with the problematizations of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform and the Australians Working Together changes. In contrast to their focus increasing future participation, Welfare to Work focused exclusively on making Parenting Payment recipients financially self-reliant and they

emphasized this goal almost to the exclusion of other possible goals such as supporting mother/child contact or mothers' well-being. Echoing very closely the concerns of the 1999 discussion paper *The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century*, these measures were rationalized on the grounds that 'workless families' were a major problem because their growing numbers were rendering the income support system unsustainable, because these families were not contributing to Australia's prosperity and their own well-being through paid work and because workless families bequeathed to their children an increased risk of also being workless and dependent upon welfare (Newman 1999). This latter concern was expressed through the idiom of 'intergenerational welfare dependency'. These arguments that intergenerational welfare dependency was occurring on a significant scale in Australia and that Australian children growing up in a family where no parent was employed were necessarily detrimentally affected by the lack of parental employment were largely asserted rather than demonstrated by reference to actual research. Australian academic scholarship on the topic largely occurred after the Welfare to Work budget changes rather than prior to them. Further reflecting the dearth of research, the journal *Australian Family Matters* published a full three years after the budget an article entitled 'Joblessness, family relations and children's development' which almost exclusively refers to research conducted within the United States (Kalil 2009). Despite this, in announcing the package the responsible Minister Andrews argued "Children growing up in a jobless household often face greater disadvantage in their community and an increased chance of becoming welfare dependent as they leave school" (Andrews 2005). Changes were necessary, it was argued, because a mother's receipt of income support renders her child more likely to also be 'welfare dependent.' The responsible minister announced "The best way to help parents and their children is to help the parents find a job" (Andrews 2005). Again the focus of these changes is the benefits paid work bestow on children but not on how women may develop their capabilities in a broad sense or on mothers' well being. Thus the government expected single mothers to undertake any paid work that was available, even if it was poorly paid and had low opportunities for development, rather than embarking on extended education or training. Policy changes that reinforced this expectation included the removal of JET child care subsidies from single mothers who undertook a course of education or training longer than 12 months in duration. During passage of the Welfare to Work legislation the Australian government explicitly argued that any job was better than income support. Appearing on a current affairs show (*The Insiders*) the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations was quizzed about the reasonableness of the changes and responded:

> KEVIN ANDREWS: We don't make any excuse for this. We believe that the best form of welfare that a person can have is to have a job. Remembering this: that when a person gets a job it's the best way of getting another job. We know that within a year 4 in 10 people who've got a job have moved on to another better job. So getting a job is the starting point. Getting a foot in the door in the labour market is much more important and useful for that person than any dependents he or she might have (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2005b).

The new work requirements announced in 2005 encouraged single mothers to obtain employment and increase their financial self-reliance as quickly as possible once their youngest child started school. While the package emphasized parents' role in providing their children with a good economic role model through labour force participation, they were largely silent about Parenting Payment recipients' roles as their children's primary carers (in most cases their mother). Aside from a broad claim that single mothers' engagement in paid work would prevent a cycle of welfare dependency, there was very little discussion of how the federal government imagined the relationship between mothering and paid work. This pattern is evident in the Coalition MP Ms Hull's argument in the house, during the passing of the Welfare to Work legislation, that work is beneficial for an individual and their family. Her emphasis is primarily upon benefits to an individual's family and specifically the ways in which it prevents intergenerational welfare dependency. She argues:

> Working has many positive influences on an individual and their family members. Participating in the work force provides confidence and a sense of responsibility. People develop skills and knowledge and varying relationships with co-workers and clients, resulting in a sense of wellbeing for the whole household, a sense of pride and a can-do feeling within the household. For those with children, working provides a fantastic example of the many benefits that a job brings and sets a positive example of the responsibilities of entering into adulthood. Seeing mum and dad, or mum or dad, going off to work, time managing, establishing an organised household, being responsible for the accounts for the household and being able to provide heating, cooling and other requirements instils a sense of responsibility in a child right from the beginning. When there is no role model in a household, it is unfair to expect a child to have any desire or motivation to enter the work force (Hull 2005, 53).

Welfare to Work also marked a key shift in that it ceased personalized planning programs for single parents - both the PA and JET programs - that were delivered within the Australian Government agencies, and announced new programs that would be contracted to the Job Network. While Australians Working Together and the review proceeding it located personalized planning programs

for single parents within Australian government agencies where policy makers had substantial oversight of program design, Welfare to Work placed them firmly within the quasi market of the Job Network. The new personalized planning program for single parents announced in the Welfare to Work package was the Preparing for Work program. Not only would Job Network agencies be responsible for delivering this program, they would also be responsible for monitoring PPS recipients' active participation in the programs and active job search, as they had been doing with the unemployed since the late 1990s. Once the new job search requirements for parents commenced, parents were required to choose a JN agency and register with them. JN agencies were required to report those parents who did not attend interviews or did not actively participate to Centrelink, which would suspend, cancel or reduce the client's income support payment if the report of non-compliance was confirmed through their own investigations. As discussed above, a major constraint that governs the actions of these agencies is that they receive the vast majority of their funding through outcome payments that are paid to them when they place a client in employment. Further, the majority of these outcome payments are received when the client maintains this position of employment for a certain period of time. Thus, in contrast to the PA and JET programs, the continued viability of a JN agency is dependent upon placing a large enough number of clients in sustainable employment.

Welfare to Work was also accompanied by a discernable shift away from attempting to defend single parents against negative stereotypes. This shift in tone - away from producing images of single parents as good, concerned parents and citizens, to a rather deep silence - is evident in all policy documents. However, it is particularly evident in customer communication documents produced by the service delivery agency *Centrelink*.[51] Centrelink documents usually provide the clearest visual and textual images of income support recipients, compared to for instance media releases from ministers or budget statements. But the Centrelink customer communications in the year following Welfare to Work provide very limited images of single parents. While Australians Working Together was accompanied by fact sheets and community announcements providing clear visual images of Parenting Payment recipients through full color graphics and numerous photographs, most Welfare to Work documents are primarily black and white documents with simple graphics and no photographs. An example is the *Helping people move into work: a community*

51 "Centrelink is the trading name of the Commonwealth Service Delivery Agency (CSDA), a statutory authority responsible for delivering human services on behalf of agencies of the Commonwealth Government of Australia." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centrelink

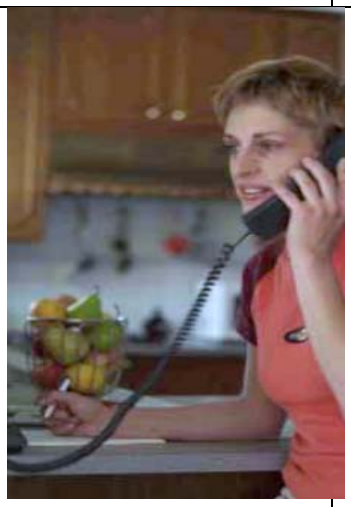
information pack. Like the Australians Working Together documents four years earlier this contains case studies of different fictional income support recipients in order to illustrate how (they imagine) individuals with relate to the policy. For example, the PPS case study in *Helping people move into work* (2005) tells us about a woman named Sue, who is 42 years old (see Table 3). We are told she has a single child aged seven, has been out of work quite some time, and about her psychological state – she is nervous about 'taking the plunge' back into the workforce and "has doubts she will ever get a job." This case study produces a subject whose barriers to paid work are psychological, not structural. Furthermore it is silent about her desires around paid work and mothering, including a desire to be a good mother, and her educational and occupational background. Readers are left to "write in" what they imagine a single mother looks like. As chapter two described, the tabloid media has produced a consistently negative image which shapes even single mothers' images of what other single mothers look like.

In contrast to the 'thin' subject produced in Welfare to Work documents, the Australians Working Together documentation describes richer, fuller subjects that implicitly challenge tabloid media stereotypes. For example, in one vignette we learn about Maggie who has been considering returning to paid work and volunteers at a Cancer support centre. Following her PA interview Maggie goes on to gain a part-time job at a small factory near her home, and eventually finds out that she can work and still be a 'good mum' to her daughter. These small details of volunteering at a Cancer support centre and Maggie's concern to be a good mum 'write in' a picture that runs counter to negative images. Photographs included in the 2003 Parenting and Employment booklet also strive to show PPS recipients having loving relations with their well cared for children, as active in paid work and education, and as explicitly not people who neglect their children by spending all their time watching television. Multiple colour photographs show mothers, and in one case a father, in a loving relationship with their children or in employment or education.

Table 3: Comparison of Parenting Payment case studies

case study from Welfare to Work documentation	**case study from Parenting and Employment Booklet**
Taking the plunge into work Sue, 42, is a single parent and has one child, Bonny, aged seven. She went on to Parenting Payment (Single) after 1 July 2006 and so she has part-time participation requirements. This means she will need to register with Job Network and start looking for work of 15 hours or more a week. Sue has been out of the workforce for quite some time. She has doubts she will ever get a job and is very nervous about 'taking the plunge'. Her Job Network provider refers her immediately to their Employment Preparation service, which will help build up her confidence, update her qualifications, and improve her job search skills. She will also be provided with information about finding suitable child care and the assistance available to help with the costs of child care. Sue will need to talk to Centrelink because when Bonny turns eight in September 2007, she will have to test her eligibility for another income support payment, most likely Newstart Allowance. Centrelink helps Sue to calculate that working for 15 hours a week means she will be around $58 a week better off on Newstart Allowance than she currently gets on Parenting Payment. This is because she will get part-payment Newstart Allowance, Family Tax Benefit, subsidised child care, and various extras like the Pensioner Concession Card and Pharmaceutical Allowance. The new income test also means Sue will be able to keep more of her Newstart Allowance. *From Helping people move into work: a community information pack*	Margie's story Margie is a sole parent with a nine year-old daughter, Danielle. Margie's been thinking about getting back into the workforce but isn't sure if she can manage both working and spending enough time with Danielle. She discusses her plans with a Centrelink Personal Adviser and together they develop a participation plan setting out Margie's goals and the options she could try to achieve them. Her Personal Adviser refers Margie to the local Volunteer Resource Centre, which helps her find a volunteer placement two days a week doing general office duties and lunchtime reception relief at the Cancer Support Centre. After six months of volunteering a few hours a week, Margie is confident she could manage doing some part-time work while still having time to be a good mum to Danielle. Her demonstrated work skills and a reference from the Manager of the Cancer Support Centre help her to win a part-time job in the office of a small factory near her home.(emphasis added)

Table 4: Images of single parents from Parenting and Employment booklet



Thus throughout the 1980s and 1990s the Australian Government sought proactively to counter the images produced within the tabloid media and to frame reforms to income support in ways that did not enflame negative images. The Welfare to Work changes are striking in their active silence regarding the themes that have circulated in the tabloid media. This silence speaks loudly to the single mothers I interviewed. Regardless of whether they were supportive of the Welfare to Work reforms or otherwise inclined, they interpreted Welfare to Work measures as directed toward reforming 'deviant' single mothers.

In the twenty five years since the launch of the SSR, Australian governments and policy makers have returned again and again to the question of what to do about the increased numbers of people of workforce age receiving income support, and the increased length of time they remain on payment. By 2005 they had created a problematic that was much more unified than that which the SSR produced. While the Review identified the growth in the numbers receiving workforce age payments as a problem and concerns with dependency, it also addressed numerous other concerns including poverty rates and structural barriers to employment. SSR also conveyed a conflicted stance regarding mothers' participation in paid work, simultaneously suggesting that participation was necessary while revealing an unwillingness to enforce it as a norm through income support regulations. By comparison, debates in the present are focused narrowly on the problem of workless families which generate intergenerational welfare dependency, and the financial unsustainability of the current system. SSR's conflicted stance regarding maternal labour force participation has been replaced with a new silence regarding the gender composition of the PPS population and gendered expectations regarding mothers' roles. Furthermore, SSR's concerns with poverty have been

replaced with the stance that the best form of welfare is a job. The Australian Government's active defence of single parents and their receipt of income support payments has been replaced with a new silence regarding the hierarchies of mothers and negative images of single mothers.

In the following section I will explore how the problematizations examined in this section have been connected to imaginings and problematizations of single parents' lifecourses, and the ways the three personalized planning programs have each consciously attempted to act upon and reorient single parents' lifecourses.

Governing the lifecourse of single mothers

Existing research and criticism on the welfare state and mothers tends toward a static perspective. Most feminist welfare commentary highlights historical and contemporary inequalities in the division of labour. Western welfare states, they argue, have enshrined in income support law and government policy more generally a gendered division whereby women care for children and men engage in paid work.[52] Such a division has had implications in terms of women's economic dependence on men, their experience of poverty and the range of economic and social opportunities available to them. Feminist welfare state theorists including Australian researchers have argued that welfare states should offer 'caring rights', that is, income and other supports for caring work (Shaver, Bradshaw 1995, Shaver 2002). Recently others have argued for both the right to paid work and the right to care (Cass 1994, Kremer 2007, Lewis, Giullari 2005).

The feminist welfare state literature's characterization of income support and the need for caring rights is misleading in so far as it suggests that income support law is founded on a static image of men and women's lives: mothers will always remain outside of the labour force and men will remain continuously within it. In contrast, I suggest that Australian income support law is founded on dynamic and gendered *lifecourse* imaginaries. The Australian welfare state developed with, and embedded, a distinct image of a woman's lifecourse as involving a predictable sequence of life events that are triggered and dictated by changing relations with others. Women were not assumed to always care, and thus be eligible for support. For example, women under 50 years of age that did

52 For instance Baldock writing in Women, Social Welfare and State Policy argues that "The proper place of women, then, was seen to be in the home, economically dependent on a male breadwinner and caring for home and family. Indeed, throughout this century there has been no fundamental change in Australia in the perception of women's role as home-maker" (Baldock 1992, 3). Similarly Cass argues" Women's primary duty is care-giving work in the home, increasingly accompanied by a secondary involvement in market activity; men's primary responsibility is market activity as a breadwinner with some slight involvement in care-giving work (Cass 1994, 107-08).

not have young children have been consistently expected to seek paid work upon loss of a spouse. Thus the proper place in Australia for women has historically been the home only if they have a husband to support them or they have young children who require care. In other cases they have been expected to support themselves through labour market participation. Once we recognize this, and the historical importance of particular institutionally embedded images of the lifecourse, we can see how recent changes to this system of support attempt to govern a gendered lifecourse rather than a static division of labour in which women care and men engage in paid work, or women engage in care and part-time paid work, and men engage in full-time paid work. At the same time, this focus on how lifecourses are imagined and institutionalized continues the feminist literature's important recognition that Australian income support policy has consistently sidelined elements of women's wellbeing not tied to their caring role. This section argues that despite the Australian government sharply moving away from the idea that motherhood is incompatible with paid work, it has nevertheless continued to interpret, regulate and support the actions of PPS recipients on the basis of their relations to others and the needs of these others. What has primarily changed is how the needs of children are defined and interpreted.

This section argues that while the emphasis of Australian government narratives between the 1940s and the present has overwhelmingly been on children's wellbeing, there have been times when it has acknowledged and focused on mothers' own interests. A child-centered focus is evident in PM Curtin's 1942 statement that the price that a mother who is a wage earner "must pay is also the price which her children must pay", the 1989 JET program's promotional statement "now you can go back to work without neglecting your most important job" (Australia. Dept. of Social Security 1989), and the Australians Working Together documents in 2000 that emphasize that "staying connected to the workforce . . . is one of the best ways towards a secure future for you and your family". In each of these instances, a mother's moral entitlement to support is derived from her status as a mother, not through her status as an individual citizen. Furthermore, the mothering role is imagined according to a specific model, with important implications for the lifecourse:

> responsibility for mothering rests almost exclusively on one woman (the biological mothers), for whom it constitutes the primary if not sole mission during the child's formative years. The corollary view of children is that they require constant care and attention from one caretaker (the biological mother) (Glenn 1994).

Indeed mothers' interests are often assumed to be indistinguishable from their children's interests. Such an emphasis clearly fits within dominant Western discourses of mothering in which mother

and child are "treated as a single entity with unitary interests" and "a mother's interests must be subordinated to the child's" (Glenn 1994, 11 & 13). As many mothering theorists have illustrated, the good mother is discursively produced as selfless and self-sacrificing (Kelso 2006, 5, Maher 2004, 9, Maher 2005).

In Australia rationalization of specific income support provisions on the basis of children's wellbeing has been connected to imaginaries regarding the way in which a woman's life unfolds. Over time the specifics of these imaginaries have changed, but for the most part the focus has nevertheless remained upon the ways that children's care needs dictate the shape of the mother's lifecourse. Prime Minister Curtin's legislation in the 1940s invoked and produced an imaginary in which a young woman became a wage earner for a short period prior to marriage, whereupon she would withdraw from the labour market and bear children. Marriage marked a woman's permanent relinquishment of her role and identity as a wage earner. Speaking in support of one of the first income support acts, Prime Minister John Curtin argued that marriage transforms a woman through causing her to "give up her role as a wage-earner" and "changing her relationship to the world". He emphasized:

> it has interrupted the continuity of her earning capacity; the world has moved on and in all probability she has been to some extent outmoded…She has undergone not only a physiological revolution by marriage and childbearing, but she has inevitably accomplished for herself an entirely new relationship to the world at large. She is a changed woman both as a wage-earner and as an individual (Australian House of Representatives. 1942).

This statement echoed comments by made by William Beveridge, the architect of the British system of social insurance, in his 1942 report *Social Insurance and Allied Services:*

> All women by marriage acquire a new economic and social status with risks and rights different to those of the unmarried. On marriage a woman gains a legal right to maintenance by her husband as a first line of defense against risks which fall directly on the solitary woman; she undertakes at the same time to perform vital but unpaid service and becomes exposed to new risks, including the risk that her married life may be ended prematurely by widowhood or separation (Beveridge 1942, 49).

Importantly, it was maternity in the context of marriage and not simply marriage that made women potentially eligible for a widow's payment. Under this legislation widows aged less than 50 without dependent children were not eligible for assistance.

Despite Curtin's definitive proclamations regarding women's "entirely new relationship to the world at large", the Australian income support system nevertheless implemented retraining schemes for widows over the subsequent decades. As mentioned above, only one decade after

Curtin's pronouncement the Australian government implemented a War Widows and Defense Widows training scheme and in September 1968 they launched the Training Scheme for Widows (TSW) designed to help Widows gain employment (Australian Government: Department of Social Security 1980b). We have already seen that this history of support for training was largely ignored when policy researchers in the late 1970 and early 1980s began to explicitly question the lack of work requirements attached to payments for sole parents. Instead, they took as the object of critique Curtin's statement and the assumptions that established the Australian income support system. This allowed policy makers in the 1980s to establish the case that the Australian welfare state had produced passivity and inactivity among sole parents, and it was necessary to act upon these embedded dispositions. A 1980 Department of Social Security research paper pointed to Curtin and argued that these "original concepts are still embedded in the Social Services Act like a fly in amber…while actual behaviour in the community has so changed as to make them increasingly questionable" (Australian Government: Department of Social Security 1980b).

As I alluded to within section one of this chapter, these problematizations of the life-course of mothers without a male bread winner continued in the SSR. A notable aspect of the review's *Bringing up Children Alone* report is the way in which it attempts to reconstruct understandings of lone parent's relationship to the labour market, and thus the role of income support payments for this group. Specifically, it attempts to reconstruct sole mothers' relationship to the labour market and pays very little attention to fathers even though by this time Supporting Parent's Benefit was also available to men (Raymond 1987). *Bringing up Children Alone* begins by arguing that there are three rationales for income support to lone parents. Firstly, it is the 'responsibility ….the community in general has…for the welfare of children' (even though the primary responsibility lay with parents); secondly, "financial support is needed during crisis periods such as widowhood, desertion, separation, etc"; and thirdly "sole parents should be provided with the opportunity to say at home to care for their children, although at the same time financial or other barriers to workforce participation or family reformation should be minimized" (Raymond 1987, 9). These rationales appear conflicted. On the one hand the rationale that support is "needed during crisis periods" suggests that support should not usually be provided on an indefinite basis. At the same time, the idea that government should support mothers to stay at home while also minimizing barriers to workforce participation suggests that support should be provided on an indefinite basis and only mothers should decide the duration of support. These kinds of conflicts are, as I suggested above, a feature of the entire report and the policy changes that followed.

While the SSR did not establish a clear problematic that explained the diverse difficulties, it did make a significant contribution to transforming the Australian Government's imaginaries of mothers' lifecourses. SSR challenged the idea that maternity did, or should, result in a permanent withdrawal from the labour market although it did accept that most mothers would withdraw from the labour market for significant periods because maternal responsibilities and substantial labour market participation were incompatible. As discussed above, the SSR challenged this idea on the basis that an increasing number of Australian mothers were engaging in paid work, the growing rate of payment receipt, and the rise of part-time employment.

SSR argued that the increased availability of part-time employment opened up new more flexible avenues of maternal reengagement with the labour force, meaning that paid work could be more easily fitted around child care responsibilities. As Gardiner's (1999, 43) article on the JET program, which flowed out of the review's findings, argues: "In line with the dominant discourse of maternal responsibility, i.e.: maternal primary care as normative throughout the child's formative years, the state's broad goal was entry into part-time employment." The review stressed that labour force participation was possible and desirable as the children grew older, and the burden of caring for them eased (Raymond 1987, 28). As the SSR also noted, many other Western countries required sole parents with school age children to seek employment. But the SSR did not suggest that Australia should move in the direction of work requirements for sole mothers with young children. Instead, changes following the SSR reinforced the idea that parents should return to paid work once the burden of child care has reduced. Resulting from changes to Supporting Parents Benefit in 1987 sole parents would lose eligibility for a parenting benefit once their youngest turned 16. Prior to the changes beneficiaries lost eligibility when their youngest was "24 in the case of dependent, full-time students" (Williams 1987a). For those with children aged less than 16 years, it suggested that sole parents should engaged in an indefinite period of study and developing their skills with a view to eventually returning to paid work. This view of the appropriate role of policy remained among a number of the single mothers I interviewed. As Sara argued in 2005, "I think it's important, especially women, that they should try and maintain some kind of skill or education or training or something, but I don't think people should be forced into work."

In the decade following the implementation of JET there was very little change in the imaginary of the single mother's lifecourse. Changes following the 2001 Australians Working Together (AWT) package enforced through legislation the assumption also evident in the SSR that a woman's

lifecourse was tied to the age of their youngest child. Both AWT and SSR assumed that mothers would transition into part-time paid work as their children got older and then eventually move into full-time employment, and they linked this to the increasing availability of part-time employment which was suitable for mothers, and the lack of full-time employment for men. The JET evaluation states:

> The first, obvious and most concrete element in the situation of a sole mother is that she has to provide personal care for a child or children. That responsibility is heaviest when the child is very young and when it suffers from illness or disability. It is not surprising that out of 22 women with children under one year of age only three were employed at all and three actively preparing for employment. The inescapable demands become less onerous as time passes" (Jordan 1991, 19).

While making this assumption, Parenting Payment (the payment to both single and partnered parents introduced in 1998) nevertheless remained available to all with a youngest child aged under 16 years under the same conditions. Following the AWT changes, parents with primary school aged children (aged 6 to 11 Years) were required to undertake an annual planning interview in which they would record plans directed toward their eventual 'return' to paid work. PPS recipients with older children (aged 12 to 15 years) had to participate in six hours a week of paid work, voluntary work or education. Non-compliance was to be sanctioned with loss of income support payment.

The important shift that occurred between SSR, AWT and Welfare to Work was not the lifecourse norm for PPS recipients but how this lifecourse norm was governed. While SSR and policies emanating from it suggested that PPS recipients should gradually increase their participation in paid work as their caring burden increased and governed this through the production of a norm and provision of economic incentives to adhere to it, they did not put in place policy mechanisms that would assess individuals' compliance with this norm. In contrast, AWT and Welfare to Work implemented mechanisms that actively monitored and assessed compliance with this norm of gradual reintegration into the labour market and penalized deviance from it. AWT changes established a specific timeframe for mothers' labour market withdrawal and re-entry and enforced adherence to the schedule through a system of interviews, structured 'participation' requirements and penalties for non-compliance. To a greater degree than JET (and TSW), this new system suggested that the age of a woman's child was to determine her participation in non-mothering

activities, more than her own desires and preferences.[53] This imaginary shaped how many single mothers I interviewed interpreted the reasonableness of the new work requirements, namely the requirements were seen as "fair because if you have known that for 12 years you can take the opportunity to study and train up and get yourself a job" (Phillis, 2006).

Changes following AWT were accompanied by discourses which sought to challenge the idea that wage-earning activities reduced time and energy expended upon mothering activities. The Australian Government, particularly the Department of Family and Community Services, tried to establish that being a wage-earner is part of being a good mother. This new imagery of the lifecourse did not invert the hierarchy in which good mothers prioritized mothering activities over wage earning activities but instead challenged the binary by arguing that "Bringing up children is one of the most important things you can do. …Planning and preparing for a return to work as your children grow older, or staying connected to the workforce, is one of the best ways towards a secure future for you and your family" (Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services 2005a). The implications of this statement are two-fold: participation in paid work will ensure a secure financial future for your child, and will prevent a cycle of welfare dependency. As discussed above, this concept of intergenerational welfare dependency, which was implied in some of the AWT measures, was the key problematic that organized the Welfare to Work changes announced in May 2005 (Pech, McCoull 1998, Pech, McCoull 2000, Penman 2006).

The Welfare to Work package announced in May 2005 involved quite a sharp break with the social tenets of the SSR and AWT packages. Changed involved the introduction of more individualistic practices, an increased level of work requirements and harsher penalties for non-

---

53 As an interesting side note, although many recipients of PPS do not claim support when they have a new born baby, but rather following separation when their children are older, state imaginaries nevertheless appeared to assume that they did. This idea was reinforced in numerous ways. The fictional case study of a single parent in the 2000 Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform discusses Veronica who "first made contact with Centrelink after separating from her husband. She was 23 years old" and had a 12 month old baby (McClure 2000, 21). Similarly, during the passage of the 2005 Welfare to Work legislation, government Senator Abetz argued that "By the time the mother has a child that has attained the age of eight years, she will have been engaged with the welfare system for a period of two years, receiving training to ensure that she becomes job ready." Such a statement assumed that this mother did not claim payment when her child was seven or older.

compliance. Recipients with a child aged over seven years would be required to seek 15 hours of paid work and moved to the less generous unemployment payment (entitled Newstart Allowance). Welfare to Work changes not only involved a radical increase in work requirements but also a radical shift in the imaginaries emanating from the Australian government. Most prominently, there was a new silence about the PPS recipient's lifecourse and caring responsibilities. Unlike earlier reforms that had promoted enterprising dispositions embedded within caring commitments, the Welfare to Work package did not explicitly recognize the demands PPS recipients' caring commitments placed upon them. While AWT case studies had promoted enterprising subjects who planned for their future, they did this through explicit reference to mothers' caring responsibilities. In contrast, the case studies accompanying Welfare to Work suggested that the sole barriers to labor force participation were the dispositions of inactivity and passivity the post-war welfare state had created among sole parents and other 'inactive' groups. In this vein the case studies talked exclusively about barriers such as confidence, job search skills and qualifications (see Table 2).

An earlier chapter (two) illustrated that the key themes in the tabloid media's images of single mothers have been remarkably similar over the last 25 years. Here I have illustrated that the Australian Government sought in the 1980s and 1990s to proactively counter these themes and images and to frame income support reforms in ways that did not enflame negative images. Yet, Welfare to Work changes are striking in their active silence regarding the themes that have circulated in the tabloid media. It is a silence that speaks loudly to single mothers who, whether supportive of the Welfare to Work reforms or otherwise inclined, interpreted these measures as addressing deviant single mothers.

Since the launch of the SSR in 1986 policy makers have produced an increasingly homogeneous lifecourse norm for PPS recipients and developed new tools to enforce it. In contrast to the argument that "dynamics of control in neoliberal regimes...operate not through the imposition of social conformity but through the organized proliferation of individual difference in an economized matrix" (McNay 2009) via the promotion of enterprising subjectivities, single mothers have been increasingly expected to adhere to a singular norm. While payment conditions prior to 2001 allowed single mothers to remain outside of the labour market, or move back and forth between part-time work, full-time work and being out of the labor force until their youngest child turned 16, conditions since have determined for mothers when these labour market states are, and are not, appropriate.

SSR conveyed a conflicted debate about mothers' participation in paid work, simultaneously

suggesting such participation was necessary but also revealing an unwillingness enforce this norm through income support regulations. By comparison, debates in the present are focused narrowly on the problem of workless families and the unsustainability of current rates of payment receipt. There is a new silence regarding the gender composition of the PPS population and gendered expectations regarding mothers' roles.

Conclusion

This chapter's extended discussion of the ways in which income support for PPS recipients and their lifecourses have been problematized over the period 1980 to 2007 has illustrated the shifting and complex relations within which three major personalized planning programs (JET, PA and EP) were located. Due to policy changes in the late 1970s, unmarried mothers were no longer left to fend for themselves as they had previously been, but were able to access income support benefits. Furthermore, policy makers attempted to move further away from the moral hierarchies of mothering established between 1942 and 1978 by combining payments for never married women, unmarried women, and single and partnered parents on low incomes into a single payment. But active efforts by the Australian Public Service and government ministers to counter single mother stereotypes ceased around the time of Welfare to Work.

Gender is simultaneously highly present and silenced within Welfare to Work. Within policy documents there is a marked decrease in discussions about how care work and paid work can be combined. PPS recipients are understood as just one, all be it significant, manifestation of a problem of 'workless families.' Within the discourses of workless families there is an emphasis on having at least one parent in paid work. What is silenced here is that the vast majority of PPS recipients are women, and that this formulation leaves families with a father in paid work and financially dependent mother at home as an uncontested ideal. If this is the way in which gender is silenced, it is simultaneously made highly present in the structure of the work requirements which progressively increase as a recipient's youngest child gets older, and the emphasis on mothers' lack of self-esteem.

This chapter has also illustrated the child first focus of the Australian welfare state. This emphasis connects with a broader cultural imaginary in which good mothering is associated with self renunciation. In the following chapter (four), I examine the connections between experiences of personalized planning programs and this ethnos of self sacrifice. Discourses of sacrifice of oneself,

of always putting their children first strongly shaped some of the single mothers' experiences of mothering and their participation in paid work and education. This was not simply that they put their child's need for food, shelter and medical care above their own need for leisure, or rest. All interviewees shared this experience. Rather it was a more specific discourse in which they spoke of themselves as "being nothing," "giving all to their children." This contrasted with mothers who spoke of constant juggling or balances where at times their needs came first and at others those of their children did. Foucault's reflections on Hellenistic practices in which it was believed that "care of the self cannot in itself tend toward so exaggerated a form of self-love as to neglect others or, worse still, to abuse one's power over them" are useful for reflecting upon some single ' and service providers' struggles to think about good mothering outside the frame of 'self renunciation' (Foucault 1997a, 288).

Chapter four: Personalized planning programs: shifting official governmentalities and technologies

Introduction

The key concerns of this chapter are the spaces of freedom and constraint personalized planning programs for single mothers create and close down. Chapters two and three provided a genealogy of income support for widows and single mothers that illustrated the problematizations and imaginaries out of which personalized planning programs for PPS recipients emerged. In contrast the empirical focus of this chapter is much narrower. It focuses in on the program rationalities and technologies of the three major personalized planning programs (Jobs, Education Training (JET) program, the Personal Adviser (PA) Program and the Employment Preparation (EP) program) which were briefly described in chapter two. Like the previous chapter this current chapter provides a 'top-down' perspective on neoliberal governmentality. It answers the question - what spaces of freedom and constraint do personalized planning programs open up and close down? - from the perspective of official program rationalities, the plans for conducting PPS recipients' conduct.

In answering this question, the first section of this chapter argues against influential accounts in which these programs are understood as reflecting firstly a shift to increased monitoring and secondly a novel presumption that social policy should aim to change how income support recipients behave (Shaver 2002, 111). Against this line of argument I suggest that policy has had a long-standing concern with changing how income support recipients, and particularly single mothers, behave. What has changed is *the particular way* in which policy attempts to act upon individuals and transform them, and how it rationalizes these attempts. This section sets out how a governmentality approach makes visible elements of the changes that are missed in the dominant account. Specifically, I argue that the key change since the late 1990s has been an increasing emphasis on using an adviser to produce economically productive subjects through inciting enterprising attitudes and dispositions among PPS recipients. Another important shift has occurred in practices of guidance involved in personalized planning programs and the kinds of work on the self that they attempt to incite. Within the second section I provide a detailed defence of this argument through an exposition of the key technologies and rationalities associated with the three

major personalized planning programs directed at PPS recipients, namely JET, PA and EP.

Producing economically productive subjects: official rationalities and technologies of personalized planning programs (1988 to 2008)

Shaver (2002, 111) has described the general trend in personalized planning programs for income support recipients over the period 1989 (when JET was implemented) to 2001 (when the PA program was implemented) as a shift away from publicly funded training for income support recipients towards attempts to combine training assistance with closer monitoring and enforcement of job search requirements. Following this line of argument about the general shift in the governance of all income support recipients and not just parents, she argues that the PA program, which required some income support recipients to attend annual planning interviews with an adviser within Centrelink (the income support agency) was part of a general trend in Australia and other Western countries to subject claimants to increased monitoring. It is also part of a general trend, she argues, to a "new and explicit presumption that the proper role of policy is to change the way that welfare recipients behave" (2002, 111). Shaver argues that the Australian postwar welfare state reflected a commitment to T.H. Marshall's "vision of social welfare as a third dimension of citizenship", albeit a flawed application of those ideals (2002, 111). She critiques PA and similar personalized planning programs for moving away from a commitment to the Marshallian welfare state, in which income support claimants were treated as sovereign individuals. Now they are said to be treated as subjects of paternalistic supervision.

While agreeing entirely with Shaver that the 'monitoring' of income support recipients has intensified in many respects since 1989, it is also important to note that they have lessened in others.[54] I would also argue that terms such as 'monitoring' or 'supervision' do not fully capture what the state has sought to do through the various personalized planning programs they have delivered or contracted other agencies to deliver for PPS recipients and other income support groups. Furthermore, I argue that by viewing the post war welfare state as an incomplete application of a theoretical ideal (Marshall's social citizenship), Shaver misses many aspects of the political rationalities and technologies that have historically governed income support recipients including lone/sole/single mothers/parents. In particular, attempts by policy makers to act upon the behaviour of income support recipients and thus transform it are not new although some of the

54 Importantly house visits by Social Security officers ceased in the mid 1980s and have not been reintroduced.

particular techniques utilized since 2000 are innovative. As chapter two illustrated, the post-war system of income support has always attempted to shape individuals through policy in order to buttress particular familial and gendered relations and strongly discourage others. For instance, the structure of the first federal income support payments were based on discouraging maternal labour force participation or births outside wedlock, while changes during the 1980s sought to increase maternal participation in part-time employment in a selected range of occupations.

Changes in welfare policies are not encapsulated in the idea of a shift away from treating the subject of welfare as a sovereign subject and toward attempting to use policy to change their behaviour. Nor are they captured by interpreting the Australian post-war welfare state as reflecting an incomplete commitment to a theoretical ideal. Instead these changes are more adequately captured in the recognition that there have been shifts in the conception of the welfare subject and their subjectivities which are linked to changes in political rationalities. My arguments here draw on Foucault's concern with self-fashioning and "the nexus between the production of a particular conception of human nature, a particular formation of subjectivity, and a particular political ideology" which were outlined in chapter one, and elaborated in chapter three (2009, 26). The concept of political rationalities underscores the idea that government is a complex activity that should not be viewed as merely the implementation of a particular economic or political theory (Beeson, Firth 1998). While economic and political theories inform government, their incorporation "is always partial and necessitates connection with administrative techniques and forms of calculation which modify, if not transform, the theories and their objectives" (Beeson, Firth 1998, 217, Rose, Miller 2010).

Therefore, against the idea that Australia has moved away from a commitment to a Marshallian welfare state which treated the recipient of welfare as a sovereign subject and towards attempting to use policy to change these subjects' behaviour, I argue that over the last 25 years there has been a shift in the techniques used to transform welfare recipient's behaviour, as well as the types of behaviour policy has sought to incite. Specifically, there was a shift in the late 1980s towards attempting to transform welfare recipients into mother-workers by encouraging recipients of sole parent pension to participate in education and training. Since the late 1990s there has been a move away from this approach and an increased use of approaches that seek to transform individuals into employees through inciting and supporting them to develop certain generic personal attributes of confidence and self-esteem in addition to skills in goal setting – to transform them into enterprising subjects. Another important shift has been in the attributes of the guide, away from a bureaucratic

expert in linking PPS recipients to additional programs and education and training opportunities, to the use of individuals with no specialist training in vocational assistance who worked generically with all categories of income support recipients. Despite these shifts, there has also been considerable continuity since the late 1980s in the technologies or practices used to govern income support recipients, something that Shaver downplays. For instance, since the late 1980s education and training assistance for single parents has been organized around an individual adviser and the JET, PA, and EP programs were informed by the diagram of personalized planning.

Foucault's genealogies on ancient practices of the self and the role the guide played in supporting these practices provide a good starting point for asking questions about the role played by advisers within personalized planning programs and the types of self-knowledge employed in these practices. Historically, autonomy has been conceived in terms of atomistic rational agents, and relations with others have been conceived as contrary to autonomy. Even though Foucault, in the tradition of thinkers such as Nietzsche, had argued that the self is socially and linguistically produced, his early works nevertheless tended to reproduce elements of this binary. As discussed in chapter one, Foucault's early works view individuals' relationships to guides, such as priests, doctors, or books, as ones of dependency (Luxon 2008)(Taylor 2008). It is only within his later works that he takes up an alternative perspective (Luxon 2008). These later works are concerned with the practices of the ancients and Foucault argues that within these practices guides often played a role of supporting the individual to become autonomous. This simultaneous recognition of the self as embedded within social relations and a concern with autonomy has also been the subject of recent feminist analysis (see collection by Mackenzie, Stoljar 2000). In particular, feminists have argued that a concern with individual autonomy is compatible with recognition of the self as socially and discursively produced (Mackenzie, Stoljar 2000).

Foucault argues that ancient practices embody a relationship between the subject and truth that is strictly different to the model underpinning contemporary and Christian practices. The true subject in psychoanalysis, Christianity and other contemporary models is one who discovers who they truly are. In contrast, the true subject who cares for themselves within these ancient practices is one who aligns himself with true precepts. When these contrasts are considered in the light of Sen's emphasis on capabilities and together with his recognition that our ability to be autonomous relies upon relationships with others, three questions regarding the role of the adviser (guide) in personalized planning programs are generated.

The first question is: does the 'guide' play a role that is orientated to respecting the

autonomy of the one who is guided, and to providing tools that enable them to develop this autonomy, or is the subject that is guided encouraged in various ways to passively 'obey'? To put it another way, does the guide provide (historically and socially specific) tools to assist the person who is guided to practice freedom? What it means to respect the autonomy of Australian single parents needs to be located both socially and historically. As chapter two illustrated, the history of the Australian system of income support is a history of single mothers being understood through their relationship to others and not one in which there has been a concern with single mothers as individual citizens. Their responsibility for the care of children has been used to justify supporting them to remain outside of the labour market and also to justify them being compelled, with the threat of sanctions for refusal, to engage in part-time work. It is also a history within which there has been extensive supervision by policy makers of single mothers' familial and sexual relations as well as their personal characteristics (for example plans and morality).

The second question is: what role does material assistance play in these personalized planning programs? Is any material assistance tightly tied to what policy makers see as the most appropriate occupational goals for clients? Or does it, as Sen argues policy should strive to, support clients' abilities to be and do what they value? As chapter two briefly described, and this chapter will elaborate in more detail, the JET and EP programs had different regulations around the provision of material assistance, and different gendered rationales for the provision of this assistance.

The third question is: do these practices of guidance attempt to tie individuals to identities that are assumed to be evident and pre-existing, or pre-existing but covered over? Identities that might be assumed to be both evident and pre-existing include maternal identities. Identities assumed to be pre-existing but covered over include low self-esteem or confidence. The governance of these covered identities has been tied to confessional practices. As elaborated in chapter one, such practices of guidance are problematic because as the Foucauldian literature illustrates they close down other viable ways of living.

It is the task of the second section to answer these questions in relation to the three major personalized planning programs, and through this to answer my overarching thesis question regarding the spaces of freedom and constraint opened up and closed down. The second section illustrates that the PA and EP programs are not only about surveillance, or about treating clients as subjects of paternalistic supervision, but instead are concerned with inciting and supporting the production of gendered enterprising dispositions and attitudes. It will argue that the most significant change has been a decreased emphasis on individuals transforming themselves into economically

productive subjects through the provision of access to training and education and an increased emphasis on invoking transformation through participation tools and the assistance of an advisor.

Producing economically productive subjects through three policy initiatives, 1988 to 2008

The active society and the Jobs, Education and Training program

JET is significant because it represents the first time a package of assistance to Australian income support recipients was organized around a specialist adviser who would facilitate this access through the provision of advice and counselling. As discussed in chapter three, this diagram of personalized planning has informed all subsequent employment programs directed to PPS recipients. The JET program was introduced as part of a package of changes that followed the mid 1980s Social Security Review. Its rationale was informed by the OECD concept of the 'active society,' which posited that the key objective of social protection policy should not be a financial safety net but instead the promotion of opportunities for active participation within society. Yet, JET did not involve a break with the historical focus on providing income support to mothers in order to support their children's wellbeing. As reflected in JET's key promotional statement "now you can go back to work without neglecting your most important job" (Australia. Dept. of Social Security 1989), it was embedded in the idea that maternal participation in employment should be primarily guided by the age of the youngest child and children's needs.

Following the OECD focus on activating previously 'inactive' populations, the JET program offered single parents education and training subsidies and low cost child care together with the practical advice of an adviser. The primary rationale for providing this assistance was to increase single mothers' employment rates thereby reducing the number who were dependent upon income support payments and decreasing the rates of child poverty. As outlined in chapter two, while Labor politicians argued during the 1980s that it was important to increase employment rates among single mothers, participation in JET was nevertheless made completely voluntary. Furthermore, access to the assistance JET offered was not tied to 'work first' type regulations whereby efforts are focused on giving individuals the minimum level of skills that will enable them to obtain employment.

Parliamentary debates reveal that the goal of JET was to *activate* single parents (at the time

referred to as sole parents) through providing them access to a range of material assistance including "wage subsidy assistance, work related training and job search assistance targeted to their special needs"(Australian House of Representatives. 1988).The government estimated that within a year of the JET's launch around 12,000 single parents would be receiving this assistance.[55] JET advisers were given access to a limited amount of funds they could use to assist clients with training (such as short courses or first aid certificates), and they could give eligible clients access to JET child care assistance, a child care subsidy, for the days they were attending classes or during their first weeks of returning to employment.[56] The level of the subsidy was not published though out the 1990s, but during the period of my study the JET subsidy enabled eligible single parents to only pay a nominal sum (of one to two dollars a day). Together the subsidies and financial assistance aimed to provide single parents with the financial means to complete education and training, and move into employment.

Targeted education subsidies, such as those provided within JET, are very important to low income Australians given the overall system of student support. Unlike countries such as Canada and the United States, Australia does not have a system of public or private student loans that can assist students meet the costs of study. Students under 25 years whose families have very low incomes or who are assessed as homeless (i.e. cannot live with their parents due to abuse) may access the *Youth Allowance* income support payment. Adults aged over 25 years may access the income support payment *Austudy*, if they meet income and assets tests. But these income support payments do not assist PPS recipients. Dual eligibility for parenting and education income support ceased in 1987, and from that time parents were eligible for the Pensioner Education Supplement (PES), worth $60 a fortnight (or $1560 per year) in 2005. Australian students at colleges must pay their fees upfront although university students may defer their fees until graduation through the Australian Government's Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS).[57] All students (including

---

55 Further "The Department of Employment, Education and Training is creating additional places in its labour market programs for JET participants so that they will have direct access to Commonwealth Employment Service officers, who will coordinate placement services and skills to development programs. Formal training programs such as Jobstart and adult training programs which carry a small amount of extra allowance during training will be available for JET starters" (Richardson 1988, 415).

56 From 2000 onwards the JET child care subsidy provided an additional subsidy on top of the Child Care Benefit (CBB) introduced that year. All Australian families who use child care are eligible for CBB (although the rate of assistance is subject to income tests).

57 Under this scheme once students graduate and start earning an income fee repayments are automatically deducted from their pay through

university students) must find a way to pay for all other costs such as student union fees, textbooks, lab material, transport, student recreation fees and living costs upfront.

The rationale for subsidizing education was to reduce single parents' reliance on income support. In JET's official two year evaluation the aims are outlined as being: "to improve the financial circumstances of sole parent families by increasing their capacity to earn while also reducing the number of pensioners, periods on pension and social security outlays" (Jordan 1991, 2). Jordan continues by arguing that the "formal objectives [of JET] require quantifiable financial gains" and the service is not provided to "expand the choices open to sole parents, more or less irrespective of result" (Jordan 1991, 2). Despite these explicit statements that JET aimed to reduce outlays and did not aim to simply expand the choices available to single parents, the program regulations and single parent's experience of these show that within fairly broad boundaries JET did respect single parents' choices and expanded choices regardless of immediate outcomes.

JET's voluntary status reflected an assumption that single parents were capable of deciding whether or not they needed the assistance the program offered and were the best judges regarding the most appropriate timing for obtaining this assistance. While policy makers made efforts to increase program participation among disadvantaged groups including indigenous people, Vietnamese immigrants and long term recipients, this was done through measures that maintained the program's voluntary status (Carberry, Chan, and Heyworth 1996). For instance, policy makers aimed to increase awareness of the program and make it easier for individuals to access it (Carberry, Chan, and Heyworth 1996). The overarching assumption was that single parents who needed assistance with entering education or training or paid work would take it up if it was made easily available and they were aware of the program.

While JET was criticized by some for focusing on a limited range of typically feminine occupations (Gardiner 1999, 43), the program provided for a much more diverse range of education and training than did subsequent 'work first' regulations which formed part of the Welfare to Work 2005 budget package. Welfare to Work initiatives only provided assistance for full-time, vocationally orientated courses lasting no longer than 12 months and as a result of the changes individuals were no longer eligible for JET assistance for the duration of an undergraduate degree, masters or PhD. Furthermore, JET did not restrict assistance to only those parents who did not have labour market

---

the tax system.

skills.[58] Instead single parents could use JET assistance, including child care subsidies, to help them change occupations, or to undertake long term non vocational education, such as an arts degree. Under JET single parents who wished to change their occupation to something they thought would be more flexible, more 'family friendly', more personally satisfying or enjoyable were supported to do so. While most of the interviewees who were studying in 2005 had low educational qualifications, a minority had already completed a diploma or a University degree and were retraining. Finally, official regulations did not require the JET adviser to assess the strength of client's plans before giving them access to assistance with fees or child care, although my interview study found that some advisers did require parents to complete a written participation plan prior to giving them assistance.

While a subsequent two year evaluation of JET downplayed the extent to which the JET program actually provided parents with access to additional resources, suggesting that in itself JET may not have substantially increased sole parents' access to supports, it is nevertheless clear that increasing access to resources was one of the main rationales for the program. The idea was to increase the material supports for capacity building that were directed to single parents rather than to simply produce a single referral and counselling point, as the PA program did. A significant difference between JET and the programs following it, such as the PA and EP programs, was that JET primarily focused on using education or training to transform single parents and was not intensely concerned with the psychological attributes of single parents (their confidence, self-esteem, or their life planning abilities), nor with using the interpersonal relationship between the adviser and the parent to transform these attributes. While JET advisers were expected to provide some counselling, policy documents make clear that this was to be primarily directed toward helping clients choose suitable employment, education and child care. Thus the emphasis was on career counselling rather than quasi psychological counselling. As the government MP Mrs Darling argued:

---

58 Further the author of the formal two year evaluation report, acknowledged that while the program did aim to expand the choices open to parents irrespective of employment results it might be reasonable to expect it to do so. Jordon wrote:
It might have been argued that the program is a service which ought to be provided to expand the choices open to sole parents, more or less irrespective of result, but its formal objectives require quantifiable financial gains: incomes are to be higher than they would have been in its absence, pension expenditure power and, at worst, the program will be paid for by the savings it produces….Events tending in the desired direction, such as enrolment in a training course or commencement of part-time work, may be encouraging but do not count as success unless it can be shown that they lead regularly to substantial result" (Jordan 1991 2).

> From March, JET will provide special counselling and individual guidance to sole parents choosing their future direction. It is practical advice and assistance which is being provided. JET advisers and Department of Social Security officers will provide individual assessment of job barriers and prospects. They will guide sole parents about their options and opportunities and will provide information about services such as child care (Australian House of Representatives 1988a, 307).

This statement suggests that JET advisers were expected to be knowledgeable about the education and training that was available, the financial assistance that parents may be eligible for, the deadlines for university and college applications, and the fees these courses attracted, or at the least to be able to direct clients to appropriate information sources. Governmental attention directed to the JET adviser's role was primarily focused on the issues of guiding parents to the available material assistance rather than, as the subsequent PA and PE programs were, on uncovering passive dispositions and fostering enterprising ones through developing the client's confidence and ability to plan.

While I have strongly emphasized that JET was primarily concerned to create economically productive subjects through enabling them to obtain recognized qualifications rather than by providing them with quasi-psychological counselling, it is nevertheless important to recognize that there was from JET's inception a desire for the adviser to be more than a bureaucrat who provided program advice and referrals, and for them to direct some attention toward the client's confidence and planning abilities. At the same time, these quasi-psychological counselling aspects of the JET adviser's role were always discussed within the context of facilitating access to material resources. For instance, in commending the JET legislation to the Senate, Senator Giles explained that:

> A sole parent who wants to take part in JET will be referred to a special staff member of Social Security, the JET adviser, who will provide advice, counselling and long term support for the sole parent participant…this long term support will go to the problems people have with the care of their children, not only when they are training but also when they actually get into the work force. This adviser will assess the person's training and education needs and readiness for re-entry into the work force, and ideally will also be a guide, philosopher and friend during what can be an extremely traumatic experience for somebody who has been out of the work force for a very long period of time and who has lost all confidence (Australian Senate 1988, 4016).

Thus being a 'guide, philosopher and friend' was something that ideally happened but not the adviser's central role. Similarly, in an article on JET pilots with disadvantaged groups, JET officers explained that assistance with confidence and self-esteem was often a first step in a process that

involved assistance with practical personal difficulties such as accommodation and child support. As they explain:

> When a customer chooses to participate in the [JET] programme, either at the initial interview or at a later point, the JET Adviser assists them to identify individual barriers to employment, discusses the range of assistance available to overcome these barriers, works with the customer to develop an action plan to achieve their identified goals and provides appropriate referrals to services, including the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments and community services.
> Advice is provided on a range of issues, including the impact earnings will have on social security payments and the range of financial assistance available to customers. In many cases a JET Adviser works with a customer to help overcome a range of personal difficulties including accommodation, child support, financial difficulties, language and/or literacy problems before the customer is ready to take up vocational training, education or employment. Improving self-esteem and motivation to the point where a customer is ready to take the first step can take a considerable period of time and may require a number of contacts or interviews (Carberry, Chan, and Heyworth 1996, 91).

Thus, facilitating access to training and accessing work-readiness were the primary techniques through which JET advisers would help single parents transform themselves. Techniques of friendship and formal written plans were just a small part of this process.

This starkly contrasts with the PA program where advisers' primary tools were to be techniques of friendship and tools that formalized clients' plans, and monitored their progress against these plans. JET's focus on facilitating transformation through targeted material support continued until it demise in 2006, despite the Howard Coalition (elected in 1996) substantially and explicitly reducing the number and depth of training programs available through this program. A continued focus on enhancing human capital through increasing qualifications is evident in the JET success stories published as late as 2005. They highlight ways that parents' lives have been transformed through access to subsidized education, training or child care. For instance, one media release entitled *Centrelink Nurses Client's Dream* writes: 'Emphasis is placed on improving long-term labour market competitiveness and career development through education and training' (Australian Government: Centrelink 2005a).

While JET was not intensely concerned with single parent's plans it nevertheless made them visible in a way that they had not previously been and this enabled Social Security staff and policy makers to cultivate an interest in them. An early JET evaluation reports a policy concern that some single parents do not plan appropriately. This evaluation highlighted an instance where a single

mother was obviously not planning ahead. Jordan comments,

> One young woman explained, *remarkably*, that she has 'twelve or fifteen months more [of pension] so didn't bother [responding to the invitation to attend a JET interview]" " (Jordan 1991, 2) (emphasis added).

Personalized planning programs for the unemployed

As described in chapter three, despite this emerging interest in the extent to which single parents did not plan for their futures, there was no attempt throughout most of the 1990s to change JET to focus more intensively on parents' plans, nor were there efforts to create new compulsory personalized planning programs for single parents. Instead the diagram of personalized planning was increasingly applied to other income support groups (such as those receiving unemployment benefits). During the 1990s the technologies of personalized planning were extensively developed and refined within programs for the unemployed, and these were subsequently applied to single parents and other income support groups. The clearest programmatic example of the application of personalized planning to the unemployed was the use of case management with the long term unemployed as part of the large budget measure *Working Nation,* which was designed to target high rates of long term unemployment (Working Nation, 1994). The extension of personalized planning also involved the introduction of Job Seeker Diaries in which unemployed individuals were required to record their job search efforts and the creation of new computer assisted technologies that Centrelink officers would use to record written plans and agreements with the unemployed. These quasi-contractual technologies called *Preparing for Work Plans* and *Mutual Obligation Agreements* contained the client's plan regarding meeting income support requirements, and the steps they would take to obtain employment. These plans, and planning meetings, were used to compel unemployed individuals to make choices, albeit from a very limited list of options. Underlying these changes was a policy preoccupation with making the unemployed more active (Carney 2006, Dean 1998, Dean 1995a). Subsequently these planning technologies were applied in a revised form to recipients of PPS through the *Personal Adviser* program (2001) and the Welfare to Work (2005) Employment Preparation (EP) program.

Clashing program rationalities and the Personal Adviser program

As chapter three briefly outlined, policy anxiety over PPS recipients who failed to make plans to exit income support, and attention to the form of the JET program resurged in the late

1990s and early 2000s. Following the Reference Group on Welfare Reform, which proposed new programs for previously 'inactive' populations such as widows without dependent children, the mature age unemployed and parents with care of a dependent child, a new Personal Adviser program was created. The PA program was designed to be the key pillar of new requirements for Parenting Payment recipients (and other targeted groups).

The PA program was not intended to replace JET but rather to exist alongside it with JET advisers remaining specialists and PAs taking on a new non-specialist adviser role. Personal Advisers' main task was to assist their clients with making plans for paid work, through formal interviews and the development written participation plans. As I will elaborate below, while JET advisers were expected to have specific skills related to employment and education counselling, PAs were employed on the basis of their interpersonal attributes (friendly, caring, concerned), and for their ability to engage and interview clients rather than specific skills relating to employment or education counselling. In contrast to JET, which had focused primarily on linking clients to sources of material assistance as well as employment, education and training opportunities, the new program focused on the 'interview space' as being in itself an important policy instrument. The interview was designed to be the primary instrument that PAs would use to increase clients' confidence, transform their attitudes towards paid work, and enable them to be active in preparing for their futures, and to make active choices about how to balance their participation requirements (Australian Government: Centrelink 2003d, Australian Government: Centrelink 2003e).

While policy makers had paid little attention to how a JET adviser approached the counselling aspect of their role, this was of intense interest to the policy makers designing the PA program. Policy makers attempted to exert significant control over the tone of the interactions between PAs and their clients as well as the frequency of these interactions. A detailed electronic Participation Toolset specified the questions advisers were to ask their clients. While the PA program did not replace the JET program, this new model of personalized planning reflected a clear change in policy makers' assumptions about the most important factors preventing single mothers from obtaining paid work. Creators of the PA program assumed that, aside from caring responsibilities, the most important factors preventing mothers from moving into paid work were problems of individual disposition and psychology including problems with motivation, self-esteem, temporary personal crisis and an inability to plan for the future. Given this new policy problematic the primary aim of the PA program was to transform single mothers by arming them with personal planning and goal setting skills and providing limited employment counselling. The PA program

sought to act upon single parents' conduct by "acting upon the forces thought to shape the values, beliefs, moralities that themselves" were held to determine the everyday choices single parents make about how they lead their lives (Rose 1999a, 278-9). PA's intense focus on single parents' attitudes, values and psychological dispositions and assertion that these could be transformed through annual interviews and written plans contrasted strongly with JET's emphasis on transforming parents through increasing their formal qualifications. In the process, the PA program redefined 'assistance' as anything which helped (or compelled) clients to develop a return-to-work-plan or to follow through on that plan (Vanstone 2002). Even the identification of barriers and plans was defined as 'assistance' rather than as being an assessment of the assistance a client required.

In this way the PA program personified what Nikolas Rose has called etho-politics, a form of politics that "concerns itself with the self-techniques necessary for responsible self-government and the relations between one's obligation to oneself and one's obligation to others" (Rose 1999a, 278-9). Etho-politics can be contrasted with *disciplinary power* concerned with "maximizing the utility and docility of individuals" and which "individualizes and normalizes" and also with *biopower* concerned with "maximizing the health and welfare of the population" and which "collectivizes and socializes." While the concept of etho-politics is useful in so far as it distinguishes certain novel elements of contemporary relations of power, the totalizing nature of the concept renders it of limited utility in understanding the spaces of freedom and constraint opened up and closed down by specific programs. Rose identifies welfare to work strategies in Western countries as one instance of etho-politics. Welfare to work strategies, he argues, "deploy re-moralizing techniques …to cajole, persuade or coerce welfare recipients into the responsibilities of employment, no matter how menial, in order to achieve the disciplining and moralizing benefits thought to flow from wage labour" (Rose 1999a, 278-9). While this is an accurate assessment of the way that many welfare to work programs in the US (and more recently in Australia) operate, his concept of etho-politics nevertheless brushes over important differences between programs that fall under the broad welfare to work rubric. Across programs there are different roles given to practices of self-care, freedom and self government that cannot be captured through the concept of 'etho-politics'. As Rose himself recognizes, etho-politics is a loose concept that covers a wide spectrum of forms:

> At one pole lie those strategies that emphasize the code aspect of the government of conduct, seeking to shape the self-regulation of the individual in terms of fixed moral rules justified by 'external' principles concerning the conduct of the self, whether these be transcendental (theology) or essential (human nature). At the other lie those strategies that emphasize the 'aesthetic' elements in the government of ethics, the active crafting of the self

> through the conscious, wilful and creative pursuit of a certain 'art of living', the fabrication of individuality through experimentation with forms of friendship, domesticity, erotics or work (Rose 1999a, 278-9).

In contrast to the totalizing nature of Rose's etho-politics concept, Foucault's reflections upon practices of the self and his distinctions between different types of work upon the self- a spectrum that runs from, at one pole work that is directed at caring for the self to, at the other pole work that is directed at normalizing or abdicating the self – are more useful in capturing the important differences between different kinds of welfare to work policy measures.

De-gendering and the Employment Preparation program

Within the Employment Preparation program the technology of personalized planning was again transformed. We have already seen that Welfare to Work heralded the most substantial changes to income support for single parents that had occurred since the extension of benefits to unmarried mothers in the late 1970s. Once these changes were enacted in legislated the PA and JET programs ceased, and parents with a youngest child aged seven years or older were required to work at least 15 hours a week. In terms of political rationalities, Welfare to Work involved a disappearance of an official concern with the gendered composition of PPS recipients; such that parents with children aged over seven years were imagined as ungendered job seekers that are indistinguishable from other job seekers except for their lower work requirement (15 hours paid work per week). Finally for the first time a personalized planning program for PPS recipients was delivered by contracted agencies (the Job Network) rather than by an Australian Government agency (CES or Centrelink).

Reflecting the idea that employment services must be delivered through market forms and the notion that processes of accessing them should also engender enterprising dispositions, individuals within the Job Network are required to choose and register with their own service provider (Dean 1998). Both JET and PA programs had protected single parents from the need to engage in a service market, but with the new Employment Preparation (EP) program they too had to engage in an active process to obtain the services they were *required to receive*.

As briefly mentioned in chapter two, publicity material, medial releases and ministerial statements associated with Welfare to Work use the degendered language of *parents* and avoided recognizing that there are any distinctive elements of mothers' labour force experience or lifecourse. Unlike the previous SSR and AWT budget packages, Welfare to Work changes do not explicitly

recognize that the vast majority of PPS recipients are mothers, nor do they discuss caring work, attempt to imagine how paid work and care will be integrated, or direct attention to concerns about gender roles. Rather than referring to gendered relations, Welfare to Work changes were rationalized on the basis of a problem of workless families and welfare dependency among persons of work-force age. Rates of PPS receipts were identified as just one manifestation of a problem of workless families (one quarter of workless families were couple families) and just one manifestation of the growth in welfare dependency among those of workforce age.[59]

Very little of the publically available information on EP specifies how the program assists clients. The only information available simply suggests that the assistance offered may include: skills assessments; payment of course fees to upgrade skills or to improve self-esteem, confidence; support and mentoring; and help with finding child care. Rather than explaining how the program will govern individuals, the vast majority of publically available material describes how the Australian Government will govern the conduct of JN agencies charged with delivering the new programs.

The primary mechanism for governing agencies within the Job Network was the allocation of contract places and outcome payments as well as the imposition of minimum client contact requirements (assessed through audit). Official documents provide extensive detail on when providers would receive funds, the funds they were allowed to spend on clients, and when PPS recipients and other clients would become eligible for employment assistance. EP is described as part of a so-called "Active Participation Model - Job Network Continuum" (see flow chart in Figure 3.) Keys for the symbols and acronyms are provided in Attachment one of this thesis. However, what matters for my purposes here is not so much the specific details of the flow chart but rather the ways in which this diagram illuminates that the new object of policy concern was the management of client flows into services so as to ensure that only those most disadvantaged in the labour market receive substantial assistance, and that government expenditure on individuals is strictly rationed according to their level of disadvantage. This concern parallels earlier concerns surrounding programs for the unemployment (Henman, Adler 2003, Henman 2004a). This way of governing unemployment services reveals a concern with managing the future through directing flows. As discussed in chapter three, the PA program utilized anticipatory modes of power that

59 Other manifestations included the growth in numbers receiving Disability Support Pension and older persons receiving unemployment payments.

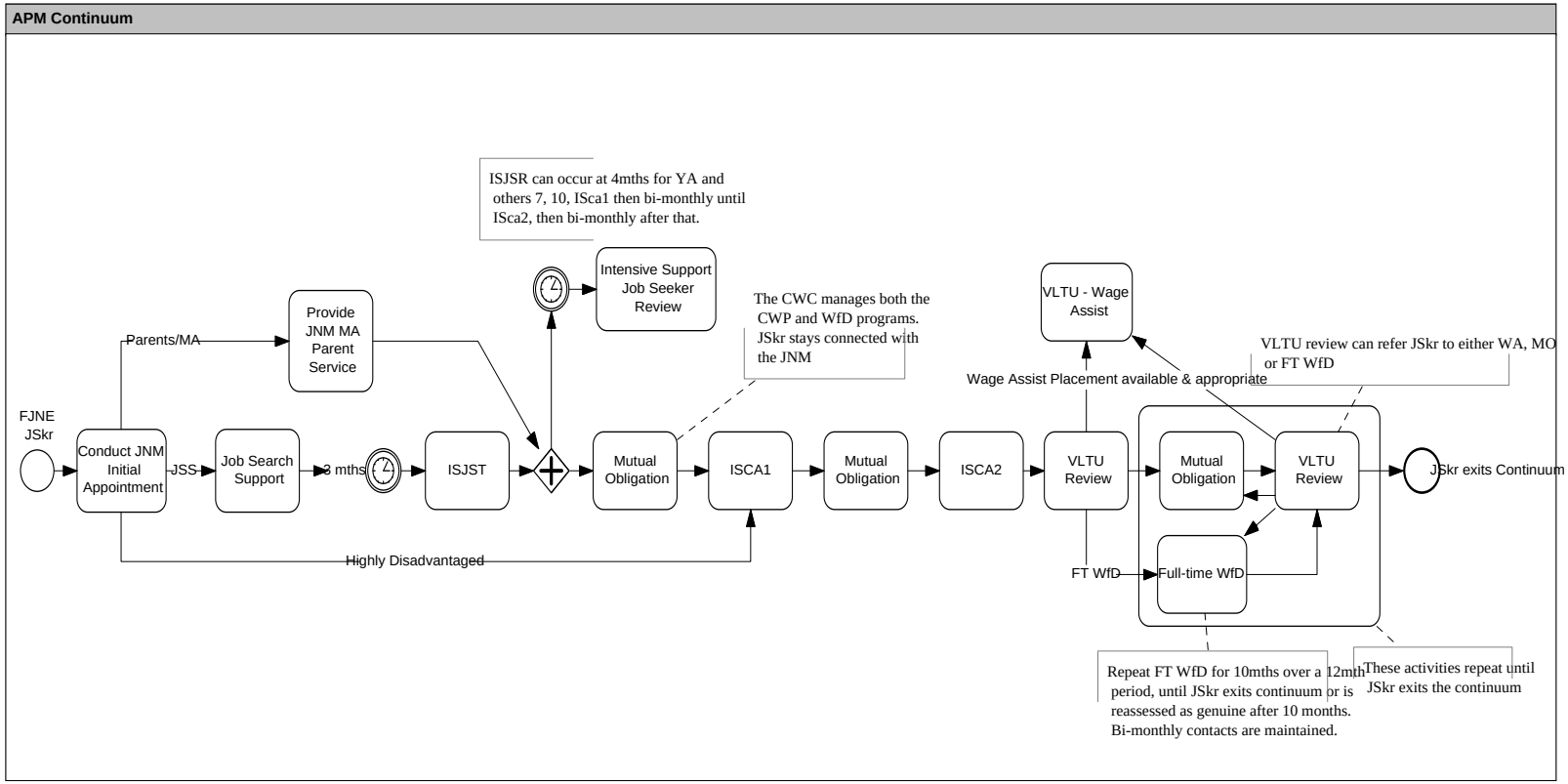
were concerned with reshaping the ways in which single mothers' lifecourses *would* unfold, rather than transforming current circumstances. In a similar way the Active Participation Model reveals that the central concern is with directing flows of unemployment through controlling the timing of the individual's movement into employment services. While all individuals referred to the JN were in search of employment it was only those whose characteristics suggested they would remain unemployed for a significant period of time were granted immediate access to assistance. Those who were assessed to be less disadvantaged were required to serve a waiting period. Specifically, PPS recipients with workforce experience in the last two years would only "receive Employment Preparation after they have been participating in Job Network for three months without finding employment" (Australia: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2008, 129).

Most PPS clients entering the JN were produced as able bodied, degendered subjects, full of unexploited potential. While JET assistance was only accessible only to single Parenting Payment and not partnered Parenting Payment recipients in recognition that being the sole primary carer of a dependent child was in itself a significant source of disadvantage, EP program gave these obligations much less recognition. Under the Active Participation Model - Job Network Continuum, substantial support (called "Intensive Support customised assistance") was only available to 'highly disadvantaged' clients, and caring obligations would not in themselves result in a client being assessed as highly disadvantaged. Each PPS recipient entering the Job Network would be credited with a $300 Job Seeker Account that the agency could spent on goods or services for the client (such as training) (Australia: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2008). PPS recipients not assessed as being 'highly disadvantaged' would only be eligible for more substantial assistance via Intensive Support customised assistance after being registered with the JN for 12 months. Theoretically, agencies could use some of the outcome payments they generated through placing other clients in employment to pay for additional assistance (such as training courses or certification) for PPS clients but there is little evidence that agencies do this.

In stark contrast to the debates surrounding the PA program Australian government officials did not discuss the qualifications that those delivering EP would have and did not attempt to describe the interview space. Unlike both PA and JET advisers, these advisers were employed within private organizations and thus their qualifications varied depending on the particular orientation,

scale and operating budget of the agency that employed them. While as I discuss below some of the JN agencies I interviewed employed some people with undergraduate degrees related to occupational counselling, health sciences and psychology, other agencies employed advisers who have no specific qualifications in these areas and little post-secondary education. The formal contracts between the Australian Government and JN agencies do not specify how providers conduct client interviews although they do specify the minimum number of times they must meet with clients. In theory, JN agencies have the freedom to decide how they structure interviews and interactions with clients and can adopt radically different approaches. Indeed, part of the rationale for the privatization of employment services was that the non-government sector would provide a wider range of service options, and the unemployed could become *customers* of employment services, choosing from a range of different options.

Figure 3: Business model - Active Participation Model (APM) Job Network Continuum



Conclusion

Chapter three concluded that one of the key ways in which spaces of freedom and constraint had changed for single mothers since 1980 was the increased imposition of a singular lifecourse norm specifying when it was appropriate to withdraw from the labour market, and when part-time and full-time paid work were appropriate. As it described, while in the 1980s policy discourses produced a new lifecourse norm in which single mothers gradually moved into the labour force as their children got older, reforms after 2000 increasingly enforced this as a singular norm to which PPS recipients must adhere.

In contrast to Chapter three's focus on the ways packages of income support regulations governed PPS recipients, this chapter focused in on the specifics of the three personalized planning programs. It examined the question regarding the spaces of freedom and constraint through asking three questions of these programs: 1) To what degree does the guide respect the autonomy of the one who is guided, and provide them with tools that enable them to develop this autonomy? 2) what role does material assistance play in these personalized planning programs? And 3) do these practices of guidance attempt to tie individuals to identities that are assumed to be evident and pre-existing, or pre-existing but covered over? These questions regarding pre-existing identities and respect for client autonomy are directly influenced by the distinctions that Foucault made between ancient practices of self-care and contemporary and Christian practices. The answers to these three questions provided in this chapter, and further developed in the next, not only reveal the ways in which the spaces of freedom and constraint produced by these programs have changed, but also the limits of these questions and distinctions.

Within these programs, respect for client autonomy and concerns with client obedience are manifested in multiple ways, depending on whether or not program participation is voluntary, and the particular tools of guidance. Although I have left the exploration of the particular tools of guidance until next chapter I have shown here that there has been a move towards compelling PPS recipients to participate in personalized planning programs. PPS recipients with a youngest aged eight years or older were required to regularly see a guide through EP if they were not already meeting their paid work requirements, while PA participants only had annual interviews and JET clients attended voluntarily. Unlike the JET program, the assumption underpinning both the PA and EP

programs is that individuals who require the assistance available through government programs frequently do not access it on their own volition. The move to require individuals to participate in these programs or face the threat of financial sanctions has been primarily justified on this basis.

These programs also continue a long standing concern with child wellbeing rather than mothers' autonomy. The emphasis on justifying benefits to mothers on the basis of children's well-being is not new but, as chapters two and three explained, has a long history. The new silence around gender relations does not result in income support provisions being reorientated around the well-being of the individual claimant. Instead, the emphasis on children's well-being has remained, but now it is argued children need a 'parent' who is in paid work. Thus, at the level of official rationalities, there is reduced space for single mothers to claim payments on the basis of their status as mothers, but at the same time no increased space for them to claim payments on the basis of individual citizenship.

Chapter five examines the practices of guidance within these programs in more depth, but what the analysis here suggests is the importance of the broader context within which these practices are located. While the guides' specific practices might be orientated toward encouraging clients' autonomy and their abilities to be and do what they value, these practices of guidance are themselves located within a system which severely restricts their possibilities. Most obviously, individuals are forced to participate in these processes or risk loss of payments, and this requirement in itself forecloses certain kinds of autonomous action.

In relation my question concerning the role that material assistance plays, this chapter has demonstrated that material assistance has played a reduced role within official aspirations to produce economically productive subjects. Within PA and EP, guides operated within a system in which there was an attempt to evoke transformation almost solely through participation tools and interpersonal assistance. Accompanying this was a move away from conceiving the advisers' role as facilitating access to appropriate education and training and towards conceiving their role as addressing deficits in individuals' ability to govern themselves autonomously due to the inability to plan or a lack of confidence and self-esteem or both. Paralleling this have been come changes in official expectations regarding the attributes and autonomy of the adviser. PAs experienced less autonomy in terms of how to structure the interview than JET and EP advisers, and neither PAs nor EP

advisers were considered specialists.

Finally, practices of guidance have largely attempted to uncover identities that are assumed to be pre-existing. As the level of compulsion has grown concern, there has been an increasing emphasis on the problem of individuals who withhold important information regarding their health, disabilities or addictions and thereby impede an adviser' ability to assist them – a topic explored in greater detail in chapter five. This, together with a diminished interest in enhancing PPS recipients' educational qualifications, has resulted in policy makers developing more sophisticated confessional technologies and requiring guides to have different skills and knowledge. JET advisers needed comprehensive knowledge of educational and training opportunities as well as other community and government resources. PA advisers were primarily expected to embody personal attributes of care and concern. Official documents are unclear as to the desired attributes of guides within EP.

The shifts in the official governmental rationalities and technologies discussed here together with the broader changes addressed in chapter two have changed the spaces of freedom and constraint available to single mothers. It is clear that these changes are not captured by the argument that there has been a move away from material support to monitoring or a move from treating claimants as sovereign subjects to subjects of paternalistic supervision. Instead, as I have illustrated here, there have been changes in official understandings about the best way to transform PPS recipients and an increasing emphasis on a singular lifecourse norm. While JET sought to transform single parents into employees through increasing their ability to obtain educational and vocational qualifications and reducing the costs of moving into paid work, more recent initiatives attempted to transform single parents by inciting them to develop more enterprising dispositions. While participation in JET was voluntary, it clearly aimed to govern single parents' conduct through inciting mothering identities as evidenced by its key promotional statement "now you can go back to work without neglecting your most important job" and other program material. While the conditions around the EP program are clearly more explicitly coercive, it cannot be argued that the JET initiative treated claimants simply as sovereign subjects while current programs treat claimants as subjects of paternalistic supervision. The following chapter develops these lines of inquiry by examining the micro program technologies (such as interviews and advisers' practices) utilized within personalized planning programs, and

exploring single mothers' and program providers' experiences of these.

Chapter five: Personalized planning programs: 'actual practices' and experiences

This chapter simultaneously undertakes what Katharyne Mitchell refers to as excavations of neoliberal governmentality from 'top-down' perspectives and 'bottom-up' realms (Mitchell 2006, 390). It contrasts with the exclusive 'top-down' focus taken in the previous two chapters. Mitchell suggests that examination of neoliberal rationalities from bottom-up realms involves the excavation of:

> the processes and forms of subjectivity formation of the enterprising individual over time: the general and particular responses to new technologies and rationalities of state institutions and actors, the evasions, resistances, enablements, exclusions, and/or motivations for individual behaviour which occur alongside and in relation to new forms of contemporary 'government' realms (Mitchell 2006, 390).

Top down analysis also tends to focus on the practice of problematization and the "resultant formation" (the apparatus, the technologies of government) and to abstract analysis from actually existing spaces and subjects (see Lippert 2005, Mitchell 2006, O'Malley, Weir, and Shearing 1997). Bottom-up analysis involves recognizing that new political technologies "are produced in specific, local fields of play" (Murtagh, Hepworth 2003, 1646) and it highlights other sets of practices that are also key to governmentalities, including managing failures and contradictions, marginalizing competing explanations, rendering a problem technical rather than political, devising compromises, and containing critiques (Foucault 1991b, Li 2007a). A consequence of the top-down focus on the resultant formation rather than on the complicated processes involved in establishing particular problematizations is that practices of governance appear settled and sometimes even complete in ways that they are not (Li 2007a). By rendering diagrams and problematics as complete through an exclusive focus on official pronouncements, power relations appear seamless, "inexorable and inescapable" (Mitchell 2006, 320). This rendering of power relations as seemingly complete, seamless and inexorable runs against the stated aim of most governmentality studies, which is to produce things in our present as strange and avoidable. When a problematic is depicted as seamless and complete, it is hard to imagine how things could possibly be otherwise.

The ethnographic material which this and the following chapters draw upon provide insights into single mothers', service providers', advocacy groups' and politicians' responses to new political rationalities and technologies including the evasions and resistances, and the

excluded forms of action that continue to occur alongside new forms of governance. While chapters three and four drew attention to some of the conflicts and tensions involved in neoliberal political rationalities and the technologies of personalized planning programs, these 'bottom-up' excavations further highlight the multiplicities and resistances that exist. As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, influential governmentality author Nikolas Rose challenges such a venture arguing that sociologies of what happened and studies of political rationalities must be kept separate (Rose 1999). While agreeing that they are distinct types of inquiry and require different tools I argue, as does Tania Li (2007b), that these approaches can be fruitfully employed together. Thus within these final two chapters I conduct an analysis of micro technologies of personalized planning programs from the perspective of official rationalities alongside an investigation of what happened when these plans met the worlds, subjects, and processes they aimed to transform. In doing so these chapters provide insights into how these programs are produced, lived and contested.

This 'bottom-up' analysis builds upon the arguments regarding the existence of a multiplicity of rationalities and practices that were developed in chapters two to four. The ethnographic analysis highlights multiplicity in two interrelated ways. Firstly, chapters three and four illustrated how historical imaginaries of Australian motherhood and the welfare state shaped emerging neoliberal rationalities and personalized planning programs. The ethnography presented here highlights how new programs never completely dis-embed existing practices and forms of thought but instead mix together with them. In single mothers' experiences, JET, PA and EP were not discrete programs with different political rationalities but programs that intermingled. Secondly, ethnography highlights some forms of power "beyond liberalism" most apparent in everyday discourse or talk, and not in state texts (Lippert 2005 ,10). Pastoral power, for instance, may not be evident within contemporary state texts but remains clearly evident within the talk and text of churches (Lippert 2005 10).

This chapter will elaborate upon the micro technologies (such as case management, interviews, and written plans) associated with the three individualized planning programs, the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) program, the Personal Adviser (PA) program and the Employment Preparation (EP) program. Chapter four hinted at some of the ways that the relationship between micro program technologies and program rationalities have changed. Policy makers gave JET advisers professional autonomy, while they governed PAs through

bureaucratic templates and EP advisers through market forms. Section one of this chapter will examine in greater detail these and other shifts in the links between micro program technologies and program rationalities.

The second section of this chapter returns to the three questions regarding practices of guidance, including the degree to which advisers respect clients' autonomy, whether practices of guidance are tied to identities that are assumed to be evident and pre-existing, and the role that economic assistance plays. It examines official rationalizations of guidance (explicated within policy documents) and single mothers' experiences of these practices. Ultimately, this chapter's exploration of the micro practices of personalized planning programs and mothers' experiences of them illustrates the utility and limits of the Foucault/Sen matrix established within chapter one.

Shifting links between program rationalities, technologies and practices

Policy makers have tried to transform PPS recipients through personalized planning programs. JET, PA and EP have each strived to do this differently. But policy makers have also sought to change the way they govern those who deliver personalized planning programs. In chapter two we saw that the most significant change has been the replacement of the traditional integrated policy and service delivery bureaucracies with new models designed to encourage enterprising dispositions among program providers. For personalized planning programs the key innovations have been purchaser/provider splits and contracted service providers. The Department of Social Security split into two departments, a policy department (Department of Family and Community Services- FaCS) and a service delivery agency (Centrelink). FaCS, together with other policy departments, then created individual service delivery contracts with Centrelink so that the new agency's funding was dependent upon providing specific services for other departments. And through the Job Network the Australian government also contracted out employment services to private providers.

JET was created and, for the first decade of its existence, delivered through a traditional integrated policy and service delivery department, the Department of Social Security. Distinctive features of JET included attempts to work within dominant imaginaries of mothering, and to incite productive subjects through linking clients with education and training using a case management model. Participation in JET was voluntary. This and the emphasis on part time employment were rationalized with reference to dominant imaginaries

of motherhood. Mothers were argued to withdraw from the labour market upon the birth of a child and then slowly transition back into part-time work. JET aimed to increase single parents' participation in education and training, but program outcomes were not closely monitored by policy makers and comprehensive outcome data was not collected on an on-going basis.

Policy makers gave JET advisers professional autonomy in so far as they did not specify how the JET advisers were to prepare for or conduct client interviews within the Guide to the Social Security Act, as they subsequently did for PAs. Instead, JET advisers could create their own practices at the local level. JET was not linked to a work-first model and this gave advisers considerable discretion in how they managed clients and the types of education and training they gave them. But policy makers were very concerned to ensure that child care assistance was only used for education, training and employment purposes and not for respite care. Thus clients in education and training had to specify the exact days and times of their classes and could only receive JET child care subsidies for care used during these periods. Thus, JET reflected long standing post-war welfare state concerns with ensuring funds were expended correctly, and providing those in the caring professions (such social workers) with a certain professional autonomy.

PA reworked these relations by tightly prescribing advisers' actions. The *Guide to the Social Security Act* described how advisers had to prepare for and conduct interviews, as well as the physical locations where they could be conducted and the circumstances under which it was acceptable to use alternative locations or have telephone interviews. Such rigid specification of micro program details (perhaps ironically) appears to reflect concerns to insert the enterprising form into the delivery of personalized planning, as well as reformulate programs as investments into the economy.

Unlike JET, the PA program had to navigate the purchaser/provider split created three years earlier. By 2001 policy makers were located in FaCS and programs were delivered by the service delivery agency Centrelink or private providers. This purchaser/provider split required policy makers to specify all aspects of the service delivery model in advance and negotiate these with Centrelink with a service delivery contract.

Furthermore the PA program reflects a concern with reorganizing social policies so that they encouraged enterprising dispositions and did not represent any cost to the economy. Detailed specifications of the PAs' actions assisted in maintaining low program

costs while maximizing the likely program outcomes. While specialist advisers may be effective at moving clients into employment, they expect high wages. In contrast, non-specialists attract lower wages although they may be ineffective due to a lack of specialist knowledge. Codification of the interview structure enabled service providers to recruit people who had little or no specialist training in career or life planning and therefore attracted relatively low wages. Simultaneously, the codification ensured these advisers focused on planning abilities and psychological dispositions which were believed to be the key barrier preventing clients moving off payments. While systematic outcome data was collected, funding for PA was not tied to outcomes in contrast to the subsequent EP program.

The EP program reflects a continuing concern with inserting the form of the enterprise into all elements of social policies through what Foucault refers to as moving the centre of governmental action downwards (Foucault 2008). With the introduction of EP the Howard government relinquished control over the specific details of personalized planning programs for PPS recipients and instead attempted to conduct the conduct of those who delivered this service. As discussed in chapters two and three, the EP program, unlike both JET and PA, was delivered by JN agencies who were contracted by the Australian government to deliver employment services. The Australian government collected outcome data for EP participants and tied the bulk of contract payments to these agencies to the achievement of specific client outcomes, such as sustained employment. All of the program technologies so tightly specified within PA, including how the adviser interacts with clients, the interview model, and the specific assistance offered, were not specified by the Australian government and instead varied from agency to agency. In the EP program, governmental attention was focused on constraining program expenditure through ensuring that the financial and interpersonal assistance clients received varied depending upon their level of labour market disadvantage.

Technologies and experiences of personalized planning programs

This section examines the micro technologies of the three programs and single mothers' experiences of them. I present each of the programs separately but also draw links between them. I do not mean to suggest that mothers experienced these programs as distinct and discrete. Single mothers' narratives of personalized planning programs run contrary to

policy makers' and evaluators' expectation that participation in a program would be a clients' 'first time exposure' to personalized planning. In many cases single mothers interpreted new programs, and anticipated what they would be like, through the lens of experiences of prior or existing programs.

Single mothers' narratives reveal that for some participants these programs often blended and blurred into each other. Within my interviews, interviewees frequently responded to my question as to whether or not they had participated in a specific program in the affirmative, only to subsequently reveal that actually it was not the program I was referring to, but another personalized planning program. In some cases it transpired that they had not participated in any of the three major personalized planning programs discussed here, but instead a program offered by the Commonwealth Child Support Collection Agency, or the Career Planning program offered by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service. As Katherine replied when I asked if she had participated in JET:

> Yeah, I think, I am not sure. You see, I have got two, nearly two university degrees and I am still confused about what my position is exactly with Centrelink. So that's an indication. Yeah, I've got a JET advisor, mine is, so is that the same sort of like, an umm? (Katherine, 2005).

There was similar confusion the following year when I asked the same participant "did you ever have a Personal Advisor interview?" Katherine replied:

> Yea, I had an interview with JET // Michelle (interviewer): You had a JET interview? // Yes
> Michelle (interviewer): Is this the same one that we spoke about at the last interview?
> Yup, that would have been the same one. When I first looked into child care to go back to study (Katherine, 2006).

Similarly, another woman replied to my question about a Personal Adviser interview by revealing that she had gone to see a JET adviser:

> I went off my own bat to see a JET adviser. She put me onto [the Job Network] and they've been trying to help me find work (Leslie, 2006).

Chelsea also struggled to recall who had assisted her:

> Chelsea: I went in...they send things out which sometimes you don't really read (laughing) about you know helping to look for work if I wanted to. But I decided myself that I wanted to so that's when I went into Centrelink myself and said, "look

I wanna look for work, I wanna you know whether you know, getting training or whatever's available." And that's when, what do you call them?
Interviewer (Michelle): Personal Advisors?
Yeah, some personal advisor but it was actually um, what do they call them? See I can't even remember what they called them
Interviewer (Michelle): A customer service officer?
No no no no no, they actually like they're in Centrelink // Okay // but they just help single parents and stuff look for work, they call themselves something I dunno
Interviewer (Michelle): Something special?
Chelsea: Yeah I can't even remember what they're called sorry, I can't think
Interviewer (Michelle): Did you see a personal advisor, did they take you through a plan?
Chelsea: yeah they talked you through all that, yeah, so it wasn't personal advisor but they call themselves something /
Interviewer (Michelle): Okay, oh maybe a JET advisor?
Chelsea: That's it, yeah.

In addition to sometimes having difficulty identifying which program they had participated in, the majority of single mothers I interviewed also had encounters with more than one of the three personalized planning programs. Many had participated in both JET and the PA program, or been asked to participate in both of these programs. A small number had also participated in the new EP program delivered by the Job Network. Some interviewees reported that in their local office the PA and JET role was carried out by a single Centrelink officer and thus in their minds JET and PA were really a single program. Furthermore seven of the interviewees had participated in personalized planning programs within the Job Network or its predecessor the Commonwealth Employment service while in receipt of the unemployment payment Newstart. In some cases this was many years prior to claiming PPS and in some cases this was immediately prior to claiming PPS. For some interviewees their exposure to personalized planning program was a decade long, having first participated in these programs as part of the new programs directed at the unemployed in the mid 1990s.

From what I could ascertain, seventeen of the 30 mothers I interviewed had participated in JET at some point, while an additional five sought to participate in the program but were not able to for various reasons including the closure of the program and being given incorrect information. Most interviewees' participation involved a couple telephone interviews with the JET adviser during which they organized access to the JET child care subsidy. A small number of interviewees were required to go into Centrelink and participate in a face to face interview and complete a participation plan prior to being given access to JET child care. Smaller numbers of mothers had participated in PA or EP largely reflecting

that these programs had been in operation for a shorter duration. Single mothers could voluntarily seek assistance from a PA or participate in the EP program but most participants in these programs participate because they are compelled to do so. Reflecting this population level pattern, none of the mothers I interviewed voluntarily participated in these programs, although one woman continued to participate in EP after being given the opportunity to obtain an exemption. My data suggests nine mothers participated in the PA program. A further two participated in a program that matched the features of the PA program but even after extensive probing the interviewees remained unsure as to whether or not this was the program they participated in. During the course of my interviews, only four interviewees were asked to participate in the new EP program for single parents, and only one of these ultimately participated in the program. These low numbers are largely a reflection of various delays Centrelink encountered in contacting and referring parents to these programs and the postponement of the new participation requirements that resulted from these delays. Two of the interviewees who were asked to participate in EP had children aged less than three years of age. When they realized that they were not required to participate due to the age of their child they declined the invitation. Another woman was studying, which met the transitional participation requirement, so she also declined the invitation. Finally, the fourth woman was required to participate in EP, although was subsequently given the option of obtaining a participation exemption due to mental illness. However, five mothers had participated in the JN in the three years prior to my first interview with them. Two had done so voluntarily while receiving PPS, while the other three had been receiving unemployment payments and were thus obliged to participate.

The JET Program: Experiences of education, training and the adviser

JET advisers were primarily charged with facilitating access to appropriate education and training rather than addressing deficits in an individual's ability to govern themselves autonomously. Official discourses and mothers' experiences reveal that in most cases JET advisers viewed clients as coming to the program with strengths and respected their ability to make their own plans. Advisers' primary roles were to link clients to assistance with accessing education and training and related subsidies. At the same time, JET appeared to play a more disciplinary role with younger mothers, by requiring them to participate in planning processes that closely mirrored PA practices.

At the level of program rationalities, the JET program was distinctly different to the PA program in that it aimed to use formal education and training to transform PPS recipients into productive subjects. Media releases highlight stories of clients who had developed their careers through JET assistance. One 2005 release describes a mother who had become disillusioned with her casual work at a major retailer and had completed two Technical and Further Education (TAFE) certificates with the assistance of JET prior to gaining a job at Centrelink. It explains that the JET program assisted the woman by covering the cost of her books, course fees and helping with her child care costs. Underscoring that the JET program was open to those who wished to upgrade their skills and not solely those parents unable to obtain employment, the client is quoted as saying:

> I was a 31-year-old mother of two, who worked casually at a major retailer for 16 years and became very disillusioned…I knew there was something better out there, but didn't know how to reach it. The only thing I knew about Centrelink before the interview with Carolyn was that it helped keep my family fed, clothed and schooled (Australian Government: Centrelink 2005b).

This emphasis on providing parents with better long term options was reiterated in another release which told the story of Marie, a mother of two who had completed a TAFE certificate and was on her way to becoming a nurse. It explained that within JET "emphasis is placed on improving long-term labour market competitiveness and career development through education and training" and thus the program had paid for her First Aid course and provided access to discounted child care.

Documents highlight that clients came to the program with their own latent goals, and aspirations which JET set in motion. Marie is quoted as saying "I wanted to be a nurse and asked what could be done to put me in that field." In another media release a JET adviser recounts how impressed she was by her client Mei-Ying's "determination to provide a secure environment for her family" and through the course of getting to know her she found out that she had a passion for Asian and vegetarian cooking. In all these instances, the JET adviser did not have to uncover what was wrong with the client, as the PA adviser did, but instead played a role of referring clients to the most appropriate courses or linking them with specific employment opportunities.

Paralleling these official aims, some of the 17 single mothers who entered the program did so because they wanted career advice but the majority joined seeking specific financial assistance to assist with realizing pre-existing plans. As elaborated in the next

section, single mothers experienced the JET adviser as offering a form of guidance that was for the most part very different from that offered by the PA, in several ways. Firstly, JET advisers were viewed as bureaucratic experts that could in most cases help clients navigate the complex JET child care subsidy rules. When JET ceased and interviewees had to negotiate this process themselves, they encountered numerous difficulties. As Sara explained in 2006:

> it was the 1st of July where they changed it to there's no more JET advisors anymore. So that was a bit of drama….Nobody knew what, what to do. There was nobody really to speak to because nobody, everything had changed. And I went to Centrelink one day, and it took about two hours before they finally got everything sorted out for me. Nobody knew what they were doing (Sara, 2006).

Similarly Janet described how

> the JET advisor…she really helped me out heaps. But now that anybody's doing it they don't have the one person doing it anymore. [With the JET adviser] if I needed extra days like if I worked or whatever I could actually just say to her, "look I'm I need an extra day put onto my JET, can you do that?" And she'd give me the paperwork and all that. So I wouldn't have to go in there and see her or anything (2006).

The JET adviser was also someone that was viewed as being different to most other Centrelink staff because they were accessible and responsive, as they quickly processed requests and responded to phone calls and queries.

Secondly, single mothers viewed JET advisers as being 'in tune' with them and on their side. While none of those who went to JET seeking guidance regarding education and paid work ultimately took up the adviser's referrals to courses (in all cases Real Estate management or TAFE certificates in care), they nevertheless viewed the adviser as helpful due to her care, enthusiasm, and supportiveness. As Marie recalled:

> It was nice 'cause so much of the other family assistance and Centrelink you feel that they distrust everything you say and that you are a suspect and they assume you are doing something wrong. She was the opposite, it was just "No we are here to help, come on we are going to get you back in". Which makes sense, they want to help get people off benefits and get people back into work, you know be positive about it. It felt like she believed in you. It was that aspect that was most helpful rather than the information she gave me. It was her attitude and her support definitely and you could vocalize what you were thinking about work with her (Marie, 2006).

Thirteen of the seventeen JET participants only had voluntary meetings with their adviser, and determined how frequently they had contact with the adviser. They made contact with

the adviser only when they had a question or needed assistance with renewing their JET child care subsidy. In the words of Pam, the JET adviser "was a point of reference for single parents who want to get back into work or study" and like other interviewees, over the course of a few years she contacted her adviser whenever she had questions about courses, education or employment. This relationship structure obviously contrasts with the PA and EP programs where the timing and goals of the interaction were determined by policy and not the client's own assessment of their needs.

At the same time, four of the seventeen interviewees were compelled to attend JET interviews and prepare formal written plans before being given financial assistance, thus complicating any sharp line between JET as a voluntary program and PA as a compulsory program. Unlike the thirteen other interviewees, these four women did not experience the adviser as caring, enthusiastic, supportive and trusting, although one did note that the JET adviser was nicer than most Centrelink officers because she looked her in the eye. All four women described a disciplinary relationship with a 'confessional' structure in which they were questioned about their plans, including their rationale for choosing that program of study and their plans once they completed it. Rather than experiencing this program as "a point of reference" or a space to vocalize their thoughts about paid work, they experienced it as a disciplinary process that determined the legitimacy of their plans.[60] They explained to me that the compulsory interview was a screening mechanism designed to prevent PPS recipients who lacked definite career plans from accessing the JET child care subsidy. Beyond granting them access to the JET child care subsidy, they did not find the process useful or supportive. In Anne-Marie's words, the interview 'was mainly asking questions…it was just sort of you know, do you intend to stay in the course for the duration'. She explained to me that the JET adviser:

> wanted to know exactly where you want to go in life and if you're not just wasting your time. You're not going to be there for a couple months and drop out and…. So they wanted to know my goals and I said my goals were TAFE [Technical and Further Education college] and then uni[versity]. So, as long as they're happy they'll support you (Anne-Marie).

Donna recalled that her 2003 JET interview, which she completed prior to the start of her

60 It is perhaps not co-incidental that these four women were aged less than 25 years but rather reveals a particular concern with more closely assessing the claims of younger mothers.

nursing degree, was 'Basically just them asking me what I plan to do. So I told them and that was it. Yea' (Donna, 2006). Chelsea echoed this:

> I know there was a lot of questions (laughing). Basically they just went through what I've done in the past in my education, what I'm willing to do like work-wise. I just put anything. Basically she went through like university you know if I wanted to do that, or go to TAFE [technical college] and yeah so she went through all that with me…
> Michelle (interviewer): And did they give you a copy of that plan?
> They did but I don't have it anymore, I tossed it out (laughing).

These feelings that the interview was screening mechanism meant that one mother (Christine) gave her adviser a description of her plans even though she was unsure what she would do once she finished her education:

> Michelle (interviewer): And did you benefit from the meeting itself?
> Christine: No, I thought it was something that I had to go through.
> Michelle (interviewer): So were there any ways in which the meeting with them helped you achieve anything you wanted to achieve?
> Christine: No, I mean in all honesty I wasn't really entirely sure what I wanted to achieve so. I mean that's something they couldn't really help me with. I guess they were just trying to pin down a goal for me.
> Michelle (interviewer): Did you want to achieve that at the time, to specify a goal more clearly?
> Christine: Yea. I said I was going to University to do psychology. It was just something, an idea floating in my head and it wasn't something that I was thinking I really, <u>really</u>, really want to do this but, you know. So it was just something to put down I guess.
> Michelle (interviewer): For them?
> Christine: Yeah in what I intended to do in the future.
> Michelle (interviewer): So you felt you needed to specify something?
> Christine: That was one of their questions.
> Michelle (interviewer): Did you feel you could say I'm not sure, can you help me with that or...?
> Christine: No, no! [incredulous tone] That wouldn't have occurred to me at all. I was trying to do the TEE [Tertiary entrance exam] so I mean I must have an idea of what I want to get out of that and what I wanted to do next but I didn't.
> Michelle (interviewer): Okay. You felt you had to or you felt they thought if you're doing the TEE [Tertiary Entrance Exam] you should know?
> Christine: Yea that I should have some goal in mind if I'm doing that so I told them that.

Through Christine's response that it would never have occurred to her to tell the adviser she was unsure about her future plans she reveals that she saw the planning processes as a bureaucratic requirement, rather than, as Marie did, a space where she could vocalize her

thoughts.

While none of the interviewees found the process of developing a plan to be personally useful, three of the four were nevertheless supportive of these compulsory interviews on the basis that it would screen out other single mothers who lacked ambition, a work ethic and morality. Elsewhere in my interviews these mothers articulated an acceptance of discourses about feckless and lazy single mothers, and strongly distanced themselves from this sub-group of the single mother population. In accepting these narratives they also accepted the idea that it was appropriate for the Australian Government to use guides or advisers to assess the worthiness of PPS recipients' plans. As Anne-Marie responded when I asked "how was that experience? Was it something that was useful or . . ?":

> It was really good, yeah. I think it should be done for everyone. Because I know a lot [of] great friends of mine that have started um courses just because they, you know, get two dollars a day…child care and then drop out a couple months later. So that's a pity, you know. Yeah. Using off the system [laughs]" (Anne-Marie, 2005).

Anne-Marie accepted that compulsory interviews were necessary to distinguish between those who were "using off the system" and those who had legitimate study plans. She also appeared to view the interview as useful insofar as the JET adviser's acceptance of what she was told confirmed that her plans were legitimate.

Single mothers' experiences of the JET program were broadly consistent with official rationalities. Mothers obtained various forms of financial assistance, and in most cases the relationship with the guide was non-hierarchical and active. Clients determined the timing and format of their interactions with the JET adviser, and the adviser provided limited career counselling to those who sought it. JET advisers were viewed as helpful because they held bureaucratic expertise in the complex rules related to JET child care subsidies and had the ability to provide access to financial assistance. However, the experiences of the four young women (who were required to attend a JET interview prior to accessing child care subsidies) reveals that since at least 2002/03, JET advisers sometimes required clients to develop formal plans as a condition of financial assistance. As such, all of the features that characterized the PA program - hierarchical relationships, passive client roles, and the asymmetrical obligation to tell the truth - were also present to some degree in the JET program, at least in its final years of operation.

Telos of PA program technologies: supporting autonomy?

As mentioned above, the techniques of guidance that PA were expected to use were

tightly specified by policy makers, and widely articulated by politicians. Yet these techniques and their rationales did not form a coherent whole. Aspects of the program design and governmental rationalities suggest the advisers' role is primarily disciplinary, that is, they help align a client's lifecourse to a specific lifecourse norm. Specifically, as noted in chapters three and four, the system of Centrelink PA interviews and structured 'participation' requirements were designed to align women's behaviour with the new norms regarding mothers' re-entry into the labour market following maternity. The highly structured design of PA interviews together with the requirement for participants to provide the adviser with extensive personal details suggest that clients were encouraged to passively obey advice and questioning of the PAs. Yet, other elements suggest their role is to develop client's autonomy. The disciplinary or corrective role of the adviser was downplayed in program material, which emphasized that the ethos and practices of guidance were concerned with assisting clients to develop their autonomy.

Parents and Employment (Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services 2005b), a 46 page booklet mailed to all PPS recipients, emphasized that the PA program was not solely concerned with ensuring that individuals meet participation requirements, but instead aimed to develop and enhance the individual's capabilities even when they were already meeting their "activity requirements." The PA program and associated policies contained a series of tools, including *Participation Record* booklets and *Participation Plans,* orientated towards assisting in these aims. Individuals with participation requirements would receive a *Participation Record* booklet in which they were to record details regarding how they were meeting the requirements. Emphasizing that this was about facilitating choice and not dictating to clients what they had to do and how to do it, the *Parents and Employment Booklet* explains, "The requirements are flexible and will be tailored to your circumstances. How you manage your participation is up to you. You just need to make sure that at the end of every 26 weeks (six months) you've met your required total" (Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services 2005b).

Policy makers also argued that the printed *Participation Plan* clients would receive at the end of the PA interview would play a similar role. *Participation Plans* would contain current activities, current goals, steps the client would take to achieve his/her goals, any actions the PA would take (such as referrals), and details about when Centrelink would re-

contact the client to review their progress.[61] The rationale for these plans was to encourage clients to be active in preparing for their futures, enable them to make active choices about how to balance their participation requirements, and help keep them on track by serving as a tangible reminder of the goals and activities they had agreed to (The Social Research Centre 2004, iii). Within promotional material, the PA interview and the process of developing a *Participation Plan* was described as transforming individual lives through changing attitudes toward paid work and increasing individuals' confidence (Australian Government: Centrelink 2003d, Australian Government: Centrelink 2003e).

Foucault's work on the history of practices of guidance provides a useful reference point for interrogating the practices through which these *Participation Plans* were produced and the Telos of these practices. Foucault consistently illustrated that it is necessary to examine material practices and technologies of governance, not simply the political language that is used (Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde 2006). What then of the practices through which these *Participation Plans* were produced?

Insofar as the *Participation Plans* helped people keep on track through serving as reminders of plans and thus assisted them to maintain their autonomy, it may be tempting to draw parallels between them and the Hellenistic *hupomnemata* - books of life - that Foucault argues were one of the key supports in the practice of caring for the self. In chapter one I showed that Foucault's later works explored ancient practices of caring for the self as part of a move away from a "demonstration-denunciation of a vast empire of normalization" (Gros 2005, 123). These later writings were concerned with the need to simultaneously critique existing structures and imagine alternatives;

> We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political 'double bind,' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures (Foucault 2003b, 134).

Foucault suggested that Hellenistic practices of caring for the self represent an alternative to normalizing contemporary practices. As chapter one also illustrated, Foucault and governmentality scholars such as Cruikshank (1999) illustrate that contemporary practices of the self are dominated by the imperative to know ourselves, and that this imperative and

61 This information was obtained from prints outs of the screens in the Personal Adviser plan obtained from the Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services in 2004.

associated practices are tied to processes of normalization, discipline and subordination (Foucault 2005c). Hellenistic practices of caring for the self represented an alternative model insofar as they were not dominated by an imperative to uncover a pre-existing natural self, and did not involve a continuous subjection of the self to the other. According to Foucault's analysis, within these practices the injunction to know the self was always subordinated to the imperative to "care for the self," and it was through caring for oneself that the individual came to know themselves. More specifically, through the regular practice of caring for the self one prepared oneself for challenges that one may face in the future by creating an equipment (*paraskeuē*) of discourses and practices. Individuals did this through *askēsis*, regular calculated procedures that allow this *paraskeuē* to be fixed and reactivated for an individual (Foucault 1997e, 327). One of the tools that assisted in this *askēsis* were the *hupomnemata,* the books of life. *Hupomnemata* were books in which:

> One wrote down quotes… extracts from books, examples, and actions that one had witnessed or read about, reflections or reasonings that one had heard or that had come to mind. They constituted… a kind of accumulated treasure for subsequent rereading and meditation (Foucault 1997e, 209)

Hupomnemata were "reread from time to time so as to reactualize their contents" (Foucault 1987a, 500). Thus the *hupomnemata* were "not meant to be substituted for a recollection that may fail" but rather "they were a material and a framework for exercises to be carried out frequently: of reading, rereading, meditating" so that one could use them, "whenever the need was felt in action" (Foucault 1997e, 209).

Contemporary studies draw parallels between specific contemporary practices and these ancient practices. For instance, in Heyes' study of *Weight Watchers* she draws a parallel between the role of the ancient *hupomnemata* and this organization's "leaflets handed out at meetings, magazine articles, website materials, and even cookbooks" (Heyes 2006a, 140). She observed that like the Greek *hupomnemata* which individuals meditated upon, and which was understood as a "manual for reacting to situations in which one might find oneself, a treatise for adjusting one's behaviour to fit the circumstances" (Foucault 1990b) *Weight Watchers* encourages their clients to carry the leaflets around, to re-read them when necessary and to use these to help make their own choices and approach food flexibly.

Heyes does recognize that there are significant differences between the practices through which *Weight Watchers' hupomnemata* and the *hupomnemata* of the ancients was produced. She recognizes that in the ancient world individuals produced their own

hupomnemata largely for their own use by collecting quotes, while *Weight Watchers* material is largely pre-written for clients and only provides small "interactive moments" (Heyes 2006a, 140). Yet Heyes chooses not to explore these differences in practices and instead focuses her analysis upon the language used within *Weight Watchers* material. She concludes that "[t]he *hupomnemata* of these organizations [Weight Watchers] use asketic language[62] to conceal their implication in normalization" (Heyes 2006a, 140). In partial contrast, I suggest that it is very important to pay attention to both the practices surrounding the production and use of these technologies and the language that they use. Such attention is necessary because the effects of such practices and technologies of governance (of the self and others), such as *hupomnemata*, meditation, and written plans, are connected to *both* the content of what is said, read, and written *as well as* how these practices of speaking, reading, and self-writing are conducted. Indeed, one of the key arguments throughout Foucault's body of work is that researchers should pay attention to the material practices and technologies of governance, not solely the words, language, or symbols that are used (Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde 2006).

Furthermore, as I have emphasized throughout this thesis, it is necessary to locate program practices within broader social discourses and institutions. Hellenistic practices were directed at wealthy slave owning males and were designed to prepare them to govern well. Within the contemporary context, working upon a self who is not an essential self, but instead one that is always changing, as well as preparing the individual to withstand the setbacks that may befall him or her, has different resonances. Within a context of advanced neoliberalism these practices echo key features of the neoliberal 'enterprising self', an active and calculating self that seeks to make its own life an enterprise by projecting its own future, maximizing its own human capital and shaping its own life to become what it wants to be (Binkley 2009, Foucault 2010, Rose 1992, Rose 1996). Rose's critique (this is Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's critique also) is that the individual is make to feel as if they have control over circumstances in their lives over which they actually have very little control because these circumstances are the result of social processes (Beck, Beck-Gernsheim 2002, Rose 1992).

---

62 By ascetic language Heyes appears to mean language that recalls the Greek term Askēsis which "denoted any kind of practical training or exercise" (Foucault in Heyes 2006a, 138) and which Foucault defined elsewhere as "a work of the self on the self, an elaboration of the self by the self, a progressive transformation of the self by the self by which ones takes responsibility in a long labour" (Foucault 2005a, 16).

In terms of the practices through which *Participation Plans* were produced, they were created within an interview between the adviser and the client, and their respective roles within these interactions are made clear in policy documents and technologies. PAs were in many respects expected to play a disciplinary role, to help align a client's lifecourse with a particular script (see chapter two). Foucault and Foucauldians have often pointed to professional, disciplinary knowledge and the truths they produce as a key way in which the caring processions (social workers, teachers, psychologists and doctors) and the welfare state tie individuals into relations of discipline and normalization (Dean 1999, Luxon 2005, Luxon 2008, Rose, Miller 2010). But while PAs were expected to play a disciplinary role, they were explicitly designated as not professionals, experts or specialists, and they did not possess a professional body of knowledge that could be drawn upon in this disciplinary process. PAs' non-professional status was clearly articulated by senior managers in Centrelink during a Senate hearing on the new program design. Responding to a Senator's question regarding the skills these new PAs would be required to have, Centrelink mangers responded that they would be primarily employed on the basis of their interviewing skills and their ability to discuss the customer's specific barriers with them. Marcia Williams, National Manager of Welfare Reform, explained "the personal adviser role itself is not expert; they are not the specialists" (Australian Senate 2001). When Senator Evans asked **"**What sorts of positions are they [PAs]? What sorts of skills is it envisaged these people will have? Are they social workers or employment officers? Williams responded that:

> These are our customer service officers. The difference, particularly in the types of skills we are looking for, is **the engaging skills—their being able to discuss with the customer particular issues which may be barriers to their ability to participate in the economy.** And so it is a particularly focused effort on actually interviewing these customers and talking to them in detail about some of those, and **not being the expert**...(Emphasis added, Australian Senate 2001, 341-42).

Centrelink's Chief Executive Officer Sue Vardon elaborated in response to Senator Evans' question that the PA would: "have to be able to sit in the shoes of the person on the other side of the desk... a special kind of personality, and an ability to get on very well with people and not be judgmental" (Australian Senate 2001, 341-42). She explained PAs would not be "specialist psychologists" or "social workers," or recruited from "the high end of the specialist continuum" but instead would be recruited from among people who had completed "community service courses... that seem to give people a very good

understanding of the citizen in their environment" (Australian Senate 2001, 341-42).

These statements, which make clear that PAs were not considered by policy makers and managers to be professionals or experts, highlight the important new role that non-experts are playing within the welfare state. As Larner points out, while governmentality researchers have recognized the changing form of expertise within the neoliberal welfare state, including the transformation of social experts into 'calculating selves,' there has been less recognition that the relationships of expertise are also changing (Larner 2002, 653-4). PA and similar personalized planning programs such as EP make clear that non-experts who do not govern through professional practice are playing an increasingly important role within the neoliberal welfare state. Their non-professional/expert status gives them a different relationship to policy makers. As described above, unlike professionals, who are given relative freedom in how they interact with clients on the basis that their professional knowledge enables them to determine the most appropriate questions, PAs' actions were heavily prescribed. When PAs commenced service in 2003, the form of their interactions with clients was completely codified by senior policy makers.[63] Importantly, this lack of autonomy also justifies their relatively low wages. In a sense PAs play a somewhat conflicted role. On the one hand they are supposed to be kind and gentle guides, who are good at asking questions and good with people. On the other-hand the *Telos* of their role was highly limited. PAs aim to uncover those personal characteristics that might prevent an individual from being reintegrated into the market and becoming financially autonomous.

The structure of the PA initiative immediately recalls Foucauldian critiques of coercive confessional practices that assume articulation alone modifies and transforms the person who speaks (Bernauer 2005, Elden 2005, Taylor 2008, Taylor 2009). Foucault defined confession as "to declare aloud and intelligibly the truth of oneself" (Foucault 1997f, 173) and as a ritual that occurs within a relation of power, and the presence (at lease virtual) of another (Foucault 1990a, 63). Confession, Foucault argues, is a central practice of self within the contemporary west, and what underpins this ritual is the assumption that "articulation alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications, in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems and purifies him and

63 As described above the timing and sequencing of their meetings with clients were set out in legislation and the structure of the interviews was codified within bureaucratic guidelines (Guide to the Social Security Act) and the electronic template (the "Participation Tool").

promises him salvation" (Foucault 1990a, 63). Salvation here is meant in the broadest sense, including financial, spiritual, and psychological salvation. While Foucault devotes much attention to early Christian confessional rituals, he was not seeking to understand the origin of contemporary religious practices but instead with the way that confession detached itself from religion and the way that contemporary secular confessional subjects are produced. [64]

The assumption that the ritual of confessional is intrinsically transformative subjects is highly evident in the PA initiative. Policy documents, evaluations and media releases all emphasize that PA interviews aim to uncover the truth about clients, and that where they succeed in inducing this confession they transform their clients. For example, the PA program evaluation argued that advisers aimed to uncover those personal characteristics that might prevent an individual from becoming financially autonomous in the future and in the process of doing this to "bring about long term **attitudinal** change among customers not really looking to work or participate in other activities" (The Social Research Centre 2004, iii). (emphasis added). What is key here is that uncovering the characteristics in itself brings about attitudinal change.

An overwhelming belief that confession is intrinsically curative is also evident in the fact that the PAs key task was to conduct an extensive interview.[65] For reasons of space, I will only outline the main headings and questions in the template (Table 5), but even these give an indication of the vast amount of intimate knowledge that was sought within the interaction. Intimate questions, such as those under the heading "family situation," were prefaced by the statement, "The next question is asked to help me find out a bit more about you in order to understand what options may be suitable to form part of your plan." Questions on education, work-skills, transport and health in part direct attention toward the kinds of structural barriers that the post-war welfare state employment services sought to address. But questions about interests, interactions with others, the client's typical week and

64 Like Max Weber he recognizes that religious practices become really powerful when they separate from the theological regimes that constrain them. Weber's concern was with the way that the protestant work ethic became detached from very specific religious practices to become a wide spread secular ethos.

65 As the 2005 official evaluation of the program described the role of the advisers: "The main element of the PA intervention is that of a participation interview. As part of this process PAs are required to conduct pre-interview research and preparation, make a detailed assessment of customer needs, identify opportunities for greater participation, match customers with appropriate types of assistance, motivate customers to take up referrals and activities, negotiate a participation plan and undertake referral, monitoring and follow-up activities."

recent activities all focus attention on dispositions and attitudes associated with welfare dependency. In particular, they seek to uncover and determine if the client is inactive and socially isolated, and thus a potential candidate for transformation through attitudinal change.

Table 5: Main questions in the PA Participation Toolset

"Activities: can you tell me about some of the activities you have been doing over the last few months?"
"Interests: what are your interests?"
"Literacy"
"Education"
"Work skills"
"Last employment: "can you tell me the main reason you stopped working in the last job you had?"
"Health: how would you describe your overall health?"
"Transport: in terms of transport, how do you get where you need to go?"
Typical week ("What happens in a typical week for you?")
Family situation ("Can you tell me about your current family situation?")
"Interactions "What interactions do you have with others?"
"Children's carer: who is the most responsible for the care of your children?"

The logic of confession – that revealing the truth about oneself to another is transformative - was also elaborated within a series of PA "success stories" presented in Centrelink press releases (Australian Government: Centrelink 2003a, Australian Government: Centrelink 2003b, Australian Government: Centrelink 2003c, Australian Government: Centrelink 2003d, Australian Government: Centrelink 2003e). Notably, the opening lines of two of these releases are very similar and describe how PAs persuaded clients to confide in them, thereby uncovering the clients' depression or low self-esteem. The first release reads: "It was hard for Windsor Centrelink Personal Adviser, Dione Healey to believe that the tertiary educated woman she was interviewing was barely able to construct a sentence or stop crying. However, as Dione slowly encouraged her to confide, it became apparent the woman in her late thirties was not just upset but clinically depressed, suicidal and in desperate need of help." Very similarly, the second opens with the lines:

> It was quite disconcerting for Echuca Centrelink Personal Adviser, Heather Downey, when her customer, a sole parent, could barely stop crying.
> "I could see she had a lot going for her," said Heather of the obviously intelligent and well educated woman sobbing in front of her.
> As Heather slowly encouraged her to confide, it became apparent the thirty-year-old felt that she would never be able to get a job due to her history of depression and that no-one would give her a go.
> She, like so many people I see, had terribly low self-esteem and it is debilitating for them.

The press release goes on to explain that the PA linked the client to assistance, in both cases relatively minor assistance. In the first case, the clinically depressed and suicidal client was referred to a Centrelink Social Worker for counselling - although social workers do not provide clinical counselling services - and the social worker dealt with an eviction order the client was facing. In the second case, the adviser referred the client to the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service. Both releases quote these two advisers using the exact same words:

> There are many reasons why people don't have the confidence to move forward in their lives, but it's about recognising that people's concerns are real then supporting and helping them to find ways to navigate a path toward achieving their goals. Many people surprise themselves.[66]

Concluding lines of the release explain that the PA learnt that this interaction has radically transformed their client's mental health and workforce participation. In the first release Dione says "I ran into my customer in the street recently and everything about her was different, her body language, disposition, posture. She happily told me she is intending to start teaching again soon. It's a fantastic result." In the second release, PA Heather says "I received a card from her the other day, she is now working and over the moon, she wanted to thank me for believing in her. She wrote that she'd just needed a boost from someone kind, accepting and inclusive. It's a great result" (Australian Government: Centrelink 2003b, Australian Government: Centrelink 2003c).

Mirroring Foucault's arguments that the ritual of confession assumes that "articulation alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications, in the person who articulates it" these releases suggest that the advisers arm

66 Given how unlikely it is that two advisers in different offices made exactly the same statement, it seems clear that these words were produced by another party and attributed to these advisers.

their clients with confidence primarily by listening to what the clients say (Foucault 1990a, 63). This reproduces two key ideas. Firstly, the key barrier to PPS recipients' reintegration into the labour market is individual psychology and dispositions, and secondly, an adviser can arm a client with confidence simply by getting clients to articulate their problems.

While both media releases mention that PAs referred clients to additional services, they provide very little detail on these services. It is not clear for instance if the suicidal client received long term counselling from the social worker, or was referred to a doctor, or how this same client avoided eviction. Neither is it clear which services the other client received from the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service. A clear implication of the releases' thematic emphasis is that the role of the adviser in detecting particular personal problems, and listening to them in a non judgmental, kind, inclusive way is in itself sufficient to bring about a change within an individual.

Secondly, within these PA policy narratives the primary author of this transformation is the adviser who uncovers specific individual pathologies. Markedly absent from these narratives is the idea that the client is the author of the process. Processes of transformation are portrayed as ignited through an interaction with the guide. Foucault contrasted these rituals of confessions in which the adviser aims to uncover intimate details about the individuals they advise with the role of the guide in the Hellenistic practices of caring for the self. Hellenistic guides were not concerned with uncovering intimate details about the individual because they aimed to arm

> the subject with a truth that he did not know and that did not dwell within him and to have the individual who was guided to progressively put this learned and memorized truth into practice to create a self that did not yet exist (Foucault 2005a, 95,98).

This practice of learning and memorizing truth was to provide individuals with "the weapons and the courage" to keep control in the face of events that could occur (Foucault 2005a, 95 & 98).

Significantly, it is not the use of practices of revelations that marks many contemporary practices as 'confessional.' Rather, it is the importance and role attributed to revelation that marks them as such. As Foucault recognizes, Hellenistic practices frequently involve the individual who is guided sharing with their guide everything that is on their mind and being frank with them (Foucault 2005a, 365). But he argues that all these elements are 'profoundly different from what we should call "confession" in the… strict sense of the

word' (Foucault 2005a, 365). They are instrumental obligations meaning they are "not effecitive modifiers that bring about a change by themselves." To confess in these practices is to assist one's guide by "providing him with a number of diagnostic elements...[or] to demonstrate one's progress by having the courage to confess a fault" (Foucault 2005a, 365). In a contemporary context Mariana Valverde argues that while practices of self developed by Alcoholics Anonymous require participants to admit that they are an alcoholic, this practice cannot be understood as confessional in the Foucauldian sense (Valverde 1998, Valverde, White-Mair 2001). What is admitted to is not a totalizing identity but a fault, and this practice is not understood to be in itself transformative. Rather, it is just one part of an assemblage of practices in which the individual themselves and not the expert is the primary author (Valverde 1998, Valverde, White-Mair 2001).

Experiences of PA interviews and participation plans

Policy narratives reveal that PA was disciplinary and confessional in so far as women were required to participate in interviews and policy makers posited that the process of revelation within the planning interview would in itself transform clients. At the same time policy narratives suggest a concern with helping clients maintain their autonomy through tools such as *Participation Plans*. Single mothers in contrast narrated an experience in which there was a strong emphasis on confessional transformation and encouraging adherence to a singular norm of participation in paid work or education. Their narratives suggest that despite all the language of PAs helping clients and caring for them, the program's bottom line was ensuring PPS recipients were meeting minimum participation requirements, i.e. adhering to the lifecourse script embedded in Australians Working Together (AWT). Interviewees who were already adhering to this script often had their PA interviews cut short. Furthermore, despite the official emphasis on enabling mothers' autonomy, interviewees highlighted the passivity of their role within the PA interaction. As they experienced it they were to answer questions when asked, respond positively to the adviser and comply with the requirements. Finally, mothers highlighted the asymmetrical obligation in regards to truth-telling. While they were expected to answer questions truthfully, the advisers generally did not inform them about additional assistance that was available nor were they very knowledgable about impending welfare reforms. I will address each of these key themes in turn.

Disciplining lifecourses

Firstly I will examine the way the program screened out those already adhering to the new life course norm. As discussed earlier, all PPS recipients were required to have an interview with an adviser regardless of whether or not they were already meeting participation requirements. Addressing this issue through an FAQ format, the *Parents and Employment* booklet explained that this gave the adviser an opportunity to provide additional assistance or information:

> **What if I already have a job or I'm studying or training?**
> You are well on the way to preparing for your future. We'd still like to see you—to offer you support and encouragement with your current and future plans, and to see if there is any other help we can offer you. The service provided at the interview is tailored to meet your needs. You probably won't need help to get a job or find a course, but you may want help with finding extra child care, or you may want some help if you want to change jobs. Whatever your situation, support is available to help you work towards your goals (Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services 2003, 5).

Thus, according to official program requirements, all PPS recipients with a child aged older than five years would be invited to an interview, and would annually attend a face to face planning interview during which they would receive a printed participation plan. In contrast, none of the recipients of PPS I interviewed experienced all of these requirements. Instead, some who were eligible for annual interviews (i.e. had a young child aged 5 years or older) never participated in a PA interview (or perhaps more accurately had no recollection of one despite my extensive questioning on the topic). One woman had a face to face PA interview but no follow-up, another had a telephone interview with a PA and received a printed plan but had no follow-up, another had a single telephone interview and received a letter telling them they had a participation plan but she never received a copy of this plan, and another had two PA interviews but both were via the telephone and they never received a printed plan. Furthermore, one woman was required to participate when her son was 12 months old. From a policy implementation and evaluation perspective, the critique that would flow from this finding is that there was a failure in policy implementation. However, the existence of a mismatch between policy design and implementation is not in itself my primary concern. Instead, what interests me is the specific pattern that this mismatch took, and what this pattern reveals about the disciplinary concerns of those who delivered the program.

The pattern of the mismatch, together with single mothers' narratives of what occurred in their encounters with PAs, suggests advisers primarily played a disciplinary role

where they almost exclusively concerned themselves with aligning parents with the requirements but not with offering additional assistance. According to single mothers' descriptions of their conversations, the PAs were primarily concerned with quickly screening PPS recipients to determine who was conforming to the new life course script that underpinned the Australians Working Together changes, and who was not. A number of single mothers reported that when they informed the PA that they were currently working or studying and the adviser quickly replied "okay, that's fine then" and did not require the women to undertake a complete interview. In contrast to the official emphasis on providing extra help to those already meeting requirements the aim on the ground appeared to be getting people into paid work. As Faye recounted:

> They called me in for [a meeting] last year, when Edward turned five. But...I just phoned them and said 'look I've been working for the last year.' And they said, okay, that's fine, don't come in.
> Michelle (interviewer): So, tell me about when they called you up for the Personal Advisor Interview. What did they say? //
> Faye: They just said they'd like to, we need you to come in for the interview because your youngest child has turned 5, to discuss, I can't remember exactly what it said [low voice]. But I just phoned, and said "what's this interview about?" Do I have to attend? And they said, "oh it's about, um, you know, about getting you back to work, blah, blah, blah." And I just said, "oh, I'm already working." And they said, "Oh, don't come in."
> Michelle (interviewer): Okay. They were fine with that?
> Faye: Yea. I told them I was working 6-8 hours a week. And they said, oh, that's fine.
> Michelle (interviewer): Okay. And did they say that they needed to complete some paper work with you or fill out a participation plan for you?
> Faye: No, they didn't say anything like that.
> Michelle (interviewer): They didn't. And you never received a letter afterward with a participation plan or anything?
> Faye: No. [they were] happy to cross me off the list (Faye, 2005)

While there was a marked tendency to screen out those who were already working this did not always happen. While Faye continued to work and study part-time, the following year she was required to have a more complete interview:

> Michelle (interviewer): When we spoke last time, you had, had a Personal Adviser interview. Did you ever have a follow-up interview with them?
> Faye: Yea they did contact me probably at the beginning of this year and asked, and … it was they've changed the thing now so you have to all be working 16 hours a week or whatever. I said "I'm working and studying," and they said "oh you still have to have an interview". So yea I've had another interview. I did it over the phone and just all the questions, what do you want to be doing in five years and blah, blah, blah,

and I just told them my plans and that was it.
Michelle (interviewer): Yep. So what did you say that you were planning on doing?
Faye: I was planning on doing my degree and working in the field of exercise physiology//
Michelle (interviewer): And what did they say?
Faye: They said "oh that is really great! Good on you!" That is about it (laughs) (Faye, 2006).

Nevertheless, despite being called in for a follow up interview, Faye's experience reinforces the impression that the PA encounters were mainly about monitoring participation in or progress towards paid employment and/or formal study.

Disciplinary relations and 'social class'

Importantly, while all clients understood the adviser's role as primarily disciplinary – that it was about crossing people off lists - their social position shaped how they negotiated this. Those with higher education levels, who also tended to have greater financial assets, explained that these disciplinary measures were not really intended for them, and suggested that this was an understanding also held by Centrelink. At the same time, while those who had lower education and were younger often saw the measures as not personally helpful, they did not suggest that these measures were not intended for them.

Peta, who had a Bachelor degree, owned her own home and was completing a diploma in alternative therapies echoed these sentiments when she argued this intervention was not designed for her. She said she "was already doing the things you are supposed to do": When I inquired whether she had received an invitation to attend a PA interview, she replied:

> I think I was, and it was around the time I was studying. **I am sort of doing all the sort of stuff they want parents to do**. They called me in and then they go "oh that sounds exciting!" They get all terribly excited. Sign the forms and then off you go. I remember the Personal Adviser lady was terribly excited that I was doing acupuncture, and we had a chat about acupuncture, and this is the kind experience I tend to have at Centrelink. They are all people that are quite well rounded. They are interesting people and they are very switched on I guess, and very empathetic people. So yes I remember, yes basically they all seemed very along the lines of filling out the forms and were very supportive**. I was already doing the things you are supposed to do. Yep. That you are supposed to do.** And that is my goal, it's to not be on the Parenting payment. It is just that currently I see it as, I see it as student allowance, that is how I see it. And I think I am quite self indulgent retraining when I am already qualified as a teacher but I don't care (Peta 2005, *emphasis added*).

Here Peta narrates the PA's role in terms of a disciplinary function. She understands that the adviser's role is to assess whether or not the client's behaviour deviates from established norms, and if so to take corrective action. Elsewhere Peta identified many features of her life, including her career experience, her degree, and her good middle class upbringing, as evidence that these programs were not really intended for her. While Peta disagreed with the Howard Government on most issues, she saw herself as sharing the values of Centrelink staff. She experienced her interactions not as between a client and professional but as between peers who related to her (just as she related to them). In each of my three interviews Peta recalled that the PA lady had been very excited about her study and explained these were "the sort of experiences I have at Centrelink." Through these narratives Peta simultaneously displays an awareness of the disciplinary role played by PAs and illustrates through her positive experiences, and the brevity of the official part of the interaction ("sign the forms and then off you go") her position within the hierarchy of single mothers; that these programs were not designed for her. This narrative was reinforced in our interview a year later when I asked if the Personal Adviser has interviewed her again during the last 12 months. She replied:

> I've only had one. I don't think they bother with people like me 'cause, what's the point? I mean they can't tell me anything that I, I mean I could probably run a course for them on how to get a job. You know what I mean? So there's not really much point I don't think (Peta 2006).

Reflecting a year later on how she understood the adviser's role, she explained:

> her role was... recording information, perhaps giving a bit of feedback. Um, making sure you were connected in with your options, but I was always already beyond the stage wherever you are supposed to be at, in a way I guess (Peta 2007).

In a very similar way another white interviewee from a middle class background who had some university education argued that she had not been contacted for an interview because there was no need to do so. She was already working and studying and therefore clearly not in need of planning assistance. In response to my question about whether she had been called in for a Personal Adviser interview, Isabella replied:

> No need because I'm working. So no need no need//
> Michelle (interviewer): they haven't

> Isabella: //No because I'm employed.
> Michelle (interviewer): okay and have they ever called you up and asked you about meeting, that you ended up not having to go to like a Personal Adviser interview?
> Isabella: Oh I'm always getting forms to fill out. I've got two at the moment, I've just sent one in. But they are to do with Pensioner Education Supplement just providing proof [that I am still studying] and the other one my rent [subsidy] but I never have to go in for meetings. **No. No because I'm doing it. Because I'm studying and it is toward my** [trails off]. (Isabella, 2005). (Emphasis added).

In contrast, Kelly who had not completed high school, had few assets and was living in public housing, had quite a different perspective on her PA experience. Like both Gina and Peta, Kelly was already engaged in part-time work. And like both of these interviewees, her initial discussion of the PA interview is framed in terms of why this intervention was not useful for her:

> And she [the PA] did an interview thing over the phone yesterday, so [I did not have to miss work]. That was really good of them so, and I don't have to talk to her for twelve months so that was even better. But (laughs) because I mean I'm doing my work, I'm doing my hours. There's not a need for this at this point in time. There's not [anything] that they can do for me. I know what my financial entitlements are with them, I know what I'm getting, I know what I'm not getting, I mean I know why I'm not getting what I'm not getting. I know how it works. I mean I've been playing this game for 12 years, so it's (pauses) you learn the system, how you toddle off and there you go (Kelly, 2005).

But as she went on to discuss the details of the PA interview, she diverged from Gina and Peta. Unlike both of these interviewees, Kelly did not say that Centrelink did not bother with people like her because they knew she was already doing what she needed to do, and she did not suggest that she had affinities with Centrelink staff. Instead she was very critical of the process, and elaborated on this in considerable detail. She pointed out aspects of the intervention which were laughable and others that suggested a lack of competence on the part of the adviser. Taking out a printed copy of her Participation Plan, Kelly observed:

> Actually I have a transcript of it just here // Interviewer (Michelle) Oh do you? // which is really, really funny. I laughed at it (laughs) I've become very cynical about Centrelink. Yeah, I mean basically what'd she say? Actions [pointing to the heading on the plan]. That she's told me there was a Pensioner Education Supplement if I wanted to go back to study and that yeah she explained the changes in the legislation, which is fair enough 'cause I told her the rest, um (laughs). And then it was just basically they wanted to know what I do; you know care for kids, home duties,

> working, my goals, things relevant to me reaching my goals and you know how will I reach them.//
> Michelle (interviewer): Can I have a look?
> Kelly: // Yeah that is like only two percent of what I told her. That's my plan (laughs) which is really funny. The things she didn't put on there was, she said "how am I gonna achieve my goals of financial stability?" and I said "I'm gonna win lotto." She didn't write that on there (laughs). I was quite upset about that (laughs). I was quite really disappointed (Kelly, 2005).

In addition to making fun of the Participation Plan, Kelly was critical of the adviser's lack of knowledge about the impending changes to income support. This latter critique is a point I will return to in chapter six.

Unlike the Welfare to Work initiative of 2005, the PA measure was not strongly informed by discourses of welfare dependent dispositions and intergenerational welfare dependency. Yet, as discussed in relation to the Reference Group on Welfare Reform, similar ideas were floating in the air. PPS recipients were aware, or at least strongly suspected, that this PA initiative was designed to deal with welfare dependent attitudes and dispositions. Those who could point to their stable middle class up-bringing or university education were more able to distance themselves from the alleged 'real target' of the policy, which was those who were *dependent* upon income support, rather than simply using it for a short period of time.

Passive client role

In contrast to the official emphasis on helping PPS recipients with their goals, interviewees experienced the PA interview as a rigid, hierarchical process where they were required to passively answer questions, and felt compelled to produce a plan. Social security legislation required PPS recipients with a child aged six years or older to attend an annual interview or face financial penalties. However, as the regulations did not require PPS recipients to discuss their plans or to complete a *Participation Plan,* technically clients could refuse to discuss their plans and then leave without facing penalties. Thus, despite making attendance compulsory, program officials could still perhaps legitimately claim that the program interactions would recognize and support the autonomy of income support recipients, and embody flexible relationships between the adviser and client.

In contrast, the participants I interviewed felt they had no choice but to create a plan, and they recalled being required to provide detailed information about their daily routines. Participation Plans were developed through intensely rigid and hierarchical processes.

Interviewees expressed a mixture of surprise and amusement at being presented with printed Participation Plan. Their narratives illustrate that they were not the author of these documents, and they had no plans to refer back to them. In other words, while official narratives implicitly suggested these plans had parallels with the ancient *hupomnemata* - books of life – PPS recipients' narratives in contrast suggested that they were externally imposed disciplinary documents produced to meet bureaucratic requirements.

Sara, who had two children and was completing her nursing degree full-time, demonstrated a strong suspicion that the PA was looking to uncover possible welfare dependent dispositions, and to help her plan her time if she was not already doing so. In Sara's own words she recalled:

> Michelle (interviewer): Did you say you had a Personal Adviser interview?
> Sara: Yea I did. I think she was a psychologist, and she wanted to interview me about planning. She was basically saying what do I do during the day, and how do I spend my time, and it is like. She was asking did I know what services were available and just recording that stuff.
> Michelle (interviewer): Can you tell me a bit about that process, how you found it?
> Sara: Um. I actually. Yea I suppose because I was studying I didn't feel too bad because I felt that I spend my time well [laughs], but I think if I hadn't been studying I think I would have felt like "well, come on you've really got to start to doing something with your life and we are going to help you plan your day and everything."
> Michelle (interviewer): So she asked you a lot about planning?
> Sara: Yeah. Like my daily routines and how do I spend my day and, like what do, when the kids are at school, and stuff like that. I suppose if you sat there and said, "Oh I watch Jerry Springer and drink coffee [laughs] and have my boyfriend over." So and there could be... she just like asked like my goals, future, plans, things, where I see myself in the future (Sara, 2006).

Probing on this topic of planning, I asked Sara how she had replied to these questions and what her final plan looked like. Her response reveals that not only was she not the author of her plan, but she also never even got to see it.

> Michelle (interviewer): And what did you say?
> Sara: Well I sort of said hopefully when I finish my degree, hopefully become of financially independent. Yeah, that was about it really.
> Michelle (interviewer): And what did she write as your goals?
> Sara: I think she just wrote down that I was studying full-time nursing and she obviously wrote down what I do during the day and things like that [laughs].
> Michelle (interviewer): She wrote down what you do during the day?
> I don't know… they sent me out something.
> [at this point Sara handed me a letter stating that she had a participation plan on file

at Centrelink.]
Michelle (interviewer): Did they just send you this saying you have a plan or did they send you the plan as well?
Sara: [laughs] Yea that was it. It was like okay. She just said that they'd recorded, that obviously like. She'd like entered it all onto the computer and that was obviously my plan, laughs, and they were quite happy with that [laughs].

Pertinent here is Foucault's observation that the dominant contemporary Western model of guidance is one where "the person who is lead and directed only get[s] the right to speech within the obligation of…confession" (Foucault 2005b, 362, Humphries 1997, 135). Sara's and Kelly's narratives highlight that there was little space for PPS recipients to speak within the interaction aside from responding to the PA's questions regarding their day to day routines and plans.

For Foucault, the feature that really distinguished Hellenistic practices of guidance was that they involved a "relationship between two wills" which "does not require complete or definitive obedience" (Foucault 1987b, 163). The PA relationship was not characterized by this feature, and neither did it support these women's autonomy in a broad sense of the term - to help develop tools for situations that they might encounter in the future. Instead, PA clients were encouraged to submit to questioning so the adviser could create a plan for them. We can also see examples here of what Foucault referred to as an asymmetrical obligation in regards to truth-telling, where the imperative to tell the truth lies primarily with the client. The next section expands on this issue.

Asymmetrical obligation in regards to truth telling

Foucault's genealogies of practices of guidance highlight the shifting practices regarding obligations to speak the truth within relationships of guidance. He argues that following the Hellenistic period there was a shift away from placing the greatest concern upon ensuring that the guide tells the truth towards an inverse concern with ensuring that the mentee tells the truth about themselves (Foucault 1987a, Foucault 2001, Humphries 1997, 135). The concepts Foucault developed in this analysis highlight some important aspects of the PA program.

Foucault points out that the Hellenistic guide was not concerned with uncovering intimate details about the individual for a number of reasons. Firstly, these relations were designed to be temporary. One solicited the advice of a guide to help endure an ordeal or bereavement for a period of one's life. Relations of guidance were therefore orientated

"towards the autonomy of the directed" (Foucault 1987a, 163, Foucault 2001). Thus it was not necessary to provide an exhaustive account that enabled the guide to exert "complete power" over the mentee (Foucault 1987a, 163, Foucault 2001). Secondly, these guides aimed to arm mentees with true precepts, with rules for conduct that they progressively learned and memorized and put into practice to create a self that did not yet exist (Foucault 2005a, 501). This practice of learning and memorizing truth was to provide individuals with "the weapons and the courage" to keep control in the face of events that could occur (Foucault 2005a, 501). This was not about uncovering a truth internal to the mentee but instead with arming him with a "truth that he did not know and that did not dwell within him" (Foucault 2005a, 501). Thus the obligation to speak the truth lay with the guide who aimed to arm the mentee with these true precepts, with *logos*, that anyone who wished to care for himself could learn and practice. Excerpts of interviewee' narratives about PA presented earlier in this chapter make clear that in contrast to Hellenistic practices, within the interview they answered many questions about their daily routines and their plans, but in turn they usually received very little information from the advisers. Such a pattern is not surprising in that it fits with Foucault's observation regarding contemporary practices of guidance. Yet it is worth exploring further because it highlights important aspects of these practices of guidance.

PA practices do not emphasize the adviser's obligation to tell the truth. This contrasts within Hellenistic practices where ensuring that the guide spoke the truth or fearlessly (*parrhesia*) was a reoccurring preoccupation that arose differently within the periods of rule by democracy and rule by monarchies. Within the context of Hellenistic monarchies, there were concerns that guides who provided advice to the Hellenistic kings might perhaps avoid being free and frank in their speech because they feared the consequences of doing do (Foucault 2001). Within earlier Hellenistic democracy this concern with *parrhesia* occurred in relation to the role of the guide in preparing individuals for their future role in civic and political life (Foucault 2001). A guide was there to provide the mentee with *logi, or* "elements of a rationality that states the truth and prescribes what we must do at the same time" and they bring about both conviction and actions so that when they are present in the head and body of someone they "act as if spontaneously" (Foucault 2005a, 326). Guides also provided mentees with *mathēsis,* theoretical knowledge of the world (natural and social). *Mathēsis* was not theoretical knowledge for its own sake but knowledge in which the individual always asked; what is the relationship between myself and the thing in the world that I observe. The

guide helped the mentee transform these *logi* and *mathēsis* into equipment (*paraskeuē*) that came to his aid when an event occurred (Foucault 2005a, 326-7). This *paraskeuē* is the "transformation of logos into ethos," what allows true discourses to be "matrixes of rational behaviour" (Foucault 2005a, 326-7).

The Hellenistic concern with ensuring that the guide spoke the truth and concepts of *logi, mathēsis* and *paraskeuē* contrasts with the types of relations and concerns operating within the PA interaction, and thus highlights some important aspects of the encounter. Firstly, while official discourses made some reference to helping individuals make active choices, the interview was structured around the client answering questions, and relatively little attention was devoted to ensuring that the advisers provided the client with useful information. The inability of the PA to provide relevant information was a re-occurring theme when I asked interviewees to reflect on whether or not their interview had been useful. When I asked Kelly "Did you find anything about it [the PA interview] useful? she replied:

> Kelly: Nah, nah it's [a] total waste of my time, well I shouldn't say that because . . I had to do it, it was compulsory. . . It was a waste of effort, there was nothing that came out of it that I didn't know. And then what I wanted to know, she couldn't help me with anyway . . . I wanted confirmation on the [policy] changes . . . and she couldn't tell me. //
> Michelle (interviewer): Anything?
> Kelly: // No, she basically said that she wasn't aware of the situation and . . . I said well this is the information I've got, told her where I got it from and in fact it's actually taken off of legislative sites.
> Michelle (interviewer): And she [long pause] didn't know?
> Kelly: No, had no know[ledge]—and yet part of her job was to tell me how the changes were gonna affect me . . . she wasn't even sure whether voluntary work or study would come into the equation [would be counted towards meeting the new requirements] (Kelly, 2005).

Reflecting back on her experience with the PA program a year later, Kelly stated that:

> They come up with these little motherhood and apple pie ideas. Like this whole Personal Adviser thing. Great in theory if the person is going to be there for you have a contact in the department and for you to have you know to discuss career advice with, and to discuss direction, and you know how you are going to cope and how you are not. But it is not (Kelly, 2006).

She contrasted her experience with a more useful model which was orientated around the adviser asking: 'How are you coping with what you are doing at the moment and how is this going to help you cope and then "Okay, well this is what we will do"'. She also reflected that when she needed some assistance with entering technical college, no one at Centrelink was

able to help (Kelly, 2006). I asked Faye the same question about the usefulness of the PA interview and she responded similarly to Kelly:

> No, no it wasn't of any use (laughs). No it wasn't of any use. No!
>
> Michelle (interviewer): Could that service have been useful if it was different?
>
> Faye: Yes it could have if they'd said "Oh by the way you should be applying for JET child care". 'Cause I could have actually qualified last semester. It is like all the areas of Centrelink aren't connected. You know they got a form in from me at the end of last year saying I've applied to study, and I qualify so they sent something back saying that I qualified for Pensioner Education Supplement. I don't know, how hard it would be to also send a flyer with that saying, "since you are going to be studying, why don't you see if you qualify for JET?" But no! (Faye, 2006).

These interviewees together with others not quoted in this chapter were critical of the adviser for not providing them with information relevant to their current concerns or that would help them with events that they were likely to encounter in their attempts to develop new capabilities in relation to paid work or education. We can think of this as perhaps a form of *mathēsis,* knowledge of the world (natural and social) that is sought not for its own sake but because of its relevance to ones current and likely future circumstances. We can perhaps also think of this knowledge as *paraskeuē* (equipment) that would have assisted single parents in the challenges they encountered in attempting to participate in education and paid work. Together single mothers' critiques underscore the lack of attention that the PA program paid to the importance of the adviser 'telling the truth.'

At the same time, interviewees' perspectives and critiques are in many respects far removed from Hellenistic concepts and practices. The women sought very specific knowledge relating to their particular circumstances, not universal precepts, and the knowledge they wanted was often bureaucratic information regarding program eligibility. The policy model orientated around the question "how are you coping" proposed by Kelly has elements of the idea that the guide should help equip you for challenges you face but also elements of a model where the guide questions the client. The distinction between the model Kelly suggests and the existing PA model, as she experienced it, was that in her model the advice the guide provided would be orientated around how the client felt they were coping and what they felt was helpful to them, rather than around a bureaucratic neoliberal model of guidance in which she was asked predetermined questions. In many ways what she was suggesting was similar to the JET model, where the advisers' actions were individualized

but were driven primarily by the client's goals and wishes, not by the policy. Kelly's critique hits at the most important distinction between the neoliberal enterprising self that shapes its own life in order to become what it wants to be and Hellenistic practices (Binkley 2009, Foucault 2010, Rose 1992, Rose 1996).

Both Foucault and Sen point to the importance of systems of social support that enable individuals to be and do what they value. But within neoliberalism, the social field in which the individual is to realize their enterprising project is one in which they must be financially autonomous and not require the assistance of others, except within strategic voluntary relationships of exchange.

Furthermore, at least in terms of their critique of PAs, single mothers were not suggesting that this program would be useful if it was a source of *logi*. Indeed, as I will discuss at greater length in chapter six, while the women sometimes talked about books they read, or friends or private counsellors as good sources of handy hints, and tips on life (*logi*), they were extremely wary of the idea that state-sponsored advisors could ever serve a similar function.

While official rationalities for the PA program move between discussion of clearly disciplinary practices and practices that illustrate concern with supporting single mothers' autonomy, single mothers' experiences do not reflect this dual concern. Instead single mothers' experiences highlight the numerous ways in which these interactions were disciplinary. I refer to these experiences as disciplinary in the very specific sense that Foucault used this term and this is to refer to a matrix of practices that involved the establishment of disciplinary norms, constant surveillance, hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination (Foucault 1977). Examining these experiences in light of Foucault's reflections on the history of practices of guidance also highlights other elements of these experiences. Most significantly, they highlight the passive role of the client, a passivity that was tied to the strong program emphasis on confession as in itself transformational.

Employment Preparation: contracted service providers and practices of guidance

As outlined in chapter four the EP program, announced in 2005 and progressively established from July 2006, reflects three major shifts. Firstly, there is a strong shift away from locating the delivery of personalized planning programs for single parents within the Federal bureaucracy and away from specifying micro program technologies. Secondly, as discussed in chapters two and three and earlier within this current chapter, EP produced a new silence about gender and motherhood within official program rationalities. Thirdly, and related to these two shifts, there was an increased utilization of technologies of sovereign power (law, prohibitions and coercions) in the governance of single parents and a decreased emphasis upon the state conducting the conduct of single parents through attempting to incite specific actions.

Larner argues if researchers of neoliberalism are to follow their object they need new methodologies (Larner 2002, 655). Social scientists will need to supplement their traditional sources (policy documents, newspaper articles and reports) with other sources such as on the ground observations. EP demonstrates the impossibility of using traditional sources to understand contemporary social policy delivery. This initiative was delivered through a network of private sector agencies, both for profit and not-for-profit and it was only possible to identify the details of the micro technologies of the EP program through contacting individual JN agencies who were contracted to deliver this program and conducting field research at these sites. In the traditional sense of the term, EP was not actually a program, even though official discourses described it as such. For instance, pamphlets produced by the Australian government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations suggested it was a program just like JET and PA. EP was claimed to be:

> . . . a service designed to help eligible parents, carers, and people aged over 50 to return to the workforce after a long absence or enter the workforce for the first time (Australian Government 2006).

Yet my review of legislative hearings and service providers' narratives suggests that EP is not a distinct program with its own procedures, training programs, interviews and

program staff. Many providers interviewed in 2007 not only stated that EP was not a distinct program but they also reported they had not designed any new training material specifically for the new parenting clients they would receive and they were not planning to create this material in the future. From JN agencies' perspective, EP represented a set of contract conditions that specified how much funding their agency would receive for assisting these parenting clients, how much funding they would receive to spend on training and other assistance for the client, and the number of times they were required to meet with the client.

While providers all saw EP as a set of contract conditions, they did not all view their Employment Services Contract (ESC) with the Australian Government in the same way. Some providers regarded the contract as significantly structuring their interactions with clients including when they met them and what they did at those meetings, while for other providers this was not the case. For the single for-profit provider in my study, the contract was viewed as strongly shaping their interactions with clients. The manager of that agency reflected that the role of the case-workers was structured by contractual obligations they were obliged to meet at each contact point, including reviewing the client's progress against their activity agreement (Alice, Job Network agency manager). Similarly, the Customized Assistant Consultant[67] reflected that she did not discuss with clients' their roles in the program because as far as she was concerned this role was mandated by the Australian government. Thus she reflected that there is:

> a lot of us saying you are our client but we still have to do these things with you….There is a big part of us that have to say it. And that is mainly the way that our contract runs, and what we have to do is work within the boundaries of what our contract is so we are flexible to a certain extent as to what we can be and how we do those contacts but for the most part, they are our client and they have to do those things (Leah, Customized Assistant Consultant).

In contrast, within other agencies the staff never mentioned their contract with the Australian government in relation to the client's role.

Information about how agencies understood the role of the client was primarily

67 Her position involved conducting an initial activity agreement with clients "which outlines the sort of things we will be doing with them to help them into work, where we can spend funds on them, what training programs are available, those sorts of things" in addition to looking at "issues maybe surrounding child care, what they are willing to do, what they want to do, also if they have had any training in it, what might be stopping them from getting work". She also saw clients for their on-going meetings.

collected through three main interview questions:

- how important is the relationship between the adviser/caseworker and the client in the service you offer single parent clients?
- what do you see as the role of the adviser/caseworker in this relationship? and
- what do you see as the role of the client in this relationship?

In the interview material there was a consistent response across the nine agencies that the relationship between the case-worker/adviser and the client was *quite important* or a *very important* part of the program and services. These responses suggested that at the program level staff placed a strong emphasis on the role of the relationship between the adviser and client in producing client transformation. While agencies had this emphasis in common, there was significant diversity in how the role of the adviser and client were understood and the practices that were drawn upon.

Agency workers' views about gender and motherhood arose in their responses to the whole range of interview questions. However, this information was specifically probed in questions about whether or not agencies were planning to develop or had developed specific programs targeted to recipients of PPS who are subject to new work requirements, what they viewed as the main difficulties single parents face in their efforts to find paid work, if they thought particular types of paid employment were most suitable for single parents, if they thought participating in paid work was beneficial for single parents and their children, and finally whether or not they thought that single parents who are in paid work face challenges that other clients do not. While these questions themselves do not explicitly reference gender, interviewees' responses to these questions illustrated the ways in which they understood their clients as gendered. For instance, clients immediately began speaking about how their clients felt as mothers even though the questions referred to ungendered parents.

Gender, motherhood and the EP program

JN agencies operate in a space between the practices and plans of the Australian Government and those of PPS recipients. They are located in a position where they have to interpret the actions, motivations and desires of both the Australian Government and PPS recipients. In terms of their interpretation of Welfare to Work, most agencies saw the emphasis upon regulations regarding what the clients had to do and punishments for failing

to adhere to these as a mistaken approach. Focusing on how this measure was seen through their clients' eyes, agencies interpreted the message as 'harsh', 'punitive' and often 'scary.' Many agencies saw these messages as ultimately unproductive and in terms of their own agency's engagement with clients, sought to move away from technologies of governance emphasized by the Australian Government, such as the imposition of rules and prohibitions. Instead they sought to act upon their clients' conduct through engaging with and inciting specific subjectivities and the clients' own self interests. Reflecting on how the Australian Government had handled the advertising of *Welfare to W*ork, Sasha, a Job Search Trainer at a for-profit agency argued that these messages had generated resistance by focusing on what parents 'had to do':

> There were a lot of parents out there on payments and I'm sure they already wanted to go back to work. But sometimes I think that when you have to do something you have a tendency to dig your heels [in]. And if [the government] had handled it perhaps differently, perhaps had more of a positive twist on it. ... I just don't feel they've handled the media or the advertising in a very effective way (Sasha, Job Search Trainer, for-profit agency).

Expressing this even more strongly, the manager of a not-for-profit Job Network agency argued that "the message coming from Centrelink and the government is more or less a negative one. In terms of what the rewards will be, we won't hit you with this stick if you do it, that sort of message" (Bob, JN agency manager, religious affiliated not-for-profit). What his agency got then was "a woman who is being forced into it", a "reluctant client coming into the whole thing, so therefore we have to turn that into a positive as much as we can." Contrasting how his agency interacted with clients and the Australian government's message, he argued that:

> we try to talk to them about the benefits, the flexibility in the whole system, the flexibility that is there, the supports that we can give them through subsidies, through child minding. So we try and put a whole positive spin on it and let them know that this is, as a community based organisation our interest is in the individual and make it positive. We have to do the initial paperwork, fine, but then we push it to one side and say 'okay now let's see what we can do' (Bob, JN Agency Manager, Religious affiliated, not-for-profit agency).

In a very similar way Janice, an employment consultant at another agency, said that while clients were resentful coming in, she tries to "talk them around. Give them the positives of the other side of things rather than relying on the negatives" (Religious affiliated, not-for-

profit agency). The manager of the same agency explained that they host a three-day program for single parents that aims to "make them feel valued." She explained "We put on a nice morning tea for them, we ... make sure we go the extra mile. We put flowers and coffee, nice coffee and we put the [glasses out there], just to make them feel cared for and valued" (Amanda, agency manager, religious affiliated, not-for-profit).

In contrast to the strictly degendered language in Australian Government documents most agencies anticipated and imagined their clients as embodying very specific gendered attitudes and expectations, including seeing themselves as mothers and being resentful of the way that the government was downplaying their mothering role. As an employment consultant, Janice at a Religious affiliated, not-for-profit suggested, "I have a lot of mums that are coming in that are really resentful **...**They believe that the government are undermining the role of mother. They are resentful of these middle class mums that can stay home look after their kids". They foregrounded their clients' understandings of themselves as mothers and the mothering practices they held as important, such as picking children up from school and attending school assemblies. Within most although not all interviews, JN agency workers engaged in a great deal of discussion about the relationship between mothering work and paid work and thus the degendering so starkly apparent within official rationalities was not apparent.

In contrast to the considerable homogeneity of the official program discourses, there was a multiplicity of rationalities and practices within JN agencies. Reading across and comparing all employees' narratives and the narratives from employees within a single agency, I discerned three distinct approaches to conceptualizing the relations between paid work and mothering work.[68] These were: 1) a degendered approach; 2) a mothering first approach; and 3) a complementarity approach. The degendered approach involved a position that was very close to the Australian government. A striking feature that distinguished these agencies was that employees within them were unable to articulate a relationship between mothering and paid work. In many respects in direct contrast, a 'mothering first' approach involved an explicit rejection of the government's emphasis on financial self-reliance and the

68 As mentioned earlier these interviews were conducted with another interviewer. This conceptualization of three approaches emerged out my own analysis. The draft analysis was reviewed by my co-interviewer who confirmed that this reading aligned with his impressions of the interview material.

need for clients to move from a position of 'welfare dependency.' Instead it contained an assertion that the client's mothering role took precedence over paid work. The final approach involved directly engaging mothering expectations but doing this in a way that envisioned a complementarity between mothering practices and paid work.

The degendered approach was taken by only two agencies. The position of these agencies was very close to official rationalities, and mirrored the top-down concerns with welfare dependency and workless families. These agencies emphasized in multiple ways that PPS clients were not different from other clients. They glossed over the fact that the vast majority of PPS clients were mothers, and the dominant social imaginaries of motherhood, and popular images of single mothers that were sketched out in chapter two. For instance, they ignored that mothers in Australia have historically had low labour force participation rates and when they have participated they on average work very low part-time hours. Instead they made reference to welfare dependent attitudes as being a key barrier for all clients and they did not view the PPS client population as different from other unemployed clients. These agencies had not created specific programs for the PPS recipients who would now be compelled to come to their agency, but used their standard set of programs with these clients. One agency justified this choice with reference to their "standard procedures" being "so much based on the individual and the individual's needs." Reflecting the position that single parents are essentially the same as the unemployed except for their lesser work requirements, they explained that while they used the same programs with parents and the unemployed, because "Parenting Payment [clients] ...have the part time requirement we tend to get them to come [in] twice a week" rather than four times a week (Sharon, client manager, not-for-profit agency).

Staff at these agencies were also not concerned with mothering practices or subjectivities. This was most evident in responses to the question "Are there differences between your non-parent unemployed clients and your single parent clients in terms of the barriers they face once in paid work?" In contrast to employees in other agencies, they did not recognize the caring responsibilities of all single parents (of either gender) with primary care of a child and cite the example of sick children. Nor did they discuss dominant mothering practices in Australia such as attending school assemblies and picking children up from school. Instead, the response within agencies taking a degendered approach was a simple "no" - the barriers were the same. A degendered line of reasoning was also evident in

the inability of employees to articulate a relationship between mothering and paid work. In contrast to other agencies that discussed at length ways that paid work may hinder or assist practices of mothering, and made these narratives an explicit part of their engagements with mothers, these employees did not reflect upon the relationship between mothering and paid work as such. This is evident in the following exchange about the benefits of paid work.

> Michelle (interviewer): Okay. Do you think participating in paid work is beneficial for single parents and their children?
> Lisa: Certainly. I'm sure it is.
> Michelle (interviewer): Why do you think that is?
> Lisa: Just because it is a valued part of society, you know, and just from that point of view.
> Michelle (interviewer): So why is it valuable for the parents and their children, in your view?
> Lisa: Um, well it is a role that is valued in the community. I don't know if there is financial benefits (sic), I mean there would be for some obviously, and a richer life all around (Lisa, JN program manager, secular not-for-profit agency).

When I encouraged her to be more specific about what the benefits for single parents or their children were, Lisa turned the question around, responding that the issue was not how paid work benefited the parent or their children, but rather the obligation that the parent, like all working age income support recipients, had to the broader community. Here Lisa continued:

> Well I don't know if I am being too cut-and-dried about this. Maybe, I mean it must be an individual thing, but I think if people are in receipt of government benefits that they should be contributing in some way to the community. I mean I don't think work is the saviour of all problems but I think that it does, it must help, it must offer something (Lisa, JN program manager).

Thus, reflecting the Howard Coalition's argument about welfare dependency, Lisa reiterated a degendered emphasis on individual responsibility.

In contrast, the mothering first approach, which was articulated by two other agencies of the nine involved in our study, involved an explicit rejection of the government's emphasis on financial self-reliance, the mandatory requirements, and the need for clients to move from a position of 'welfare dependency'. Both of these agencies were religious affiliated not-for-profits and they saw mothering as a Parenting Payment recipient's primary

priority. In line with this vision they focused on finding single mothers employment that fitted into school hours. While they attempted to see complementarity between mothering work and paid work, they did this in a way in which the mothering role was always foregrounded. Furthermore, contrary to official regulations, which stated that mothers could not refuse a position of paid work if there was a place available in a registered childcare center, these agencies asserted that 'every mum has a different view on how they want their children looked after' and thus that mothers had a right to refuse daycare that they are not happy with (Janice, employment counselor, religious affiliated non-profit). Based on these narratives, it appears that single mother clients of these agencies have access to a discursive space in which their identities as mothers are recognized and foregrounded, but that perhaps their identities as carer persons are downplayed.

Finally, the complementarity approach was taken by five agencies and included a very mixed range of discourses and practices. What these five agencies had in common was attempts to see mothering and paid work as complementary practices. In contrast to mothering first approaches which also attempted to envision complementarity between mothering and paid work practices, those taking a complementarity approach did not envision mothering as an overwhelming identity and practice that informed all of their clients' hopes and aspirations. They saw their clients as having hopes and aspirations that did not relate directly back to their children, and that in some cases may clash with what their children wanted. These agencies also emphasized the heterogeneity of PPS recipients, referring to the diversity of skills, labour market experience, hopes, beliefs and aspirations that parenting clients came into their service with. Thus, unlike *mothering first* agencies who responded to the question as to whether or not they thought particular types of employment were most suitable for PPS clients with an emphatic "yes", or the *degendered* agencies who responded with an emphatic "no", these agencies replied that it depended on the client's specific situation. For instance, it depended on a parent's skills, interests, number of children, and the level of support they had from friends and family. Very similarly, two other JN employees interviewed at the disability employment service argued that the types of employment suitable for their parenting clients were the same as everyone else, but then foregrounded the concrete practices of mothering by saying that of course their single mother clients "have to worry about after school care and getting home late and cooking the tea and everything else" (Marcia, client marketing, disability employment service provider).

The attention to mothering practices, together with attention to the heterogeneity of mothers, was also evident in these employees' responses to the question of whether or not work was beneficial for mothers and their children. They argued that while it was not beneficial in all cases, if the right employment was chosen it was beneficial in the majority of cases. This contrasted with agencies taking a *degendered* approach, which asserted that employment was an unqualified good but within our interviews were unable to be specific about the benefits it bestowed on mothers and their children. Among those taking a *complementarity* approach, the social networks that employment may provide to single mothers was also a recurring theme. Interviewees in these five agencies argued that being a full-time mother was often isolating, particularly where a mother had gone through a divorce or separation. Employment, they argued, can give people a 'sense of what they can achieve', provide confidence, and help mothers to grow and learn. One agency manager argued that employment makes people 'much more equipped . . . to be able to deal with what's coming' as children get older (Mary, manager, not-for-profit agency). Paid work also gave mothers a break from their children and this prompted greater appreciation of time spent together. At the same time, the agency manager, Mary, argued that there were cases where employment might be too much for a single mother.

The agencies taking a *complementarity* approach also attempted to explicitly address concrete aspects of parenting, to envisage how the concrete activities of looking after children fitted with the activity of paid work. This attention included being actively involved in locating childcare for their clients, being knowledgeable about the characteristics of these childcare centers, and thinking about the distance between a client's home, childcare and workplace. Within these agencies there was an active effort on the part of agency employees to create a discursive space where single mothers could reflect on how they wanted to combine practices of mothering and paid work. These employees also attempted to develop new discourses through which they could articulate the relationship between mothering work and paid work.

Focus of training programs: generic individual workers or mother workers

This final section concentrates specifically upon the training programs that JN providers used and planned to use in the future with their parenting clients. Agencies were free to employ the standard training material they used with all clients for their EP clients, or

if they wished they could develop specific material. Four of the nine agencies used the standard material that they used with clients receiving unemployment payments while the remaining five had developed specific training material. Those who use standard materials and processes for clients caring for a dependent child and those who do not have caring responsibilities argue that this is appropriate because their procedures and training are completely "individualized".

While JN members are not required to develop specific material for the EP program, they are required to develop training material for Intensive Assistance Job Search Training (IAJST) and provide a copy of this to the Australian government for the latter's records. Providers' contracts require them to include certain topics in this training but the specific presentation of this material and the inclusion of any additional topics is left to the discretion of individual providers. Agencies are not obliged to create this training material in-house, but instead have the option of purchasing training material from an external provider. IAJST is provided to all clients, including EP clients, in most cases a number of months after they sign up with an agency. Providers also reported producing or purchasing additional material including standardized vocational assessments, mini training courses on using common office software (such as the Microsoft office suite) or material on work-life balance and mental health issues.

In examining these materials and the types of relationship to oneself that they call individuals to establish, two things are clearly evident. Firstly, there are a variety of distinct logics at play. On one hand there are elements of the confessional model I described in relation to the PA program. Knowledge of a pre-existing self is privileged, as is self-domination through adherence to narrow behavioural norms. On the other hand, one finds elements of practices of caring for the self, including constituting a new self through the development of new tools. Secondly, while agencies who use the same materials for PPS recipients and the unemployed do so on the basis that their procedures are completely individualized, their materials omit certain kinds of individuality. In particular they do not consider caring obligations.

Most of the JN training material conformed to the disciplinary practices I examined above in my analysis of the PA program. Training material emphasizes knowing the self, taking responsibility for one's unemployment, obedience to employers and others, and self-scrutiny against a rigid set of norms. For example, a Job Search Training (JST) *Job Seekers*

Workbook encourages individuals to both know themselves and to subordinate themselves to others in order to obtain and keep employment. It is organized into four main sections - *choose, get, keep* (a job) and *advance* (in the workplace). This JST workbook covers a range of topics including goal setting, self marketing, body language and advancement within workplace and seeks to produce, what Dean refers to as an enterprising self who governs their self as an enterprise or production process (Dean 1995, 576). As Dean observed in relation to programs for the unemployed in the early 1990s, the type of self relation they seek to produce is:

> Firstly one in which the individual is the proprietor and marketer of his or her skills, qualifications and even physical and psychological attributes. We might call this the active subject (Dean 1995, 576).

Consistent with this observation, each section of the JST workbook reinforces the idea that the jobseeker must market themselves as a product and understand their success or otherwise in job search as the result of goal setting and having realistic targets in all areas of their life. Goal setting activities are broadly defined so that they include areas such as holidays, hobbies and friends. In relation to job search, developing a successful enterprising self involves marketing oneself as one would market a product. As the workbook explains:

> You need to:
> - know what it is you are selling – what it is you offer the job market;
> - be able to describe this product – YOU – in a way that potential employers will understand, like, and want to employ . . .
> - master the interviewing skills needed to present yourself well and "close the sale" ending up with a new job that is exactly what you want. (Capitals in original).

This idea of the self as a marketable product is reinforced throughout the text with statements such as "your resume is an advertisement for YOU," "once you have mastered using the phone it is time to canvass yourself through direct marketing," and "the personal sales letter can be effective for uncovering prospects in the hidden job market." Consistent with this idea, one of the key positions held within JN agencies was a 'reverse marketer' who helped clients market themselves to prospective employers. Such practices reflect the multiplication of the enterprise form within the social body. At the same time, it is important to recognize these ideas about governing society on the basis of the enterprise form are not monolithic. The Labor government policies that Dean identified in his 1995 article on the

enterprising unemployed self incorporated a role for state agencies in providing substantive training, subsidized employment and case management beyond that countenanced by the Howard Coalition in Welfare to Work and the EP program.

A striking aspect of the JST workbook is the absence of discussion of caring commitments and how these might relate to the process of "choose, get, keep and advance." Indeed, there is no significant discussion relating to diversity among jobseekers. Thus I refer to the type of individual service delivery practiced by these agencies as *generic individualism*. Generic individualism is the broad acknowledgement that people are different and services should respond to these differences. But importantly, this general idea is not informed by any in-depth understanding of some of the key ways that individuals are different nor any processes for dealing with significant differences, such as the need to find alternative care for children while engaging in job search or the need to integrate paid work with caring work.

The five agencies who had developed some new material in order to cater to their changing client demographic - namely a greater number of clients with primary care of a dependent child - had devoted considerably more attention to these issues. One agency in particular developed a suite of new programs and material targeting single mothers subject to new work requirements. Its approach was distinctive in many respects. For reasons of confidentiality I cannot name the service provider, but will refer to the program as *New Opportunities* and the main workbook used in this program as *JN 2 workbook*. New Opportunities (JN 2) workbook begins with the following statements:

> New Opportunities (NO) offers people the opportunity to reassess their needs on the "stage of life".
> NO will visit the 'scenes' we have acted in over the years, the various roles we have played and what props were necessary for us to perform those roles.
> NO will explore how best our props can be utilized to maximize the best **performance of our life** (emphasis in original).

In these introductory statements and the following modules, the emphasis is not on uncovering an essential self but rather on the selves one had been and whether or not these are the selves one wishes to continue to be. Within the workbook there are 11 sections: values, needs and wants, behaviour types, self-esteem, decision making, communication, negotiation, goals, and my commitment to myself. Section one begins with the question "what sort of person am I?" While this question in itself may suggest work orientated around uncovering a pre-existing self, the material does not have this emphasis. Instead the

first page begins:

> What do I really care about?
> What brings a tear to my eye?
> What quickens my pulse?
> What helps me smile?
> What injustice might influence me to want to help others?

After these introductory questions about current likes and passions, the workbook continues by asking about current beliefs and enquires as to which current beliefs the client may wish to change and which they may wish to continue to hold:

> Write down 3 of your beliefs. Ask yourself if these beliefs are useful to you, or not and why?
> Think why these beliefs became part of your belief system?
> Would you be prepared to change any of these beliefs? Which ones and Why?

The module goes on to ask the reader to imagine that they were able to choose from a list of 12 'experts' which could achieve 'miracles' in their life. Readers are asked to select six experts from a list of people who can make them look exactly how they want, help them find their ideal job, give them a long life by slowing the aging process, fix their family conflicts, give them spiritual enlightenment, and so on. The emphasis is on what is important to the individual but in the context of making decisions about the future, not in the context of uncovering an essential self. While in the PA program identifying things about one's essential self was linked to practices of planning for the future, in this program the two components get de-linked.

The decoupling of these two elements was also evident in my interview with Mary the manager of the JN Agency that produced the New Opportunities workbook. Speaking about the need to focus on the issue of confidence and self-esteem, the manager described these not as inherent individual characteristics but as context specific skills. Mary explained confidence is being able to say "how does this work, or please show me that again, I didn't quite catch it the first time". This was presented less as an innate characteristic and more as a context-specific ability. As Mary explained:

> because [single mothers] are very competent in their own environment as a working mum or whatever that embarrassment of I guess having to ask for help is something that they have never been used to…Because they have been working in the home

> environment, working at their own pace, being responsible to themselves as their own boss. I think it is quite a daunting experience for them to remove them from that environment to a real life work environment where you do have an employer and there are set time guidelines and expectations (Mary, JN Manger).

In contrast to the Job Seeker workbook discussed above, the NO workbook contains a series of what we might call handy tips for dealing with everyday problems. Also, unlike the Job Seeker workbook, which emphasized singular norms and a specific form of self scrutiny, the message of NO is that there is no single right way of doing things. Clients are encouraged to develop a repertoire of tools they can use to manage the many different challenges that may arise in their life or the workplace. Clients are given a range of options and encouraged to choose based on their own needs and desires. For example, a sheet on "worries" suggests several ways people can deal with ongoing worries, including writing them down on a sheet and then at a pre-set time looking at it again, asking if it is still a worry, if something can be done about it and if not putting it aside until the next review time. An alternative exercise is to have 'worry time' where one ponders worries and asks if this worrying time is achieving what one needs. Another module describes different ways to go about making decisions, and yet another how to deal with conflict. Both cases present the reader with alternatives, explain the advantages and disadvantages of these and explicitly inform the reader that there is no single best way to approach these tasks. Consideration of clients' caring obligations is incorporated into exercises such as the "ideal time-pie" in which individuals are asked to show how their days are currently organized in terms of, sleep, time for oneself, family, travel, work and other tasks.

Presenting clients with alternatives and encouraging them to choose the option they think is the best is not necessarily a laudable enterprise. In some circumstances it can be a preferable alternative to the imposition of rigid singular norms against which all individuals are expected to assess themselves. On the other hand, and in some circumstances, asking individuals to choose from a list of alternative options can be legitimately interpreted as downloading responsibility for problems that are essentially structural or social onto the individual (Beck 1992, Brodie 2007, Clarke 2005). Thus the broader context within which this NO course is presented is important. Unlike many other agencies, this organization took it upon itself to assist clients in ways it was not contractually obliged to do, nor financially compensated for. For instance, in relation to child care they had:

> . . . developed a resource manual for child care. I have done some research on, not necessarily the best, but the most practical child care centres who allow for workers outside of normal working hours. And we look at the menu that they provide for their children, we look at the number of staff pro rata to the kids. We look at how convenient it is to get to the location. So we do a lot of that research for the mums because quite often if they are in work and things change they don't have time to do that kind of research. And their biggest worry is "how's my kid. Is my child okay ?" So we like to alleviate some of those worries for them (Mary, 2007).

They had also organized opportunities for single mothers to voluntarily get together to share experiences with a facilitator present rather than a trainer. In doing so they recognized that individual problems and experiences were often shared experiences. As Mary explained, they

> . . . talk about issues arising for them individually, quite often they are shared issues once you actually express what yours are and looking at the bases of where to from now. How do you get from A to B and what is out there because there are so many choices today it can be quite daunting, where do you start? (Mary, 2007)

Some agencies had explicitly avoided group training or these types of groups explicitly because when they did so, parents identified shared difficulties. They viewed shared identification as a barrier to their attempts to encourage their single mother clients to be more self-responsible. Thus the presentation of different alternatives within the NO workbook occurred within a context in which it was recognized that some problems are social or structural and in which the agency took significant responsibility for assisting clients with challenges they were likely to face. At the same time, it is essential to recognize the limits of the agencies' abilities. While aware of various structural problems, including the structure of employment, and child care, and the burden that paid work may represent for some mothers, this agency had only a limited ability to shape these broader circumstances.

Conclusion

This exploration of the micro practices of personalized planning programs and mothers' experiences of them adds to our emerging understanding of the spaces of freedom and constraint produced by the Australian program initiatives. Within JET the form that a single mothers' participation took was significantly shaped by their own desires. This was because the program structure was based on the principle of voluntary participation, the rejection of "work first" principles and the provision of limited material assistance and career counselling to those who wanted to take up paid work or study. Furthermore, while JET

career counselling was limited, JET advisers could and did refer those seeking more in-depth assistance to the CRS Australia career counselling program. JET took caring needs into account by leaving it up to individuals to decide when and how to integrate caring and paid work. At the same time, the program produced constraints. Promotional material reflected the assumption that mothers would seek part-time work in selected female occupations, and this assumption was also evident in the types of occupational advice JET advisers provided my interviewees.

In contrast, the PA program offered no material assistance and was experienced as a disciplinary program in which the adviser's function was to assess single parents against set program norms. Unlike the JET program, the client was assigned a passive role and the timing of the interactions was not driven by the client's desires or self-assessed needs.

It is considerably more difficult to make definitive statements about the EP program, which my research reveals is in many respects not a coherent program at all. Micro practices diverge considerably from official program rationalities and are very diverse. Some agencies have adopted a generic approach to individualized service delivery whereby single mothers are considered individuals in the same way as clients without caring obligations are. At the same time, these agencies did not have any processes for dealing with significant individual differences such as the need to access child care. Other agencies saw their parenting clients as 'mothers first', while others were attempting to adopt new practices which took account of the needs and desires of parenting clients but did not assume that these clients were necessarily mothers first. Furthermore, the training material varied, ranging from agencies whose training emphasized adherence to set norms, to programs that tried to provide clients with a diverse set of tools.

This chapter has illuminated how the two distinct but related arguments advanced by Foucault and Sen regarding capabilities and capacities might help us understand the operation of social policies directed at single mothers. As we have seen, Sen argues that the capabilities "a person does actually have (and not merely theoretically enjoys) depend on the nature of social arrangements, which can be crucial for individual freedoms. And there the state and the society cannot escape responsibility" (Sen 2000, 288). Yet, Foucault warns us not to be overly sanguine about the state's role in promoting capabilities; his investigations suggest "relations between the growth of capabilities [capacités] and the growth of autonomy are not as simple as the eighteenth century may have believed"

(Foucault 1994). The programs examined here illustrate the complex ways in which both of these statements are simultaneously true. Sen's arguments are evident in the reality that single mothers' abilities to obtain employment they valued and enjoyed were in many cases dependent upon being able to afford to return to education or training. Interpersonal relations such as the encouragement and support of others, including in some cases official advisers, were important to some. JET had been particularly important to many single mothers, especially in terms of the financial assistance it provided. At the same time, all three personalized planning programs restricted individual freedoms and autonomy through normalizing practices that relied upon the client to some extent playing a passive role within the program.

As this chapter has illustrated, the spaces of freedom and constraint that these programs produced were not set out in advance within official program rationalities. Instead they were actively interpreted, taken up, used and sometimes resisted by single mothers and those responsible for delivering the programs. This chapter gave only a small indication of some of the ways single mothers and program providers contested and resisted aspects of the programs. But this is the core theme of the following and final chapter. There I will illustrate how single mothers and service providers, along with politicians and advocacy groups, have contested the Welfare to Work changes. In so doing, I will locate single mothers' and agency workers' contestations within broader contestations of contemporary welfare politics.

Chapter six: Challenging Personalized Planning Programs for Parenting Payment recipients: subjugated knowledges and contestations

Introduction

One of the main challenges facing critics of current income support policies and social support programs is developing a new vocabulary and set of practices. The 'social' approaches of the postwar welfare state have been systematically critiqued by those on the political left and right, and it is not possible to simply revive these old approaches. In Australia the social approach involved ensuring male wages were high enough to support a wife and two children, and also systematically blocking married women's access to the labour market. In terms of income support, it involved a strongly hierarchical system of assistance that distinguished between legitimate and illegitimate motherhood. Widows with dependent children were allowed to remain indefinitely out of the labour market, and as a result of social activism unmarried mothers also obtained access to similar support in the 1970s. Under this system, women received support that kept them out of extreme poverty but they had limited opportunities to build financial assets or participate in paid work.

In Western countries, personalized planning programs are now the primary programmatic response to problems of disadvantage. As illustrated in previous chapters, they are also the primary response to problems in the relationship between Australian single mothers and income support. In the current policy landscape, personalized planning initiatives establish the boundaries or limits for the practical solutions that are understood as sensible and not sensible (Foucault 1997d, 258, Foucault 1997a, 19: note 36, Foucault 1997c). At the same time, as I have illustrated, personalized planning programs are highly problematic in many respects.

In this chapter I wish to rethink current and future social policy by 'learning from' contestations of welfare reforms. I examine the grounds upon which the three personalized planning programs targeted at PPS recipients - the Personal Adviser (PA), the Jobs, Education, and Training (JET) and Employment Preparation (EP) programs – were contested in the period 2005 to 2007. These grounds are: the retraction of material assistance; imaginaries of the family and care work; government sponsored guides; and the children-first focus. After describing these four areas of contestation I use the theoretical

matrix, and in particular the distinction between capabilities and capacities, to make sense of these contestations and to sketch out alternatives in this chapter's conclusion.

In examining contestations I specifically focus on the ways that politicians, advocacy groups, service providers and single mothers have critiqued these programs. Following Foucault's arguments against speaking for others, and his simultaneous concern with supporting the re/appearance of subjugated knowledges and those directly affected by systems of power, I focus primarily on contestations by single mothers, although I also address contestations from other groups (politicians, advocacy groups and service providers) in order to explore how single mothers' contestations are, and are not, taken up in broader policy and political debates. This focus on subjugated knowledges has also influenced the formatting of this chapter. Quotes from mothers' interviews in the previous chapters are for the most part very short and used to illuminate specific points. In contrast, within this chapter I have incorporated much longer quotes in order to allow mothers' voices to play a stronger role.

Within this chapter the theoretical matrix enables me to highlight and elaborate on elements of single mothers' contestations and to contrast these to the contestations of advocacy groups and politicians. Both Sen's and Foucault's works are particularly useful for sketching alternatives, because they offer glimpses of an approach to collective practice that is neither a return to the social techniques of the post-war welfare state nor the individualism of Western neoliberal states. Specifically, Foucault and Sen assist in the elaboration of four important issues that arose within the four areas of contestation. Firstly, Sen's reflections on *capabilities* and Foucault's on practices of caring for the self help tease out differences between the grounds on which single mothers anchored their claims and the grounds on which advocacy groups and politicians anchored their claims. Single mothers grounded their contestations in terms of their freedom to be and do what they value (*capabilities*), while advocacy groups and many politicians challenged Welfare to Work measures on the grounds of inadequate attention to developing specific capacities or children's well-being. Advocacy groups and politicians from the opposition and minor parties did not challenge the prevailing policy emphasis on financial autonomy, but instead argued that a work-first approach would not achieve that end. Thus advocacy groups' and politicians' critiques are targeted at the means used to achieve financial autonomy rather than this goal itself.

Secondly, Foucault's conception of the work of caring for oneself as a practice

embedded within relations with others and not as the effort of a solitary, atomistic individual helped to draw attention to the dynamic and relational nature of the challenges that single mothers faced. Thirdly, Foucault's reflections on power and resistance assist in differentiating the strategies of resistance that some single mothers used when compelled to participate in a personalized planning process. Finally, Sen's and Foucault's insistence that what matters are the freedoms that an individual actually enjoys not the legal rights they theoretical have assisted in highlighting the ways that single mothers' legal right to assistance diverged from the assistance they actually enjoyed.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. I will begin by examining single mothers' and advocacy group's contestations of the retraction of material assistance, and then move onto each of the remaining three themes in turn. These are: contesting imaginaries of barriers, the family and care work; contesting government sponsored individual advisers; and contesting the children first focus through practices of self-care.

Contesting the retraction of material assistance

Chapters two and three showed how the 2005 Welfare to Work measures retracted material assistance (particularly in the form of child care subsidies) for single parents who were engaging in long term education and they effectively reduced income support payment levels. The Howard Coalition had consistently denied that they would cut payment levels, and as discussed in chapter two they technically kept this promise as they did not reduce the payment rate associated with any given income support payment. However, the Coalition effectively reduced payment levels by moving many single parents to an unemployment payment (Newstart) which has a lower rate than Parenting Payment. Following the implementation of the Welfare to Work changes, new single parents with a child aged older than seven years were no longer eligible for PPS but instead had to claim Newstart Allowance which is paid at a lower rate. Newstart Allowance also has a higher 'taper rate,' meaning that individuals who earn income while receiving Newstart Allowance have more of their payment clawed back compared to recipients of PPS. A further level of complexity associated with the changes was that these new rules were only applied to single parents who made an income support claim after 2005. Single parents who were receiving PPS prior to 2005 were not affected by the changes as long as they remained on payments. Such

complexity meant that the vast majority of the PPS recipients I interviewed and the general public did not understand all elements of the changes and their financial implications.

During my interviews I asked interviewees to explain to me their understanding of the Welfare to Work changes and also to list any areas that they felt confused or unsure about. Following their responses, I then explained each component of the changes, including the new part-time work requirements, the redirection of new claimants to Newstart (and the financial implications of this), the closure of the JET program and the restriction of JET child care subsidies to those undertaking courses lasting 12 months or less. I then asked interviewees what they thought about these changes. As I elaborate below, the retraction of assistance to those undertaking training generated far more contestation than did the (effective) cuts to payments levels. Recipients often found it hard to understand the effect that the changes to age of youngest child eligibility requirements had on payment levels. The difficulties they faced in grasping this element of the changes are illustrated in the following exchange between Isabella and myself. In the exchange I struggled to explain what the changes were, who they would affect, and the financial implications. In the end, Isabella never answered my questions as to whether or not she agreed the part-time work requirement of fifteen hours a week. I began:

> Interviewer (Michelle): There are a lot of different changes but the two major ones are, firstly there is the part-time work requirement for parents once their youngest turns seven. And secondly, for everyone who comes onto PPS, once their youngest child turns eight they'll lose Parenting Payment and be moved to a Newstart payment which has a lower rate of payment and also has a larger taper. So when you earn money you lose it more quickly than you do on Parenting Payment. So could I ask you first of all what you think about the part-time work requirement of fifteen hours a week?
> Isabella: Umm I think it is good. yea//Interviewer(Michelle) be[cause]?// because I personally know of someone who is living off child support which was huge and Parenting Payment and was made then because her child turned seven to find work and she is now working in Centrelink (laughs) fulltime, so, umm I find that quite amusing. Yea, no, it is good. It just goes to show they were abusing the system so (pause). So I find it good except for this tapering off business (laughs) again I still think that what you earn, or the majority of, because it does, it takes away the incentive.
> Interviewer (Michelle): Okay. So you don't agree with people being moved to Newstart and then losing more of what they earn?
> Isabella: Well that is what I do now//yea//yea so and that is on Parenting Payment.
> Interviewer (Michelle): Oh okay. Yes I understand that you lose money at the moment but Parenting Payment is a pension payment and the change is that people get moved to Newstart which is a lower rate of payment and also you can earn less

money on it without it affecting your payment.
Isabella: Oh! Okay.
Interviewer (Michelle): so the things you are talking about, about losing money when you work they will get worse under the new system//
Isabella: Oh, no I don't agree with that then (laughs) that, would be there criteria, because there is usually you have to this and that before you are eligible so//
Interviewer (Michelle): Eligible for?
Isabella: Newstart.
Interviewer (Michelle): Sorry, you mean?
Isabella: Well you have to be unemployed to get Newstart.
Interviewer (Michelle): Yes. So before it was when your youngest turned 16 and then if you were on Parenting Payment you were moved to Newstart, and now that has been reduced to when your youngest child is eight. Well, it is for everyone who came onto Parenting Payment after 2006.
Isabella: It could be as well, if you are studying full time, you are exempt.
Interviewer (Michelle): No, those studying won't be exempt.
Isabella: Oh okay. Do I agree with it? If it's going to make it hard if someone wants to study, um, no then I don't agree.

At this point I left this topic and moved onto asking about the changes to assistance for education and training, because it appeared that Isabella was not going to answer my question about the taper requirement. In part this difficulty reflected the particularities of this interview, but the challenges in communicating and discussing the changes were similar to those encountered in other interviews.

Some interviewees were themselves aware of these complexities. One interviewee who was employed as a social worker at the time of my second interview raised concerns that the effects of the changes were masked by their complexity and the fragmenting of information about them. In response to my question as to whether she had been mailed information about the welfare reforms, she replied:

> Katherine: Yes, I don't like it though. [laughter] // Interviewer (Michelle) Okay //
> Katherine: I think it's very um, I don't know [pause]. Just a bit warm and fuzzy. Basically my own situation is nice, because I don't have to do anything yet, because my daughter is not this age. And, so you know, it's all good. Nothing changes. But it doesn't give anyone, (pause) because I've seen other versions of it [the letter], you know, with children of different ages and things. It doesn't give anyone any concrete information for actually planning what they might do. Things like rules, like if you're twelve weeks off the income [Parenting Payment], then you're on to the new rules. Like people don't know that...I think because it's so individualized, because they send you out for your exact circumstances. You get form number two or whatever. You don't get a sense of the injustice of it all, which I have, through information from other sources (Katherine, 2006).

Some academics including Ann Harding did pull together the overall financial impact of the changes and published their findings within a report commissioned by the National Foundation for Australian Women and academic journals (Harding, Vu, Percival, and Beer 2005a, Harding, Vu, Percival, and Beer 2005b). Harding concluded that if the proposed changes were implemented, single parents would be up to $100 a week worse off. Within parliamentary debates, Senator Allison, leader of the minority opposition party the Australian Democrats, moved that the Senate recognize these findings and "urge[d] the Government to ensure that the Welfare to Work package does not result in a reduction in people's income levels" (Australia. Senate. 2005b, 95). In contrast, the official Labor opposition focused on the increased means test taper rates, arguing that a parent who worked 15 hours a week under the changes would be "$91 a week worse... than if they moved into work under the current arrangements. The Howard government is effectively asking sole parents to work for a return of $3.88 an hour" (Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives. 2005a 6). Such contestation resulted in the minor concession from the Howard Coalition that single parents would only be moved to Newstart once their youngest child turned eight, rather than the proposed age six. At the same time, the Howard Coalition consistently tried to avoid acknowledging that they were effectively cutting payment rates. In response to the charge that they were reducing benefit levels to single parents, they countered that a person engaging in paid work after the changes was better off than a person who was currently not engaging in paid work. Of course, this avoided acknowledging that a person engaging in paid work now would be worse off after the Welfare to Work changes were implemented.

While the reduction in payments to single parents did receive some attention from sole parents groups, politicians and sole parent interviewees, the reductions in education and training assistance were the subject of the greatest contestation. Reductions in assistance were justified by the Howard government on the grounds that there was plenty of employment available for people with low skills, and that any job was better than income support because it offered the best chance of obtaining another, potentially superior, position of employment. This 'stepping stone' line of reasoning was clearly illustrated in the Coalition Workplace Relations Minister Kevin Andrews' arguments that the most important thing for an individual was to get "a foot in the door in the labour market" (for more details see chapter two) (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2005b).

Reductions in assistance for education and training were consistently contested by a

Senator from the Greens, one of the minority parties that on several occasions has held the balance of power in the Australian Senate. She raised the matter in parliament several times and summarized her objections in a motion that:

> That the Senate notes:
>
> (i) that the policy of restricting Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance funding to 12 months limits the capacity of single parents to complete most courses of study, (ii) the importance of further education opportunities to advance the earning capacity and living standards of single parent families, and (iii) that the new restrictions on the JET program are hurting single parents; and (iv) calls on the Government to lift the restriction of 12 months funding for JET assistance in order to enable single parents to better access education opportunities (Australia. Senate. 2007, 17).

The opposition Labor party did not specifically address the reductions in the JET child care allowance, or the closure of the JET program. However, it did critique the whole package of changes by arguing repeatedly, as Labor MP Jenny MacKlin did, that in contrast to the Welfare to Work package, "real welfare reform would give people the chance to get the skills an employer needs and then get a job" (Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives. 2005a 4). While not addressing the specifics of the cuts, opposition MP Jenny Macklin argued:

> This legislation flies in the face of what we know to be the primary reasons for welfare dependency: a lack of appropriate skills and a lack of assistance in the provision of proper incentives. The legislation cannot replace adequate investment in vocational education and training (Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives. 2005b, 29).

Ms Macklin's arguments were effectively arguments about *capacities*, in so far as her concern was that the Coalition's policies were not likely to give single parents the skills they needed to obtain employment and thus to curtail welfare dependency.[69]

---

69 Furthermore when Labor won government at the end of 2007 they did not reinstate unrestricted JET child care. Instead they increased eligibility from 12 months to 24 months and required all recipients to complete a Centrelink Employment Pathway Plan (EEP) that would specify how this study or training contributed to their 'path' to employment. As explained in the Guide to the Social Security Act, the guide used by Centrelink employees

> Where appropriate, activities [in the EEP] should focus on achieving sustainable employment, including looking for a particular number of jobs each fortnight. However, for some job seekers, including all early school leavers, the primary focus must be the undertaking of approved courses of education, training or other approved activities that on

In contrast, single mothers' critiques were closer to the arguments that Sen makes regarding *capabilities*. Single mothers critiqued the cuts to assistance for education and training primarily on the grounds that the government was taking away their ability to choose employment that was meaningful and enjoyable to them. While they did raise the issue that these cuts made it more likely that single mothers would remain trapped in low wage employment, their greater concern was that the government was choosing their employment for them.

Single mothers had a strong understanding of the government's rationale for implementing these reforms and most were outraged by the policy reasoning. When I asked interviewees what they thought about the changes to the JET child care subsidy, they explained to me that this change was designed to move them into industries that needed more people and to reduce 'welfare dependency.' In the words of Trish:

> Well they [the government] are looking at industries that need people and they are trying to fill them with the people who are supposedly bludging off the system. So get out there and do your bit and look after our aging population. So I guess that is the strategy that they are deliberately employing.

Christie expressed this even more strongly by arguing the government was trying to move single mothers like livestock into jobs that were not attractive to others: "I guess they're just trying to round up herds to go into the jobs that no one else wants."

While interviewees understood the government's rationale, they did not support these changes. As Trish elaborated when I probed, "is it a change you would support?":

> No it isn't a change I would support. The part I would support is encouraging people to do things like [a one year diploma], and saying at the end of the year you could be doing whatever, but it shouldn't be restricted to that at all, that should be. It is meant to be a democracy and you are meant to be free to [be able to] make choices and stuff, and that is restricting your choices (Trish, 2007).

---

completion, will improve their employment prospects. The courses, training and activities should generally be vocationally orientated and designed to improve the job seeker's capacity and skills to enable them to secure and undertake suitable paid work.

As this guide makes clear the new Labor government's policy was equally orientated to ensuring that individuals moved quickly into employment. But they key difference was that they were concerned that those with low skills undertake some substantive education or training so that they could obtain sustainable employment.

This idea that people should be free to choose their career was one of the areas of strongest agreement among single mothers. While the vast majority of single mothers agreed with the general idea of imposing part-time work requirements, there was considerable disagreement about the details. Some felt very strongly that it was a good idea, others were more ambivalent, and yet others felt that it was a good idea but requirements should not start until their youngest child was eight or older. Many mentioned that voluntary work and education, not just paid work, should count toward any requirements. But the restrictions to JET provoked responses that it was "terrible," "outrageous," and "sexist." Those who had managed to complete their education prior to the implementation of the change reflected on how difficult it would have made things for them, such as when Phillis noted, "I mean if I'd ended up in that situation I would be stuffed", and another mum suggested, "JET was definitely really important for me in terms of being able to afford to study because I needed the child care. Otherwise it was just plain and simple. I wouldn't have been able to do the course."

A number of mothers reflected that such a change meant that the government was essentially saying that if you found yourself in the situation of becoming a single mother then you should resign yourself to undertaking menial work for the rest of your life and not having any choices. As Phillis argued,

> That's so sexist. I mean pretty much all of these people are single mothers. So they're basically saying if you choose to have a child or you have a child with somebody and you're abandoned or you end up by yourself parenting, that you will then have to do menial work for the rest of the child's life... They're basically saying if you're a woman and you end up in full care of your children that you cannot then go on and do anything worthwhile. You can work as a cleaner or an assistant in a [exasperated sigh]. No that's terrible. I really think that's terrible.

Echoing this, Jane argued,

> If somebody really wants to become a school teacher and they had a child at a young age or whatever and they are saying that they are not going to help them in doing that, but they'll help them become a child care worker or something that you can do in under 12 months, then they are not letting them choose the career path they want to take.

Similarly, Leslie pointed to the poverty trap that single mothers will find themselves in

without this assistance:

> If you are a mum with a child who is studying you need the child care, you are only getting another $60 a fortnight [the Pensioner Education Supplement], and if you are not getting child care cheap plus you are travelling. They are basically making it impossible for a single mum to pick herself up and dust herself off and try and sort their lives out. In other words, you are put in a poverty level and you can't climb out of it because no-one is going to help you. They are making it impossible.

Single mothers argued strongly that it was inequitable and unjust that those who found themselves as single mothers should be condemned to low skill employment for low wages. But it was also that the government was choosing for single mothers the path they should take and foreclosing the opportunity to choose employment that was meaningful to them. Elaborating on her response, Jane argued, "Well I don't think that is fair. That is sort of saying to people you can become something that is trained within 12 months, whatever that would be, but you can't become a teacher. You know they are picking and choosing what is right for the people. Does that make sense?" Pam reflected that restricting JET child care was unfair because "in terms of people being able to [pause] choose freely what they would like to study and what they would like to do with their lives, it could be very instrumental".

This focus on freedom was particularly striking because, as I discuss below, the vast majority of interviewees did not object to the part-time work requirements for PPS recipients. Most thought that it was reasonable to expect single parents to engage in part-time work at some point (most felt when the child started school or turned seven or eight). But all nevertheless felt strongly that it was unjust to force individuals into a narrow range of occupations. In this area they clearly echoed Sen's arguments that individuals should 'have the freedom to be and do what they value.' Without access to education, Ellie asked, "Well, what are my chances of finding meaningful jobs? None, after that, so we'll have a lot of women workers at Target - checkout chicks and aged care workers". Donna reflected that a one-year diploma "may not give them enough skills for the job that they would really want down the road, in the future." Sara felt it was pointless to force single mothers into situations where they were unhappy:

> I think it is important that you enjoy your work...like you might be doing something really menial but you might enjoy it because you might like the people you work with or you might have fun aspects in your job which make it valuable to you. But if you're just going to be forced to do something that you absolutely hate there is no purpose in that. I think to be productive in any workplace, you have to feel good

> about working. If you go to work, you know, this is crap. I hate this job [chuckles] and this sucks and you're not going to do a good job. You're going to be miserable and it just seems pointless.

In connecting justice to happiness, single mothers' critiques of Welfare to Work were much broader than those put forward by advocacy groups. Single mothers did not just argue that these changes had economic effects – forcing them into poverty traps – but they also argued they relegated single mothers to occupations where many would be unhappy. However, Faye reflected that perhaps the issue of single mothers' fulfillment was not of interest to the government:

> I can go out and get some job but in the long run I'll be happier...I did a one year TAFE course and that helped me to get a job with the government but...for the government it is a means to an end. It gets them a job as soon as possible but whether or not people will stay in the job or whether they'll be in jobs they don't like, although that's not really the government's concern is it?

In summary, while organized political contestations challenged the cuts to education and training on the grounds that they would increase welfare dependency rather than decrease it, and that they restricted the ability of single parents to increase their earning capacity and living standards, single mothers' contestations were orientated around a *capabilities* approach. Although they made some mention of living standards, they focused overwhelmingly on the injustice of the government deciding for people what occupation was right for them.

Another important area of difference between organized political and single mothers' contestations was that while the opposition parties' critiques largely focused on retaining what already existed, single mothers were also critical of existing payments and programs. Single mothers argued that the eligibility criteria for various subsidies and additional payments were not transparent (for instance, they were not clearly stated within official documentation), that Centrelink staff often had a poor understanding of the regulations regarding assistance, and they reported missing out on assistance they were eligible for. Furthermore, the available funds and subsidies only met a very small proportion of the total costs of education.

Mothers' narratives regarding the challenges they faced accessing assistance they were entitled to return us to Foucault's and Sen's critiques of theories of justice that focus on institutions and laws. As discussed in chapter one, Foucault argues "The liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them" (Foucault

1999, 135) while Sen argues that what matters in terms of justice is not whether or not someone is entitled to a certain freedom in law but whether they have that freedom in practice. Within interviews, single mothers repeatedly reported that they did not get access to the material assistance they were officially entitled to under Australian Social Security Law. One difficulty was finding out about the JET program and getting access to the JET adviser. Trish explained that she had difficulties accessing a JET adviser because the Centrelink employee assisting her seemed to think that she was trying to access the Job Network (JN). As she explained:

> Trish: Just recently I asked about JET because I was thinking of, I don't know, maybe doing a course, or just something and I'd heard one of the girls talking about JET at the mums' group. But what they, the last woman I rang, she was so confused it was like, I don't know, she kept getting all the information mixed up and she was telling me that I had to get a[n employee] separation certificate[70] and just all this stuff.
> Interviewer (Michelle): Did she think you were claiming a payment?
>
> Trish: Yea. I don't know if she was new. She kept on going, "Oh, I just have to check with my supervisor" and so she'd go off and I was on the phone for about an hour while this woman was trying to figure out this very simple thing. And then she said "Do you have a Job Network provider?" and I said "no", and she said "Well do you want one?" and I said "no not really", but I said "I'll have some information on JET" and she sent me some information on JET.
> Interviewer (Michelle): And did you get a JET adviser?
> Trish: No, they wouldn't give me a JET adviser.
> Interviewer (Michelle): No, so that was it?//yep//you simply had that?
> Trish: Yep I wanted one but they wouldn't give me one.
> Interviewer (Michelle): so when they were asking you all those questions, it never went any further than that?
> Trish: Nope, nope, and they were not at all forthcoming about what a JET adviser was all about, or anything (Trish, 2005).

Similarly, over the course of my 2005 and 2006 interviews with Isabella, she explained that she had done a short computing course through JET many years prior. However, when she called Centrelink in 2004 to see if she could obtain assistance for the diploma that she was starting at TAFE, she was told "It no longer exists. It is called something else." I probed: "can you tell me about why you wanted to talk to them?"

---

70 An Employee Separation Certificate is a Centrelink form where applications specify why they separated from their last employer and the financial arrangements surrounding that separation (such as redundancy payments or annual leave payments).

> Isabella: Oh, (laughs) for my studies again I wanted to see if I could get extra funding...I was studying at TAFE at the time, or beginning or going to study at TAFE so it was basically just to find out yea, so I didn't actually get that far, she just said that it didn't exist. (Isabella, 2006).

Another difficulty was accessing the JET child care subsidies. Interviewees most commonly heard about these through friends, or their child's child care, or a mothering group. While Centrelink documents mentioned this subsidy, none of the public documents I reviewed specified exactly what the eligibility conditions for these JET child care subsidies were. Instead, they only stated that PPS recipients participating in education may be eligible to receive them. Many interviewees who were eligible for JET child care subsidies never received them or they missed out for many years because they were told they were not eligible before finding out from another officer that they were. Those that did receive them often found the process complex and confusing. Katherine summed up all of these themes:

> Interviewer (Michelle): So you went to the JET program? // Katherine: Yeah // Interviewer (Michelle): How did you find that? Can you tell me a bit about it, like what happened, what did you do?
> I had a lot of trouble...I decided to go back to Uni and my daughter must have been eight months old or something. I rang Centrelink to speak to a JET advisor and I think they got somebody to ring ... I couldn't make an appointment so they got somebody to ring me back or whatever and that was fine . That person actually gave me some very good advice that has turned out to be accurate, but I was confused for a long time, um, in terms of [the] child care allowance that JET gives you on top of your Child Care Benefit.[71] ... It was just a confus[ing] … l... got different messages. A friend of mine who is a single mum, who should have been on JET paying two or three dollars a day child care was for a whole year paying about ten dollars a day. I don't know how she managed to do it... I was so confused between what her situation was, what the person had told me and different bits of information and I had to go and speak to my JET advisor ... because they had to put in for my child care which was only at the start of this year. And I got on the phone to my friend and said, "I am only paying two dollars" She said, "You can't be …" I was dumbfounded that she was paying ten dollars a day still. I said, "It can't be right!" and she went to them and she should have been for the last past year on JET but … because they hadn't ticked one box or maybe she hadn't ticked one box or because of the mysteriousness of the ... that she couldn't access information to go, "Now,

71 Child Care Benefit is a payment the Australian Government provides to parents using either Registered Care or Approved Child care in order to help them meet the costs of this care. Registered care is care that is provided persons such as relatives, friends or nannies who have registered with the Australian Government as carers. Approved care is a child care service that has been approved by the Australian government to pass on the Child Care Benefit to parents in the form of reduced fees.

> actually, that sounds like me, I should be on that." And I always look now at the JET Adviser pamphlets and they are always a bit fluffy and nice and like, if I can use my friend as an example, if she had been looking at that, she wouldn't have known whether she should have been on it or not, when she should have been on that (Katherine, 2005).

In other cases, people had trouble with their subsidy after they had been granted access. Most interviewees did experience these troubles prior to 2006, when the JET adviser role ceased and responsibility for handling applications was given to regular Centrelink staff. Marsha, who was studying full-time, had an eighteen month old baby and relied entirely on formal child care (rather than assistance from family or friends), experienced the most extreme difficulties. I quote her here at length, where she explains both the specifics of her difficulties and the stress she experienced. The quote conveys the great complexity and confusion surrounding eligibility for JET assistance:

> Marsha: I was still having a massive problem with four extra hours of study time, which I didn't realize that I was allowed to have through JET, and they announced at the center saying where they were not going to pay for it. And I am going to JET and they are saying "Yes, we are." But it is still not happening and then the carer doesn't get paid and so then she doesn't want to offer me more hours and it is just becoming an awful experience at the moment.
> Interviewer (Michelle): Can you tell me a bit what you mean by that, about the funds or what is it that you've been getting through JET?
> Marsha: Through JET I thought my on campus sort of hours, the contact hours were all covered by them [Centrelink]. 'cause you get the family child care benefit and JET is separate, because I was studying [laughs] - or I am studying full-time - and covered the rest. You're meant to pay three dollars a day. // Yeah. // but if they don't pay it you like end up with a twenty or thirty dollar bill for the day which for myself [laughs] it might as well as be a thousand dollars it's just you know yea so ridiculous. So I confirmed it with JET over phone because I can't actually go in and see them which I find really frustrating. You have to do everything by phone. Often you can't contact them and you are speaking to all different people, and it becomes awful. So you're constantly relaying your story from the very beginning. And all that happened [that caused the problem] was that I extended a Wednesday, instead of being four till eight, it [my on-campus time] was from 12.30 thirty till eight. It wasn't even a whole four hours...I ended up asking what their exact policies were and asking them to recite them to .... me over the phone from a manual and the lady come across a point that the family day care, they must specify the exact hours and that hadn't been done by the advisor, JET advisor, and, therefore got sent to the JET crew, which are the ones that pay (laughs) the family day care. Yeah, that is what apparently happened, so now they have to go back and manually change each hour for the last, I think it would have been about six weeks, is being changed. But the whole process is … I am having the day care center abusing, or the family day care abusing me over the phone…

> Interviewer (Michelle): Because they are not getting paid?
> Marsha: Now the day care are panicking because she is not getting paid either, because the thing is I have to contact them [the child care] to find out exactly what the problem is and then I have to contact JET, but I can't speak to the actual JET [crew] people. I can only speak to the JET Advisors. So I am feeling a bit like an ant with this massive organization. (laughs). And it, yeah, it can be very stressful! ... And the thing is I am also actually going through a divorce, a very messy property settlement and very messy custody agreement and arrangements. I am doing a university degree. I have no external supports as such. My peer network has vanished since my husband became mentally ill, and raising a child is the easiest thing of the lot. So I am thinking, I don't need all this stuff, it is their [Centrelink's] job. If I had the money I certainly wouldn't be trying to use the system, if you know what I mean. I just wouldn't go near it. I would struggle through on what I had but I have absolutely nothing else!

Interviewees' reports that Centrelink applies regulations inconsistently and makes a large number of errors in the processing of entitlements are not new. A study conducted by the Australian Auditor General found that over half of Aged Pension claims were incorrectly processed (Australian Government. Australian National Audit Office. 2001). Howard (2004) also found significant errors and deviations from procedure in the administration of income support for the unemployed in Australia. Scholars of welfare systems across the globe also frequently find a divergence between entitlements in law and actual practices.

At the same time, the repeated finding that administrative practices deviate from legal entitlements should not be glossed over as a trivial 'implementation issue.' This divergence instead raises the need for much greater vigilance and activism around the benefits and rights that income support recipients can access in practice. As Foucault and others, including Sara Ahmed (2006)argue, laws and regulations in themselves do not guarantee rights. Instead, the guarantee of rights is a constant vigilance regarding those rights. As Ahmed clearly illustrates, written policies that supposedly entitle individuals to certain rights may actually hinder the bringing about of the effects they name. In the case she examines, written institutional commitments to racial equality come to stand as evidence that the institution has really acted on the issue (Ahmed 2006). In some cases where individuals and groups have charged educational institutions with racism, these institutions have used their written anti-racist policies to stand as evidence that they could not have committed the offences (Ahmed 2006). Similarly, within social and political debates, legislated policies such as JET child care subsidies frequently stand in as evidence that the Australian Government is assisting single mothers who need help with child care or finding employment. But single

mothers' narratives about their experiences of receiving assistance caution us against letting legislated entitlements stand in as evidence of what individuals experience or that access will be straightforward.

Concretely, interviewees' narratives of the struggles they experienced suggest that these problems could be reduced by making eligibility criteria transparent and readily available within departmental websites and the policy documents distributed to customers. Marsha was able to resolve the problem with the JET child care subsidy only when she insisted that the Centrelink officer read the policies out to her. Katherine, who described above how her friend had missed out on JET child care, argued that income support recipients should be given the same kinds of information that the Tax Office provided to everyone who had to file a tax return. She elaborated:

> I think there is something about the general sort of ethos and vibe of welfare [laughs] or Centrelink running welfare... Like in comparison to tax you are not given information to deal with it for your own purposes, and for your own planning, and for your own future. It is like almost held back from you because you are not (laughs), well my feeling is "Oh, you are not really smart enough or responsible enough to actually deal with it and plan your own thing, and we're the boss of that, so you just leave it to us and, you know, toe the line a bit." But that is not just for single parents. I mean, I just it was the same sort of thing, I had Austudy [an income support payment for low income students] when I first went to uni[versity]...I understand, again, because it is a complex thing and every situation is different... But definitely something like the Tax Pack,[72] have a little thing at the back on how to work out what you might be eligible for (Katherine, 2005).

These narratives also suggest an increased need for mechanisms that ensure people actually receive the assistance they are entitled to. A great deal of policy effort is expended upon the creation of data matching systems[73] to detect fraudulent claims for benefits. But very little policy effort is expended on creating data systems to detect where people are missing out on benefits to which they are entitled. These narratives also suggest that policy analysts and academics broadly interested in policy issues should pay greater attention to the assistance that individuals actually receive rather than just their formal, legislated rights.

---

72 "TaxPack is a booklet issued by the Australian Taxation Office to assist individuals complete their income tax return." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TaxPack

73 These systems cross check personal data held by banks, the tax department, Centrelink and other Australian government agencies.

Contesting imaginaries of barriers, the family and care work

As chapters four and five showed, policy makers argue that Parenting Payment recipients lack the specific capacities they need in order to engage in paid work. Policy makers cite particular individual or household characteristics, including dependent attitudes, poor health, lack of education, or lack of access to adequate transport, as the key factors preventing PPS recipients from engaging in paid work. Debates around JET were framed in terms of single parents' disadvantage, while the PA program focused on individual psychological dispositions, including confidence, self-esteem and identities (mothering identity) which formed barriers to participation in paid work. Every JN provider interviewed cited single parents' lack of confidence as one of the barriers preventing single mothers from obtaining paid employment, though providers varied in how they defined confidence. In this section I examine how single mothers' narratives around difficulties associated with participating in paid work and education, and the things that made this participation possible, clashed with official discourses. I begin by briefly reviewing how advocacy groups contested the Coalition's Welfare to Work discourses and practices before moving onto mothers' narratives. I argue that advocacy groups shared with the government an emphasis on *capacities*. This focus on *capacities* was articulated through a language of *barriers*, and the debate centred around which types of barriers were the most important. Importantly, *barriers* are conceived as non-systemic structures or temporary blockages that impede individuals from gaining a particular *capacity*. In contrast, single mothers focused on systemic structures that made it difficult for them to be and do what they valued as well as the networks of relations and supports that sometimes enabled them to be and do what they valued. In other words, mothers focused on networks that supported or thwarted their capabilities.

Australia's peak welfare advocacy organization, the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), contested the 2005 Welfare to Work and other policy packages on the grounds that they do not adequately address the real barriers to employment faced by many income support recipients. ACOSS argued these packages do not provide enough assistance to enable individuals to overcome significant personal barriers to obtaining employment. While these contestational discourses differ from official narratives in that they focus on material barriers such as education and transport, rather than psychological barriers such as confidence, self-esteem and dependent attitudes, they share in common with official policy rationalities a focus on *capacities* expressed in the language of *individual barriers*. For example,

ACOSS writes:

> Those who are unemployed in the current labour market tend to be highly disadvantaged. For instance 60% of single parents on payments have no more than a Year 10 education. Others face a number of barriers to work such as transport, child care and experiences of mental illness, poor health or domestic violence. An estimated 800,000 children are growing up in households where no one has a job, leading to concerns that unemployment may be furthering disadvantage in some areas of Australia (Australian Council of Social Services. 2006, 1).

As a metaphor, 'barrier' provides a particular explanation for why some individuals undertake paid work and others do not. It suggests a few specific things. First, there are structures in place that impede some individuals from gaining paid work, but these structures are not systemic. Barriers are temporary blockages in the path of specific individuals, or even communities, not permanent institutionalized features of society. So for instance, there may be an inadequate supply of child care or public transport within a specific community. But it is not the case that child care is systematically provided in such a way that clashes with mothers' needs.

Second, the emphasis tends to be on strengthening individual or household resources. It is argued for example that in order to move from worklessness to paid work, individuals need to obtain better health, skills, child care or transport. While the Coalition emphasized strengthening the psychology and attitudes of individuals and households, ACOSS and others emphasized the need for further subsidies and payments. The debate thus revolves around the relative emphasis on addressing individual psychology versus providing new subsidies and payments. As single mothers' narratives below highlight, the 'barriers' metaphor is both static and binary. There is either a structure preventing an individual from accessing paid work or there is not, and the nature of this structure does not change. What is missed is the importance of webs of relations and the inflexibility of structures of paid work, education and child care.

This language of individual barriers was dominant within policy documents surrounding Welfare to Work. Within *Helping people move into work: A community information pack,* repeated reference was made to barriers, including "your Job Capacity Assessor will be able to arrange for services to help you overcome your barriers to work" and "this new assessment will help identify what services you need to overcome any barriers to employment" (Australian Government: Centrelink 2006, 15 & 21).(emphasis added).

A third feature of the barriers discourse is that the *family* unit is defined as parents or a parent and children residing within a single household. While this reflects dominant

statistical and policy definitions of the family in other social policy areas, such as child support and child custody, non-resident fathers are defined as very much being part of the child's family. The implication of using this definition of the family is that children who live in a two parent family where only the father works are not defined as living in a *workless* family. But if these children's parents divorced and they resided with their mother who continued to remain out of the labour force, they are now defined as living in a *workless* family and it is claimed they are now at risk of future welfare dependency. Thus, within welfare debates, because the father no longer resides in the household, he is defined as no longer part of the child's family. In contrast, within child custody and child support policy debates it was emphasized that the father remained part of the child's family.

Mothers' narratives of their own participation in paid work clashed with this static metaphor of barriers and its attendant emphasis on the nuclear family contained within a single household. While the single mothers I interviewed mentioned a lack of educational qualifications, employment related skills, their own poor physical or mental health, lack of access to transport, and lack of access child care as sometimes posing difficulties, they did not talk about these in terms of *barriers*. Instead, they emphasized the dynamic difficulties they faced and how these were embedded within institutional practices and relations with others. When discussing things that make it difficult to participate in paid work, their narratives highlighted the "patterns of exchange, support, and caregiving" which extend across households and the ways these relations facilitated certain types of participation and hindered others. As Tillman and Nam argue, "In general [within policy], it has been assumed that the household is the primary basis for the exchange of economic and social resources between family members" (Tillman, Nam 2008, 369). But single mothers' narratives highlighted the "patterns of exchange, support, and caregiving" between family members living in different households and the ways this shaped their ability to participate in non-caregiving activities (Tillman, Nam 2008, 368).

Sen's capabilities approach asks: what makes it possible for individuals to be and do what they value? He insists there is not a single answer to this question. Instead echoing Foucault he insists that the answer needs to be worked out within specific political contexts. Single mothers' narratives provide insights into what makes it possible for them to be and do that they value. Problems they encountered when engaging or attempting to engage in paid work and education were not experienced as static structures. Instead, single mothers experienced these problems as ebbing and flowing as part of a web of relations extending beyond their individual household. For instance, when discussing depression, single mothers did not speak in terms of a continuous discrete episode of mental illness which they either

failed to address or permanently cured. Instead, they narrated spells of anxiety and depression that accompanied a range of highly stressful events. One interviewee for instance experienced periods of anxiety or depression while dealing with the problems associated with her ex-husband's mental illness. Her anxiety and depression was high during our first interview, at which time she was finalizing financial arrangements associated with her divorce. During the second and third interviews she reported feeling well but discussed periods during the previous twelve months when her husband's relapse had been associated with an increase in her anxiety. Another interviewee who had two children and was working part-time began experiencing black-outs attributed to severe anxiety about six months after she commenced full-time study on top of her existing duties.

Child care was another area where women did not discuss static barriers. Interviewees narrated difficulties that changed over time. Child care arrangements which were working well at the time of one of my interviews frequently had become totally unsuitable at the next interview. The most common reason for child care becoming unsuitable was that children's needs changed as they got older. For instance, some family child care providers preferred only to care for children in a select age range (0-6 years) and once children began school, interviewees were encouraged to find another position for their child. In other cases, after school care positions that children enjoyed in their early years of primary school became tedious and boring to them as they entered the later primary school years.

Thus interviewees' problems were not experienced or narrated as static 'barriers' but instead as flows of relationships, resources and circumstances that changed over time. Amartya Sen's work on capabilities and Foucault's work on practices of caring for the self are useful for highlighting the dynamic aspects of interviewees' narratives and the ways that these dynamics are embedded within institutional practices and relations with others. Sen's capabilities approach does not focus on barriers as such but instead asks how is it that some people not only form a preference to undertake paid work or education, but are also able to engage in an ongoing process of carrying out this activity. He draws attention to the institutional systems of support and constraint that make it difficult for some individuals to be and do what they value, while making this possible for others. Similarly, Foucault's reflections on practices of caring for the self move outside the static binary concept of barriers. Foucault conceives of the work of caring for oneself not as the effort of a solitary,

atomistic individual, but instead as a practice embedded within relations with others and sustained by them. His reflections described in chapters one and five of this thesis draw attention to ways of thinking about individual practices that are neither atomistic nor subsume the individual within a collective.

These conceptual frames are useful for highlighting aspects of mothers' narratives about the things that support or impede their participation in a range of activities. Sen and Foucault, and their emphasis on dynamic processes, help us work through interviewees' narratives regarding the ways institutional systems and routines associated with children and domestic labour clashed with the institutional structures associated with the contemporary world of education and paid work. Available forms of child care frequently conflicted with employment and higher education. Child care centres generally only offered child care between the hours of 7.30am and 6pm, but often the employment available to interviewees operated on a non standard work schedule. Inflexible structures of many higher education programs, including the requirement that some programs be completed on a full time basis or the requirement for full time practical placements for those doing social work, education or nursing degrees, also clashed with the routines of child care centres. Primary schools and grocery stores in Perth also operated on schedules incompatible with the contemporary timetables of paid work and higher education. As discussed in the introduction to the thesis, Perth metropolitan area has highly restricted shopping hours which means that major grocery stores only open between the hours of 8.30am and 6PM Monday to Saturday. This meant that mothers who engaged in full time work or study had to do their grocery shopping on a Saturday, a time that was often also filled with children's sports practice or competition. Alternatively, interviewees could shop in the smaller and more expensive independent grocery stores that stay open late. Difficulties fitting grocery shopping into their schedules were mentioned frequently by interviewees who engaged in study or paid work. Interviewees who had young children also discussed the pressure that their children's school exerted on them to participate in voluntary work at the school. Most mothers of young children explained that their children's school expected mothers to provide in-classroom support with reading and other activities during their children's early years. In addition, schools were constantly sending home requests for parents to volunteer in the school canteen. Unlike grocery shopping, participation in these activities was voluntary, but the schools' expectations were nevertheless experienced as a time pressure for those who

participated or guilt-inducing for those who did not.

Multiple clashes between institutional practices, routines and structures posed particular difficulties for interviewees who relied entirely on formal institutional systems of support, subsidies and financial assistance provided by the Australian Government. In contrast, those who had in-kind and financial assistance from informal institutions, such as their family and friends, or could purchase private child care (such as a nanny) experienced these clashes less intensely. Two thirds of those engaged in study or paid work had child care assistance from family members. This assistance was particularly important for mothers with very young children and those engaged in full-time education or paid work. Mothers undertaking full time paid work or education overwhelmingly had child care assistance from their mothers, and in a smaller number of cases from their fathers. At the time of the first interview, seven of the interviewees were studying full time and two interviewees were working fulltime. Of these nine interviewees, seven were obtaining child care assistance from their own families; including in one case both the maternal and paternal grandparents.

Prominent in interviewees' reflections upon the child care assistance they received from family were their arguments that it enabled them to participate in paid work and education while continuing to address their children's basic material needs. Meeting children's basic material needs comprises a very large part of mothering work and it is also an aspect of mothering work over which interviewees have very little choice. After all, consistent failure to provide these basics is usually a criminal offence (child neglect) (see for example (NSW Government: DoCS 2006).

Interviewee's narratives bring to light important contrasts between informal and informal child care. Formal child care does tend to some of a child's basic needs but it does not address tasks such as laundering of clothes, bathing or the provision of packed lunches. Furthermore, many mothers reported that a full day of formal child care is tiring for their children. In contrast, many forms of informal child care, including nannies and care from other family members tend to a wider range of children's basic needs, and mothers did not report that these forms of care fatigued their children. Those with multiple children or very young children and those who had to rely entirely on formal child care reported the greatest challenges in consistently addressing their children's basic care needs while engaging in high levels of participation in paid work or education. Interviewees' own parents were more likely than their children's fathers to provide care that tended to the full range of children's care

needs.

Importantly, while media attention is often focused on fathers who want greater access to their children, the interviewees I spoke to would have appreciated if their ex-partners had seen their children more regularly and provided child care support during the week. While mothers did see this time as important for enabling the child to retain and build a relationship with their father, they also saw this as ideally providing care work which facilitated their own social and economic participation. When their ex-partner withdrew care or was irregular in their provision of care it disrupted their opportunities. According to single mothers' reports, very few ex-partners were willing to see the children regularly or outside of weekends. Fathers had regular contact with their children in only eight cases and in five of these cases they were only willing to see their children on the weekends or in the evenings. Only four interviewees received regular child care assistance from their child's father which directly facilitated their employment or participation in education. In three of these four cases over the course of my study there was a period during which the father withdrew care in retaliation for a perceived offence committed by their ex-partner or due to difficulties within their new household.

The ways that alternative carers' willingness to tend to children's basic care needs shaped single mothers' participation in paid work and education were particularly evident among those who engaged in full-time paid work or education. In contrast to descriptions of formal child care, interviewees described the ways their own family assisted their children's sleep and hygiene (e.g. bathing) needs. This assistance was particularly important for those who were studying full-time (at the time of the first interview) because all of these interviewees were required to participate in fulltime practical placements as part of their degree requirements.[74] Practical placements required early morning starts (with some shifts commencing at 7am) and these potentially disrupted children's sleep needs. The case of Sara, who was completing a nursing degree and obtaining child care assistance from her mother, is illustrative. During the first interview Sara explained how she managed her early and late nursing placement shifts: "I've had mum helping me out. She comes and baby-sits. A couple of weeks ago I had to work evenings and morning shifts and she'd come in the morning and if I had a late shift she'd come after work and take care of the kids" (2005). When I asked

7474 The degrees were in either social work, midwifery, nursing, or education.

her "What would you do if you didn't have your mother around?" she replied:

> Sara: I wouldn't be able to do it. I honestly wouldn't be able to do it. She [my mother] has been overseas last week and I managed to organize my pracs [practical placement] so that I only worked mornings but in the mornings it was such a hassle because I had to be at work at seven which meant I had to leave here at quarter to seven and in doing so I had, my after school carer she was good enough to pick Emily up for me. She would come after me so they were on their own for about five minutes and then David had to get himself off to school. I can't afford to send the both of them to after school [care] when I'm working and I've got nobody else to look after them.
> Interviewer [Michelle]: And you would prefer that is not the case?
> Sara: Yea well I don't like the idea of him staying on his own.

Later in the interview she reflected on the difficulties of having to get the children up so early while her mother was overseas, given that there was not a second parent in the household:

> Just having to juggle the kids. And like last week I just felt so bad having to drag my child, my children out of bed at six o'clock in the morning and drag them to child care before seven o'clock. I don't know. It doesn't sit right with me…and I feel I suppose it's worse. It's different if there's two of you in a household to share the, the load, but I felt really bad coming home and I couldn't, you know, I was just irritable and having to cook tea, and then by the time you cook tea, it's nearly bed time and, and um, it's your day over then, and you get to spend no quality time whatsoever with them (Sara, 2005).

Another interviewee who was completing her nursing degree and had moved back to live with her parents reflected that the child care assistance she received from them allowed her child to sleep longer, and that without this assistance it would have been very difficult to study. The only interviewee who was studying fulltime (at the time of the first interview) but not receiving any child care support from her family experienced substantial difficulties. At the time of the first interview she had an 18 month old child and was experiencing great difficulties managing child care and her practical placement in social work. Over the course of the interview she discussed her feelings of anxiety, isolation and depression. At the second interview 12 months later she reported that she had reduced her study load to part-time and that her grades had greatly suffered during her practical placement term due to the difficulties she encountered in managing child care and her study.

For similar reasons, child care assistance from the interviewees' own families or the

children's fathers was also very important to those who were working high part-time hours (between 15 and 25 hours of paid work a week), to those combining part-time education and employment, and to those with very young children. One interviewee, Glenda, who had returned to part-time work when her baby (Bella) was six months old, received child care assistance from Bella's father and grandfather. This enabled Glenda to undertake one evening shift and one night shift because, unlike formal child care these carers could put Bella to bed for the night and provided care outside of regular business hours. While this assistance was very helpful, the interviewee reflected that she wished that the child's father participated more fully in the child's care, particularly since at the time he was unemployed.

For many mothers, child care assistance from family or the child's father did not replace formal child care but instead reduced the number of hours they used. This was particularly important for interviewees with younger children as these mothers reported their children tended to be very tired after a full day at formal child care. For interviewees who studied or worked part time or did both and had child care assistance from family members, this meant that they usually only had to use half days and at most a couple of full days of formal child care. In contrast, those who did not have this assistance needed to place their children in formal care for longer hours. In some cases, young children were not able to cope with those longer hours. For instance, Isabella, whose daughter was four and a half at the time of the first interview, was studying a diploma part time and working part-time. Between the first and second interview she commenced a degree full-time but after a semester dropped to a three quarter study load and also reduced her hours of paid work because her daughter's child care centre and school had both reported on a number of occasions that her daughter Chancey was tired during the day. The reduced hours of study and paid work enabled Isabella to pick her daughter up from child care early two days a week.

Another prominent theme in single mothers' narratives was the important role that economic assistance in the form of reduced rent and loan of money or vehicles from their families or friends played in their ability to participate in education or paid work. While some single mothers received relatively large amounts of child support, others received only a few dollars or nothing, and while some received substantial in-kind assistance in the form of vehicles or reduced rent others did not. All of these resources obtained from extended family or ex-partners made it possible to purchase services and goods which facilitated their

participation in economic activities. Such goods and services included a nanny, convenient meals, computers, and a personal vehicle.

Current policy appears to assume that all single parents have equal access to supports, and that differences in participation are related to barriers that may, importantly, include single parents' lack of planning skills or their inappropriate subjectivities. The key difference between the Coalition government and the Labor opposition was that the Coalition tended to focus on individual psychological barriers, such as the inability to set goals or stick to plans, while the Labor opposition and the advocacy groups focused on lack of transport, skills, education, or poor health. While single mothers may face many of these difficulties, this *barriers* perspective misses many of the elements within single mothers' narratives. Mothers' narratives suggest that their participation in work and education is facilitated by networks of institutions and relations that extend beyond their individual family unit. Networks and webs of material and child care support that facilitate the participation of some are not available to all. The inflexible institutional structures around school, shops and child care and the limited assistance for education and training provided by the government were sufficient for some women because they had access to multiple resources from family or in a few cases friends. But for other women it was not possible to access these 'informal' supports. Their families or friends were either not willing or not able to assist. Single mothers who were entirely dependent upon formal institutions, such as formal child care, the income they could earn themselves and the support from the Australian government in most cases needed much more support than is currently available. As I elaborate in the following sections, policy makers need to take seriously the desire of most single mothers to participate in paid work and education and to look at the formal and informal institutional structures that support and facilitate this. Further, they need to do this in a way that recognizes the importance of webs of relations and the inflexibility of current structures of paid work, education and care.

Contesting government sponsored individual advisers

This thesis shows that personalized planning programs are more than an empirical phenomenon; they are also a diagram, meaning a way of thinking about the organization and regulation of welfare payments and services as well as a specific assemblage of institutions and technologies, including written plans, individual advisers and individual interviews. At

the same time it has illustrated the diversity within this diagram. Australian single parents over the last two decades have experienced personalized planning in three different programmatic forms - JET, PA and EP. Chapters four and five have attempted to tease out the degree to which these program's attempts to develop capacities intensified power relations and narrowed behavioural options versus supported single mothers' abilities to be and do what they valued. Chapter five concluded that while policy narratives around PA at times suggested a concern with helping clients maintain their autonomy through tools such as *Participation Plans* single mothers experienced an overwhelming emphasis on emphasis on confessional transformation and promoting adherence to a singular norm of participation in paid work or education. In contrast to PA's approach JET advisers were expected to transform mothers primarily through facilitating access to appropriate education and training and for the most part JET advisers did not compel single mothers to engage in specific planning processes. The approaches taken by EP advisers varied depending on the specific organization within which they were located. Although single mothers generally find their interactions with Centrelink demeaning and frustrating, in most cases the guides themselves (JET, & PA) were described as 'nice' or 'lovely' or in a neutral or ambivalent manner. Similarly, the few people who had participated in the JN described the advisers as nice or cheerful, even if 'fake.' While most liked the adviser as a person, single mothers were more divided about whether or not the policy of requiring them, and other parents, to complete a plan was sensible and well administered. In chapter five we saw that all parents interpreted the compulsory interactions with the PA advisers, and JET advisers, as designed to ensure they were complying with the Centrelink guidelines, rather than being about assisting them. Further, while no parent reported finding the compulsory interview personally helpful, some parents thought the requirements were legitimate and reasonable, in so far as Centrelink had the right to determine the legitimacy of their goals, and to assess if they were on the right track for achieving them. However, other parents did not like the adviser attempting to assess their goals and were explicitly critical of the process they experienced.

Among advocacy groups such as ACOSS and opposition political parties at the Federal level there was broad agreement that personalized planning programs are an appropriate and useful policy tool. Reflecting this consensus, when the Labor opposition was elected into government in 2007 it developed additional personalized planning programs. As discussed in section one, under these new rules all individuals receiving income support who

have an activity requirement are required to complete a Centrelink Employment Pathway Plan (EEP) during an interview with a Centrelink officer.

In this section of this chapter I consider the ways that single mothers explicitly resisted elements of personalized planning programs. It is important to take note of these strategies of resistance because they point to the ways that individuals negotiate the relations of domination that are part of these programs in order to utilize elements that enable them to be and do what they value. At the same time, they illustrate how some strategies of resistance reinforce broader relations of domination.

A strategy of resistance that appeared to reinforce broader relations of domination was the strategy of *othering*. *Othering* occurred where interviewees suggested that while the process of personalized planning had not helped them it might be helpful for other people, for instance people with lower education or people who were not thinking about their future. This was a common strategy. While parents reported that compulsory interviews were not personally useful, most were reluctant to suggest the advice and planning assistance offered by individual advisers was not useful for anyone. Reflecting this line of reasoning, in response to my question as to why she thought the PA adviser had asked her about her plans, Faye explained:

> Faye: just to keep you focused and make sure you are still thinking about it and not just caught up in just looking after the kids. I mean someone has got to. I mean I am sure there are people who are sitting at home who don't want to get a job or maybe do want to get a job and don't know how to go about it. So it is just that bit of encouragement that "okay, you've got to think about these things, that sort of thing"//Interviewer (Michelle): so to keep you focused by? //Faye: yea by maybe getting you to think about some short term goals or how to get started (Faye, 2007).

In particular, the line "someone has got to" suggests that Faye felt there was a need to police a segment of the PPS population.

Othering was a common strategy of resistance but parents also contested the guides in other ways. I have categorized these as strategies of *reversal, refusal, tactical compliance,* and *humour*. I developed these categories through analysis of the interview material which was informed by reflections on Foucault's arguments regarding power and resistance outlined in chapter one. Importantly, Foucault argued convincingly that we can never step outside of relations of power in order to resist them. That is, "[resistance] does not predate power which it opposes. It is coextensive with it and absolutely its contemporary" (Foucault 1988b,

122). Consistent with Foucault's view that power is not something that one can simply possess, like a commodity, he argued that resistance cannot be conceptualized as the capture of power by one individual or group, from another (Foucault 1990a, 92). These statements suggests that resistance plays a part in creating and maintaining relations of power; relations that are themselves constantly shifting and moving around. As he argues, "the limit and the transgression depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess" and "the relationship takes the form of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust" (Foucault 1977, 34).

To return then to the strategies which single mothers pursued: firstly, through *reversal* single mothers attempted to reverse the encounter by taking seriously the adviser's assertion that they were there to help and challenging them when they were not able to help because they lacked knowledge of the system. Kelly, for example, challenged the adviser on her lack of knowledge:

> I wanted confirmation on the changes...and she couldn't tell me //Interviewer (Michelle): anything? // No, she basically said that she wasn't aware of the situation and it's not like that and I said "well this is the information I've got, told her where I got it from and in fact it's actually taken off of legislative sites" //Interviewer (Michelle): and she (p) didn't know? // No, had no know- and yet part of her job was to tell me how the changes were gonna affect me and all she could tell, all she was interested in telling me was that, once my youngest child turns six - and I said "well he's already six" - I will then have to go into this Mutual Obligation and work at least 15 hours a week or do volunt- and she wasn't even sure whether voluntary work or study would come into the equation. And I said, "pffh well what good is it?" I said, "well can you then tell me that?" (Kelly, 2005).

In contrast, Faye did not directly challenge the adviser's competence within the interview but she did in her recollection of the planning process. She argued:

> It could have [been useful] if they'd said, "Oh by the way you should be applying for JET child care," Cause I could have actually qualified last semester. It is like all the areas of Centrelink aren't connected. You know they get a form in from me [at the] end of last year saying, I've applied to study, and I qualify, so they sent something back saying that I qualified for Pensioner Education Supplement. [Given that] I don't know how hard it would be to send a flyer...saying, "since you are going to be studying, why don't you see if you qualify for JET." But no! (Faye, 2006).

Through *refusal* parents explicitly refused to comply with elements of the policy and challenged the adviser. This occurred in two cases and included refusing to attend the face to

face interview on the basis that they would have to miss paid work, and challenging the adviser's recommendation that they should plan for the future on the basis of their mothering identity and practices. As discussed in chapter five, one interviewee (Jane) was required to participate in a Personal Adviser planning interview when her son was 12 months old. The adviser asked "what are your plans for your future?" and when Jane replied "to raise my son and look after him" she recalled that the PA responded:

> "well when he goes to school, you need to find a job, or be doing volunteer work or training". And I said "but that is another five years and they said but yea but if you want to become a nurse, you need to do so many years training so you need to do so many years training so you need to start to do it now. So then when you have finished your training and he is at school you can start work"... and I said, "well I need to look after my son", and they said "well we can provide child care to look after your son, well I don't want to put my son into child care, I've worked in child care, not that I'm saying they are bad, the people....

When I asked: "And did you actually you finish the plan or did you leave?" Jane explained that the PA advisers did not care about her or her son, and were effectively asking her to let other people raise her child:

> No, I finished it but I said I wasn't willing to do any training or willing you know, to go back work. And they said, oh it is something you have got to think about now, and you know think about if you want to study to do something or. And I said well right now my future is my son and I want to look after him and the best way I can is to make sure that I'm okay. And I don't think that going to full time work or study is going to do that for my, [son] so I just got all upset. And walked out//Interview (Michelle): And how were they about it?//They didn't care. They were just like, this is what is happening and that is it... think about what I want to become, she said "like if you want to be a nurse you can start studying now then you'll be working when he is at school" I thought well that is very nice but the situation I am in isn't like how you are meant to be. Basically get into training, get yourself a job and get off our benefits... so don't care about your health. Don't care about your son. Let somebody else raise him. That is my feeling about child care, that somebody else is doing your job and um, if I happen to believe like that mums should stay at home, or fathers even for that matter, to raise their child, you know and to have a family upbringing, now it is just put them in child care and let somebody else do it.

As discussed in the section on Personal Advisers in chapter five, Kelly explained that she openly challenged the adviser and aspects of the policy:

> I got a letter about it on Friday and they wanted me to go in there on Thursday this week and I rang them and said, "well hey that's a no go because I'm not giving up pay to come and see you guys" And she did an interview thing over the phone

> yesterday so that was really good and I don't have to talk to her for 12 months for that was even better (Kelly, 2005).

We saw in chapter five that Kelly challenged the adviser about what she was going to do with the information she obtained from her. In her own words: "that [the written plan] is like only two percent of what I told her... she said to me that it's only purely for their records (p). And I said well that's good 'cause I don't want you to tell everybody else" (Kelly, 2005).

Another strategy of contestation that Kelly and others used was *humour/making fun.* This included laughing at and dismissing as silly the specific technologies involved in personalized planning programs. As quoted in chapter five, while Kelly was taking me through a copy of her Participation Plan she joked:

> The things she didn't put on there was, she said "how am I gonna achieve my goals of financial stability?" and I said "I'm gonna win lotto." She didn't write that on there (laughs). I was quite upset about that (laughs). I was quite really disappointed (Kelly, 2005).

Similarly, when Faye described the interaction she parodied the adviser's attempt to be supportive. In an ironic happy singing voice, Faye made fun of the adviser's response to her plans: "she said "oh that is really great! Good on you!" That is about it" (laughs) (Faye, 2006).

Finally *tactical compliance* was a common strategy of going along with the adviser so they could be 'ticked off the list.' Chelsea's response was typical:

> Chelsea: I went in...they send things out which sometimes you don't really read (laughing) about you know helping to look for work if I wanted to. But I decided myself that I wanted to so that's when I went into Centrelink myself and said look I wanna look for work, whether you know, getting training or whatever's available and that's when what do you call them?
> Interviewer (Michelle): Okay, oh maybe a JET advisor?
> Chelsea: That's it, yeah. Yeah so um, so I spoke to them and you know they went through what I could do and that and then that's when I went to IPA.[75]
> Interviewer (Michelle): So did you, did they actually write up a plan for you?
> Chelsea: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
> Interviewer (Michelle): // And was that, can you tell me a bit about the process as much as you can remember?
> Chelsea: I know there was a lot of questions (laughing). Oh basically they just like, they just went through what I've done in the past, you know, in my education, um, you know what I'm willing to do like work wise, I just put anything. Um, basically

75 IPA is an agency in the Job Network

> they, she went through like university, you know, if I wanted to do that, or go to TAFE [Technical And Further Education collage] and yeah. So she went through all that with me.
> Interviewer (Michelle): Work was the option you were . . .
> Chelsea: Oh it was work yeah.
> Interviewer (Michelle): Yup, okay. And did they give you a copy of that plan?
> Chelsea: They did, but I don't have it anymore, I tossed it out (laughing) (2005)

The following year she reflected that JET did not help her with planning. She contrasted the judgement she felt in her encounter with the JET adviser with the experience she had with her current employer who she could talk to about things that were on her mind without him judging her, and who gave advice but left it to her whether she took it or not.

Strategies were often used in combination. For example, while Faye made fun of the adviser when recounting the experience, within the PA interview she used a strategy of compliance, reporting that when the adviser contacted her and insisted Faye had an interview even though she was already exceeding the requirements of 15hours of work per week, she "did it over the phone and just all the questions, what do you want to be doing in five years and blah, blah, blah, and I just told them my plans and that was it."

All of these are individual strategies. It is important to consider the strategies individuals use, particularly in a context in which the existence of individual agency has been downplayed within governmentality studies that have examined personalized planning programs. At the same time, focusing on the acts of specific individuals risks falling into the trap of solely conceiving of resistance in terms of solitary, individualistic, heroic models of action. As Bonnie Honig argues, "even progressive theorists of politics remain bewitched" with acts of resistance carried out by solitary individuals (Honig 2010, 4) . As she argues elsewhere:

> It is a trick and a victory of statist law and politics in liberal democracies to ascribe to individuals those significant actions [such as Rosa Parks' refusal to move to the back of the bus] that are actually (also) the products of a concerted politics. Rival sovereignties, oppositional movements, and political dissidence are thereby erased from view and we are left only with small individuals (Honig 2006, 116-7).

It is also necessary to consider the degree to which practices of freedom within this relation are extremely constrained and limited. While single mothers can do many things within this relationship, these are, to paraphrase Foucault, "finally no more than a certain number of

tricks which never [bring] about a reversal of the situation." As outlined in chapter one an important innovation within Foucault's later works was his development of a theoretically elaborated concept of domination, which he distinguished from a nominal conception of power. Foucault argued that relationships of power, which he understood as being relations of force in a constant state of flux, may develop into states of domination when,

> .. power, instead of being variable and allowing different partners a strategy which alters them, find themselves firmly set and congealed. When an individual or social group manages to block a field of relations of power, to render them impassive and invariable and to prevent all reversibility of movement - by means of instruments which can be economic, political, or military means - we are facing what can be called a state of domination (Foucault, 1988, 3).

Within such a state, practices of freedom do not exist, exist only unilaterally, or are extremely constrained and limited (Foucault 1988a, 3). Such a demarcation between power relations and structures of domination provides something like a normative stance against which power relations can be subject to critique. What is important is not the absence of constraints in society, but whether individuals affected by them have the ability to transform them (Foucault 1997a, 147-8). A society's system of constraints becomes really unbearable when the individuals who are affected do not have any means by which to modify it (Foucault 1997a, 148). As discussed in the introduction to this section, within organized politics there is no evidence of resistance to the diagram of personalized planning. Rather, in contesting the retraction of material assistance, opposition parties and advocacy groups have only argued that compulsory personalized planning is justified in so far as these programs also provide substantial opportunities for individuals to engage in education and training.

Contesting the children first focus through practices of self-care

> *The overall effect is reduced income support for people with a disability and for sole parents while they are looking for work, preparing for work or working the 15 or 20 hours per week. In fact, Catholic Welfare's paper makes the point that, under this legislation, a sole parent with one child will lose 43 per cent of their net disposable income and a single person with a disability will lose 40 per cent of their net disposable income. The overall effect is reduced income. In the sole parent group, women are disproportionately affected as 83 per cent of sole parents are*

> *women. My major concern in relation to this group is the dependent children. It is already well documented that some of the poorest, most disadvantaged people in our community are sole parent families* (MP Ms Moylan in Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives. 2005a, 14).

Here opposition Labor MP Ms Moylan challenges Welfare to Work primarily on the grounds of child welfare. As chapters two through five have demonstrated, Australian single mothers have been most often governed through the exhortation that they must align their actions in accordance with others' needs. These chapters illustrate that income support provisions for parents have primarily been justified on the basis of child well-being since the 1940s. Prime Minister Curtin argued that mothers should not have to engage in paid work because that may damage their children. More recently, Welfare to Work provisions which require women to take up paid work have been justified on the basis of children's well-being. It is posited that a single mother's workforce participation inoculates her children against the risk of welfare dependency. Throughout the history of income support for single mothers there has been a significant silence about women's well-being. While Foucault was strikingly silent on gendered relations in his reflections upon practices of caring for the self, his reflections appear to be particularly useful for feminist researchers. As elaborated in chapter one, the ancient concept of caring that Foucault investigated articulated that one must care for oneself first in order to care well for others.

When examining spaces of freedom and constraint opened up and closed down by personalized planning programs it is crucial to take note of the way that the governance of women's capacities is so often linked to the wellbeing of others. Ms Moylan's quote, which opened this chapter, reflects a dominant strategy for contesting welfare reforms. As described in chapter three the National Council for Single Mothers and their Children (NCSMC) critiqued Welfare to Work on the basis that it was 'anti-child.' Further as chapter five described some JN providers contested Welfare to Work because of its effects on children and thus focused on allowing mothers to work during school hours. In doing so, these JN providers were attempting to meet women's preferences (as they interpreted them) but at the same time they were expressing a less clear concern with mothers' needs and desires beyond their mothering role. Finally, as earlier sections of this chapter have described, some interviewees also contested Welfare to Work on these grounds. Yet not all

practices around welfare reforms are anchored to a child-first focus. As chapter five identified, some JN agencies developed their programs around practices of guidance that resonated with the ancient practices of guidance linked to the practice of caring for the self. Within this section I return to the concept of caring for the self to pull apart and examine elements of single mothers' own narratives and practices around capacities and capabilities.

Many single mothers I interviewed implicitly contested the idea that work requirements or the lack of them should be formulated solely on the grounds of children's wellbeing. As discussed in the conclusion to chapter three, all mothers explained within my interviews that they put their children's needs for food, shelter and medical care ahead of their own needs for leisure and rest. But there was a clear contrast between the majority of mothers who spoke of constant juggling or balancing, where at times their needs came first and at others those of their children did, and a small group of mothers who spoke of themselves as "being nothing," or "giving all to their children." As suggested above in the first section (on the retraction of assistance for training and education), interviewees felt that it was important that single mothers find the paid work they engage in personally satisfying and meaningful. In reference to their own situation, interviewees argued their participation in education or work was driven at least partly by their own needs. Further, many argued that if they were happy then they were better parents. Such a connection between caring for others and caring for the self differed from the connection that is made in Welfare to Work. Within Welfare to Work narratives, single mothers' needs and desires are made invisible and subordinate to the child's (hypothesized) need to be in a working family. In contrast, within many single mothers' narratives the self is not subordinated to the care of others, and as discussed in chapter five, some JN providers made similar arguments.

Marie's narrative regarding her decision to engage in paid work illustrates a more complex relationship between paid work, and her care of self and others. Marie explained that her decision to engage in employment was the result of multiple factors that included finances, her own future and her personal well-being. At the time of my first interview she was working part time from home organizing functions, as well as one afternoon a week at a restaurant. By 2006 she was working full-time and she continued to do so in 2007. I asked her at that interview "What would you say are the main reasons you are working and also the amount of work that you do?" and she explained:

> I couldn't not work, I would go crazy and I couldn't work on that pension anyway. So for me it is not really an option. I don't see not working as an option. I try doing what I do part-time and you just can't. All the good jobs are full time. Plus I need the money that you only get with full-time and I feel that I'm actually building my career as well, for the future, for myself. //Interviewer (Michelle): can you tell me a bit more about that when you say you have to work for yourself?//
> I guess there is many; it is for the mental challenge, the social team side of things, plus I absolutely love what I do. I just love it. And ... if I was just [at home] I would be so bored, and lonely and isolated and all of those things if I wasn't working. Not to mention broke (Marie, 2007).

In addition to linking their participation in paid work to their own needs, other interviewees also explicitly made the connection between engaging in paid work for the purposes of self-fulfilment and their role as a mother. Trish was working in multiple part-time academic positions when we first spoke and had one young child. By the following year she had taken on two larger part-time research positions, and in the final interview she had commenced a full-time research position. As an academic and researcher she had spent a long time completing her education and paid work played a very important role. Responding to my question "If you had to choose for yourself, in terms of what is a good way to bring up kids, do you have any particular views?" she explained:

> One thing I think that has become important to me and it is only because I've struggled with the fact of putting Rose in day-care is that I think it is really important for the parent to be happy, "you know" when I took that semester off and I was just basically at home Rose. I wasn't happy. I mean I love her to death but that is not the person that I am, and I found that when I went back to work I was so much happier and my relationship, with Rose improved, a lot and I think that is an important thing. I think parents need to also have their own life and do what makes them happy so if working makes them happy and they need that space from their child, I don't think there is anything wrong with day-care (Trish 2005).

Similarly, Ellie who had one young child and was working full-time by the time of the second interview argued "I would be bored out of my brain if I did nothing. I could not just sit at home, not study or do noting and you know do anything while my kids are at school. I'd just sit there and God knows what I would be doing." (Ellie, 2006). Participation in study or work also sometimes came up in the context of my questions about "what sort of things are for you involved in caring for yourself?" As Anne explained in 2006, "I don't care for myself. I do the basics that I have to. Now I'm starting to because I'm starting [study]. The

study is part of it I guess because it is helping my brain to develop and it keeps, it stops me from getting bored and it keeps my mind active." Within these narratives the interviewees argued that employment and study was important to them intellectually and socially.

Thus many interviewees - though certainly not all - asserted that their participation in paid work or study was personally valuable for them, aside from economic considerations. These narratives aligned with those of some of the JN providers who, as discussed in chapter five, argued that the right employment (not just any employment) may be beneficial for many women. On the topic of employment and study, many interviewees and some JN providers were (at least implicitly) contesting welfare reform narratives which held that they should obtain employment solely for the welfare of their children, or to relieve the 'tax-payer' of the burden of supporting them. Such an assertion also runs against dominant imaginaries of good mothers as giving up everything for their children.

At the same time, it was not the case that an ethic of caring for themselves strongly informed most interviewees' practices. Within the first and second interviews I asked single mothers what the phrase 'caring for oneself' meant to them, whether they did anything that they considered part of caring for themselves, and if they had plans to develop or increase these practices in the future. I categorized their responses into the following nine categories: *beauty related activities*, such as hair cuts, facials, and manicures, *using alternative therapies*, such as massage, yoga, and reki, *attending to physical health*, including exercise and eating well, *sleep and rest*, *consumption activities* such as shopping, *time with family and friends*, such as meals out with friends and visiting family, *using one's mind*, including reading and studying, *time-out activities*, including a glass of wine with oneself, watching movies and television, and finally *time to reflect*, including time to journal, write poems, and let one's mind wander. Interviewees reported spending little time caring for themselves but many described specific plans to take up new activities, such as exercise, in the coming year. However, when I asked interviewees to reflect back on these plans at the following interview for the most part they had not managed to increase the time they devoted to practices of self-care. In some cases they had commenced new routines incorporating self care but found that these routines were not sustainable. This inability to sustain these practices contrasted strongly with the way in which most interviewees managed to meet their work and study goals over the course of my interview study.

This inability to keep up practices of self-care is not surprising. Foucault has pointed

out the important role that practices of self-renunciation have played within western practices of the self, and feminists have shown how these ideas of self-renunciation have powerfully shaped ideas of good motherhood. Using a framework of 'adaptive' preferences and ideological smog, Sen has also gestured toward these issues. Interviewees' focus on obtaining the right employment for themselves and simultaneous inability to maintain routines of self-care suggests that within the present there is some space for mothers to focus on themselves, but only in so far as it contributes to their ability to be financially autonomous, and thus fits with the broader neoliberal definition of an autonomous and enterprising self.

Conclusion

Within the arena of organized politics – parliament, political parties and advocacy groups – Welfare to Work and personalized planning programs have largely been contested on the grounds of efficacy or child welfare. Yet, these are the very grounds on which Welfare to Work changes have been defended. Coalition politicians argued that previous policies have failed to stop the growth in 'welfare dependency' and have been ultimately bad for children, bequeathing them welfare dependent attitudes and dispositions. Points of contention are then ultimately empirical: does a mother at home or a mother in paid work result in better child outcomes, and will the work-first model of Welfare to Work be more effective in achieving outcomes than previous initiatives?

But as this chapter has illustrated, these organized contestations fail to take account of many aspects of single mothers' experiences. The desires of many single mothers to participate in paid work that is meaningful to them are largely ignored in favour of an emphasis on whether or not Welfare to Work will enable people to gain work that is well paid. While access to well paid work is certainly important, so too single mothers argue is the ability to choose work that is meaningful to them. Advocacy groups' and The Opposition's emphasis on barriers also ignores the dynamic difficulties faced by single mothers and the ways in which these are embedded within institutional practices and relations with others. Single mothers in my study who were engaged in high levels of paid work or study or both almost always had high levels of support from their family or their children's father. Current institutional supports, such as formal child care, often clash with the demands of paid work or study.

This chapter returned again to the Foucault and Sen theoretical matrix, as a source for understanding spaces of freedom and constraint. In this chapter I have emphasized how both thinkers conceptualize the resources needed to sustain freedom as relational and dynamic. This interpretation builds upon and extends my argument that Hellenistic practices of caring for the self were not individualistic. This chapter also highlights elements of Foucault's work that have been downplayed within the literature. Foucault made key contrasts between ancient practices and Christian and contemporary practices. Firstly, he contrasted ancient practices of constituting the self with contemporary and Christian practices focused on finding one's true self through the confessional. Secondly, he contrasted constitution of the self with Christian practices of self renunciation. Within commentaries on Foucault's later works, it is the distinction between finding one's true self and practices of creating oneself on the other that has received the greatest attention. But mothers' narratives highlight the importance of Foucault's distinction between practices of self renunciation and practices of self formation. As discussed in this chapter and throughout the thesis, historically good mothers have been strongly associated with practices of self renunciation, and this framework continues to underpin contemporary welfare reforms.

Mothers' narratives also highlight the limits of Sen and Foucault for understanding gendered relations within advanced neoliberalism. The problem is the ways in which some of their arguments are so easily re-appropriated by neoliberal discourse. Single mothers' narratives of their relationships and decisions around child care and other activities illustrate how their well-being is simultaneously connected to their child's well-being and to their ability to engage in non-child care related activities. For single mothers their ability to *be and do what they value* is dependent upon resources that support their well-being and those of their children. For example, their well-being is dependent upon access to child care that fits within contemporary realities of paid work and education, is affordable and caters to the full range of their children's needs. Child care that does not do these things simultaneously reduces the wellbeing of both children and mothers.

But this interdependence is not recognized within Sen's capabilities model in which individuals enter into relationships in order to increase their welfare (Lewis, Giullari 2005, Peter 2003). As Lewis and Giullari argue, this makes it hard to recognize that women's "agency is located in relationships of care" (Lewis, Giullari 2005). But Sen's omission is also

reflected within neoliberalism. As Foucault argues, neoliberalism "involves extending the economic model of supply and demand and of investment-costs-profit so as to make it a model of social relations and of existence itself, a form of relationship of the individual to himself, time, those around him, the group, and the family" (Foucault 2008, 242) . Developing this, Binkely argues that neoliberalism does promote relationality, but only in the form of strategic relations with others (Binkley 2011). Hellenistic practices, as Foucault describes them, also conceive of relationality in this strategic way. It is through relations with others that the individual develops his (or her) capabilities. In contrast single mothers' narratives highlight the need to bring in a consideration of relational interdependencies that cannot be understood through the framework of strategic relations.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The proliferation of personalized planning programs has radically transformed how single mothers are governed. I began this thesis by asking: what are the spaces of freedom and constraint produced by Australian personalized planning programs directed at single mothers? To answer this question I also pursued two secondary aims: 1) understand the different ways in which the relationship between single parents/mothers and income support has been problematized since the emergence of the post-war welfare state; and 2) explain why beginning in the late 1980s personalized planning programs were established as the dominant solution to the problematic of single parents on income support.

My starting proposition was that we can obtain a richer understanding of these spaces by drawing on the works of Amartya Sen and Michel Foucault. While recognizing the differences between their intellectual lineages, I have argued that a close study of their works reveals parallel concerns with creating conditions that allow individuals to develop particular capacities/functionings but do not subject them to the wills of others. For Foucault, public policies and institutions subject individuals to the wills of others through processes of discipline, normalization and governmentalities, while for Sen this occurs through more explicit processes whereby individuals are forced to choose particular functionings. My key argument was that Sen's reflections on *capabilities* bring to the neo-Foucauldian literature a reminder that economic resources play an important role in individuals' abilities to choose to be what they value. At the same time, the Foucauldian literature brings to the Senian social policy literature tools for understanding power as domination, power as governance, and the microphysics of power. This addresses Lewis and Giullari's critique of Sen's 'generative' conception of power, meaning Sen only addresses power asymmetries through terms such as capabilities, agency, empowerment and freedom. In place of Sen's problematic concept of *adaptive preferences* the Foucauldian literature illustrates that discourses produce the subjects and objects they govern.

While arguing that the Senian and Foucauldian literatures bring important things to each other, and together provide a rich theoretical matrix for examining personalized planning programs, I signalled at the commencement of the thesis that this matrix was potentially vulnerable to two critiques. The first is that it pays inadequate attention to gender and the second is that the concepts of capabilities and care of the self are ultimately too individualized to pose a systematic challenge to the normalizing elements of neoliberal

governance. While thinkers such as McNay (2009) and White (White, Hunt 2000) make abstract philosophical arguments that the concept of caring for the self cannot provide a systemic challenge, I argued that these assessments cannot be determined in the abstract. The degree to which Sen's and Foucault's concepts are useful is only evident through putting them to work to make sense of particular cases. Thus at the beginning of this research project it was an open question as to whether or not the concepts of 'caring for the self' or an 'ability to be and do what one values' could adequately capture and account for Australian single mothers' experiences in the first decade of the twenty first century.

It is important to note my emphasis on the location of this case within a particular space and time. A key theme of this thesis has been that it is important to anchor arguments about neoliberalism in specific places and periods. Key governmentality theorists such as Dean (1999) and Rose (2010) discuss Western countries in general such that their analyses seem to float outside specific geographies and times. In contrast, this thesis has attempted to follow those governmentality inspired theorists, such as Larner and Walters (2000, 2002, 2004), and Mitchel (2006) who ground their analyses of neoliberal projects in studies of specific social contexts and national histories.

Thus this thesis sought to locate personalized planning programs and the attempt to produce capacities/functionings within a specific space and time. Through my genealogy of income support for single parents/mothers I illustrated how personalized planning programs emerged as sensible solutions to the problems of single mothers, paid work and income support. We saw how these policy solutions grew out of Australian politicians' and policymakers' engagement with the work of international policy organizations, discourses on globalization, the growth in the population of single mothers receiving payments, and attempts to address Australian social imaginaries of motherhood and single mothers with any reforms. The genealogy illustrated that, because of several historical contingencies including a Labor government and a universal means tested system of income support, Australian personalized planning programs for single mothers were not initially twinned with work requirements as they were in Canada and the United States. When work requirements were introduced for single mothers with young children in 2005, this history shaped service providers' reactions, with only a few embracing the Government's 'worker first' model.

A key contribution of this thesis has been to bring two new dimensions into a study of contemporary neoliberal governmentalities: Foucault's reflections on the care of the self

and Sen's explicit consideration of economic resources. Consistent with other governmentality studies, this thesis used Foucault's work on technologies of the self, which provides a nexus between particular political rationalities and subjectivities, to illustrate the ways in which personalized planning programs normalize and discipline individuals. However, using Foucault's reflections upon practices of caring for the self I simultaneously examined the degree to which such programs are potentially more than simply disciplining and normalizing. Furthermore, Sen's work on capabilities was used to provide a re-occurring reminder that economic resources influence an individual's ability to be and do what they value. The thesis returned to these aspects of the theoretical matrix – Foucault's reflections upon practices of caring for the self, and Sen's emphasis on capabilities – in three key ways.

Firstly, the matrix was used to highlight the child centred focus of the Australian system of income support directed at widows/single mothers since the 1940s. While feminist theorists of the welfare state have long pointed out that women within the post-war welfare state have been provided with eligibility for payments due to their relation to others (as wives or mothers) Foucault's reflections upon practices of caring for the self and their distinction from Christian ethics enabled an elaboration of these themes. Specifically, it underscored that not only were women provided with income support in their role as wives or mothers, but welfare regulations also reinforced the link between good motherhood and practices of self-abdication. From the 1940s until the present, the duration of Australian government financial and employment assistance to widows and single mothers has for the most part been organized around governmental understandings of what was best for children.

Second, I returned to the elements of the practices of self-care which I drew out in chapter one as part of my examination of the technologies of the self utilized within personalized planning programs. Single mothers' participation in the JET program was significantly shaped by their own desires because it was voluntary, rejected 'work-first' principles and provided some economic assistance. While recognizing mothers' desires, JET also strove to produce a certain kind of gendered subject, in which single mothers were mothers first and engaged in part-time work in traditional feminine occupations. In contrast, participants' own desires played a very small role within PA. Clients were assigned a passive role and the primary function of the initiative was to assess single parents against set program norms. Because of the de-centered, networked nature of the EP program, it is more

difficult to make singular assessments of this initiative.

Thus the logic and structure of the EP program introduced new complexities and contingencies. Indeed, some agencies' micro practices diverged considerably from official program rationalities. While the government expounded a 'work-first' message, several agencies rejected this model and saw their parenting clients as 'mothers first'. Others were attempting to adopt new practices that took account of the needs and desires of parenting clients, but did not assume that these clients were necessarily mothers or workers first. Furthermore, the training material varied from agencies whose training emphasized adherence to set norms, to programs that provided clients with a diverse set of tools. Importantly, although some service providers tried to address what they regarded as problems with official rationalities, their ability to diverge was definitely constrained: agencies had to get their clients into employment in order to receive funding, and they did not have resources to invest in longer term spells of education or training, even if this was what their single mother clients wanted.

Thirdly, I used the theoretical matrix to understand the ways in which single mothers resisted personalized planning programs, including the grounds on which they anchored their claims. While single mothers framed their contestations in terms of their freedom to be and do what they value (*capabilities*), advocacy groups challenged welfare reforms on the grounds of inadequate attention to developing specific capacities or children's well-being. Advocacy group arguments that a work-first approach would be 'ineffective' remain well within the limits of neoliberal rationalities which emphasize the importance of financial autonomy. The advocacy groups' critiques are not targeted at the goals of Welfare to Work, but largely at the means it uses to achieve these goals.

The analysis in this thesis illustrates the possibilities and limits of using Sen and Foucault together to understand the intersections of neoliberal welfare state programs, care-work and paid work. Sen's and Foucault's works suggest that there should be public provision to support individuals' abilities to be and do what they value. But they also argue against forms of public provision which compel individuals to take up certain kinds of functionings (capacities). Together their works have enabled me to undertake a nuanced explication of the ways in which the Australian Government has historically provided, and continues to provide, widows and single mothers with economic assistance and the spaces of freedom and constraint this opens up.

At the same time this thesis has illustrated the importance of pursuing the strains of Foucault's thought that emphasize "collaborative world making" (Myers 2008). While practices of caring for the self are not solitary, Foucault's reflections often emphasize relations which are 'strategic'. This means that within an ethics of caring for the self one engages in relations with the guide, and with others, in order to create oneself. As discussed in chapter one, in interviews focused on contemporary issues, including gay-politics, Foucault emphasizes the world-building dimension of practices of the self over concerns with creating oneself. Foucault emphasizes the need to create new "shared modes of life" (Myers 2008, 141). This thesis has highlighted the need to emphasize the "world making" dimensions of practices of the self. I have highlighted single mothers who attempt in isolation to resist some of the features of welfare reform. At the same time, I have illustrated that many of the negative features of welfare reforms can only be adequately challenged and transformed through collective 'world making' activity. For example the lack of provision for long term study, including the restriction of JET childcare subsidies to 12 months, can only be remedied through legislative change.

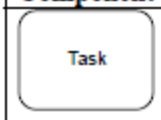
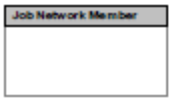
I have also shown the obstacles that single mothers face in pursuing collective challenges to welfare reforms. Aside from the severe lack of time available to most single mothers, a large number of single mothers do not consider themselves to be part of a wider social collective of single mothers. As illustrated by the statistics cited in the introduction, many women are only single mothers and/or receive PPS for a few years. This pattern was replicated in my study where half of my interviewees had left PPS within 24 months of my first interview. Of those who had left PPS, half had done so because they repartnered. The narratives presented in this thesis show how single mothers commonly anticipate that they will only remain on PPS for a short period of time. The nature of welfare reforms also poses challenges to those who seek to establish collective resistance against them. Welfare reform policies break up and individualize the single mother population through the individualized targeting of information and the 'grandfathering' of payment conditions. This approach makes it difficult for single mothers and the broader public to grasp the overall impact of the changes. Finally, the socially imagined hierarchy of single mothers strongly shapes the politics of welfare reforms. Within high rating/distribution tabloid media the single mother continues to be associated with sexual deviance and laziness. Many interviewees reinforce this discourse through distancing themselves from this stereotype rather than rejecting it.

While this thesis has documented many of the problems with contemporary personalized planning programs, a reoccurring theme is that it is neither possible nor desirable to return to the post-war welfare state. Given many of the punitive features of contemporary conditions, it is tempting to recall with fondness previous arrangements. This rose-coloured image of the post-war welfare state is very prevalent within the feminist welfare state literature. Australian commentators such as Blaxland (2009, 2010) argue that prior to 2002 single mothers were constructed as undertaking culturally valued carework, while Shaver argues the post-war Australian welfare state reflected an application of the Marshallian conception of social citizenship (2002). Against this nostalgic image this thesis has documented the 'dark side' of the post-war welfare state, especially its treatment of women, alongside an investigation of the problems with personalized planning programs. The post-war social system created hierarchies and exclusions that provided some citizens with relatively stable income and left others to fend for themselves. During this period it was also extremely difficult for mothers who did wish to participate in paid work to do so. Contemporary welfare reforms exert high 'costs of existence' for single mothers, but reverting to the post-war welfare state (or recreating it according to our selective historical imaginings) is not a positive step. Instead, single mothers' narratives suggest the need for *world making* orientated to providing single mothers with greater support to be and do what they value.

Recent contributions to the Senian capabilities literature including Lewis and Giullari (2005) and H. Dean (2005) attempt to answer the question: what are new ways of organizing public programs which would support individuals' quests to be and do what they value? This thesis has illustrated that the capabilities approach alone is an inadequate framework for understanding current policies and alternatives. Sen's capabilities approach misses many of the ways that liberal public policies operate, including the nexus between subjectivities and political rationalities. I have illustrated the strengths of an approach inspired by governmentality that also integrates a Senian emphasis on economic resources and public action, as a tool for examining existing programs. While this thesis has not systematically explored alternative ways of organizing public income support programs, the findings suggest the potential benefits of using the matrix developed here as the basis of world making activities orientated towards developing new concepts and practices of income support for single mothers.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Key of Symbols for Business Process Models

Component	Name	Description
	**Task**	An activity within a process. Tasks are discrete activities that cannot be divided into smaller actions. *Example: Activating a job seeker's record*
	**Start Event**	The start of a process.
	**End Event**	The end of a flow within a process.
	**Intermediate event**	Intermediate events occur between a start and end event. It will affect the flow of the process, but will not start or directly end the process.
	**Intermediate event**	An intermediate event that has a time related element.
	connection	A link between two elements. Connections show the chronological sequence of activities in a process.
	Message flow	A link between two or more processes in different organisations. Message flows are used to show the information flowing between processes from different organisations. *Example: Centrelink referral to Job Network Members.*
	**Decision**	A decision is required. The result of the decision can be only one of the options available. *Example: Did job seeker attend activity? Yes/No*
	**Concurrent decision**	Waits for all information flows and connections to arrive before the process can continue.
	**Concurrent decision**	Describes a single flow which leads to two or more outputs which will occur at the same time.
	**Pool**	A box representing an organisation. All components that lie within the pool are performed by that organisation.
	**Group**	Provides a visual way to group related elements.

Cited works

Ahmed, S., 2006. The Nonperformativity of Antiracism. *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism,* 7(1), 104-126.

Andrews, K., 2005. 'Welfare to Work - $389.7 Million to Help Parents into Work', Media Release, 10 May 2005. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government: DEWR, .

Australia. Dept. of Social Security, 1989. *Now you can go back to work without neglecting your most important job.* Canberra: Dept. of Social Security.

Australia. Senate., 2007. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard), 16 Aug,* 9.

Australia. Senate., 2005a. Community Affairs Legislation Committee, 22 November. *Senate Committee (Hansard),* .

Australia. Senate., 2005b. Parliamentary debates (Hansard), 9 Nov. 17.

Australia: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2008. *Welfare to Work Evaluation Report.* Canberra, Australia: Australian Government.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation, ABC News online Barnett to step down Feb 27, 2005 [Homepage of ABC Online], [Online]. Available: http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200502/s1312023.htm [17 Nov, 2010].

Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Insiders, TV program transcript, Broadcast: 23/10/2005, IR changes family-friendly, says Andrews 23 Oct 2005 [Homepage of Australian Broadcasting Corporation], [Online]. Available: http://www.abc.net.au/insiders/content/2005/s1488537.htm [1 March, 2006].

Australian Bureau of Statistics., 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, 2007 - One Parent Families . Available: http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/F4B15709EC89CB1ECA25732C002079B2?opendocument [Nov 17, 2010].

Australian Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1969. *Official yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia.* 55. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics.

Australian Council of Social Services., 2006. NA. Sydney, Australia: ACOSS.

Australian Government, What is Employment Preparation?, June [Homepage of Australian Government], [Online]. Available: http://www.workplace.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/9029ACAD-CF33-4D6E-87B7-7AB01F57A21E/0/JN_What_is_Employment_Preparation.pdf [Jan, 2010].

Australian Government, Budget 2002-03 Major Initiatives in the 2002-03 Budget [Homepage

of Australian Government], [Online]. Available: http://www.budget.gov.au/2002-03/budget_ministerial/OSW/html/osw-02.html#P96_6275 [March 1, 2010].

Australian Government. Australian National Audit Office., 2001. *Family and Community Services' Oversight of Centrelink's Assessment of New Claims for the Age Pension.* 35. Canberra, Australia: Australian National Audit Office.

Australian Government: Centrelink, Helping people move into work: a community information pack n.d. [Homepage of Centrelink], [Online]. Available: http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/publications/lw028.htm [July 2006, .

Australian Government: Centrelink, 2005a. Centrelink nurses a customer's dream: Western Australia, *Media Release,*. 30 March Canberra, Australia: .

Australian Government: Centrelink, 2005b. Customer turns customer service officer: Queensland Media Release, Tuesday, 25 January 2005. Canberra, Australia: Centrelink, .

Australian Government: Centrelink, 2003a. Centrelink's back to work help for Michelton mothers: Queensland Media Release Friday, 28 February 2003. 28 Feb 2003 Canberra, Australia: Centrelink, .

Australian Government: Centrelink, 2003b. From depression the only way is up: Victorian Media Release 18 Aug Canberra, Australia: Centrelink, .

Australian Government: Centrelink, 2003c. A little bit of belief goes a long way: Victorian Media Release. 21 Aug Canberra, Australia: Centrelink, .

Australian Government: Centrelink, 2003d. Taking a gamble on a gambler: Victorian Media Release Friday, 15 August 2003. Canberra, Australia: Centrelink, .

Australian Government: Centrelink, 2003e. Working with his people: Western Australia Media Release, Wednesday, 28 May 2003. Canberra, Australia: Centrelink, .

Australian Government: Centrelink., 2006. A guide to Australian Government payments: on behalf of the Department of Families and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Department of Education, Science and Training, and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - 20 March - 30 June 2006.

Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services, 2005a. Parenting and Employment Booklet.

Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services, 2005b. Parenting and Employment Booklet.

Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services, 2003. *Parents and Employment: A Guide to Support Your Workforce Participation.* Canberra: Australia: Department of Family and Community Services.

Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services, 1999. Some Common Questions about Lone parents answered. *In:* Healey J., ed, *Issues in Society: Single Parenthood.* 1st edn. Sydney: Spinney Press, pp. 6-13.

Australian Government: Department of Social Security, 1980a. *Characteristics of Sole Mothers Receiving State Assistance Subsidised under the States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act.* Research Paper 7. Canberra: Australia: Department of Social Security.

Australian Government: Department of Social Security, 1980b. *Research Questions on Income Security for Sole Parents.* Canberra: Australia: Department of Social Security.

Australian Government: DEWR., 2005. *Australians Working Together Report.* Canberra, Australia: Australian Government.

Australian Government: Employment and Workplace Relations, Disability Employment Network [Homepage of Employment and Workplace Relations], [Online]. Available: http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Individual/DisadvantagedJobseekers/DisabilityEmploymentNetwork/ [7 May, 2010].

Australian Government: FaHCSIA, 2009. *Income support customers: a statistical overview 2005*. No. 4. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian House of Representatives, 1989. Social Security and Veteran's affairs legislation amendment bill No. 3 1989 Second Reading. 24 Oct Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia., .

Australian House of Representatives, 1988a. Adjournment debate. 24 August Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia., .

Australian House of Representatives, 1988b. Mrs E.E. Darling (LILLEY, ALP, Government) Speech. 24 August Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia, .

Australian House of Representatives., Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 1988-89 Second Reading House of Representatives Hansard 28 August [Homepage of Parliament of Australia], [Online]. Available: http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2F1988-08-29%2F0051%22 [1 June, 2009].

Australian House of Representatives., 1942. Parliamentary debates (Hansard) : Senate and House of Representatives, Vol 171. 15 May Parliament of Australia.: Government Printer, .

Australian Senate, 2001. Community Affairs Legislation Committee: Consideration of Budget Estimates. 30 May Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia., .

Australian Senate, 1988. Social security legislation amendment bill. 13 Dec Canberra, Australia: Parliament of Australia, .

Baker, M., 1998. Poverty, ideology and employability: Canadian and Australian policies for

low-income mothers. *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 33(4), 355-378.

Baldock, C.V., 1992. Women, social welfare and state policy. United Kingdom: London University, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, .

Barrett, G. and Cobb-Clark, D., 2001. The Labour Market Plans of Parenting Payment Recipients: Information from a Randomised Social Experiment. *Australian Journal of Labour Economics,* 4(3), 192-205.

Barrett, G.F., 2002. The dynamics of participation in the sole parent pension. *Economic Record,* 78(240), 1-17.

Bassin, D., Honey, M. and Kaplan, M.M., 1996. *Representations of motherhood.* New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Prress.

Bates, B.R., 2006. Care of the Self and American Physicians' Place in the" War on Terror": A Foucauldian Reading of Senator Bill Frist, MD. *Journal of Medicine & Philosophy,* 31(4), 385.

Beck, U., 1992. *Risk society: towards a new modernity.* London ; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E., 2002. *Individualization : institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences.* London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Beeson, M. and Firth, A., 1998. Neoliberalism as a political rationality: Australian public policy since the 1980s. *Journal of Sociology,* 34(3), 215-31.

Bentham, J. and Bowring, J., 1843. *The Works of Jeremy Bentham.* 1843 edn. W. Tait.

Bernauer, J., 2005. Confessions of the soul: Foucault and theological culture. *Philosophy & Social Criticism,* 31(5-6), 557.

Besley, T., 2005. Foucault, truth telling and technologies of the self in schools. *Journal of Educational Enquiry,* 6(1), 76-89.

Beveridge, W., 1942. *Social insurance and allied services.* Cmd. 6404. London, UK: HMSO.

Binkley, S., 2011. Psychological Life as Enterprise: Neoliberal Transformations in the Government of Interiority. 27 March Banff Centre, Banff, Canada: The 11th Annual Meeting of the Foucault Circle, .

Binkley, S., 2009. The Work of Neoliberal Governmentality: Temporality and Ethical Substance in the Tale of Two Dads. *Foucault Studies,* 6, 60-78.

Blaxland, M., 2009. Everyday negotiations for care and autonomy in the world of welfare-to-work: The policy experience of Australian mothers, 2003-2006. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney., .

Blaxland, M., 2010. Mothers and mutual obligation: policy reforming the good mother. *In:* S. Goodwin and K. Huppatz, eds, *The Good Mother: Contemporary Motherhoods in Australia.* 1st edn. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney Press, pp. 131-152.

Bowden, G., 2008. Working at the limit: Indoor rowing, Foucault, and the agony of ecstasy. *In:* J. Defert, T. Tchir and D. Webb, eds, *Declensions of the self : a bestiary of modernity.* 1st edn. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 96-112.

Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, 2004. *The Seven Point Plan and Practice Outcome Indicators For The Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding in Community Health Services (CHS).* Vancouver, Canada: Breastfeeding Committee for Canada.

Brennan, D., 2007. Babies, Budgets, and Birthrates: Work/Family Policy in Australia 1996-2006. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society,* 14(1), 31-57.

Breunig, R., Cobb-Clark, D.A., Dunlop, Y. and Terrill, M., 2003. Assisting the Long-Term Unemployed: Results from a Randomized Trial. *Economic Record,* 79(244), 84-102.

Brich, C., 2008. The Groupe d'information sur les prisons: The voice of prisoners? Or Foucault's? *Foucault Studies,* 5(Jan), 26-47.

Brich, C., 2005. REVIEW Philippe Artières, Laurent Quéro & Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds.), Le Groupe d'information sur les prisons. Archives d'une lutte 1970-1972 (Paris: Éditions de l'IMEC, 2003). ISBN: 2908295571 Alain Jaubert, Michel Foucault, une journée particulière (Lyon: Ædelsa Éditions, 2004). Photographs by Élie Kagan. ISBN: 2915033056. *Foucault Studies,* 2(May), 165-168.

Brodie, J., 2010. Panel 1: Globalization and the underinvestment in families: globalization, Canadian Family Policy and the Omissions of Neo-Liberalism. *NCL Rev.,* 88, 1559-1881.

Brodie, J., 2007. The New Social "isms": Individualization and Social Policy Re-form in Canada. *In:* C. Howard, ed, Palgrave-McMillan., .

Butler, J., 1993. *Bodies that matter : on the discursive limits of "sex".* New York: Routledge.

Butler, J., 2004. Bodies and Power Revisited. *In:* D. Taylor and K. Vintges, eds, *Feminism and the final Foucault.* Chicago: Univ of Illinois Press, pp. 183-194.

Cai, L., Kalb, G., Tseng, Y.P. and Vu, H., 2008. The Effect of Financial Incentives on Labour Supply: Evidence for Lone Parents from Microsimulation and Quasi-Experimental Evaluation*. *Fiscal Studies,* 29(2), 285-325.

Campbell, M.L., Gregor, F., 2004. *Mapping social relations: A primer in doing institutional ethnography.* Rowman Altamira.

Caputo, J.D., 2000. *More radical hermeneutics: On not knowing who we are.* Bloomington: Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Carberry, F., Chan, K. and Heyworth, A., 1996. Sole Parent Pension and Parenting Allowance – a comparison. *Social Security Journal,* (December), 108-127.

Carney, T., 2007a. Traveling the 'Work-First' Road to Welfare Reform. *Just Policy-A Journal of Australian Social Policy,* 44, 12-22.

Carney, T., 2007b. Reforming Social Security: Improving Incentives and Capabilities. *Griffith Law Review,* 16(1), 1-26.

Carney, T., 2006. Welfare to Work: Or Work Discipline Revisited. *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 41(1), 27-48.

Cass, B., 1994. Citizenship, work, and welfare: The dilemma for Australian women. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society,* 1(1), 106-124.

Christian, B., 1994. An Angle of Seeing: Motherhood in Buchi Emecheta's Joys of Motherhood and Alice Walker's Meridian. *In:* E.N. Glenn, G. Chang and L.R. Forcey, eds, *Mothering, ideology, experience, and agency.* 1st edn. New York & London: Routledge, pp. 95-120.

Clarke, J., 2005. New Labour's citizens: activated, empowered, responsibilized, abandoned? *Critical Social Policy,* 25(4), 447-463.

Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives., 2005a. *Parliamentary debates (Hansard), Nov 30,* 20.

Commonwealth of Australia. House of Representatives., 2005b. Parliamentary debates (Hansard), November 30. 19.

Connolly, W.E., 1993. Beyond good and evil: the ethical sensibility of Michel Foucault. *Political Theory,* 21(3), 365-389.

Conway, A., 1987. Salvation in the streets of shame. *Sun Hearld,* , pp. 43.

Cortis, N. and Meagher, G., 2009. Women, work and welfare in the activation state: an agenda for Australian research. *Australian Bulletin of Labour,* 35(4), 629.

Courier Mail, 1998. Single-minded on single mothers. *Courier Mail,* .

Cowling, S., LaJeunesse, R., Mitchell, W. and Watts, M.J., 2006. Work Choices: the low productivity road to an underclass. *Australian Journal of Social Issues, The,* 41(2), 221.

Craig, L., Mullan, K. and Blaxland, M., 2010. Parenthood, policy and work-family time in Australia 1992-2006. *Work, Employment & Society,* 24(1), 27.

Crocker, S., 2005. Review: Charles Taylor. Modern Social Imaginaries.Duke University Press, 2004, 232 pp. *Canadian Journal of Sociology Online,* Jan-Feb.

Cruikshank, B., 1999. *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects.* Ithaca, NY:

Cornell University Press.

Cruikshank, B., 1996. Revolution within: self-government and self-esteem. *In:* A. Barry, T. Osborne and N. Rose, eds, Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, pp. 231–251.

Curtis, B., 1995. Taking the state back out: Rose and Miller on political power. *British Journal of Sociology,* , 575-589.

Daily Telegraph., 1998. One-child policy. *Daily Telegraph,* , pp. 15.

Daniels, D., 1995. *Social security payments 3: sole parents and widowed people, 1942 to 1995: Background Papers Social Policy Group.* No. 4. Canberra: Australia: Parliament of Australia.

Daprè, R., 2006. *A compendium of legislative changes in social security 1983–2000.* Occasional Paper No. 13. Canberra, Australia: Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Davidson, P., 2007a. Incentives and Capabilities, Public Policy, University of Melbourne, ed. In: *From Welfare to Social Investment Reimagining Social Policy for the Life Course,* 21 – 22 February, 2007 Public Policy, University of Melbourne http://www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/conference07/.

Davidson, P., 2007b. Incentives and capabilities in Australian welfare to work policy, SPRC, ed. In: *Australian Social Policy Conference,* 15-17 July SPRC http://www.sprc1.sprc.unsw.edu.au/ASPC2007/FullProgram2.asp.

Dean, H., Bonvin, J.M., Vielle, P. and Farvaque, N., 2005. Developing capabilities and rights in welfare-to-work policies. *European Societies,* 7(1), 3-26.

Dean, M., 1998. Neo-liberalism as a Counter-Enlightenment Cultural Critique. *In:* S. Hänninen, ed,
Displacement of Social Policies. SoPhi: University of Jyväskylä, pp. 198-226.

Dean, M., 1999. *Governmentality : power and rule in modern society.* London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Dean, M., 1998. Administering Asceticism: Re-working the Ethical Life of the Unemployed Citizen. *In:* M. Dean and B. Hindess, eds, *Governing Australia: Studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government.* Melbourne: Australia: Cambridge University Press, pp. 87-107.

Dean, M., 1995. Governing the unemployed self in an active society. *Economy and Society,* 24(4), 559-583.

Dean, M. and Hindess, B., 1998. *Governing Australia: Studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government.* Cambridge University Press.

Dean, M., 1999. *Governmentality : power and rule in modern society.* London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Dean, M., 1998. Administering Asceticism: Re-working the Ethical Life of the Unemployed Citizen. *In:* M. Dean and B. Hindess, eds, *Governing Australia: Studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government.* Melbourne: Australia: Cambridge University Press, pp. 87-107.

Dean, M., 1995a. Governing the unemployed self in an active society. *Economy and Society,* 24(4), 559-583.

Dean, M., 1995b. Governing the unemployed self in an active society. *Economy and Society,* 24(4), 559-583.

Deleuze, G., 1988. *Foucault.* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

Den Dulk, L., Peper, B., Černigoj Sadar, N., Lewis, S., Smithson, J. and Van Doorne-Huiskes, A., 2011. Work, Family, and Managerial Attitudes and Practices in the European Workplace: Comparing Dutch, British, and Slovenian Financial Sector Managers. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society,* 18(2), 300.

Dobrowolsky, A. and Jenson, J., 2004. Shifting Representations of Citizenship: Canadian Politics of" Women" and" Children". *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society,* 11(2), 154.

Dockery, A.M. and Stromback, T., 2004. An Evaluation of a Parenting Payment Intervention Program. *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 39(4), 431-443.

Dreze, J. and Sen, A.K., 1989. *Hunger and public action.* Oxford [England]: Clarendon Press.

Dumm, T.L., 1996. *The Politics of Freedom.* Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage.

Duncan, A. and Harris, M.N., 2002. Simulating the behavioural effects of welfare reforms among sole parents in Australia. *Economic Record,* 78(242), 264-276.

Eardley, T., 1997. *New Relations of Welfare in the Contracting State: The Marketisation of Services for the Unemployed in Australia.* SPRC Discussion Paper No. 79. University of New South Wales, Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre.

Eardley, T., 2003. Outsourcing Employment Services: What Have We Learned From The Job Network? *Centre for Applied Economic Research Conference on the Economic and Social Impacts of Outsourcing, 4-5 December 2003, University of New South Wales,* Centre for Applied Economic Research, University of New South Wales .

Edwards, A. and Magerey, S., 1995. *Women in a restructuring Australia: work and welfare.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Elden, S., 2005. The problem of confession: the productive failure of Foucault's History of Sexuality. *Journal for Cultural Research,* 9(1), 23-41.

Feher, M., 2009. Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital. *Public Culture,* 21(1), 21.

Fejes, A., 2008. To be one's own confessor: educational guidance and governmentality. *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 29(6), 653-664.

Flax, J., 2007. Soul Service: Foucault's" Care of the Self as Politics and Ethics. *In:* N.E. Brooks and J. Toth, eds, *The mourning after: attending the wake of postmodernism.* Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, pp. 79-98.

Flynn, T., 2005. Philosophy as a way of life: Foucault and Hadot. *Philosophy & Social Criticism,* 31(5-6), 609.

Foucault, M., 2010. The birth of biopolitics. *NEW edition of the BESTSELLING English Language textbook!,* , 71.

Foucault, M., 1977. Preface to Transgression. *In:* D.F. Bouchard, ed, *Language, Counter-Memory and Practices: selected essays and interviews.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 29-52.

Foucault, M., 2000. Interview with Michel Foucault. *In:* J. Faubion, ed, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. 3: Power.* 1st edn. New York, New York: New Press, .

Foucault, M., 2008. *The birth of biopolitics.* Hampshire, England & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M., 2007. *Security, territory, population : lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78.* Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M., 2005a. *The hermeneutics of the subject : lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82.* 1st edn. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M., 2005b. *The hermeneutics of the subject : lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82.* 1st edn. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M., 2005c. Introduction. *In:* M. Foucault, F. Gros, F. Ewald and A. Fontana, eds, *The hermeneutics of the subject : lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82.* 1st edn. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. xix-xxx.

Foucault, M., 2003a. Governmentality. *In:* P. Rabinow and N. Rose, eds, *The essential Foucault : selections from The essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984,* New York: New Press, pp. 229-245.

Foucault, M., 2003b. The Subject and Power. *In:* P. Rabinow and N. Rose, eds, *The essential Foucault : selections from The essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984,* 1st edn. New York: New Press, pp. 126-143.

Foucault, M., 2003c. What is critique? *In:* P. Rabinow and N. Rose, eds, *The essential Foucault : selections from The essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984.* 1st edn. New York: New Press, .

Foucault, M., 2001. *Fearless speech.* Cambridge, MA: Semiotext(e).

Foucault, M., 2000a. *Power.* New York: New Press.

Foucault, M., 2000b. Space Knowledge, and Power. *In:* .

Foucault, M., 1999. Space, Power and Knowledge. *In:* S. During, ed, *Cultural Studies Reader*. Second edn. New York, New York: Routledge, pp. 134-141.

Foucault, M., 1997a. The ethics of the concern for self as a practice of freedom. *In:* P. Rabinow, ed, *Ethics: Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984 volume 1*. Victoria, Australia: Penguin, pp. 281-301.

Foucault, M., 1997b. *Ethics: Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984 volume 1*. Victoria, Australia: Penguin.

Foucault, M., 1997c. Polemics, politics, and problematizations. *In:* P. Rabinow, ed, *Essential Works of Foucault, Volume 1, Ethics*. New York: New Press, pp. 111-119.

Foucault, M., 1997d. Preface to The History of Sexuality, Volume Two. *In:* P. Rabinow, ed, *Essential Works vol. 1: Ethics*. London: Penguin, pp. 200-204.

Foucault, M., 1997e. Self Writing. *In:* P. Rabinow, ed, *Essential Works of Foucault, Volume 1, Ethics*. 1st edn. Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books, pp. 207-223.

Foucault, M., 1997f. Subjectivity and Truth. *In:* S. Lotringer and L. Hochroth, eds, *The politics of truth*. 1st edn. New York, N.Y.: Semiotext(e), .

Foucault, M., ed, 1996. *Foucault live : (interviews, 1961-1984)*. New York: Semiotext(e).

Foucault, M., 1994. What is Enlightenment? *In:* P. Rabinow, ed, *Ethics - essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984 Volume 1*. Victoria: Australia: Penguin Books, pp. 304-319.

Foucault, M., 1991a. Insurance and Risk. *In:* M. Foucault, G. Burchell and C. Gordon, eds, *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*. University of Chicago Press, pp. 197-210.

Foucault, M., 1991b. Questions of Method. *In:* M. Foucault, G. Burchell and C. Gordon, eds, *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 87-104.

Foucault, M., 1990a. *History of Sexuality: an introduction, Volume 1*. New York: Random House.

Foucault, M., 1990b. *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage Book.

Foucault, M., 1988a. The Ethic of Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom: an interview with Michel Foucault January 20, 1984. *In:* Bernauer, J. and D. Rasmussen, ed, *The Final Foucault*. Cambridge, Massachussetts: MIT Press, pp. 1-20.

Foucault, M., 1988b. Power and Sex. *In:* M. Foucault and L.D. Kritzman, eds, *Politics, philosophy, culture : interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*. New York: Routledge, pp. 110-124.

Foucault, M., 1988c. Social Security. *In:* M. Foucault and L.D. Kritzman, eds, *Politics, philosophy, culture : interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*. New York: Routledge, pp. 110-124.

Foucault, M., 1988d. Social Security. *In: Politics, philosophy, culture : interviews and other writings, 1977-1984*. New York: Routledge, pp. 159–177.

Foucault, M., 1988e. Technologies of the self. *In:* L.H. Martin, H. Gutman and P.H. Hutton, eds, *Technologies of the self : a seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, pp. 16-49.

Foucault, M., 1987a. About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self. *In:* J.R. Carrette, ed, *Religion and Culture*. Manchester University Press, pp. 158-181.

Foucault, M., 1987b. About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self. *In:* J.R. Carrette, ed, *Religion and Culture*. Manchester University Press, pp. 158-181.

Foucault, M., 1977. *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*. Auckland: Penguin Book.

Foxhall, L., 1998. Pandora Unbound: A Feminist Critique of Foucault's History of Sexuality. *In:* D.H.J. Larmour, P.A. Miller and C. Platter, eds, *Rethinking sexuality: Foucault and classical antiquity*. 1st edn. New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, pp. 122-137.

Gardiner, J., 1999. Putting Sole Mothers in Their Place: The Normalising Discourse of Social Policy. *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 34(1), 43-58.

Glenn, E.N., 1994. Social Constructions of Mothering: a thematic overview. *In:* E.N. Glenn, G. Chang and L.R. Forcey, eds, *Mothering: Ideology, experience, and agency*. New York & London: Routledge, pp. 1-32.

Goldsworthy, K., 2005. A Current Affair on Channel Nine/Today Tonight on Channel Seven. *Monthly: Austrlaian Politics, Society & Culture,* .

Goodin, R.E., 2001. False principles of welfare reform. *Australian Journal of Social Issues,* 36(3), 189-206.

Government of Alberta, 2004. *Alberta Works, For Expected to Work and Not Expected to Work Clients, Your Guide*. Alberta: Government of Alberta.

Gregory R.G. & Klug, E., 2004. A Picture Book Primer: Welfare Dependency and the Dynamics of Female Lone Parent Spells, Canadian Employment Research Forum, ed. In: *Helping People Out of Low Income - What Strategies Do Analysis of Patterns of Low Income Suggest?,* June 3-4, 2004 Canadian Employment Research Forum http://www.cerforum.org/conferences/200406/program.html.

Gregory, R.G., Klug, E. and Thapa, P.J., 2008. Cut-offs, Knock-ons and Welfare Payment Taper Changes: An Evaluation of the July 2000 Tax and Welfare Changes for Lone Mothers*. *Economic Record,* 84(266), 291-309.

Gros, F., 2005. Le souci de soi chez Michel Foucault. *Philosophy & Social Criticism,* 31(5-6), 697-708.

Hamilton, L.A., The political philosophy of needs [Homepage of North American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy], [Online]. Available: http://www.political-theory.org/books/reviews/hamilton.html [1 March, 2010].

Hammond, C. and Australia Dept. of Social Security., 1980. A review of the characteristics of sole parents assisted under the Social Services Act.. Canberra, Australia: Dept. of Social Security, Research and Statistics Branch, .

Harding, A., Vu, Q.N., Percival, R. and Beer, G., 2005a. *The distributional impact of the proposed welfare-to-work reforms upon sole parents.* Canberra, Australia: Report to the National Foundation for Australian Women.

Harding, A., Vu, Q.N., Percival, R. and Beer, G., 2005b. Welfare-to-work reforms: impact on sole parents. *Agenda,* 12(3), 195-210.

Harrer, S., 2007. The Theme of Subjectivity in Foucault's Lecture Series' Herméneutique du Sujet'. *Foucault Studies,* (2), 75.

Harris, P., 2001. From relief to mutual obligation: welfare rationalities and unemployment in 20th-century Australia. *Journal of Sociology,* 37(1), 5.

Harris. P., 2002. Welfare Rewritten: Change and Interlay in Social and Economic Accounts. *Journal of social policy,* 31(03), 377-398.

Henman, P., 2004a. Targeted! Population Segmentation, Electronic Surveillance and Governing the Unemployed in Australia. *International Sociology,* 19(2), 173-191.

Henman, P., 2004b. Targeted!: Population Segmentation, Electronic Surveillance and Governing the Unemployed in Australia. *International Sociology,* 19(2), 173.

Henman, P. and Adler, M., 2003. Information Technology and the Governance of Social Security. *Critical Social Policy,* 23(2), 139.

Henningham, N., 2001. 'Hats off, gentlemen, to our Australian Mothers!'Representations of white femininity in north Queensland in the early twentieth century. *Australian Historical Studies,* 32(117), 311-321.

Heyes, C.J., 2007a. Cosmetic surgery and the televisual makeover. *Feminist Media Studies,* 7(1), 55-32-71.

Heyes, C.J., 2007b. *Self transformations: Foucault, ethics, and normalized bodies.* USA: Oxford University Press.

Heyes, C.J., 2006a. Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers. *Hypatia,* 21(2), 126-149.

Heyes, C.J., 2006b. Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers. *Hypatia,* 21(2), 126-149.

Hill, E., 2006. Howard's 'Choice': The ideology and politics of work and family policy 1996–2006. *Australian Review of Public Affairs,* February.

Hindess, B., 2006. Bringing states back in. *Political Studies Review,* 4, 115-123.

Hindess, B., 1998. Knowledge and Political Reason. *Critical review of international social and political philosophy,* 1(2), 63-84.

Hobson, B., 2011. The Agency Gap in Work–Life Balance: Applying Sen's Capabilities Framework Within European Contexts. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society,* 18(2), 147.

Hobson, B. and Fahlén, S., 2009. Competing Scenarios for European Fathers: Applying Sen's Capabilities and Agency Framework to Work—Family Balance. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 624(1), 214.

Hobson, B., Fahlén, S. and Takács, J., 2011. Agency and Capabilities to Achieve a Work–Life Balance: A Comparison of Sweden and Hungary. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society,* 18(2), 168.

Honig, B., 2010.
Ismene's Forced Choice: Sacrifice and Sorority in Sophocles' *Antigone*. 29 Jan Victoria, BC, Canada: Victoria Colloquium on Political, Social and Legal Theory, .

Honig, B., 2006. Another Cosmopolitanism? Law and Politics in the New Europe. *In:* R. Post, ed, *Another Cosmopolitanism. The Berkeley Tanner Lectures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, pp. 102-127.

Howard, C. and Fenger, M., 2004. The New Governance of Australian Welfare: Street-level Contingencies. *In:* P. Henman, ed, *Administering Welfare Reform: International Transformations in Welfare Governance*. 1st edn. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 137-160.

Hoy, D.C., 2004. *Critical Resistance: From Poststructuralism to Post-Critique*. MIT Press.

Hull, K., 2005. *Debates,* Wednesday, 30 November 2005, House of Representatives. Canberra, Australia: .

Humpage, L., 2007. Models of Disability, Work and Welfare in Australia. *Social Policy & Administration,* 41(3), 215-231.

Humpage, L., 2006. Transitioning From Welfare-To-Work: Perspectives From The 'Coalface', G. Marston, C. McDonald and P. Henman, eds. In: *Road to Where? The politics and practice of welfare to work,* 17-8 July 2006 Social Policy Unit, School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences, The University of Queensland. www.uq.edu.au/swahs/welfaretowork.

Humphries, M.L., 1997. Michel Foucault on Writing and the Self in the Meditations of

Marcus Aurelius and Confessions of St. Augustine. *Arethusa,* 30(1), 125-138.

Jay, M., 2006. The Limits of Limit-Experience: Bataille and Foucault. *Constellations,* 2(2), 155-174.

Jefford, L., Groessler, R., Stratford-Smith. L. and Williams. H., 1998. Support one, two or none? *Courier Mail,* Letters.

Jordan, A., 1991. *Two years of the Jobs, Education and Training Program for Sole Parents: response, activity and outcomes.* Melbourne: Australia: Department of Social Security.

Kalil, A., 2009. Joblessness, Family Relations and Children's Development. *Family Matters,* 83, 15-15-22.

Kanjuo Mrčela, A. and Černigoj Sadar, N., 2011. Social Policies Related to Parenthood and Capabilities of Slovenian Parents. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society,* 18(2), 199.

Keen, S., 1999. Associations in Australian history: their contribution to social capital. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 29(4), 639-659.

Kelso, J., 2006. Representing mothers. *Hecate: an interdisciplinary journal of women's liberation,* 32(2), 4-18.

Kingston, M., 2009. Subversive Friendships: Foucault on Homosexuality and Social Experimentation. *Foucault Studies,* (7), 7-17.

Klesse, C., 2007. How to be a Happy Homosexual?!" Non-monogamy and Governmentality in Relationship Manuals for Gay Men in the 1980s and 1990s. *Sociological Review,* 55(3), 571-591.

Kremer, M., 2007. *How welfare states care: culture, gender and parenting in Europe.* Amsterdam University Press.

Larner, W., 2002. Globalization, governmentality and expertise: creating a call centre labour force. *Review of International Political Economy,* 9(4), 650-674.

Larner, W. and Walters, W., 2004. *Global governmentality: governing international spaces.* Routledge.

Larner, W. and Walters, W., 2000. Privatisation, governance and identity: the United Kingdom and New Zealand compared. *Policy & Politics,* 28(3), 361-377.

Lemke, T., 2003. Comment on Nancy Fraser: rereading Foucault in the shadow of globalization. *Constellations,* 10(2), 172-179.

Lemke, T., 2000. Foucault, governmentality and critique. http://www.andosciasociology.net/: .

Lewis, J., 1992. Gender and the development of welfare regimes. *Journal of European social policy,* 2(3), 159.

Lewis, J. and Giullari, S., 2005. The adult worker model family, gender equality and care: the search for new policy principles and the possibilities and problems of a capabilities approach. *Economy and Society,* 34(1), 76-104.

Li, T., 2007a. Practices of assemblage and community forest management. *Economy and Society,* 36(2), 263-293.

Li, T., 2007b. *Will to Improve : Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics*. Durham, NC, USA: Duke University Press.

Lippert, R.K., 2005. *Sanctuary, sovereignty, sacrifice : Canadian sanctuary incidents, power, and law*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Lister, R., 2006. Children (but not women) first: New Labour, child welfare and gender. *Critical Social Policy,* 26(2), 315.

LoPo, F., 1987. Letter to the editor: Sole parent myth. *Sydney Morning Herald,* Letters to the Editor, pp. 8-8.

Luxon, N., 2008. Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault. *Political Theory,* 36(3), 377.

Luxon, N., 2005. 'The Impossible Professions': Freud and Foucault on doctors, educators, and ethical subjectivity. San Diego: University of California, .

Luxon, N., 2004. Truthfulness, risk, and trust in the late lectures of Michel Foucault. *Inquiry,* 47(5), 464-489.

Mackenzie, C. and Stoljar, N., eds, 2000. *Relational autonomy: feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

Maddox, M., 2005. *God under Howard: The rise of the religious right in Australia*. 1st edn. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Maher, J.M., 2005. A mother by trade: Australian women reflecting mothering as activity, not identity. *Australian Feminist Studies,* 20(46), 17-29.

Maher, J.M., 2004. Skills, not attributes: Rethinking mothering as work. *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering,* 6(2), 7-16.

Markula, P., 2004. " Tuning Into Oneself:" Foucault's Technologies of the Self and Mindful Fitness. *Sociology of Sport Journal,* 21(3), 302-321.

McClure, P., 2000. *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society: The Interim Report of the Reference Report on Welfare Reform*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government: Department of

Family and Community Services.

McDonald, C. and Marston, G., 2005. Workfare as welfare: governing unemployment in the advanced liberal state. *Critical Social Policy,* 25(3), 374.

McDonald, C., Marston, G. and Buckley, A., 2003. Risk Technology in Australia: The Role of the Job Seeker Classification Instrument in Employment Services. *Critical Social Policy,* 23(4), 498-525.

McDonald, J. and Spindler, Z.A., 1988. Benefit-induced female sole parenthood in Australia, 1973-85. *Australian Economic Papers,* 27(50), 1-19.

McDonald, C., Marston, G. and Buckley, A., 2003. Risk Technology in Australia: The Role of the Job Seeker Classification Instrument in Employment Services. *Critical Social Policy,* 23(4), 498-525.

McGushin, E., 2005. Foucault and the problem of the subject. *Philosophy and Social Criticism,* 31(5/6), 623.

McKeen, W., 2006. Diminishing the concept of social policy: The shifting conceptual ground of social policy debate in Canada. *Critical Social Policy,* 26(4), 865.

McNay, L., 2009. Self as Enterprise: Dilemmas of Control and Resistance in Foucault's The Birth of Biopolitics. *Theory, Culture & Society,* 26(6), 55.

McNay, L., 1999. Gender, Habitus and the Field: Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity. *Theory, Culture & Society,* 16(1), 95-117.

McNay, L., 1992. *Feminism and Foucault.* Cambridge: Cambridge: Polity Press.

McWhorter, L., 1999. *Bodies and pleasures: Foucault and the politics of sexual normalization.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mead, L.M., 1997. *The new paternalism: Supervisory approaches to poverty.* 1st edn. Washington, DC: Brookings Inst Press.

Milchman, A. and Rosenberg, A., 2007. The aesthetic and ascetic dimensions of an ethics of self-fashioning: Nietzsche and Foucault. *Parrhesia,* 2, 44-65.

Milchman, A., 2009. Timothy Rayner, Foucault's Heidegger: Philosophy and Transformative Experience (New York: Continuum, 2007), ISBN 978-0-8264-9486-3. *Foucault Studies,* 6, 79-82.

Miller, P.A., 2007. The Art of Self-Fashioning, or Foucault on Plato and Derrida. *Foucault Studies,* 2, 54-74.

Mitchell, K., 2006. Neoliberal governmentality in the European Union: education, training, and technologies of citizenship. *Environment and planning D: society and space,* 24(3), 389-407.

Mollor, B. and Taylor, J. Bonham, B. Howlett, S., 1986. Hatred Of Dole Cheats Centres On New Scapegoat. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* , pp. 12-12.

Murphy, M.X., 1998. Failure of parents benefits. *Courier Mail,* Letters.

Murray, S., 2007. Care and the Self: Biotechnology, Reproduction, and the Good Life. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine,* 2(6),.

Murtagh, M.J. and Hepworth, J., 2003. Feminist ethics and menopause: autonomy and decision-making in primary medical care. *Social science & medicine,* 56(8), 1643-1652.

Murtagh, M.J., 2008. A funny thing happened on the way to the journal: a commentary on Foucault's ethics and Stuart Murray's "Care of the self". *Philosophy, ethics, and humanities in medicine,* 3(2),.

Myers, E., 2008. Resisting Foucauldian Ethics: Associative Politics and the Limits of the Care of the Self. *Contemporary Political Theory,* 7(2), 125-146.

NCSMC., [Homepage of National Council Single Mothers and Her Children], [Online]. Available: http://www.ncsmc.org.au/ [March/01, 2010].

Newman, J., 1999. *Discussion Paper. The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century.* Canberra, Australia: Australian Government:FaCS.

NSW Government: DoCS, 2006. *DoCS Policy on Child Neglect.* Sydney, Australia: NSW Government.

Nussbaum, M.C., 2003. Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice. *Feminist Economics,* 9(2-3), 33-59.

OECD., 1988. The Future of Social Protection. Paris, France: OECD, .

O'Malley, P., Weir, L. and Shearing, C., 1997. Governmentality, criticism, politics. *Economy and Society,* 26(4), 501-517.

Parnell, S., 1998. Police chief backs GP's attack on single mums. *Courier Mail,* , pp. 146.

Pearce, V., 2005. Parents on Low Income Study – factors that promote self-reliance, SPRC, ed. In: *Australian Social Policy Conference, Looking forward, looking back,* SPRC, University of New South Wales http://www.sprc1.sprc.unsw.edu.au/aspc2005/Downloads.asp.

Pech, J. and McCoull, F., 2000. Transgenerational welfare dependence: myths and realities *Australian Social Policy,* .

Pech, J. and McCoull, F., 1998. 'Intergenerational poverty and welfare dependence: is there an Australian problem?', *Changing families, challenging future, 6th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference* .

Penman, R., 2006. Psychosocial factors and intergenerational transmission of welfare dependency: a review of the literature.

Peter, F., 2003. Gender and the Foundations of Social Choice: The Role of Situated Agency. *Feminist Economics,* 9(2-3), 13-32.

Peters, M.A., 2003. Truth-telling as an Educational Practice of the Self: Foucault, Parrhesia and the ethics of subjectivity. *Oxford review of education,* 29(2), 207-223.

Povinelli, E.A., 2006. *The empire of love: toward a theory of intimacy, genealogy, and carnality*. Duke Univ Press.

Prozorov, S., 2007. *Foucault, freedom and sovereignty*. Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Rabinow, P., 2003. *Anthropos today: Reflections on modern equipment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Raymond, J., 1987. Social Security Review. Bringing Up Children Alone: Policies for Sole Parents. Australian Government: Canberra, Australia: AGPS, .

Read, J., 2009. A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity. *Foucault Studies,* 6, 25-36.

Reference Group on Welfare Reform, 2000a. *Participation support for a more equitable society: Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services.

Reference Group on Welfare Reform, 2000b. *Participation support for a more equitable society: the interim report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government: Department of Family and Community Services.

Richardson, S., 1988. Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill 1988 Social Security and Veteran's Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill 1988. Australia: .

Richlin, A., 1998a. Foucault's History of Sexuality: A Useful Theory for Women? *In:* D.H.J. Larmour, P.A. Miller and C. Platter, eds, *Rethinking sexuality: Foucault and classical antiquity*. 1st edn. New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, pp. 138-170.

Richlin, A., 1998b. Foucault's History: useful for women. *In:* D. Larmour, P.A. Miller and C. Platter, eds, *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and classical antiquity*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 138-170.

Robeyns, I., 2006. The Capability Approach in Practice. *Journal of Political Philosophy,* 14(3), 351-376.

Rorty, R., 1992. Moral Identity and Private Autonomy. *In:* T.J. Armstrong, ed, *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*. 1st edn. New York, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, .

Rose, N., 1992. Governing the enterprising self. *In:* P. Heelas and P. Morris, eds, *The values of enterprise culture: the moral debate.* London: Routledge, pp. 141-114.

Rose, N. and Miller, P., 2010. Political power beyond the state: problematics of government. *British Journal of Sociology,* 61(s1), 271-303.

Rose, N., O'Malley, P. and Valverde, M., 2006. Governmentality. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science,* 2, 83-104.

Rose, N., 1999a. Inventiveness in politics. *Economy and Society,* 28(3), 467-493.

Rose, N., 1999b. *Powers of freedom : reframing political thought.* Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N., 1990. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self.* London: Routledge.

Rose, N.S., 1999. *Powers of freedom : reframing political thought.* Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N.S., 1996. *Inventing our selves : psychology, power, and personhood.* Cambridge, England ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Saunders, M., 1998. Teen mothers bear their own burden. *The Australian,* , pp. 13-13.

Scheper-Hughes, N., 1993. *Death without weeping: The violence of everyday life in Brazil.* 1st edn. Berkley & Los Angles, California: University of California Press.

Schram, S., 2002. Praxis for the poor. New York: New York University Press, .

Sen, A., 2009. *The idea of justice.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sen, A., 2000. *Development as freedom.* New York: Anchor Books.

Sen, A., 1985. Well-being, agency and freedom: the Dewey lectures 1984. *The Journal of Philosophy,* 82(4), 169-221.

Sen, A., Agarwal, B., Humphries, J. and Robeyns, I., 2003. Continuing the conversation. *Feminist Economics,* 9(2-3), 319-332.

Sharpe, M., 2007. 'Critique' as Technology of the Self. *Foucault Studies,* 2, 97.

Shaver, S., 2002. Australian Welfare Reform: From Citizenship to Supervision. *Social Policy and Administration,* 36(4), 331-345.

Shaver, S. and Bradshaw, J., 1995. The Recognition of Wifely Labour by Welfare States. *Social Policy & Administration,* 29(1), 10-25.

Shields, R., 2010. "The Virtual and Anticipatory Politics: Implications for Critique".

Department of Political Science, University of Victoria, 8 April, .

Simons, J., 1996. Foucault`s mother. *In:* S.J. Hekman, ed, *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault.* 1st edn. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Univ Press, pp. 179-210.

Starr, P., 1987. The Sociology of Official Statistics. *In:* W. Alonso and P. Starr, eds, *The politics of Numbers.* 1st edn. New York, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 7-60.

Stokes, G., 2004. The 'Australian settlement' and Australian political thought. *Australian Journal of Political Science,* 39(1), 5-22.

Stokes, J., 1998a. Family Council of Queensland. *Courier Mail,* Letters.

Stokes, J., 1998b. Social tragedy of single mums. *Courier Mail,* Letters.

Sunday Telegraph, 1998. Cut payments - GP. *Sunday Telegraph,* , pp. 20.

Sutherland, P. and Anforth, A., 2005. *Social security and family assistance law.* 2nd Edition edn. Sydney, NSW: Federation Press.

Swain, S., 2007. Writing the history of women and welfare. *Australian Feminist Studies,* 22(52), 43-47.

Sydney Morning Herald, 1986a. Single mother (of 7) answers pension critics. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* , pp. 5.

Sydney Morning Herald, 1986b. Witness the birth of a new breed children of despair. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* , pp. 13-13.

Sydney Morning Herald, 1973. Govt Helping Hand for Solo Mothers. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* News and Features, pp. 16.

Sydney Morning Herald, 1969. Widows Look to the Future. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* , pp. 12.

Taylor, C., 2009. Pornographic Confessions? Sex Work and Scientia Sexualis in Foucault and Linda Williams. *Foucault Studies,* (7), 18-44.

Taylor, C., 2008. *The culture of confession from Augustine to Foucault: a genealogy of the 'confessing animal'.* New York & London: Routledge.

Taylor, D. and Vintges, K., 2004. *Feminism and the final Foucault.* 1st edn. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Taylor, P., 2008. Sucked in. *The Australian,* The Nation.

The Social Research Centre, 2004. *Personal Adviser Evaluation: Better Assessment at Risk Customer Group- Qualitative Evaluation- Final.* Melbourne, Australia: The Social Research Group.

Tillman, K.H. and Nam, C.B., 2008. Family Structure Outcomes of Alternative Family Definitions. *Population Research and Policy Review,* 27(3), 367-384.

Tobias, S., 2005. Foucault on Freedom and Capabilities. *Theory, Culture & Society,* 22(4), 65-85.

Toshack, M., 1972. Back to business. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* News and Features, pp. 3.

Tseng, Y.P., Vu, H. and Wilkins, R., 2008. Dynamic Properties of Income Support Receipt in Australia. *Australian Economic Review,* 41(1), 32-55.

Twomey, C., 1997. 'Without natural protectors': Responses to wife desertion in gold-rush Victoria. *Australian Historical Studies,* 27(108), 22-46.

Ure, M.V., 2007. Senecan Moods: Foucault and Nietzsche on the Art of the Self. *Foucault Studies,* (4), 19-52.

Valverde, M., 1998. *Diseases of the Will: Alcohol and the Dilemmas of Freedom.* 1st edn. Cambridge University Press.

Valverde, M. and White-Mair, K., 2001. 'One day at a time'and other slogans for everyday life: the ethical practices of alcoholics anonymous. *Sociology,* 33(02), 393-410.

Vanstone, S.A., 2002. Personal Advisers start today: more help for the most vulnerable. Australia: .

Veyne, P., Porter, C. and Davidson, A.I., 1993. The final Foucault and his ethics. *Critical inquiry,* 20(1), 1-9.

Veyne, P., 1997. *In:* A.I. Davidson, ed, *Foucault and his interlocutors.* 1st edn. University of Chicago Press Chicago, pp. 225-233.

Walters, W. and Haahr, J.H., 2005. *Governing Europe: discourse, governmentality and European integration.* New York: Routledge.

Walters, W., 2006. 'The end of the passing past': towards polytemporal policy studies. *In:* G. Marston and C. McDonald, eds, *Analysing Social policy: a governmental approach.* UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 167-186.

Walters, W., 2000. *Unemployment and government: genealogies of the social.* Cambridge, UK ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Wathen, J., 1987. What's worry the female voters. *Sun Herald,* , pp. 146.

Wells, A., 1998. State Regulation for a Moral Economy: Peter Macarthy and the Meaning of the Harvester Judgment. *Journal of Industrial Relations,* 40(3), 371.

White, M. and Hunt, A., 2000. Citizenship: Care of the Self, Character and Personality.

Citizenship Studies, 4(2), 93-116.

Williams, G., 1987a. No support for the supporters. *Sydney Morning Herald,* News and Features, pp. 19-19.

Williams, G., 1987b. It's a myth girls have babies to get pension, says Howe. *The Sydney Morning Herald,* News and Features, pp. 3.

Wolin, R., 1994. Foucault's Aesthetic Decisionism. *In:* B.(.). Smart, ed, *Michel Foucault: Critical Assessments: vol. 3*. 1st edn. London: Routledge, .

Wool, Z.H., 2007. Operationalizing Iraqi freedom: Governmentality, neo-liberalism and new public management in the war in Iraq. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy,* 27(11-12), 460-468.

Yeatman, A., 2002a. The new contractualism and individualized personhood. *Journal of Sociology,* 38(1), 69.

Yeatman, A., 2002b. The new contractualism and individualized personhood. *Journal of Sociology,* 38(1), 69–74.

Yeend, P., Welfare Review, E-Brief: Online Only issued September 2000 [Homepage of Parliament of Australia Parliamentary Library], [Online]. Available: http://www.aph.gov.au/LIBRARY/INTGUIdE/SP/welfarebrief.htm [02/15, 2008].

Žižek, S., 2009. *First as tragedy, then as farce*. London ; New York: Verso.