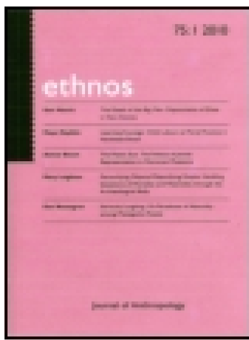

Ethnos

Journal of Anthropology

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ISSN: 0014-1844 (Print) 1469-588X (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/retn20

Financialised Welfare and Its Vulnerabilities: Advice, Consumer Credit, and Church-Based Charity in the UK

Ryan Davey

To cite this article: Ryan Davey (2020): Financialised Welfare and Its Vulnerabilities: Advice, Consumer Credit, and Church-Based Charity in the UK, Ethnos, DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2019.1687545

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2019.1687545

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Published online: 23 Feb 2020.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 170

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=retn20

ETHNOS
https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2019.1687545

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

OPEN ACCESS
Check for updates

Financialised Welfare and Its Vulnerabilities: Advice, Consumer Credit, and Church-Based Charity in the UK

Ryan Davey

Department of Anthropology, LSE, London, UK

ABSTRACT
Debt advice, as a neoliberal variant of social welfare in the UK, highlights the introduction and repercussions of approaches to welfare that encourage, and/or rely on, financial speculation. Since the 1990s, senior managers in the debt advice sector have anticipated funding cuts by advocating co-operation with the financial industry, implying a financialised concept of social welfare that valorises the redistribution of opportunities to speculate, rather than that of wealth. Yet following cuts, 'front-line' debt advisers complain they are unable to provide the required level of care and compassion, leading to an increase in church-based, volunteer-run advice, aimed at the poorest and most vulnerable. Rather than some pre-determined political modality, the ethical concepts of welfare that caught on, and the moral qualities consequently ascribed to its beneficiaries, emerged at the interface of managers' assessments of the viability of particular funding models with the political-economic conditions in which those models were implemented.

KEYWORDS Welfare; debt; advice; financialisation; neoliberalism

Introduction

'Beacon Advice doesn't deliver money advice any more'. I was talking to Matthew, the project manager of Beacon Advice, a money advice charity in Newtown, in the summer of 2013.[1] He explained: 'Things are so different now that it's becoming unethical. Personally, I don't see myself staying there, because it's incompatible with my beliefs'. In early 2011, the UK government had threatened to axe all its funding for debt advice as part of its austerity measures. But this funding cut never materialised. Instead, in 2012, the government announced the creation of a new commissioning body, the national Money Advice Service, which was funded by the financial industry. The Money Advice Service tasked itself with increasing efficiency in the debt advice sector. Beacon Advice, which was funded this way, had been subject to a sudden

CONTACT Ryan Davey ryan.davey@bristol.ac.uk

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

sixty per cent hike in caseload targets – the number of client cases its funder required it to administer each month.

I asked Matthew how Beacon Advice had met the extra sixty per cent. He said: 'Well that's the thing: you can't. Something's got to give'. He told me he had 'shared some of the burden' by going to a homelessness charity to find new clients. This had helped Beacon Advice to meet the higher targets. However, because the higher targets required him to give advice in a faster, 'more mechanised' way, he felt he could not address the deeper and more complex problems of the homeless people he met there. For Matthew, this compromised the quality of the service so much that it no longer fit his definition of 'money advice' at all. He said: 'It's why I've considered leaving. Money advice is fundamentally changing'. Returning to Newtown in 2016, I learned that Matthew had indeed left Beacon Advice, along with the administrator and all but one of the advisers. He was earning a living from a training and consultancy business he had set up, while working one day a week at a church-based, volunteer-staffed money advice charity, called Shine-a-Light, overseeing its expansion from its home in a Baptist church to a new, unpaid debt advice post in a local foodbank, run by the Methodist Mission.

In many ways, this scenario shows the on-the-ground reality of austerity measures, which further hack away at the welfare state. But while characterising recent changes to the organisation of social welfare primarily as *loss* may suffice as a normative assessment (one I support), it falls short insofar as we are left none the wiser about how the prevailing cultural conceptions of social welfare have changed. This paper therefore asks: what cultural understandings of social welfare prevail in the UK today? And what are their practical repercussions? Following this special issue's call to pluralise welfare, which I understand as an ethical activity of governance concerned with the distribution of goods as a societal practice of care, it examines the introduction of what I describe as 'financialised' approaches to welfare in the UK – in other words, forms of welfare that encourage, and/or rely on, financial speculation.[2]

I show that a market-oriented discourse around debt advice that emerged in the 1990s features its own peculiar concept of social welfare that involves *a speculative principle of redistribution*: it prioritises the redistribution through society of opportunities to borrow and speculate, rather than the redistribution of wealth, income, property or resources in the present. My central argument is that this concept of welfare was not imposed by some pre-determined political modality. Instead, as I show, the governmental and managerial logics about funding debt advice that have caught on, the concept of welfare that emanates from them, and the moral qualities consequently ascribed to debt advice clients, have been determined at the interface of managers' assessments of the viability of particular funding models with the political-economic conditions in which those models were implemented.

Debt advice is the focus of a significant and growing body of research (Kempson 1995; Goriely 1996; James 2014; Kirwan 2016; Kirwan 2018). However, so far its significance as a neoliberal form of welfare is not well understood. Challenging received wisdom about 'the consequences of neoliberal reforms to welfare', Read and Thelen (2007: 4) have shown that cutbacks, implemented on the basis of the belief that welfare discourages people from working and hinders economic growth, have too often been understood in terms of a one-dimensional 'state withdrawal' narrative that masks the complexity and variability of reforms. The comparative study of

welfare should instead treat state-provided welfare, holistically, as existing within a variety of institutionalised and non-institutionalised practices of care (ibid.).

Building on this, recent research has attempted to capture ethnographically the avowed 'good' of neoliberal welfare programmes (however problematic this good might be). This follows a broader trend in the anthropology of liberal governance: reconceptualising, for instance, financial 'de-regulation' as a mere re-location of governance (Riles 2011); austerity policy as an ethical valorisation of state debt repayment (Bear 2015); and neoliberalism generally as employing a micro-economic approach to meeting public needs (Collier 2011). On welfare, Hyatt argued that 1980s and 1990s social programmes in the USA 'encourage[d] the poor to be self-managing and entrepreneurial and to rely on themselves … rather than on government assistance' (2001: 202). Muehlebach, writing on the rise of volunteerism in neoliberal Italy, argues that 'the supposedly dystopic neoliberal order is in fact increasingly dependent on … new forms of utopia' (2012: 19).

Despite this, however, it has become generally accepted that neoliberal reforms to state welfare forego a concern with redistribution – whether in terms of the erosion of a twentieth-century ethos of 'long-term … distributional reciprocity' (Muehlebach 2012: viii), or the waning of a sense of redistribution being a public good (Bear 2015; see also Hyatt 2001: 227). While these arguments are well taken, their ethnographic impulse to understand neoliberal governance in its own terms can be taken further. As Ferguson has shown, a global surge in apparently neoliberal welfare schemes of direct cash transfers features a new 'politics of distribution' (2015: 10), concerning 'how resources should be distributed, who is entitled to receive them, and why' (ibid., 24). Taking debt advice as a variant of welfare reveals that neoliberal governance in Britain does not lack an impulse for redistribution, but in fact promulgates a deeply flawed, yet nonetheless ethical, notion of welfare that promotes the distribution through society of opportunities to borrow and speculate.[3]

In contrast to the classic liberal precept that *removing* state welfare (conceived as disincentives to work) will unleash entrepreneurialism (Hyatt 2001), here, the notion of welfare at stake is that *putting in place* opportunities to speculate will serve the interests of individual and collective prosperity.[4] Hence while neoliberal cutbacks to welfare have been based 'on the liberal idea of the autonomous individual, for whom dependency is perceived as essentially negative' (Read & Thelen 2007: 4), debt advice shows that the discursive constitution of this 'autonomous' individual depends upon their political-economic emplacement within networks of financial accumulation.

This indicates a complex relation between moral expectations about welfare and the economic conditions in which welfare is provided. In exploring this relation, I show that *the moral goods of neoliberal welfare emerge in response to assessments of the viability of certain models for resourcing particular acts of assistance in specific political-economic conditions*. I draw on recent research into moral economies – especially those that reinforce current patterns of wealth accumulation (Neveling 2015; Palomera and Vetta 2016), where moral economy and hegemony intersect. By focusing on how debt advisers' moral expectations inform their response to changing political-economic conditions, and are in turn shaped by them, this article makes two complementary

points. First, characterisations of the beneficiaries of welfare, which generally have a moral dimension, are somewhat dependent on the resources available to assist them and on where and how those resources are derived. And, second, prevailing approaches to the funding and delivery of welfare services gain their prevalence, not as the result of any pre-determined political modality, but instead as a result of the welfare managers' assessments about the viability of those approaches amid the contingent political-economic conditions in which they are implemented.

It is in this way that, as Muehlebach (2012) argues, an ostensibly non-market morality, based on care and compassion, may support the thing it opposes. With state-funded debt advice now almost entirely reliant on the financial industry for its funding, growing numbers of debt advisers consider it is no longer an arena for exercising care and compassion towards those with the greatest financial difficulties. An overtly moral approach towards helping 'the poor, vulnerable and needy' has arisen in church-based advice, which distinguishes itself from a mainstream, state-funded advice sector, but in so doing reinforces the latter's founding principle that statutory advice serves the needs of those citizens whose debt problems can be solved in a manner that is, at least in principle, compatible with the commercial interests of the financial industry. Church-based advice assisting those deemed incapable of realising the opportunities that financial markets offer signals their exclusion from state welfare's notional 'public', along with an ascription of social inferiority.

The concepts of social welfare I study arise within processes of governmental reasoning about how debt advice ought to be provided, to whom, and with what resources. These processes include not only large-scale policy debates and managerial decisions, but also the deliberations of individual debt advisers. Hence this paper tacks back and forth between different scales. It draws on participant-observation and interviews and documentary research at several debt advice charities in England and at meetings among senior-managerial and policy-level staff in the debt advice sector, conducted between 2012 and 2017.

Background: Voluntary-Sector Debt Advice as Social Welfare

The UK's voluntary sector – made up of charities and other not-for-profit organisations – has long played a prominent role in the provision of social welfare.[5] In nineteenth-century Britain, responsibility for the provision of social welfare was assumed by many organisational forms besides the state – churches, charities, mutuals, friendly societies, co-operatives and commercial enterprises (Taylor 2004). While, in the mid-twentieth century, social welfare was brought under the aegis of the state, since the late 1970s, the delivery of publicly funded social welfare was increasingly delegated (or delegated *back*) to the voluntary sector. This shift was inaugurated by the Wolfenden Report 1978, 'The Future of Voluntary Organisations', which recommended 'a "welfare pluralism" in which the state would continue to provide funding, but the voluntary sector would provide the services' (Taylor 2004: 132).[6] This arrangement for social welfare provision steadily gained ground, reaching its peak under New Labour, with unprecedented levels of state funding.[7] From then onwards, voluntary-

sector organisations have increasingly been encouraged to employ entrepreneurial methods of revenue-generation (or 'income diversification'). A range of commercial organisations and social enterprises subsequently emerged as providers of welfare, to form what is called 'the third sector' – comprising organisations thought to 'unite the best of both worlds: [market] efficiency with public interest' (Alexander 2010).[8] This marketizing process has more recently been accelerated by the Coalition (2010) and Conservative (2015) governments' swingeing austerity cuts.

Debt advice, for its part, assists people, generally on low incomes, with their participation in credit markets and their emplacement within regular streams of mandatory payments. London's Toynbee Hall provided 'money clinics' at the end of the nineteenth century (David Hawkes, AdviceUK, interview), while early-nineteenth-century debt relief charities gave relief to imprisoned debtors – most famously the Society for the Discharge and Relief of Persons Imprisoned for Small Debts (Finn 2003: 161). Besides these historical precursors, debt advice first emerged in its contemporary guise, as a 'systematic framework for dealing with debt problems' (David Hawkes, interview), in the early 1970s, with a charity called Birmingham Settlement. Its leader, John Blamire, published the first handbook on 'Debt Counselling' in 1975. From the mid-1980s onwards, the debt advice sector expanded, partly due to the 'credit revolution' of the 1980s, though partly also due to a rise in non-financial debts, such as rent arrears and debts owed to local authorities (see James, this volume). New debt advice posts were created in existing organisations, such as Citizens Advice Bureaux, and some new organisations were set up specifically.

From the mid-1980s until the mid-1990s, the vast majority of voluntary-sector organisations providing debt advice received funding from their local authority (David Hawkes, interview), consistent with the Wolfenden model just mentioned. Local authorities continued to provide a substantial proportion of debt advice funding, and state funding was augmented in 1995 with Legal Aid being channelled towards the provision of debt advice, and again in 2006 with the establishment of the 'Financial Inclusion Fund' – all until the recent period of government austerity. However, alongside government funding cuts, what is equally crucial to the story of how free debt advice has sourced its funds is the practice, beginning in the early 1990s, and only a few years after the first paid debt advice posts appeared, of obtaining funds from the credit industry (Davey 2017).

Financialising Social Welfare

A number of debates and tensions have arisen within the debt advice sector about whether relations with creditors should be adversarial or co-operative, and about the rights and wrongs of receiving funding from the financial industry. These debates manifest a conflict, I would suggest, between two contradictory concepts of social welfare: a broadly-speaking socialist one and a broadly-speaking neoliberal one. By charting how the latter has come to prevail, this section of the article describes a contemporary hegemony according to which debt advice, as a form of social welfare, is compatible with financialised accumulation.

Speaking of a more adversarial past in the early days of debt advice, the advice managers I interviewed criticised an 'old-fashioned' left-wing position that saw creditors' interests as fundamentally opposed to clients' interests. This reportedly outdated position had, it was said, led advisers to adopt antagonistic relations with creditors in their efforts to assist their clients. It rested on the idea that financial corporations' relations with their debtors were extractive or exploitative (or worse) at heart. Accordingly, social welfare could only happen *in spite of* the financial industry. For instance, Nick Pearson, a veteran of both free-to-client and fee-charging debt advice, told me: 'There was a degree of Trotskyite entryist tactics in the Money Advisers Association, in the same way that Militant took over the Labour Party at around the same time'. Indicating the level of antagonism at play, he was referring to an attempted take-over of the UK's left-of-centre Labour Party in the 1980s by a group called Militant Tendency, which led the UK's resistance to the Poll Tax and, when it later split from Labour, became the Socialist Party. He said that when debt advisers were first invited to speak at a meeting of the Council of Mortgage Lenders, the speaker 'put in a woeful, embarrassing performance … because there was no sense that he was trying to work with these guys'.

We can read into Nick's recollection a (since disavowed) socialist notion of welfare, which sees creditors' interests as fundamentally opposed to clients'. Nick told me that on leaving university in the 1980s, debt advice appealed to him as a way to enact his anti-capitalist politics while providing practical assistance to people who were struggling financially. However, he gradually found that it was 'more beneficial to clients' for advisers, like him, to be 'less black-and-white' and 'incremental, not absolutist'. For example, rather than arguing that bailiffs per se should be banned, he said that more could be achieved by seeking to place controls on the way that bailiffs carried out their work.

In contrast to this socialist understanding of social welfare, he and other advice managers today avow a more 'modernising' position. This holds that the interests of debtors can be brought into alignment with the interests of the retail financial industry. Hence co-operation and harmony became the ideal kind of relation between debt advisers and creditors. The belief that relations between debtors and creditors should be harmonious is exemplified by the Money Advice Liaison Group. The group (known as 'MALG') was established in 1987 as a forum for dialogue and collaboration between the debt advice sector and the consumer credit industry. Its meetings were attended by a variety of representatives: some from creditor trade associations, like the British Bankers Association;[9] others from not-for-profit debt advice organisations, such as Advice UK, and their profit-making equivalents, such as PayPlan; and still others from government departments and regulators, including the Financial Conduct Authority.

Discussions at MALG revolved around the concept of 'the client's best interests'. This was the nominal touchstone for the actions not only of debt advisers but also of creditors – the idiom through which they reasoned about their respective duties of care towards debtors, and so established their common ground. At a MALG meeting I attended in 2016, representatives from both the advice and lending sectors discussed upcoming pensions reforms. These reforms included 'auto-enrolling' workers into

pension schemes and giving them the option to draw down on their pensions before the time of their retirement. An advice sector representative said the reforms created a dilemma for advisers, between advising people to pay money into a savings plan for benefits in the future, or to use that money today to alleviate 'really pressing debt problems'. The adviser added: 'What is in the client's best interests in all of this?' The second speaker worked for a lending company:

> What do you do [as a lender] if a consumer comes to you and says they want to draw down on this pay pot, to pay off some of their debts? The challenge is to make sure debt collection practices are absolutely fair.

The facilitator said: 'This is one area where creditors and advisers, who are often at loggerheads, are actually on the same page'.

In instances such as this, MALG members espoused a norm for harmony in relations between the advice sector and the credit industry – what they generally described as 'working *with*' one another. Yet this kind of harmony was seldom taken for granted. Anthony Sharp was the chair of MALG from its founding until stepping down in 2016. I interviewed him in February 2016 shortly before he stepped down from the role. He told me then that a well-known consumer rights spokesperson had once promised to 'bully the creditors'. He elaborated: 'That phrase ["bullying"] to MALG is lethal. The whole point of MALG is to work *with* creditors and *with* the debt advice centres. You try to bring them in to see the common sense'. Hence, for the sake of co-operation at MALG, moments of hostility had to be kept in check.

Despite increased collaboration, the norm for harmony between advisers and creditors is not completely dominant. As James writes (this issue), a great deal of criticism exists among debt advisers of unscrupulous practice by lenders and debt collectors. Indicating that this discrepancy might be a matter of tensions within advice organisations, one of my interviewees,

Meg van Rooyen, policy manager at the Money Advice Trust, said that while all the policy-level creditor representatives whom she meets at national forums 'are very co-operative and helpful', she wondered whether front-line advisers would say that *their* relations with creditors, such as debt collection agencies or bailiffs, had routinely become more co-operative. She added that debt advice cases often have an element of unhelpful behaviour by a creditor, but that front-line advisers 'lack the time, funding and resources to challenge it'.

Still, those advocating harmony held antagonism to be a thing of the past. When I interviewed him in 2016, the then-chair of MALG described those hostile to creditors as 'the old-style advisers'. Several other senior staff I interviewed narrated journeys from youthful rebelliousness to adult maturity, and from old-fashioned left-wing ideologies to a supposedly post-ideological, non-partisan interest in doing what benefits the client. They framed progress in debt advice as a matter of establishing harmony between advisers and creditors. This echoes New Labour's 'Third Way', which emphasised effectiveness over partisan ideologies. It is consistent with a broader narrative of modernisation within the sector. It is typical for such narratives, in the context of 'Third Way' politics, to frame 'the demands of the people who are threatened by

neoliberal globalisation as archaic, as impediments to the modernisation of society' because 'to "modernise" means to adapt to neoliberal globalisation' (Laclau & Mouffe 2013).

Claims that clients' interests are best served by collaboration between advisers and creditors imply that creditors' and debtors' interests are basically aligned. Such claims suggest that access to consumer credit is itself a kind of social welfare – a way in which care is provided to others in society. Speaking more widely than the debt advice sector alone, there are two distinct senses in which credit has been advocated as a medium of welfare in the UK. First, access to consumer credit markets (and, notionally through these, to property markets) is promoted as a means by which the masses might prosper. This can be seen in a distinction made by advisers at Beacon Advice between 'credit for investment' (e.g. a car for work) and 'credit for consumption' (e.g. Christmas presents). The expansion of these markets is also considered to generate collective prosperity. As Langley (2015) observes, the proper functioning of global financial markets is indelibly linked, in the contemporary political imagination, to the welfare of society:

> The [Anglo-American] governance of the [financial] crisis … was a matter of restarting, and keeping in motion, the vital and turbulent flows of global finance, because of the opportunities they apparently afford *for the wealth and well-being of society*. … What was to be secured was not merely the markets, the banks, and the financing of the productive economy … but the continuation of three decades or so of … the expanded and widespread availability of mortgage loans and consumer credit' (Langley 2015: 10; emphasis added).

Second, access to credit has also been advocated as a solution to the precarity generated by contemporary production and accumulation. For instance, *The Economist* said in 2007: '[R]ising instability of incomes is not necessarily a bad thing. … Short-term fluctuations could be smoothed out by borrowing and saving [making] temporary income instability easier to deal with' (quoted in Standing 2009: 100). In this sense, credit and debt now constitute a key part of the 'safety net' that the mid-century UK welfare state once provided (see Montgomerie 2013).

In this financialised vision of welfare, wealth redistribution is absent (see Bear 2015). But more precisely, this concept of social welfare valorises the redistribution through society of opportunities to borrow and speculate, rather than the redistribution of wealth, income, property or resources in the present. It thus involves a *speculative* principle of redistribution. When social welfare is framed in this way, the risks of dispossession and the ongoing processes of economic extraction that take place through consumer credit–debt relations are often glossed over. Yet these are precisely the problems that many debt advisers consider it their job to address.

There appears, then, a contradiction between the debt advice sector's mission to help those ill-served by current economic arrangements and its tendency to accept the various marketising reforms described above. Advisers often critique policies that impact on debtors collectively (Kirwan 2018). Yet the promotion at MALG of 'win-win solutions' implies a belief that liberal financial governance benefits everyone.[10] This apparent contradiction unravels on noting that UK policy-making circles generally

avoid commentary on the normal distributional functions of our economic system. One senior adviser told me: 'What we're unsuccessful in doing is [addressing] questions about distribution. And yet with financialisation, we are dealing with a change in the way that distribution happens and widening inequality. That seems to be taboo in the policy discussions, even around poverty' (Davey 2017: 11).

Through all this, the commercial interests of the financial industry have become central to British policy and bureaucracy. One could compare this to state capture (Pradhan & World Bank 2000), although without the element of corruption. As I will show, the eventual hegemony of the financialised concept of social welfare, premised upon a consensus that debt advice serves creditors' and debtors' interests simultaneously, seems (alongside other factors) to have had two unintended consequences: first, a rise in funding models that many advisers feel stops them from exercising compassion and care to those with the greatest need; and, second, the growth of a non-state, mainly faith-based, volunteer-driven sub-sector of debt advice whose *raison d'être* is to provide it.

Funding from the Financial Industry

The increase in cordial relations between managers in the debt advice sector and the credit industry, as exemplified by MALG, proceeded in tandem with a growth (and increasing variety) of revenue-generating practices that saw money flow from creditors to free debt advice organisations. Amid actual or anticipated reductions in public funding from general taxation, three distinct models of revenue-generation have emerged since the early 1990s. They include the 'fair share contributions' model, where each creditor pays the advice provider for each repayment they receive (around ten per cent); partnerships with creditors;[11] and a statutory levy on financial service providers, said to work on the principle 'polluter pays' (Davey 2017). Known as the Bank Levy, this replaced general taxation as the funding stream for free public debt advice in the UK upon its creation in 2012, when other advice services were receiving funding cuts. It led to the creation of a new public commissioning body, the Money Advice Service (since superseded, in 2019, by the Money and Pensions Service).

These funding models are generally premised upon a perception of shared interests between the advice organisation and financial industry, the same basis on which dialogue takes place at MALG. This 'introduction of market approaches to welfare' (Taylor 2004: 122) in the debt advice world has effected a 'mixed economy of welfare', which first emerged twenty years prior to austerity, though was greatly accelerated by it.[12] It has led to the transformation of a once-clear-cut voluntary *sector* into an indeterminate 'tension field', suspended between commerce, community and state (Evers & Laville 2004: 15). The recent Bank Levy, which formalised the financial industry's subsidisation of debt advice, entrenches this tension field at a national level.

Tensions on the 'Front Line'

When the main stream of public funding for debt advice was transferred to the Money Advice Service in 2012, along with the creation of the Bank Levy, its effects were

considerable. This can be seen through the experiences of debt advisers at Beacon Advice, the organisation featured in the introduction to this paper. The Money Advice Service had aimed to increase the 'efficiency' of the services it funded in order to satisfy 'unmet need', including absorbing the effects of Legal Aid cuts, yet with no overall increase in funding.[13] When this transfer took place at Beacon Advice, caseload targets rose by sixty per cent. In August 2012, I overheard the administrator and the two debt advisers discuss their uncertainties about having jobs the next year. One of the advisers, Chris, later explained that if Beacon Advice failed to meet its caseload targets, then its funding would end: 'That's why we're all in the position of having to look for jobs'.

The hike in targets was met with friction, tension, and adaptation. One adviser, Nick, tended to remain quiet throughout the day and to immerse himself in his work, occasionally talking to the administrator, who remarked on Nick's quiet industriousness: 'He panics'. While Nick had become stressed, his colleague Chris, in contrast, admitted to using a degree of 'artistic licence' and 'playing the numbers game', in order to bump up his caseload statistics. His methods included conducting appointments by telephone, rather than face-to-face at clients' homes; counting as 'full cases' short phone conversations where a client declined the offer of an appointment, as long he had given them a piece of advice; and increasingly preferring to advise his clients to apply for a form of insolvency for people on low incomes known as Debt Relief Orders (DROs), because they were quicker to administer and were broadly suitable for most of his clients (see James, this volume).

In turn, relations between the front-line advisers and their manager became more antagonistic. Chris's artistic license was met with concern from his manager, who said the service was becoming a 'DRO factory', in the sense that Chris was providing a 'one-size-fits-all' service (in the words of his manager), rather than tailoring the advice he gave to the needs of each individual client. The other adviser, Nick, was sceptical about the manager's proposed efficiency improvements. He told me:

> Vanessa's told us we have to take our laptops with us to clients' homes for all of our appointments from now on. It's supposed to cut out the 'duplication' of writing case notes during the appointment, then typing them up when we get back to the office. But it's just not possible. When we're in clients' homes, we're sat on a sofa, so we'd have to balance the laptop on the arm of the sofa. Then we've got clients handing piles of letters to us, and we're trying to draw up a financial statement. And then the case management software is online so we have to have a dongle plugged in. It's just not workable.

Chris concurred: 'She doesn't know what she's talking about'. After explaining his reservations to the manager in vain, Nick refused to comply and was called in for a 'chat', prompting Chris to mimic: 'Oh, what shall I do today? Shall I persecute Chris? No, he's a gobshite. Oh I know, I'll persecute Nick instead'. The drive for efficiency generated a pronounced antagonism between the junior workers and the managers. It is possible, then, that the claimed harmonisation of once-antagonistic relations between the debt advice sector and the credit industry has, as the earlier quote from Meg van Rooyen indicated (interview), led to different perspectives between junior advice workers and their managers. At Beacon Advice, and perhaps elsewhere, this reached

the level of outright antagonism between frontline advice staff and their managers – hence not eliminating but merely shifting the 'old' antagonisms between advisers and creditors.

More broadly across the advice sector, the Money Advice Service's time in charge of commissioning state-funded debt advice – premised on funding obtained on the expectation that debt advice can serve debtors' and creditors' interests at once – received widespread criticism from advisers. A London-based debt adviser I interviewed in 2016 commented on the impact that the shift to Money Advice Service funding from the Bank Levy, funnelled through a regional commissioning body, had had at his organisation:

> [This] is a really well-known, popular advice service. Recently, everyone was put on four days [a week], and a housing adviser and an admin worker, who'd been there from the start, were made redundant. They [the advice centre] just can't say 'no' to [the regional commissioning body]. I've got a colleague who is working as a debt adviser under on a Money Advice Service-funded contract and she needs three months off – it's making her ill. She's trying to do everything now, for less money, in four days. Now, other people will handle it very differently, but she's conscientious, and because of that … Ah, it's sad, it really is. *These* are the first people who had to go. It's those that don't care so much who tend to stay.

This adviser's assessment of the impact of Money Advice Service funding echoes the criticisms made by the adviser Matthew, from Beacon Advice, in the introduction to this article. Matthew emphasised the fact that the 'efficiencies' required by the Money Advice Service were making debt advice practices 'unethical'. The London-based adviser, likewise, argued that the caseload requirements and cutbacks in resources made it intolerable to do debt advice insofar as you cared about it. Like Nick at Beacon Advice, the London-based adviser's colleague had experienced stress as a result of conscientiously trying to meet the increased demands of her job. In this respect, according to Matthew and the quote above, Money Advice Service funding was pushing out those who whose motivations for doing debt advice included conscientiousness, compassion and care. In each case, the adviser interpreted changes in funding conditions through the lens of a moral framework of expectations about what debt advice, as a form of welfare, should be doing. Their expectation that debt advice should include the exercise of care came into conflict with the principle that debt advice can serve creditor and debtor interests at once.

'Reaching Out to the Poor, the Needy, the Lost': The Re-emergence of Paternalistic Charity

Running in parallel with the reforms described above, a new sub-sector (loosely conceived) has emerged in the debt advice world: organisations where advice is delivered primarily by unpaid volunteers, associated with, and housed in, a local Christian church. David Hawkes from Advice UK, the umbrella organisation for independent advice charities, told me in 2016 that the biggest growth among Advice UK's membership recently had been from this type of organisation. This superficially traditional-seeming style of charity – reliant on charitable donations (rather than state funding

or commercial contributions), community-based rather than professional or corporate, and staffed by volunteers rather than paid employees – is one of the debt advice sector's latest innovations.

It would be inaccurate to say that its rise has straightforwardly been caused by the recent wave of austerity cuts or the Coalition Government's promotion of 'the Big Society'. For starters, the church-based sub-sector has been in existence, and slowly growing, since the turn of the millennium, thus predating austerity by a decade. Church-based critiques of austerity, for instance by Archbishop Justin Welby, have entered the public sphere, signalling the re-emergence of churches and other faiths as key constituents of public and political life (Dinham 2009). Nonetheless, the rise of funding from the financial industry, and the perceived deficit of compassion, conscientiousness and care it has engendered, are factors in the growing prominence of church-based debt advice.

When Matthew quit his job at Beacon Advice, following the changes wrought by the Money Advice Service, he continued to work at another debt advice service called Shine-a-Light Advice Group. Shine-a-Light is based in an office at Newtown Baptist Church, a large, granite-stone church near the city centre. Its appointments are conducted on-site, in prayer rooms within the church building, three days a week. While Matthew is paid for one of the days he works there, the five other advisers are unpaid volunteers, all members of either Newtown Baptist Church or the non-denominational evangelical City Church. These churches also sponsor its relatively modest running costs. Within Newtown Baptist Church, Shine-a-Light sits alongside several other charitable projects: a soup run and a lunch club for homeless people, a Recovery Group ('for those struggling with addictions'), and Street Pastors (who 'go out on a Friday or Saturday night, give out bottled water, and support girls who are not safe') (see Koch 2019).

In Newtown, rather than Anglicans, it is non-conformist Christians, such as Baptists and non-denominational evangelical Christians, including some who are socially anti-liberal in sensibility, who appear to be getting involved in church-based debt advice. This reflects a broader trend among evangelical Christianity in the UK to 'revivify the brand … as the welfare state retreats' through social action rather than proselytising (Brown 2014); a similar shift has been recorded in North America (Steensland & Godd 2014). Church-based voluntarism around debt relief was also widespread in the early nineteenth century (see note 8), as were evangelical Christian campaigns for savings banks (Hilton 1988: 89).

Newtown Baptist Church, for one, features an unusual mixture of economically progressive and socially conservative convictions. On the one hand, a new pastor, speaking of the Church's anti-poverty work, told me 'capitalism is the problem', and Matthew spoke with relish of the biblical concept of jubilee, as a means of cancelling debts en masse. On the other, when the Marriage Equality Bill was passing through Parliament, one adviser complained to me that 'the gay lobby' should not be forcing its agenda upon society given that most homosexuals are incapable of long-term, committed relationships. All this went along with a concept of charity opposed to notions of rights,

according to which claims had to be made as pleas without any presumption of being granted (i.e. meekly), as one of the advisers told me:

> On the soup run one night, some blokes come up to us, all gruff, and say: "What am I entitled to?" Well, you're not entitled to anything: this is charity; you're not entitled to anything. You know – it's the alpha males.

The adviser puffed out his chest and clenched his upper arms to demonstrate, looking at me knowingly. I took it he had a normative expectation of a stance of neediness among those he sought to help, and conversely found something distasteful about an entitlement-claiming stance.

In August 2016, Matthew told me he set up a church-based debt advice service partly to connect the church with people in the city, but also because the business model (so to speak) of a church-based advice centre seemed more sustainable than state funding. He said:

> Debt advice just seemed like an obvious thing we should be doing [as a church], because there's a big need, and we should be reaching out to the poor, the needy, the lost. We want to be community-based and bottom-up, which is sustainable. Because, actually, [his former employer] Beacon Advice isn't sustainable. If the government stops its funding, it all disappears. Whereas what we want to say here, as Christians, is 'We'll be here today, we'll be here tomorrow, we'll be here the day after, until we've helped you through'.

Thus, Matthew's direct experience of the impacts of austerity on his ability to conduct debt advice at Beacon Advice guided him towards a volunteer-led, church-based organisational form in which his Christian motivation for doing debt advice was more explicit.

Many of Matthew's experiences are reflected on a larger scale. In 2001, a new umbrella organisation for church-based, volunteer-delivered debt advice organisations was created, with the name of Community Money Advice (CMA).[14] In 2003, it had two affiliate centres; by 2011, there were nearly a hundred, since growing to over 140. Claire Daniels from CMA told me that CMA's growth was partly due to its 'replicable model':

> Our model is very low-cost, so individual organizations don't need funding. That eliminates the need for [caseload] targets. The model is largely volunteer-run, although there are some paid workers. There is no central management, so our running costs are low and we don't have to charge big affiliation fees to members. The thing about churches is you have an existing community infrastructure. You've already got volunteers there.

Claire connected CMA's successes to recent austerity-related closures. For instance, CAB closures in Newcastle meant 'I've got two new potential centres, because CMA branches can kind of step in. When there's nothing, it's easy [for our branches] to grow'.

These advisers' turn towards unpaid, church-based advice was informed by a moral expectation that social welfare should involve an exercise of compassion and care, which the economic conditions of funding models based on the financialised concept of welfare (and its corollary of harmonious relations between advisers and creditors) did not facilitate when it came to the 'poor', 'needy' and 'vulnerable'. In other words,

moral expectations informed their response to political-economic conditions. At the same time, church-based advice was also valued for its political-economic viability in facilitating this exercise of compassion and care.

Looking across the sector as a whole, there was agreement among the debt advice managers I interviewed that particular funding models have affinities with the particular demographics of clients such funding allows them to assist. They describe this as 'market segmentation'. The fee-charging, commercial debt management sector's clients generally comprise home-owners 'who wouldn't be seen dead in a CAB waiting room' (interview, DEMSA).[15] The 'hybrid' advice providers relying on fair share contributions from financial lenders, PayPlan and StepChange, require their clients to have £50 spare per month for debt repayments, although an increase in 'non-financial' debts like rent arrears and council tax (see James) is proving challenging. Meanwhile, state-funded services, like CABs and Beacon Advice, work with many unemployed people. But since cuts to statutory funding, these organisations are increasingly said to disadvantage those who – generally described as 'vulnerable' – require more support than their increased caseload targets allow.

At Shine-a-Light in 2016, these idioms of 'vulnerability' and 'mental health' served as a proxy for three things: first, the reasons the client had become over-indebted in the first place (thus decreasing the ascription of fault to the client); second, the ways in which the client may be ill-served by mainstream debt advice and so require a more flexible, personal, ongoing service; and, third, the reasons the agreed-upon 'debt solution' (such as a repayment arrangement) might still eventually fall through. Take for instance a debt advice client at Shine-a-Light, a middle-aged mental health nurse with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder and multiple debts she had accrued following a divorce. She attributed 'excessive' spending and borrowing to 'my mental health' and 'my bipolar'. Her adviser had sought lower repayments with her creditors on the basis that she was in a manic phase when she had borrowed. Another of the advisers at Shine-a-Light said that, while a CAB adviser usually instructs the client what they have to do to sort out the debt issue themselves, he would not deal with a 'vulnerable client' that way: 'If I asked him to do all that, he'd probably just go home and go to bed, because of his depression. That's why I do a lot of it for him'. Talking about 'vulnerability' and 'mental health' extenuated individual culpability, and so stood as a less blame-ridden alternative to talk of 'difficult clients'. Nonetheless, these terms have moral and pathological connotations, tending to attribute the difficulties in remedying a client's situation to problems located within the client her- or himself.

The growing sub-sector of church-based debt advice providers operating a 'low cost model', with volunteers giving the advice, such as Shine-a-Light and Community Money Advice, is said to be especially well-suited to meeting the needs of 'vulnerable' clients, whom many consider that the Levy-funded statutory advice services now increasingly let down. Claire Daniels from CMA said that the 'main benefit of the [CMA] model is being able to do more than say, "Here are your options." If somebody wants to sit and talk for a while, you can see somebody for years and years'. She added:

> A huge percentage of our caseload are struggling with mental health problems. So you need more time, without pressure, to get to the bottom of things. Other organizations, like CABs, just don't have the time. We want to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

'Vulnerability' is an ambiguous category that contains multiple tensions. On the one hand, it provides a justification for leniency towards those struggling the most – and highlights that not everyone benefits from advice funded on the assumption that creditor and debtor interests are aligned – thus creating the possibility for critique. Yet 'vulnerability' also designates anomalies, especially given its associations with mental health: by cordoning off 'vulnerable' debtors as those who have not fared well in various markets, often because they have something 'wrong' with them, it implies that economic extraction from non-'vulnerable' debtors is benign.

The advice sector's concern with vulnerability has recently become institutionalised, as the former head of the Institute of Money Advisers (a professional association) told me in 2016: 'Vulnerability has been incorporated into the Financial Conduct Authority's rules on debt advice, so it's all about establishing someone's vulnerability now'. The discourse of vulnerability has also gained traction within the credit industry itself, through a mixture of regulation, industry self-regulation and corporate social responsibility.[16] A 'Financial Services Vulnerability Taskforce', made up of financial services industry representatives with charities and consumer groups, recently released a new report outlining 'best practice guidelines' to improve the experience of 'vulnerable customers'.[17] Here, then, we see something resembling Victorian-era philanthropy, and a paternalistic kind of charity, whereby, in place of (say) centralised wealth redistribution, church organisations and benevolent industry together take care of the poorest and neediest.[18]

Conclusion

This article has considered two changes in social welfare that have taken place since the 1970s in the UK. The first is that debt advice started to be seen as an important component of social welfare. The second is that new ideas emerged about what roles the state, the financial industry and volunteer-based charities should take in providing this form of social welfare – the state's role changed from directly funding and delivering social welfare to acting rather as a conduit. Both changes impinge on how social welfare is conceptualised, in contemporary practices of governance. They show that significant changes have taken place not only in the *content* of the public good, but also in the roles that the state, commerce and faith-based charity assume for themselves in bringing those public goods about.

The attempt to integrate free public debt advice with financial accumulation, founded on a perceived mutuality of interests and typified by the rise of creditor funding, has generated a remainder or residuum that falls outside its scope. This takes the form of church-based, volunteer-run advice organisations and the 'vulnerable' clients they seek to serve. In my interviewees' descriptions of this new segment of the debt advice market, we can see the (discursive) emergence of a demographic – the vulnerable, poor and needy, or the mentally unwell – who are catered for by the re-

emergence of a particular kind of social welfare that acts outside the state, in terms not only of service delivery but also of funding. 'Difficult' and 'vulnerable' clients are, therefore, those who, in the eyes of debt advisers, are not well served by state-funded, Third Way, voluntary-sector public services.

Two different moral logics run in tension – the morality of financialised welfare, and that of a decidedly non-market, compassion-driven arena of volunteerism in church-based charity. While they may not constitute a totalising neoliberal 'order' (cf. Muehlebach 2012),[19] and even though their methods and motivations contrast, at present they are mutually reinforcing. I would suggest that a non-market morality of compassion can reinforce the processes of capital accumulation that neoliberal policies facilitate insofar as the former feeds into class-based hierarchies of ascribed moral worth. The post-crisis endowment of moral agency to financial corporations, through the notional munificence of their funding of debt advice and their measures to help vulnerable clients, and the re-emergence of paternalistic forms of charity, through faith-based, unpaid advice work, all indicate a 'neo-Victorian re-moralization' of poverty, class and wealth (Desjarlais 1997: 177). In this, a subordinate class position is understood more and more as the outcome of some shortcoming of conscience or character (Morris 2002). The likeness between neoliberal and nineteenth-century Britain should not be over-stated: early-nineteenth-century evangelicals, for instance, promoted savings to the poor as a buffer *against* market volatility rather than encouraging them to speculate on it (Hilton 1988: 374). But attitudes towards debtors and poverty hardened over the Victorian period, along with 'a growing belief in the salutary discipline of market mechanisms for the poor' (Finn 2003: 153–54). This view of misfortune 'initially serv[ed] to generate new forms of charitable assistance', but ultimately paved the way for more punitive interventions (ibid., 154).

The more recent transformation in the discourse on debt is founded on a subtle redefinition of state-provided social welfare as the distribution through society of opportunities to borrow and speculate, such that someone's poverty is seen as the result of their failure to take those opportunities up. The segmentation of advice changes over time, but this change affirms a more important anthropological point: that characterisations of welfare beneficiaries and their problems, which generally have a moral dimension, are dependent on the resources available to assist them and on where and how those resources are derived. Imposed by no one, and not designed in advance, but a product of pragmatic responses to changing funding opportunities, the financialised concept of social welfare nevertheless legitimises government policies that prioritise the 'healthy' functioning of liberalised financial markets, which increase inequality and amplify economic insecurity.

Notes

1. 'Beacon Advice', 'Newtown' and (later) 'Shine-A-Light' are pseudonyms, as are the names of the employees there. The other names in the article are real. The term 'money advice' generally applies to the combination of debt advice and welfare benefits advice.
2. Here I draw on Kar's (2013) idea of 'financialising poverty'.

3. My account of the growing prevalence of a financialised concept of social welfare is not meant to imply an all-out historical rupture between the mid-century welfare state and what emerged from the 1980s onwards (Neveling 2015: 216). The mid-century welfare state in Britain was exclusionary and coercive (Davey & Koch n.d.). The idea 'of harnessing the [private] passions of men, of making them work toward the general welfare' was formulated in the eighteenth century by Vico and Mandeville (Hirschman 1977).
4. The idea of finance as a public good features in research on microfinance, with development NGOs promoting empowerment through credit (Elyachar 2005; Schuster 2015), or for-profit microfinance used for 'inclusive growth' in India (Kar 2013). UK debt advisers and microfinance credit counsellors and loan officers intervene differently in the notional life-cycle of borrowing, repayment, and default, and occupy different positions to state, market and civil society, but both highlight the limits of attempts to integrate social good and profit-making (Kar 2013).
5. 'Voluntary sector' refers to registered charities and NGOs, but does not mean 'volunteering', as many people who staff these organisations are paid employees. See Taylor (2004).
6. Thus, and perhaps surprisingly, parallel to the birth of British neoliberalism under the Thatcher government, the voluntary sector as a state-funded provider of social welfare actually grew.
7. Hence this arrangement is often seen as characteristic of the late 1990s (for example, Rose 1999: 167).
8. See also Alexander (2009) and Read (2014).
9. Creditor trade associations, like the British Bankers Association (BBA) and the Credit Services Association (CSA), are membership organisations that lobby government. They undertake 'self-regulation', compiling and overseeing their own codes of practice, and collaborating with third-sector organisations (such as MALG) to produce non-binding 'best practice guidelines'. This pre-empts official regulatory oversight, facilitating liberal forms of financial governance.
10. I worked on a project that promoted such 'win-win' solutions myself, in policy research about debt collection and mental health, foregoing outward critique of the harmful effects of debt collection in favour of 'helping creditors to face the challenges of working with customers who have mental health problems' (Fitch & Davey 2010).
11. Guy, Jane (2013), 'Partnerships working in money advice'. *Quarterly Account*, Summer 2013.
12. Arguably, current advice provision, with its mix of funding models, is the result of competition between public and private sectors. This casts doubt on economists' idea of 'crowding out' – i.e. that increasing public expenditure cannot generate macro-economic growth – because it diverts money away from the private sector (Sloman & Wride 2009).
13. Money Advice Service (2012) 'Debt advice in the UK' (report).
14. Source: Heather Keates (2012) 'No Ordinary Life: The story of Community Money Advice' (booklet).
15. DEMSA is the Debt Managers' Standards Association, the trade association for commercial debt management companies.
16. See, for instance, the British Bankers Association (2016), 'Improving outcomes for customers in vulnerable circumstances'. https://www.bba.org.uk/publication/bba-reports/improving-outcomes-for-customers-in-vulnerable-circumstances/.
17. https://www.bba.org.uk/news/press-releases/financial-services-establishes-new-gold-standard-for-customers-in-vulnerable-circumstances/.
18. I use the term 'paternalism' to mean behaviour expressing an attitude of superiority, hence rather more loosely than Hilton's (1988: 87) distinction between 'moral' and 'economic' paternalists. At Shine-a-Light, no such clear separation existed.
19. Neoliberalism is not a totalising 'order' but a mode of governance, or of governmental reasoning (Collier 2011).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the advice practitioners who generously gave their time and to colleagues at LSE, Phil Child, Anna Strhan, and Patrick McKearney who assisted with its development. Opinions expressed are the author's own.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

The research for this paper was funded by ESRC Grant ES/M003825/1 'An ethnography of advice: between market, society and the declining welfare state'.

ORCID

Ryan Davey http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4965-5924

References

Alexander, Catherine. 2009. Illusions of Freedom: Polanyi and the Third Sector. In *Market and Society: The Great Transformation Today*, edited by Christopher M. Hann and Keith Hart, 221–239. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2010. The Third Sector. In *The Human Economy: A Citizen's Guide*, edited by Keith Hart, Jean-Louis Laville and Antonio David Cattani, 213–224. Cambridge: Wiley.

Bear, Laura. 2015. *Navigating Austerity: Currents of Debt along a South Asian River*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Brown, Andrew. 2014. How Evangelical Christians Are Using Social Action to Revivify Church Brand. *The Guardian*, April 18.

Collier, Stephen J. 2011. *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Davey, Ryan. 2017. Polluter Pays?: Understanding Austerity through Debt Advice in the UK. *Anthropology Today*, 33(5): 8–11.

Davey, Ryan & Insa Koch. n.d. Nearest and Dearest: Working-Class Responses to the Coercion of the Liberal British State.

Desjarlais, Robert R. 1997. *Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood among the Homeless*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Dinham, Adam. 2009. *Faiths, Public Policy and Civil Society: Problems, Policies, Controversies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elyachar, Julia. 2005. *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.

Evers, Adalbert & Jean-Louis Laville. 2004. *The Third Sector in Europe*. Cheltenham; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Ferguson, James. 2015. *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*. Durham; London: Duke University Press.

Finn, Margot C. 2003. *The Character of Credit : Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fitch, Chris & Ryan Davey. 2010. *Debt Collection and Mental Health: Ten Steps to Improve Recovery*. London: Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Goriely, Tamara. 1996. Law for the Poor: The Relationship between Advice Agencies and Solicitors in the Development of Poverty Law. *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, 3(1/2):215–248.

Hilton, Boyd. 1988. *The Age of Atonement : The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865*. New York: Clarendon Press.

Hirschman, Albert. 1977. *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hyatt, Susan Brin. 2001. From Citizen to Volunteer: Neoliberal Governance and the Erasure of Poverty. In *New Poverty Studies : The Ethnography of Power, Politics, and Impoverished People in the United States*, edited by Judith Goode and Jeff Maskovsky, 201–235. New York: New York University Press.

James, Deborah. 2014. *Money from Nothing: Indebtedness and Aspiration in South Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kar, Sohini. 2013. Recovering Debts: Microfinance Loan Officers and the Work of 'Proxy-Creditors' in India. *American Ethnologist*, 40(3):480–493. doi:10.1111/amet.12034.

Kempson, Elaine. 1995. Money Advice and Debt Counselling. Policy Studies Institute (Vol. 797).

Kirwan, Samuel. 2016. The UK Citizens Advice Service and the Plurality of Actors and Practices that Shape 'Legal Consciousness'. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 48(3):461–475.

———. 2018. On 'Those Who Shout the Loudest': Debt Advice and the Work of Disrupting Attachments. *Geoforum*, November. Pergamon Press.

Koch, Insa. 2019. *Personalising the State: How Citizenship Becomes Punishment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Laclau, Ernesto & Chantal Mouffe. 2013. Democracy and Populism: Are They Compatible? *Talk at Tallinn University*.

Langley, Paul. 2015. *Liquidity Lost: The Governance of the Global Financial Crisis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Montgomerie, Johnna. 2013. America's Debt Safety-Net. *Public Administration*, 91(4):871–888.

Morris, Lydia. 2002. *Dangerous Classes: The Underclass and Social Citizenship*. 2nd ed. London; New York: Routledge.

Muehlebach, Andrea Karin. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Neveling, Patrick. 2015. Flexible Capitalism and Transactional Orders in Colonial and Postcolonial Mauritius: A Post-Occidentalist View. In *Flexible Capitalism*, edited by Jens Kjaerulf, 207–234. Oxford: Berghahn.

Palomera, Jaime & Theodora Vetta. 2016. Moral Economy: Rethinking a Radical Concept. *Anthropological Theory*, 16(4). SAGE PublicationsSage UK: London, England: 413–432.

Pradhan, Sanjay & World Bank. 2000. *Anticorruption in Transition: A Contribution to the Policy Debate*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Read, Rosie. 2014. Images of Care, Boundaries of the State: Volunteering and Civil Society in Czech Health Care. *Social Analysis*, 58(3):90–106.

Read, Helen & Tatjana Thelen. 2007. Social Security and Care after Socialism. *Focaal*, 2007(50):3–18.

Riles, Annelise. 2011. *Collateral Knowledge: Legal Reasoning in the Global Financial Markets*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Rose, Nikolas. 1999. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schuster, Caroline E. 2015. *Social Collateral: Women and Microfinance in Paraguay's Smuggling Economy*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Sloman, John & Alison Wride. 2009. *Economics*. Harlow: F.T. Prentice Hall.

Standing, Guy. 2009. *Work after Globalization: Building Occupational Citizenship*. Cheltenham; Northhampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Steensland, Brian & Philip Godd (eds). 2014. *The New Evangelical Social Engagement*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, Marilyn. 2004. The Welfare Mix in the United Kingdom. In *The Third Sector in Europe*, edited by Adalbert Evers and Jean-Louis Laville, 122–143. Cheltenham; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.