Hartley Dean

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Abstract (English)

The paper explores the shifting ethical foundations of the welfare-to-work or 'workfare' state within the richer capitalist economies of the world. It provides a discussion of the historical context; a critical analysis of competing moral discourses and ethical concepts of responsibility; and, based upon this, a heuristic taxonomy of different approaches to welfare-to-work. It concludes with a critique of the dominant approaches to welfare-to-work, contending that they are at worst an affront to human rights and at best they are ethically ambiguous in that they fail to address people's need, as opposed to their responsibility, to work.

Key words: welfare; work; ethics; responsibility

The foundations of 'mature' welfare states in 'developed' capitalist countries are changing. At one level this reflects economic imperatives associated with globalisation. Social protection for workers in rich nations depends increasingly on the outcome of international competition for capital investment and therefore the extent to which domestic labour market participation can be promoted, labour force costs constrained, and/or labour productivity maximised. At another level, however, the change reflects shifting political orthodoxies and *moral* assumptions. The social protectionist ethic is giving way to an ethic of self-responsibility (Bauman, 1993; Rose,

1999). This paper aims to explore the shifting ethical foundations of the 'welfare-to-work' or 'workfare' state (Peck, 2001; Lødemel and Trickey, 2000; Jessop, 2002; Handler, 2004).

It starts with a brief discussion of the historical context. Second, it offers a critical analysis of competing moral discourses and ethical concepts of responsibility. Finally it presents a heuristic taxonomy of welfare-to-work regimes and a critique of dominant approaches to welfare-to-work, arguing that at worst they are an affront to human rights; at best they are ethically ambiguous.

Evolving principles of welfare: an historical account

Recent and current welfare reforms in countries such as the US, Canada, Australia and the UK and shifts of emphasis within the welfare policies in countries across the European Union and in East Asia reflect an incremental evolution rather than a step change in the principles that inform welfare provision. They entail in practice the accretion and refashioning of principles, rather than the replacement of old ideas by new ones. If there is a narrative thread running through the evolution of welfare provision it is in part, perhaps, the chaotic story of the ideological fashioning and refashioning of post-Enlightenment 'liberalism'. This is not to ignore the countervailing influence of social conservatism or social democracy both within and beyond the realm of so called 'liberal' welfare states (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Nor is it to suggested that liberalism's latest neo-liberal incarnation is necessarily so monolithic as to be irresistible (Larner and Walters, 2000). It is to acknowledge the centrality of liberal ideologies to the ascendancy of the capitalist project.

The Poor Law Era

The essence of the Poor Laws across much of Western Europe was that they were locally administered, coercively enforced and yet retained an essentially paternalistic element by which the rich and powerful acknowledged pastoral responsibilities for the poor and dispossessed. This could be observed as much in the systematised nature of the relief scheme devised by Martin Luther for Liesnig in Saxony in the sixteenth century as in the Benthamite utilitarian principles that later informed the Poor Law Reform Act in England in the nineteenth century (see H. Dean 1991). Polanyi argued that the logic of the capitalist economic system became embedded in the fabric of social life through the invention of pauperism on the one hand and the ascendancy of classical political economy on the other (Polanyi, 1944; M. Dean, 1991). The terms on which relief of the poor might be organised became central to the sustenance of the market economy and the process of liberal governance. And yet in the name of liberalism social policies were then, as often they are now, distinctly illiberal (King, 1999). Benthamite utilitarianism represented a subversion of classical liberalism in that it was prepared to sacrifice the sovereignty of the individual for the greater good. Supposedly dysfunctional individuals could legitimately be subject to the disutility of 'less eligible treatment': the pauper would be relieved in the local workhouse under conditions systematically contrived to be less congenial than those endured by the poorest independent labourer. Bentham himself insisted that the state of the pauper should be 'an object of wholesome horror' (cited in Spicker, 1984).

Liberal governance was supposedly more humane (or, at least, less physically brutal) than feudal or mediaeval modes of governance, but relied none the less upon coercion though incarceration and the disciplinary effects of indignity, stigma and shame. At the same time,

however, nineteenth century Poor Law administration managed to harness a humane tradition that was quintessentially conservative rather than liberal. In England the organisation of ever more extensive forms of 'out-relief' meant that Poor Law officials worked hand in glove with middle class philanthropists. Middle class philanthropy was not the same as the aristocratic philanthropy of the past since it was systematically organised. It was not overtly premised on the *noblesse oblige* principle but fostered the kind of individual casework methods that would lay the foundations of modern social work practice. Despite these differences, the essential nature of philanthropy is its paternalism. And the character of the middle class philanthropists' paternalism owed much to the pastoral traditions of the preceding era in which the 'upper' social orders embraced a sense of responsibility not only for the wellbeing of the 'lower' and less-fortunate, but also for their conduct and moral hygiene. Poor Law supplicants were constituted as individual cases or clients whose deserts were to be evaluated in terms of their circumstances and their obedience to moral norms.

The Welfare State era

Modern welfare states differed from the Poor Law regimes they supposedly replaced, primarily because of the new technologies of administration and governance that they adopted. It became possible for central or federal governments to institute national systems of welfare provision and/or to regulate the frameworks within which benefits or services were provided at sub-national level. What made this possible was the development of bureaucratic modes of administration on the one hand and the professionalisation of social service provision on the other, providing mechanisms of accountability and control (Pollitt, 1993; Clarke and Newman, 1997). Just as essential, were new disciplinary techniques associated with the creation of rules-

based systems of entitlement. Citizenship now entailed not only civil and political rights, but social rights as well (Marshall, 1950). In particular, rights to income maintenance entailed complex conditions and principles. Twentieth century welfare systems required people to frame their claims in accordance with prescribed rules, to submit to set procedures, to stand - literally and metaphorically - in the right queue (H. Dean 1991). Welfare state claimants were constituted as individual juridical subjects or citizens whose entitlements were to be adjudicated in accordance with statutory requirements.

In the process such systems generated incentives for citizens to sustain themselves through paid employment and to maintain each other within families and they imposed a range of pecuniary sanctions for those who did not. Despite this, by the end of the twentieth century, the sustainability of the modern welfare state was brought into question (Mishra, 1984), not only upon fiscal grounds (O'Connor, 1973), but because rights to welfare were supposedly de-moralising (Himmelfarb, 1995); they crowded out people's sense of individual responsibility (Roche, 1992). The claim advanced by the New Right was that rights were out of kilter with responsibilities and state welfare provision was nourishing an amoral 'dependency culture' across the developed English-speaking world (Barry, 1987; Murray, 1984).

This particular claim was manifestly ill-founded. Research in the UK by Dean and Taylor-Gooby (1992) - and similar studies conducted in the 1980s and early '90s at a time when New Right governments were seeking to retrench welfare systems and tighten their rules - demonstrated that long-term welfare claimants did not subscribe to a distinctive dependency culture, but to mainstream values, aspirations and beliefs. Within the findings, however, lay the seeds of a deeper insight: the truth behind the myth of the dependency culture. Welfare claimants were keen, even desperate, to obtain employment, but they were reluctant to take low-paid and

uncongenial jobs that would undermine their sense of self-worth and self-esteem: being forced into such jobs would undermine the value they placed on paid work. They attached considerable importance to their moral commitments and affective ties to their children, partners and other family members: being forced into financial dependency upon, or conversely denied the means materially to provide for, their families was seen as an affront to the quality and meaning of their most intimate relationships. Welfare claimants did not celebrate their rights to welfare: on the contrary, they already regarded welfare as a last resort and the state as an adversary. The New Right's attempts to 'roll back' the welfare state and its critique of the ethos supposedly engendered by state welfare misconstrued the nature of changing social values and they manifestly failed to restore the traditional values of the Poor Law era. They were none the less to herald a transition to a different era.

The Workfare State era

The era through which we now live has been described as post-industrial (Bell, 1973), post-modern (Lyotard, 1984) and even post-social (Rose, 1996), but the term post-material - attributed to Inglehart (1990) - also captures something distinctive, if elusive, about the transition involved. Inglehart's particular argument is that following an era in which the welfare state saw to it that our material needs were met we have, in the developed world, become increasingly individualistic and detached from traditional class-based loyalties; and increasingly introspective and preoccupied with our needs for belonging, identity and self-realisation. Inglehart supported his argument with cross-national quantitative data drawn from an array of social attitude surveys. Dean and Taylor-Gooby's study concerning the nature of the values demonstrated by the beneficiaries of welfare state largesse (see above) chimes with, illustrates and amplifies certain

aspects of what might be described as a nascent post-materialist ethos: an ethos in which self-esteem, affective relationships and individual freedom take precedence over immediate self-sufficiency, customary obligations and respect for authority. It appeared that as the welfare state era was being drawn to a close people subscribed to a work ethic that demanded more than material remuneration, a family ethic that demanded more than material interdependency and a citizenship ethic that had become sceptical as to the capacity of Marshallian social citizenship to deliver material security.

I would contend that Inglehart's argument overplays the role and the effectiveness of the welfare state and the extent to which material sufficiency was or is universally enjoyed. The argument has to an extent been superseded by Beck's (1992) contention that we inhabit a society characterised not by guaranteed material sufficiency, but by individualised *risk*. Insofar as we may characterise the current workfare state era as post-materialist, I am not suggesting that we inhabit a non-materialist or selfless culture. On the contrary, it is a culture that is profoundly self-centred and consumption oriented. But consumption provides a particular source of identity and it is as free consumers rather than as class-bound producers that we negotiate the ethical basis of our lives and relationships (Bauman, 1993; 1998). The struggles and preoccupations of everyday life - even amongst the poorest members of developed societies - are concerned at least as much with issues of identity and recognition as with issues of material distribution (Fraser and Honneth, 2003; Lister, 2004).

The so called Third Way project (Lewis and Surender, 2004) - espoused first by Clinton in the US, more recently by Blair in the UK, and whose influence is evident across Europe (Bonoli and Powell, 2002) and parts of East Asia (Walker and Wong, 2005) as well as in Canada (Herd, 2002) and Australia (Ryan, 2005) - may be understood as an expression of post-

materialism. Called the Third Way because it was supposedly a compromise between Old Left and New Right, it is arguably a project with its own distinctive logic, defined by Gilbert (2004) and others in terms of a transition to an 'enabling state'. Giddens, arch-theorist of the Third Way, has redefined 'equality as *inclusion* and inequality as *exclusion*' (1998: 102). Objectives of equality and social justice are no longer concerned with material outcomes, but with opportunity structures. The primary role of social policy is not the distribution of resources to provide for people's needs, but to mitigate risk and to *enable* people individually to manage risk. Old forms of liberal governance are therefore giving way to what Rose (1999) calls 'advanced liberalism' that is intent upon promoting self-provisioning, prudentialism and an individualistic ethic of self-responsibility. Post-materialist subjects are constituted as consumers whose capacity for long-term self-sufficiency and responsible self-management is to be promoted, enabled or regulated.

Advanced liberalism is critical of monolithic government on the one hand and the proliferation of welfare rights on the other. And yet at the heart of the Third Way consensus there is a renewed and distinctly illiberal desire to enforce the civic responsibilities of workers and/or citizens (Roche, 1992). Most particularly, there is a desire to enforce the responsibilities of the poor to sustain themselves. This approach is aptly characterised – even by its supporters – as 'the new paternalism' (Mead, 1997). Social policy is characterised by 'creeping conditionality' (Dwyer, 2004) not only in the developed world but also in some parts of the developing world (Standing, 2002). Provision of social benefits for the poor is made conditional upon their willingness to seek employment, undertake training, attend health clinics, and/or send their children to school. Neo-liberal economics is harnessed to an illiberal paternalist social agenda that associates poverty with individual irresponsibility, or with the failure to manage risk. It represents the final challenge to material dependency upon the welfare state, a renewed assault

upon the chimera of the dependency culture and an attempt to establish and consolidate an alternative ethical basis for the workfare state era. The dominant element of such an approach is to be found in the kind of welfare-to-work policies that are discussed later in this paper.

Competing moral discourses and ethical concepts of responsibility

First, however, I propose critically to examine notions of responsibility. Political discourse is replete with attempts to (re)construct a politics of welfare obligation (Fitzpatrick, 2005) and with competing notions of responsibility. The complexity of political discourse revolves principally around the reciprocal relationship that necessarily exists within any polity between the responsibilities of the citizen and the rights that may be guaranteed by the state. The transition from the welfare state to a workfare state era could be celebrated as a triumph for principles of social obligation over the principles of social rights or it might be decried as a retreat from, or the surrender of, public responsibility. Popular discourse on the other hand is inclined to engage with notions of responsibility in relation to the quotidian realities of daily life and relationships (Dean and Rodgers, 2004). There is a certain body of evidence to suggest that when defining social obligations and personal responsibilities, people tend neither to subscribe to prescribed codes of conduct nor to respond to the dictates of economic utility; rather they engage within their relationships and across the generations in processes of social negotiation and their decision making is informed by forms of moral rationality (Finch and Mason, 1993; Duncan and Edwards, 1999).

Generally, however, little attempt is made to distinguish between different kinds or levels of responsibility, or indeed between concepts of obligation, duty or obedience. It is possible to do this, at a strictly heuristic level, by way of a taxonomic model of competing discursive moral repertoires, such as that presented in Figure 1. The taxonomy is built around two fundamental distinctions or dimensions represented by the two intersecting axes. At its simplest, the continuum represented in the horizontal axis is concerned with ideological orientation, while the continuum represented in the vertical axis is concerned with normative expectation.

Ideological orientation

For the purposes of this model a distinction may be drawn between *contractarian* and *solidaristic* understandings of citizenship and of the relationship between the individual and the state. The distinction is related to that between liberal and republican traditions of citizenship (e.g.Oldfield, 1990).

Contractarian repertoires are premised on an essentially individualistic conception of the social order in which a more or less explicit trade-off, metaphorical contract or implied covenant is required between competitive and self-interested individuals. Aspects of the individual's sovereignty or freedoms - most particularly 'irresponsible' freedoms - are surrendered in return for a measure of protection against the predations and irresponsibilities of others. The purpose is to achieve a minimum of social order. At the extremity of the contractarian pole of the continuum, human society is understood in Hobbesian terms as a war of all against all, while the human subject is constituted through the deals or bargains she must strike with other beings.

Solidaristic repertoires are premised on a collectivist view of the social order in which the priority is to sustain co-operative solidarity. Sovereignty must be pooled and responsibility

shared within a society in order to provide security against external threats. The purpose is to achieve the maximum internal social cohesion. At the extremity of the solidaristic pole of the continuum, human society is understood as an association of vulnerable beings clinging together for protection in a hostile universe, while the human subject is constituted through her attachments to other beings.

The two repertoires exist in dialectical relationship with, and can feed off, each other.

Normative expectation

For the purposes of this model we may secondly draw a distinction between ethical as opposed to moral expectations and assumptions about human behaviour. In ordinary English usage 'ethics' and 'morality' are virtually synonymous terms, yet for some philosophers it is important to distinguish between the two; generally in terms of abstract and contested distinctions between the 'right' and the 'good'. The distinction I wish to draw is, perhaps, more sociological than philosophical. It is related in one sense to that which Habermas (1987) makes between 'system' and 'life world'. Ethics are concerned with cognitive *ethos*; morals with cultural *mores*. Like contractarian and solidaristic poles of the continuum defined above, the two are closely related and exist in dialectical relation to each other. Ethics are a reflection upon morals. Morals may entail the (re)interpretation of ethics. Ethics are systemic; their preoccupation is with values and abstract principles. Morals are grounded; their preoccupation is with norms and customary practices. Ethics are expressed in terms of doctrines; morals in terms of codes.

The taxonomy

The resulting taxonomy is illustrated in Figure 1 (see Dean 2002; Doheny, 2004).

Figure 1. Competing discourses of responsibility
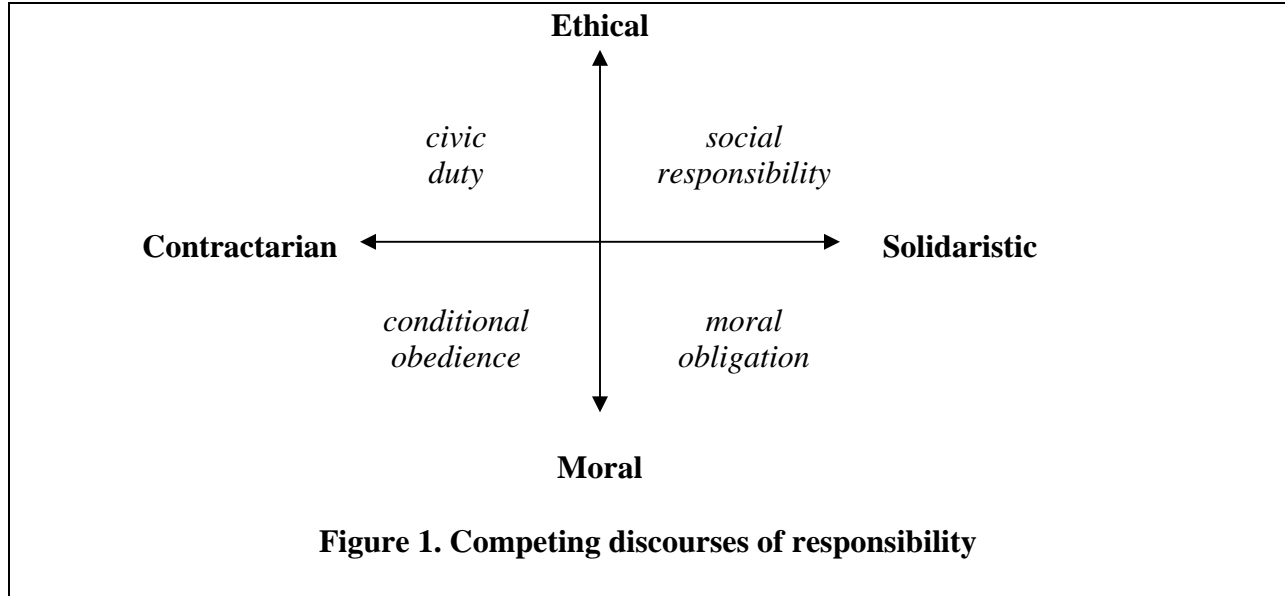
Responsibility, when it is socially constructed from within a contractarian understanding of citizenship, but from an ethical perspective (the top left-hand quadrant of Figure 1), takes the form of civic duty. Civic duty is probably the dominant discourse of responsibility within the workfare state ethos. The citizen's freedom not so much as a worker, but as an 'heroic consumer' (Warde, 1994) is premised on such duties as she owes to other citizens as may be necessary to ensure their freedoms are not infringed. Each person's duty to fulfil or refrain from certain actions flows from a system of expectations that are reciprocal and symmetrical. Duties, however, are individualised. They arise from the need to ensure that, so far as can reasonably be expected, one's individual interests and ambitions can be fulfilled without burdening others or unfairly prejudicing the interests of others. The observance or performance of duties becomes, ideally, a self-regulating process such as that which Adam Smith referred to as the 'harmony of sentiments and passions' (1759: 72) that can be reflexively achieved within a market economy that is truly free. Fundamentally, civic duty is about responsible self sufficiency.

When an ethical notion of responsibility is constructed from within a solidaristic understanding of citizenship (the top right-hand corner of Figure 1), responsibility assumes a universalistic character. The good citizen assumes responsibility - mediated by the state - for others as much as herself. It is important to remember that this taxonomy is a heuristic device and not necessarily a wholly accurate description of discursive repertoires that are prominent or extant. The universalistic notions of social responsibility and social justice that most conspicuously informed the highly redistributive social democratic welfare states have arguably been premised as much on Kantian as upon socialist principles: upon a notion of responsibility as innate to an individual having free will within her social context. In practice, therefore, they have constituted an essentially social liberal or 'reluctant collectivist' (George and Wilding, 1985) concept of social responsibility. The taxonomy serves to characterise a notion of responsibility that is rational, reflexive and democratic; which recognises that members of society must share their responsibilities for each other in ways that are not necessarily reciprocal or symmetrical and that acknowledges that certain responsibilities rightly lay in the public realm. Social responsibility requires commitment to social justice.

When it is constructed from within a contractarian notion of responsibility, but from a moralistic perspective (the bottom left-hand quadrant of Figure 1) responsibility takes the form of conditional obedience. Egotistical individuals may observe their responsibilities only because they are resentfully constrained to do so by legal or administrative rules. Their expectations of others may stem from a belief that in fairness everybody should be equally constrained. Self-interested behaviour in the absence of systemic self-regulating duties is likely to result in irresponsibility and, in this context, the function of the state relates not to the promotion of responsibility, but the governance of irresponsibility (Dwyer, 2000). This may require the

imposition of penalties and sanctions for irresponsible behaviour or it may entail processes by which particular forms of irresponsible behaviour are identified and stigmatised - as happened during the Poor Law era and as continues to happen under welfare-to-work schemes (see below). A contractarian approach to the governance of irresponsibility is likely to have as much to do with eliciting obedience as with promoting responsibility. Conditional obedience is about getting by within the rules.

Finally, when a moralistic notion of responsibility is constructed from within a solidaristic understanding of citizenship (the bottom right-hand quadrant of Figure 1) it assumes the form of moral obligation. The members of society are characteristically passive or acquiescent and conform 'naturally' to whatever is customary. Responsibility is constructed with reference to collective loyalties and participatory customs; to moral norms and shared values; to the necessary and incontestable expectations that arise from social belonging or, indeed, clientalistic dependency. Moral obligation, by its nature, stems from social traditions (whether long established or recently emergent) and though policy makers may seek to harness moral obligation, for example, through community regeneration and civil participation initiatives, these cannot be authentically solidaristic. Moral obligation is about compliance with the social order.

Responsibilisation

The ethos disclosed by the welfare dependants interviewed by Dean and Taylor-Gooby (alluded to above) valued work and family life for non-material reasons, but it had not established any deontological basis for ordering work and family life. The contention by Burchell, Rose and others is that, in the context of the kind of narrative I have outlined in the section above, liberalism's current phase has adopted an immanent strategy of 'responsibilisation' (Burchell,

1996). Liberal governance is now concerned to draw individuals into accepting individual responsibility for aspects of social protection once governed by the welfare state, but to do so according to appropriate or approved ethical techniques of the self. Donzelot has referred to the procedures by which this is attempted as 'contractual implication' (cited in Burchell, 1996: 29). Responsibilisation entails a notion of responsibility that is both contractarian and ethical. However, the taxonomy outlined above would suggest that prevailing discourses of responsibility are complex, diverse and contested and that they include discourses that survive from earlier eras.

To explore this further we need perhaps to illustrate the issue in relation to a specific policy example, namely the development of welfare-to-work regimes.

Contradictory welfare-to-work regimes

The expression 'welfare-to-work' is emblematic of the transition from the welfare state to the workfare state era, and yet it has its roots in the Poor Law era. The more draconian forms of welfare-to-work or workfare have been associated with policy innovations in the US in the late twentieth century, but the idea that social benefits or 'relief' should be made conditional upon the performance of labour - such as breaking stones or picking oakum - is one that dates back to the Poor Law era (Piven and Cloward, 1974; Whiteside, 1995; King, 1999). In this respect the utilitarian principles of the nineteenth century Poor Law in England were a clear departure from classical liberalism, with its rejection of slavery and forced labour. It was deemed neither humane not prudent to leave the poor to starve. In the interests of the poor themselves and
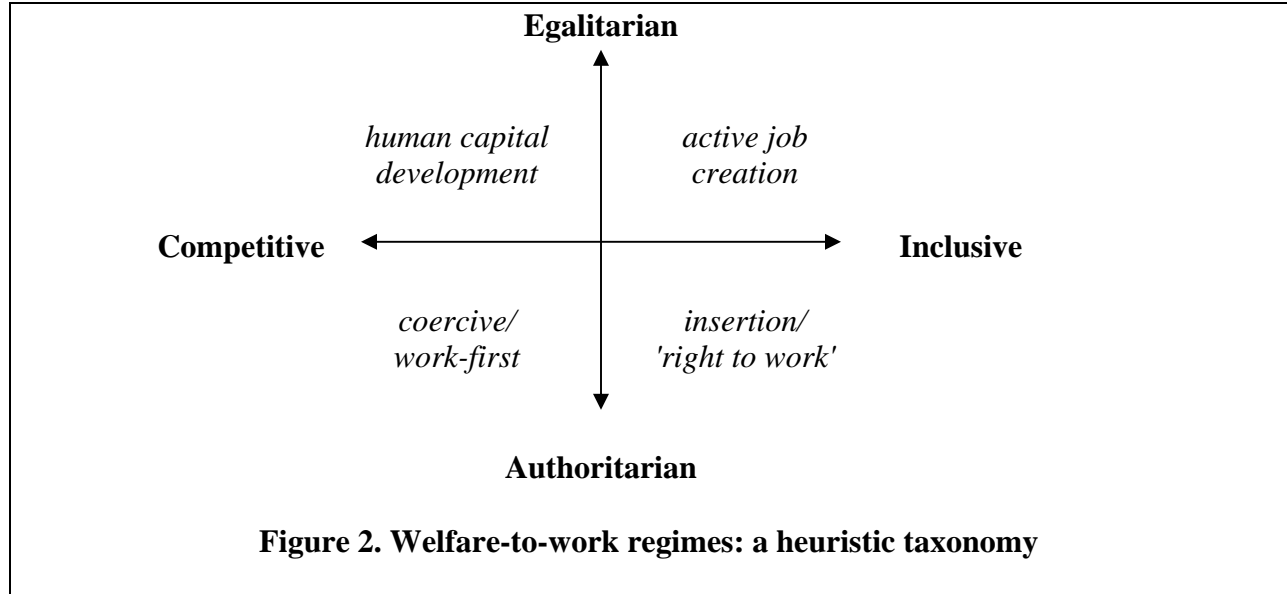
society at large the poor should whenever possible be made to work. The welfare state era, however, coincided with two developments: the emergence of a human rights agenda that sought, most specifically through the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an absolute prohibition on forced labour; and a growing consensus based upon Keynesian economic theory and the idea that full employment could be achieved through the macro-economic manipulation of aggregate demand.

In the UK context, for example, the plan that famously laid the foundations of the modern welfare state (Beveridge, 1942) had assumed that the threat of 'Idleness' would by averted by Keynesian economics. Social insurance benefits would sustain citizens who were subject to temporary unemployment and, though these were conditional upon a requirement that claimants should seek work, they were not required to work for their benefits. The assumption of the workfare state era is that the welfare state was too 'passive' (DSS, 1998). By the beginning of the twenty-first century we faced on the one hand growing support across the developed world for more 'active' forms of welfare intervention and on the other a shift away from Keynesian economics in favour of a Monetarist consensus.

Diverse regimes and hybrid discourses

There have been various attempts to characterise the different kinds of welfare-to-work, active labour market policy and workfare regime that have emerged (Lødemel and Trickey, 2000; Peck, 2001; Gray, 2004). My purpose, however, is to link different kinds of welfare-to-work regime with competing discourses of responsibility. I do this in Figure 2, which like Figure 1 is built around two fundamental distinctions or dimensions represented by two intersecting axes.

Egalitarian

human capital development   *active job creation*

Competitive ←——————————→ **Inclusive**

coercive/ work-first   *insertion/ 'right to work'*

Authoritarian

Figure 2. Welfare-to-work regimes: a heuristic taxonomy

The horizontal axis relates to the distinction that can be made between the different ideologically informed purposes of welfare-to-work policy. Policy may be geared to promoting the competitiveness of labour on the one hand or to promoting the inclusiveness of the labour force on the other. It is a distinction directly related to that between contractarian and solidaristic understandings of citizenship, since contractarian understandings will focus on the competitive nature of labour markets and the responsibility of the individual to compete, while solidaristic understandings will focus on inclusive potential of labour processes and the shared responsibilities or loyalties associated with labour participation. In the context of the workfare state era it is a distinction associated with the tension between, on the one hand, the 'new' monetarist economic orthodoxy that is pre-occupied with economic competitiveness and the supply side of the labour market and, on the other hand, the 'old' Keynesian economic orthodoxy that is concerned with the demand side and about social protection (Gray, 2004).

The vertical axis in Figure 2 relates to the distinction that can be made between different ethically of morally informed premises of welfare-to-work policy. Policy may be ethically egalitarian and concerned to promote procedural fairness on the one hand or substantive social justice on the other. Alternatively, policy may be morally authoritarian and concerned to promote social order, whether by compulsion on the one hand or by incorporation on the other. In the context of the workfare state era it is a distinction associated with a tension between different constructions of the motivation and agency of the individual worker: between whether work is a matter of ethical commitment amongst subjects of equal worth or whether it is a moral requirement in a society based upon hierarchical or conventional order.

Welfare-to-work when it is conceived on a competitive/egalitarian basis (top left-hand quadrant of Figure 2) is concerned to promote human capital development. Elements of this approach have lately feature in what Lødemel and Trickey (2000) have termed the 'European centralised' model - epitomised by the Dutch Job-seekers' employment scheme, Danish activation and the UK's New Deal. The concept of human capital (Becker, 1993) is used to refer to the individual skills that vest in an individual by virtue of their abilities, education and training. The civic duty of the individual lies in ensuring that she should not be a material burden on the welfare system, but maximise her human capital. Policy therefore focuses on the opportunities that are made available to individuals to enhance their productive potential and their labour market readiness.

When it is conceived on an inclusive/egalitarian basis (top right-hand quadrant of Figure 2) welfare-to-work is concerned to promote active job creation. The active labour market policies of social democratic welfare states such as Sweden and Norway had ensured during the welfare state era that the state itself effectively became the 'employer of first resort' (Leibfried, 1993).

The sense of social responsibility engendered by the institutionalised social citizenship model meant that citizens had to be included in productive labour. As a result of economic upheavals towards the end of the twentieth century, the Scandinavian welfare states have modified their active labour market policies (Kautto *et al.*, 1999) and there is now greater emphasis on retraining for unemployed workers, subsidized work-experience programmes and the stimulation of private sector employment, rather than the direct creation of public sector employment - which remains, nonetheless, a conceptually important possibility.

When it is conceived on a competitive/authoritarian basis (bottom left-hand quadrant of Figure 2) welfare-to-work is concerned to promote 'work first'. This is best illustrated by workfare schemes in the US (Peck, 2001). Most recently, under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, especially as it is interpreted in more conservative states, the enforcement of the obligation to work overrides the liberty of the subject. The object is to secure conditional obedience. The primary function of the more aggressive forms of US style workfare is to prevent welfare dependency by hassling or coercing welfare dependents into jobs: any jobs, never mind how low paid, uncongenial or inappropriate.

When it is conceived on an authoritarian/inclusive basis (bottom right-hand quadrant of Figure 2) welfare-to-work is concerned to promote the 'insertion' of those who have been excluded into the labour market; to give effect to their right and their moral obligation to work. It is an approach that has been most clearly evident in France where the republican tradition remains strong and insertion programmes and youth training initiatives have been developed to plug the gaps that had been left by social protection systems based on employment-based social insurance. Welfare-to-work is thereby a means to achieve social integration. The objective is in

practice seriously compromised by conservative/corporatist interests that seek to protect the security and privileges of existing workers against the possibility of erosion by 'outsiders'.

This alternative taxonomy of welfare-to-work regimes is once again no more than a heuristic device. It defines ideal types that do not necessarily exist in pure form, since actual welfare-to-work regimes are invariably hybrid in nature, reflecting contested discourses of responsibility and the inherent instability of the ethical foundations of welfare.

Responsibility and need

By and large, it would seem, the workfare state era is dominated by various hybrid combinations of the work-first and the human capital approaches. Though the US is generally held to exemplify the work-first approach, initiatives taken in certain states under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provide isolated examples of a human capital approach (Savner and Bernstein, 2004). Though the UK may be said to lean more heavily towards a human capital approach, the UK government claims to be 'building a system that recognises the responsibilities people have to get themselves off benefits' (DWP, 2006: 7) and some commentators would say the resulting policies tend to favour the work-first approach (Finn, 2005). Hybrid welfare-to-work systems may be of value to those who are ready and able to access the labour market, but they do not work well for those who may be less ready or who are especially vulnerable. Vulnerable people may be put substantively at risk by aggressively instituted work-first approaches or may be driven to corrosive self-recrimination by unsuitably designed human capital approaches (Dean, 2003). Either way, the systems may fail to engender responsibility.

The moral-authoritarianism of the work-first approach has everything in common with the Benthamite utilitarianism of the nineteenth century Poor Law. As such, it sits uneasily for

example with the principles expounded by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which declares that everyone has the right to free choice of employment (Article 23[1]) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 which acknowledges the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain her living by work which she freely chooses or accepts (Article 6[1]). Guy Standing has argued that 'the right to a job that is chosen for you by somebody else against your wishes …. is no right at all' (2002:273). Indeed, though it remains a moot point, being forced on pain of destitution to take a job one has not chosen might indeed be held to amount to a violation of one's human rights.

The human capital approach, in contrast, is arguably more in tune with the emerging ethos of the workfare state era. However, the limitations of the human capital concept are well rehearsed (Piachaud, 2002). The assumption is that investment in a person's skills and training may produce a return that will benefit both the welfare of the individual and the productivity of the economy. This is, however, unduly individualistic in that the ability to invest in education and skills training and the effectiveness of the outcomes are subject to the wider social context, including the effects of poverty, class background, parental and peer-group influences. It is also unduly economistic since it cannot easily account for the variable quality and substance of educational inputs and training schemes, nor, for example, for the qualitative contribution to economic benefits that may result from 'soft' or inter-personal skills. More fundamentally, the application of the term capital as a metaphor for individual productive potential has crucial ideological significance since it privileges a particular construction of what is to be valued about a person and her abilities. From a neo-Marxist perspective one might complain that the human capital approach to welfare-to-work and the manner in which it contrives to invest in the supply side of the labour market locks people inexorably into the capitalist system of wage labour

(Novak and Jones, 1999). From a liberal perspective, however, Amartya Sen would also complain that 'human beings are not merely means of production, but also the end of the exercise' (1999: 296). Sen has championed the idea not of human capital, but of human capabilities. By capabilities Sen is referring not to what people can do (their functionings) but to their ability to lead a life they would choose and that they value. For Sen, poverty arises not merely when people are deprived of commodities, but when they are deprived of capabilities. Empowerment comes not merely from an ability to function, but from the freedom to function. By insisting the individual must embrace for themselves a 'responsible' or correct form of functioning (i.e. labour market participation), advanced liberalism is, arguably, as much a corruption of the liberal ideal as the utilitarianism of the Poor Law era had been.

Job-creation and right to work approaches, though clearly now in decline even in continental European countries (Bruttel and Sol, 2006), continue to offer an alternative conception of the nature of responsibility and the ways in which paid employment relates to social inclusion and non-material needs. From a solidaristic perspective it can be argued that 'work' - whether it is paid or unpaid, productive or reproductive - shapes our lives (Mooney, 2004). Marx, of course, contended that work - if it is a freely performed creative interaction with the world around us - constitutes the very basis of humanity's conscious 'species-being' (Marx, 1844: 328). Though not necessarily informed by philosophical considerations, the job-creation and the right to work approaches pursued in part by social democratic and corporatist welfare regimes were focused upon people's need to work as well as upon their responsibility to do so. Job creation regimes, such as those that were until recently characteristic of certain Nordic countries, sought to expand the number of jobs to meet the needs of society; while insertion/right to work regimes, such as those attempted by some corporatist welfare regimes, have sought to

gather up those whose need to work has not been met. Work - including care work, voluntary work, artistic or scholarly endeavour as much as paid employment - is necessary to human self-actualisation (Maslow 1954) and self-identity (Giddens, 1991).

It is argued elsewhere (Dean *et al*. 2003) that what is required is a 'life-first' approach to welfare-to-work: an approach that would place a person's life-needs, including their need to work, before their duty or obligation to take paid employment. The implication is not necessarily that case-management approaches associated with welfare-to-work schemes should become yet more comprehensive or intrusive but that their emphasis should change so as to focus on human capabilities, not human capital; on the right of an individual to flourish through her work, and not merely survive by her labour. Handler (2004) has put the case for separating the administration of benefit payments to job-seekers from the provision of services intended to ready job-seekers for work and/or place them in the labour market. Ending the direct conditionality of income support would free welfare-to-work programmes to function in more supportive and creative ways. But, more fundamentally, policy and practice should proceed not from the premise that 'work' is an enforceable individual obligation, but that it must necessarily have some socially constituted value and meaning if it is to be a means to social inclusion.

Conclusion/summary

It has been contended that what might now be characterised as a workfare state era has entailed a partial shift from moral to ethical preoccupations on the one hand and from solidarism to contractarianism on the other. The consequence so far as social policy and the provision of

welfare are concerned can be characterised by means of the inelegant term 'responsibilisation':

individuals increasingly are inculcated to an ethic of self-responsibility and assisted to maximise

their personal human capital. But despite this, moralistic and solidaristic elements remain in

evidence: neither the authoritarian legacy of the Poor Laws, nor the collectivist impulses of the

welfare state have been entirely eclipsed. In particular, the immanent logic of welfare-to-work is

complex and hybrid in nature, though - certainly in the English-speaking world - it is dominated

by a problematic combination of 'work-first' and 'human capital development' approaches which,

through their focus on contradictory interpretations of responsibility, in fact fail to meet people's

non-material needs, including their need to work.

To achieve full-employment through coercion is neither economically sustainable, nor

ethically acceptable. And yet an approach to welfare-to-work premised upon a competitive

individualist ethos may be shown to prejudice the inclusion of the most vulnerable (Dean 2003)

and, more generally, it distorts the relationship between human welfare and the value of work.

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Hartley Dean, Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK