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Punishing the Poor

THE NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOCIAL INSECURITY

Loïc Wacquant

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clinic of a jail finds itself handling serious cases of mental illness which, because they were not treated by the hospital sector outside, have led to incarceration).

Finally, it is essential to *forge connections between activists and researchers on the penal and social fronts*, between members of unions and associations in the welfare, education, housing, and health sectors, on the one hand, and their counterparts mobilized around the police, justice, and correctional services, on the other. The double regulation of the poor through the conjoined assistantial and judicial wings of the state in the age of economic deregulation must be met by new alliances of analysts and militants taking account of the growing fusion between the Right hand and the Left hand of the state distinctive of the anatomy of the neoliberal state. Moreover, such civic and scientific synergy must be established not solely at the national level but also at the European level in order to optimize the intellectual and organizational resources that can be invested in the permanent struggle to redefine the perimeter and modalities of public action.[32] There exists a formidable pool of theoretical and practical knowledge to be exploited and shared across the continent to dissect and remake the organic link between social justice and criminal justice. For the true alternative to the drift toward the penalization of poverty, whether soft or hard, remains the construction of a European social state worthy of the name. Three and a half centuries after its birth, the most effective means for pushing back the prison still remains and will remain for the decades ahead to push social and economic rights forward.

Theoretical Coda: A Sketch of the Neoliberal State

Three analytic breaks have proven necessary to elaborate the diagnosis of the invention of a new government of social insecurity wedding restrictive "workfare" and expansive "prisonfare" presented in this book, and to account for the punitive policy turn taken by the United States and other advanced societies following its lead onto the path of economic deregulation and welfare retrenchment in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

The first consists in *breaking out of the crime-and-punishment poke*, which continues to straightjacket scholarly and policy debates on incarceration, even as the divorce of this familiar couple grows ever more barefaced. The runaway growth and fervent glorification of the penal apparatus in America after the mid-1970s—and its milder expansion and startling political rehabilitation in Western Europe with a two-decade lag—are inexplicable so long as one insists on deriving them from the incidence and composition of offenses. For the rolling out of the penal state after the peaking of the Civil Rights movement responds, not to rising *criminal insecurity*, but to the wave of *social insecurity* that has flooded the lower tier of the class structure owing to the fragmentation of wage labor and the destabilization of ethnoracial or ethnonational hierarchies (provoked by the implosion of the dark ghetto on the United States side and by the settlement of postcolonial migrants on the European side). Indeed, the obsessive focus on crime, backed by ordinary and scholarly common sense, has served well to hide from view the new politics and policy of poverty that is a core component in the forging of the neoliberal state.*

The second break requires *relinking social welfare and penal policies*, since these two strands of government action toward the poor have

*For instance, the excellent volume on *The Crime Drop in America* edited by Alfred Blumstein and Joel Wallman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), bringing together the foremost criminologists in the land to puzzle out the causes of the unexpected decline in offending, contains not one paragraph tackling the sea changes in welfare provision, public housing, foster care, health care, and related state policies that jointly set the life options of the populations most susceptible to street crime (as both perpetrators and victims).

come to be informed by the same behaviorist philosophy relying on deterrence, surveillance, stigma, and graduated sanctions to modify conduct. Welfare revamped as workfare and prison stripped of its rehabilitative pretension now form a single organizational mesh flung at the same clientele mired in the fissures and ditches of the dualizing metropolis. They work jointly to invisibilize problem populations—by forcing them off the public aid rolls, on the one side, and holding them under lock, on the other—and eventually push them into the peripheral sectors of the booming secondary labor market. Returning to their original historical mission at the birth of capitalism, poor relief and penal confinement collude to normalize, supervise, and/or neutralize the destitute and disruptive fractions of the postindustrial proletariat coalescing under the new economic conditions of capital hypermobility and labor degradation.

The third rupture involves *overcoming the customary opposition between materialist and symbolic approaches*, descended from the emblematic figures of Karl Marx and Émile Durkheim, so as to heed and hold together the instrumental and the expressive functions of the penal apparatus. Weaving together concerns for control and communication, the management of dispossessed categories and the affirmation of salient social boundaries, has enabled us to go beyond an analysis couched in the language of prohibition to trace how the expansion and redeployment of the prison and its institutional tentacles (probation, parole, criminal databases, swirling discourses about crime, and a virulent culture of public denigration of offenders) has reshaped the sociosymbolic landscape and remade the state itself. Tracking down the conjoint material and symbolic effects of punishment reveals that the penal state has become a potent cultural engine in its own right, which spawns categories, classifications, and images of wide import and use in broad sectors of government action and civic life.

Now, it is fruitful, to sharpen the analytic contours and clarify the theoretical implications of this inquiry into the punitive turn in public policy toward the poor taken in advanced society at century's dawn, to relate it to the works of Pierre Bourdieu on the state, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward on welfare, Michel Foucault and David Garland on punishment, and David Harvey on neoliberalism. This leads us, by way of theoretical coda, to draw a sociological sketch of that wooly and ominous configuration extending beyond its usual economic characterization.

When Workfare Joins Prisonfare: Theoretical (Re)Percussions

In *The Weight of the World* and related essays, Pierre Bourdieu has proposed that we construe the state, not as a monolithic and coordinated ensemble, but as a splintered space of forces vying over the definition and distribution of public goods, which he calls the "bureaucratic field."[1] The constitution of this space is the end-result of a long-term process of concentration of the various species of capital operative in a given social formation, and especially of "juridical capital as the objectified and codified form of symbolic capital" which enables the state to monopolize the official definition of identities and the administration of justice.[2] In the contemporary period, the bureaucratic field is traversed by two internecine struggles. The first pits the "higher state nobility" of policy-makers intent on promoting market-oriented reforms and the "lower state nobility" of executants attached to the traditional missions of government. The second opposes what Bourdieu calls the "Left hand" and the "Right hand" of the state. The Left hand, the feminine side of Leviathan, is materialized by the "spendthrift" ministries in charge of "social functions"—public education, health, housing, welfare, and labor law—which offer protection and succor to the social categories shorn of economic and cultural capital. The Right hand, the masculine side, is charged with enforcing the new economic discipline via budget cuts, fiscal incentives, and economic deregulation.

By inviting us to grasp in a single conceptual framework the various sectors of the state that administer the life conditions and chances of the lower class, and to view these sectors as enmeshed in relations of antagonistic cooperation as they vie for preeminence inside the bureaucratic field, this conception has helped us map the ongoing shift from the social to the penal treatment of urban marginality.[3] The present investigation fills in a gap in Bourdieu's model by inserting the police, the courts, and *the prison as core constituents of the "Right hand"* of the state, alongside the ministries of the economy and the budget. It suggests that we need to bring penal policies from the periphery to the center of our analysis of the redesign and deployment of government programs aimed at coping with the entrenched poverty and deepening disparities spawned in the polarizing city by the discarding of the Fordist-Keynesian social compact. The new government of social insecurity put in place in the United States and offered as model to other advanced countries entails both a shift from the social to the penal wing of the state (detectible in the reallocation of public budgets, personnel, and discursive precedence) and the colonization of the welfare sector by the panoptic and punitive logic characteristic of the postreha-

A Sociological Specification of Neoliberalism

The invention of the double regulation of the insecure fractions of the postindustrial proletariat via the wedding of social and penal policy at the bottom of the polarized class structure is a major *structural innovation* that takes us beyond the model of the welfare-poverty nexus elaborated by Piven and Cloward just as the Fordist-Keynesian regime was coming unglued. The birth of this institutional contraption is also not captured by Michel Foucault's vision of the "disciplinary society" or by David Garland's notion of the "culture of control," neither of which can account for the unforeseen timing, socioethnic selectivity, and peculiar organizational path of the abrupt turnaround in penal trends in the closing decades of the twentieth century. For the punitive containment of urban marginality through the simultaneous rolling back of the social safety net and the rolling out of the police-and-prison dragnet and their knitting together into a carceral-assistantial lattice is not the spawn of some broad societal trend—whether it be the ascent of "biopower" or the advent of "late modernity"—but, at bottom, an exercise in *state crafting*. It partakes of the correlative revamping of the perimeter, missions, and capacities of public authority on the economic, social welfare, and penal fronts. This revamping has been uniquely swift, broad, and deep in the United States, but it is in progress—or in question—in all advanced societies submitted to the relentless pressure to conform to the American pattern.

Yet Michel Foucault was right to advise us to "take penal practices less as a consequence of juridical theories than as a chapter in political anatomy."[26] Accordingly, the present book has been intended, not as a variation on the well-rehearsed score of the political economy of imprisonment, so much as a contribution to the political sociology of the transformation of the field of power in the era of triumphant neoliberalism. For tracking the roots and modalities of America's stupendous drive to hyperincarceration opens a unique route into the sanctum of the neoliberal Leviathan. It leads us to articulate two major theoretical claims. The first is that *the penal apparatus is a core organ of the state*, expressive of its sovereignty and instrumental in imposing categories, upholding material and symbolic divisions, and molding relations and behaviors through the selective penetration of social and physical space. The police, the courts, and the prison are not mere technical appendages for the enforcement of lawful order, but vehicles for the political production of reality and for the oversight of deprived and defamed social categories and their reserved territories. Students of American politics, stratification, poverty, race, and civic culture who

neglect them do so at huge analytic and policy costs. The second thesis is that the ongoing capitalist "revolution from above" commonly called *neoliberalism entails the enlargement and exaltation of the penal sector* of the bureaucratic field, so that the state may check the social reverberations caused by the diffusion of social insecurity in the lower rungs of the class and ethnic hierarchy as well as assuage popular discontent over the dereliction of its traditional economic and social duties.

Neoliberalism readily resolves what for Garland's "culture of control" remains an enigmatic paradox of late modernity, namely, the fact that "control is now being re-emphasized in every area of social life—*with the singular and startling exception of the economy*, from whose deregulated domain most of today's major risks routinely emerge."[27] The neoliberal remaking of the state also explains the steep class, ethnoracial, and spatial bias stamping the simultaneous retraction of its social bosom and expansion of its penal fist: the populations most directly and adversely impacted by the convergent revamping of the labor market and public aid turn out also to be the privileged "beneficiaries" of the penal largesse of the authorities. Finally, neoliberalism correlates closely with the international diffusion of punitive policies in both the welfare and the criminal domains. It is not by accident that the advanced countries that have imported, first workfare measures designed to buttress the discipline of desocialized wage work and then variants of US-style criminal justice measures, are the Commonwealth nations which also pursued aggressive policies of economic deregulation inspired by the "free market" nostrums come from America, whereas the countries which remained committed to a strong regulatory state curbing social insecurity have best resisted the sirens of "zero tolerance" policing and "prison works." Similarly, societies of the Second World such as Brazil, South Africa, and Turkey, which adopted superpunitive penal planks inspired by American developments in the 1990s and saw their prison population soar as a result, did so not because they had at long last reached the stage of "late modernity," but because they had taken the route of market deregulation and state retrenchment.* But

*Loïc Wacquant, *Les Prisons de la misère* (Paris: Raisons d'agir Éditions, 1999), translated as *Prisons of Poverty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); and L. Wacquant, "Towards a Dictatorship over the Poor? Notes on the Penalization of Poverty in Brazil," *Punishment & Society* 5, no. 2 (April 2003): 197–205. British developments provide a pellucid illustration of this process of sequential policy transfer from the economic to the social welfare to the penal realm. The Thatcher and Major governments first deregulated the labor market and subsequently introduced US-style welfare-to-work measures, as recounted by David P. Dolowitz, *Learning from America: Policy Transfer and the Development of the British Workfare State* (Eastbourne: Sussex

to discern these multilevel connections between the upsurge of the punitive Leviathan and the spread of neoliberalism, it is necessary to develop a precise and broad conception of the latter. Instead of discarding neoliberalism, as Garland does, on account of it being "rather too specific" a phenomenon to account for penal escalation,[28] we must expand our conception of it and move from an economic to a fully sociological understanding.

Neoliberalism is an elusive and contested notion, a hybrid term awkwardly suspended between the lay idiom of political debate and the technical terminology of social science, which moreover is often invoked without clear referent. For some, it designates a hard-wired reality to which one cannot but accommodate (often equated with "globalization"), while others view it as a doctrine that has yet to be realized and ought to be resisted. It is alternately depicted as a tight, fixed, and monolithic set of principles and programs that tend to homogenize societies, or as a loose, mobile, and plastic constellation of concepts and institutions adaptable to variegated strands of capitalism. Whether singular or polymorphous, evolutionary or revolutionary, the prevalent conception of neoliberalism is essentially economic: it stresses an array of market-friendly policies such as labor deregulation, capital mobility, privatization, a monetarist agenda of deflation and financial autonomy, trade liberalization, interplace competition, and the reduction of taxation and public expenditures.[29] But this conception is thin and incomplete, as well as too closely bound up with the sermonizing discourse of the advocates of neoliberalism. We need to reach beyond this economic nucleus and elaborate a thicker notion that identifies the institutional machinery and symbolic frames through which neoliberal tenets are being actualized.

A minimalist sociological characterization can now be essayed as follows. Neoliberalism is a *transnational political project* aiming to remake the nexus of market, state, and citizenship from above. This project is carried by a new global ruling class in the making, composed of the heads and senior executives of transnational firms, high-ranking politicians, state managers and top officials of multinational organizations (the OECD, WTO, IMF, World Bank, and the European Union),

Academic Press, 1998). Then Anthony Blair expanded workfare and complemented it by overhauling the criminal justice system through the slavish imitation of American penal remedies, with the result that England now sports "the highest imprisonment rate, the most crowded prisons, the severest sentencing practices, the most hyperbolic anti-crime rhetoric, and the worst racial disparities in Europe." Michael H. Tonry, *Punishment and Politics: Evidence and Emulation in the Making of English Crime Control Policy* (London: Willan, 2004), 168.

and cultural-technical experts in their employ (chief among them economists, lawyers, and communications professionals with germane training and mental categories in the different countries).[30] It entails, not simply the reassertion of the prerogatives of capital and the promotion of the marketplace, but the articulation of four institutional logics:

1. *economic deregulation*, that is, reregulation aimed at promoting "the market" or market-like mechanisms as the optimal device, not only for guiding corporate strategies and economic transactions (under the aegis of the shareholder-value conception of the firm), but for organizing the gamut of human activities, including the private provision of core public goods, on putative grounds of efficiency (implying deliberate disregard for distributive issues of justice and equality).
2. *welfare state devolution, retraction, and recomposition* designed to facilitate the expansion and support the intensification of commodification, and in particular to submit reticent individuals to the discipline of desocialized wage labor via variants of "workfare" establishing a quasi-contractual relationship between the state and lower-class recipients treated not as citizens but as clients or subjects (stipulating their behavioral obligations as condition for continued public assistance).
3. the *cultural trope of individual responsibility*, which invades all spheres of life to provide a "vocabulary of motive"—as C.-Wright Mills would say—for the construction of the self (on the model of the entrepreneur), the spread of markets, and legitimation for the widened competition it subtends, the counterpart of which is the evasion of corporate liability and the proclamation of state irresponsibility (or sharply reduced accountability in matters social and economic).
4. *an expansive, intrusive, and proactive penal apparatus* which penetrates the nether regions of social and physical space to contain the disorders and disarray generated by diffusing social insecurity and deepening inequality, to unfurl disciplinary supervision over the precarious fractions of the postindustrial proletariat, and to reassert the authority of Leviathan so as to bolster the evaporating legitimacy of elected officials.

A central *ideological* tenet of neoliberalism is that it entails the coming of "small government": the shrinking of the allegedly flaccid and overgrown Keynesian welfare state and its makeover into a lean and nimble workfare state, which "invests" in human capital and "activates" communal springs and individual appetites for work and civic participation through "partnerships" stressing self-reliance, commitment to paid work, and managerialism. The present book demonstrates that the neoliberal state turns out to be quite different *in actuality*:

while it embraces laissez-faire at the top, releasing restraints on capital and expanding the life chances of the holders of economic and cultural capital, it is anything but laissez-faire at the bottom. Indeed, when it comes to handling the social turbulence generated by deregulation and to impressing the discipline of precarious labor, the new Leviathan reveals itself to be fiercely interventionist, bossy, and pricey. The soft touch of libertarian proclivities favoring the upper class gives way to the hard edge of authoritarian oversight, as it endeavors to direct, nay dictate, the behavior of the lower class. "Small government" in the economic register thus begets "big government" on the twofold frontage of workfare and criminal justice. The results of America's grand experiment in creating the first society of advanced insecurity in history are in: *the invasive, expansive, and expensive penal state is not a deviation from neoliberalism but one of its constituent ingredients.*

Remarkably, this is a side of neoliberalism that has been obfuscated or overlooked by its apologists and detractors alike. This blind spot is glaring in Anthony Giddens's celebrated reformulation of neoliberal imperatives into the platform of New Labour. In his manifesto for the *The Third Way*, Giddens highlights high rates of crime in deteriorating working-class districts as an indicator of "civic decline" and curiously blames the Keynesian welfare state for it (not deindustrialization and social retrenchment): "The egalitarianism of the old left was noble in intent, but as its rightist critics say has sometimes led to perverse consequences—visible, for instance, in the social engineering that has left a legacy of decaying, crime-ridden housing estates." He makes "preventing crime, and reducing fear of crime" through state-locality partnerships central to "community regeneration," and he embraces the law-and-order mythology of "broken windows": "One of the most significant innovations in criminology in recent years has been the discovery [sic] that the decay of day-to-day civility relates directly to criminality. . . . Disorderly behavior unchecked signals to citizens that the area is unsafe."* But Giddens studiously omits the punishment side of the equation: *The Third Way* contains not a single mention of the prison and glosses over the judicial hardening and carceral boom

*Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 16, 78–79, and 87–88. In support of order-maintenance policing, Giddens repeatedly cites George Kelling and Catherine Coles's *Fixing Broken Windows*, the "how-to-cut-crime handbook" sponsored by the Manhattan Institute which "demonstrate[s] that the broken windows thesis is 100 percent correct," according to the fervent back cover endorsement of John DiIulio (apostle of mass incarceration and founding director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives under George W. Bush).

that have everywhere accompanied the kind of economic deregulation and welfare devolution it promotes. This omission is particularly startling in the case of Britain, since the incarceration rate of England and Wales jumped from 88 inmates per 100,000 residents in 1992 to 142 per 100,000 in 2004, even as crime was receding, with Anthony Blair presiding over the single largest increase of the convict population in the country's history (matching the feat of Clinton, his cosponsor of the "Third Way" on the other side of the Atlantic).

A similar oversight of the centrality of the penal institution to the new government of social insecurity is found in the works of eminent critics of neoliberalism. David Harvey's extended characterization of "the neoliberal state" in his *Brief History of Neoliberalism* is a case in point, which appositely spotlights the obdurate limitations of the traditional political economy of punishment which the present book has sought to overcome. For Harvey, neoliberalism aims at maximizing the reach of market transactions via "deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision." As in previous eras of capitalism, the task of Leviathan is "to facilitate conditions for profitable capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital," but now this translates into penal expansion:

> The neoliberal state will resort to coercive legislation and policing tactics (anti-picketing rules, for instance) to disperse or repress collective forms of opposition to corporate power. Forms of surveillance and policing multiply: in the US, incarceration became a key state strategy to deal with problems arising among the discarded workers and marginalized populations. *The coercive arm of the state is augmented to protect corporate interests* and, if necessary, to *repress dissent*. None of this seems consistent with neoliberal theory.[31]

With barely a few passing mentions of the prison and not a line on workfare, Harvey's account of the rise of neoliberalism is woefully incomplete. His conception of the neoliberal state turns out to be surprisingly restricted, first, because he remains wedded to the repressive conception of power, instead of construing the manifold missions of penality through the expansive category of production. Subsuming penal institutions under the rubric of coercion leads him to ignore the expressive function and ramifying material effects of the law and its enforcement, which are to generate controlling images and public categories, to stoke collective emotions and accentuate salient social boundaries, as well as to activate state bureaucracies so as to mold social ties and strategies. Next, Harvey portrays this repression as aimed at political opponents to corporate rule and dissident movements that

challenge the hegemony of private property and profit, whereas this book shows that the primary targets of penalization in the post-Fordist era have been the precarious fractions of the proletariat concentrated in the tainted districts of dereliction of the dualizing metropolis who, being squeezed by the urgent press of day-to-day subsistence, have little capacity or care to contest corporate rule.*

Third, for the author of *Social Justice and the City* the state "intervenes" through coercion only when the neoliberal order breaks down, to repair economic transactions, ward off challenges to capital, and resolve social crises. By contrast, *Punishing the Poor* argues that the present penal activism of the state—translating into carceral bulimia in the United States and policing frenzy throughout Western Europe—is an ongoing, routine feature of neoliberalism. Indeed, it is not economic failure but economic success that requires the aggressive deployment of the police, court, and prison in the nether sectors of social and physical space. And the rapid turnings of the law-and-order merry-go-round are an index of the reassertion of state sovereignty, not a sign of its weakness. Harvey does note that the retrenchment of the welfare state "leaves larger and larger segments of the population exposed to impoverishment" and that "the social safety net is reduced to a bare minimum in favor of a system that emphasizes individual responsibility and the victim is all too often blamed."[32] But he does not recognize that it is precisely these normal disorders, inflicted by economic deregulation and welfare retrenchment, that are managed by the enlarged penal apparatus in conjunction with supervisory workfare. Instead, Harvey invokes the bogeyman of the "prison-industrial complex," suggesting that incarceration is a major plank of capitalist profit-seeking and accumulation when it is a disciplinary device entailing a gross drain on the public coffers and a tremendous drag on the economy.**

*Harvey lists as the main targets of state repression radical Islam and China on the foreign front and "dissident internal movements" such as the Branch Davidians at Waco, the participants in the Los Angeles riots of April 1992 (triggered by the acquittal of the policemen involved in the videotaped beating of motorist Rodney King), and the antiglobalization activists that rocked the G-8 meeting in Seattle in 1999. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 83. But squashing episodic and feeble mobilizations against corporate power and state injustice hardly requires throwing millions behind bars.

**"The rise of surveillance and policing and, in the case of the US, incarceration of recalcitrant elements in the population indicates a more sinister turn toward intense social control. The prison-industrial complex is a thriving sector (alongside personal security services) in the US economy." Ibid., 165. We saw in chapter 5 that the growth of private incarceration stopped cold with the stock market crash of 2000, that it is a phenomenon derivative of the expansion of the penal state, and that the weight of corrections in the national economy is negligible in any case.

Fourth and last, Harvey views the neoconservative stress on coercion and order restoration as a temporary fix for the chronic instability and functional failings of neoliberalism, whereas I construe authoritarian moralism as an *integral constituent of the neoliberal state* when it turns its sights on the lower rungs of the polarizing class structure. Like Garland, Harvey must artificially dichotomize "neoliberalism" and "neoconservatism" to account for the reassertion of the supervisory authority of the state over the poor because his narrow economistic definition of neoliberalism replicates its ideology and truncates its sociology.* To elucidate the paternalist transformation of penality at century's turn, then, we must imperatively escape the "crime-and-punishment" box, but also exorcise once and for all the ghost of Louis Althusser, whose instrumentalist conception of Leviathan and crude duality of ideological and repressive apparatuses gravely hamstring the historical anthropology of the state in the neoliberal age. Following Bourdieu, we must fully attend to the internal complexity and dynamic recomposition of the bureaucratic field, as well as to the constitutive power of the symbolic structures of penality to trace the intricate meshing of market and moral discipline across the economic, welfare, and criminal justice realms.[33]

For the spread of economic deregulation and the about-turn in social policy observed in nearly all advanced societies, away from broad-based entitlements and automatic benefits toward a selective approach promoting private operators, contractual incentives, and targeted support conditional on certain behaviors aimed at closing the exit option from the labor market, have been accompanied everywhere by the enlargement and reinforcement of the facilities, activities, and reach of penal bureaucracies effectively pointed at the lower end of the class, ethnic, and spatial spectrum. The so-called *enabling state* that dominates policy making at the top on both sides of the Atlantic at century's

*For Harvey, neoconservatism is a rival political formation which "veers away from the principles of pure neoliberalism" in "its concern for order as an answer to the chaos of individual interests" and "for an overweening morality." It might replace the neoliberal state, as the latter is "inherently unstable." Ibid., 81–82. Garland adopts a similar tack to resolve the empirical contradiction between the libertarian ethos of late modernity and the authoritarian tendencies of neoliberalism: "While the neoliberal agenda of privatization, market competition and spending restraints that shaped much of the administrative reform that government imposed on criminal justice agencies behind the scenes, it was the very different neo-conservative agenda that dictated the public face of penal policy." Garland, *The Culture of Control*, 131.

dawn[34] turns out to be a *disabling state* for those at the bottom who are adversely affected by the conjoint restructuring of the economy and polity, in that it acts toward them in ways that systematically curtail social opportunities and cut off social ligatures—to recall the two components of "life chances" according to Ralf Dahrendorf.[35]

In his meticulous comparison of eugenic measures in the 1920s, compulsory work camps in the 1930s, and workfare schemes in the 1990s in England and America, Desmond King has shown that "illiberal social policies" which seek to direct citizens' conduct coercively are "intrinsic to liberal democratic politics" and reflective of their internal contradictions.[36] Even as they contravene standards of equality and personal liberty, such programs are periodically pursued because they are ideally suited to highlighting and enforcing the boundaries of membership in times of turmoil; they are fleet vehicles for broadcasting the newfound resolve of state elites to tackle offensive conditions and assuage popular resentment toward derelict or deviant categories; and they diffuse conceptions of otherness that materialize the symbolic oppositions anchoring the social order. With the advent of the neoliberal government of social insecurity mating restrictive workfare and expansive prisonfare, however, it is not just the policies of the state that are illiberal, but *its very architecture*. Tracking the coming and workings of America's punitive politics of poverty after the dissolution of the Fordist-Keynesian order and the implosion of the black ghetto reveals that neoliberalism brings about, not the shrinking of government, but the erection of a *centaur state*, liberal at the top and paternalistic at the bottom, which presents radically different faces at the two ends of the social hierarchy: a comely and caring visage toward the middle and upper classes, and a fearsome and frowning mug toward the lower class.

It bears stressing here that the building of a Janus-faced Leviathan practicing liberal paternalism has not proceeded according to some master-scheme concocted by omniscient rulers. To reiterate the warnings sounded in the book's prologue: the overall fitness of punitive containment to regulate urban marginality at century's dawn is a rough *post-hoc functionality* born of a mix of initial policy intent, sequential bureaucratic adjustment, and political trial-and-error and electoral profit-seeking at the point of confluence of three relatively autonomous streams of public measures concerning the low-skill employment market, public aid, and criminal justice. The complementarity and interlocking of state programs in these three realms is partly designed and partly an emergent property, fostered by the practical need to handle correlated contingencies, their common framing through the lens of

moral behaviorism, and the shared ethnoracial bias stamping their routine operations—with (sub)proletarian blacks from the hyperghetto figuring at the point of maximum impact where market deregulation, welfare retrenchment, and penal penetration meet. The coalescing government of social insecurity is neither a preordained historical development, propelled by an irresistible systemic logic, nor an organizational constellation free of contradictions, incongruities, and gaps. Indeed, both workfare and the penitentiary as we know them at the outset of the twenty-first century are riven by deep irrationalities, glaring insufficiencies, and built-in imbalances,[37] and their coupling is doubly so. The refusal of "the functionalism of the worst" is inseparably a rebuff of the conspiratorial view of class rule and a rejection of the flawed logic of structural hyperdeterminism which transmutes the *historically conditioned outcome of struggles*, waged over and inside the bureaucratic field to shape its perimeter, capacities, and missions, into a necessary and ineluctable fact.

Whatever the modalities of their advent, it is indisputable that the linked stinginess of the welfare wing and munificence of the penal wing under the guidance of moralism have altered the makeup of the bureaucratic field in ways that are profoundly injurious to democratic ideals.[38] As their sights converge onto the same marginal populations and territories, deterrent workfare and the neutralizing prison foster vastly different profiles and experiences of citizenship across the class and ethnic spectrum. They not only contravene the fundamental principle of equality of treatment by the state and routinely abridge the individual freedoms of the dispossessed. They also undermine the consent of the governed through the aggressive deployment of involuntary programs stipulating personal responsibilities just as the state is withdrawing the institutional supports necessary to shoulder these and shirking its own social and economic charges. And they stamp the precarious fractions of the proletariat from which public aid recipients and convicts issue with the indelible seal of unworthiness. In short, the penalization of poverty splinters citizenship along class lines, saps civic trust at the bottom, and sows the degradation of republican tenets. The establishment of the new government of social insecurity discloses, *in fine*, that *neoliberalism is constitutively corrosive of democracy*.

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In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville and his friend Gustave de Beaumont were dispatched to the United States by King Louis-Philippe to gather evidence on the workings of the American prison system and make recommendations for its application in France. Much as with zero-