2 Need, Benefit and Control
The morning after the release of the interim report of Senator Jocelyn Newman's Reference Group on Welfare Reform (2000 [a]) Prime Minister Howard said "People want the needy looked after but they don't want an explosion in welfare spending." (P&NB 29/3/2000. 9 am News). Patrick McClure, CEO of Mission Australia and the head of the Reference Group, in an interview on Life Matters a few minutes later was asked about sanctions that might apply to income support applicants if they did not 'participate' in the Government's plans to extend mutual obligations provisions applying to unemployed people to single parents and disability pensioners claimed that there was only one reference to sanctions in the 75 page report. This comment was presumably made in an attempt to assure a frightened recipient population they were not about to lose their benefits. Those Life Matters listeners who had watched the 7.30 Report two days previously would have put McClure's comments alongside the fact that in the previous 12 months Centrelink had issued 200,000 notices of breach to social security recipients in the previous year. Anyone who bothered to read the Reference Group's interim report would have found scattered throughout pages 51-61 references to "compelled participation", "requirements to participate", "sanctions...to ensure compliance", "explicit direction", ruling out "open choice" in relation to how people participated and to "mutual obligation".

McClure claimed the idea of extending mutual obligation through participation arose from the Reform Group's review of New Zealand's income support system and of Tony Blair's labour market initiatives. This ignores the fact that in New Zealand the Clarke Labour Alliance Government, supported by the Greens, announced shortly after gaining office its intention to revisit in 2000 the entire National Party Government 'compelled activity' programs for income support recipients. On the 9th March the relevant New Zealand Minister, Steve Maharey ended work-testing for people on invalids benefits. He says the evaluation of the trial held last year showed the policy was 'completely useless'. He says that people with disabilities want to work and he prefers to put money into positive programmes that remove barriers to their employment (The Jobs Letter 27th March, 2000, p.3).

The Blair Government acknowledged its indebtedness to the Keating Government's Working Nation document (1994), in relation to unemployed beneficiaries there has, since the 1947 Social Security legislation, been a work testing eligibility requirement, and work relief programs (the Susso) during the 1930's demanded actual work for sustenance prior to the supply of unemployment relief. The Howard Government’s ‘work for the dole’ program is a latter day Susso scheme.

The recent history of 'compelled activity' in relation to income support in Australia reveals that preoccupation with 'activity / participation' was very much a part of the previous Labor Government's approach to unemployed people. Professor Bettina Cass (1986,Chs. 2 & 6) in the mid to late 1980s headed the Review of Social Security which recommended in a number of reports (Cass, Gibson & Tito 1986, Cass 1988) that the Department should insist applicants for unemployment benefits engage in some form of 'approved activity'. Cass claimed in a number of consultations she undertook that such 'activity testing' was designed to assist those most marginal to the labour market retain their benefit. Cass argued that in times of high unemployment the most marginal were likely to fail a strict application of the 'work test'. Some present at these
consultations in Melbourne and Perth argued that, in the absence of universal income guarantees, compelling activity could be potentially detrimental to the interests of the most vulnerable.

In Cass' defence it should be noted that she was privy to much of the thinking that went on inside Brian Howe's, the then Minister of Social Security, Office. At the time he was in the process of articulating Labor's social justice principles of:

- Equity,
- Access,
- Equality of rights, and
- Participation.

These social justice principles came to be issued as part of the Budget Papers with the imprimatur of the Prime Minister (Keating & Howe 1992) and as a consequence came to be widely interpreted, at least in normative terms, as:

- the right to participate,
- right to have equitable access, and
- to enjoy equality of rights.

Throughout the nineties social welfare advocates relied on such principles to assert clients' right to participate in a range of decisions which affected their lives. The release of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform Interim Report heralds the metamorphosis of participation as a social right into participation as obligation.

In part this book sets out to explain changes to income support which have occurred over the last three decades. Mike Steketee, The Australian's National Affairs Editor, writing about the Reference Group on Welfare Reform Interim Report, noted "The Government is shifting the philosophy behind welfare from that of an entitlement to a privilege, and increasingly one that has to be earned." (29th March, 2000, p.13). In this same article he wrote:

Largely unnoticed and without setting off political alarms, John Howard has moved substantially in the direction of reform of welfare policy. In the mid-1980s, his preaching of welfare privatisation was written off as radical conservative rhetoric. Now large slabs of the welfare dollar are being delivered by the private sector and church and other non-profit agencies (p.13).

**God on our side**

The establishment of the CES (Commonwealth Employment Service) was announced in the 1945 *White paper on Full Employment* (Australian Government 1994 p.131). Its role as a job finding agency for the unemployed soon expanded to include regulating the unemployed through the application of the work test.

Governments from Whitlam on had involved the 'not for profit' sector in job training, job finding, and community work activities. The Hawke / Keating Government expanded the 'not for profit' sector's role through Skill Share and the Job Network.

In 1996 the Howard Government began moves to corporatise the CES and it became Employment National. There had always been private job agencies who concentrated their efforts towards the top end of the job market. The Howard Government opened up the publicly
funded employment finding and job readying market to competition from both 'for profit' and 'not for profit' agencies. Employment National had to compete for what until then had been a virtual government monopoly.

The contracts let in the first round resulted in about 40% of the old CES clients staying with the government owned Employment National. For the Year 2000 round this was reduced to 1%. In the first round of contracts 'for profit' companies got the lion's share of clients and money. But by early 2000 the largest job agency in the Job Network was the Salvation Army's Employment Plus. Closely followed by the Anglicans' Mission Australia. The Catholic and United Churches also have been awarded a significant stake in the carve up. These Christian churches also have extensive investment in nursing homes, hostels, schools, child care, disability and other social welfare agencies.

Johnathan Singer (2000, p.12) revealed these churches are demanding new employees have a Christian commitment (Religion Report [a] 26/4/2000). Australian welfare services are being returned to the pre-Whitlam period where conservative church agencies dominated much of the charity, emergency relief and service delivery. They did it on the cheap and the results they produced are revealed in reports of the

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's 1997 report into the stolen generations entitled Bringing them home,
- the abuse at Neerkol and other orphanages. (Forde 1999)
- forced adoptions,
- the brutal treatment of unmarried mothers, intending to adopt, who were not allowed to see their babies in many Salvation Army and other church run maternity units,
- the incarceration of young women who were sexually abused by their fathers on the grounds that they were in 'moral danger', and
- the pitifully small contribution churches were able or willing to make to the alleviation of poverty.

The dismantling of the CES is now complete. If all that had happened was that one agency of government with its contradictory roles had been replaced by an improved bureaucracy there would be little concern. However, what is occurring is a major onslaught upon the secular welfare state.

The reinforcement of 'Christian' attitudes amongst employees of these agencies has the potential to produce the next round of silent, compliant accomplices to the denigration of those most marginal to the interests of government. Since the mid-1970s abused clients were likely to find advocates amongst secular human services workers, union delegates and other officials of good will who used to be able to rely on due process, natural justice, whistle blower legislation, public service regulations and union protection. The presence of government officers in institutional settings does not guarantee an absence of abuse. Reviews conducted in all States and Territories of Australia of prisons, watch houses, large State run mental hospitals and children's homes attest to that (Fitzgerald 1989, Forde 1999, Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997). Such an analysis has recently found support amongst right wing critics of churches involvement in the Howard Government's contract regime (The Religion Report [b] 23/8/2000, Gregg 2000). Though freedom of
information legislation and other tools in the armory of those who wish to safeguard clients or expose abuses at the hands of the State are regularly watered down, they are more apparent in State run rather than in private institutions.

There is another not dissociated feature in the debate about silencing potential critics of abuse of clients of such services once they are contracted out to major church bodies. At times, it was workers from church run agencies who blew the whistle on abuses occurring in government run services. Once services are handed over to churches this limits their workers adopting the roles of outside critic (Gregg 2000). Some church leaders in the past have played important roles as advocates for improved government services (Religion Report 20/4/2000). Perhaps the feature of this change in service provider which in the longer term will be most limiting is that clients of such services will be prepared to settle for poorer quality of service because it is provided by a church run rather than being a government service.

Whilst there have been times in Australia when church run welfare agencies have provided real leadership in income support debates, such situations are rare. The most notable example of leadership occurred in the mid-1970s at the Brotherhood of St Lawrence under the leadership of Connie Benn (1981, Liffman 1978). Church welfare agencies have a tendency towards conservative social values and when conservative governments increasingly insist that the 'not for profit' sector looks to business philanthropy as a major source of its income this exacerbates such tendencies.

The Liberal Prime Minister's determination to foist onto Australian people his social conservative agenda was an underlying theme in the Reference Group on Welfare Reform Interim Report. From page 47 to 51 the report deals with Howard's social coalition in terms similar to those Howard used in his 12th January 2000 article in The Australian:

Put simply, it describes a partnership of individuals families, business, government, welfare and charitable organisations each contributing their unique resources and expertise to tackle disadvantage at its source (p.11).

In this article he also wrote, "Most of all, the social coalition is firmly rooted in notions of mutual obligation" (p.11). The Reference Group on Welfare Reform Interim Report discusses 'mutual obligation' from page 51.

Howard makes no bones about the Government's attempt to promote conservative social policy administered by the churches operating in close association with business. On 4th May 1999 in his Australia Unlimited Roundtable speech he said:

The values and priorities we bring to social policy provide important 'points of anchorage' in a period of rapid and ongoing economic change. Economic policy liberalisation and modern conservatism in social policy share important common values and objectives. …

Both recognise the role of markets and of government….
Both reject the controls of the corporate state over people's lives.
Both promote opportunity, incentive and responsibility over dependence and welfarism. And both support the full realisation of individual potential as well as the reality of social obligation. (pp.3-4).
Conservatives have always been with us

The avalanche of conservative social policy which followed in the wake of the election of the Howard Government accentuates the conservative ideologies which have underpinned the system of income support since the earliest days of Australian colonisation. The essence of that system was *'less eligibility', discouraging the unworthy, assisting those 'in need' through no fault of their own*, that is *targeting the needy not the greedy*. 

In an interesting paper given at the 6th National Conference on Unemployment Ed Carson contends that theoretically

> the most important intellectual challenge of the new right comes from its neo-liberal rather than its neo-conservative wing….for neo-liberals, the major issue lay in the relationship between the market economy and representative democracy, for neo-conservatives the major concern was declining public authority and social control (1999 p.1).

Carson sees the new right's social agenda relying upon a form of social authoritarianism which has allowed neo-conservatives to link the need for tough law and order policies with welfare cutbacks.

> Whereas, on the one hand, crime is linked with dependency and lack of individual initiative when there is a need to justify welfare cuts, on the other hand, crime is also portrayed as fluctuating due to individual pathology and unfathomable evils, with the only way to control it being increased expenditure on repressive measures (p.3).

The mystification inherent in this contradiction constrains many of the debates about appropriate welfare services in this country. Failure to acknowledge that the welfare state has a dual role of containment and support limits understanding of the function of welfare services. This insight is not new as will be seen from the remainder of this chapter many leading Marxist and feminist social policy writers of the 1970s and 80s addressed this very issue.

The twin issues of 'need' and control

A recurring theme in discussions about the welfare system in Western democracies is that of the relationship between 'need' and control. Marxists and feminists express considerable concern about the amount of control which is exerted over beneficiaries. This issue is also raised when dealing with the role of the family in social policy and in relation to categorical benefits versus income guarantees. Conservatives, and to a lesser extent classical liberals, see the control functions of the welfare system as a benefit in so far as they help assure stability, conformity, and maintain traditional relationships. Such control functions become apparent when the methods used to determine 'need' are examined.

The 'needs based' approach to welfare

The 'needs based' approach has been a central component of welfare relief since before the Elizabethan poor law system was introduced (Polanyi 1945). The concept of 'lesseligibility' which lies at the heart of the method of determining who shall be assisted and who shall be refused can be identified in the Speenhamland system's restriction of assistance to labouring families. The various charity systems which operated in English parishes (prior to the
Elizabethan Poor Law) only assisted the worthy, leaving those considered undeserving to die at the cross roads. The process of determining whose behaviour and circumstances warranted relief allowed the parish, and later the state, to exert controls on behaviour through the distribution of largesse.

'Needs based' welfare programs are those in which the agency provides minimal clarification of its eligibility requirements. Agency pronouncements can be as general as 'we will assist people in need' without setting out under what conditions and at what rate, an approach allowing frontline welfare workers or their immediate superiors enormous discretionary power.

Such a 'needs based' approach is claimed, by its supporters, to be the most cost effective method of removing poverty. It contains a number of technical assumptions and is grounded in an ideological network in which the residual definition of welfare is paramount. The assumptions on which such assertions are founded are:

- those 'in need' can be identified,
- 'need' can be understood and satisfied,
- take-up by 'the needy' will be near total,
- the greedy will be prevented from receiving benefits, and
- the impact of processes such as stigmatisation are not socially costly.

These assumptions have drawn serious criticism from a range of writers on the left, from social democrats to Marxists, all of whom have pointed to the lack of empirical support for such assumptions. Despite this ‘needs based’ policies continue to have a strong influence on welfare practice.

The desire to assist all those 'in need' is in effect a determination to refuse assistance to all those whose circumstances do not fit into some societally approved, arbitrarily defined (albeit undeclared and somewhat flexible) set of rules.

It is possible to define 'need' to mean purely financial need and to clearly specify what constitutes financial need in relation to some arbitrary level such as Professor Henderson's Poverty Line (Henderson 1975, Social Welfare Policy Secretariat 1981, Manning 1985, Fincher & Niewenhuysen 1998). In such circumstances it would be a simple task to specify levels of financial assistance considered appropriate to satisfy such need.

Current practices in welfare departments have for many years allowed inordinate discretion to people who determine whether to assist and what level of assistance to provide: these procedures are still justified as a way of ensuring that the Department will be able to address the needs of individuals in the most appropriate manner. Griffiths (1975) did not mince words when he declared "Discretion as it applies to the present provision of emergency relief is a euphemism for discrimination (p.27)". Even many statutory income maintenance provisions are dependent upon the assessor determining the 'need' cum worthiness of the applicant.

Even when eligibility requirements and rates of assistance are specified, as they are in Social Security payments, it is still possible to create situations where the discretionary powers of officials are substantial. This was apparent in the so-called 'dole bludger' campaign orchestrated
through the press by conservative forces aimed to limit the number of out of work people who would apply for and/or obtain unemployment benefits (Windschuttle 1981).

Despite claims made by Centrelink personnel that they rely on Federal legislation and regulations, the general rule of law and legal precedents; for many years officers of that Department have refused to interpret the cohabitation rule in line with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal rulings, preferring to stay with the old Departmental instructions which are more moralistic in tone and application.

'Need' - a non explanation

The generally nebulous nature of 'needs based assistance' coupled with the obvious difficulty encountered by expert committees in coming to an adequate definition of 'need' raises the question why the concept of 'need' continues to be used to explain agencies' everyday actions in assisting their clients. Oliver (1996 p.67) argues that "the concept of need is essential to social control by the State". There is a conscious reliance by service providers on the concept of 'need' so as to mystify the restrictive nature of the assistance provided. The reasons why this happens probably differ between administrators and human service workers: administrators may seek to limit expenditure, human service workers may wish to extend professional power over both their clients and the junior administrative levels in agencies.

Clearly expressing eligibility for assistance in such nebulous terms as 'being in need' allows agencies to avoid publicising just how restrictive their assistance is. Agencies know that the more precisely they specify their eligibility requirements the greater will be the take-up rate by eligible people. If people do not know their entitlements they are less likely to attempt to enforce their rights and will be more likely to see whatever assistance they are given as reasonable (Mishra 1981, p.37, George & Wilding 1976, p.124).

Stigma is what many agencies rely on to ensure they see only the most 'needy'. It is the most determined rather than the most financially 'needy' who are advantaged by 'needs based' welfare programs.

Take-up rate of benefits could be raised by increasing efforts to inform potential clients of their eligibility, and making the eligibility requirements and ways of applying for benefits simple; through removing stigma; by presentation of the benefit as a right rather than as a privilege; by making eligibility dependent upon financial rather than social considerations; and also by defining eligibility in general rather than specific categories (Taylor-Gooby & Dale1981 p.32, Cass 1985, Le Grand 1982,Goodin 1992, Boston & St John 1998). When governments stop talking about rights preferring to speak about obligations (Howard 2000) the stigma associated with receipt of welfare benefits is increased. The widespread use of 'dependency rhetoric' since 1986, accentuated during the Prime Ministership of John Howard (1999), further devalues social security recipients.

Generalised statements about helping 'the most needy' ensure that not all of those who would meet that definition (in financial terms) apply for assistance. Failure to specify exactly what services are provided and on what terms allows agencies to avoid admitting the restrictive nature
of the services provided. Further, the power of the workers in welfare agencies in relation to clients is increased if the clients are not certain what their actual entitlements are.

In 'needs based' welfare programs
- judgemental aspects of eligibility determination,
- disregard of common or shared features between clients, and
- excessive concentration on individual differences (often of an inconsequential nature) reveal clearly how determination of 'need' is used to restrict service delivery. Although it is often not as obvious, eligibility determination in categorical programs, such as those designed to assist lone parents or people with disabilities rely heavily upon judgements made about personal attributes. Such a process differs markedly from guaranteed minimum income programs where only a person's financial and residential status is examined. In unconditional Basic Income schemes the only entitlement which is tested is a person's citizenship / residency.

Whose needs?

Spokespersons for the welfare industry, when they reflect on the motivations of staff, speak in terms of their 'altruism' as they go about the task of satisfying the ‘needs’ of their clients. Not all observers of the way human service workers behave see it in these terms. McKnight (1977) has put the relationship that exists between professional and client as follows:

Removing the mask of love shows us the face of servicers who need income, and an economic system that needs growth. Within this framework, the client is less a person in need than a person who is needed. In business terms, the client is less the consumer than the raw material for the servicing system. In management terms, the client becomes both the output and the input. His essential function is to meet the needs of servicers, the servicing system and the national economy. The central political issue becomes the servicers' capacity to manufacture needs in order to expand the economy of the servicing system (p.74).

Benefit and control

For the same reasons that most Marxist sociologists (Corrigan and Leonard 1979, pp.104-105) reject the notion that the state is simply the Committee of the Bourgeoisie, I discard the suggestion that service providers are simply agents of social control (that is, they are the Welfare Committee of the Bourgeoisie). Many of the people working in social welfare agencies are genuinely trying to liberate people and provide them with benefits. Such people are often articulate exponents of liberal or socialist philosophical positions and are committed to limiting the excesses of the state and of capital. For example, the workers in some women's refuges around Australia are engaged in a constant battle to counter patriarchal control of women's lives and the workers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander run agencies are engaged in a daily struggle against racism.

On the other hand, the intimate connection between welfare personnel and the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie cannot be overlooked. There are many aspects of decision making occurring in welfare agencies which are clear expressions of their role as agents of capital. Such relations of
production are reinforced in welfare regimes organised around Howard's (2000) *social coalition* principles.

The majority of Marxist and socialist commentators argue that social welfare provisions are the result of the struggle of the working class (or some particular segment of it) with either capital or the State. The main thrust of such pronouncements is that the State, in a quasi-Bismarckian style, grants concessions to head off protest and to aid production. The ruling class is seen as benefiting through increased legitimisation; for the working class and welfare recipients in particular the question is one of benefit versus control.

Drawing on both socialist and Marxist reasoning, I suggest that the delivery of social welfare benefits allows the State to control beneficiaries and, in the short term, limits the capacity of the working class to demand a fair distribution of surplus value. This is particularly so when governments move to atomise workers through individual contracts whilst simultaneously attempting to fracture the solidarity of the reserve army of labour by attaching participation requirements thereby increasing uncertainty in the minds of the jobless.

There are writers, such as Pemberton (1982) who suggest that it is unlikely that the 'control' thesis can be maintained because

> In Australia social work and welfare is mainly about assistance to the elderly, the handicapped, widows, and war veterans; to that extent the radicals' 'control' thesis simply seems irrelevant. For instance, why do the elderly need 'controlling' by welfare? This has not been made clear in the radical analysis of welfare. And, if the elderly (or widows, or single parents, or the disabled) have been controlled by welfare, what were they doing (or were likely to do) to necessitate such 'control'? Answers to these questions must be forthcoming if the radical critique is to be salvaged even in modified form. Where the control thesis might be thought to be appropriate, in the case of the unemployed, we have seen that strong counter argument and counter evidence exists (p.34).

Pemberton himself has not always held such views. For instance, in 1971 he wrote

> Social workers play a crucial part in the management of systemic conflict by alleviating the more severe effects of the unequal distribution of economic resources and political power that exist under capitalism. They are among the 'technicians of consent'; the range of understanders, adjustors and instructors, from the industrial psychologist through to the primary school teacher, who defuse the discontented and 'train' the potentially rebellious (Pemberton & Locke, 1971, p.101).

The payment of welfare benefits may not be necessary to prevent an uprising by citizens, but in a country where federal elections have been held on average every couple of years, citizens do not need to mount the barricades. They can bring down a government with a pencil in a voting booth. Any government wishing to stay in power has to ensure it does not alienate its citizens - maintenance of their support is a form of control (Althusser 1977).

**The control process**
Apart from feminists, the most articulate exponents of the control thesis have been Marxists or socialists. Writers of these persuasions see the welfare system as an integral part of the capitalist mode of production, not an appendage 'one step removed from' the productive aspects of that mode. They see the welfare system as the means by which the working class obtains concessions from capital - via the State (Gough 1979, pp.58-59), and the way the State ensures for capital, the reproduction of the working class (McIntosh 1979, Mishra 1981, p.82). Such writers see the welfare system as the method both of distributing the social wage and of ensuring internal peace in society.

George and Wilding (1984) in *The Impact of Social Policy* consider the basic components of the welfare system which the state utilises in order to control the workless to be: its reliance on the establishment of individual need, its imposition of non-challenging definitions of social problems, its support for authority and hierarchy, and its constant attempt to replace class conflict with group competition (such as home owner/tenant, old/young (pp.194-220).

This analysis is extended by Baldock (1983) who argues that control is exercised through artificial segmentation of the workforce on the basis of alleged differentiation of skills resulting in the destruction of working class solidarity. She notes that such segmentation is reinforced by ideologies of race and gender, dividing workers from workers, and, in turn, workers from the workless. The artificial division between different categories of welfare recipients is effective, in her view, in controlling the poor, just as skill differentiations are among the working classes. In her words:

> A most effective aspect of bureaucratisation, effective that is as a form of social control, is the development of artificial divisions between different categories of recipients by means of varying eligibility criteria and slightly different formulas for payment.

Feminist writers are particularly conscious of the twin aspects of control and benefit delivery and have identified the major purpose of the control functions stemming from the needs of patriarchy. (Eisenstein 1979, Barker, D. and Allen, S 1976, Hartmann 1979, Wilson1977, Else 1996, Sainsbury 1996 Ch. 9, Mink 1998).

Central to feminist concern about the control aspect of the welfare system is their analysis of dependency, implied and real. The most obvious example of this is provided by the rules and regulations applying to the supply of benefits to unmarried mothers and deserted wives. Feminists argue that the eligibility for social security benefits is so structured that it allows the State to become "a more jealous husband than the man they left"(Glassman 1970, pp.102-103).

Many writers who have looked at the social welfare system and its effects on groups such as Aborigines in Australia; Asian and Caribbean immigrants in Britain; or Native, Black and Spanish Americans in the United States, have pointed to racism as an underlying ideology supporting social control (See Chapter 6).

Whether the perceived need to control welfare recipients derives from patriarchy, racism or ruling class fear of the less affluent, it may be argued that there is a propensity in modern social democracies to use the welfare system rather than military or para-military forms of social control whenever possible. Althusser (1977) expressed this idea as the State's preference for
ideological rather than repressive control. This use of welfare operatives to pacify or deflect unrest, to make recipients feel they have a stake in the future, to present the State (or a department of the State) as a caring institution, has been recognised by many writers in social work circles and is referred to as the 'soft cop role'.

Leonard (Corrigan & Leonard 1979) operating from a Marxist perspective has pointed out that

The concept of the welfare state as a humane response to need has performed an invaluable ideological function in the control and discipline of working-class populations, for in the name of welfare much can be achieved which would be impossible by more direct methods of repression (p.vii).

In Western democracies, such as Australia, the control exerted by the State is seldom exemplified in overt police or paramilitary forms - Bowral following the Hilton bombing, or the regular showdowns between Aborigines and the police notwithstanding. Repressive tolerance was the term coined by Marcuse (1964, 1968) to account for the gentle but firm control exercised over the populace. Gramsci (1977, pp. 53, 170-172, 185-189, 1978, pp. 233-235, 255-266, 443-459) pointed to the importance of the development of hegemonic forces by the ruling classes to underpin the enforcement of their will. Poulantzas (1978) argued that the ruling classes rely on ideology rather than direct repression in their efforts to control working people. All these accounts share a common feature. They all maintain that the State and the ruling classes ensure that a ruling class version of the ongoing reality is accepted by the bulk of citizens by means of ideological control.

But welfare recipients and those refused welfare assistance, encounter far more obvious control than do any other section of the citizenry. This control is manifested in the policy that the nuclear family shall be the 'recognised' economic unit and shall be the locus for primary welfare help, as well as being responsible for the reproduction of the next generation of workers and workless. Whether the State exemplifies its control functions by enforcement of the work ethic, by being 'a more jealous husband than the man a woman has left', or by enforcing particular child care policies, the State is omnipresent in the lives of welfare recipients.

In supplying benefits and in containing dissent the welfare system serves a legitimating function for capital. The welfare system serves to disguise the privilege of the more affluent and acts to support the status quo by:

- the way the welfare system delivers its benefits;
- the circumscribed nature of much social welfare research;
- the use of residualist definitions of who will and who will not be helped;
- the very real limitations to the redistributive functions; and
- the widespread use of 'need' determination.

This is perhaps no where more obvious (as shall be seen in Chapter 4) than in the way Australian governments seek to delegitimise unemployed citizens. Before looking in detail at a number of specific areas of social policy such as employment, locality Indigenous issues and disability the next Chapter will survey major ideological features which influence social policy formation here and in English speaking countries.
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