"The way you make me feel": Shame and the neoliberal governance of disability welfare subjectivities in Australia and the UK

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Disability and Neoliberal Statistical Panic

There has been a growing global statistical panic surrounding 'disability' over recent years. This disability anxiety has been couched around a discourse of *un*sustainability as governments use a particular set of disability statistics to argue that they can no longer afford disability welfare, that is, one of fiscal doom and gloom, 'looming in the horizon' (Woodward 2009, p. 197). Such concerns have been occurring across most OECD countries, and these statistical discourses of disability fiscal panic have become normalized with the onset of austerity measures since the financial crash in late 2007. Global policy institutions such as the OECD, World Bank and the IMF have situated disability within economic discourses of global restructuring (Grover and Soldatic 2013). Disability is thus now central to economic debates pertaining to the future 'health' of the nation that dominates debates of welfare retraction that aim to move people off welfare and into the world of work (Soldatic 2013).

Disability's shift from the fringes to the epicenter of economic policy emerged in the mid-1990s (Soldatic and Chapman 2010). Before this, disability was mostly positioned as a category of social welfare and medicine (Clear and Gleeson 2001). This changed with the emergence of two specific forces: the disability rights movement and the rise of neoliberalism as a policy orthodoxy (Roulstone and Morgan 2009). As French and Swain contend (2008), while these two movements have disparate aims for disabled people, their focal point around disabled people's enduring exclusion from the labour market and the

resultant effects of entrenched poverty and dependence on welfare has, at times, led to a precarious position of convergence.

The timing of the disability right's movement call for the 'right to work' emerges in concert with workfare. Peck (2001) suggests that workfare is the key domestic social project of neoliberal global restructuring as it seeks to re-regulate the relationship between the labour market and state welfare provisioning by making welfare supports dependent upon individualised economic contribution. This deepening of the market society via workfare regimes first surfaced in North America under the Reagan administration but came into full effect in the US during the Clinton Administration with the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act 1996 (Abramovitz 2006, p. 339). Workfare is now part of an international project promoted through global policy institutes such as the OECD and IMF (Grover and Soldatic 2013). In the last ten years, most Western nation states have undertaken some form of welfare restructuring to reflect the institutional requirements of a workfare state (Soldatic 2013). In the UK, the Blair Labour Government developed its 'making work pay' strategy and its *New Deal* policy (Peck 2001) which have been further consolidated under the Cameron Conservative-led Coalition Governments radical withdraw of any claim to citizenship entitlement, affecting a multitude of groups, and particularly disabled people (Roulstone and Morgan 2014).

The hegemony of neoliberalism has redefined ideas of citizenship, social inclusion and social mobility. The liberal social contract of 'rights and entitlements' and 'roughly equal' has radically shifted to the coercive authoritarian neoliberal logic of 'responsibilities and obligations'; often pitched in the populist mantra of 'no rights without responsibilities' (Fiske and Briskman 2007). This means that access to social entitlements is no longer based on need or necessity alone. The discursive panic created by statistical repetition of doom and gloom creates public consent for an authoritarian logic that requires citizens to *earn* their social entitlements through performance of market behaviours in exchange for welfare benefits and supports. Work, labour market attachment and subordination to the imperatives of the market are thus promoted as the highest form of citizen responsibility (Lister 2001). Workfare is thus inherently contradictory, as it combines the imperative of market individualism of the New Right with the authoritarian obligations asserted by neo-conservatives.

Nearly all Western liberal democracies have undertaken large-scale disability policy restructuring in line with neoliberal welfare policy trends (Humpage 2007). While there is a multiplicity of local variations and deviations, international analysis suggests that neoliberal disability policy converge around the restructuring of disability social security entitlements with the primary aim of steering disabled people off disability pensions and into the open labour market (Roulstone and Barnes 2005; Grover and Soldatic 2013). Consistent across Australia, Britain, Canada and the USA has been the large-scale implementation of numerous governance technologies to 'activate' disabled people's labour-market participation (OECD 2009). These activation technologies concentrate on compelling disability social security recipients into a set of prescribed activity tests as a condition of maintaining access to benefits, such as individual compacts, participation plans, sanctioning regimes and in many instances, the straight denial of social security support (Grover & Piggott 2013; Soldatic 2013). These all aim to contain disability pension growth and curtail future fiscal outlays by making disabled people disappear from the welfare rolls (Grover & Soldatic 2013).

While major scholars in welfare studies often interrogate neoliberal workfare governance in the key centres of global power, such as the USA and the UK (Jessop 2002; Peck 2001), as Grover and Soldatic (2013) illustrate, it has been Australia that has been the experimental 'hot bed' of neoliberal workfare restructuring, and, it has been the area of disability that has been central to its trialling of new forms of neoliberal governance under governments of either persuasion (Morris et al 2015). In fact, in recent years we have seen the active global transfer of neoliberal disability welfare restructuring as the Australian political elite are increasingly invited to remind their global political counterparts of the benefits of Australian neoliberal restructuring (see Hockey 2012). Thus, this inter-scalar transfer of neoliberal orthodoxy, spoken within intimate elite political networks, moves from the centre to the periphery and back again, in a continued dialogue of discursive privilege and power.

This global statistical panic, however, discloses little about the reproduction of neoliberal violence in the everyday experience of disability in a continually and rapidly changing polity where disability has become centre stage in economic policy deliberations (Soldatic & Pini 2012). Rarely are the voices of disabled people heard in these critical public policy debates (Gibilisco 2010) despite the impact of these policies on disabled people's subjectivities. Thus, there is the possibility of another reading of these statistics, a reading that critically focuses on the narratives of disabled people who have developed a range of strategies to

sustain their emotional wellbeing to contend with the barrage of neoliberal workfare policies that shame them into compliance. In this chapter, we draw upon interviews conducted as part of two national studies in Australia and the UK with disabled people who have been experiencing first hand the effect affects of neoliberal workfare. Despite the differing socio-spatial contexts, these people's narratives reveal an intimate convergence - a highly masculine abled bodied project that denies subjects care for oneself and others, whilst having to perform 'care for the nation' via the realm of work.

Emotions, Disability and Neoliberal Governance

Emotions have had a contested and chequered history within scholarly research since the emergence of industrial capitalism. With the advance of neoliberal capitalism, they have become, once again, prominent in work that seeks to critically illustrate the regulatory role of emotions with capitals ebbs and flows. Authors such as Ahmed (2004), Skeggs (2004) and Tyler (2013) are documenting the emotionality of neoliberalism as it increasing frames social citizenship via the emotional lens. This rich body of work identifies the ways in which emotions infuse the contested boundaries of the private and the public as an array of emotions are actively drawn upon by elite actors to socially shape new forms of neoliberal governance at the micro-scale of the 'self'. Emotions thus are not things that belong to an individual as a separate object, but are in fact, framed with moral meanings and sentiments that operate discursively at the macro scale to create nascent forms of social control that can become embodied as everyday practices of self-governance.

Disabled people have long been aware of the role of emotions in social regulating their daily lives (Marks 1999). Emotions have historically been powerful mechanisms to maintain disabled people's confinement within the asylum, clear them from the streets, and to hide them away from the public gaze (Schweik 2009). Latterly, Kolarova (2012) demonstrates how disabled people have had to take on 'handicap, social stigma, dependence, isolation and economic disadvantage' (Stone 1984: 4 cited in Kolarova 2012: 265) in exchange for the status of being a 'tolerated exception' from neoliberal requirements of citizenship. For disabled people, emotions are thus deeply political. This is both due to the direct and indirect affects it has on their lives, which are disabling, stigmatizing and extremely painful. As Reeve (2012) contends, the emotional sphere of disability social regulation operates in the ''most mundane words or deeds that exclude or invalidate' (Hughes, 2007, pp. 682)' a form of 'ontological invalidation [that] undermines psycho-social emotional well being' (Reeve, 2012: 79-80). The affect effects thus frames disabled people's intra-corporeal engagement,

effectively reaffirming social processes of oppression as forms of internalized self-governance. Emotions for disabled people, are therefore, a key area of social life where they are required to manage other people's emotions, whilst simultaneously managing their own emotions all for the benefit of others.

Of all of the emotions, it is shame that dominates the everyday experience of disability. As Charlton (1998, p. 27) notes, 'shame and other manifestations of this process are devastating, for they prevent people with disabilities from knowing their real selves'. To have an unruly corporeality is one of great shame, signifying to the public a rejected body (Wendell 1996) and a corporeality that is in fact of 'no social value' (Siebers 2008, p.162). This negative social devaluation re-positions disability as *the* human spectacle, the ongoing invalidating gaze forces disabled people to adopt, practice and perform a tightly controlled performance to avoid the shaming gaze of the able-bodied public (Soldatic 2010). Most critically, for disabled people, the recurrent experience of shame, and the internalized practices of self-management to avoid public shaming, radically alters their own sense of self-dignity and self-respect (Reeve 2012). With each external repetition, these underlying structures of internalized shame reaffirm an internal dialogue of self-disrespect, which are durable and enduring (Siebers 2008).

For disabled people, these acts of shaming, through either public discursive depictions of disabled people through political or media discourse and representations coupled with the daily acts of staring they encounter in a multiplicity of spaces and places are a form of violence (Garland-Thomas 2009). This is captured in the burgeoning literature on disability 'hate crime' (Sherry, 2010; Roulstone & Mason-Bish 2013) where Sherry's apparently common-sense subtitle 'Does Anyone *Really* Hate Disabled People?' is in stark contrast to the level and intensity of everyday routinized violence disabled people experience. This generates a heightened sense of fear for disabled people when navigating the world due to the frequency, irregularity and randomness of this violence (Roulstone and Morgan 2014). These everyday forms of shaming experienced by disabled people are reflective of Young's (1990) definition of violence when she denotes that:

> Members of some groups of people live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their person or property, which have no motive but to damage, humiliate or destroy the person. (Young 1990, p. 61)

The long lasting effects of such random attacks prohibits many disabled people from actively traversing and experiencing the outside world. As Roulstone and Morgan (2014) have argued, disabled people are frequently feeling this form of everyday routinised violence, directly and indirectly, as they are shamed by the political elite's attack on disability welfare with the ongoing intensification of neoliberal restructuring of welfare. It seems that increasingly, disabled people are shamed not just because they are disabled, but because of their potential association with the welfare system that disability suggests (Soldatic 2010). The implied profligate expansion of welfare provision that permitted too great a number of *exceptions* 'from the requirements of conscientious citizenship and individual responsibility' (Kolarova 2012, p. 265) is utilised as a way in which to '*justify* the channelling of public hostilities towards vulnerable and/or disadvantages populations' (Tyler 2013, p. 212). This reclassification of large numbers of disabled people from deserving to undeserving recipients of welfare provision transforms them in to 'symbolic and material scapegoats' (Tyler 2013, p. 211) for the economic crises and resultant austerity.

Shame is the emotion that 'makes you want to disappear, to hide away and to cover yourself' (Probyn 2004: 329). Roulstone and Morgan (2014) argue that many disabled people are now remaining 'in place', stuck within their homes with their curtains closed to avoid the public shaming and rise of direct acts of violence that has coincided with the political speak of disabled people as neoliberal welfare scroungers. In fact, as Roulstone and Mason-Bish (2012) have documented there has been a massive increase of violent hate crime against disabled people with the advent of neoliberal political speak to make them feel ashamed of their claim to social entitlements.

This everyday experience of internalising the affect effects of neoliberal shame both violates disabled people's sense of identity, and also their sense of security and safety when being 'out of place' (Soldatic 2013). The structural collective shaming of disabled people thus becomes embodied in the reproduction of everyday life, where disabled people are shamed by the performance of the non-market self. Neoliberalism is thus extremely mobile. Moving from the structural, the political and the group through to navigating down to the individual who is required to perform the market individual in everyday life. Shame performs this inter-scalar labour on its behalf.

Nussbaum suggests that shame is *the* social emotion (Nussbaum 2004). It is the emotion best known for keeping people *in their place* due to 'its everyday dependence on the

proximities of others, of place, of routine, of biography and history' (Probyn 2004: 329). Primarily, its use as a subtle everyday mechanism to contain marginalized social groups, works to establish borders and boundaries around sets of bodies – dividing, sorting and classifying bodies-and-minds into a complex web of social regulating regimes (Sayer 2005). Nussbaum (2004) refers to this process as stigmatised shame, where the role of shame in public moral discourse is to stigmatise the class of people towards which it is targeted as a form of group subordination. The resultant feelings of shame associated with this type of public shaming leaves members who identify with the stigmatised group feeling unworthy; a feeling that disabled people can readily corroborate.

Therefore, it is not surprising that shame has a long-standing association with violence (Scheff & Retzinger 1991). Shame has been used throughout the establishment of modern liberal democracies to regulate the socio-spatial sphere (Nussbaum 2004) and yet, is most often exhibited as individual acts of violence in direct response to structural shame (Scheff & Retzinger 1991). Shame's power is hence its ability to become embodied and internalized as individual moral failure, as it subtlety oozes through a range of spaces and places to hide the structural effects of social inequality, exclusion and deprivation (Sayer 2005). Shame is embedded in, and emerges from, our social existence and, therefore, it shapes, and is shaped by, the political sphere (Nussbaum 2004). It is actively used to individualise structural deprivation to re-situate the place of blame and entails the reimagining of the 'rational individual' or of 'homo economicus' as an *emotional* being. This emotional being is *irrational, unruly* and *resistant* to market behaviours, logics and norms.

It is these individualizing properties of shame and public acts of shaming that are incredibly significant in revealing the architecture of neoliberal workfare and the experience of neoliberal forms of everyday life. The targeting of individual behaviour as a moral public discourse has been prominent across Western liberal democracies implementing workfare strategies. For example, US President Reagan referred to single mothers on welfare as 'welfare queens' (Goodin 2002) and Prime Minister Tony Blair insisted that disabled people were using disability benefits 'as an excuse to never work again' (Lyall quoted in Galvin 2004, p. 126). In Australia and the United Kingdom the 'welfare scrounger' has become a powerful moral signifier across successive governments (Soldatic 2010; Roulstone & Morgan 2014). Wilson and Turnbull (2001: 384) argue that such strategies are a '*calculated political tactic'* of the New Right (original emphasis), personified around a 'politics of blame' that discursively constructs, poor working subjects as the primary cause of the welfare- fiscal

crises (Haylett 2003). All of these efforts are thus designed to move public resentment away from neoliberal governments as growing numbers of their citizens are faced with a precarious existence, of high economic insecurity and of growing material deprivation with neoliberal global restructuring. Shame thus actively displaces political discontent; providing governments with a proxy to target one's anger for the downward spiral in social mobility experienced so much by the lower-middle classes (McRobbie 2013).

Shaming of welfare recipients also encourages an active process of forgetting, forgetting past injustices, past inequalities and past structural exclusions, hiding such structural marginalization through blaming and shaming. As Ranciere (2004) argues, this shifting political frame then creates a form of seeing of what was previously *un*seen. This key technique of neoliberal governance, lays the grounds for the political elite to build a new moral consensus of social norms, dominated by new meanings of citizenship that are framed around precarious forms of work in low wage casualised labour markets as the 'new norm' of participation. The desired effects of shaming are thus two fold – to build public consensus for neoliberal workfare restructuring, and also, to remove social entitlements as a right of citizenship and propel welfare recipients into the labour market.

As we illustrate throughout the next section, neoliberalism actively draws upon acts of shaming to force disabled people to comply with its coercive regulating regime (Bessant et al. 2006). As legitimising discourses, to advance the market logic of neoliberalism, the structural processes of neoliberal welfare restructuring not only individualise, but directly blame, disabled people suffering from structural disadvantage. Shame is used to articulate the lack of a job as a private moral failure. It is used to labour the inter-scalar moralisation of neoliberal intensification. Moralising structural disadvantage reinforces existing social divisions (Martin 2007), whilst re-constituting new social hierarchies. Most significantly, shaming has become a calculated political tactic to re-imagine the disability landscape; creating new divisions to separate the deserving from the *un*deserving disabled welfare recipient (Grover and Piggott 2013). With the emergence of a neoliberal workfare state, a new set of social norms are required; re-regulating and re-classifying disabled citizens into two classes – those so-called disabled people who are *un*deserving of social entitlements and plague the system by actively abdicating their responsibilities, and those *truly* deserving disabled citizens who are unable to contribute to the neoliberal project.

Repeated experience of shame within neoliberal workfare spaces undermined disabled people's sense of self and their ability to act in the world. The chapter combines two separate studies that occurred in Australia and the UK. The Australian study was part of Soldatic's PhD research that focused upon Australian disability income reform with the onset of neoliberalism and its intensification with the 2004 re-election of a majority Conservative Government (Soldatic 2010). The second study, completed in the UK during 2012, drew upon the learnings of Soldatic's Australian study, working in collaboration with researchers from Lancaster University. While the temporal moment of each set of interviews does not occur simultaneously, the structural transformations with the intensification of neoliberalism as policy hegemony are directly comparable (Grover and Soldatic 2013). Henceforth, the comparative analysis of the interviews confirm the global literature on the policy mobility of neoliberal welfare to work measures, that despite local contingencies, illustrates the transfer of international learnings, processes and practices to build consensus within the polity to achieve the structural, institutional and regulatory transformations that neoliberalism demands.

The interview transcripts reveal that the dominant experience of disabled people in Australia and the UK with neoliberal intensification is that of public shaming, through a diverse range of political discourses. The constant barrage of shame promoted an internalisation of the violation and disrespect embedded in institutionalised practices of shame. Public discourses and symbolic representations to promote neoliberal governance not only misrecognised disabled people's structural disadvantage, but actively worked to further stigmatise disabled people as a group in order to assure their compliance with the new workfare norms of neoliberal governance. Shame labours on neoliberalism's behalf, traversing the inter-scalar relations between the citizen and the state, transforming disabled people's subjectivity through everyday forms of violence. These everyday practices of violence become internalised, and yet, remain abstract and distance, critical components of the affect effects of shame. The discursive power of statistical panic moves from the parliament, the financial market and the press, and then breadth, lived and negotiated in everyday life.

Neoliberalism and Disabled People's Songs of Shame

Shaming employs multiple strategies. Some acts of shaming are subtle, while others are deliberately overt, intended to signify to a group the set of power relations in which they are embedded (Barbalet 1998). Shaming occurs at all levels, from the macro-structural scale to the micro-spaces and places (Sayer 2005). Disabled people from Australia and the UK

participating in these studies clearly understood neoliberal acts of shaming to reflect their marginalized position of power in workfare governance. Most significantly, they actively internalised the public shame of being unemployed and on welfare as a moral evaluation of the self. We first were alerted to this with Beatrice, a young women with a vision impairment living with her mother in Perth, Australia. Even though Beatrice has made multiple attempts to find work, actively seeking the support from workfare services Beatrice repeatedly disclosed the feelings of inferiority she experienced when explaining her experience putting in her best efforts to join the neoliberal labour market that has historically excluded disabled women. At the end of the interview, Beatrice told has how she no longer had the energy to pursue employment as "I was feeling I wasn't worth it, even though I had skills I thought I wasn't good enough anymore".

All the disabled people in the UK and Australia participating in these two studies expressed these individualized feelings of internalized shame. While Beatrice's shame is commonly expressed as a form of low-lying shame, revealed as ongoing feelings of inferiority, others expressed more overt forms of shame. In fact, it appeared that as neoliberal workfare intensified across the two countries, the everyday experience of shame was heightened for the research participants with their failure to gain employment, even though they actively worked hard to gain employment of any kind. To us, as researchers, it appeared that as the research participants intensified their efforts to gain employment so did their experiences of internalized shame and feelings of unworthiness. The internalization of social forms of shaming had a transformative effect. For Beatrice she no longer wanted to "go out to try for another job" and therefore, she largely remained 'in place', isolated in her home with her mother. However, for others these effects were more direct and violent.

Rachel, a woman with cerebral palsy, reveals the extreme forms of hiding that disabled people may need to practice to escape neoliberal workfare strategies that aim to 'activate' disabled people's labour market participation. Rachel was forced to see a workfare employment provider and meet regularly with a case management to manage her transition to employment and off welfare. Eventually a job was found, however, this job was within a local library that was unpaid. The local library had stairs and no lift. Rachel was a wheelchair user. Additionally, this unpaid job, would force Rachel to spend money from her disability payment to get to and from work, which she could ill-afford. Even though Rachel explained this situation to the case worker, Rachel was forced to 'go to work'. Eventually, Rachel decided to actively exclude herself from the barrage of daily shaming that was experienced

with having to work for free in an inaccessible workplace. In fact, Rachel took to hiding from the workfare case worker she was assigned, which in turn left her isolated from communicating with the rest of her world. To escape workfare governance, she needed to disconnect herself from her primary form of communication – the telephone: "so I was at the point she had me so terrified, haranguing and bullying me, I took the phone off the hook, and all but hid under the bed".

Rachel's experiences and practices of resistance, along with Beatrice's experiences of unworthiness, also demonstrate the contradictory nature of workfare governance, which combines the New Right agenda of market activity with neo-conservative authoritarian logic of obligation. Neo-conservatives such as Mead (1986) have long argued that these necessarily coercive strategies promote active engagement with the labour market and society, but in fact, these practices of shaming disabled workfare conscripts into compliance, as experienced by Rachel and Beatrice, did not encourage or enable them to seek employment; rather, it ensured that they used *active practices of exclusion* to protect themselves from further injury by a violent and punitive system. These findings reinforce Sayer's (2005, p. 153) argument on shame wherein he states that it leaves people 'feeling inadequate and hid[ing] from the gaze of others'. Rather than wanting to participate and collaborate with workfare services, Rachel adopted a range of practices to remove herself as far as possible from the workfare spaces even at risk of losing access to their entitlements. Hiding at home appeared as a central mechanism for Australian disabled people on welfare to hide one's shame from the world of being a disabled welfare recipient, and also to hide from further possible shaming from neoliberal activation strategies.

In the UK, however, the home no longer represented the possibility of hiding from the public shaming that neoliberal workfare advances. The research participants from the UK were clearly able to articulate how neoliberal workfare brought shame to their home via the brown envelope. Its distinct brownness and typeset clearly demarcate it from other official correspondence. Thus, the envelope was readily identifiable as coming from social security to both the postman – the deliverer, and the disabled people at home – the receiver (Reeve 2012). It is understood by disabled people as a key mechanism of neoliberal governance of inter-scalar relations, that brings the authority of administrative bureaucracy down to the intimacy of the home. The contents contained within the brown envelope summoned disabled welfare recipients to disability re-assessments, a process that either verified or refuted their disability identity which in turn, had material ramifications via the disability

support payment system. Sarah, a young women with Multiple Sclerosis living with her parents on a disability welfare payment stated that the confluence of media reporting, political speak, and general gossip within one's friendship group about neoliberal welfare retraction brought shame to disabled people's homes on two fronts. First, the brown envelope publicly identifies your status as someone on welfare who is potentially 'scrounging'. It also represented the fear of potentially losing one's disability status and hence, access to the disability social security system. Thus, for disabled people in the UK, hiding at home was not safe from the external world that drew upon shame to force disabled people to participate in neoliberal workfare. The inter-scalar labour of neoliberal shame asserts its authority over everyday life, where disabled individualised shame brings stigmatisation to one's most intimate spaces, to keep disabled people in their place. In fact, this inter-scalar labour of shame created its own risks and fear, which threw its recipients into whirlwinds of despair as they were required to manage their internalized shame, hiding from their communities, their families and even themselves:

> Sarah: Yeah, I have a general brown envelope fear.
>
> ….
>
> I know that brown envelopes are from the DWP [Department of Work and Pensions]. I've actually got one upstairs that's been there for three days and I haven't yet opened it. I will open it, just it takes me a couple of days to pluck up the courage. So yeah, I knew it was from, brown envelopes are generally from the DWP so.

Thus, the invasion of safety within the home with the distinct brown envelope brought new fears and risks for all of the participants that were interviewed in the UK. Moreover, Sarah's hiding of the envelope in her home until she built up her courage to review the letter unfortunately, puts her at greater risk of losing access to benefits, as disabled people were expected to respond to these notifications within 10 working days of receipt. If not, disability support payments were discontinued.

These experiences of shaming reiterate Young's (1990) understanding of violence. In these instances, these are felt as random attacks on the person and reveal the importance disclosing the association of shame with violence in workfare governance. Michael, a young married Australian man with a physical disability, describes the constant fear, shame and violence that many disabled people live with on a daily basis, particularly in having to try to comply with a highly coercive and unpredictable system that has total control over one's material resources. As Michael's experience suggests, while neoliberal states are highly efficient in delivering, via mail, the set of instructions that aim to refute one's claim to

disability entitlements, when state workfare agencies withdraw these entitlements mistakenly, disabled people experience the added shame of not being informed of the error via mail:

> Like when they make the mistake when they cut me off disability. They made the mistake and they sent me no apology. You could imagine how I felt when I got a letter saying… sorry you've been cut from disability.. you know your income is gone.. shh… and that took a whole month to send out a letter. They cut disability, didn't notify me until a month later. So I was without payment for a whole month… It was really quite a shock as we complied with all of their rules and things and they never told us why they did it.

Thus, for both disabled people in Australia and the UK, feeling ashamed of oneself and one's body was coupled with the personal indignity of the material implications of randomly losing access to, and thus control of, one's income. The structural intent of such everyday experiences is to deepen the regulatory logic of the market society so that it becomes internalised and hence, naturalised. The shame of individualised market failure normalises the everyday forms of neoliberal structural violence, appearing abstract and intangible (Tyler, 2013). Shame, as it labours on behalf of neoliberalism, maintains people in their place.

Shame, however, was highly mobile. In fact, it travelled from the home to the place of disability verification. This was particularly acute within the UK, where respondents highlighted the ways in which one's disability was verified by one's ability to navigate travel between spaces and places, as they travelled from their homes to the disability testing centres to verify or refute your status. Katherine, a women who acquired a disability less than two years prior to interview, illustrates how the disabled subjectivities are regulated across varying spaces, and how this navigation is tested with a high degree of suspicion:

> You go in there completely honest and open and yet the first question is 'how did you get here?' As if, if you've got there by yourself then you have absolutely no right to be here and I just kind of looked at her. 'A friend gave me a lift.' 'Well where did she drop you off?' It's like the Spanish inquisition over something as --. And then the stairs and the lift obviously and how did you negotiate entrance, did you use the stairs or did you use the lift? How long did it take you to get from --? And I just was stunned."

Thus, Katherine's description of the assessment process identifies how disability becomes spatially regulated. To get her assessment for a disability support payment Katherine needed to navigate an upstairs isolated room, hidden from the main entrance of the room. As Katherine describes, this spatial location of the disability assessment office becomes

pivotal to the process of jointly assessing disability and shaming disabled people for claiming a disabled subjectively. As Katherine outlines, the neoliberal disability assessment actively questions her spatial orientation, where the navigation of space and, the movement from place to place is embedded within the assessment to mark out the 'really disabled' and the 'welfare scroungers'. In the UK, this was repeated in nearly all of the interviews, where disabled people were strongly aware how they were watched as they navigated inaccessible assessment sites.

In Australia, suspicion was not built into all of the dynamics of the assessment process, and generally, disabled people initially felt more confident in their initial navigation of workfare spaces. However, suspicion was embedded throughout the system, and was even extended to individuals who were 'marked' in the system as disabled, but may have been seeking additional entitlements that were associated with their lawful disability status. Paul, a man with a mental illness, supports a number of peers in a voluntary role in dealing with the Australian neoliberal workfare agency - Centrelink. Paul describes how shaming, mistrust, and randomised attacks on the person's integrity results in individuals withdrawing from the system:

> *The stress it caused her was just unbelievable, because they were making out that she is a liar, like, you know. "This person is telling lies. She is trying to cheat the system." You know, like, she is trying to get mobility. It was only a few dollars.*

Such practices and their random application, even when unprovoked, reaffirms Young's (1990) definition of systemic violence. Disabled people who took part in this study disclosed that their experiences of a neoliberal workfare state resulted in both a collective and personal injury. Their feelings of shame, and their ongoing experience of fear, demonstrate the continued role of violence in state institutional practice. With the state's transformation to a neoliberal workfare state, its governing institutions have developed a number of shaming strategies to meet this end.

The participants' experiences of neoliberal workfare governance demonstrate the importance of shame as a state tool to produce rigid conformity to a highly punitive system. Further, research participants' experiences in both Australia and the UK of the workfare system signify the level of personal shame and humiliation that violate disabled people's dignity, through the randomisation and unpredictability of their access to material resources – previously a recognized entitlement of disability citizenship. Personal feelings of failure are

a direct result of state coercive practices of shaming, which are reaffirmed by the constant material insecurity and negotiation of minimal resources to maintain a basic standard of living. Thus, the structural reproduction of shame, in turn, reinforces individual feelings of personal failure. As Bourdieu (1996) has noted, those who experience failure through no fault of their own are still likely to feel shame, which Sayer (2005, p. 154) argues is a 'structurally generated effect'.

Disabled people must both comply with and reproduce the medicalised classifying regime of their bodies, and in fact participate in a game of shaming oneself in order to gain access to the required resources to support their effective participation in workfare governance. This balancing act of negotiating the lived bodily space of severe material deprivation, rigid state regulatory compliance and the moralisation of their bodies can fall at any time. For some, such as Emma, a young single mother living in Melbourne, Australia, who has had a number of encounters with state child welfare agencies, the intensity of shame she has been made to feel about herself, her material deprivation and her mothering have led to Scheff and Retzinger's (1991) shame-rage spiral. Emma describes below a recent 'run-in' that she has had with state workfare authorities and the police:

> It's bad when you've got a family. I remember one week I was supposed to get paid but I didn't get paid. I got so mad at them. I said 'if you don't pay me I'm going to rob your place'. They got scared, then thought I was going to rob them so they said 'Ok we will pay you next week'. I'm like 'I need the money now because I have to pay my son's childcare. They said 'we are so sorry we can't give you your money today as your money doesn't go in until next week. I said, 'this week is my pay day and I want my money now' and I made a smart remark that I'm going to rob the […] Bank and the police came and thought that I was really going to rob the bank and arrested me that day.

Emma's case demonstrates the extreme levels of state violence that underpin neoliberal authoritarian workfare governance. The state, as Emma's description above reveals, will use extensive measures to bring shame on disabled people to ensure compliance with its neoliberal authoritarian workfare governance. Rather than seek to redress the harmful injustices that Emma has experienced, the state uses its full force to ensure compliance with a system that has forced Emma to this position. Of course, Emma may have had other choices, but the material destitution of her real life, her commitment to caring for her young son and the constant shame she has endured under workfare governing institutions rendered almost all other options futile. As Sayer (2005) argues, the shame that is caused by severe structural deprivation and stigmatisation often results in individual acts of violence. Unfortunately for Emma, the consequences of highly individualised acts of violence, result in

state aggression and further violence, and the state is more than willing to use disabled women on workfare, such as Emma, as public examples to produce and reproduce violent, authoritarian neoliberal workfare regimes.

Concluding thoughts

In this chapter we have explored the way in which the implementation of workfare-based welfare reform in Australia and the UK has utilised shame as a form of neoliberal governance. The chapter illustrates the ways non-market actors signify significant fiscal risk for the future health of the nation. The penetration in the public imagination of statistical doom and gloom associated with disabled people on welfare aims to deepen and normalise regulatory regimes that advance the neoliberal market society. Disabled people, a particularly targeted group, are being subjected to activation technologies that are frequently re-classifying them (often without any accompanying change in their condition) as insufficiently or inadequately disabled to remain as *exceptions* to the demands of a neoliberal citizenship that is premised upon able-bodied, masculine notions of contribution and individual responsibility. The experiences of our respondents reaffirm that, despite the development of the disability rights movement with its emphasis on a collective identity based on pride with claims couched in the language of rights, 'fundamentally disability is defined by public policy. In other words, disability is whatever policy says it is' (Hahn 1985, p. 94). In this chapter we have provided an alternative reading of the statistical disability panic employed to drive neoliberal welfare reform. Through the narratives of the disabled people in our study we have illustrated the central role shame plays in classifying and (self) regulating the behaviour and emotions of welfare recipients.

While shame has long held a position of close proximity to disability, with the onset of neoliberalism and its latter intensification vis a vis, austerity, the experience of shame for disabled people takes on a qualitative new form. Shame and its attachment to disability has now reached new political heights; no longer are disabled people discursively positioned as the deserving poor. The crafting of neoliberal political discourse to legitimise disability retraction pervades historical discourses of charity and pity. Moralising discourses of charity and pity were historically situated to keep disabled people in place, contained within the walls of the institution, removed from the streetscape. Neoliberal political discourses of shame aim to mobilise disabled bodies as active members of the precarious low wage labour market, compelling them to compete with few labour protections and regulations. Contradictorily, as many of the participants reveal, ongoing public shaming often resulted in

a counter response – to hide from the world and the violence that it entails with neoliberal intensification – to escape from the qualitatively new risks created for disabled people at the scale of the everyday.

Processes of neoliberal reclassification undermine the wellbeing of disabled people subjecting them to damaging forms of psycho-emotional disablism. Disabled people are forced into highly precarious positions as they negotiate the labouring affect effects of neoliberal shame. Insecure and low wage employment or, the random and unexplained withdrawal of benefit income become the everyday, mundane effects of neoliberal inter-scalar violence. Moreover, the manner in which the reforms of disability-based entitlement to welfare benefits has been framed demonstrates the ways in which stigmatization is employed as a form of governance to legitimise the dominant mantra of 'there is no alternative' to either welfare reform of the shaming of disabled people. The misrecognition of the structural disadvantage experienced by disabled people enables popular discourse to vilify disabled people, either as a result of their reclassification as 'faux' disabled people (Roulstone & Morgan 2014) or their continued failure to achieve the neoliberal imperative of self-sufficiency.

Thus through this stigmatizing, shaming and shameful reclassification disabled people are 'mobilized to do the ideological dirty work of neoliberalism' (Tyler 2013, p. 211) accepting the blame and resultant shame that accompanies this. This refocusing of an invalidating gaze through the lens of shame exacerbates the exclusion of disabled people. More overt forms of socio-spatial segregation such as the residential institution or day centre, have given way to more nuanced and complex forms of exclusion and regulation. The isolation of disabled people in their own homes serves to individualise the political nature of emotions which are to be endured away from opportunities for collective opportunities to resist and subvert the affects of shame. The affect effect, is to keep disabled people, in place.

Acknowledgements

Note

1. All the names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.

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