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## A Foucauldian investigation into the accountability relationships of the Australian government and recipients of Parenting Payment Single

Zahra Maronesy  
*University of Wollongong*

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**School of Accounting, Economics and Finance**

**Faculty of Business**

**A Foucauldian Investigation into the Accountability  
Relationships of the Australian Government and Recipients of  
Parenting Payment Single**

**Zahra Maronesy**

**This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Wollongong**

**September 2015**

### **Certification**

I, Zahra Maronesy, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Accounting and Finance, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institutions.

Zahra Maronesy

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis presents some of the key ideas of Michel Foucault and uses Foucault's ideas about discipline as a lens to examine welfare reforms in the past three decades in Australia. In particular, a detailed analysis of Foucauldian disciplinary techniques employed in the Howard government's Welfare to Work (WTW) reform is made in regard to single parents. The research is focused on the increased requirement of accountability, specifically concepts of mutual obligation (MO), placed on Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients, who were one of the main groups targeted by the WTW reform. The recent changes to entitlement under the Gillard government are also reviewed. The relevance of Foucault's ideas in this area are analysed, as they provide a lens to examine the implications for recipients of the requirements for receipt of this payment. Recipients' attitudes were also surveyed to see which elements of discipline they provided that were attached to this payment, and how they considered that this affected them.

This study suggests that while the government might see MO as a tool to direct Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients into employment, the recipients may see this quite differently. There is evidence of the use of techniques identified by Foucault as disciplinary techniques within the structure of MO. This research found that several disciplinary techniques and punishment schema are applicable, such as: surveillance, punishment, partitioning, timetable, the normalization technique, signalisation, the examination technique, and the technique of dressage.

Foucault (2007) addressed three forms of power: sovereignty, discipline and governmental management, which he referred to as a 'triangle' of power. Evidence of disciplinary

techniques is also an indication of the existence of power relationships within the discourse of MO under the WTW welfare reforms. Discipline and dominance/control are linked in a way that places discipline as a form of power.

The results of this study suggest that the recipients of PPS payments may experience the techniques outlined above as disempowering and counter-productive rather than as an aid to escape welfare dependency.

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## **Glossary**

APM	Active Participation Model
APS	Australian Public Sector
AuSSA	Australian Survey of Social Attitudes
AWT	Australian Working Together
BPA	Business Partnership Agreements
CPMF	Centrelink Project Management Framework
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CES	Commonwealth Employment Services
CSL	Commonwealth Serum Laboratories
CIC	Commercial- In- Confidence
CTC	Competitive Tendering and Contracting
CSDA	Commonwealth Services Delivery Agency Act
DCALB	Diverse Cultural And Linguistic Backgrounds
DSP	Disability Support Payment
EEP	Employment Pathway Plan
FMIP	Financial Management Improvement Plan
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GBEs	Government Business Enterprises
IC	Industry Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITAA	Income Tax Assessment Act
JET	Jobs Education and Training
JSA	Job Services Australia
LLNP	Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program
MO	Mutual Obligation
NCP	National Competition Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPM	New Public Management

NSA	New Start Allowance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PA	Privacy Act
PP	Parenting Payment
PPP	Parenting Payment Partnered
PPS	Parenting Payment Single
PSASB	Public Sector Accounting Standards Board
R & D	Research and Development
SP	Special Benefit
VFM	Value For Money
WFD	Work for the Dole
WN	Working Nation
WTW	Welfare To Work
YA	Youth Allowance

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*One of the important principles that underpin our approach to welfare reform is that there are social obligations that apply to everyone (McClure 2000b, p.4).*

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Research in the area of accounting has expanded over the last few decades as a result of the introduction and development of a critical-accounting movement. This approach to accounting promotes a ‘new analysis and understanding of the role of accounting’ and acknowledges the lack of awareness about the broader context of accounting in accounting research (Gaffikin 2009, p. 270). Furthermore, according to this movement accounting is recognised as a social science, a consideration that should be reflected in accounting research (Gaffikin 2006, 2009; Mautz 1963).

This research contributes towards understanding the role of accounting as a social science by investigating accountability and considering it in a broader accounting context. It also furthers critical enquiry into accountability, by contributing to the understanding of mutual obligation (MO) within the context of Australian welfare reform through the application of critical discourse analysis and by consideration of Foucauldian ideas of discipline.

Accountability, one of the human aspects of accounting, is the focus of this research. This study uses Foucault’s ideas of discipline to investigate the accountability mechanisms currently applied to Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients. These recipients were one of two main targets (the other being the recipients of the Disability Support Pension) of the

Welfare to Work (WTW) reform, which was introduced by the Howard government in 2006. The accountability of PPS recipients within the WTW literature is referred to as MO, which is underpinned by the notion of social obligation, and the centrepiece of Australian welfare reform under the Howard government. Under MO:

Governments, businesses, communities and individuals all have roles. Governments will have a responsibility to continue to invest significant resources to support participation. Employers and communities will have a responsibility to provide opportunities and support. Income support recipients will have a responsibility to take-up the opportunities provided by government, business and community, consistent with community values and their own capacity (McClure 2000b, p. 6).

The notion of social-welfare recipients' accountability is not specific to the welfare reforms of the Howard government. In fact, both the Hawke-Keating Labor government and the Howard government considered this concept as part of welfare reforms, where "both Labor and the Coalition have used similar terms: Labor, 'reciprocal obligation'; the Coalition, 'mutual obligation'" (Harris 2001, p. 19). The concept of MO was carried on by the Gillard Labor government, during which changes were implemented to the welfare system. This research provides a background to the welfare reforms introduced under these governments (Chapter 2); however, to make the research more manageable, the focus here is the MO of PPS recipients under the WTW reform of the Howard government. In addition, the questionnaire designed for this research is based on the concept of MO and the changes initiated under the Gillard government to examine PPS recipients' views on how the MO mechanism affected them.

The concept of social-welfare recipients' accountability is an obvious trend visible in the social-welfare policies of both Labor and Coalition governments over the past three decades. Considering that MO has become a central plank in the welfare reforms initiated by both Labor and Liberal Coalition governments, analysing the possible side effects such as power and control that comes with the obligation and discourse of MO takes on a particular importance.

This study provides some arguments for the existence of control and dominance within the context of Australian welfare reform through the discourse of MO. This research advances the knowledge and applicability of Foucault's ideas in the area of accounting and social-welfare by using his lens of discipline. It demonstrates the applicability and use of disciplinary techniques within different stages of a claim (or duration) of a social-welfare payment (PPS). Implementation of disciplinary techniques in various stages of this social-welfare payment may also be an indication of an administration system that enforces social control. In this study a disciplinary map has been developed for Foucault's disciplinary techniques. This visualises the techniques used in this research and provides a better understanding of their classifications and applicability.

Guided by Foucault's (1995) idea of discipline and Van Dijk's (1993) framework, this thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the discourse of MO, which was adopted by the Howard government to transform the social welfare system in Australia through welfare reform (specifically, WTW) and the application of MO. This research has used the lens of Foucault's disciplinary techniques to examine the accountability of PPS recipients towards

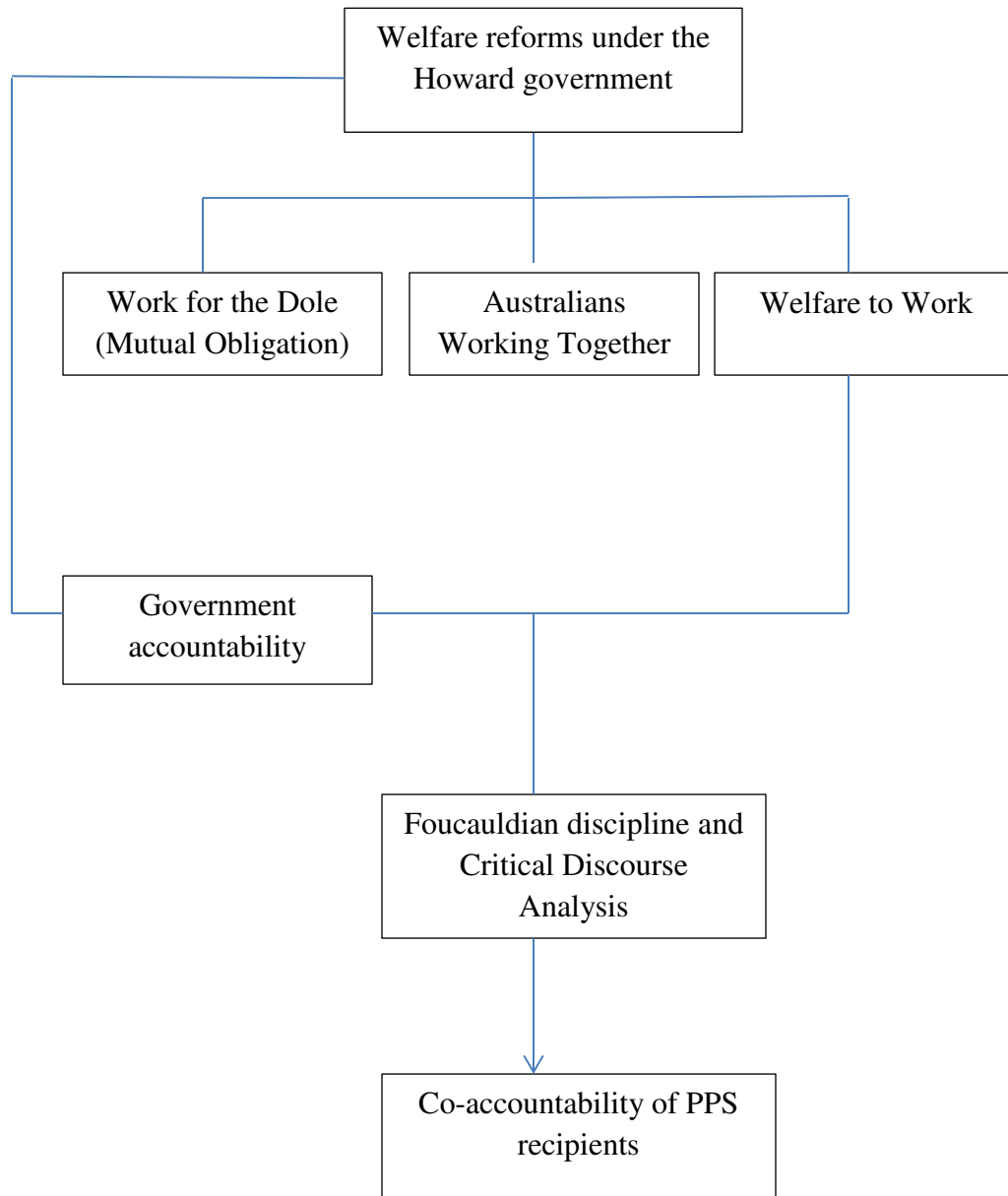
the Government. Application of various disciplinary techniques from Foucault and their examination in light of the MO of PPS is a contribution to accountability research.

The research framework of this study is a demonstration of the flexibility of Foucault's ideas in the application of mixed frameworks. It provides a better understanding of how Foucauldian disciplinary techniques and Van Dijk's framework combine to help explain the mechanisms of power in the example of the MO between PPS recipients and the Government.

Even though the main objective of this study is to examine the Foucauldian idea of discipline in the MO of PPS recipients, and through this lens to establish the association of the discourse of MO with control and power, the researcher has also examined the idea of discipline in practice as well to provide more depth to the study. In doing so, this study conducted a survey in which a questionnaire was used to collect data for an analysis of the attitudes of PPS recipients about MO. The questionnaire consisted of questions to establish respondents' perceptions of MO and its association with control.

Figure 1.1 provides a map of this research:

**Figure 1.1:** Research map



The Howard government introduced a ‘political anatomy’ through the introduction of MO in welfare reforms. Foucault (1995) identifies the concept of ‘political anatomy’ as a mechanism of power: “it define[s] how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only

so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines” (p. 138).

This research aims to show how accountability (MO) under WTW is an instrument of control. Control contributes towards an understanding of accountability in that it defines accountability. There is a strong link between accountability and control because accountability is “a means of achieving control” (Mulgan 2000, p. 11) and it is also “a vital mechanism of control” (Uhr 1993, p. 6); therefore, making someone accountable is a way of controlling their behaviour. This study, which is set around the accountability of PPS recipients under WTW, sets out to reveal the dominance of the Australian government (through Centrelink) in enforcing this accountability. This study explores how the concept of MO is understood and put into practice. Foucault’s idea of discipline is central to the analysis conducted in this study.

MO is a discourse constructed by the government and is communicated through legislation and other public documents to enhance community understanding and engage the people who are affected by it. However, it cannot be considered and analysed in isolation. MO is a term as well as a concept, and understanding it requires consideration of context as well as of the way it has been structured and formed. This research takes a contextual approach to the discourse of MO. It identifies the multiple contexts of MO: public sector reform/welfare reform (Chapter 2); accountability (Chapter 3); critical context (Chapters 4 and 5); and public documents (Chapter 6).

This thesis demonstrates that the WTW reform, through the implementation of MO, potentially controls and dominates PPS recipients. MO not only encourages PPS recipients



to engage socially and economically but also enforces adherence to the requirements of MO, making the recipients obedient and ‘docile’ bodies: recipients are forced to deal with the financial and non-financial consequences of non-compliance. In other words, PPS recipients are subject to MO in order to receive their payment. Foucault acknowledges the importance of power relationships in the process of subjugation but also points to the importance of communicative relationships in this process (Lynch 1998; Allen 2000).

Van Dijk (1993) offers a systematic analytical approach to explore, first, the communicative relationships in MO and, second, the structure of MO:

- (1): If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise ‘exhibit’ their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how [this framework is used to explore the communicative relationships in MO]; and
- (2): If they [the powerful group] are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audience, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in [this framework being used to examine the structure of MO] (p. 259).

To demonstrate the power relationships in the process of PPS recipients’ subjugation to MO, Foucault’s idea of discipline is applied. Foucault (2007) addresses a ‘triangle’ of three forms of power: sovereignty, discipline and governmental management. He says this power triangle “has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism” (p. 108). By exploring the notion of discourse and discursive practices, this study demonstrates how disciplinary practices in MO occur and are perpetuated. It shows how the dominant discourse of MO that operates under the WTW reform subjugates PPS recipients and shows the Government to be an elite group. The theoretical framework of this study provides an approach to analyse communicative as well as power relationships in

the process of subjugation of PPS recipients to the discourse of MO. The findings of this research also offer insight for other social- welfare payments that have undergone reform; for example, the Disability Support Pension. It also provides an understanding of the challenges PPS recipients face as a result of the impact of MO.

Application of Foucault's concepts and ideas in accounting research to demonstrate the existence of power, control and domination is not new. Lamb (2001) uses Foucault's concept of power and demonstrates that the mode of taxation governance in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England was associated with power relations and forms of accountability. Neu (2000) applies Foucault's idea of governmentality to illustrate the role of accounting in the control of First Nations (that is, Indigenous) people between 1830 and 1860 in Canada during the occupation of their land. Hooper and Kearins (1997) conducted a Foucauldian study which examines the role of accounting in facilitating control over Maori land in 19<sup>th</sup>-century rural New Zealand. Alagiah (1996) has used Foucauldian genealogy to explain how an accounting concept of 'income' is a mechanism of control in the context of Australian social-welfare payments. Grose (2011, p.520) uses Foucault's ideas of disciplinary power, surveillance and normalisation "to examine how indirect government control mechanisms are used as a means of holding government agencies and recipients of social security benefits accountable".

Some of the literature applies Foucauldian ideas to examine MO. Yeatman (1999) addresses the unequal relationship of the service provider (on behalf of the government) and clients (recipients of social-welfare payments) based on a paternalistic contractualism approach to the notion of MO.

Sawer (2006, p. 5) aims to “assess mutual obligation in the light of the views of Work for the Dole participants themselves about the principle, with a particular focus on their views about their rights and obligations”. Edwards (2003) applies Foucault’s ideas of panopticism, governmentality and technologies of self and domination to demonstrate that the monitoring and surveillance element of MO does not affect all specified social participants equally, and that young working class women are most affected by this surveillance. Parker and Fopp (2005) investigate the monitoring practices of MO faced by unemployed Australians; they consider the surveillance existing in MO as “‘top-down’ with the powerful government observing those with little power (people who rely on the state for an income). It is thus appropriate to apply a theory which is concerned with power relations and domination” (p.122).

However, there has not been sufficient research that examines MO and its governance under the WTW reform and the existence of a power relationship in the accountability of PPS recipients. Also, the extent to which Foucault’s disciplinary paradigms and their relevant techniques are applicable is not clear, as only one or two paradigms/techniques have been applied in past research. It is important to know the degree to which these techniques are applicable and the extent of their use within the discourse of MO.

For Foucault, discipline incorporates three paradigms for analysis: ‘docile bodies’, ‘the means of correct training’ and ‘panopticism’; each includes its own disciplinary techniques (see the disciplinary map in Chapter 4). This study demonstrates the applicability of these paradigms and their relevant techniques in MO discourse, which is an indication of control and domination by the elite group (the Government). This research also demonstrates cases

in which one disciplinary practice was applicable to different aspects of MO (e.g., the timetable applicable in waiting periods, interviews and lodgement requirements), and cases in which one aspect of MO attracted a number of Foucault's disciplinary techniques (e.g., the Employment Pathway Plan (EPP), which could be used to identify the panopticism paradigm as well as the technique of examination).

This study contributes towards an understanding of “how modern western society [such as Australia] organises itself [in the area of welfare], and regulates people's [PPS recipients] thoughts and behaviour” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 46); and how regulating accountability (MO) with disciplinary techniques is used as an instrument of control and dominance; this is also in line with “one crucial presupposition of adequate critical discourse analysis [that] is understanding the nature of social power and dominance” (Van Dijk 1993, p. 254). The concept of MO “is now regulated in Australia, through...[Centrelink], which is a system of power regulating the practice” of MO (Alagiah 1996, p. 242).

Furthermore, this work advances the knowledge and applicability of Foucault's ideas in the area of accountability and social welfare by applying his notion of discipline to the accountability of PPS recipients under MO. This research demonstrates the applicability and use of disciplinary techniques within different stages of a claim or through the duration of a social-welfare payment. The implementation of disciplinary techniques in the various stages of a claim or the currency of a social-welfare payment is also an indication of an administration system that enforces social control.

This study also seeks to demonstrate Hartman's (2005, p. 61) statement that "the welfare state has not shrunk [under neo-liberalism]; rather different forms of welfare have arisen coupled with new modes of administration and underpinned by a theoretical rationale which has shifted from entitlement to obligation" (see Chapter 6).

This research is exploratory and intends to stimulate further critical research in the area of accountability within the welfare system. It also initiates an examination of other Foucauldian ideas in the area of accountability within the context of social welfare. The research is limited, however: it only considers WTW, analysis is limited to PPS recipients and it only applies Foucault's disciplinary ideas. This is done so that the scope of enquiry is kept to manageable proportions.

The ontological foundation of this study is social structuralist and its epistemology is based on the idea that knowledge is subjective. This study considers MO discourse as "conceptual, meaning to say that [it is] not available in the world of nature...[It] occur[s] not as part of nature, but [is] human construction and lie[s] in the world of abstraction" (Alagiah 1996, p. 240). Moreover, MO "is brought into existence through discourse and is therefore a construction through discourse" (Alagiah 1996, p. 276), which is subject to change.

This thesis consists of seven further chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 present a review of the literature and establish the background of the discourse of MO. These two chapters also consider analysis of text in context, where public-sector reform and accountability are considered as two of the contexts for MO discourse.

Chapter 2 discusses public-sector reform in Australia, including welfare reform. The chapter looks at the historical context of reform as well as the practices of the Howard government and the instruments that were used to implement reform within the Australian public sector. This chapter also explores the various rationalities behind public-sector reform and introduces the reforms initiated by the Howard government. It aims to reflect circumstances and events that led to the regulation of the concept of MO. It focuses on government practices that have shaped the notion of MO in which the Australian welfare system “discourses and brings into reality an object known as” MO (Alagiah 1996, p. 240).

Chapter 3 provides an understanding of how this thesis considers accountability as a broad concept. This chapter discusses how MO is constituted within the context of accountability. It sets a framework for the accountability investigated by this research. The accountability specified under welfare reform is associated with MO when the government is not the sole party responsible for the wellbeing of welfare recipients, and when they themselves are required to be involved, both socially and economically.

This study uses Foucault’s idea of discipline as its methodology and critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its method; the work of Van Dijk (1993) is employed to provide the framework, and is applied to the texts in this study. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and addresses the research design, which provides the philosophical foundation and the theory applied. This chapter explores Foucault’s literature and provides a basis for understanding Foucault and the role of his work in this research. It addresses the idea of power and the relevancy of this idea to other Foucauldian concepts such as ‘governmentality’ and ‘discipline’. There is a connection between these concepts as Foucault (2007) addresses three forms of power: sovereignty, discipline and governmental

management. As noted above, he refers to these forms of power as a triangle “which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism” (p. 108).

Chapter 5 demonstrates the procedural instrument and method applied in this study. Van Dijk’s (1993) framework is applied in this chapter, which contributes to an exploration of the structure of MO discourse and an understanding of the relevance of communicative relationships in the process of subjugation. This study examines a range of public documents. These documents are the *Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work and Other Measures) Act 2005*, the McClure report (2000), government department websites, and publications by Centrelink and the government in regards to welfare reform.

Chapter 6 provides the immediate context for analysis. In this chapter, data in relation to the concept and elements of MO discourse are extracted using Van Dijk’s (1993) framework. In other words, the chapter explores the structure of MO discourse within the context of WTW reform using relevant public documents, and examines communicative relationships within the discourse of MO. However, these communicative relationships only describe one aspect of the subjugation of PPS recipients to MO, the other aspect being the power relationship, which is addressed in Chapter 7. This chapter uses the outcomes and findings of Chapter 6, in which the structure of MO discourse is explored, and applies Foucault’s disciplinary techniques to analyse them. It examines how PPS recipients have been subject to MO using Foucault’s idea of discipline.

While Chapter 7 examines the existence of the notion of dominance and control within the structure and theory of MO, Chapter 8 provides some practical insights into the relevance of Foucault's disciplinary techniques and some views of PPS recipients regarding MO gathered by using a questionnaire. Chapter 9 concludes this thesis.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF PUBLIC-SECTOR AND WELFARE REFORMS IN AUSTRALIA**

#### ***2.1. INTRODUCTION***

Public-sector reform in Australia began in the mid-1980s, which makes Australia a pioneer in examining and restructuring the public sector. Australia's reforms were a response to resource scarcity, as well as to other trends identified by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These trends included ageing populations, budget deficits and low rates of economic participation by some sections of the workforce.

Globalisation has also affected government policies regarding public-sector reform. In Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, governments speak of 'modernising' (repositioning their economies in response to globalisation). In Australia, welfare reforms have been implemented by parties on both sides of the political spectrum: specially, the Labor party and the Liberal-National coalition. One major shift in the Howard government's welfare policies within the context of public-sector reform has been the involvement of the private-sector and the introduction of private sector practices into the public sector (see Section 2.6. for instruments of reform and Section 2.6.2.6 for the creation of Centrelink, which delivers welfare payments to recipients).

The introduction of private-sector techniques and practices to the public sector is one way of implementing reform. Privatisation, contracting out and public-private partnerships (PPP), instruments of reform used under the Howard government, had an impact on governance and accountability within the public sector. The Australian government also

implemented welfare reform as part of its wider public-sector reforms. Giddens (2001) traces the shift of social-welfare policy in Australia and other OECD countries over 30 years, examining it in the context of the globalisation, welfare dependency and changes in social demographics that motivated the reforms.

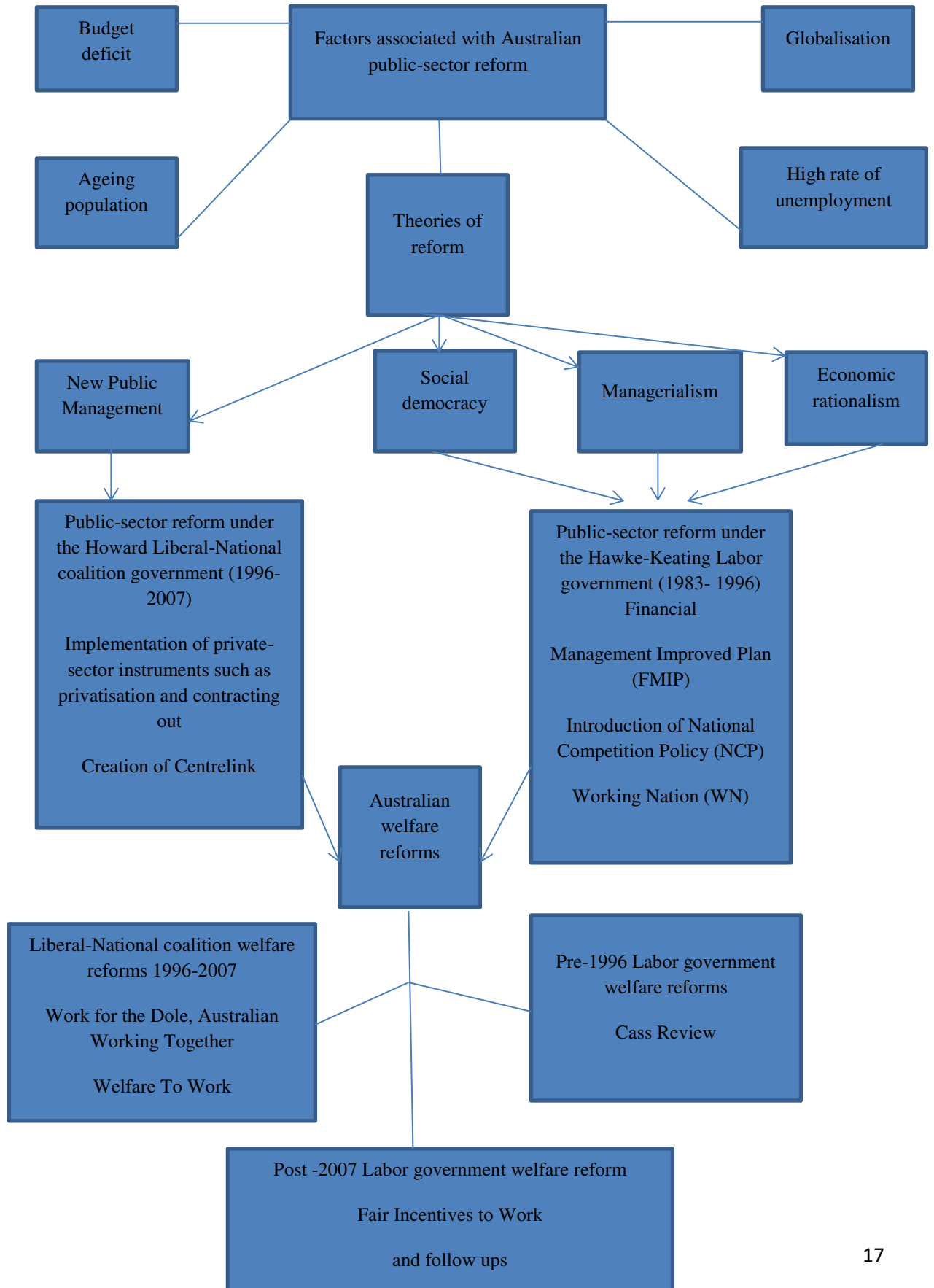
In the area of welfare reform, ‘the McClure report’ (McClure 2000b) discusses the reasons that led to a significant change in Australia’s social support system:

- Australia has a strong labour market, but employment opportunities are not being shared fairly.
- An unequal distribution of employment is resulting in a growing reliance on income support, with negative consequences for many individuals and families and [for] the system itself.
- Economic growth, on its own, will not address the problem of entrenched economic and social disadvantage for many people.
- The social support system has not responded adequately to changes in our economy and society.
- It is therefore highly unlikely that these problems can be addressed effectively without a major reorientation of social support arrangements (McClure 2000b, p. 64).

This chapter addresses Australian public-sector and welfare reforms. It provides a background for understanding these reforms, the factors and trends that have directed Australian governments toward reform and the various policies that have been initiated over time. It also provides a context for MO, which is the focus of analysis in this research.

The following diagram provides a map for this chapter.

## Map of Chapter 2



## ***2.2. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGE IN OECD COUNTRIES AND PUBLIC-SECTOR REFORM IN AUSTRALIA***

Australia and New Zealand are considered pioneers in fiscal reform as low economic growth and budget deficits in both countries in the early 1980s prompted them to introduce changes (Tanzi 2004). In the 1990s, Australia and other OECD countries faced ageing populations; Carey (1999, p. 2) cautioned at the time that “on unchanged policies, this will increase government outlays for public pensions and health care, causing a deterioration in budget balances, and reduce economic growth (mainly by lowering growth in the labour force)”.

Van der Schoot (1994) refers to the age-dependency ratio (the proportion of the population over 65 relative to the number of those of working age). It is predicted that “the most rapid increase in the number of people over 65 [will occur] between 2011 and 2021, when the peak of the baby boom generations reach retirement ages” (Van der Schoot 1994, p. 64).

Unemployment is also a common problem among OECD countries. “Severe and prolonged rises in unemployment in the early 1990s left almost 35 million people unemployed in 1994” (McCoull 1996, p. 70). Labour markets in OECD countries have also experienced a number of other trends over recent decades: an increase in the participation of women in the labour force; the increasing component of part-time work in employment growth; increasing employment in service sectors with a corresponding decline in industry and agriculture; low demand for unskilled jobs; and widening wage differentials (McCoull 1996).

Governments have traditionally been responsible for administering the public sector and ensuring that government organisations adhere to regulations and budgets (Parker & Guthrie 1993). Since the 1980s the Australian public-sector has undergone extensive changes to achieve this, including the introduction of private-sector practices, accountability and accounting systems into the public sector structure (O’Faircheallaigh *et al.* 1998; Parker & Guthrie 1993). Pusey (2008) also reports on the concentration of power in a few Australian government departments, an internal pressure leading to reform. In 1976 the Royal Commission on Government Administration identified a concentration of power in the Department of the Treasury, and recommended moving economic policy-making into the spending departments. In addition, the 1991 Economic Rationalism Report identified central agencies, including the Departments of the Treasury, Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Finance as those where power was most concentrated (Pusey 2008). This also was also a contributing factor to changes in government administration.

### **2. 2. 1 Globalisation and reform**

“Globalization can be interpreted in various ways but essentially it means that a country’s dependence on the rest of the world is now very high” (Tanzi 2004, p. 525).

Sapir (2006) refers to global economic transformation, where technological change together with the implementation of market-like practices by China, India and the former Soviet bloc, have contributed to the establishment of ‘one world’ where global competition is very strong. “As recently as 1970, the share of developing countries in developed countries’ imports of manufactured products was barely 10 per cent. Today their share is over 45 per

cent” (p. 371). Sapir (2006) suggests the implementation of social and economic reforms to cope with these changes in the global economy.

‘Modernisation’ is the term used in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom for governments’ repositioning of their economies in response to globalisation (O’Brien & O’Donnell 2002). Tanzi (2004) believes “countries that open themselves up to the rest of the world, and that introduce reforms that prepare them for the opportunities that globalization offers, generally benefit, over time, from the choice that they make” (p. 527). Furthermore, “a country with flexible and transparent rules and with an intelligent and unconstrained economic policy can benefit a lot from opening its economy to the many winds that characterize globalization” (p. 529).

Sapir (2006) and Tanzi (2004) both acknowledge the fact that globalisation has costs and benefits: “the costs are normally up front and are easily identifiable while the benefits are often delayed, occur over a longer period, are more diffused among population and, especially at the beginning, tend to be concentrated on particular groups” (Tanzi 2004, p. 526). Broader market size; greater demand; more access to capital goods, raw materials and consumer goods; and easier access to new technologies and organisational tools are some of the benefits of globalisation. On the other hand, the costs of globalisation include joblessness, reduction in value of some capital and downward pressure on tax revenue as a result of policy enhancement and change (Tanzi 2004). Governments need to restructure the public-sector to enjoy the benefits of globalisation (Sapir 2006).

### ***2.3. THEORIES OF REFORM***

One factor that influences governments' decision-making in public policies and enforces changes in the public sector is 'intellectual catalysts': economic theories/doctrines applied to public policy and administration. Australian governments have been influenced by the economic doctrines of their time, and have implemented them in their decision-making in developing and implementing public policies.

Orchard (1998) identifies three of these 'intellectual catalysts' that brought changes to the public sector during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s: social democracy, economic rationalism (public choice) and managerialism. A more recent theory is New Public Management (NPM). NPM is the doctrine implemented by the Howard government to introduce change to the public sector. Australian social welfare (as part of the public sector) was also affected by the implementation of these theories which they "reinforced the view that traditional approaches to public administration suffered from inertia and ossification, and were in need of reform" (Orchard 1998, p. 21).

These theories have offered alternative public-sector management practices and it is important to reference these economic doctrines to provide a better understanding of the foundation they have provided in Australian governments' decision-making and implementation of public-sector reforms. They also have provided a context in which public-sector reforms have emerged.

### **2.3.1. Social Democracy**

Orchard (1998) contends that social democracy is at the core of Australian public-sector reform, where “equity, if not equality, is still a strong commitment of national government while the mixed economy remains an important policy concern” (p. 28). This approach was applied to public policy and administration under the Whitlam government; however, the position of subsequent Labor governments changed over the years. The Labor party’s move from a social-democratic policy toward a free market policy started with the Hawke government of the 1980s. In December 1983 a decision was made to float the currency and abolish exchange controls; soon after, in 1984, Hawke’s ‘Trilogy’<sup>1</sup> was initiated (Quiggin 1998). The ‘Trilogy’ commitment also marked the implementation of a doctrine labelled by Braithwaite (1998) as the ‘hydraulic model’. Since then both major Australian parties have been committed to this doctrine and implement it in their policies. This model originates from libertarian American ideology, which also informs neo-liberal conceptions of a free-market economy. This ideology believes in a strong market and views the state as weak, asserting “that the state sector is a national burden, a hindrance to development, and that a dollar spent in the private economy is a productive dollar and worth more than a dollar spent in the public sector” (Pusey 2008, p. 20). In Wilenski’s view (1986), a reformed public sector is one “that reconcile[s] social democratic principles of equity and public intervention, efficient administration and democratic openness with a libertarian purpose” (p. 20).

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Trilogy’ covers the following points: “federal government tax revenue would not be permitted to grow as a proportion of GDP; federal government spending would not grow faster than the economy as a whole; and the federal deficit would be reduced in money terms in 1985-6 and would not be permitted to grow as a proportion of GDP in the following two years” (Quiggin 1998, p. 81).



### **2.3.2. Economic Rationalism**

In Australia, economic rationalism originated when expansion of public spending caused a rise in real wages that contributed to the 1974 recession, which many consider to be the end of the post-war boom era; high rates of unemployment were characteristic of this time. The idea of economic rationalism became the subject of debate in the early 1980s; “[o]ver time, however, most ‘economic rationalists’ came to assume that reasoned analysis would always lead to support for free-market policies” (Quiggin 1998, p. 78).

The term ‘economic rationalism’ is generally used in Australia (Spigelman 2001). “In many respects, economic rationalism is the antithesis of the participatory citizenship vision of the Whitlam Government” (Sumsion 2006, p. 2). Other terms used for the same approach include ‘free-market’, ‘economic reform’, ‘structural change’, ‘libertarian’ and ‘laissez-faire’ economics (Pusey 2008). Under economic rationalism’s philosophy, “[the] free market will always return to an ‘equilibrium’ position. Therefore, international trade should be completely free; there should be no government regulation of industries; publicly owned industries should be privatised; and the banking system should be de-regulated” (Weekes 1998, p. 385). Economic rationalism claims that “the market is, at least in principle, the only means of setting values on anything” (Pusey 2008, p. 31), and “that economies, markets and money would always, at least in principle, deliver better outcomes than states, governments and the law” (Pusey 2008, p. 25).

Proponents of economic rationalism argued that “traditional public sector management practices suffered from inertia and ossification, and that private sector management techniques such as strategic planning and accrual accounting should be imported into public sector management” (Parker & Gould 1999, p. 112). “Economic rationalism is a doctrine

that advocates a return to the principles of neo-classical economics with a corresponding reduction in the size and power of government and the public sector” (Melleuish 1997, p. 203).

### **2.3.3. Managerialism**

Managerialism subjects government agencies to a higher level of scrutiny. In addition to economic rationalism, managerialism was behind the changes in the Australian public sector during the 1980s. Under these theories there was “an emphasis on the necessity for clear goals, corporate plans, and, above all, internal and external accounting systems with clear responsibility lines for output performance measurement” (Parker & Guthrie 1993, p. 62). This approach also advocated for reduction in the size of government and the transfer some of the government’s responsibilities to the private sector (Campbell 1995; Barrett 1996; Funnell 1997, p. 93).

The Hawke government (1983-91) was influenced by managerialism and determined “to remould the public sector with a corporatist, private sector ethos which [gave] priority to getting the best out of scarce resources” (Funnell 1997, p. 87). Performance under managerialism is associated with quantifiable outputs. The emphasis is on efficiency; “this is often interpreted as cost reduction of public sector activities for given outputs” (Parker & Guthrie 1993, p. 64). Funnell (1997) refers to a shift of accountability under managerialism from accountability for inputs to “a keener focus on the relationship between inputs and the resulting outputs and outcomes” (p. 91). Funnell also notes that “by allowing managers greater authority and flexibility in their decision making they have been encouraged to become results orientated, the assessment of which is through financial measures” (p. 91).

#### **2.3.4. New Public Management**

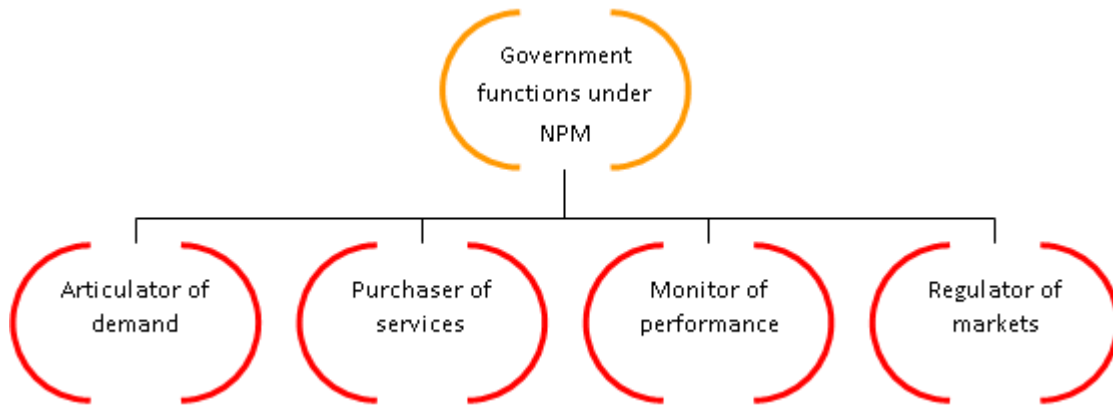
Hood (1995) identifies the 1980s as the time when there was a move towards NPM in a number of OECD countries, even though “not all OECD countries moved to adopt NPM principles to the same extent<sup>2</sup> during the 1980s and...there were marked differences even within similar family groups such as the English-speaking ‘Westminster-model’ countries” (Hood 1995, p. 98). NPM is made up of several elements, including “emphasizing competition, performance-based contracting, service delivery, customer satisfaction, market incentives, and restoring civil society” (Savas 2001b, p. 1321). This approach “which sought to mimic private sector management practices and principles, the new public management, in a very short time overturned structures, doctrines, beliefs and practices which had sustained the Australian public sector since the founding of Australia in 1788” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 26).

NPM is the doctrine implemented by the Howard government to introduce change to the public sector. Lorenz (2012, p. 600) refers to NPM as “neoliberal policies in the public sector”. Neo-liberalism “is based on some central tenants [sic] including: economic liberalism; small government with a reduced public sector expenditure and tax burden; and increased personal responsibility and self-reliance” (Parker & Fopp 2005, p. 110). NPM is referred to as “an overall ‘paradigm’ for reforming government institutions” (Dunleavy *et al.* 2005, p. 469). One characteristic of NPM is that it restructures the functions of government, as illustrated in Figure 2.1:

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<sup>2</sup> Examples of countries that adopted NPM to a high extent “would be likely to include Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the U.K. with France, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Ireland also showing a number of marked shifts in the direction of NPM” (Hood 1995, p. 99). On the other hand, Hood (1995) cites Germany, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Japan and Turkey as countries that adopted NPM to a much lesser extent.

**Figure 2.1:** Government functions under NPM



*Source:* Based on Savas 2001a, p. 1321

Hood (1995) reflects that NPM reverses “the two cardinal doctrines of PPA [Progressive Public Administration]; that is, lessening or removing differences between the public and the private sector and shifting the emphasis from process accountability towards a greater element of accountability in terms of results” (p. 94). NPM addresses a public-service management theme based on efficiency, accountability and private-sector provisions (Hood 1991; Barzelay 2001; Heffernan 2006; Dent & Barry 2004).

Dunleavy *et al.* (2005, p. 470) specify three themes for NPM:

- Disaggregation-splitting up large public sector hierarchies in the same way that large private corporations earlier moved from U-form to M-form (multifirm) structures; achieving wider, flatter hierarchies internally; and re-specifying information and managerial systems to facilitate this different pattern of control.
- Competition-introducing purchaser/provider separation into public structures so as to allow multiple different forms of provision to be developed and to create (more) competition among

potential providers. Increasing internal use was made of competitive processes to allocate resources (in place of hierarchical decision making).

- Incentivization-shifting away from involving managers and staff and rewarding performance in terms of a diffuse public service or professional ethos, and moving instead toward a greater emphasis on pecuniary-based, specific performance incentives.

Savas (2001b) uses NPM as the label for reforms whose main feature is the application of “market principles into the political world” (p. 1732). “Much of NPM is built on the idea (or ideology) of homeostatic control; that is, the clarification of goals and missions in advance, and then building the accountability systems in relation to those pre-set goals” (Hood 1995, p. 107). NPM is a broader context of public-sector reforms implemented under the Howard government. It also specifies the position of control within the public-sector as a whole. Understanding the position of control within the context of public-sector reform would clearly assist in the extracting and examination of control and domination within welfare reforms, which have made up a significant portion of public-sector reform.

#### ***2.4. CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLIC-SECTOR REFORMS***

This research classifies Australian Public-sector reforms into two types: those enacted under the Hawke-Keating Labor governments, and those enacted under the Howard Liberal-National coalition government. This classification provides consistency and reflects on continuity of public-sector reforms over time despite the leadership of different political parties.

It is important to address public-sector and welfare reforms. Welfare reform is the area of study in this research and is considered as part of public-sector reform. In other words, public sector reforms provide context to the study of welfare reforms.

#### **2.4.1. Public-sector reforms under the Hawke-Keating Labor governments**

Reforms enacted under the Hawke-Keating Labor governments from 1984 to 1990 were part of the Financial Management Improvement Plan (FMIP) (Wanna *et al.* 2000). The overall goal was to obtain efficiency in public-sector management (Head & Patience 1989).

Under FMIP, managers in the public sector had a “defined level of resources allocated to them and the required performance or results from these resources [were] specified”; also, “managers [had], as far as possible, the necessary tools to achieve these results” such as financial management information systems and flexibility (Shand 1994, p. 1). All government agencies and departments were required to report their program performance (annual reports, corporate plans and budget explanatory notes) to Parliament. Australia Post, Australian National Rail, the Commonwealth Bank, Australian Airlines and Telecom were examples of government business enterprises (GBEs) that underwent reform as part of the performance-management movement (Parker & Guthrie 1993).

The Labor party maintained its view in favour of a free-market policy. The next stage of public-sector reform was the introduction of the concept of ‘competition’ to the public sector through the establishment of the National Competition Policy (NCP). The aim of the NCP was identified as “promoting and maintaining competitive forces to increase efficiency and community welfare, while recognising other social goals” (Independent

Committee of Inquiry into a NCP 1993, p. v). This was partly to strengthen the Australian economy so that it could compete with rival Asian countries. The Independent Committee of Inquiry into a National Competition Policy identified three reasons to introduce the NCP: “Australia had become a single, integrated market because of advances in technology and transport”; NCP was considered “essential to the economic wellbeing of the nation”; and there was a perceived need for a broad reform to include all levels of government to “promote nationally consistent approaches and reduce the costs establishing industry-specific reforms” (Independent Committee of Inquiry into an NCP 1993, p. xviii).

The Keating government appointed Professor Fred Hilmer “to identify weaknesses in Australian competition policies” (Funnell 1997, p. 94). The Hilmer Report found “excessive regulation in commodity and financial markets...[and] the restrictive trade practices which have become an entrenched feature of all of the professions” (Funnell 1997, p. 94). The belief was that through application of competition, a market would provide “better services, more efficiently and at lower cost than the taxpayer resourced, budget dependent, anachronistic public sector monopoly providers with their attendant inefficiencies, oversupply and excessive costs” (Parker & Gould 1999, p. 114).

In consideration of this view, the NCP inquiry was initiated in 1991, and reported in 1993.

Under the NCP:

- No participant in the market should be able to engage in anti-competitive conduct against the public interest;

- As far as possible, universal and uniformly applied rules of market conduct should apply to all market participants, regardless of the form of business ownership;
- Conduct with anti-competitive potential said to be in the public interest should be assessed by an appropriate transparent assessment process, with the provision for review, to demonstrate the nature and incidence of the public costs and benefits claimed;
- Any changes to the coverage or nature of competition policy should be consistent with, and support, the general thrust of reforms (Fels 1994, p. 2).

Brown and Waterhouse (2005) specified the main themes of the NCP as shrinking the scope and size of the public sector, and competition with the private sector. They believed that for the Australian government to adopt the recommendations of the NCP, the public sector would require a new structure and service-delivery models. Hoque and Moll (2001) referred to the NCP as the major driver of reform in all levels of government.

The Labor government's other initiative was the introduction of Working Nation (WN) in 1994, a fundamental policy shift in public-sector employment relations (Brown & Waterhouse 2005). Its objective has been described as "combined economic development through a major industry-responsive and deregulatory approach with a highly responsive social equity agenda" (Brown & Waterhouse 2005, p. 73). The NCP and WN both implemented market mechanisms as a delivery mode for public services (Brown & Waterhouse 2005). The Hawke and Keating governments implemented a combination of social-democratic policy (which was in line with their party's stated political objectives)



and a free-market policy, which was designed to increase competition and efficiency within the public sector.

#### **2.4.2. Public-sector reforms under the Howard Liberal-National coalition government**

Public-sector reform continued under the Liberal-National coalition government; however, the approach of this government was different to that of its predecessors. The Howard government took an NPM approach to public-sector reform that implemented private-sector practices (Funnell *et al.* 2012). Application of private sector practices required changes which “included downsizing, decentralization, deregulation, and re-engineering with the goal of smaller, more responsive, more entrepreneurial, and more effective public management” (Romzek 2000, p.39).

The implementation of the NPM approach has affected the “size of government, sources of services, and mode of product and service delivery” (Parker & Gould 1999, p. 109). NPM positioned the government as the facilitator of the public sector rather than the provider of services (Guthrie & Parker 1998; Glynn & Perkins 1997; Parker & Gould 1999). Privatisation, outsourcing/contracting out and public-private partnerships (PPP) are some of the private-sector delivery modes that were implemented by the Howard government during times of reform; “these service delivery solutions are based on the premise that private provision offers superior savings to consumers and governments” (English 2006, p. 251).

“Privatization involves the sale of the asset and of the right to produce and sell associated services. Government relies on law and regulation to manipulate social outcomes from

privatized corporations” (English 2006, p.251). Gowland and Aiken (2005) refer to efficiency and customer satisfaction as two priorities under the privatisation model, and believe that privatisation eases pressures on management. The sale of shares in the Commonwealth Bank, Qantas and Aussat to form the basis of Optus and the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (CSL) are some examples of the privatisation of government assets (Funnell *et al.* 2012; Quiggin 1998).

“Contracting out” was very common in the mid-1990s. The Howard government that came to office in 1996 continued using this public-sector reform instrument, and pursued a policy aimed at lowering public-sector expenditure and taxes and ensuring a small welfare state, in line with similar trends in the UK, USA and New Zealand (Aspin & Hayward 2001). Proponents of contracting out have generally asserted that the private sector is more efficient than the public sector (Funnell *et al.* 2012; Hodge 1997; Hodge 1999).

Another NPM approach is public-private partnerships (PPPs). Barrett (2000) defines PPPs as “the public sector working in partnership with the private sector, or indeed any public sector agency working in partnership with another agency and with private sector firms” (p. 68). Johnston (2010, p. s61) states that the concept of PPPs was introduced in Australia for “the development of economic and social infrastructure”.

“Entering into agreements with the private sector to build and operate large public sector projects on behalf of the government, such as hospitals, is usually justified on the basis of improvements in the equality of, and access to, services which the new facilities would provide at lower costs” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 58). However, PPPs were not always

successful. For example, after a decade of “troubled operations and mounting local opposition”, the NSW Government ceased its PPP for the operation of the Port Macquarie hospital and resumed public management of this facility (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 59). Other unsuccessful experiences with PPPs as such include the Cross City Tunnel public dispute in Sydney (Forward 2006). However, these few unsuccessful experiences in the implementation of PPPs did not undermine the State and Commonwealth governments’ enthusiasm for them. In fact, “Australia has been successfully engaged in the Asia-Pacific for over 30 years providing development assistance, contracting and a variety of professional services” (Regan 2006, p. 342). PPP contracts started in the mid-1990s in the Asia-Pacific, and were considered to be a substitute for scarce state capital. The first PPPs in Hong Kong, Indonesia and Malaysia were for the construction of toll roads using the BOOT format: the private sector would Build, Own, Operate and Transfer the infrastructure project. The emphasis of PPPs in the region now is on efficiency, using the expertise of the private sector and lowering costs. “Coincident with the arrival of the new public management, governments began to shift their presence in the provision of services from departmental structures to the use of agencies associated with departments which gave greater freedom to their managers by removing political heads from the day-to-day decision-making. Highly autonomous business units have proved especially popular for this purpose” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 26). The creation of Centrelink in the time of the Howard government is an example of governments using agencies to deliver their services to the public. (This is further discussed in section 2.6.2.6).

## **2.5. PUBLIC-SECTOR REFORM AND ACCOUNTING**

There have been waves of public-sector reforms over the last three decades affecting Australian governments' decisions to update public-sector management (Funnell *et al.* 2012; Hoque 2008; Hoque & Moll 2001). Australian governments were under pressure as result of budget deficits and lack of performance (Funnell *et al.* 2012; Tanzi 2004), high levels of unemployment (McCoul 1996); the concentration of power in a few Australian government departments, an internal pressure mentioned by Pusey (2008); and international forces such as globalisation. These pressures led to the reforms in the Australian public-sector (Giddens 2001; Winkworth 2005). Since the 1980s the Australian public-sector has undergone extensive changes to implement private-sector practices, accountability and accounting systems into the public-sector structure (O'Faircheallaigh *et al.* 1998; Parker & Guthrie 1993; Funnell *et al.* 2012; Hoque 2008) in a bid to ease these pressures.

It was believed that public-sector reforms “bring greater discipline to the budgetary processes to improve the targeting of programs, [and] give greater flexibility to public sector departments in allocating resources for administration” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. xiii). Furthermore, implementation of social and economic reforms were seen as a way to cope with changes within the global economy (Sapir 2006; Tanzi 2004; O'Brien & O'Donnell 2002).

Australian governments were influenced in their public-sector reform decisions by doctrines and rationales. Orchard (1998) identifies three ‘intellectual catalysts’, or theories that brought changes to the public sector during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s: social democracy, economic rationalism (public choice) and managerialism. The more recent doctrine of NPM was implemented by the Howard government to initiate reforms in the

public-sector. Under NPM, the Howard government implemented instruments such as privatisation and contracting out to bring private-sector practices to the public sector where “NPM in general and accounting reforms in particular have transformed the public sector landscape” (Christiaens & Rommel 2008, p. 59).

Accounting plays an important role in serving the purpose of public-sector reform (Funnell *et al.* 2012). In fact, “accounting plays a significant role in promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of public sector services” (Houque & Moll 2001, p. 304). However, accounting needed to be redesigned to serve its purpose within the context of public-sector reform. Reformed accounting has been vital in the application of NPM techniques in the public sector (McLeod & Harun 2014).

Public-sector reforms “have led to the adoption of accrual budgeting and financial reporting to enhance the level of financial information available for decision making” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. xiii). In fact, “accounting technologies have dominated public sector management reforms and accrual based financial reporting has been significant amongst these technologies” (Christensen 2002, p. 93).

Before the public-sector reforms, cash accounting had been used in the public sector where the “full costs of programs and activities were not recorded; the timing of transactions and inconsistent treatments provided misleading results and were easily manipulated; and there was no overarching, systematic record of the government’s non-cash assets and non-borrowing liabilities, such as superannuation” (Pearson 2012, p. 2).

The other characteristic of the public-sector accounting system prior to the public-sector reform of the late 1980s was that “the Auditors-General were the main actors involved, however, more recently, accounting technologies have been promoted by accounting policy units within Treasuries and Departments of Finance” (Ryan 1998, p. 518). The traditional accounting systems used in the public sector prior to reform emphasised inputs, whereas under accrual accounting, the emphasis were now placed on outputs and performance measurement (Funnell *et al.* 2012; Broadbent & Guthrie 1992; Guthrie 1995; Hoque & Moll 2001).

Accrual accounting was introduced to the public-sector to improve efficiency, effectiveness and accountability (Funnell *et al.* 2012). It “was expected to increase accountability and to improve management tools in a convergent way. Further, accrual accounting would increase the financial transparency of governmental organisations” (Christiaens & Rommel 2008, p. 59). Despite governments’ efforts to implement accrual accounting in the public sector, the literature indicates that accrual accounting might not generate the same results when applied in the public-sector and that it has not provided the benefits expected from its implementation in the public-sector (Miley & Read 2000; Robinson 1998). Further, “the empirical studies generally reveal that, due to different factors, the design and implementation of governmental accounting reforms appear to be less successful and are diverging in an uncontrolled way” (Christiaens & Rommel 2008, p. 60). Moreover, application of accrual accounting contributed to “a significant rise in both the complexity and the significance of financial reporting. These financial reports were complex to prepare, as they had to take into account future contingencies and liabilities” (Pearson 2012, p. 3). Christiaens and Rommel (2008, p.60) add that “the transition to accrual accounting in

governments is more than just a matter of time, and we think that it is unlikely to succeed...accrual accounting will only succeed in the coming years in businesslike (parts of) governments...[and] cannot account for the typical activities of governments” (Christiaens & Rommel 2008, p. 70).

The literature suggests that there is not one single ideal accounting system for the public-sector due to the divergence between the government’s businesslike and non-businesslike activities. “Although cameralistic accounting is more useful for most governmental activities, it is less useful for activities in which business aspects play a role. For businesslike activities, the economic information provided by accrual accounting becomes relevant” (Christiaens and Rommel 2008, p. 73).

The changes applied to the accounting system under public-sector reform also affected auditing: “audits became more complex, with a large amount of information to be considered when preparing an opinion on the reliability of the reports” (Pearson 2012, p. 3). This led to the introduction of new auditing standards “to enable a more risk-based approach whilst also safe-guarding the quality of the audit opinion” (Pearson 2012, p. 3). In addition to auditing, a new budgeting arrangement was needed as a result of the implementation of accrual accounting (Guthrie 1999; Hoque 2008). Accrual budgeting was introduced to provide “a resource management framework, which is accrual based and outcome and output focused” (Hoque 2008, p. 471).

## ***2.6. CLASSIFICATION OF AUSTRALIAN WELFARE REFORMS***

The classification of welfare reforms addressed in this research fall into three categories: reforms undertaken by the Labor governments, which include the Hawke-Keating Labor governments (1983-1996); reforms enacted under the Howard Liberal-National coalition government (1996-2007); and the post-2007 welfare reforms enacted by the Gillard Labor government (2010-2013). The first category provides a background to the concept of accountability and obligation of social-welfare recipients.

The Howard welfare reform of Welfare to Work is the focus of analysis in this research. This category is selected to be the focus of Foucauldian analysis, as it was under the Howard government that the concept of obligation was systematically introduced and implemented in the welfare system. The Foucauldian analysis in this research examines the existence of the notion of dominance and control within the structure and theory of MO discourse.

The third category, Gillard's welfare reforms, is also addressed to indicate the continuity of reform within the Australian welfare system. Furthermore, the changes in this category and the overall concept of MO were the basis for designing a questionnaire to examine PPS recipients' views on MO. This category brings a sense of currency and practicality to the thesis. It is also used to provide some practical insight into the relevance of Foucault's disciplinary techniques.



### **2.6.1. Welfare Reforms and Labor Governments (Pre-1996 reforms)**

“Talk of a crisis of the welfare state began to take hold in the mid-1970s and developed quite a momentum that continues into the early 2000s” (Bessant 2002, p. 12). The Labor government’s concern with regard to a decline in labour-force participation led to a review of social security conducted by Bettina Cass in 1988 (Edwards *et al.* 2001). “From the mid-1980s onwards concerns about the effects of long term joblessness led to a shift in the policy emphasis from a focus on ‘passive’ income support measures towards a more ‘active’ approach to participation” (Winkworth 2005, p. 25). The Cass review (1986-88), initiated by the then Labor government, “marked a change in the way unemployment assistance was delivered in Australia” (Winkworth 2005, p. 25). This policy required recipients of social welfare to take part in overcoming joblessness, and asserted the government’s responsibility to support them in their efforts (Cass 1988). This policy included a “wide range of education and assistance programs to facilitate work re-entry and financial incentives to increase participation” (Winkworth 2005, p. 25).

This reform included “development of the work test which had applied from the introduction of the benefit into an activity test.... The new approach involved greater obligations on the beneficiary to participate in programs to improve ‘job readiness’ and subsidized employment programs” (Dale 2006). This stage of reform also covered family payments including those to single parents, and provided single parents with work incentives (Doiron 2004). The Family Allowance Supplement was also introduced in recognition of the fact that there were people on waged income who nevertheless suffered from poverty (Bessant 2002).

“Behind the Hawke Labor government’s reform was the central premise that a ‘cycle of dependency’ on social security benefits needed to be broken” (Bessant 2002, p. 13). To implement this premise, eligibility criteria and means testing were tightened and procedures put in place to deal with cheats (Bessant 2002). However, the “Hawke Labor government policies were also informed by and sought comfort from ‘human capital’ arguments which claimed that increased participation rates in education meant decreased unemployment” (p. 13). This concept contributed to the high number of people of working age who preferred training to employment (Bessant 2002). In addition, according to the ‘Labour Force Survey’<sup>3</sup>, “the participation rate of lone parents increased by six to seven percentage points (ppts) from 1986 to 1990” (Doiron 2004, p. 157).

Furthermore, in 1994 the Keating Labor government produced ‘Working Nation’, a white paper that addressed further reforms in the area of unemployment; these reforms were intended to assist the long-term unemployed who were also receiving social-security payments. “Changes were designed to reduce disincentives to seek employment imposed by the income test upon both beneficiaries and their spouses and to provide direct assistance for spouses of beneficiaries who were not in the labour force” (Dale 2006). The theme of the Working Nation scheme was that “if the government is providing income support, labour market programs and other services, it is only fair that clients take up any reasonable offer of assistance and do whatever they can to improve their employment prospects” (Harris 2000, p. 285).

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<sup>3</sup>The Labour Force Survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (currently approximately 26,000 houses, flats, etc.) and a list sample of non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), and covers approximately 0.32% of the civilian population of Australia aged 15 years and over (ABS 2014, cat. no. 6202.0).

Buckingham (1999) acknowledges the effect of Australian welfare reform on the reforms implemented by the UK New Labour government. “The New Deal is heavily derivative of the past Australian Labor government’s ‘Working Nation’ reform and the more recent Liberal-National Coalition government’s ‘Work for the Dole’ program. In turn, these reforms can be traced back to the United States ‘workfare’ reforms” (p. 25).

### **2.6.2. Welfare reforms and the Liberal-National coalition**

Kinnear (2002) offers three arguments for the shift from social-security systems based on ‘entitlement’ towards ‘conditional’ social welfare systems:

- ...they are consistent with fundamental and longstanding principles of liberal democratic traditions;
- ...entitlement systems counterproductively create ‘welfare dependency’, and over-emphasise citizens’ rights at the expense of their responsibilities; and
- ...they are just plain common sense: that if the community has an obligation to provide income support for some members, then those who are being supported have corresponding obligations to the community (p. 248).

The concept of mutual obligation (MO) was heavily emphasised as part of the welfare reforms initiated by the Howard government. The term began appearing in welfare literature in 1996, the year the Howard government came to office (Yeend 2004). “Mutual Obligation was based on a concept that welfare assistance provided to the unemployed of working age should involve some return responsibilities for the recipient” (Dale 2006).

The Government’s emphasis on MO was exemplified in the ‘Work for the Dole’ (WFD) program. WFD legislation was introduced to Parliament on 19 March 1997. This reform

was followed by two other major welfare reforms: Australians Working Together (AWT) (2003) and Welfare to Work (WTW) (2006); the latter is the focus of this study.

#### ***2.6.2.1 Work for the Dole Reform***

“In 1997 the ‘Work for the Dole’ scheme was introduced as the first part of a broader ‘Mutual Obligation’ approach to the structure of income support and support programs for unemployed people” (Dale 2006). The core concept of WFD reform, which also provided an outline for other stages of reform, was MO. WFD placed more emphasis on obligations than training and education. This policy was similar to the policy reforms implemented in the United States (Buckingham 1999).

The Howard government used three rationales for implementing MO:

that unemployed people ‘owe’ something to the community in exchange for unemployment payments (the contractualist argument), that it deters the unemployed from being ‘too selective’ about the jobs they will accept (the ‘job snob’ argument), and that it helps the unemployed to gain work by developing their capacity for autonomy and self-reliance (the new paternalist argument) (Sawer 2006, p. 4).

Kinnear (2000, p. v) addresses “[t]wo strands of philosophical debate underl[y]ing the justification for Mutual Obligation Policies: the idea of the social contract and the idea that rights are accompanied by reciprocal duties or obligations”. Furthermore Kinnear mentions that MO “is based upon a direct contract wherein the government agrees to provide income support and job-search assistance in return for which the unemployed person agrees to undertake a series of activities designed to maximise their employment chances” (p. 20).

The concept of MO is not only popular in Australia; in fact it is a concept in welfare reform shared by all industrial countries regardless of the major differences in their welfare-reform packages (Ferguson 2000).

In Australia MO is considered the centrepiece of government policy, where responsibility is shared and “welfare assistance provided to the unemployed of working age should involve some return responsibilities for the recipient” (Dale 2006). The concept of MO extends accountability to four parties: the community, the business sector, the government and the recipients of social welfare (McClure 2000b). The government’s responsibility is to provide resources and job opportunities (Ferguson 2000), and individuals are required to actively look for work and improve their skills in return for welfare. Employment agencies are also required to take an active role in helping the unemployed look for work (Buckingham 1999). However, MO “does not address how, if at all, the obligations of the other parties – Government, business or the community – should be enforced and what, if any penalties should apply to breaches of their obligations” (Kinnear 2000, p. 31).

These are the activities specified under MO:

- Part-time paid work
- Work for the Dole
- Community development employment projects
- Voluntary work
- New Apprenticeships Access Programme
- Job-search training
- Advanced English for Migrants Programme

- Green Corps
- Relocation
- Approved literacy and numeracy training
- Part-time study
- Intensive assistance
- Jobs Pathways Programme
- Job Placement, Employment and Training Programme
- Career counselling

*Source:* Dale 2006

Under this reform, communities are also part of the program. They “provide work experience for the unemployed, designed to help the unemployed re-attach to the labour market. WFD is also designed to provide communities with quality projects/ activities, which are of value to those communities” (Yeend 2004).

Ultimately, through the application of MO, “it is hoped that a more inclusive and cohesive society can be created where everyone pulls together in the interests of the community” (Buckingham 1999, p. 25).

#### ***2.6.2.2 Australians Working Together Reform***

AWT, based on recommendations provided by the McClure report (2000), was announced as part of the May 2001 budget. The aim was to help welfare recipients find work and/or increase their community participation. More opportunities and choices were identified to give individuals a variety of options from which to choose to fulfil their responsibilities (Department of Family and Community Services & Centrelink 2002).

In addition, trained officers such as Jobs, Education and Training (JET) advisers, Centrelink customer service officers, disability officers and occupational psychologists were appointed to conduct one-on-one interviews with three disadvantaged customer groups to provide them with more individualised assistance in being more active in the community and in employment-seeking. These groups were:

- a) the very long-term unemployed: those who had been on income support for more than five years;
- b) the mature-aged: people aged over 50 years without jobs; and
- c) workless families: parents in families in which no adult was working.

AWT legislation initiated a compliance system for welfare recipients that specified the consequences of non-adherence to obligations. Breach penalties were softer for the young unemployed; the system also provided older unemployed and parents with the opportunity to have suspended payments reinstated if they complied with the requirements (Department of Family and Community Services 2002). The instruments of increase in both supply and demand of labour were implemented to reduce joblessness under AWT (Dawkins 2002). “The [McClure] report suggests that the most effective ways of reducing unemployment are in-depth counselling, financial incentives for those who get a job and job search assistance...combined with increased monitoring and enforcement of the work test” (McClure 2000a, p. 24).

The report also addressed government and business obligations towards individuals. The government’s obligation, according to the report, was “to maintain an adequate safety net to alleviate poverty, provide leadership in the development of the new system and provide

additional assistance to help individuals and communities in their capacities for participation”; the obligation of business was “mutual obligation...joining with government to create more opportunities particularly for those who face significant barriers to social and economic participation” (McClure 2000b, p. 49).

#### ***2.6.2.3. Welfare to Work Reform***

WTW was introduced in the 2005/2006 Federal budget because it was believed that an increase in labour supply among single parents would reduce the percentage of people who substantially depended on welfare (Dawkins 2002): “a \$3.6 billion investment by the Government in moving ‘working Age’ Australians from welfare to work. Welfare to Work aims to increase labour force participation and to increase employment over time” (McCairns 2005, pp. 1-2). Single parents and people receiving the Disability Pension were the two main targets.

Under WTW reform, a new compliance system was implemented on 1 July 2006 that stipulated that suspension of payment (temporary termination) may occur in cases of non-adherence to MO. It was believed that this system would be more effective in encouraging an individual’s adherence to obligations (McCairns 2005). This reform provided a certain level of earnings disregard (i.e., an income-free threshold), which aims to encourage employment by allowing welfare recipients to earn up to a certain amount of money without affecting their welfare payment. Means-testing provides welfare recipients with disincentives to work. In other words “a generous but means-tested system of unemployment benefits will reduce the financial rewards of working, making some people



less willing to work, or at least more selective about which work they will take” (Oliver 1997, p. 2).

In addition to government policies designed to increase workforce supply and enforce social and economic participation to move people away from welfare towards work, saving for personal retirement has been a widely accepted strategy to confront declines in the rates of national savings and the problems posed by an ageing population. “The growth of superannuation will have many positive effects in the long term. It will encourage people to provide for their own retirement, shifting the burden of paying for aged support away from future generations. It will also help to increase the national saving rate” (Van der Schoot 1994, pp. 65, 67).

#### ***2.6.2.4. Welfare dependency***

The term ‘dole bludger’ was used informally throughout the 1980s and early 1990s (Engels 2006) for unemployed people on receipt of social-welfare payments. However, this term was later replaced by a newer label, ‘welfare dependency’. “The recent popularity of the rhetoric of ‘welfare dependency’ in Australia in general borrows heavily from the conservative American interpretation and understanding of the term” (O’Connor 2001, p. 230). Gilder (1981) and Murray (1984) are among the scholars whose work has significantly influenced American social welfare. These two scholars argued that “the liberal welfare state has led to increased poverty, illegitimacy, dependency and family breakdown” (cited in O’Connor 2001, p. 225).

In Australia, Federal Liberal parliamentarians were the first one who brought the label of welfare dependency into “public policy discourse via two debates on family welfare and the

unemployment benefit in the lower chamber of the Commonwealth Parliament in 1986” (Engels 2006, p. 8). It also appeared often in parliamentary debates in 1989, 1999 and 2000, the time that the Australian welfare system was under review (Engels 2006).

The Howard government’s welfare-dependency label assisted the government in preparing for welfare reform. The Howard government exposed the cause of welfare dependency “in a well-intentioned but mis-directed government run welfare system [of Labor governments], one that prevented individuals from being sufficiently motivated to act in their own interests” (Engels 2006, p. 11). Attributing the cause of welfare dependency to the Labor governments’ administration of the welfare system, instead of just blaming ‘dole bludgers’ for their unemployment and high social-welfare expenditure, provided the Howard government the grounds to introduce its principal changes and gain public support for them (Engels 2006).

Welfare dependency has been an important element of social policy making and policy planning (Morgan 2008). The former Minister for Family and Community Services, Jocelyn Newman (1999b), indicated in the ministerial discussion paper ‘The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century’ that there had been an increase in welfare dependency that needed to be addressed. The Reference Group headed by Patrick McClure was set up and included representatives from business, academia, the community and areas of government to review the welfare system and provide feedback from organisations and individuals. The reference group received over 360 submissions from the community pointing out various shortcomings in the welfare system (McClure 2000a).

The McClure report centralised the concept of mutual obligation in social-policy agendas (McClure 2000a). According to MO, government is not the sole party to face the issue of welfare dependency. Recipients of welfare payments have the responsibility to tackle welfare dependency through their own economic and social participation (McClure 2000a; McClure 2000b). (Chapter 6: Mutual obligation of Parenting Parent Single discusses this issue in more details).

#### ***2.6.2.5 Economic recommendations to reduce joblessness***

Bessant noted in 2002 (p. 12) that after years of economic growth, “joblessness, under-employment and reliance on income support continue to remain high” in Australia; Dawkins (2002, p. 532) similarly wrote that “[i]t is jobless households that have the highest dependency on welfare, and the growth in welfare dependence over the last twenty years to a large extent mirrors this growth in jobless households”. Considering that “unemployment implies dependency, whether on a welfare system designed to spread the risk collectively, or whether that burden is privatised and shifted onto family and friends” (Saunders 2002, p. 21), governments have implemented several economic and social policies.

The problem of reducing the number of jobless households was a major and explicit priority of the Howard government’s welfare-reform policies; to achieve this aim, the McClure Report recommended a simplified income-support system, improved work incentives and increased economic and social participation requirements for welfare recipients and enhanced employment services (McClure 2000a). This report specifies both the government’s and recipients’ responsibilities and obligations to improve the welfare system and overcome joblessness. The allocation of obligations under MO mirrors

Dawkins's (2002, p. 535) statement that "in order to substantially reduce the number of jobless households, it will be necessary to implement policies that will significantly increase both the supply of and the demand for labour, especially from jobless households", where social-welfare recipients and the government could improve both the demand and supply sides of labour through economic and social participation and through work incentives to reduce joblessness.

There is a view that blames social-welfare recipients for not doing their part to overcome unemployment, and for being dependent on social welfare in the first place (O'Connor 2001). According to this view, "recipients of welfare support are considered to be behaviourally deficient and engaging in the defrauding of the Commonwealth, through their decision to claim income support" (Engels 2006, p. 6). This view indicates that "welfare causes dependency and thus unemployment and poverty-and that welfare reform therefore needs to focus on changing the behaviour of welfare recipients rather than providing employment opportunities" (O'Connor 2001, p. 221).

There is another view that acknowledges the role of the labour market and its trends over the last three decades (increases in the number of part-time and casual jobs) in unemployment and welfare dependency, and indicates "that a full-time job is needed to produce sufficient income to raise people above the poverty line" (Saunders 2006, p.1). Saunders (2006) emphasises the importance of interaction between economic and social policies to overcome unemployment and sees "the need for an integrated approach to economic and social policy which recognises the constraints and the opportunities

associated with Australia's potential to combine economic abundance with social equity and sustainability" (p. 3).

There is also a view that addresses the lack of performance by the government. Saunders (2006) states that "Australian policy-makers have been unwilling to develop the ideas and commit the resources required to eradicate poverty, except as a by-product of the achievement of other goals" (Saunders 2006, p. 2). Lack of government commitment to provide resources also has been identified by Morgan (2008), who indicates that "many young rural Australians do not have appropriate access to employment, education and training, drug and alcohol counselling and personal support services" (Morgan 2008, p. 53).

The McClure report emphasises on the supply side of labour and the role of economic and social participation on the part of social-welfare recipients of PPS and disability-support payments, as well as the importance of improved work incentives (McClure report 2000a). However, improving the demand side of labour is the government's task. Strong economic growth is an essential element in this, but was not enough to solve the problem of unemployment throughout the 1990s, when the level of unemployment was high despite strong economic growth (Dawkins 2002). "The other major determinant of labour demand is real-labour costs, which are driven primarily by what happens to wages. If the rate of growth of wages can be slowed, along with sustaining strong economic growth, then the demand for labour will grow more strongly" (Dawkins 2002, p. 543).

McClure report addresses the real-labour costs "by increasing people's earnings (for example, by increasing the minimum wage), by cutting taxes (thus increasing people's take-home pay) or through in-work benefits that offer additional assistance to low-paid

workers in low income families” (McClure 2000b, p. 26). However, it considers ‘in-work benefits’ as the preferred option, as “in-work benefits for full-time, as well as part-time employees, can help to restrain the growth of real labour costs, especially of low-skilled workers. This could help to increase employment opportunities of people on income support payments” (McClure 2000b, p. 26).

Since the last major review of welfare by the reference group in 2000 (the McClure report) there have been some indications that the overall status of employment is improving. According to McClure interim report (2014, p. 154), “[t]he proportion of working age (15 to 64 years) people participating in the labour force has been increasing over time” (participation rates include employed: both full and part-time, away from work and unemployed). The Department of Employment’s latest Employment Outlook to 2017 (2013) estimates the continues employment growth in the service sectors of the labour market such as health care and social assistance, retail trade and construction will contribute nearly half of the total growth in employment till 2017. The other service sector expected to provide employment growth is the aged-care sector due to the increase in ageing population: “the expansion of the National Disability Insurance Scheme will both require a larger carer workforce in the future. As such, there should be a growth in employment opportunities in these and other related areas of the economy” (McClure 2014, p. 152).

#### ***2.6.2.6 Creation of Centrelink under the Howard government***

Centrelink was established in 1997 to deliver all Commonwealth government social-security programs and to take over the functions of the Commonwealth Employment

Services (CES), such as job-seeker registration, assessment and referral of job seekers to job networks and administration of income support. Centrelink operates under the *Commonwealth Services Delivery Agency Act 1997* (CSDA Act). Even though Centrelink is an autonomous statutory authority, it is considered to be an Australian Public Service (APS) organisation and is subject to the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act). Centrelink's staff operates under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, 2003-04).

Centrelink was created “to improve the quality of Commonwealth Government services for all Australians” (Centrelink 2006, p. 3). Centrelink is intended to be the human face of the Commonwealth government, addressing the needs of Australians as a whole, including customers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds (DCALB), Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities (Centrelink 2006). Centrelink declares that its vision is to “make a positive difference to Australian individuals, families and communities, particularly during transitional periods in their lives”. And “Centrelink’s mission states the scope of our [Centrelink] unique business that sets us apart from other organisations and exhibits our commitment to our customers and stakeholders” (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, p. 19).

“Centrelink’s role in the implementation of welfare reforms is to determine a person’s eligibility for income support. Centrelink will also continue [to play] an important role in encouraging and supporting people to undertake required activities” (Centrelink Annual Report 2002- 03, p. 70). Even though this is mentioned under Centrelink’s role in AWT, it applies to WTW as well, and could be considered Centrelink’s general role. From 1 July 2006 Centrelink was given an additional role: “[to work] closely with a range of

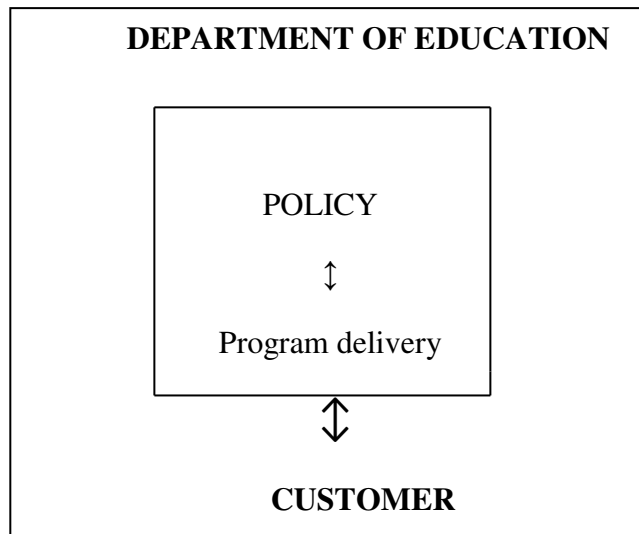
Commonwealth government departments, particularly the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), which has carriage of the Welfare to Work Measures” (McCairns 2005, p. 1). It is also Centrelink’s role to assess each individual’s needs, refer them to the required services and “encourage their participation based on their individual circumstances with the view of obtaining a full or part-time job or participating in an education or training pathway” (McCairns 2005, p. 7).

Centrelink was established as part of public-sector reform. Within the context of public-sector reform, government departments no longer deliver their services directly to the customer. They perform their role as policy-making departments (client agencies/purchasers), and are responsible for developing and improving policies. In the case of social-welfare services, Centrelink is a delivery agency (provider) that provides government services on behalf of client agencies (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, 2003-04).

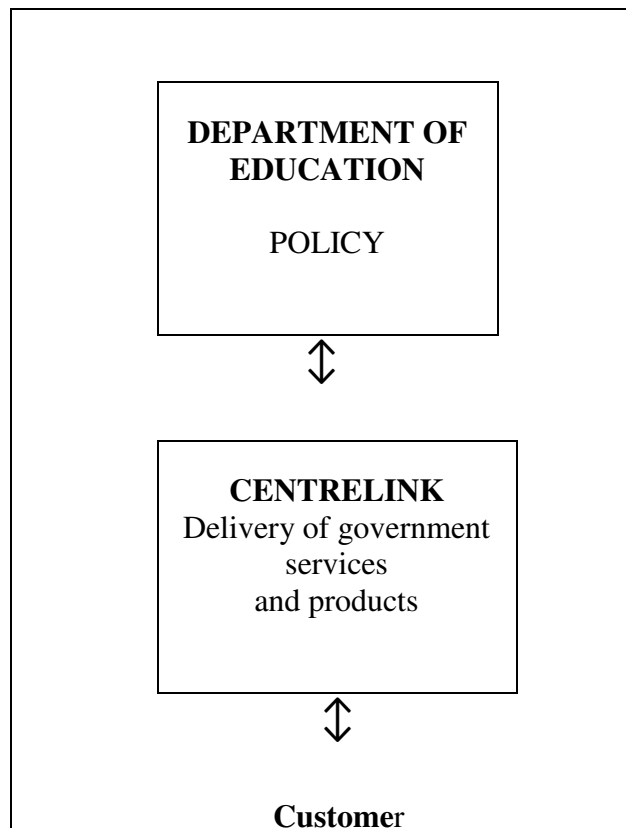
Figures 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate as an example the Department of Education, one of Centrelink’s client agencies:



**Figure 2.2:** Status of policy-making and service delivery prior to welfare reforms



**Figure 2.3:** Status of policy-making and service delivery after welfare reforms

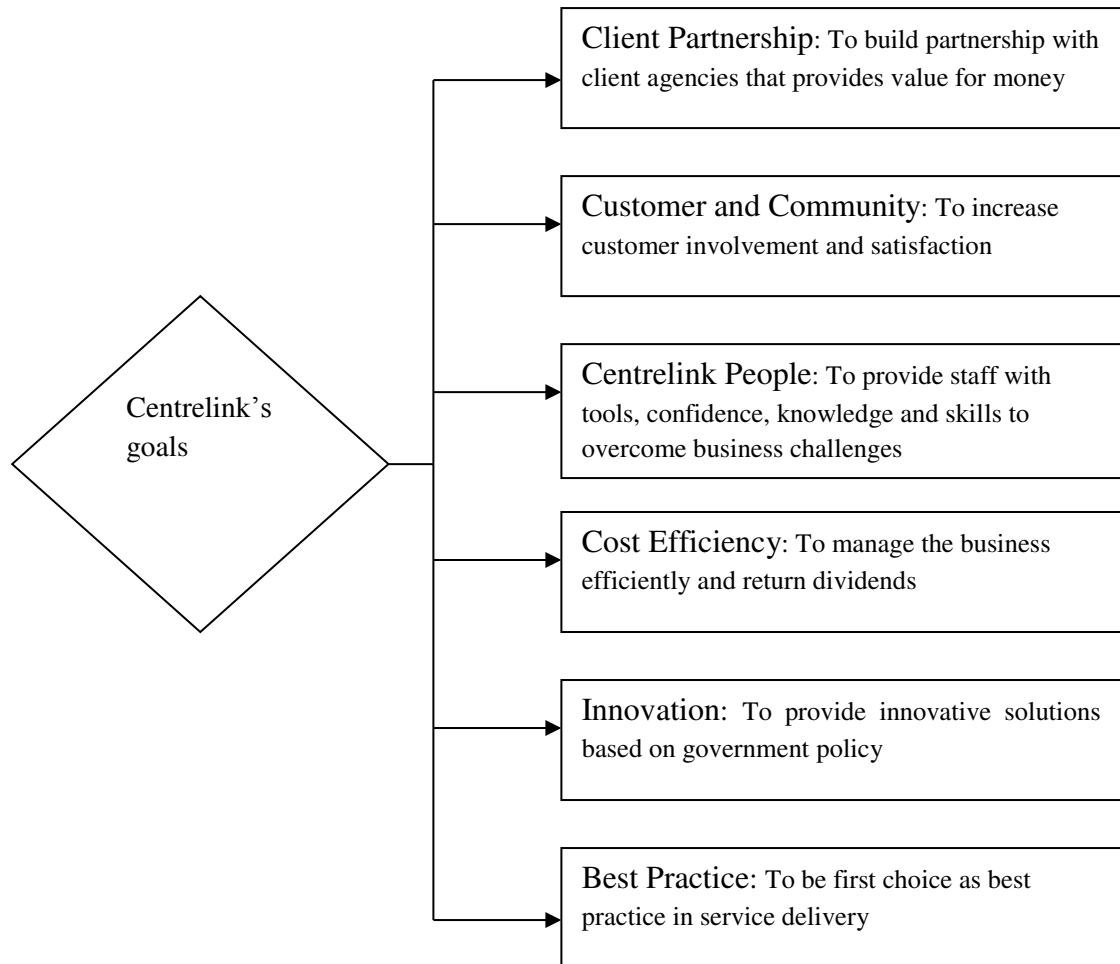


Source: CMC 2006, pp.2, 3

Centrelink has Business Partnership Agreements (BPAs) with 25 client agencies. BPAs are sources of revenue for Centrelink; in return, Centrelink is required to deliver specified services on behalf of these client agencies (policy agencies) (Centrelink Annual Report 2002- 03, 2003- 04). To deliver a quality service, it is vital that Centrelink's role is clear. Output and outcome statements specify its role in delivering the specified services on behalf of client agencies. "Centrelink's outcome and output are 'effective' and 'efficient' delivery of Commonwealth services to eligible customers, respectively" (Centrelink Annual Report 2002- 03, p. 10).

Figure 2.4 illustrates Centrelink's goals:

**Figure 2.4:** Centrelink's goals



*Source:* Based on 'Our Goals Table' (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, p.19)

Centrelink's use of private-sector techniques is apparent through its own statements about business planning, the Centrelink Project Management Framework (CPMF) and risk management. "Centrelink's strategic directions and goals operate at national, area and local levels through the Business Plan and associated processes.... [CPMF] provides governance that reflects Centrelink's commitment to improve its operational efficiency.... Centrelink is

improving the way it controls and manages its business” (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, pp. 21- 23).

Centrelink’s accountability is to government, client agencies and customers “for the coherence and integrity of the social security system” (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, p. 68). In satisfying its accountability to the government, Centrelink’s strategy is to help people toward greater social and economic participation by supporting welfare reforms introduced by the government. Centrelink strives to meet its accountability to client agencies by using what it terms a ‘Getting it Right’ strategy that “ensures correctness in delivery of payments to welfare recipients, and also by improving accuracy. To meet its accountability to customers, it ensures their privacy and gives them freedom of information access” (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, p. 68).

### **2.6.3. Welfare reforms and Gillard’s Labor government (post-2007)**

In addition to the welfare reforms initiated by the Howard government, the Rudd and Gillard Labor governments continued with reform. ‘Fair Incentives to Work’, under the ‘Social Security Legislation Amendment (Fair Incentives to Work) 2012’, attracted controversy among public and professional bodies, academics and even some members of government. Under this change, “some 80,000 of Australia’s most vulnerable families, generally single parent families, have been rushed into the position where they are to be moved off the parenting payment onto Newstart” (Commonwealth of Australia 2013, p. 4466).

In summary this change was made to:

remove the ‘grandfathering’ transitional arrangement from the parenting payment from 1 January 2013; reduce the length of the liquid assets waiting period by doubling the maximum reserve threshold for liquid assets to \$5000 for singles without dependants or \$10 000 for others from 1 July 2013; and clarify the definition of ‘termination payment’ for the purposes of the income maintenance period to ensure it includes any payments connected with the termination of a person’s employment (Australian Parliament House 2012).

This transfer of payment from PPS to New Start Allowance (NSA) meant a reduction of \$120 per fortnight as well as the loss of the pensioner education supplement and pensioner concession cards. The first and main reason given by the Government for the change was the unemployment level among PPS recipients. The then-Employment Participation Minister, Kate Ellis, stated that “there are almost 3,900 parents who had no fortnightly earnings on the first of January who are now working. I think that’s good news for them, I think it’s good news for their children and I think that’s good news for our community” (The World Today with Eleanor Hall 2013).

Contrary to the government’s view, Terese Edwards, chief executive of the ‘National Council of Single Mothers and their Children’, said, “it’s a myth that single mothers don’t work.... [O]ut of the group that were impacted on the first of January we had two-thirds were already in the workplace. So there was no need for this tough-love approach. Single mothers are already working” (The World Today with Eleanor Hall 2013).

Greens Senator for Western Australia Rachel Siewert refers to the ‘Newstart inquiry into the adequacy of the payment’, in that it “demonstrated that only 43 per cent of all clients

were adequately helped into ongoing work for the year ending 12 September [2012]. This result dropped to an alarming 25 per cent for stream 4 jobseekers-the most disadvantaged clients. In other words, these job service support programs are not helping the most disadvantaged and the people who face the most barriers to work” (Commonwealth of Australia 2013, p. 4463).

And then there is the financial impact of this change. Petra Hilton, a single mother affected by this change, describes her condition under the new changes:

I work part time, I work 20 hours a week for the same employer for 13 years and I’m one of the mothers that the government apparently, you know, was trying to incentivise mothers to go back to work by putting them on Newstart, that was their argument anyway. But it was the working mothers who are the most affected. We lose more money than non-working mothers so I don’t follow the logic of it being an incentive to work at all, and in fact if you weren’t working and you had to weigh up all the cost of getting to and from work, child-care costs et cetera, et cetera, I don’t see it as an incentive at all (The World Today with Eleanor Hall 2013).

Terese Edwards also addresses the financial impact on PPS:

The vast majority of the families who were impacted on the first of January were in private rent and we know that they’re struggling, so their rent, they’re quite stuck, they do not have the additional resources to pay for their rent. They do not have the resources to actually relocate and so they’re really in quite a stranded and dark place (The World Today with Eleanor Hall 2013).

Liberal Senator for Western Australia Chris Back provides a comparison between the government's intended outcome and the amount of interest the government pays for its debt:

[I]t causes one to weep when you see that the saving over five years from this measure [shift PPS to NSA]...equates to 10 days of interest on the debt as a result of the waste of this government, which commenced under now [then] Prime Minister Rudd.... The \$300 million over five years [which government would save from shift of PPS to NSA] accounts for a mere 10 days interest on the billions of dollars of debt that this Labor government has run up (Commonwealth of Australia 2013, p. 4466).

According to the current Social Services Minister, Kevin Andrews, "the decision was to save taxpayers \$728 million over four years" (Karvelas 2013).

#### **2.6.4. The Labor Government's Follow- ups**

As result of continuous criticism, the Labor government introduced two amendments to the 'Social Security Legislation Amendment (Fair Incentives to Work) 2012' to ease the financial impact on the recipients affected by the shift of payments from the PPS to the NSA.

##### ***2.6.4.1 Social Security Amendment (Supporting More Australians into Work) Bill 2013***

This Bill was an amendment to the *Social Security Act 1991* and was brought in to:

increase the income free area that applies for recipients of Newstart Allowance, Widow Allowance, Partner Allowance, Parenting Payment (Partnered) and Sickness Allowance; extend eligibility for the Pensioner Education Supplement to single principal carer parents receiving Newstart Allowance

payments; and provide a 12-week extension of eligibility for the Pensioner Concessioner Card to single parents who are no longer qualified for Parenting Payment (Single) because their youngest child has turned eight years of age and who do not qualify for another income support payment due to earnings from employment (Australian Parliament House 2013).

According to this bill, the income-free area that applied to the NSA, Widow Allowance, Partner Allowance, Parenting Payment Partnered and Sickness Allowance increases from \$62 to \$100 per fortnight from 20 March 2014. Furthermore, the income-free area is indexed to the CPI from 1 July 2015. This also extends the eligibility for the pensioner education supplement to single parents who were moved to the NSA from 1 January 2014. Furthermore, also from 1 January 2014, the eligibility for the pensioner concession card is extended by 12 weeks for single parents who are moved out of the PPS. However, the Greens believe that “each of these measures will only benefit some of those struggling to keep a roof over their heads and pay the bills on an income support payment that is more than \$130 below the poverty line” (Seiwert 2013, p. 4462).

#### ***2.6.4.2. Social Security Legislation Amendment (Caring for People on Newstart) Bill 2013***

This bill also amended the *Social Security Act 1991* to

increase the single rates of Newstart and Youth Allowance by \$50 a week; and standardise the indexation arrangements for pensions and allowances; and *Social Security (Administration) Act 1999* to provide that these payments are made from monies appropriated by the Parliament (Australian Parliament House 2013).



These two amendments will reduce some of the financial impact of the Fair Incentives to Work legislation passed under Gillard's Labor government. The newly elected Liberal-National coalition government of Tony Abbot also intends to continue with reform as "the government believes welfare reform is essential because of the rapidly ageing population" (Karvelas 2013), a view shared by previous Labor governments despite differences in their approach to reform. Under the new government, "Social Services Minister Kevin Andrews will order a review of all welfare payments to address a system he believes is too ad hoc, comprised of too many payments that have been added without a holistic strategy and approach" (Karvelas 2013). The Abbott Government also intends to change the management of the welfare system "to put all welfare payments under one minister's control in one department-previously it was split between the Employment Department and the Families Department" (Karvelas 2013). The Abbot Government also states that an "immediate priority will be looking at a suite of options to help single parents-most of them women-who have been hit by Labor's decision to shift them from more generous parenting payments on to the regular dole, Newstart Allowance, when their youngest child turns eight" (Karvelas 2013).

## ***2.7. CONCLUSION***

This chapter provided a background for understanding Australian public-sector reform and welfare reform, which this study considers two broad contexts for MO. It also classified public-sector reforms in Australia into those under the Labor party and those under the Liberal-National coalition.

The Hawke and Keating Labor Governments implemented a combination of social-democratic policy in line with their party's objectives and a free-market policy designed to increase competition and efficiency. The public-sector reforms under the Keating Labor Government continued under the Financial Management Improvement Plan (FMIP). This reform package was implemented from 1984 to 1990 with a view to achieving efficiency in public-sector management. The next stage of Labor's reform was the introduction of the concept of 'competition' into the public sector in 1993, when all Australian governments agreed to the principles of the National Competition Policy (NCP). Under NCP the market, through its discipline of competition, was seen to provide better services, more efficiently and at lower cost. The other initiative of the Labor government was Working Nation (WN), introduced in 1994. Its objective was economic development through a major industry-responsive and deregulatory approach.

Public-sector reform continued under the Liberal-National coalition; however, the NPM approach that was taken was different to what had gone before. Systematic welfare reform was considered a major part of public-sector reform under Howard government. Self (1995) believes that many new public policies eventually will experience difficulties and face problems, and that public policies are capable of change; in contrast, Orchard (1998) sees 'democratic pressures' as the reason for shifts in public-sector policy.

This chapter also explored Australian welfare reforms, with WTW being the focus of analysis in this study. It addressed the reforms implemented under the Hawke-Keating

Labor governments, Howard's Liberal-National coalition government and Gillard's Labor government. The Howard's reforms in general greatly emphasised 'obligation'. In fact, the concept of MO was revisited in a more systematic way: now it specified not only the responsibility of welfare recipients, but also the government's obligations. The government hoped that WTW would lead to the economic and social participation of those receiving payments, and eventually to their employment.

The next chapter examines the concept of accountability in its own right and discusses accountability within the context of reform and MO.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### ***3.1. INTRODUCTION***

Accountability is a broad concept, with a range of meanings in each of the many fields of research into which it has been incorporated. In its broadest sense, accountability refers to the giving and demanding of reasons for conduct by which people explain and take responsibility for their actions.

In this study, accountability is considered within context of welfare reform, which is referred to as mutual obligation (MO). MO has been subject to changes within context of social welfare reforms and these changes force accountability change accordingly. This chapter looks at various definition and concepts of accountability, the relationship between accountability and democracy, accountability issues under the Howard government's public-sector reform, and provides a link between MO and accountability. This chapter provides an understanding of accountability within consideration of this research.

#### ***3.2. TYPOLOGIES OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND ITS DEFINITION***

Accountability is an ancient concept and has existed in accounting systems among communities since early human civilizations (Ezzamel 1997; Munro & Mouritsen 1996; Ezzamel & Carmona 2007). Accountability "is closely related to accounting, in its literal sense of bookkeeping" (Bovens 2007, p. 448).

Accountability has no standard definition, as perceptions of the term depend on “the ideologies, motifs and language of our time” (Sinclair 1995, p. 221). It is “a very elusive concept because it can mean many different things to different people” (Bovens 2007, p.448). To address the variety of meanings of accountability, Sinclair states that its meaning in theoretical research is discipline-specific. Accountability is “continually being constructed”, and is a discourse rather than a fixed concept (Sinclair 1995, p. 231). One issue associated with accountability is that of multiple accountabilities. Koppell (2005) refers to Multiple Accountabilities Disorder (MAD), where “notions of accountability are rarely differentiated” and “[o]rganizations are often expected to be accountable-explicitly or implicitly-in every sense” (p. 99). Koppell (2005, p. 99) further refers to the difficulty of multiple accountability, stating that it “is challenging enough for an entity to be controllable when multiple entities are issuing directives”.

Considering the extent of accountability and its many meanings, one way to look at accountability is through its typology and classifications; this also clarifies the relevant concepts of accountability within a specified vein and defines it more narrowly.

In Table 3.1, typologies of accountability address concepts of control, responsibility and performance in association with accountability. This research aims to investigate accountability within the context of welfare reform in a narrow vein of controllability (through the application of the Foucauldian idea of discipline) and its close link to responsibility and performance (in this case, of PPS recipients).

**Table 3.1: Typology and classifications of accountability**

Koppell's (2005) five dimensions of accountability	Transparency, liability, controllability, responsibility and responsiveness
Dubnick and Frederickson's (2009) six promises of accountability	Mechanisms/means of accountability: control, ethical behaviour and performance Ends/virtues of accountability: integrity, democracy/legitimacy, justice/equity
Romzek and Dubnick's (1998) four-part typology of accountability	Political, legal, bureaucratic and professional
Bovens's (2007) three-tier typology of accountability	Vertical, diagonal and horizontal
Mulgan's (2000) four concepts of accountability	Control, responsibility, responsiveness and dialogue

These classifications point out that classification of accountability is vital to evaluate it (Koppell 2005). They also address the complexity of accountability, which could easily lead to confusion. However, “[t]he many meanings of accountability suggested by the varied use of the word are not consistent with each other: that is, organizations [individuals] cannot be accountable in all of the senses implied by this single word” (Koppell 2005, p. 95). To bring clarity to this study’s investigation into accountability, it is considered in sense of control, responsibility and performance.

Control is one of the concepts integrated within the typology of accountability mentioned previously. A number of accountability definitions address the link between accountability and control. Accountability has been referred to “as a means of achieving control” (Mulgan 2000, p. 11) and as “a vital mechanism of control” (Uhr 1993, p. 6). Furthermore, “to be fully accountable implies the ability to exercise control” (Day & Klein 1987, p. 227). “Accountability is a form of control designed to force those holding power to own up for their conduct” (Uhr 1999, p. 99). Accountability has also been defined as “a relationship

between an actor and a (variety of) forum(s) with the authority to monitor and assess its behavior, and the principal is normally just one of multiple account-holders” (Schillemans & Busuioc 2014, p. 3).

The concepts of performance and answerability also underlie the typology of accountability. “The promise of accountability through performance measurement is the fashion of the day” in which “agencies are caused to improve performance in the direction of program goals” (Dubnick & Frederickson 2010, p. 146). Accountability is seen “as the process of holding someone answerable for performance” (Romzek 2000, p. 28). It is also seen as “a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences” (Bovens 2007, p. 447). Dubnick and Frederickson (2010, p. 144) also address performance and accountability within this definition, saying that accountability “includes organizational and/or political mechanisms designed to ‘bring’ or ‘cause’ individuals or agencies to account ‘before the fact’ by causing them to act accountably”.

Responsibility is another concept connected to accountability within the typology of accountability mentioned in this section. “Accountability is seen by many as essential to making individuals responsible” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 48). Uhr (1999) sees responsibility and accountability as parts of a whole where “whoever is responsible for a policy or program is also accountable to some authority for their performance within their sphere of responsibility” (p.98). Accountability and responsibility are inseparable concepts: “one cannot be accountable *to* anyone, unless one also has responsibility *for* doing something

[italics in the original text]” (Day & Klein 1987, p. 5). These three concepts of control, responsibility, and performance are cross-referenced with accountability under welfare reform (MO) in Section 3.6.

### **3.3 ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMOCRACY**

Accountability is the basic foundation of a democratic system (AHRSC 1990) that “promises democratic government” (Dubnick & Frederickson 2010, p. 147). Brandsma and Schillemans (2012) see accountability as a cornerstone of democracy (together with representation and delegation).

“Accountability in a democracy can be envisaged as a hierarchy of accountability, with each level a derivative of, and contributor to, higher levels. At the top is political or democratic accountability, which is exercised through free, regular and fair elections” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 14). Day and Klein (1987) refer to political accountability as “those with delegated authority being answerable for their actions to the people, whether directly in simple societies or indirectly in complex societies” (p. 26). “Political accountability is dependent upon the government being prepared to present itself for electoral judgement and to accept the decision of, usually, the majority of the people” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 14)

Under the Westminster system, accountability starts with public servants, who are accountable to ministers; ministers are in turn accountable to Parliament and Parliament to the people (Fuller & Roffey 1993). Under an effective democracy, governors are accountable to the governed (Day & Klein 1987). Accountability is “critically important to modern understandings of governance” (Dubnick & Frederickson 2010, p. 144), and although it “is posited as an obvious means in the search for justice and democracy,



equating it with the achievement of either proves frustrating at the least” (Dubnick 2005, p. 380).

The accountability of government toward citizens and the right of citizens to know about their government’s activities are specified in the Constitution of Australia (Funnell & Cooper 1998; Funnell 2001), and the accountability of Australian public servants is addressed in the *Public Service Act 1999* and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (Barton 2006).

Funnell *et al.* (2012) address financial accountability and management accountability as two of the most important accountabilities within public sector, where “[f]ulfilment of financial and management accountability is essential to meeting higher level constitutional, social, ethical and political accountabilities expected of democratically elected governments” (p. 42). If the governments are to be held accountable for the use of resources entrusted into their care, there must exist the authority to ensure the legitimacy and acceptance of the need to be accountable (Normanton 1966). In Australia “this is to be found in the constitutions of the states and the Commonwealth that contain explicit provisions which stipulate the political and financial accountability” (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 15).

Given the pervasiveness of the introduction of market practices into the public sector and government implementation of New Public Management (NPM), the traditional public administration’s responsiveness to democracy has been questioned (Lynn 1996). Moreover, “[w]hile being in favor of efficiency, responsiveness and accountability is a popular rhetorical stance, the reality of public-sector reform represents substantial challenges, not

the least of which is how reforms impact the accountability of public administrators” (Romzek 2000, p. 21).

When examining high levels of private-sector involvement with the public sector, it is important to acknowledge the difference between accountability in each sector. The extent of public-sector accountability is much broader than that of the private sector, due to the size of the former (Hughes 1992; Kearns 1996). Hughes (1992) also points out that decisions in the public sector are based on legislation, and that politicians set the agenda for the public sector. In his view the management techniques of the private sector are not effective enough for the public sector. It is also important to mention that “motives and goals which drive private sector actions are recognised as being different to that of the public sector” (Funnell 1997, p. 101), which affects the way accountability is viewed and considered. Multiplicity of accountability has been identified, and regardless of each type’s individual compatibility with democracy, multiple accountabilities have been suggested for employment in western democracies (Bovens 1998; Romzek & Dubnick 1987; Romzek 2000).

### ***3.4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REFORM***

An effective system of accountability is considered to be a means of getting better value for money in the public sector. In other words, “accountability is increasingly seen as a means of stretching scarce resources” (Day & Klein 1987, p. 1). The role of accountability in a changing public sector is “potentially complex, contradictory and confusing” (Parker & Gould 1999, p. 109); this, by extension, makes government accountability a ‘complex subject’ (Robinson 2003). Under the public-sector reform and implementation of NPM, the focus of accountability has shifted “from issues of process, access and equity to outputs and

outcomes particularly in financial and budgetary terms” (Parker & Gould 1999, p. 102), where “[d]e-emphasizing inputs<sup>4</sup> and processes and emphasizing outcomes and outputs does not necessarily mean more or less accountability from government administrators. Rather it means different kinds of accountability relationships should be emphasized”(Romzek 2000, p. 39).

The introduction of private-sector structure into the public sector, along with the increase in the number of government-owned business enterprises (GBEs) and their involvement in the public sector, have changed public-sector management accountability (Coates 1990), causing the government “to shift many of the sources of financing of government services from budget dependence to self-sufficiency or private delivery”, which has consequently meant fewer constitutional protections, but greater financial freedom, for the public sector (Funnell 2001, p. 20). Governments are not considered to be the only agent that is accountable to customers, as, under the reforms, the private sector is involved in the delivery of services, making it partly accountable (Barrett 2000). Characteristic of public-sector accountability under NPM is that even though public-sector middle managers are accountable to senior executives (when private-sector principles are applied), the responsibility of public-sector officials to Parliament still remains. This is only one aspect of the complexity of the public-sector environment, where “the variables of policy, politics, and management are inevitably mixed” (Parker & Guthrie 1993, p. 68).

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<sup>4</sup> “An input orientation focuses on resources, what an agency or manager has available to carry out the program or activity” (Romzek 2000, p.33).

“A process orientation emphasises proper paper flow, consultation with relevant, appropriate actors and compliance with mandates and regulations” (National Academy of Public Administration, 1997, cited in Romzek 2000, p. 33).

“Outputs are the quantity and quality of services delivered or products made.... Outcomes reflect the quantity and quality of the results achieved by the outputs in satisfying the client, taxpayer, customer, or program needs” (Romzek 2000, p. 34).

A shift in the position of citizens also has an impact on accountability. The involvement of non-government organisations (NGOs) in the delivery of public services and the application of private-sector principles has meant that citizens are now clients; at the same time, the idea of a competitive markets has allowed citizens (clients) to have more choice regarding their service providers. Citizens are frequently referred to as ‘stakeholders’ who have a role in government decision-making (Australian Public Service Commission, undated).

The position of citizens as clients underwent another change with the implementation of NPM. Parker and Guthrie (1993) refer to the transformation of clients to customers under the new regime. The government’s focus on ‘customers’ under NPM means a focus on individuals, which results in the reduction of accountability from a responsibility toward the whole society to one toward particular customers (Parker & Gould 1999).

The application of private-sector practices was not implemented without difficulties. The next section addresses the concerns about accountability that accompanied public-sector reform.

### ***3.5. ACCOUNTABILITY CONCERNS IN APPLICATION OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT UNDER THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT***

The approach applied to the delivery of government services under the Howard government’s public-sector reform, NPM, aimed to apply private-sector principles to the public service (Funnell *et al.* 2012, p. 26). Application of this approach affected the “sources of services and mode of product and service delivery” (Parker & Gould 1999, p.

109) and positioned the government as the facilitator of the public sector rather than itself the provider of services (Guthrie & Parker 1998; Glynn & Perkins 1997; Parker & Gould 1999).

Privatisation and contracting out were among the private-sector practices that the Howard government introduced to the public sector, which also had implications for accountability (Funnell *et al.* 2012). “With privatization initiatives, the presumption is that market forces will impose cost and quality discipline on contractors. The accountability question is whether the contract product or service is delivered” and “[t]he logic of accountability under contracting is that of specifying mutual expectations, responsibilities, and obligations of the contracting parties” (Romzek 2000, p. 32). While these seem clear in theory, when it comes to practice, accountability faces ambiguity under these newly adopted modes of product and service delivery.

Privatisation shifts “executive powers and responsibilities away from the congested political-administrative centres of the state toward a host of third parties: nonprofit organizations, privatized state enterprises, networks, trans-and international organizations and semiautonomous agencies” (Schillemans & Busuioc 2014, p. 1). Privatisation is seen as a way of providing space for the government to escape accountability while at the same time safeguarding it from inefficiency (Gilmour & Jensen 1998). Privatisation reduces the size of the government (Funnell *et al.* 2012; Romzek 2000) and affects governance; as result it has posed a challenge to public accountability (Gilmour & Jensen 1998).

Riemer (2001) refers to an administrative model where the government sets the policy and public servants deliver government services. This model assumes that government accountability is eliminated by privatisation, as:

[o]nce government strips away from its own organization and employees the power to operate a program and confers that power on private organizations and their employees, the argument goes, government loses the capacity to hold the program accountable for either process or outcome (p. 1718).

It can also be argued that under this administrative model government holds a power monopoly in the area of service delivery; there is no competitor with whom the government's performance can be compared, so there is no true accountability (Riemer 2001). Barton (2006) also addresses this point and mentions that not all public goods and services can be privatised. Those that the government provides to its citizens through taxation, such as defence, the legal system, international relations and political matters, cannot be privatised. However, government monopoly in these areas leads to inefficiency precisely due to the lack of competition.

In contracting out, "accountability involves an obligation to answer for one's decisions and actions when authority to act on behalf of one party (the principal) is transferred to another (the agent)" (Barton 2006, p. 257). Aspin and Hayward (2001) address the limitation of accountability in contracting out with multinational companies and mention that these companies have subsidiaries with names different from, and in some cases even unrelated to, those of their parent company; thus in the case of service failure it is difficult to make connections and identify and follow accountability channels.

Beermann (2001) states that the focus of government has shifted towards contracting out, and specifically to contracting out of social-welfare and social-insurance programs. Aspin and Hayward (2001) claim that accountability in most areas of social and public policy is not enhanced under contracting out, as it is difficult to develop performance indicators to measure activities and performance. Funnell (1997) refers to “the preference of governments for secrecy in contract negotiations and terms, both with senior public sector officers and private sector firms” (p. 94). The accountability issue that often appears in cases of contracting out is the use of commercial-in-confidence<sup>5</sup> (CIC) (Barton 2006; Uhr 1999). Barrett (2000) refers to CIC as an area deserving of attention by the Australian Parliament in particular. The concern is that ordinarily Parliament ensures public accountability via external scrutiny, while under CIC this scrutiny is avoided. Barton (2006) believes CIC undermines the two basic requirements of a democratic system: accountability and transparency. Government reforms of the public sector to incorporate private-sector practices also include CIC. However, the application of CIC by government departments in outsourcing leads to higher costs, which undermines the very purpose of outsourcing. “[O]utsourcing cannot be justified on economic grounds when it results in higher costs to the public” (Barton 2006, p. 267).

Even though government departments are able to announce their activities as CIC under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), they still cannot avoid accountability under contracting out “because the goods and services remain as government ones funded from taxation, [where] due parliamentary process must be followed” (Barton 2006, p. 262). The

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<sup>5</sup> “In Australia, outsourcing contracts have been generally written on a commercial-in-confidence basis in which key terms such as the price, quality, payment and delivery terms are kept secret” (Barton 2006, p. 256).

literature suggests that accountability under contracting out could still be maintained through careful contracting and monitoring (Harding 1992; McDonald 1994).

Accountability is a challenge for managers, especially in time of reforms where “increase [in] government’s efficiency, effectiveness and accountability” are expected (Romzek 2000, p. 21). Application of contracting out “raises immediate questions for the one held to account. Accountable to whom? For what? And how?” (Romzek 2000, p. 22). These questions are not easy to answer “because occasionally it is unclear which of the focal points (or sources of expectations) constitute the most legitimate source of authority for a given situation” (Romzek 2000, p. 22). Furthermore, “accountability problems multiply because familiar rules of administrative law do not clearly constrain the new regime of the Contractual State” (Bezdek 2001, p. 1559), and “legally, government has the right to do almost anything without being either in breach of the contract or accountable to the private contractor” (Johnston 2010, p. s66).

### ***3.6. ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WELFARE REFORM***

As part of Australian public-sector reform, the Australian welfare system underwent changes as well. These changes affected the structure of social welfare governance (for example, the creation of Centrelink; see section 2.6.2.6) as well as accountability within the context of social welfare. The term ‘mutual obligation’ (MO) is used to indicate accountability within the context of welfare reform in this research. Decades of development in welfare policies by previous governments (e.g., the Bass review of welfare system, Working Nation), trends in socioeconomic factors (e.g., an ageing population and a reduction in workforce participation) and the contributions of academics and doctrines



(e.g., the McClure report, NPM) have brought MO to the centre of the government's social policy and welfare reform.

“[T]he idea of the ‘social contract’ is the basis of mutual obligation’s popular appeal. Proponents argue that the policy is fair and reasonable, because it has its origins in liberal democratic philosophical traditions” (Kinnear 2002, p. 250). Within this social contract, “the government agrees to provide income support and job-search assistance in return for which the unemployed person agrees to undertake a series of activities designed to maximise their employment chances” (Kinnear 2002, p. 253).

March and Olsen (1995) refer to the transformation of accountability, stating that “the idea of accountability has sometimes been transformed into an idea of co-accountability” (p. 159); others have stated that accountability has been extended in terms of actors and content (Heinrich, Lynn & Milward 2010; Skelcher 2010). Accountability has been transformed within the context of welfare reform and extended to become multi-party accountability.

The McClure report (2000b) mentions the parties accountable in the process of building a better welfare system, and refers to it as mutual obligation, in which social-welfare recipients are not the sole accountable party in this process. According to the McClure report:

Mutual obligations [are] underpinned by the concept of social obligations. Governments, businesses, communities and individuals all have roles. Governments will have a responsibility to continue to

invest significant resources to support participation. Employers and communities will have a responsibility to provide opportunities and support. Income support recipients will have a responsibility to take-up the opportunities provided by government, business and community, consistent with community values and their own capacity (McClure 2000b, p. 6).

Kinnear (2002, p. 253) states that “for true mutuality to exist, dependency and vulnerability must be approximately equally shared between contracting parties and each must have the option to withdraw from, or not to enter a contract if the possibility for exploitation is present”; however, within the context of mutual obligation, “contract is at once asymmetrical-the individual is dependent upon the government to supply basic needs-and unilateral: the government has no corresponding dependency” (Kinnear 2002, p. 253).

The MO implemented by the Howard government in its welfare reforms is based on the model constructed in the McClure report (2000). This report:

- Emphasises the expectation on recipients to undertake some form of economic or social participation, consistent with their individual capacities and life circumstances.
- Incorporates both a set of broad expectations and a set of minimum requirements (reflected in legislation), which should be developed with consultation to ensure expectations and requirements reflect community norms and values.
- Is implemented in a way that maximises voluntary compliance and provides that alternative approaches to sanctions are considered before financial penalties are imposed (McClure 2000b, p. 56).

Romzek 2000 (p. 28) refers to accountability as “the process of holding someone answerable for performance”. This process under MO starts with the expectation on social-

welfare recipients to undertake social and economic participation as specified in their individual agreement with Centrelink. The way social welfare-recipients need to answer for their performance to comply with their agreement is also set based on an individual basis, such as through arranged interviews with Centrelink or returning forms or diaries detailing their efforts to find a job.

Accountability in modern terms is mentioned to include “organizational and/or political mechanisms designed to ‘bring’ or ‘cause’ individuals or agencies to account ‘before the fact’ by causing them to act accountably” (Dubnick & Frederickson 2010, p. 144). MO is also designed according to the capacities of social-welfare recipients to enact social and economic participation accountably in the process of finding employment. Some of these mechanisms under MO include: part-time paid work, voluntary work, job-search training, a programme of advanced English for migrants, an approved literacy and numeracy program, part-time study or career counselling.

This model mirrors Funnel *et al.*’s (2012, p. 47) definition that “[t]o be accountable means that there is an obligation to answer for one’s actions and decisions”; in this case, through the compliance system introduced under the changes in welfare system. Moreover, “obligation refers to the need to adhere to laws and moral principles which are formulated outside the individual and within which they must perform their tasks” (Funnel *et al.* 2012, p. 49). Within the context of MO these obligations are formulated individually for each recipient of social welfare to ensure the recipient complies and avoid sanctions or financial penalties.

The McClure model of MO also fits within Dubnick and Frederickson's (2010, p. 144) definition that "accountability denotes relationships between two (or more) parties, where one party is obliged to account for his or her behavior to the other(s), and where specific mechanisms are deployed to make him or her behave in an accountable manner". Accordingly social-welfare recipients are obliged to adhere to their required social and economic participation; otherwise the compliance mechanisms are deployed to make them act in an accountable manner.

The MO model also matches Bovens's (2007, p. 447) definition of accountability as "a relationship between an actor<sup>6</sup> and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences". The actor within the context of MO is a recipient of social welfare, and the forum is Centrelink (on behalf of the government). MO is a relationship between Centrelink and recipients of social welfare, where the latter are obliged to adhere to social and economic participation and their compliance is assessed accordingly.

This research focuses on the mutual obligations applying to recipients of the Parenting Payment Singles (PPS), which is examined in Chapter 6.

### ***3.7. CONCLUSION***

This chapter has explored the concept of accountability, both in general and within the context of reform. It has addressed the ambiguity of the concept and variations within its

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<sup>6</sup> "The actor can be either an individual...an official or civil servant, or an organisation, such as a public institution or an agency. The significant other, the accountability forum, can be a specific person, such as a superior, a minister or a journalist, or it can be an agency, such as parliament, a court or the audit office" (Bovens 2007, p.450).

definition, and discussed typologies of accountability. It has presented the position of accountability under reform and described a number of accountability concerns in the application of instruments of reform. This chapter has provided a foundation for understanding the concept of accountability within the context of reform in general, and as a background for further investigation of the MO of PPS recipients in Chapter 6.

The following chapters present the methodology (Chapter 4) and methods (Chapter 5) employed in this research.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND FOUCAULDIAN METHODOLOGY**

#### ***4.1. INTRODUCTION***

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the research method applied in this study, and Foucault's idea of discipline is used for analysis.

Since the early 1980s accounting researchers have been applying Foucauldian ideas as a conceptual lens and an alternative mode for research in accounting (Cousins & Hussein 1984; Stewart 1992a; Van Dijk 1993; Alagiah 1996; Allen 2000, 2009; Armstrong 1994; Cater 2008; Cronin 1996; Danaher *et al.* 2000; Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982; Fox 1998; Gutting 1989; Kerr 1999; Lemke 2001, 2002; McNay 1994; McKinlay & Pezet 2009; Miller 1997; Mills 2003; Neimark 1990; O'Malley 1996; Owen 1994; Powers 2007; Ransom 1997; Rose 1996; Rowlinson 2002; Stahl 2004; Whisnant 2012; Zabala 2009; Al-Amoudi 2007; Oksala 2010; Grose 2011).

Foucault himself was averse to his work being labelled 'theory', although it has been positioned as both post-modernist and structuralist. Foucault's work has also been variously described as 'detailed analysis' (Sheridan 1980) and 'conceptual' (Van Dijk 1993), but according to Gaffikin (2006, p. 14) "Foucault is a notoriously difficult person to categorise". However, Foucault has also been positioned under French Critical Theory

(Laughlin 1995). This study follows this classification, as there is no evidence that Foucault distanced himself from it.

Foucauldian analysis is the basis of the critical discourse within this study, and Van Dijk (1993) provides the framework within which this analysis is conducted. The reason for this combination is twofold. First, both authors belong to CDA research and both approach discourse in similar ways, seeing it as a social phenomenon and acknowledging the effect of power within the notion of discourse.

Second, Foucault does not provide a clear-cut methodology (Reed 1998; Al-Amoudi 2007; Oksala 2010; Gilbert *et al.* 2003; Hewitt 2009; Cataldi 2004; Stahl 2004). This area of weakness in Foucault's methodology is criticised by scholars (Reed 1998; Oksala 2010; Al-Amoudi 2007); however, it also allows researchers the freedom of choice to choose a method that best serves their research (Gaffikin 2009; Hewitt 2009; Cataldi 2004; Stahl 2004) (Section 4.4.3).

This study selects the work of Van Dijk (1993) as its research framework as well as its method because it informs and develops the idea of Foucauldian discourse. This framework also provides a way to investigate the structure of a discourse and its formation, which is important for exploring the reproduction of dominance within the context of the Welfare to Work (WTW) reform. On the other hand, "at no point does Foucault show the slightest desire to produce a theory to account for the 'structuring' of discursive formation by 'relations invested in institutions', etc." (Sheridan 1980, p. 214).

Van Dijk (1993) considers two major dimensions in ‘discursive reproduction of dominance’ (which is the main object of critical discourse analysis): ‘production’ and ‘reception’; he specifies the existence of these dimensions through two statements:

[1] If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise exhibit their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done. And [2] if they thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audiences, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process (p. 259).

There is also another reason for selecting Van Dijk’s work: his method of capturing the relevance of communicative relationships in the process of subjugation goes hand in hand with the application of Foucault’s idea of discipline to highlight the power relations within the process of subjugation. Foucault acknowledges both power and communicative relationships in the process of subjugation (Foucault’s acknowledgement of the latter relationship appears in his three-volume work *The History of Sexuality*). It also directs this research towards a systematic and detailed analysis.

The combined Van Dijk/Foucault method allows for an examination of the structure of discourse which is vital in the investigation of the reproduction of dominance within the mutual obligation (MO). It captures both power and communicative relationships in the process of Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients’ subjugation to MO and enables the researcher to extract the ‘regulated communication’ in regard to the discourse of MO (Chapter 6). Furthermore, it provides a lens to analyse the exercise of power and dominance through the discourse of MO (Chapter 7). In addition, the researcher explores PPS



recipients' perspectives on MO by conducting a questionnaire (Chapter 8), which provides data illuminating the analysis of how MO might be involved in the exercise of power.

The remaining sections of this chapter focus on the key Foucauldian concept of power. Foucauldian power “constitutes a radical break with all previous conceptions of power”. It is considered to be present everywhere and at the same time no one owns it; it is productive and it is “an effect of the operation of social relationships, between groups and between individuals” (Sheridan 1980, p. 217). As Foucault (2007) addresses three forms of power-sovereignty, discipline and governmental management, which he refers to as the ‘triangle’ of power-this chapter also includes sections in which these concepts are addressed and how they are connected to other Foucauldian ideas relevant to this study, such as liberalism and welfare.

#### ***4.2. MICHEL FOUCAULT***

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is an iconic symbol of CDA, the approach that aims to examine the element of power within a social practice. It was not Foucault's intention to produce theories, and he refuses to consider his work as theory. Rather he “work[s] in a specific field and do[es] not produce a theory of the world” (Foucault 1988c, p. 108). With regard to his concept of power, he insists that “I am not developing a theory of power” (Foucault 1988a, p. 39). On other occasions he asks, “[W]hat is power? [It] is obviously a theoretical question that would provide an answer to everything, which is just what I don't want to do” (Foucault 2003, p. 13).

Kritzman (1988a) crowns Foucault as the inventor of the term ‘specific intellectual’, someone who aims “to simply discover the truth of power and privileges...to analyze the specificity of the mechanisms of power and to build, little by little, ‘strategic knowledge’” (p. xiv). Foucault asserts, “I’m an empiricist: I don’t try to advance things without seeing whether they are applicable” (Foucault 1988c, p. 106). Foucault believes that “the work of an intellectual is not to shape others’ political will”, but rather “to participate in the formation of a political will” through the analyses she/he makes (Kritzman 1988a, p. xvi).

Stewart (1992a) identifies two stages in Foucault’s work: ‘archaeologies’, which cover “primarily historical case studies...[and] mainly [concern] the conditions for the emergence of an array of modern human sciences” (p. 62); and ‘genealogies’, in which “Foucault retained his interest in the human sciences-in the archaeology of knowledge structures-but concerned himself more with the strategic role of these knowledge in certain fields of public administration and policy” (p. 62).

Foucault’s archaeology approach “treat[s] an anonymous discourse. That would be a theory of what is said, regardless of who said it” (Hacking 1991, p. 191). “In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault attempts the task of analysing knowledge, its production, maintenance and transformation without recourse to humanist categories” (Goddard 2010, p. 350). This approach “suspends reference to logical, grammatical, psychological or semiotic analyses of language” (Goddard 2010, p. 350). Kerr (1999) characterises Foucault’s archaeology approach as follows: “it does not question the truth or meaning of a body of knowledge to

which it is applied.... [It] is blind to the constitutive role of the human subject.... [It treats] discourse as autonomous” (p. 176).

The second stage of Foucault’s work (according to Stewart (1992a)) is genealogy, which originates from the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. This approach, “concerned with detailed tracing of the emergence of discourses and practices, is essentially dynamic” (Armstrong 1994, p. 47). Considering Stewart’s classification, the concept of governmentality is also a genealogical approach. Foucault’s work on the self is also recognisable in the genealogical approach. Martin *et al.* (1988) regard Foucault’s work on the self as the “logical conclusion to his historical inquiry over twenty-five years into insanity, deviancy, criminality, and sexuality” (p. 3), where Foucault applies his genealogy approach in the study of the self to determine “the self-constituted *itself* as subject” (Martin *et al.* 1988, p. 4).

Martin *et al.* (1988) refer to two meanings of self: “*Auto* means ‘the same’, but it also conveys the notion of identity. The latter meaning shifts the question from ‘what is this self?’ to ‘what is the plateau on which I shall find my identity?’” (p. 25). The second meaning is the one considered by Foucault. In his study of Plato’s *Alcibiades*, he identifies three major relationships: “first, the relation between care of oneself and care of the political life; second, the relation between taking care of the self and defective education; and third, the relation between taking care of oneself and knowing oneself” (Martin *et al.* 1988, p. 30).

#### ***4.3. HISTORY, ACCOUNTING AND FOUCAULT***

Stewart (1992a) addresses the significance of history in the identification of broad contexts of accounting. In addition to the traditional economic and technical contexts, these include social, ideological and political contexts; “the emergence and functioning of accounting in its various contexts is a complex phenomenon, due to the interplay of many different influences” (p. 61).

The early 1980s was the start of Foucauldian accounting research (Carter 2008; Rowlinson & Carter 2002; McKinlay & Pezet 2010). “The attraction of Foucault to accounting historians and theorists is in the conceptual lenses he has provided, particularly as an antidote to positivistic/scientific explanations of accounting” (Stewart 1992a, p. 61) and “Foucauldian-inspired accounting histories have given some alternative and new insights into the emergence of accounting” (Stewart 1992a, p. 66).

Armstrong (1994) mentions two types of Foucault-inspired accounting research: accounting research into power and knowledge, and that into governmentality. In governmentality studies, “accounting is seen as a form of action [management] at a distance and attention is focused on the processes of translation whereby the discursive conditions of possibility of particular uses of accounting come into being” (Armstrong 1994, p. 25). Governmentality-inspired research in accounting has “de-emphasised the concept of power-knowledge in favour of the sociology of translation” (Armstrong 1994, p. 50).

Foucault inspires accounting in such a way that its history is no longer “a single story woven around a master narrative such as accounting for decision making or increased efficiency” (Stewart 1992a, p. 68). In addition, the Foucauldian approach “raises new epistemological/methodological questions about how the past should be understood. It

questions the possibility of being objective, in a positivistic sense, about the past” (Stewart 1992a, p. 68). Armstrong (1994) acknowledges the positive influence of Foucault in the accounting field and states that “at a minimum it has inspired a number of excellent studies which have enriched the empirical basis on which an understanding of the trajectory of accounting might be based” (p. 50). On the other hand, Armstrong states that “Foucauldian research has paid very little attention to the validity of the genealogies”, and “the one attempt which has been made to use genealogy as the vehicle of critique has only served to demonstrate that such an enterprise contradicts the method itself” (p. 51).

#### ***4.4. FOUCAULT’S LINE OF THOUGHT***

The work of self-acclaimed ‘specific intellectual’ Michel Foucault provides “a kind of toolbox which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however, they wish in their own area” (Foucault 1974, p. 523). Foucault’s ideas of discourse, power, governmentality and discipline (discussed later in this chapter) are widely applied in the social sciences and other fields. Sheridan (1980) notes that “Foucault’s relation to ‘theory’ is often misunderstood. Foucault does not have a theory of history, which he then sets about ‘proving’. The mass of detailed analysis he brings to bear in his work is not material to support a theory, in the sense that this analysis would be ‘invalidated’ if the theory were proved ‘false’” (p. 211).

Foucault’s concepts and his research position put his work within the framework of social theory, regardless of his reticence to be a theorist of any sort. However, Foucauldian scholars hold differing views about which branch of social theory Foucault’s work belongs

to. Neimark (1990) and Laughlin (1995) regard Foucault as a postmodern philosopher.<sup>7</sup> However, Foucault seems to distance himself from this classification when he asks, “[W]hat are we calling post-modernity? I’m not up to date” (Foucault 1988a, p. 33). He also writes, “I do not understand what kind of problem is common to the people we call post-modern or post-structuralist” (Foucault 1988a, p. 34).

Another view classifies Foucault as a structuralist scholar. Gaffikin’s (2006) categorising of Foucault as a structuralist comes from his archaeology method, which Gaffikin believes “displays his [Foucault’s] structuralist roots” (p. 14); however, Gaffikin continues by saying that “it [the method] has moved well beyond Saussurean structuralism” (p. 14). This statement, as well as the fact that Foucault used other methods (such as genealogy and the study of discourse), suggests that he cannot be categorised according to only one of his methods. Furthermore, Sheridan (1980) refers to the ‘elementary periodization’ of Foucault’s work-the discontinuity of Foucault’s approach throughout his work-which also makes it difficult to find a fixed position for him.

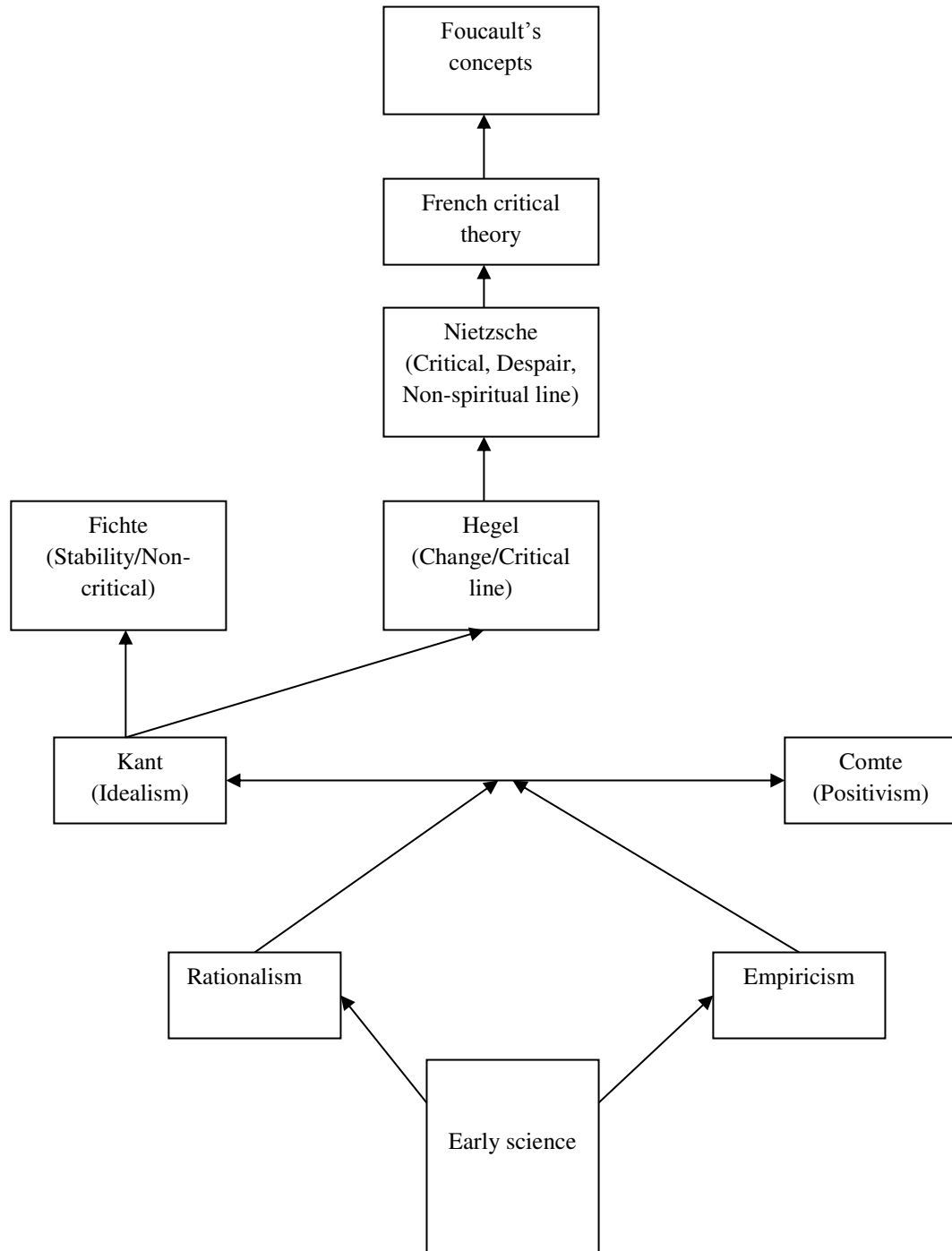
There is yet another classification of Foucault that has philosophical roots. Laughlin (1995) classifies accounting approaches according to their philosophical roots: “the quasiscience of the accounting economists, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, structuration, Marxism and labour process theory, German critical theory, French critical theory and post-structuralism” (Laughlin 1995, p. 69).

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<sup>7</sup> “What they [postmodernist] have in common is an effort to tear accounting from its foundations in modernist/Enlightenment ontology and epistemology and to situate accounting in the world of lived experience as both a product of social construction and as an architect of social experience” (Neimark 1990, p. 106).

Figure 4.1 demonstrates Foucault's line of theoretical and methodological thought under French critical theory.

**Figure 4.1:** Foucault's Tree of Theory



Source: Based on Laughlin 1995, pp. 71-73

Kantian philosophy underlies French critical theory and, by extension, Foucault. This philosophy is based on the assumption that “neither experience nor reason *alone* [emphasis in the original text] can generate understanding” (Laughlin 1995, p. 71). Similarly, Hegel presents the foundation to the change/critical line approach and has “a fundamental belief in a material world in which understanding of and change in its design...[is] possible and appropriate” (Laughlin 1995, p. 75).

Popkewitz and Brennan (1997) view Foucault’s work as “both generative and illustrative of an intellectual tradition that provides certain breaks with the ordering principles of critical traditions dominating western left thinking since the turn of the century” (p. 288). Kant “informs Foucault’s notions of critique, or his ‘ontologies of the present’, as Foucault calls them” and “Michel Foucault appeal to Immanuel Kant’s notion of political maturity [Mündigkeit] as they define the activity of critique” (Cook 2013, p. 965). On the other hand, Nietzsche has influenced Foucault’s idea of reality in a way which “[a]ny ontological schema, any interpretation of reality, is an imposition, not a pure description of the given” (Oksala 2010, p. 451).

The main intention of this study is to examine the power relationships manifested in the social practice of WTW reform through the Foucauldian idea of discipline. To develop a conceptual and theoretical framework, it is important first to address the Foucauldian stand on four fundamental questions- ontology, epistemology, methodology and method-in investigating power relationships. It is also important to mention this study’s position in



regards to two dimensions of CDA: critical and discourse. These will be discussed in later sections.

#### **4.4.1. Four Fundamental Questions**

Gaffikin (2008) identifies four fundamental terms-ontology, epistemology, methodology and method- that relate to this discussion: “on what basis can we make the claim that what we state is knowledge is *reliable* [emphasis in the original text] knowledge?” (p. 6). A number of scholars address ontology as the principal component in the study of governance (Catlaw & Jordan 2009; Howe 2006; Stout 2012). Ontology is important because “it *frames presuppositions about all aspects of life and what is good and right* [emphasis in the original text]. Ontological assumptions drive everything from the question of sovereignty to a public ethic and the proper institutions of government” (Stout 2012, p. 390). Oksala (2010, p. 449) also addresses the importance of having an ontology, stating that “[m]odern thought has become irreversibly aware that all thinking necessarily relies on ontological commitments of some kind” and that “[s]hying away from ontological inquiry can therefore only constitute a position of hypocrisy for us: Not mentioning the word ontology does not mean that questions concerning it will disappear” (Oksala 2010, p.449).

Having mentioned the importance of ontology, it is also vital to ask what ontology is? Numerous scholars have defined ontology; for example, Gaffikin (2008, p. 6) writes, “[o]ntology is the theory of being; it is designed to determine the nature of the fundamental kinds of things that exist”. Oksala (2010, p. 463) states “that the word ontology has two

distinct meanings: it commonly refers both to the fundamental nature of reality and to the systematic study of this nature. Ontology is also “referred to a fairly restricted field of philosophical reflection concerned with analyzing being or beings that was relatively remote from moral-political concerns”. White (1997, p. 502) writes that traditionally ontology is “closely connected-sometimes even identified-with metaphysics, an activity now regarded by many with deep suspicion”.

Stout (2012, p.388) defines ontology as “a theory of existence, being, or reality” which “stem[s] from philosophy, religion, or physics” (Stout 2012, p.389). Furthermore, Stout (2012, p.391) states that “what we believe about reality guides what we do, and sometimes we do not like the results. So, we critique what we believe using a variety of theoretical lenses (e.g., critical social theory, postmodern philosophy, feminist theory, cultural studies, etc.) in order to recommend change”.

Foucault used the term ‘*ontologie de l’actualité*’ (ontology of actuality) in 1983, in his course at the Collège de France. A year later Foucault published a longer version of his course text in English; however, instead of ‘ontology of actuality’ he used ‘historical ontology of ourselves’ (Zabala 2009). “If we compare both editions we can easily observe that Foucault meant the same thing by both formulations and probably found ‘historical’ and ‘critical’ more appropriate because they could both be used as opposing modifiers to the ‘ontology’” (Zabala 2009, p. 112).

Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) investigates social practices through power. Al-Amoudi (2007, p. 553) states that Foucault’s work “shares the crucial characteristics of the

critical realist ontology as it assumes a relational conception of society and considers structures as both enabling and constraining for agency”. In the same line, Oksala (2010, p. 447) states that under critical reality, reality is “the result of social practices always incorporating power relations, but also of concrete struggles over truth and objectivity in social space”. Oksala (2010) further addresses that the production of truth “responds to a certain number of imperatives and conditions that are not purely theoretical, but also practical and political. Our understanding of reality is inevitably the effect of power relations also in this sense”. Furthermore, critical realism suggests “that the world is not only composed of events and experiences but that is also composed of (metaphorically) deep mechanisms” (Al-Amoudi 2007, p. 545).

Second, epistemology, the theory of knowledge, is “the process by which we obtain knowledge” (Gaffikin 2008, p. 7), which is driven directly from the selected ontology. Critical realism recognises two dimensions for knowledge: the ‘transitive’ and the ‘intransitive’. While the transitive dimension “refers to the field of references and comprises such objects as: discourse, concepts, beliefs, impressions and so on” the intransitive dimension “refers to the world to which transitive objects refer.... Notably, the intransitive dimension includes the transitive dimension but is not limited to it” (Al-Amoudi 2007, p. 545).

Foucault’s concept of power in *Discipline and Punish* could be considered to be within a transitive dimension of knowledge. Notable in Foucault’s idea of power is the productivity of power; in fact, according to Foucault, “Knowledge is produced, manufactured by a series

of mechanisms and obscure power relations” (Foucault 2000, pp. 6-7). On another occasion Foucault (1995, p. 194) states, “[p]ower produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth”.

“Critical realism suggests that the transitive dimension is socially constructed” (Al-Amoudi 2007, p. 545). Constructionist-oriented research is “an orientation toward social reality that assumes the beliefs and meaning people create and use fundamentally shape what reality is for them” (Neuman 2006, p. 89). Foucault’s idea of power in *Discipline and punish* follows a social-constructionist epistemology where he aims to interpret social practices (of prison) to address how power produces reality and truth.

The focus of this research is MO (co-accountability), which is a complex concept. Furthermore, accountability is a discourse (Sinclair 1995) that is applicable to MO in this research. In fact, MO is a discourse constructed by the government and is communicated through legislation and other public documents in such a way as to make sense to people who are affected by it. This study considers MO as “conceptual, meaning to say that [it is] not available in the world of nature.... [It] occur[s] not as part of nature, but [is] human construction and lie[s] in the world of abstraction” (Alagiah 1996, p. 240). MO “is brought into existence through discourse and is therefore a construction through discourse” (Alagiah 1996, p. 276).

Third, the researcher needs to select a methodology that is “used to indicate the techniques used to gather data and information-the methods” (Gaffikin 2008, p. 7), the fourth fundamental element for conducting research. According to Irvine and Gaffikin (2006)

“qualitative research both requires and provides great flexibility in approach” (p. 121), which indicates that it incorporates a variety of methods, and that “in subjective qualitative research no method is privileged over others, so there are many variations” (Gaffikin 2006, p. 9). The current study implements CDA, which is based on Foucauldian discourse analysis. Van Dijk’s (1993) work as well as paradigms and techniques of Foucauldian discipline (Section 4.4.3 contains a disciplinary map) are applied as a method in this research.

#### **4.4.2. Critical Theory**

Gaffikin (2009) sees the last 40 years as the starting point for the “growth of a new analysis and understanding of the role of accounting. This is well known and it has been called the critical accounting movement” (p. 270). ‘Non-mainstream accounting’ and ‘public-interest accounting’ are other terms used for this idea. The 1980s generated a wide range of empirical studies in accounting from various theoretical and methodological approaches. This decade also saw a tension, for example, between economic and behavioural approaches. However, by the early 1990s, “with the proliferation of more and more ‘behavioural’ approaches to empirical research, battles are beginning to emerge within this broad boundary, with those relying on post-modernists, such as Foucault, being particularly in the firing line” (Laughlin 1995, p. 64).

Gaffikin (2006) also addresses the “growing acceptance of the belief that positivistic scientific epistemology was inappropriate for the social and human sciences...because

these disciplines involved human and social aspects, a belief in the possibility of objective, value neutral research methodologies was held to be impossible” (p. 3).

The 1980s was also the time that “the growing interest in empirical research in understanding the nature of accounting within organizations and society...generated a range of intellectual ‘borrowing’ from social and political thought” (Laughlin 1995, p. 69). In particular, Burrell and Morgan (1979) developed “an abstracted classification schema for understanding broad streams of social science approaches” (Laughlin 1995, p. 65); this schema has supplied a vision to accounting scholars to demonstrate perspectives in accounting. Lodh and Gaffikin (1997) see this as the point of agreement between critical theorists in accounting.

Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis involve a two-by-two matrix: one bipolar continuum ranges from subjectivist to objectivist and represents the continuum of social sciences; the other ranges from sociology of regulation to sociology of radical change and represents the continuum of society. The continuum of social sciences consists of five dimensions: ontology, epistemology, human nature, methodology and society. Laughlin’s work on ‘methodological themes’ (1995) was inspired by Burrell and Morgan (1979), as was Chua’s ‘classification of assumptions’ (1986a). Laughlin’s (1995) model is a three-dimension matrix including theory, methodology and change. Table 4.1 demonstrates the model in relation to Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) model and the application of each dimension.

Table 4. 1: Corresponding dimensions of the models of Burrell & Morgan and Laughlin

Laughlin	Burrell & Morgan	Application
Theory	Ontology Epistemology	Involves deciding on a view about the nature of the world Involves what constitutes knowledge (past and present), and its relation to research
Methodology	Methodology Human nature	Involves the level of theoretical formality in defining the nature of the discovery method Involves taking a position on an amalgam of the nature and role of the observer
Change	Society	Involves taking a position on whether the investigation is intentionally geared towards achieving change in the phenomena being investigated

*Source:* Based on Laughlin 1995, p. 66

#### 4.4.3. Foucault's Discourse Analysis

This research is concerned with discourse analysis as inspired by Foucault. The researcher has specifically chosen Foucault's discourse analysis for his contribution to understanding the role of discipline and power. The starting point for this choice of methodology, as opposed to other equally influential approaches to discourse analysis, lies in the way discourse is used and treated.

The work of Jürgen Habermas, a thinker who belongs to the Frankfurt School, is heavily applied in the social sciences. His approach is mentioned here in comparison to Foucault's approach to better explain the idea of discourse in this study. The common link between Habermas and Foucault is that their intellectual and institutional development is closely linked to Marxist thought and thus to "a fundamental critique of the alienating circumstances of the capitalist mode of production" (Stahl 2004, p. 4334). However, Foucauldian discourse and Habermasian discourse are not identical (Stahl 2004). In the

French language the term ‘discourse’, “while it still refers to serious statements..., is more part of the ordinary use of language.... Discourse therefore does not necessarily refer to an immediate exchange of ideas”, whereas “the use of Diskurs in German stands for a clearly defined debate about a specific topic” (Stahl 2004, p. 4329). Stahl suggests that Foucault sees discourse as “the societal process of understanding and self-definition” (Stahl 2004, p. 4330), whereas Stahl claims that Habermas takes the view that “discourses are the means or the medium to clarify contentious validity claims” (Stahl 2004, p. 4331).

The concept of power is emphasised in Foucault’s discourse analysis, where “it forms the basis for the analysis of discourse” (Powers 2007, p. 28). Foucault (1980d, pp.141-142) mentions that “power is ‘always already there’; that one is never ‘outside’ it” and also that “power circulates through the network of social relations”. Foucault’s notion of power is influenced by Nietzsche, which demonstrates “how power creates the illusion of meaning to support control strategies without the necessity of an appeal to the notion of an organized conspiracy” (Powers 2007, p. 31). Power is at the core of Foucauldian discourse, and validity is the central theme in Habermasian discourse. Foucauldian analysis investigates “the influence of power and bodily discipline on historical discourses whereas Habermas stands for the normative explication of the validity and acceptability of discourses” (Stahl 2004, p. 4331).

In fact it is Foucault’s notion of power that makes his work different to that of other thinkers. According to Foucault, “power is not ‘owned’”-for example, by states, institutions or individuals-to be exercised on other individuals or citizens; rather, “power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault 1990, p. 93). In other words, Foucault sees power as being omnipresent.



Foucault emphasises the power relationships within subjugation: “[I]n the modern era, individuals become subjects by being subjected to the forces of disciplinary power and normalization” (Allen 2009, p. 14). On the other hand, Habermas emphasises the communication relationships in subjugation and “suggests a more benign process whereby autonomous individuals are socialized into a communicatively (thus, rationally) structured life world” (Allen 2009, p. 14).

Even though the notion of subjugation is different for Habermas and Foucault, the difference is not as great as it might seem. Habermas does not deny the power relationship in subjugation, but he does not agree with the emphasis Foucault puts on power in the process of subjectivation<sup>8</sup> (Allen 2009). To understand Habermas’s stand, Lynch (1998) refers to two possible claims that could be extracted from the Foucauldian idea of omnipresent power. First, “because power relations are omnipresent, then, an account of power relations is necessary in order to understand society” (p. 68). And second, “an account of power relations is sufficient for social explanations” (p. 68). Habermas’s view is in conflict with the second claim. Furthermore, Habermas believes that “communicative action is necessary but not sufficient for socialization” (Allen 2009, p. 18).

Lynch (1998) addresses the shift in Foucault’s stand towards power. Even though power for Foucault is omnipresent, “power is neither the sole nor necessarily the most important aspect of social relations for Foucault”<sup>9</sup> (Lynch 1998, p. 69). Lynch (1998) refers to

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<sup>8</sup> This term is used by Allen 2009 as an alternative for the term subjugation. “The term ‘subjectivation’ refers to the process by which neonates are transformed into competent subjects who have the capacity to think, deliberate, and act” (Allen 2009, p. 14).

<sup>9</sup> Lynch (1998) refers to the periodisation of Foucault’s writings to address the emphasis Foucault placed on power. “From the publication of *Discipline and Punish* in 1975 through the late 1970s, in what is often called his ‘genealogy’ or ‘middle’ period, the analytics of power was one of Foucault’s central concerns. In the 1980s, until his death in 1984, Foucault’s interests shifted toward the self’s constitution of itself; this was the later period of ‘ethics’” (p. 65).

Foucault's work on sadomasochistic (S/M) practices in *The History of Sexuality* as an indication of the shift in Foucault's writings, and even though "Foucault explicitly notes that power plays an important role in practices of S/M...power relations are only one aspect of these relations" (p. 68). For Foucault the fact that remained unchanged about power was the characteristic of the 'omnipresence' of power in social relations (Lynch 1998).

Allen (2000) also addresses the shift in Foucault's writing:

[A]fter the publication in 1976 of volume 1 of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault turned his attention away from the way that subjects are produced via the anonymous functioning of power/knowledge regimes and toward the ways in which individuals actively and reflexively constitute themselves via a particular kind of ethical relation to self (p. 118).

Foucault believes that subjugation is a social process, which also indicates that subjugation is inflected with power (Allen 2009). This, however, does not conflict with Habermas's view, as Habermas "also acknowledges a necessary role for power in subjectivation, even if he does not seem particularly worried about the implications of this role" (Allen 2009, p. 22). On the other hand, Foucault (1983) recognises the communication relations in social practices and states that "it is...necessary to distinguish power relations from relationships of communication which transmit information by means of a language, a system of signs, or any other symbolic medium" (p. 217). In fact, these two accounts of subjugation are "analytically distinct but practically intertwined" (Allen 2009, p. 23).

Fairclough (1995), one of the founders of CDA, is a scholar within the linguistic tradition of discourse analysis who also has contributed a great deal to research in the area of social

science. Discourse theory is about “how ideas are expressed in language. Language, therefore, as well as other forms of symbolic exchange, is the primary object studied by discourse theory” (Whisnant 2012, p. 4). Even though works of scholars from the linguistic tradition are inspired by Foucault, they do not treat discourse in the same way. They see discourse “solely as the units of written and spoken communication under study and focus on the content of texts and conversations” (Hewitt 2009, p. 2). Foucault (1972, p. 49) views discourses “as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. Foucault sees discourse as more than ways of speaking and writing (Willig 2008). In Foucauldian research “power relations are reflected in language, but are not a consequence of language” (Hewitt 2009, p. 2). Foucault is interested in “the procedures and social interactions that shape communication” (Stahl 2004, p. 4330) rather than a definition of the term (Stahl 2004). In Foucault’s view, “discourses are bound up with institutional practices-that is, with ways of organizing, regulating and administering social life” (Willig 2008, p. 113).

Discourse in this study is inspired by Foucault as well as Van Dijk, whose view of discourse, despite some differences, is as a social phenomenon, acknowledging the power relations within discourse. This research depends on notions from the work of Van Dijk (1993) for its framework. Van Dijk’s work is chosen as it develops and informs the idea of discourse considered by this research with attention to the statement that “at no point does Foucault show the slightest desire to produce a theory to account for the ‘structuring’ of discursive formation by ‘relations invested in institutions’, etc.” (Sheridan 1980, p. 214). Discursive formation and the investigation of the structure of discourse is an important procedure in exploring the reproduction of dominance within the context of WTW.

Van Dijk (1993) considers two major dimensions in ‘discursive reproduction of dominance’ (which is the main object of CDA): production and reception. Van Dijk notes the existence of these dimensions

through the enactment of dominance in text and talk in specific contexts, and more indirectly through the influence of discourse on the minds of others. In the first case, dominant speakers may effectively limit the communicative rights of others, e.g. by restricting (free access to) communicative events, speech acts, discourse genres, participants, topics or style. In the second case, dominant speakers control the access to public discourse and hence are able to indirectly manage the public mind (p. 279).

Within the framework sketched above, Van Dijk references two statements for each dimension that contribute towards the twofold method applied in this study: the application of Van Dijk to capture the relevance of communicative relationships in the process of subjugation and to investigate the structure of the discourse of MO; and the application of Foucault’s idea of discipline to highlight the power relations within the process of subjugation and direct this research towards a systematic and detailed analysis. In addition to this framework, the researcher explores PPS recipients’ perspectives on MO by conducting a questionnaire, which produces data that illuminates the analyses of how MO might be involved in the exercise of power.

Van Dijk’s (1993) two statements are:

[1]) If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise exhibit their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done. And [2]) if they thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audiences, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process (p. 259).

The first statement is mainly concerned with the structure of discourse, whereas the second concerns influence and power where the “power and dominance of groups are measured by their control over (access to) discourse” (Van Dijk 1993, p. 257). Foucault’s idea of discipline and his disciplinary techniques are implemented here to measure control or, in other words, to investigate the existence of dominance within MO practices, considering that “the more power renders the body productive, the more forces there are to control and direct. This difficulty is overcome by the action of the disciplinary mechanisms” (Sheridan 1980, p. 218).

The method within Foucauldian discourse analysis is a target of criticism, as Foucault does not offer a methodology (Reed 1998; Al-Amoudi 2007; Oksala 2010; Gilbert *et al.* 2003; Hewitt 2009; Cataldi 2004; Stahl 2004). One critical view is that Foucault’s methodology focuses “on practices: instead of natural objects or things, there are only practices that are constitutive of discursive objects (Oksala 2010, p. 453) and it “premises for the study of society as an open system without possible closure” (Al-Amoudi 2007, pp. 549-550).

The other criticism is that Foucault’s methodology is “incapable of distinguishing ontologically and analytically between human agency and social constraint” (Al-Amoudi 2007, p. 552). In the same line, Reed (1998, p. 209) believes that lack of differentiation between creative agency and structural constraint makes Foucault’s discourse analysis unable to distinguish between ‘open doors’ and ‘brick walls’. Foucault himself also “recognizes that many aspects of his discourse theory and recommendations for analysis remain ambiguous” (Cataldi 2004, p. 12). The status of method within Foucauldian

discourse analysis could also indicate that “there are many methods employed and at the same time no methods of discourse analysis” (Hewitt 2009, p. 3); this could offer flexibility to Foucault-inspired researchers to apply their own methods. On the other hand, “Foucault offers great perspectives for the analysis and critique of extant social structures and...sharpens the perceptions of discourse pathologies” (Stahl 2004, p. 4332).

The ‘scope and flexibility’ that Foucauldian discourse analysis offers researchers (Cataldi 2004) allows more freedom to formulate a research framework and method, as “Foucault’s ideas are sufficient to provide a ‘way of thinking’ when conducting research” (Hewitt 2009, p. 9). His ideas also “suggest a compatible way of accessing data about discourse ideology, processes, and institutional structures and interpreting their impact on idea formation and, ultimately, on policy formulation” (Cataldi 2004, p. 67). And “since Foucault’s approach is highly critical of established institutions, his view of discourses is often utilised in research that aims to critique the status quo” (Stahl 2004, p. 4332). Gaffikin (2009, p. 270) also refers to Foucault’s ideas as an option to be used “in the wake of ‘critical accounting movement’” which promotes “new analysis and understanding of the role of accounting”.

In this study, the researcher first applies Van Dijk’s (1993) framework to extract the ‘regulated communication’ in MO discourse. The Australian government legislated WTW in 2006. This legislation (along with other public documents; see Chapter 5) is the ‘regulated communication’ of MO discourse where all elements of MO are addressed and its structure and functions are communicated. Furthermore, Van Dijk’s framework allows for an investigation of the structure of the discourse of MO. Chapter 6 demonstrates how

the discourse of MO is organised and structured; how the elements of MO are interconnected based on the idea/requirement of social and economic participation; how these elements are associated with PPS recipients' eligibility for payment; and how the public participated in its introduction. Furthermore, this study investigates the power relationships in the subjugation of PPS recipients (and to attend to the second statement of this study's framework, which addresses the discursive strategies involved in the reproduction of dominance), the Foucauldian concept of discipline and Foucault's disciplinary techniques are applied.

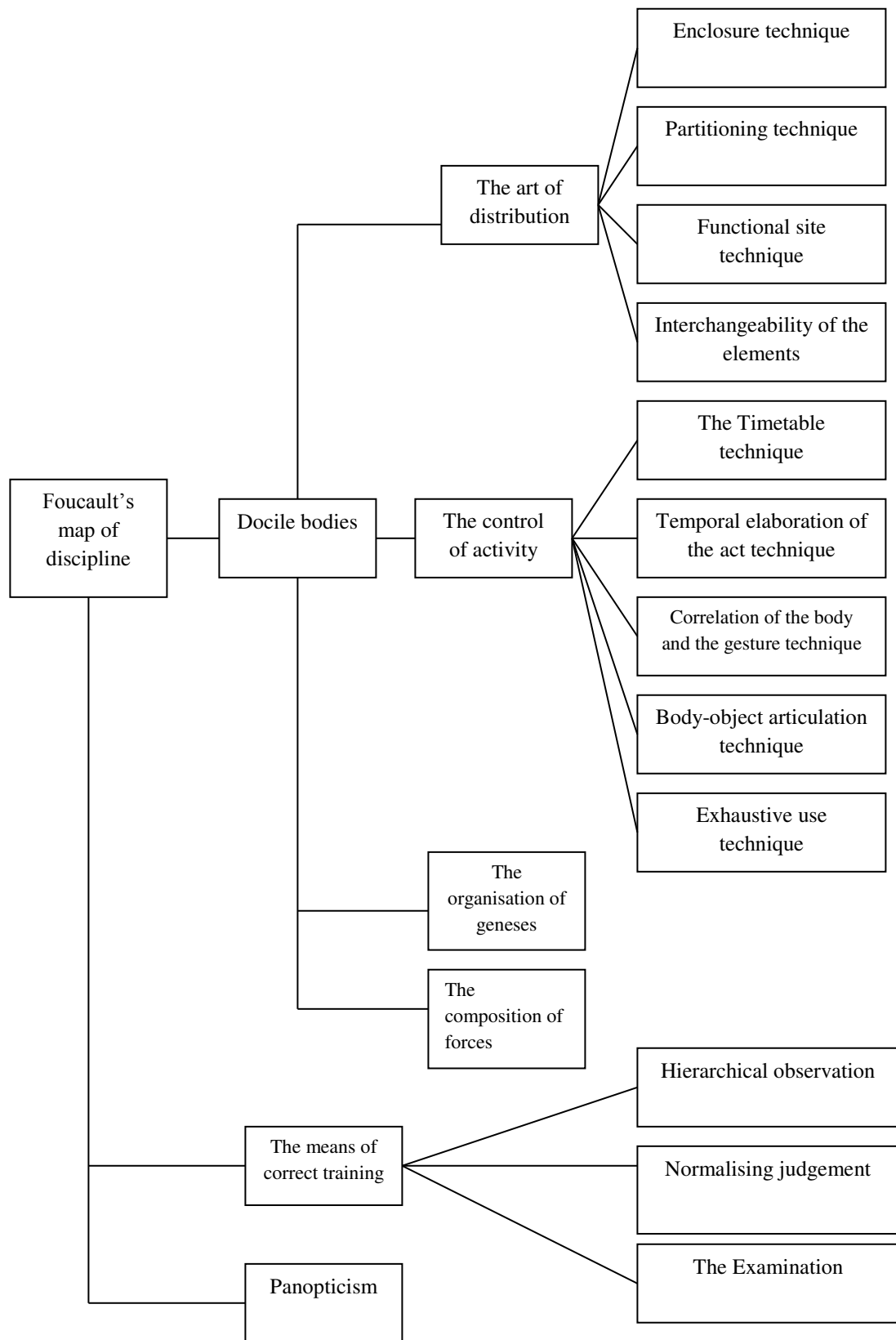
Centrelink is an institution appointed by the Australian government that exercises power in numerous ways. Centrelink's position of delivering services and deciding on applicants' eligibility provides Centrelink with the power to alter discourse and to make PPS recipients subject to discipline and normalisation. As these are Foucauldian themes, the application of Foucauldian discourse analysis to the discourse of MO is appropriate. However, MO cannot be analysed in isolation. MO is a term as well as a concept, and understanding it requires consideration of context as well as the way it has been structured and formed.

Centrelink plays an important role in the subjugation of PPS recipients. In this subjugation to the discourse of MO both communicative and power relationships are identifiable: there are "a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the 'value' of each person and of the levels of knowledge)" and "a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy)" (Foucault 1983, p. 219).

This research has developed a disciplinary map based on Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995). This map (Figure 4.2) provides a clear pathway to analyse the relationships of power and domination through the discourse of MO. The disciplinary map provides a way of thinking, a method to conduct this research, even though not all of the disciplinary techniques are examined due to considerations of time and the extent of this research. This also makes the contents of this research more manageable.

**Figure 4.2:** Disciplinary map





The twofold method this research uses to analyse the structure of discourse, examine the power relationships exercised through the discourse of MO and capture the communicative and power relationships of the subjugation of PPS recipients to this discourse indicates that “the researcher is interested in the way discourses are structured, in the processes that allow or disallow access, and in the genealogy of the discourse. The central point of interest tends to be that of power and of the bodily means of exerting power” (Stahl 2004, p. 4333).

#### ***4.5. INTRODUCTION TO FOUCAULDIAN DISCIPLINE, DISCIPLINARY PARADIGMS AND TECHNIQUES***

The concept of discipline used in this research is based on Foucault’s (1995) book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, which, “originally published as *Surveiller et Punir*, is best understood as one part of a broader effort that Foucault makes to depict the mix of forces and phenomena that arose in the context of the industrial revolution” (Ransom 1997, p. 28). Foucault applies his disciplinary techniques “which developed in closed institutions such as the penitentiary and the asylum, to modern society as a whole” (Cronin 1996, p. 73).

Disciplinary practices help us “to understand how modern western society organises itself, and regulates people’s thoughts and behaviour”. (Danaher et al. 2000, p.46). Foucault also associates disciplinary control/technologies to the rise of capitalism (Rabinow 1984). In addition, “the re-organization of the power to punish, and the relationships between power and knowledge are central to this book” (Sargiacomo 2009, p. 271). Discipline “is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology” (Rabinow 1984, p. 206). Ransom (1997) defines disciplines in Foucauldian terms as “those micromechanisms of power whereby

individuals are molded to serve the needs of power” (p. 59). Furthermore, “disciplines are part of the answer to the question, how are all these people to be governed?” (Ransom 1997, p. 31).

Discipline is integrated with individuals. Discipline “shapes individuals-neither with nor without their consent. It does not use violence. Instead, individuals are trained” (Ransom 1997, p. 37). “Discipline ‘makes’ individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise” (Foucault 1995, p. 170). It also creates individuality “that is endowed with four characteristics: it is cellular (by the play of spatial distribution), it is organic (by the coding of activities), it is genetic (by the accumulation of time), it is combinatory (by the composition of forces)” (Foucault 1995, p. 167). Through these characteristics, discipline forms the individual into a docile body<sup>10</sup> and “in doing so, it operates four great techniques: it draws up tables; it prescribes movements; it imposes exercises; lastly, in order to obtain the combination of forces, it arranges ‘tactics’” (Foucault 1995, p. 167). Foucault then concludes that “tactics, the art of constructing, with located bodies, coded activities and trained aptitudes, mechanisms in which the product of the various forces is increased by their calculated combination are no doubt the highest form of disciplinary practice” (Foucault 1995, p. 167).

Mills (2003) appreciates Foucault’s work on discipline, stating that “his work on disciplinary regimes is of great interest, since rather than simply seeing regimes as being oppressive, he analyses the way that regimes exercise power within a society through the

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<sup>10</sup> “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (Rabinow 1984, p. 180).

use of a range of different mechanisms and techniques” (p. 43). Foucault (1995) believes that “discipline organizes an analytical space” (p. 143) where “[its] elements are interchangeable” (p. 145). For Foucault, discipline incorporates three paradigms: ‘docile bodies’, ‘the means of correct training’ and ‘panopticism’, where each section includes and elaborates on specific analytical techniques. “Foucault argues that disciplinary methods intensify the link between an ‘increased aptitude’ and an ‘increased domination’, producing ‘subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile bodies’” (McNay 1994, p. 102).

Foucault identifies two roles for discipline: “discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)” (Foucault 1995, p. 138). One way of influence is through implementation of ‘discipline’. “For Foucault, discipline is a set of strategies, procedures and ways of behaving which are associated with certain institutional contexts and which then permeate ways of thinking and behaving in general” (Mills 2003, p. 44).

The following section provides details of Foucault’s disciplinary paradigms and their techniques.

#### **4.5.1. The docile-bodies paradigm and ‘the art of distribution’ techniques**

Foucault (1995) mentions the concept of ‘political anatomy’ as a mechanism of power: “it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines” (p. 138). The disciplinary paradigm and techniques are

the way to achieve this, as “discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” (p. 139). In other words “discipline is a political anatomy of detail” (p. 139).

The purpose of disciplinary techniques is to create docile bodies; this could be generalised to all disciplinary paradigms, as the concept of Foucauldian discipline “centres around the production of ‘docile bodies’: the organization, disciplining and subjection of the human body in such a way as to provide a submissive, productive and trained source of labour power” (McNay 1994, p. 92). In addition, each individual disciplinary technique elaborates on a specific aspect of discipline.

‘Enclosure’ and ‘partitioning’ are among the distribution techniques that fall within the docile-bodies paradigm.

#### **4.5.1.1.        *General enclosure and partitioning***

Foucault (1995) states, that “discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space” (p. 141). It does so “by the careful distribution of individuals over general purpose, self-contained places of confinement [in cases where prison is considered as the organisation to be studied]” (Macintosh 1994, p. 222). However, the technique of general enclosure by itself “is not sufficient to achieve disciplinary spaces. It is also necessary to partition the enclosure into smaller, self-contained locations in which it becomes possible to know, master, and make useful each and every individual” (Macintosh 1994, p. 222).

Foucault (1995) mentions that “the principle of enclosure is neither constant, nor indispensable, nor sufficient in disciplinary machinery” (p. 143). Instead, he introduces a much more flexible and detailed principle, which he calls ‘the principle of elementary

location or *partitioning*' (p. 143), where "each individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (p. 143). The aim of partitioning is "to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits" (p. 143).

#### **4.5.2. The docile-bodies paradigm and 'control of activity' techniques**

Macintosh (1994) regards the docile-bodies paradigm as 'the efficient body principle'. Timetable and dressage are two techniques from this paradigm. Timetable is the technique that "programs the individual" and the technique of dressage "produces automatic responses to signals" (p. 223).

##### **4.5.2.1. *Timetable***

Discipline "arranges a positive economy; it poses the principle of a theoretically ever-growing use of time: exhaustion rather than use; it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces" (Foucault 1995, p. 154). Foucault (1995) associates discipline with time, and states that discipline "must also be understood as machinery for adding up and capitalizing time. This was done in four ways, which emerge most clearly in military organization" (p. 157):

1. Divide duration into successive or parallel segments, each of which must end at a specific time. For example, isolate the period of training and the period of practice...in short, break down time into separate and adjusted threads.

2. Organize these threads according to an analytical plan-successions of elements as simple as possible, combining according to increasing complexity.
3. Finalize these temporal segments, decide on how long each will last and conclude it with an examination, which will have the triple function of showing whether the subject has reached the level required, of guaranteeing that each subject undergoes the same apprenticeship and of differentiating the abilities of each individual.
4. Draw up series of series; lay down for each individual, according to his level, his seniority, his rank, the exercises that are suited to him (Foucault 1995, pp. 157-158).

#### **4.5.2.2. *Dressage***

Dressage has “emerged as a highly effective mechanism for disciplining time” (Macintosh 1994, p. 224). It is characterized by “the strict timetabling, systematic procedures, and precise rhythm of the management control process” (Macintosh 1994, p. 239). However, Foucault extends this paradigm: under the mechanism of dressage, “discipline is no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine [system]” (Foucault 1995, p. 164).

Jackson and Carter (1998) identify two aspects of dressage-discipline and taming-and specify different levels for each aspect. The first level of discipline contains organization, where “discipline is cherished and celebrated in its own right, such as in the military, where automatic obedience to orders is a primary objective of all training and acculturation” (p.

56). The second level contains organisations that “consciously or unconsciously, model themselves on a quasi-militaristic standard, such as the police, hospitals and schools” (p. 56). At the third level “are organizations such as bureaucracies which also exhibit strong attachment to discipline” (p. 56).

The goal of discipline is “for everything to be done that should be done, and done at the right time and in the ways prescribed”. The underpinning view is that discipline “refers to the ideal of order and, as such, is presented as rational, functional and productive” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 56).

The second aspect of dressage, taming, is defined as “to tame or habituate to obedience” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 56). This aspect also consists of three levels. “At a primary level there is the straight-forward issue of accepting the requirement of submission to discipline” (p. 56). The second level “concerns the modification and manipulation of behaviour in ways desired by those in control”. The focus of this level is to identify and model the ideal worker, “who is not only obedient but is willing to modify any behaviour which managers might define as deviant, and thereby to symbolize their submission to control” (p. 57). The third level “centres on the idea that work has intrinsic value” (p. 57) which is seen by ‘governors’ as good for the ‘governed’, “who must therefore be encouraged, or if need be compelled, to do lots of it” (p. 57).

Dressage also “places the body in a world of signals, each with a moral imperative and each requiring instantaneous response” (Macintosh 1994, p. 224). Foucault (1995) discusses concept of ‘signalisation’ within the context of dressage. He opens the discussion by stating that dressage “requires a precise system of command...[in which] the order does not need



to be explained or formulated; it must trigger off the required behaviour and that is enough” (p. 166). Foucault then states that signalisation “is a question not of understanding the injunction but of perceiving the signal and reacting to it immediately, according to a more or less artificial, prearranged code” (p. 166).

Foucault addresses the main purpose of the use of signalisation as “to attract at once the attention of all the pupils to the teacher [in cases where the institution is school] and to make them attentive to what he wishes to impart to them. Thus, whenever he wishes to attract the attention of the children, and to bring the exercise to an end, he will strike the signal once” (Foucault 1995, p. 166). However, this is subject to the fact that “the pupil will have to have learnt the code of the signals and [then] respond automatically to them” (p. 166). Dressage “place[s] the bodies in a little world of signals to each of which is attached a single, obligatory response: it is a technique of training, of dressage” (p.166). In other words, “dressage automatically triggers a reflexive response from the disciplined body” (Hopper & Macintosh 1998, p. 132) which “usually is rationalized and justified in terms of a greater, collective interest” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 51).

Foucault (1995) refers to several ways of signalisation through application of signals in a school where “the training of schoolchildren was to be carried out in the same way [as dressage]: few words, no explanation, a total silence interrupted only by signals-bells, clapping of hands, gestures, a mere glance from the teacher, or that little wooden apparatus used by the Brothers of the Christian Schools” (p. 166). He further states that “even verbal orders were to function as elements of signalization” (p. 167).

#### **4.5.3. The paradigm of the means of correct training**

Foucault (1995) states that “the success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination” (p. 170). Cronin (1996) states that these techniques make disciplinary power productive, as they are “designed to control bodily behavior in a continuous manner, [in which] the modern subject [an individual] is literally constituted as a vehicle of power and an object of knowledge” (p. 58), contrary to sovereign power, which is negative because it “prohibits behavior that does not conform to the law” (p. 58).

Macintosh (1994) regards this paradigm as ‘disciplining minds’ where “the chief function of the disciplinary power is to ‘train’, rather than to select and to levy; or, no doubt, to train in order to levy and select all the more” (Rabinow 1984, p. 188). However, to train individuals, it is also necessary “to establish standards that will act as performance goals for each individual” (Ransom 1997, p. 47).

This paradigm includes three techniques: hierarchical surveillance, normalisation and examination.

##### **4.5.3.1. *Hierarchical surveillance***

Danaher et al. (2000) state that “surveillance techniques have become a fundamental part of life in modern western societies” (p. 54). ‘Hierarchical surveillance’ functions within an organisation “as an uninterrupted, anonymous, automatic, and indiscreet disciplinary gaze which [plays] out over the entire organization” (Macintosh 1994, p. 226). Its function is extended when, “by means of such surveillance [hierarchical], disciplinary power

[becomes] an ‘integrated’ system, linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it [is] practiced” (Foucault 1995, p. 176).

This technique also functions through “a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network ‘holds’ the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another: supervisors, perpetually supervised” (Foucault 1995, pp. 176-7). “The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery”; regardless of “its pyramidal organization [that] gives it a ‘head’, it is the apparatus as a whole that produces ‘power’ and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field” (Foucault 1995, p. 177).

#### **4.5.3.2.        *Normalisation***

Foucault (1995) states that, “like surveillance and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age” (p. 184). Foucault argues that we live “in a disciplinary society in which social relations are subject to an all-pervasive regime of normalizing<sup>11</sup> discipline” (Cronin 1996, p. 59). “By ‘normalization’, Foucault means a system of finely gradated and measurable intervals in which individuals can be distributed around a norm-anorm which both organizes and is the result of this controlled distribution” (Rabinow 1984, p. 20). In a disciplinary society individuals are assessed “according to a normalizing set of assumptions, or what Foucault calls the ‘carceral network of power-knowledge’” (McNay 1994, p. 94).

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<sup>11</sup> “The norm is a standard of some kind that a multiplicity of individuals must reach and maintain to perform certain tasks” (Ransom 1997, p. 47).

Foucault (1995) states that “the power of the Norm appears through the disciplines”, through which it not only “imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another” (p. 184). McNay (1994) states that “it is this notion of disciplinary power as a normalizing rather than repressive force that lies at the base of Foucault’s assertion that power is a positive phenomenon” (p. 95).

Disciplinary power is concerned “with the normalization of behavior designed to harness the productive and reproductive capacities of the body” (Cronin 1996, p. 58). Under normalisation, “any individual could be treated by the expert professional of a particular discipline as a case study, an object to be measured, described, compared, and judged according to the norms and averages of the general population” (Macintosh 1994, pp. 227-228); in other words, an individual is considered as “a thing to be corrected, normalized, and treated in accordance with the discursive practice of that particular discipline” (p. 228). This way of practice stems from the idea that “control in modern societies is achieved, therefore, not through direct repression but through more invisible strategies of normalization” (McNay 1994, p. 97).

#### ***4.5.3.2.1. Punishment and normalisation***

Punishment, a schema discussed as a factor in normalisation, is a practice that “compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes” (Foucault 1995, p. 183). It “is aimed neither at expiation, nor even precisely at repression” (p. 182). “In discipline, punishment is only one element of a double system: gratification-punishment. And it is this system that operates in the process of training and correction” (p. 180).

Foucault (1995) identifies five functions of punishment:

1. It refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed.
2. It differentiates individuals from one another, in terms of following the overall rule.
3. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level, the 'nature' of individuals.
4. It introduces, through this 'value-giving' measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved.
5. It traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal (pp.182-3).

Foucault (1995) mentions the function of disciplinary punishment as 'reducing gaps' and therefore 'essentially corrective'. He also adds that "the disciplinary systems favour punishments that are exercise-intensified, multiplied forms of training, several times repeated" (p. 179).

#### **4.5.3.3. Examination**

Examination "combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment. It is normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish" (Foucault 1995, p. 184). This technique "establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them" (p. 184). Foucault (1995) states that "the examination opened up two correlative possibilities: firstly, the constitution of the individual as a describable, analyzable object" (p. 190) and "[secondly,] the constitution of a comparative system that made possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterization of collective facts, the

calculation of the gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given ‘population’” (p. 210). He adds that “the practice of placing people under observation is a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures” (Foucault 1995, p. 227).

Foucault (1995) refers to the structure of examination: the combination of “the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth” (p. 184). This technique is also connected to the power/knowledge concept through its mechanism “that [links] to a certain type of the formation of knowledge a certain form of the exercise of power” (p. 187). Power within examination, “instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects” (p. 187). With regard to individuals, “the examination is at the centre of the procedures that constitute the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge” (p. 192), and “places individuals in a field of surveillance” (p. 189).

Examination “also situates [individuals] in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them” (Foucault 1995, p. 189). Foucault refers to the ‘power of writing’ “as an essential part in the mechanisms of discipline”, which “was modeled on the traditional methods of administrative documentation, though with particular techniques and important innovations. Some concerned methods of identification, signaling or description” (p. 189).

#### **4.5.4. The paradigm of panopticism**

Foucault's paradigm of panopticism is greatly affected by 'Bentham's Panopticon', which he introduces as follows:

Bentham's Panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy (Foucault 1995, p. 200).

It is not just the architectural design that strikes Foucault; rather the concept beneath it contributes to the concepts of Foucauldian power and discipline and "automatizes and disindividualizes power" (Foucault 1995, p. 202). Foucault (1995) understands the panopticon "as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men" (p. 205).

The panopticon "laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable": visible because the individual "will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon" and unverifiable because the individual "must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault 1995, p. 201). In panopticism, "power rested less on direct control of the body and more on techniques designed to elicit 'self-regulation' as people

began to act as if they were being observed” (Savage 1998, p. 68). In addition, the panopticon is considered as a laboratory that “could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals” (Foucault 1995, p. 203).

The panopticon is “about efficiency, transparency and legitimacy as much as surveillance” (McKinlay & Pezet 2009, p. 2) that aims “to strengthen the social forces to increase production, to develop the economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality; to increase and multiply” (Foucault 1995, pp. 207-8).

#### **4.6. VAN DIJK**

Van Dijk<sup>12</sup> advocates an approach called critical discourse studies (CDS), which he believes expands CDA, as it “emphasize[s] that critical study is not a readymade ‘method’ of analysis, but also has theoretical and applied dimensions” (Van Dijk 2009b). “CDS scholars are typically interested in the way discourse (re)produces social *domination*, that is, the *power abuse* of one group over others, and how dominated groups may discursively *resist* such abuse” (Van Dijk 2009a, p. 63, all emphases in the original text). Van Dijk states “CDS is not a method, but rather a critical *perspective, position* or *attitude* within the discipline of multidisciplinary Discourse Studies” (Van Dijk 2009a, p. 62, emphasis in the original text) which aims “to analyse, and thus to contribute to the understanding and the solution of, serious social problems, especially those that are caused or exacerbated by

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<sup>12</sup> Teun Adrianus van Dijk (1943- ) is a scholar in discourse analysis and CDA (the linguistic approach). “After earlier work on generative poetics, text grammar, and the psychology of text processing, his work since 1980 takes a more critical perspective and deals with discursive racism, news in the press, ideology, knowledge and context. He is the author of several books in most of these areas, and he edited *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (4 vols., 1985) the introductory book *Discourse Studies* (2 vols., 1997; new one-volume edition, 2011) as well as the reader *The Study of Discourse* (5 vols., 2007). He founded 6 international journals, *Poetics*, *Text* (now *Text & Talk*), *Discourse & Society*, *Discourse Studies*, *Discourse & Communication* and the internet journal in Spanish *Discurso & Sociedad* (www.dissoc.org), of which he still edits the latter four” (Discourses, 2009).



public text and talk, such as various forms of social power abuse (domination) and their resulting social inequality” (Van Dijk 2009a, p. 63).

Van Dijk’s major works concern discourse. In these he implements a multidisciplinary approach and conducts research in various fields where discourse is applicable, including discourse and racism, ideology and discourse, and knowledge and discourse. He also has “contributed to the formulation of the aims and nature of CDS as a movement of socially and politically concerned scholars in the field of discourse studies and related fields” (Van Dijk 2009b). Van Dijk also labels his approach as ‘sociocognitive’: “it only means that (at present) I am personally most interested in the fascinating sociocognitive interface of discourse, that is, the relations between mind, discursive interaction and society” (Van Dijk 2009a, p. 65). On the other hand, Van Dijk acknowledges the complexities of the issues CDS deals with and recognises other approaches, noting that the “label of ‘sociocognitive’ approach does not mean that I think that CDS should be limited to the social and cognitive study of discourse, or to some combination of these dimensions” (Van Dijk 2009a, p. 65).

Van Dijk’s specific area of study is “the integration of social and cognitive approaches to discourse and critical analysis”; he acknowledges that “CDS deals with social problems and issues that have both a social and a cognitive dimension”. Furthermore, “[d]iscourse, thus is at the interface of the social and the cognitive: It is itself a social practice, but at the same time it is the major way we acquire ideologies” (Van Dijk 2009b). The organisational work Van Dijk does to promote CDS includes: editing the journal *Discourse & Society*, and

being on the board of the Centres for Research Into Texts, Information and Communication in Society (CRITICS) discussion list on the Internet, an initiative of the international CRITICS Foundation (Van Dijk 2009b).

#### **4.7. FOUCAULDIAN POWER**

“One crucial presupposition of adequate critical discourse analysis is understanding the nature of social power and dominance” (Van Dijk 1993, p. 254) (this is discussed below). “[S]ince discourse is so socially influential, it gives rise to important issues of power” (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, p. 258).

The concept of power in Foucault’s work is not considered ‘theory’. Foucault states, “I am not developing a theory of power” (Foucault 1988a, p. 39). And, “[W]hat is power? is obviously a theoretical question that would provide an answer to everything, which is just what I don’t want to do” (Foucault 2003, p. 13).

Foucault sees the need for “a political philosophy that isn’t erected around the problem of sovereignty, nor therefore around the problems of law and prohibition. We need to cut off the king’s head: in political theory that has still to be done” (Foucault 1980c, p. 121). Kerr (1999) elaborates: “as Foucault appears to equate the monarchy with sovereignty and with the state, then the beheading of the king implies that the state must be marginalized in the study of power” (p. 180). In Foucault’s work, “beheading the king’ means doing so ‘historically and therefore also conceptually” (Kerr 1999, p. 186). In fact, Foucault’s view of power “involve[s] a shift from a substantive conception of power as invested in, and exercised by and over, subjects to a relational view of power as a function of a network of

relations between subjects” (Cronin 1996, p. 57). In other words, Foucault “thinks of power as a complex flow-a set of relations between different groups, which changes with circumstances and time” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 87).

#### **4.7.1. Characteristics of Foucauldian Power**

Foucault sees power as an ever-changing flow that “moves around and through different groups, events, institutions and individuals, but nobody owns it” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, pp. 80, 73). However, “certain people or groups have greater opportunities to influence how the forces of power are played out” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 73) and “the way in which this flow moves around depends very much on how different groups, institutions and discourses negotiate, relate to and compete with one another” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 80). However, Foucault “does not wish to see the relations between institutions and individuals as being one only of oppression and constraint. Rather, he has led to a focus within much critical theory on the resistance which is possible in power relations” (Mills 2003, p. 50). In fact, Foucault does not assume that individuals are powerless; “thus, his analysis of power has set in motion an entirely new way of examining power relations in society, focusing more on resistance than simple passive oppression” (Mills 2003, p. 52). His way of examining power also leads him to view “power relations as largely unsuccessful, as not achieving the goal of total domination” (Mills 2003, p. 47).

The distinguishing point in Foucault’s opinion of power is that he sees it as “productive, something which brings about forms of behaviour and events rather than simply curtailing freedom and constraining individuals” (Mills 2003, p. 36) and “as an essentially positive force which permeates all levels of society, engendering a multiplicity of relations other than those simply of domination” (McNay 1994, p. 90).

Foucault replaces the idea of power as something that can be possessed with the idea of power as “a strategy, something which someone does or performs in a particular context” (Mills 2003, p. 35), which “does not act on others in a direct and immediate way...[but]...acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future” (Foucault 1982, p. 220). Foucault examines “the way that power operates within everyday relations between people and institutions” (Mills 2003, p. 33).

Jamrozik (1982) refers to the presence of power in social welfare: “the issue of power in social welfare services is always present because of the function of social control these services perform” where “the providers of welfare services have four kinds of power: legal power, administrative power, moral (that is social and psychological) power, and the power of knowledge” (p. 3) and “the relation between social-welfare recipients and providers of welfare services is a power relationship” (Jamrozik 1982, p. 1).

Van Dijk (1997a) defines the term ‘social power’ as “a specific *relation between social groups* or institutions” (p. 17, emphasis in the original text). He mentions “various patterns of sharing, negotiating, colluding with, and hence dividing power among powerful groups”, and states, “as soon as others (opponents, dissidents) acquire partial access to public discourse, they will also acquire at least some counter-power” (Van Dijk 1997a, p. 23). The upcoming sections explore the relevant concepts to idea of Foucauldian power which brings the whole idea of power together.

#### 4.7.2. Biopower

Biopower is an expansion of Foucault's concept of power which he developed in *The Will To Knowledge*, Foucault's first volume of *The History of Sexuality*<sup>13</sup>. In this book "the mechanisms of power are addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate" (Foucault 1980e, p. 147). Biopower is referenced in this chapter as it is an aspect of power initiated by Foucault, and in a way it completes Foucault's idea of power as a whole. However, as this research applies the idea of power developed in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, biopower has not been used in its analysis.

Foucault believes power "acts on everybody-the dominant as well as the dominated...everybody is, to some extent, the product of biopower...even the most dominant of groups or individuals in a state or culture ... are 'written' by various institutional contexts, ideas and discourses" (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 74). Foucault considers the point that "people are themselves produced by and subject to, the forces of biopower" (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 74). "The basic idea of biopower is to produce self-regulating subjects. In other words, once our bodies and minds have been formed and formulated in particular ways, we then take it upon ourselves to make sure that we function in these ways, and remain good, healthy subjects" (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 75).

Biopower exists relative to two poles. "One pole is the human species. For the first time in history, scientific categories (species, population, fertility, and so forth), rather than juridical ones, become the object of systematic, sustained political attention and

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<sup>13</sup> This term initially was used by Foucault in his lectures (*Security, Territory, Population; and Society Must Be Defended*) in the Collège de France between 1975-1978.

intervention”. And the second pole “is the human body: the body approached not directly in its biological dimension, but as an object to be manipulated and controlled” (Rabinow 1984, p. 17). Biopower includes technologies “used for analysing, controlling, regulating and defining the human body and its behaviour” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 64). Human sciences are considered the developmental source of biopower, and discipline is considered as a biopower technology (Danaher *et al.* 2000).

#### **4.7.3. Power/Knowledge**

The power/knowledge is a common concept in Foucauldian power literature. Knowledge is considered one of the three ‘major Foucauldian themes’ (the other two being power and subjectivity) (Danaher *et al.* 2000). Foucault does not intend to define knowledge any more than he intends to define power; rather, he writes, “the very fact that I pose the question of their relation proves clearly that I do not identify them” (Foucault 1988a, p. 43). Foucault makes the distinction between these two concepts: “power dominates people, but knowledge-that is, the truth-sets people free” and calls it the ‘repressive hypothesis’ of power (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 63). Foucault believes in the unique status of each of these paradigms, stating “while power and knowledge imply each other, one cannot be *reduced* to the other” (Ransom 1997, pp. 23-24, emphasis in the original text).

On the other hand, Foucault believes in the integration of power and knowledge, and says, “there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power” (Foucault 1980a, p. 52). He believes that truth is the product of both the power and knowledge paradigms, between which he draws various relationships. “Power produces

knowledge and knowledge is used to select techniques of power, and to implement the chosen techniques in practices” (Foucault 1977, p. 27).

The other point of integration between power and knowledge relates to ‘poles of knowledge’. Kendall and Wickham (1999) refer to two poles of knowledge: the ‘sayable’ and the ‘visible’; these constitute knowledge where “power relations serve to make the[se] connections...between the visible and the sayable...yet they [power relations] exist outside these poles” (p. 37). Foucault (1989b) believes that notion of power/knowledge is omnipresent and the only possible way is move from one regime of power/knowledge to another. His view is that “we should learn to exercise power ‘with a minimum of domination”” (Dean 2010, p. 47).

#### **4.7.4. Resistance**

Resistance is another concept connected with the idea of power: Foucault (1978) points out that the two are inseparable. Macintosh (1994) states that “resistance, except in situations of great crisis, occurs in the immediate vicinity of the exercise of power” (p. 241). He defines ‘transversal’ resistance as “the idea that the same kind of struggles takes place across institutions and organizations” (p. 241).

#### **4.7.5. Foucauldian Power and Governmentality**

Foucault (2007) addresses three forms of power: sovereignty, discipline and governmental management. He says this power ‘triangle’ “has population as its main target and

apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism” (p. 108). Sovereign power<sup>14</sup> in governmentality is referred to as power “exercised through the juridical and executive arms of the state. It is exercised over subjects” (Dean 2010, p. 29). In contrast, discipline is the “exercise of power over and through the individual, the body and its forces and capacities, and the composition of aggregates of human individuals” (Dean 2010, p. 29).

The governmentality approach emphasises the ‘discourses of rule’; views power as a top-down concept; and sees power as ‘positive and productive’ (Kerr 1999). Under the governmentality concept, “some form of government (and power) will always be necessary to control and constitute society” (Kerr 1999, p. 194), and power is “a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised...power is...a machinery that no one owns” (Foucault 1980b, p. 156). A study of governmentality “regards the exercise of power and authority as anything but self-evident and in need of considerable analytical resources” (Dean 2010, p. 16).

#### **4.7.5.1.        *Aspects of Governmentality***

Goddard (2010) notes the dominant position of governmentality in the investigation of power, and states that it contributes to an “immeasurably more nuanced and informative account of how power operates in modern societies than critical models focusing on making normative distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate uses of power” (p. 358). Similarly, Lemke (2002) says that governmentality “links technologies of the self with

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<sup>14</sup>“The object of sovereign power is the exercise of authority over the subjects of the state within a definite territory ... [and] the object of disciplinary power is the regulation and ordering of the numbers of people within that territory” (Dean 2010, p. 29).



technologies of domination, the constitution of the subject to the formation of the state; and finally, it helps to differentiate between power and domination”<sup>15</sup> (p. 51).

Scholars have noted many aspects of governmentality:

- Foucault’s concept of governmentality is based on his analysis of power (Foucault 1980a).
- Governmentality is concerned with “a particular regime of government that takes as its object ‘the population’”<sup>16</sup> (Dean 2010, p. 28).
- Governmentality “does not juxtapose politics and knowledge, but articulates a ‘political knowledge’” (Foucault 1997a, p. 67).
- Governmentality “construes neo-liberalism not just as ideological rhetoric or as a political-economic reality, but above all as a political project that endeavours to create a social reality that it suggests already exists” (Lemke 2001, p. 203).
- Governmentality “offer[s] no reasons why policy-makers should act in one way rather than another, since they refrain from normative judgments and thus have no way of justifying one course of action over another” (Goddard 2010, p. 354).
- “The concept of governmentality also proves to be useful in correcting the diagnosis of neoliberalism” (Lemke 2002, p. 57).

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<sup>15</sup> “Domination refers to those asymmetrical relationships of power in which the subordinated persons have little room for manoeuvre because their ‘margin of liberty is extremely limited’” (Lemke 2002, p. 53).

<sup>16</sup> “Population is not ‘discovered’ but defined and constructed as an object to be governed” (Foucault 2008, p. 103) and “this definition of a population is the first act of government” (McKinlay & Pezet 2010, p. 487).

- Governmentality provides “a dynamic form of analysis that does not limit itself to stating the ‘retreat of politics’ or the ‘domination of the market,’ but deciphers the so-called end of politics itself as a political program” (Lemke 2002, p. 57).
- “In the perspective of governmentality, we are always obliged to reflect on the historical and social conditions that rendered a certain historical knowledge of society” (Lemke 2002, p. 61).
- ‘Governmentality studies need to be aware of how governing occurs through a wide range of the capacities and attributes of economic, social and collective actors’ (Dean 2010, p. 262).
- Governmentality “involves the management of populations...[and] by remaining at a distance the state is able to measure its efficacy and to maintain the separation from the individual essential for its legitimacy” (McKinlay & Pezet 2010, p. 487).

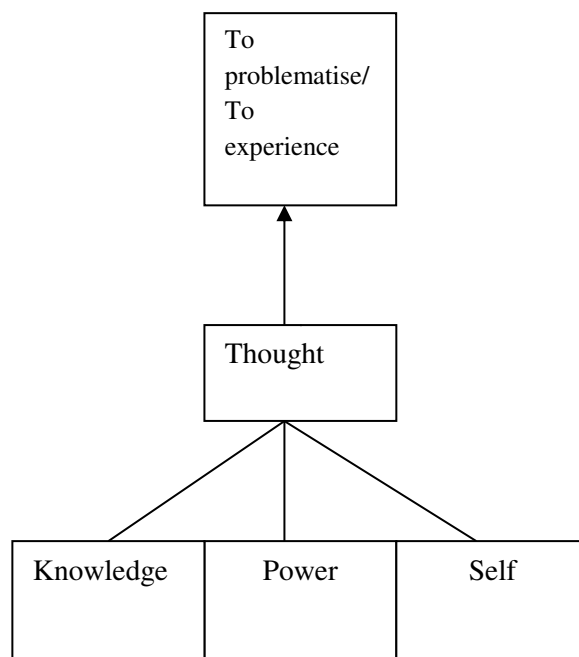
#### **4.7.5.2.        *Problematization***

Problematization is the starting point for conducting a governmentality study. According to Foucault, problematization can be conducted on “rules and institutions that have reified the substance of daily life” (Kritzman 1988a, p. xxv). The problem Foucault approaches in his work “deals with the relations between experiences ... knowledge...and power” (Foucault 1988b, p. 71). Similarly, Martin *et al.* (1988, p. 15) mention three traditional problems studied by Foucault: “(1) the relations we have to truth through scientific knowledge,... (2) the relationships we have to others through those strange strategies and power relationships,... [and] (3) the relationships between truth, power, and self” (Martin *et al.* 1988, p. 15).

The current study concerns itself more with the second type, examining the co-accountability relationship between the government and welfare-payment recipients. Several elements contribute to the structure of problematisation. Foucault states that “to think is to experience, to problematize. Knowledge, power and the self are the triple foundation of thought” (Deleuze 1986, p. 124).

Figure 4.3 demonstrates these relationships:

**Figure 4.3:** Problematisation diagram



*Source:* Based on Deleuze 1986

#### **4.7.5.3.        *Government in Governmentality***

Foucault defines government within the framework of governmentality as ‘conduct of conduct’. This phrase may mean various things. One is “to lead, to direct or to guide, and perhaps implies some sort of calculation as to how this is to be done” (Dean 2010, p. 16). In a broad sense the conduct of conduct means “the more or less deliberate attempt to shape the actions of others or of oneself” (Dean 2010, p. 250), which involves “the government of acts and things, of processes and conditions, and of existing forms of government and self-government” (p. 251). Lemke (2002) also notes, “Foucault defines government as conduct, or, more precisely, as ‘the conduct of conduct’ and thus as a term that ranges from ‘governing the self’ to ‘governing others’” (p. 50).

Conduct has a second meaning that is relevant to this study: ‘to conduct oneself’. Here the focus is on self-direction, which is suitable in a specific situation; for example, at home, with friends, in business (Dean 2010). The third meaning of conduct refers to “our behaviours, our actions and even our comportment, i.e. the articulated set of our behaviours” (Dean 2010, p. 16).

McNay (1994) acknowledges the importance of government, as “it alters the previous notion of disciplinary power, introducing greater differentiation between relations of force and consent, between an act of violence and the actions of free individuals” (p. 165). He believes this notion has enabled Foucault “to explain the complex and subtle nature of modern methods of social control: government without direct intervention” (p. 166). Dean (2010) identifies three forms of government within the governmentality framework: house holding (*Oeconomia*) and dispositional government, liberal and social forms of government and reflexive forms of government. These forms of governments are regarded as “frames

within which governing occurs...[they] enable us to distinguish two trajectories and sets of processes that lend intelligibility to present forms of rule and authority. These are the governmentalization of the state and the governmentalization of government” (p. 252).

Foucault (1991) specifies that the aim of government is to influence the actions of others through tactics and procedures. Dean (2010) expands on this, addressing two implications of government. The first implication “involves some sort of attempt to deliberate on and to direct *human* conduct”<sup>17</sup> (p. 18, emphasis in the original text). And the second implication is in relation to the term ‘rational’ and that “to bring *any* form of rationality<sup>18</sup> to the calculation about how to govern” (p. 18, emphasis in the original text).

Dean (2010) identifies government as a ‘moral’ activity within the area of governmentality. “Notions of morality<sup>19</sup> and ethics generally rest on an idea of self-government” (p. 19). Morality is where “government extends to cover the way in which an individual questions his or her own conduct (or *problematizes*) so that he or she may be better able to govern it” (p. 19, emphasis in the original text). Even though “government is intensely moral in that it seeks to engage with how both the ‘governed’ and ‘governors’ regulate themselves” (p. 19), government as a conduct of conduct presupposes the freedom of the governed, as well as

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<sup>17</sup> “From the perspective of those who seek to govern, human conduct is conceived as something that can be regulated, controlled, shaped and turned to specific ends” (Dean 2010, p. 18).

<sup>18</sup> “Rationality is simply any form of thinking which strives to be relatively clear, systematic and explicit about aspects of ‘external’ or ‘internal’ existence, about how things are or how they ought to be” (Dean 2010, p. 19).

<sup>19</sup> Morality is an “attempt to make oneself accountable for one’s own actions, or as a practice in which human beings take their own conduct to be subject to self-regulation, then government is an intensely moral activity” (Dean 2010, p. 19).

those who govern, in their acting and thinking. This assumption also means “that when we govern ourselves and others we exercise our capacities for thinking” (p. 24).

Foucault discusses the rationality of state power in relation to government: governmentality towards the state is governmentality that “defines the nature and function of the state, not vice versa” (Kerr 1999, p. 189). Foucault formulates the rationality of state power into two doctrines: the *reason of state* and the *theory of police* (Foucault 1988b). In describing the reason of state, Foucault attempts to distinguish “the differences between principles and methods of state government and governing principles and methods of religion, household and community” (Foucault 1988b, p. 74). It is described as “an ‘art’; that is, a technique conforming to certain rules” (Foucault 1988b, p. 74), and as “the rationale that elevates state interests over those of the individual” (Ransom 1997, p. 62).

On the other hand, “the idea of the ‘police’ denotes a cluster of apparatuses of security that are central to the governmental techniques of the modern state” (McNay 1994, p. 119), which “defines the nature of the objects of the state’s rational activity; it defines the nature of the aims it pursues the general form of the instruments involved” (Foucault 1988b, p. 74). It is “an institution or mechanism functioning within the state” (Foucault 1988b, p. 77), the aim of which “is to foster both citizens’ lives and the state’s strength as they both entail each other” (Kerr 1999, p. 186). Foucault also mentions pastoral power as the opposite of state power; it “is directly concerned with the welfare of the individuals” (Ransom 1997, p. 64). Pastoral power is different to reason of state: with the latter, “the vigor of the state is the desired end, with services for individuals expended as a means to that end”; but with pastoral power, “the well-being of the individual is what is anticipated, with the state

viewed only as a more or less adequate environment in which to pursue this goal” (Ransom 1997, pp. 64-65).

Even though state power and pastoral power are opposite, reason of state has “produced the need for a civil society which would both criticise the effectiveness and necessity of the development of state policies of intervention and regulation and, in certain instances, replace it” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 92). In fact, “these differing interests often manage to reach agreement” (Ransom 1997, p. 63).

In fact, Foucault believes in the reconciliation of state power and pastoral power, which is accomplished through ‘the art of government’. The art of government “is essentially concerned with answering the question of how to introduce economy—that is to say, the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family” in a way “to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family into the management of the state” (Foucault 1991, p. 92).

The role of the ‘art of government’ is “to define the proper scope and limits of government, how much governing the state should do and how much should be left up to, or in partnership with, other agencies” (Dean 2010, p. 263). The art of government views governing as “an activity that requires craft, imagination, shrewd fashioning, the use of tacit skills and practical know-how, the employment of intuition and so on” (Dean 2010, p. 28). Gordon (1991) points out that “Foucault use[s] the term ‘rationality of government’ almost interchangeably with ‘art of government’. He was interested in government<sup>20</sup> as an activity

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<sup>20</sup> Government is “an activity that undertakes to conduct individuals throughout their lives by placing them under the authority of a guide responsible for what they do and for what happens to them” (Foucault 1997d, p. 67).

or practice, and in arts of government as ways of knowing what that activity consisted in, and how it might be carried on” (p. 3). Foucault himself defines the rationality of government as “a way or system of thinking about the nature of the practice of government...capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced” (Gordon 1991, p. 3).

Foucault addresses government within the framework of governmentality as a ‘utopian activity’, regardless of its being extremely bureaucratic or market-inspired. He asserts that it “presupposes a better world, society, way of doing things or way of living” (Dean 2010, p. 45), that it is possible for government to reach its desired outcomes and that “there can be a match between the outcomes and intentions of policies. This implies that it is possible to re-form human beings, to form or shape them or their attributes in some way, and that our exertions can be effective in this regard” (Dean 2010, p. 44).

#### **4.8. Foucault and Liberalism**

“For Foucault, the art of government finds its first crystallization in the theme of *raison d’état*, or ‘reason of state’” (Kerr 1999, p. 185), in which, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, governmentality set the art of government free from *raison d’état* (Foucault 1991), and “[government] comes to express itself in the form of liberalism” (Kerr 1999, p. 185). In Foucault’s view, liberalism “emerges out of the relationship between governmental, legal and economic contexts” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 95). “Liberalism uses the market...as the means of limiting or shutting out government intervention...liberalism attempts to make use of the law to regulate government out of society” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 93). For Foucault, “liberal thought is treated as an exemplary model of the dilemma that lies at the



heart of the problem of social control in modern societies, namely the possibility of government without intervention” (McNay 1994, p. 132).

Liberalism is seen “as a form of reflection on governmental practice” (Dupont & Pearce 2001, p. 132). It is also viewed “as a philosophy based on the ‘rule of law’ and the protection of individual rights and freedom against the unnecessary encroachments of the state” (Dean 2010, pp. 61-62). Foucault (2008) identifies the relationship of individuals (the governed) and liberalism as one where the governed are the element that contributes to the governmental wisdom of liberalism, and liberalism as a way of governing that “conceive[s] the freedom of the governed as a technical means of securing the ends of government” (Dean 2010, p. 24).

There are two main differences between Foucault’s work and the more broadly accepted characteristics of liberalism:

First, Foucault’s assertion that power and freedom are inextricably mixed differs fundamentally from the liberal view that places power and freedom in opposition.... [The second is] in the conceptualization of the individual. Although the work on government relies on terms such as the free individual and will, they cannot be conflated with corresponding liberal notions...[as] Foucault still understands the individual as an effect of power relations.... [In his view] individuals are the vehicles of power (McNay 1994, pp. 130-131).

According to the notion of governmentality, “every liberal state is a failing state since it can only fail to satisfy ever-rising expectations of economic growth, security and well-being and individual freedom” (McKinlay & Pezet 2010, p. 488). Dean (2010) identifies ‘the social’ as a set of solutions within governmentality framework for liberal government, (including: economical, legal, expertise and administrative). “Yet, at the same time, the

social threatens and will ultimately take liberal government beyond its founding images of society” (p. 66). Foucault (1989a) views liberalism as an instrument of critique “which can be turned against the previous forms of government it tries to distinguish itself from, the actual forms it seeks to reform, rationalize and exhaustively review, and the potential forms it opposes and whose abuses it wishes to limit” (p. 113).

#### ***4.9. Governmentality and Neo-liberalism***

Liberalism can be divided into many sub-types, including “classical liberalism, economic liberalism, social liberalism, welfare liberalism, [and] neo-liberalism (itself taking several versions)” (Dean 2010, p. 65). NPM is a version of neo-liberalism that formed the framework of the Howard government’s policies to initiate and implement public-sector reforms, and, in particular, welfare reforms.

Discussions of governmentality have used “‘neo-liberalism’ and ‘advanced liberal government’ as a frame in which to understand contemporary techniques and rationalities of government” (Dean 2010, p. 261). Neo-liberalism and the ‘managing [action] at distance’ concept of governmentality share three commonalities: “to shrink the state, to withdraw from direct economic management, and to managerialise public provision” (McKinlay & Pezet 2010, p. 489).

Lemke (2001) identifies neo-liberalism as a ‘political rationality’ that attempts to “link a reduction in (welfare) state services and security systems to the increasing call for ‘personal responsibility’ and ‘self-care’” (p. 203). The main feature of this rationality is “to achieve between a responsible and moral individual and an economic-rational actor” (Lemke 2001, p. 201).

Furthermore, “the naïveté of neo-liberalism is that the boundary between the public sector and the market economy can be dissolved and that government can occur without a centre or that the centre can be reduced to a set of indirect measures of surveillance” (Dean 2010, p. 259).

The position of neo-liberalism in relation to classical political economy is that “the latter emphasises ‘real estate, capital and labour’ in the production of goods, while the former emphasises only real estate and capital, giving a ‘passive production factor’ to labour” (Lemke 2001, p. 198).

Foucauldians such as Rose (1996) and Miller and Rose (1993) believe that “the latest form of governmentality: neoliberalism, has almost completed the process of perfecting the system of positive power and has furthered its externalization from, and marginalization of, the state” (Kerr 1999, pp. 193-194).

Neo-liberalism “develop[s] indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them” (Lemke 2001, p. 201). Holding individuals responsible also “entails shifting the responsibility for social risks such as illness, unemployment, poverty, etc. and for life in society into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of ‘self-care’” (p. 201).

#### ***4.10. US NEO-LIBERALISM (CHICAGO SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS)***

The Chicago School<sup>21</sup> of Economics is a system of economic thought developed half a century ago by scholars from the University of Chicago (Emmett 2010). Emmet (2010) distinguishes the Chicago School of Economics from other schools in that “the Chicago School understood economics to be an applied policy science, and, with some exceptions, have not been afraid to suggest that their scientific findings had relevance to policy debate” (p. 1). However, he notes “in the popular literature, most discussion of the Chicago School is focused on its ‘normative’ or ‘ideological’ character...as a promoter of laissez-faire, of market-based solutions to public policy problems, and for its connections to the Reagan, Thatcher and even Pinochet governments” (Emmet 2010, p. 1). Having said that neo-liberalism is a promoter of market principles, Van Horn and Mirowski (2010) identify the connection of this school with neo-liberalism, in that the purpose of the Chicago School “was not so much to revive a dormant classical liberalism, as it was to forge a neoliberalism better suited to modern conditions” (p. 196).

Three dominant forms of criticism of neoliberal practices are:

First, neoliberalism is treated as a manipulative ‘wrong knowledge’ of society and economy that must be replaced by a right or emancipatory- which means scientific or ‘impartial’-knowledge ....

Second, critics see in neoliberalism the extension of economy into the domain of politics, the triumph of capitalism over the state, the globalization that escapes the political regulations of the nation-state....

The third line of criticism is leveled against the destructive effects of neoliberalism on individuals (Lemke 2002, p. 54).

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<sup>21</sup> The Chicago School of Economics is “a common set of assumptions-methodological and theoretical-about the discipline [economics] developed by the economists at the University of Chicago, who sought through their teaching and research to enrich, extend and promote their vision of economic science” (Emmett 2010, p. 1).

Lemke (2002), however, does not agree with the way neo-liberalism is criticised, and notes that “the main problem is that they [critics] undertake a critique of neoliberalism by relying on the very concepts they intend to criticize. They operate by opposing knowledge to power, state to economy, subject to repression” (p. 54). Instead, he mentions the way Foucauldian governmentality criticises neoliberalism: “by coupling forms of knowledge, strategies of power, and technologies of the self, it allows for a more comprehensive account of the current political and social transformations since it makes visible the depth and breadth of processes of domination and exploitation” (Lemke 2002, p. 54).

#### ***4.11. WELFARE REFORM AND FOUCAULDIAN GOVERNMENTALITY***

Foucault addresses three points in regards to the system of social guarantees (social welfare). Although he is considering the specific case of France, they more or less apply to all developed countries:

- [social welfare] is now coming up against economic obstacles that are only too familiar
- this system is now reaching its limits, as it comes up against the political, economic, and social rationality of modern societies
- [it] has also had ‘perverse effects’: an increasing rigidity of certain mechanisms and a growth in dependence. (Foucault 1988f, p. 160)

These factors open the way for market-inspired government services. Dean (2010) refers to the role of the market in reconfiguring of social welfare, where “individuals as consumers will make choices, and in which, so the story goes, provision is tailored to their needs” (p. 258). Furthermore, the establishment of “new systems of responsiveness and social

accountability” emphasises “the partnership of government with active citizens and engaged communities within civil society” (p. 263).

One notion inherent in the governmentality approach is ‘apparatuses of security’, which the government implements as instruments that “include all the practices and institutions that ensure the optimal and proper functioning of the economic, vital and social processes that are found to exist within that population and would thus also include health, welfare and education systems” (Dean 2010, p. 29). Foucault’s prediction that the government would take a neo-liberalist form was accurate for almost all Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. These governments implement various instruments of reform, importing techniques from the private sector (apparatuses of security) to adhere to the rationality of neo-liberalism.

The Howard government endorsed reforms to the Australian welfare system and introduced MO; “[p]roponents [of MO] argue that the policy is fair and reasonable, because it has its origins in liberal democratic philosophical traditions” (Kinnear 2002, p. 250). “The Howard government has drawn on both market liberal and new paternalist ideas ... [where] the market liberal focus on the value of self-reliance has combined with a new paternalist focus on enforcing citizenship obligations” (Sawer 2006, p. 5). The Howard government’s view was that achieving a better system of social welfare was possible through contributions and efforts by the government on one hand, and by recipients’ social and economic participation on the other. This is in line with the definition of “government as the ‘conduct of conduct’ [which] is to open up the examination of self-government or cases in which governor and governed are two aspects of the one actor” (Dean 2010, p. 19).

The Howard government legislated the requirements and accountability of both sides including “a set of standards or norms of conduct by which actual behaviour can be judged, and which act as a kind of ideal towards which individuals and groups should strive” (Dean 2010, pp. 17-18). Prior to legislating for welfare reform, the Howard government initiated a series of consultations and reviews with members of the community (McClure 2000a). This is in line with Foucault’s assertion that governing people “is not a way to force people to do what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself” (Foucault 1993, p. 204).

#### ***4.12. CONCLUSION***

This chapter addressed one of the weaknesses of Foucauldian analysis: the lack of a clear methodology. It was also noted, however, that this weakness also provides an opportunity for researchers to choose their own methods to suit their research. This study has used the Foucault idea of discipline and the analysis and work of Van Dijk (1993) as its framework within which to develop discourse, and to examine the structure of discourse, which is an important process in exploring the existence of dominance. The application of this framework also reflects on the communication relationships in the process of subjugation, where ‘regulated communication’ (which in the case of this study is the public documents) will be examined in terms of the relationship as well as the structure of the discourse of mutual obligation (Chapter 6). However, prior to examining this regulated communication within the context of WTW, it is important to clarify the sources used in this study, what this study means by public documents and the process of selecting sources; these are addressed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONSIDERATION OF DISCOURSE, TEXT AND CONTEXT, AND TWOFOLD RESEARCH TOOL METHOD IN MUTUAL OBLIGATION

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

Two methods are applied in this research. The first is based on Van Dijk (1993); the second is the disciplinary map based on Foucault's book, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995). The reason for adopting these two methods is based on Foucault's view of subjugation (Chapter 4). Foucault believed that two types of relationships-communicative and power-are evident in institutions, which play a role in the process of subjugation. Centrelink is such an institution, and plays a role in the subjugation of Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients in the discourse of mutual obligation (MO). Within the discourse of MO, the Australian government (through Centrelink) implements

a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the 'value' of each person and of the levels of knowledge) and a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy) (Foucault 1983, pp. 218-219).

To examine the communicative relationships in MO discourse, Van Dijk's (1993) framework is applied to public documents (Appendix 5) to extract the 'regulated communication' in regard to MO discourse. This chapter specifies the public documents considered in this study and provides an examination technique in the selection of its text. To investigate the power relationships in the subjugation of PPS recipients, the disciplinary map (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3) is used. Furthermore, the discourse and contexts of this study are identified.



## **5.2. CHARACTERISTICS AND DEFINITION OF DISCOURSE**

Discourse has been defined and characterized in various ways. Van Dijk (1997c, pp. 1-2) identifies discourse as “spoken language or ways of speaking”, and as “ideas or philosophies”. He expands his discussion by distinguishing three main dimensions of discourse: “a) language use, b) the communication of beliefs (cognition), and c) interaction in social situations”, which involve the corresponding disciplines of “linguistics, psychology and the social sciences” (p. 2).

Van Dijk (1997b, p. 24) introduces three approaches to discourse: “a) those which focus on *discourse* ‘itself’, that is on structures of text or talk; b) those which study discourse and communication as *cognition*; and c) those which focus on social *structure and culture* [emphasis in the original text]”. He refers to this as the ‘triangle of discourse-cognition-society’, where application of one approach does not necessarily mean avoiding/rejecting the other approaches; “on the contrary, the analysis of discourse as ongoing, social action also focuses on order [process approach] and organization [structure approach]” (Van Dijk 1997b, p. 2). Fairclough (2005) states, “a *discourse* is a particular way of representing certain parts or aspects of the (physical, social, psychological) world” (p. 925, emphasis in the original text). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) note that “discourse can be interpreted in very different ways, due to the audience and the amount of context information which is included” (p. 278); this indicates the extent of the discourse.

Various and unstandardised definitions of discourse provided by scholars have led to confusion. In addition, “we cannot help sometimes feeling that the word discourse is used to cover up muddled thinking or postponed decisions on vital analytical matter as often is the case with popular words and areas” (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000, p. 1128). To

overcome this issue, Leitch and Palmer (2010) suggest defining the key terms in a research, including ‘discourse’, to provide an indication of what specific definition of discourse is applicable; this could also indicate the position of the research in relation to assumptions about ontology and epistemology.

Foucault brings discourse close to statements where he defines discourse as “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (Foucault 1989b, p. 90). Statements here are related to each other in a way that they can replace each other and have a common context (Danaher *et al.* 2000). In Foucault’s view, “not everyone is able to make statements, or to have statements taken seriously by others. Some statements are more authorized than others, in that they are more associated with those in positions of power or with institutions” (Mills 2003, p. 65). The discourse considered in this research is MO. MO is made up of statements (welfare-reform legislation) produced by the government; moreover, the production is “controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures” (Foucault 1981, p. 52) (Chapter 6).

This study uses two specific definitions of discourse. The first is Foucault’s: “a discourse can...be understood as a series of events. Discursive practices occur at a particular time, and are like events in that they create effects within a discursive field” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 34). This definition is relevant in the examination of MO discourse in relation to a specific set of welfare reform events initiated in Australia under Welfare to Work (WTW) (2006).

The second definition applied in this research relates to context and the social aspect: “Discourses are a structural part of their contexts and their respective structures mutually and continually influence each other” (Van Dijk 1997b, p. 15). Further, “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between, people and groups of people” (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, p. 258). Foucault is also “interested in analysing discourse as an impersonal system which exceeds the individual” (Mills 2003, pp. 65-66). This concept views MO discourse not as an isolated phenomenon but as socially constitutive as well as socially shaped, acknowledging various contexts that have influenced its initiation and structure.

### **5.3. FROM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS TO CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

“‘Discourse analysis’ is generally taken to be the analysis of ‘texts’ in a broad sense-written texts, spoken interaction, the multimedia texts of television and the Internet, etc.” (Fairclough 2005, p. 916). Van Dijk (1997c) states that “in sum, discourse studies are about *talk and text in context*” (p. 3, emphasis in the original text). On the other hand, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) define critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a form of research that “is very much about making connections between social and cultural structures and processes on the one hand and properties of text on the other” (p. 277).

Van Dijk (1997c) provides indicators to distinguish CDA from discourse analysis in general. In CDA the researcher is actively involved in the research, gives opinions and challenges the dominance with discourse analysis, and decides to expand the research by adding one more step of adherence to the “political and moral task of responsible scholars” (pp. 22-23). In CDA, the “focus [is] on relevant social *problems*. That is, their work is more

issue-oriented than theory-oriented” and finally the “ultimate goal is not only scientific, but also social and political, namely *change*” (Van Dijk 1997c, pp. 22-23, emphasis in the original text). In this way CDA is also seen as social discourse analysis.

Even though Van Dijk distinguishes between discourse and CDA he admits that “it is not always possible, or desirable, to neatly distinguish between doing ‘value-free’ and technical discourse analysis [called in this study discourse analysis] on the one hand, and engaging in social, cultural or political critique [called in this study critical discourse analysis] on the other” (Van Dijk 1997c, p. 23). In addition to the differences between CDA and discourse analysis, critical theorists take various approaches to CDA. “Theoretical approaches in CDA vary in their focus in regards to key features including ‘historical perspective’ in their methodology and theory, ‘mediation between the text and the social’, repetition, predictability and reproduction/creativity and innovation” (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, p. 262). They classify these approaches into: French discourse analysis, critical linguists, social semiotics, socio-cultural change and change in discourse, socio-cognitive studies, historical method, reading analysis and the Duisburg School. Chua (1986a) states that “critical theorists do not share common philosophical standards for the evaluation of theories” (p. 626). However, regardless of differences in approaches to CDA, “critical studies can be seen as a general umbrella concept of the alternative research school to mainstream accounting research” (Lodh & Gaffikin 1997, p. 464).

#### **5.4. CONSIDERATION OF CONTEXT**

Several scholars in the field of CDA emphasise the contextualisation of text (see, e.g., Fairclough 1992; Fairclough & Wodak 1997; Van Dijk 1993, 2006; Heracleous & Marshak

2004; Chouliaraki & Fairclough 2010; Leitch & Palmer 2010). Heracleous and Marshak (2004) offer an approach called 'situated symbolic action'. They identify three levels for analysing discourse: discourse as action, discourse as situated action and discourse as situated symbolic action. The first level of analysis, discourse as action, examines "what the participants said and what they may have intended to achieve through their communicative actions in the meeting". The second level of analysis, discourse as situated action, examines "the added value that arises from a knowledge of the different levels of context (interactional, organisational and industry) in discursive analysis". The third level, discourse as situated symbolic action, "adds sensitivity to deeper considerations of how discourse frames, constructs and represents issues in particular ways" (Heracleous & Marshak 2004, p. 1286).

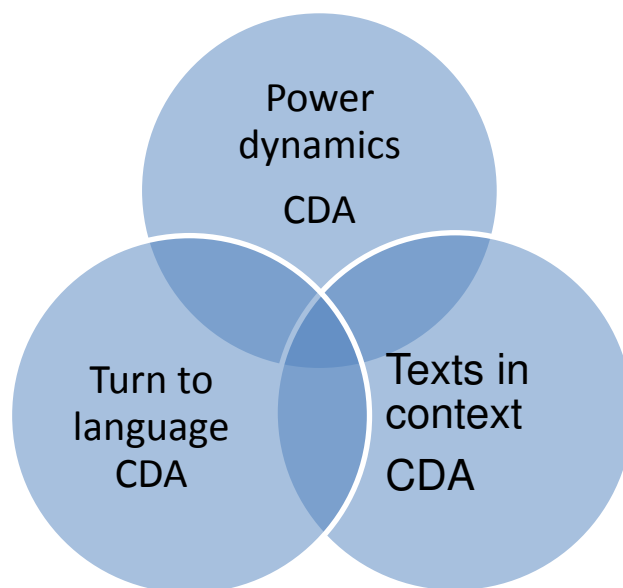
Heracleous and Marshak (2004, p. 1287) believe

that this perspective [discourse as situated symbolic action] helps to respond to some of the key challenges facing the organizational discourse field in terms of developing more structured and clearly specified conceptualizations of discourse that are appropriate to the organizational level of analysis; achieving a more holistic and discourse-sensitive understanding of empirical contexts by organizational researchers; and lastly illustrating that organizational discourse analysis is not simply an intellectual luxury but can have pragmatic, relevant implications.

Van Dijk (2006) also takes a contextual approach to discourse. His 'context models' "integrate a detailed and explicit study of structures of text and talk with an analysis of their social and cognitive contexts as a basis for problem-oriented critical discourse analysis" (p. 161). Van Dijk (2006) "propose[s] that contexts are not 'objective' or 'deterministic'

constraints of society or culture at all, but subjective participant interpretations, constructions or definitions [mental constructs] of such aspects of the social environment” (p. 163). It is within this framework that contexts “are able to function as the interface between situational and societal structures and discourse structures” (p. 162), which in Van Dijk’s (2006) view “are of a very different nature, and if there are ‘contextual’ constraints at all, these should somehow be mediated by an interface that is able to act as a conceptual and empirical bridge between social ‘reality’ and discourse” (p. 162). Leitch and Palmer (2010) also emphasise the contextualisation of text, with regards to the diversity of approaches to CDA. They classify CDA research into three types (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1:** Three areas of CDA and their commonality



*Note:* The shaded areas where the three circles overlap represent the commonality between the three types of CDA research (critical lens).

*Source:* Based on Leitch & Palmer 2010

Besides variations in CDA, Leitch and Palmer (2010) speak of a ‘critical lens’ as a common area for all three types of CDA; this “is focused on the ways in which knowledge, subjects, and power relations are produced, reproduced, and transformed within discourse, and is operationalized through a variety of methods to analyse texts in context” (p. 1195). Leitch and Palmer (2010) indicate that, unlike text, which has been the subject of much theoretical research, context is under-theorised, and the reason for this lies in how context is defined. They identify ways to present context, address issues concerning analysing text in context and put forward protocols to deal with these issues.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2010) refer to the work of Leitch and Palmer (2010), and while they agree with the need for further reflexivity in CDA, they believe that Leitch and Palmer’s “recommendation for a strict methodological protocol in CDA studies may be reproducing some of the problems they identify in their analysis” (p. 1213). They put forward as an alternative a ‘relational-dialectic’ approach to discourse, which they claim “understands context in deliberately contingent and broad terms” and “defends a purposefully porous and integrationist orientation to research methodology that privileges *trans*-disciplinarity over rigour” (p. 1218, emphasis in the original text).

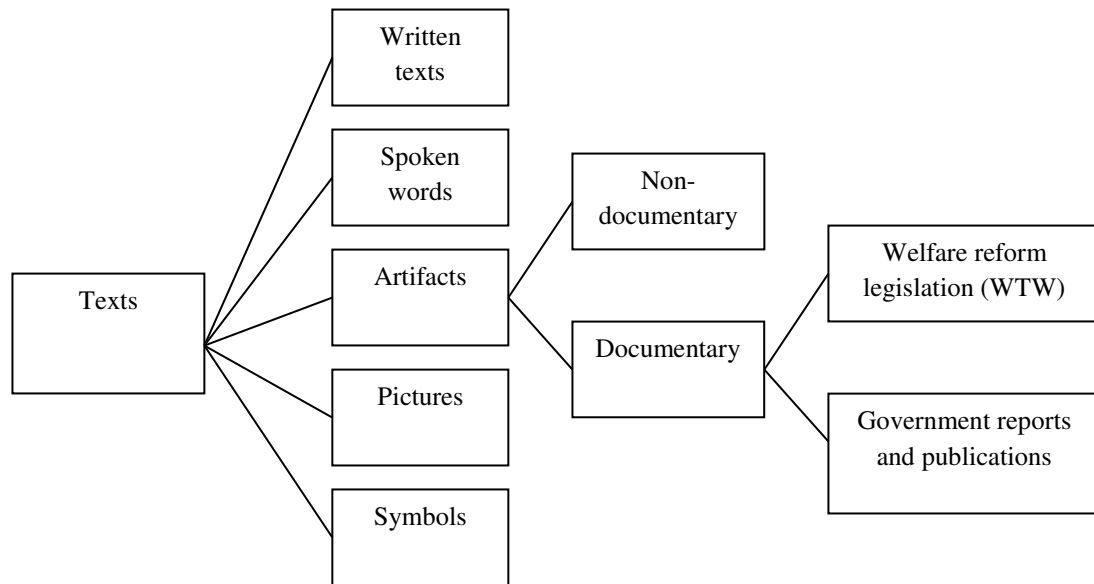
While Chouliaraki and Fairclough’s (2010) position is worth noting, the work of Leitch and Palmer (2010) is relevant to this thesis. The researcher agrees with Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2010) that Leitch and Palmer’s (2010) work opens up “an important debate regarding key theoretical, conceptual, and analytical issues in CDA within organizational studies” (p. 1218). Furthermore, the researcher believes that this work provides a clear understanding of the CDA method.

### 5.5. TEXTS EXAMINED IN THIS STUDY

This research considers Phillips and Hardy's (2002, p.4) broad definition of texts, which is "considered a discursive 'unit' and a material manifestation of discourse. Texts may take a variety of forms including written texts, spoken words, pictures, symbols, artifacts<sup>22</sup> and so forth". This is also in line with, and complementary to, Scott's (1990) classification of source material in three categories, including 'artefacts'.

This research refers to its texts as 'public documents' (Appendix 5) Figure 5.2 shows the relationships among the source materials used in this research.

**Figure 5.2:** Relationship of source materials



*Source:* Based on Phillips & Hardy 2002 (definition of text) and Scott 1990 (classification of source materials)

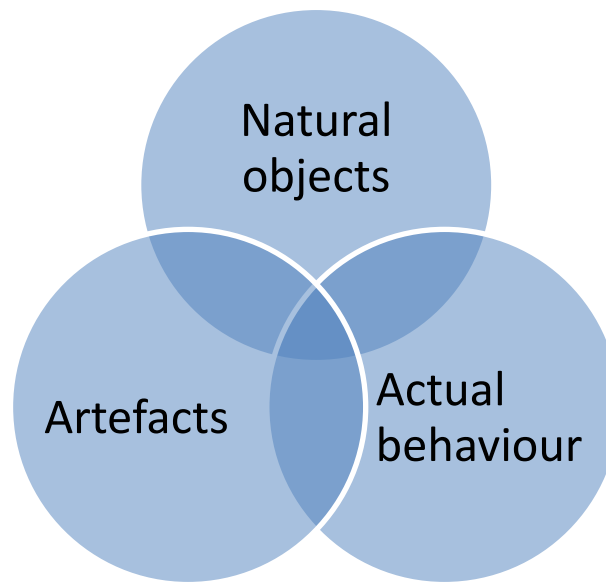
<sup>22</sup> The word is spelled as 'artifact' by Phillips and Hardy (2002) and is spelled as 'artefact' by Scott (1990); this is the reason why both spellings are used in this section.



### **5.5.1. Source Materials**

“The uses and limitations of documentary sources can only be fully appreciated when they are understood in their social context as historical products” (Scott 1990, p. x). This supports Leitch and Palmer’s (2010) view of the importance of studying texts within context. However, it is important to first examine the available sources that are applicable for data construction. Scott (1990) classifies source materials based on “relationships between the observer and the observed” into “proximate or direct access” and “mediate or indirect access” (p. 2). Proximate access is “where the observer and his or her source material are contemporaneous and co-present”, and mediate access is where “the observer and the observed are not co-present and the observer may only obtain evidence indirectly from the buildings, books and so forth produced by people in the past” (Scott 1990, pp. 2-3). Mediate access is the applicable form of access for this research: the researcher obtains the evidence/source materials in text format written by government officials. Figure 5.3, based on Scott (1990), shows three types of source material, identifying the position of documents among the other sources.

**Figure 5.3:** Three types of source material



*Source:* Based on Scott 1990

Scott (1990) notes the interdependency of these sources and states that “artefacts are natural objects which have been transformed in some way by human behavior” (p. 6). The common areas in the three circles reflect the interdependency of the types of source material. Scott sees this interdependency as the reason why a particular source may not easily be classified as one or another type, as well as the reason to apply a combination of both proximate and mediate access types. While this research acknowledges this view, the second type of source material, artefacts (specifically documents), is a more relevant source type for this research.

### **5.5.2. Document Classification and Quality Control**

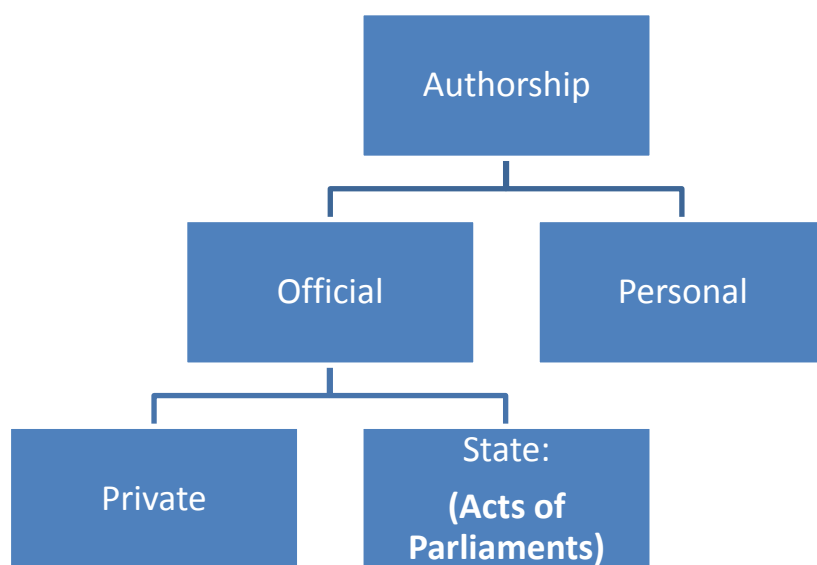
McCulloch (2004, p. 1) states that “documents are literally all around us, they are inescapable, they are an integral part of our daily lives and our public concerns”.

According to Scott (1990, p. 12), “a document in its most general sense is a written text”. In line with this last statement, the current research considers only written documents. Document classification (recognising the type of document) and quality control (establishing the credibility of a document as source material) are addressed in the following sections.

#### **5.5.2.1. Document classification**

This research classifies documents according to authorship (Scott 1990), as illustrated in Figure 5.4.

**Figure 5.4:** Classification of documents



*Source:* Based on Scott 1990

Scott (1990) classifies Acts of Parliaments under the category of state (public) documents, and recognises that “they are often the by-products of policy and administration and, as the

creations of public bodies, they reflect the organization and interests of state agencies” (p. 59). Scott (1990) also addresses the political context that shapes public documents, and examines ideology and culture as factors that provide political context. On the other hand, McCulloch (2004) addresses the classification of documents by historians such as Marwick (1970), where documents are classified as ‘primary’<sup>23</sup> and ‘secondary’. However, McCulloch believes that “the basic dualism of primary and secondary sources seems in some respects to be an inadequate means of understanding the nature of documents, and their limitations and potential for understanding the social world” (McCulloch 2004, pp. 29-30).

Scott (1990) refers to systematic documentary research where documents are considered resources or topics. An example of documents as resources is the use of a bibliography in a reference book. In contrast, when considering the document as topic, “the main concern is to explain the nature of the documents themselves.... The aim is to elucidate the social processes through which they were produced in order to explain their form and content” (p. 36-37). Furthermore, documents as resources and topics “are interdependent, and...any researcher will inevitably be forced to consider the documents he or she uses from both points of view” (p. 38).

McCulloch (2004) acknowledges the decline in the use of documents and the increase in the use of methods such as interviews, observation and questionnaires in social research.

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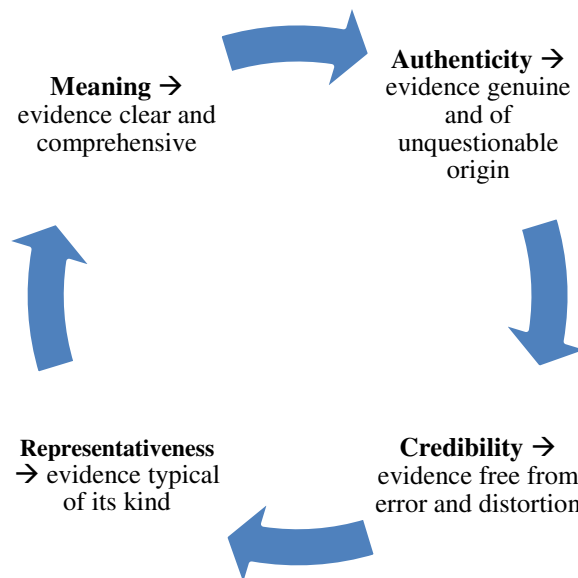
<sup>23</sup> Marwick (1970, p.136) defines primary sources as “the raw material, more meaningful to the expert historian than to the layman; the secondary source is the coherent work of history, article, dissertation or book”.

#### ***5.5.2.2. Quality control***

“A complete analysis of all texts associated with a particular change process or discursive struggle may, however, be impossible because of the sheer size of such a corpus” (Van Dijk 2001, p. 99). Based on this, in addition to considering the views of Scott (1990), that documents as source materials require quality control, the documents under investigation in this study are limited to welfare-reform legislation and government reports issued between 1997 and 2006. These documents are also selected with a view to the importance of the connection between them. As Phillips and Hardy (2002, p. 82) argue, “it is not individual texts that produce social reality, but structured bodies of texts of various kinds-discourses-that constitute social phenomena”.

Figure 5.5 represents the quality-control criteria considered for the selection of source materials for this research, and used in the ongoing process of data construction and representation.

**Figure 5.5:** Quality-control criteria for the selection of source materials



*Source:* Based on Scott 1990, p. 6

Scott (1990), in describing quality control criteria for documentary sources (authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning), states the four criteria “should not be regarded as distinct stages in assessing the quality of documentary sources...they are interdependent...quality appraisal is a never-ending process, as any conclusions arrived at can be used to push the appraisal a little further” (p. 6).

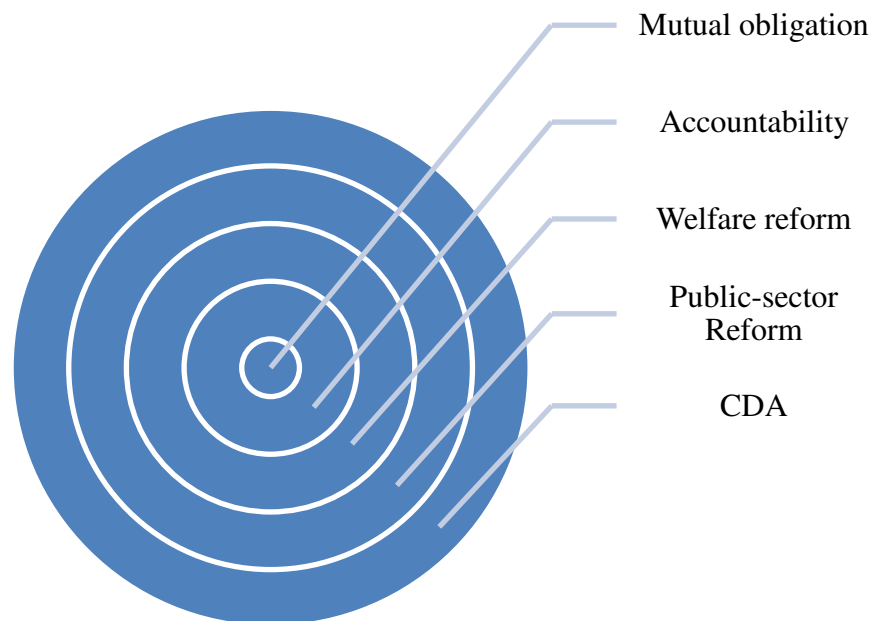
### **5.6. MULTIPLE CONTEXTS OF THIS STUDY**

This qualitative research “acknowledges the contextual nature of inquiry” (Glesne & Peshkin 1992, p. 7), and considers contexts that produce meaning for its analysis. Leitch and Palmer (2010) identify five ways to present context in CDA studies: “context as *space*, context as *time*, context as *practice*, context as *change*, and context as *frame*” (p. 1195, emphasis in the original text). Accordingly, the ‘space’ context for this research is national (Australia). The ‘time’ context is 2006, and in terms of past events, this research notes

welfare reforms from the Hawke and Keating Labor governments. The ‘practice’ context of this research is the public sector; the ‘change’ context is social welfare (through the initiation of welfare reforms); and the ‘frame’ context includes CDA as the method and the application of Foucauldian ideas as the methodology.

This research recognises multiple contexts for MO. The researcher believes the combination of these contexts (specified in Figure 5.6) is necessary to understand the concept of MO within welfare reform, and to contribute towards making inferences within a critical context.

**Figure 5.6:** Texts, discourse and multiple contexts



The circles representing different contexts in Figure 5.6 are examined in different chapters: public-sector and welfare reforms in Chapter 2; accountability in Chapter 3; mutual

obligation in Chapter 6; CDA in this chapter (Chapter 5); and Foucauldian analysis of MO discourse in Chapter 7.

### ***5.7. TWOFOLD METHOD OF THIS STUDY***

This study applies two methods to understand the Foucauldian idea of discourse and power and the existence of two types of relationships in the process of subjugation. The following sections cover these two methods.

#### **5.7.1. Van Dijk's Framework**

Van Dijk's (1993) method is used in this study to examine the 'regulated communication' of the discourse of MO.

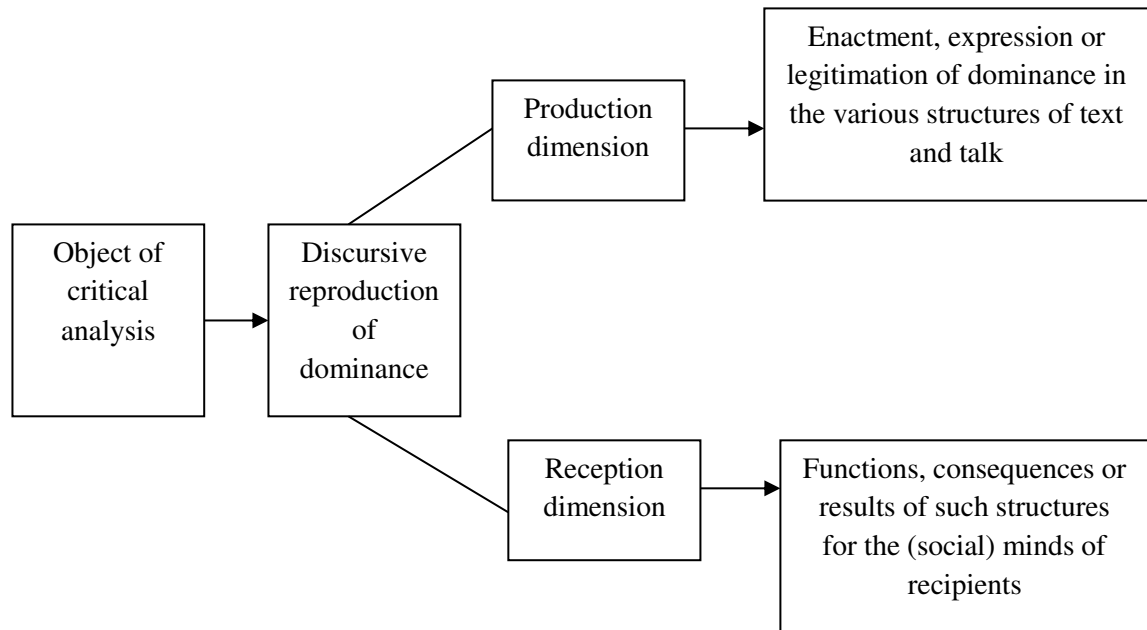
Van Dijk (1993) states that "focus on dominance relations by elite groups<sup>24</sup> and institutions" is one of the principles of CDA (p. 249). One way to examine dominance relationships is by examining the involvement of discourse in dominance, "namely through the enactment of dominance in text and talk in specific contexts, and more indirectly through the influence of discourse on the minds of others" (Van Dijk 1993, p. 279). Figure 5.7 demonstrates this relationship.

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<sup>24</sup> "Some members of dominant groups and organizations have a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power...[that are called] the *power elites*" (Van Dijk 1993, p. 303, emphasis in the original text).



**Figure 5.7:** Dominance relationships



*Source:* Based on Van Dijk 1993, pp. 259, 279

The application of Van Dijk's (1993) work as a method in this study enables the researcher to investigate the 'communicative relationships' of MO discourse in the process of the subjugation of PPS recipients where public documents are used as sources. (The application of this method is detailed in Chapter 6). Van Dijk's framework consists of the following two statements: "If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise 'exhibit' their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done"; and "if they [a powerful group] thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audience, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process" (Van Dijk 1993, p. 259).

### **5.7.2. Foucauldian Idea of Discipline**

In order to understand the ‘power relationships’ in MO discourse; Foucault’s idea of discipline is considered. Foucauldian discipline contains paradigms, and each paradigm has its own disciplinary techniques. The techniques of Foucauldian discipline used in this research are extracted from Foucault’s (1995) book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. A disciplinary map has been developed by the researcher (Figure 4.2 in Section 4.4.3) to visualise and distinguish between the paradigms/techniques. The application of these paradigms and techniques is demonstrated in Chapter 7.

### **5.8. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the twofold method (Van Dijk’s 1993 and the Foucauldian disciplinary idea) applied in this research and to classify the public documents that have been used as sources.

The study uses Van Dijk’s (1993) method, whereby public documents are investigated to find answers to these statements within the context of welfare reform. This investigation will be detailed in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6

### MUTUAL OBLIGATION AND PARENTING PAYMENT SINGLE RECIPIENTS

#### *6.1. INTRODUCTION*

The concept of mutual obligation (MO), implemented by the Australian government in welfare reforms, is based on the model constructed in the McClure report (2000). This report:

- Emphasises the expectation on recipients to undertake some form of economic or social participation, consistent with their individual capacities and life circumstances.
- Incorporates both a set of broad expectations and a set of minimum requirements (reflected in legislation), which should be developed with consultation to ensure expectations and requirements reflect community norms and values.
- Is implemented in a way that maximises voluntary compliance and provides that alternative approaches to sanctions are considered before financial penalties are imposed (McClure 2000b, p. 56).

Foucault acknowledges both communicative relationships and power relationships in the discourse surrounding the process of subjugation (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3.). Van Dijk's (1993) method is used in this research to reflect on the communicative relationships of MO discourse, and explores its structure. Van Dijk's (1993) framework includes two statements:

(1): "If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise 'exhibit' their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done" [this framework is used to explore the communicative relationships in reference to discourse of MO]; and (2): "if they [the

powerful group] thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audience, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process” [this framework is used to examine the structure of the discourse of MO] (p. 259). Using these two statements, MO is examined in this research in the context of welfare reform. Within this context, the government exhibits/exercises its power through Parliament by enacting policies and introducing legislation in various matters of public concern, such as the budget, national security, education, and welfare. This research specifically concentrates on welfare reform and the MO discourse. The researcher has used public documents (Appendix 5) to provide a response to each of the statements.

Various discourse-related properties are involved in MO discourse, for example, economic factors (such as a budget deficit), demographic factors (such as an ageing population), and theories and ideologies (New Public Management, or NPM). Globalisation is also a factor. Governments considered these factors during welfare reform (Chapter 2), and have resulted in the incorporation of the concept of MO into the reform measures. Such factors, however, do not go far enough in explaining how the government exhibits its power in the production of the discourse of MO. The government justified the introduction of MO by using positive representations generated by government departments involved in the implementation of welfare reform, and by representing welfare payment recipients in a way that suggested that they needed to participate actively in the community’s social and economic life.

In the area of welfare reform, parliamentary debates using facts and figures, a “lexical style [that uses a] choice of words that imply negative (or positive) evaluations” and the use of credible information provided by experts are examples of positive representation of

government decisions (Van Dijk 1993, p. 264). Senator Newman justified the government's decision to introduce reform in her speech of 29 September 1999 when she said, "In an increasingly globalised and competitive world, Australia can simply not afford, socially or morally, to have such large numbers of working age people on passive welfare assistance. This is not in their interests, in the community's interest or in our economic interest" (Newman 1999a, p. 5). The McClure report also presents a positive view of MO, stating that "the Reference Group believes that provided there is appropriate reciprocity, mutual obligations can be seen to be both appropriate and fair when applied to income support arrangements" (McClure 2000b, p. 34).

## **6.2. CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION**

'Participation' usually implies concepts such as democracy, rights and involvement that are often seen within the welfare reform literature. Walters *et al.* (2001) note that "interest in participation has risen since the late 1980s and reflects a 'New Right' agenda which aimed to break the entrenched power of what it viewed as the 'inefficient' public sector" (p. 20). This indicates that the concept of participation has been linked with public-sector reforms where the aim has been to overcome inefficiencies in the public sector.

Hendriks and Tops (1999) state that "notions of interactive and participative decision making were embraced by reform thinkers in the 1990s" (p. 139), where the "emphasis was on quality and became more customer oriented. This 'public service orientation' was characterised by efforts to find out what service users wanted and to meet their needs in the most efficient and effective way" (Stewart & Clarke 1987, p. 164).

Oakley (1991) mentions several definitions of participation; two are discussed here, as their point of difference provides a deeper understanding of the concept. The first is the definition used by the Economic Commission for Latin America (1973): “participation is considered a voluntary contribution by the people in one or another of the public programmes supposed to contribute to national development, but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the programme or criticizing its contents” (cited in Parfitt 2004, p. 538).

The second is that of Paul (1987, p. 2), which views participation as “an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish”.

These definitions have similarities as well as differences. Both indicate that people’s active participation leads to their own development. However, the definitions differ in their rationales for participation. The first “is suggestive that development will be enhanced because people are mobilised to volunteer some work on a project without actually having any substantive voice in determining what it will do and how it will do it” (Parfitt 2004 , p. 539). The second definition suggests “that project participants will have a say in the design, management and evaluation of the project” (Parfitt 2004, p. 539). In other words, this latter definition encourages empowerment, whereas the first definition does not. The other major difference is that the first “implies that participation is to be seen as a means of bringing about development, a way of mobilising people behind the predetermined objectives of development agencies”, while the second suggests that “to one degree or another, participation is an end in itself inasmuch as it empowers people to pursue their own development activities and projects” (Parfitt 2004, p. 539).

Empowerment is a term associated with participation and accountability. Walters *et al.* (2001) date the term empowerment to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the field of medicine. This term eventually entered the literature in different fields. “[I]ncreasingly applied within political science around the application and increase of democracy, it has become concerned with the acquisition or withdrawal of power” (p. 4). By the 1980s, the term was being used to examine two societal pressures: “increasing recognition of shared rights and corresponding claims” and “the development of competition” (Walters *et. al.* 2001, p. 2). Oakley (1991) sees participation as a way for government to develop its projects. On the other hand, Parfitt (2004) refers to the ambiguity of participation as either a means or an end: “participation must function as a means because any development project must produce some outputs...but it must also function as an end inasmuch as empowerment is viewed as a necessary outcome” (p. 537). Depending on whether it is considered a means or an end, participation may be implemented in different ways. “Participation as an end suggests a transformation in power relations between donor and recipient, with the latter empowered and liberated from a clientelist<sup>25</sup> relation with the former” (Parfitt 2004, p. 539). This participation results in empowerment of citizens/staff/customers. On the other hand, “participation as a means is politically neutral insofar as it does not address such power differentials” (p. 539).

Literature in the area of empowerment discusses the concept of ‘empowerment evaluation’, which this research considers as a concept opposite to that of a compliance system. “Rather

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<sup>25</sup> “Historian Richard Graham characterized clientelism as an action-set built upon the principle of ‘take there, give here’, enabling clients and patrons to benefit from mutual support as they play parallel to each other at different levels of political, social, and administrative articulation” (Graham 1997, cited in Roniger 2004, p. 353).

than imposing evaluation and remediation from outside, empowerment evaluation encourages self-evaluation and self-adjustment from inside”, and “creates user-friendly environments by motivating improvement rather than fomenting user-hostile environments that create defensiveness” (Mithaug 1996, p. 235). Fetterman (1996) defines empowerment evaluation as “the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination” (pp. 4, 5). Its purpose is “to help people help themselves and improve their programs using a form of self-evaluation and reflection” (pp.4, 5). Mithaug (1996) believes that empowerment evaluation “empowers users to regulate their personal, social, and institutional problem solving toward those goals and missions worth pursuing...[also] it creates the sense of community that is necessary for maximizing gain toward a common good” (p. 254).

### **6.3. VAN DIJK’S FIRST STATEMENT**

*If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise ‘exhibit’ their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done.*

There are two notions of participation within the welfare-reform literature. The first is the opportunity for participation given to the Australian people as a result of the commitment of the Australian government to the democratic mode of government, to be involved in the process of implementing MO. However this tends to be in ‘consultation’ format. The second notion is participation in a practical sense.

Involving the community in public decision-making through consultation is not new. “There is a rich history of consultation at the core of democratic theory and practice”



(Lilburn 2000, pp. 2-3). The concept of democracy requires “policy makers to find out how citizens will be affected by policy decisions and whether they will accept a particular shift in policy direction” (pp. 2-3). Consultation is believed to provide public-sector legitimacy (Lilburn 2000). The application of consultation in policy-making and practice expanded greatly during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Under the Whitlam government in the mid-1970s, a Royal Commission into Public Administration determined that the public sector had become more democratic (Lilburn 2000). This process continued under John Howard’s Liberal National coalition government.

“On 29 September 1999, the Minister for Family and Community Services announced the Government’s intention to review the Australian welfare system”<sup>26</sup> (McClure 2000, p.2). ‘The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ was the title of a discussion paper advertised by the Howard government in national papers (October 1999) that pointed toward upcoming changes in the welfare system (Lilburn 2000). Prior to implementing the changes, the government set up a reference group to provide advice and seek feedback from individuals and organisations. The reference group included representatives from business, academia, the community and areas of government.

The reference group received over 360 submissions from the community that pointed out various shortcomings in the welfare system. Measures to elicit feedback included:

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26 The Hon. Jocelyn Margaret Newman served as Senator for Tasmania for the period 1986-2002 for the Liberal Party of Australia. Her ministerial appointments included “Minister for Social Security from 11.3.96 to 21.10.98, Minister for Family and Community Services from 21.10.98 to 30.1.01, [and] Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women from 11.3.96 to 9.10.97 and from 21.10.98 to 30.1.01”. She resigned from parliament on 1 February 2002 (Parliament of Australia 2008).

- questionnaires available on the Internet and distributed to all organisations and individuals who had made submissions prior to the development of the Interim Report;
- a series of commissioned focus groups with income support recipients;
- a series of commissioned focus groups with representatives of the community sector, employer and business peak bodies, academia and government;
- bilateral meetings with key peak bodies and their officials;
- participating in public discussions at conferences, meetings and seminars (McClure 2000b, p.7).

The final report, prepared in 2000, was titled ‘Participation Support for a More Equitable Society’, but is more frequently referred to as the McClure Report (McClure 2000b). The reference group declared that “the new system must engage people more actively, and to be successful that engagement must be reciprocal” (McClure 2000b, p. 5); however, it also considered that “a key issue for welfare reform is to ensure that increased opportunities for social and economic participation are made available to complement the changes to the income support system that will provide greater support and incentives for employment” (McClure 2000b, p. 45). The report refers to paid employment as ‘a major source of self-esteem’ without which “people can fail to develop, or become disengaged from, employment, family and community networks. This can lead to physical and psychological ill health and reduced life opportunities for parents and their children” (McClure 2000b, p. 3).

In Harris’s (2000) view the McClure report includes three different narrations for participation:

1- Self-sufficiency; here participation is established as the opposite of dependency and passivity. 2- Paying your dues; [this] is about putting back what you took out...a story about fair dues, articulated through mutual obligation programs. 3- Team effort; it is about working with others for a common goal (p. 280).

Regardless of the government's attention to individuals' participation on the basis of MO, Lilburn (2000) believes that "an important opportunity to challenge public perceptions about the value of welfare expenditure and the actual experience of welfare recipients has been missed in the conduct of the Welfare Reform consultation" (p. 16). A second consultation paper, 'Building a Simpler System', was produced in 2002 under Howard's Coalition government, to introduce further changes under the Australians Working Together (AWT) reform. Its purpose was to publicise work incentives and paid work, and to encourage more participation from welfare recipients (Department of Family and Community Services and Centrelink presentation 2002). (This research does not cover this paper and this notion of participation is not the focus of this study). However, welfare reform based on MO has redirected this process toward participation in a much more practical sense, where welfare recipients are not only involved in consultation in the process of policy-making, but required to participate economically and socially (McClure 2000b). Accordingly, "democratic citizens have an obligation to participate in civil and political life and to be concerned with the welfare of the political community" (March & Olsen 1995, p. 154). The researcher identifies this as the second notion of participation. The welfare-reform literature reveals a notion of participation that is comprised of continuity and practicality.

The Australian government has explicitly stated that “welfare assistance provided to the unemployed of working age should involve some return responsibilities for the recipient” (Parliament of Australia Parliamentary Library 2004). Moreover:

[the government does] welfare recipients no favours by simply paying their benefits and being content to leave them on welfare indefinitely. They have both the right and the obligation to share in the benefits of economic and employment growth and to participate in their communities to the full extent of their capacity (Newman 1999b, p. 6).

Participation here is considered more of an *obligation* on the part of welfare recipients within the discourse of MO; it is social and economic participation. This participation is very much associated with the involvement of individuals in the process of accountability. When individuals participate in the welfare-reform process, they also become accountable for it. They are obliged to participate in building a better welfare system, and are also required to participate in various activities (see the discussion on the second statement of the framework in Section 6.4.) as a condition of receiving payments from Centrelink. The government, therefore, demands accountability from welfare recipients. Participation and accountability are connected in a way that “participation necessitates downward accountability given that it entails recipients making decisions about what will be done” (Parfitt 2004, p. 550).

To identify the participation of social-welfare recipients, it is useful to reference the types of participation identified by Walters *et al.* (2001):

There are different types of participation that may affect how empowered people really are. There is a ‘spontaneous’ type of participation that comes without external support and is the choice of the individual concerned. ‘Supported’ participation is created when an individual is given help or

assistance in order to participate. Finally there is the 'coerced' form, where an individual is made to participate or feels that they have no other choice as failure to do so will result in sanctions being imposed. The element of choice is therefore an important aspect in the process of participation and the level to which the participants in a project or a society feel that they are empowered themselves (p. 21).

Under Australian welfare reform, participation is more inclined towards the 'coerced' form of participation, where a compliance system exists to enforce participation and adherence to MO. The notion of empowerment is lacking within the context of welfare reform, as the element of choice-which shifts participation towards empowerment-is almost nonexistent. Kinnear (2002) identifies a 'sink or swim' pattern that indicates the sort of choice recipients have in the welfare system, and states that if "they cannot swim, they are thrown in the 'deep end' and told they must learn. If they sink, they are then penalised by being thrown in again" (p. 254).

Participation under welfare reform has moved toward considering that "any development project must produce some outputs" (Parfitt 2004) rather than "[suggesting] a transformation in power relations between donor and recipient, with the latter empowered and liberated from a clientelist relation with the former" (p. 537). In other words, social and economic participation does not deliver empowerment within a welfare-reform system that in practice is in conflict with the notions of individualism and empowerment that are emphasised so extensively under NPM. Furthermore, opportunities to initiate empowerment evaluation are denied due to the existence of a compliance system. This approach to participation might create governable bodies and ease the governance of social-welfare recipients; however, producing docile bodies is a challenge because there is no

element of choice to shift participation towards empowerment. Instead it is a clear reflection of the role of power relationships in the process of subjugating Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients to MO.

#### **6.4. VAN DIJK'S SECOND STATEMENT**

*If they [the powerful group] thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audience, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process.*

This section addresses the discursive structure of MO and the strategies implemented in reference to MO, which influence PPS recipients. These strategies and discourse structures make recipients into bodies that comply with MO and its requirements. This section illustrates how government makes recipients into governable bodies through various elements of MO discourse. These elements control and organise the recipient's activities so that they are in line with the requirements of MO. To examine the strategies and discourse structure of MO, the researcher has selected the PPS, which, along with the Disability Support Pension, were the two main targets of the WTW reform.

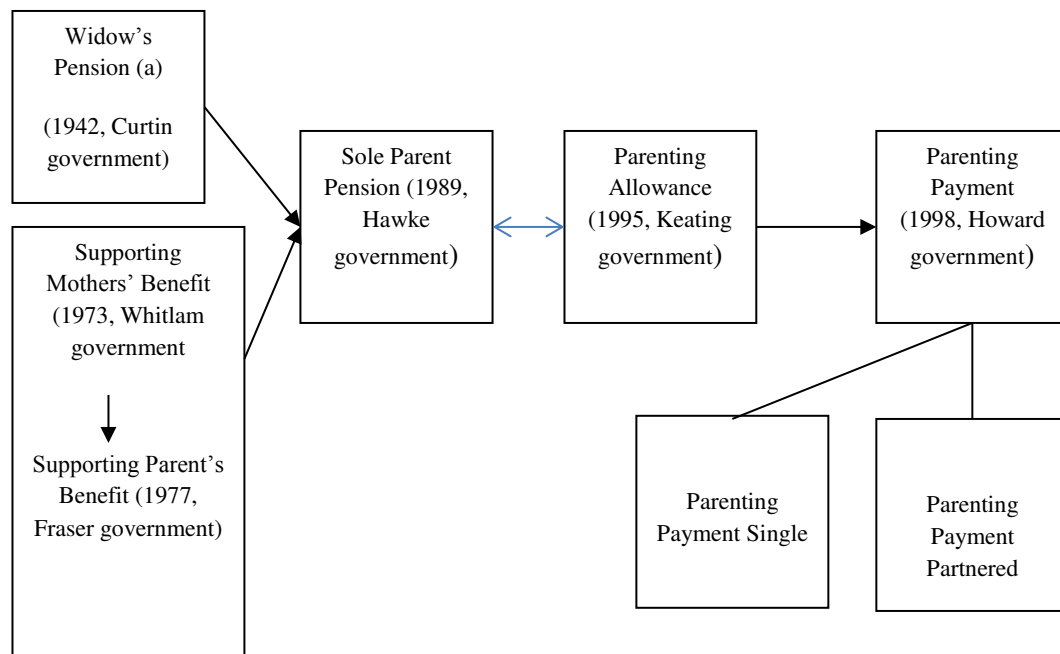
There are three reasons why this payment was selected as the focus of this study, besides it being the main target of the WTW reform. First, as a woman and a mother the researcher wanted to investigate the plight of other women who, for many reasons, have ended up on welfare. Second, an increasing number of single mothers rely on welfare payments. Third, in the researcher's opinion, mothers play an important role (even more so in single-parent

families) in breaking the cycle of welfare dependency and teaching the new generation the importance of employment and self-reliance.

#### 6.4.1. Introduction to Parenting Payment

The Parenting Payment (single and partnered) was introduced in 1998 under the Howard government. There were various prior and existing payments throughout the many years of the development of social welfare in Australia that had informed the introduction of this payment. Figure 6.1 illustrates the origin of PPS:

**Figure 6.1:** Origin of the PPS payment in Australia



Source: Based on Daniels 2009

Commonwealth payments to single women caring for children can be traced back to the introduction of the Widow's Pension which, after several attempts by the Australian Labor

party (ALP) at the Fourth (1908), Fifth (1912) and Sixth Commonwealth Conference of the ALP (1915), was finally introduced in 1942 (Kewley 1965, p. 211). The introduction of a widows' pension was a promise given in an election speech by the then-leader of the ALP, John Curtin, in 1940 (Kewley 1965). The Commonwealth widows' pension scheme was based on the widows' pension scheme (1926), which was delivered in the state of New South Wales, and the provision for widows made by the *New Zealand Social Security Act of 1938* (Kewley 1965).

The term 'widow' included de facto widows who had been living with the deceased spouse for at least three years prior to his death and had been maintained by him. Eligibility was also given to deserted de jure wives who had been deserted for at least six months, divorced women who had not remarried and women whose husbands were in hospitals for the insane (Daniels 2009, p. 22).

There were different classes of widows' pensions. Class A included widows who cared for at least one child under the age of 16; Class B included widows over 50 years of age with no dependent children; Class C included widows under 50 years of age with no dependent children; and Class D included women whose husbands were imprisoned for at least six months and who cared for at least one child or were above 50 years of age and otherwise eligible. The amending legislation of 1960 abolished Classes C and D and extended eligibility for Classes A and B (Kewley 1965). These eligibility criteria for Classes A and B meant that Class A recipients were forced to transfer their payment to the unemployment benefit and were thus required to seek employment when their child turned 16 if they had not reached the age of 50. However:



This situation was changed in 1956...by amending legislation (Act No 67 of 1956) which enabled a widow over 45 years of age in such circumstances to transfer directly, subject to the appropriate means test, from the class A pension to the class B pension without any break in the continuity of payment, except that class B rate of pension and means test would apply (CPD, HR, 12, 20 September 1956, cited in Kewley 1965, p. 217)

The Supporting Mother's Benefit (SMB) was another payment for single women caring for a qualifying child or children under 16 years of age. It was introduced in 1973 under the Whitlam government. This payment was paid to "unmarried mothers, deserted de facto wives, women whose de facto husbands were in prison and other separated wives not eligible for Widow Pension Class A (WPa)" (Daniels 2009, p. 40). In 1977, under the Fraser government, the eligibility for the SMB was extended and the name of the payment was changed to the Supporting Parent's Benefit (SPB), which included "male sole parents...widowers, divorcees, separated husbands or de facto husbands and husbands or de facto husbands of prisoners or mental hospital patients" (Daniels 2009, p. 41). In 1983, under the Hawke government, eligibility for the SPB was extended to unmarried people who were the legal guardians of a qualifying child, and to married couples caring for a qualifying child in cases where a spouse was living apart because of illness or infirmity (Daniels 2009).

The Sole Parent Pension (SPP) was a new payment introduced in 1989 under the Hawke government, and was a combination of the SPB and WPa. This payment also included "people with substantial control and care of a qualifying child, although not having legal custody, where that care and control had existed for at least 12 months before grant of

pension” (Daniels 2009, p. 42). However, nine years later, in 1998 under the Howard government, the SPP and Parenting Allowance<sup>27</sup> (PgA) were combined and the Parenting Payment (PP) was introduced. “The rates and eligibility conditions for the two payments were largely unchanged resulting in separate rate and eligibility structures for PP (single) and for PP (partnered)” (Daniels 2009, p. 52). The “Parenting Payment is a social security payment paid through Centrelink, separate from Family Tax Benefit. It is paid to single parents with dependent child(ren) under 8 in their care and partnered<sup>28</sup> parents with dependent child(ren) under 6 in their care” (Department of Human Services 2014).

The objective of the Parenting Payment is to provide principal carers of child(ren) with:

- recognition of their parenting responsibilities, and
- opportunities for financial independence by helping people move forward to maximise their potential whether that is through getting a job, returning to education or training or helping in their communities (Department of Human Services 2014).

#### **6.4.2. Eligibility Criteria for Parenting Payment Recipients**

Eligibility criteria are considered an important element of MO discourse as they contain the regulated and structured set of conditions that determine the eligibility of a PPS claimant. An entry point requires a claimant to fulfil all eligibility requirements before being eligible to receive the payment.

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<sup>27</sup> PgA was introduced in 1995 and was paid to “people who cared for dependent children under the age of 16 years and were members of a couple” (p. 51).

<sup>28</sup> For Centrelink’s purposes people are considered partnered when they usually or always live together and are:

- “• married, **or**
- in a registered relationship (opposite or same-sex), **or**
- in a de facto relationship (opposite or same-sex)” (Department of Human Services 2014).

Bezdek (2001) refers to welfare policy in the US (since 1996), which requires women to enter employment to receive payments from the government. She addresses this shift in welfare policy as “reciprocity between government and recipient in the extension of benefits” (p. 1563). This concept, or in the case of Australian welfare reform, MO (co-accountability), is considered the core of welfare reform, which starts from the time a claimant applies for the PPS. A PPS claimant needs to meet certain requirements to qualify for a payment. This section explores the eligibility criteria of a PPS claimant. To be eligible for PPS, a person must:

- have the care of a dependent child(ren) aged under 8
- have income and assets under certain amounts
- have been in Australia as an Australian resident for a continuous period of 104 weeks (not including absences), or arrived in Australia as a refugee, or become a single parent while an Australian resident (for Parenting Payment Single only), or have a qualifying residence exemption
- meet any participation requirements that [they] may be subject to (Department of Human Services 2014).

PPS claimants can test their eligibility by using an ‘application for payments’ form, or through the ‘intent to claim’ procedure. To register an ‘intent to claim’, the claimant may contact Centrelink (via phone, in person or online). This is specifically important as after claimants’ eligibility for the payment is determined, their payment will start from the day the intention to claim is registered (subject to providing requested documents such as any forms, points of identification, etc. within 14 days of an intention to claim). Once the PPS claimant is determined to be eligible they must satisfy the compulsory part-time (15 hours a week) obligations once their youngest child turns six (Centrelink 2011). Once a person’s

eligibility for the PPS is determined, they may also be eligible for other allowances and concessions such as a Pharmaceutical Allowance, Telephone Allowance, Pensioner Education Supplement, Clean Energy Advance, School Kids Bonus and Education Entry Payment (Department of Human Services 2014).

Centrelink supports PPS recipients by “paying income support, offering self-service facilities and referral services”. In return recipients are “expected to look for work, accept suitable work offers and do extra activities to improve [their] chances of finding work” (Centrelink 2010).

#### **6.4.3. Participation Requirements**

Participation requirements may apply to PPS recipients if the youngest child is aged six or over.

There are several ways to meet the participation requirement:

- enter into an Employment Pathway Plan (EPP)
- look for a part-time job of at least 30 hours a fortnight
- participate in employment services (such as Job Services Australia)
- undertake a period of work experience activity with [an] Employment Services Provider (Centrelink 2010).
- attend Centrelink and Employment Services Provider appointments when requested to do so
- accept suitable work offers
- go to all job interviews

- not leave a job, training course or program without a valid reason (Department of Human Services 2014).

#### **6.4.4. Voluntary Work**

In addition to the participation requirements detailed above, welfare recipients can fulfil their obligations by undertaking paid work, study or a combination of work and study for at least 30 hours a fortnight, in addition to voluntary work. If recipients are 55 years of age or older, they can receive Centrelink approval to do voluntary work of at least 30 hours per fortnight; however, they need to remain connected to an employment-services provider and accept any suitable paid work. Recipients under 55 years of age need the approval of their employment services provider to undertake voluntary work that helps them find paid work, or a combination of voluntary work and other activities, and include this in their EPP. However, recipients still need to attend appointments with their provider, attend job interviews and accept suitable job offers (Department of Human Services 2013).

#### **6.4.5. Interviews**

Interviews are an important element of MO discourse, and a strategy for directing PPS recipients toward participation. They are an indication of the communicative relationships in the process of subjecting PPS recipients to MO and to participation requirements. To provide correct payments and services to welfare recipients, Centrelink needs certain information, which is commonly gathered through interviews. The collected information is handled in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and other confidentiality provisions.

Centrelink conducts a 'New Claim Interview' when a person first applies to receive a payment. During this interview the available payments and services are explained (Department of Human Services 2013). A Job Capacity Assessment appointment may also be arranged if the claimant is of working age (Department of Human Services 2013). Centrelink also arranges personal-contact interviews for PPS recipients to discuss participation requirements and the level of support that Centrelink offers. Failure to attend this interview may affect the PPS recipient's payment (Centrelink 2010). Recipients are responsible for advising Centrelink if they cannot attend the interview, providing the information required for the interview and advising Centrelink of any changes in circumstances such as:

- personal and contact details
- bank details
- relationship status
- care arrangements for anyone in your care, including your children
- work status
- leaving the country, temporarily or permanently
- getting a lump sum payment
- income or assets increase or decrease, including your partner's income and assets
- start or finish studying (Department of Human Services 2014).

#### **6.4.6. Parenting Payment Activity Agreement**

An EPP is an individual agreement between welfare recipients and an employment services provider and/or Centrelink. An EPP specifies what PPS recipients need to do to enter employment or improve their employment opportunities. It also explains the assistance offered by Centrelink. An EPP is regarded as a legal document that subjects the PPS

payment to completion of agreed activities and is effective from the time the claimant signs it (Centrelink 2010).

An EPP is tailored according to each individual's situation with regard to gaining employment; however, the payment may stop if agreed activities or participation requirements are not met (Department of Human Services 2013).

#### **6.4.7. Reporting Requirements**

This element of MO requires PPS recipients to report any change in circumstances (such as income earned or change in marital status) to Centrelink to ensure that their entitlement is correct. The reporting frequency is usually monthly (although it may vary based on the recipient's situation). Reports can be lodged in person, online or over the phone (Department of Human Services 2013).

#### **6.5. *STRUCTURE OF MUTUAL OBLIGATION***

To better understand the structure of MO, an example follows. Ms X is a 29-year-old single mother of two, whose children are now aged seven and six. Ms X and her two children arrived in Australia about nine months ago under a humanitarian visa, subclass 200 (refugee visa). Ms X tested her eligibility for PPS upon arrival. As she entered Australia under a refugee visa, she was not subject to a waiting period and could apply on the same day of her arrival. She is the principal carer of her two children who are under the age of eight, she is not partnered and she has no income or assets. Furthermore, as her youngest child was under the age of six upon arrival, she was not subject to participation

requirements.<sup>29</sup> She was advised that she was entitled to AMEP<sup>30</sup>, and since then she has been busy attending her course and has used all her 510 hours of entitlement.

Her youngest child turned six on 27 February 2013 and a few days later she received a letter from Centrelink. Ms X contacted the Centrelink Multilingual Call Centre to speak to a Centrelink bilingual customer service officer in her language regarding the letter she had recently received. It was explained to Ms X that, as her youngest child had turned six, she would now have to meet the part-time (30 hours a fortnight) participation requirement. She was also advised that she needed to select a Job Services Australia (JSA)<sup>31</sup> provider from the list attached to the letter for the Centrelink officer to connect Ms X to the JSA provider of her choice in the computer system and book an appointment. During the interview, the JSA officer explained to Ms X that, owing to changes in her circumstances (her child turning six), she needed to have her participation requirements in place through EPP in order to continue receiving PPS.

An EPP is an important element of the MO discourse structure in which Centrelink, JSA and DES are given “certain powers under social security law by the Secretary of DEEWR [Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations], including the power to

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<sup>29</sup> Activity test/participation requirements mean: “be actively looking for paid work/or be participating in another approved activity, and-be willing to take any suitable job that you are capable of doing, including full-time, part-time and casual jobs (Department of Human Services 2012).

<sup>30</sup> The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is offered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and entitles holders of humanitarian visas and migrants to free English classes.

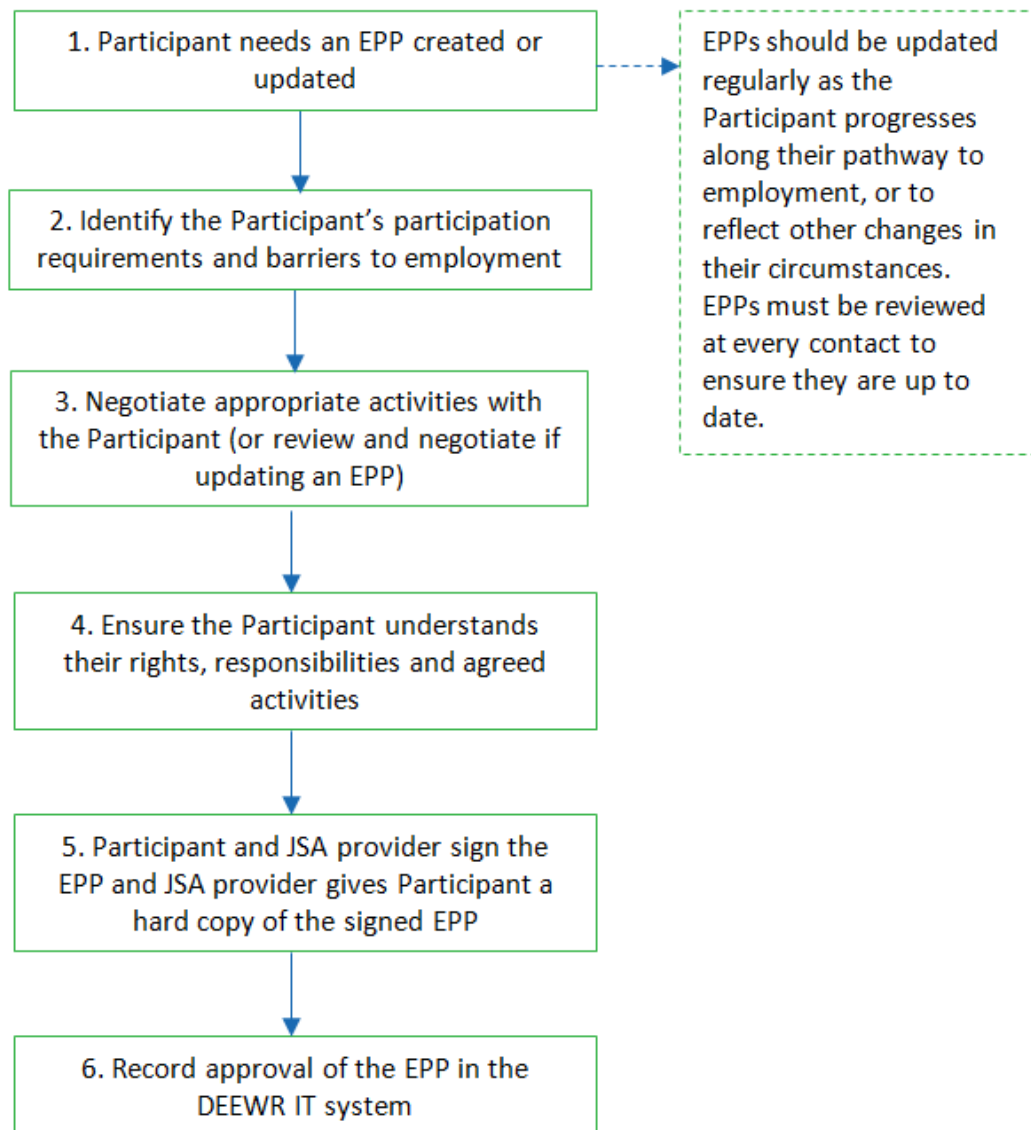
<sup>31</sup> JSA and Disability Employment Services (DES) are employment-service providers that help job seekers and participants find employment. An EEP can be updated by JSA as well as Centrelink (see Appendix 3: ‘Issues Arising From Modes of Product and Service Delivery under Public Sector Reform’).



require a job seeker to enter into or vary an EPP, approve the terms of an EPP, and suspend or cancel an EPP” (Guide to Social Security Law 2012).

Figure 6.2 demonstrates how an EEP is created.

**Figure 6.2:** Creating and Updating an Employment Pathway Plan



Source: Job Services Australia 2011

Even though the steps in Figure 6.2 are essential for creating or updating an EPP, the content of an EPP differs from case to case. An EPP is an individually tailored contract that considers recipients' circumstances and conditions. In line with this, the JSA implements a 'stream' classification to determine the level of support and assistance each participant/jobseeker is eligible for and requires. These streams indicate what activities could be considered norms in each individual case.

There are four streams:

- Stream 1, for job seekers who are work-ready
- Stream 2, for job seekers with relatively moderate barriers to employment
- Stream 3, for job seekers with relatively significant barriers to employment
- Stream 4, for job seekers with severe barriers to employment (JSA 2011).

The JSA officer placed Ms X in Stream 3 based on the fact that her writing, reading and other communication skills needed improving. The JSA officer believed that her lack of English had prevented Ms X from having sufficient work experience and being work-ready. Streams 2 and 3 provide job seekers/participants with more support than Stream 1. "This could include help to develop your skills, training in job search techniques, programs to help with English, programs to help with reading, writing and math, or help to overcome personal barriers preventing you from getting a job" (JSA 2011). Ms X was referred to a Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) offered through her local Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institution. She was allocated a block of 200 hours for this course and she received a referral letter to exempt her from paying a tuition fee. She was

also advised that she needed to study for 15 hours per week (30 hours per fortnight) to meet the participation requirement. Ms X was also asked to report any changes, as they might affect her entitlement. She was also booked to attend a participation interview in 12 weeks to review her participation requirements. Ms X signed her EPP, thus making it a legal document. Ms X was made aware that, for the next 12 weeks, the continuity of her payment depended on her attendance at her LLNP course.

The EPP and its specified participation requirements meant that Ms X was subject to MO, which introduced a disciplinary mode for her activities (attend LLNP course, report any changes, attend participation interview, and accept any job offer). The EPP determined the 'norm' in relation to Ms X's activities. It is this part of MO that judged Ms X's activities according to the requirements for continuity of her payment. Ms X would also be assessed in her upcoming interview against the norms (participation requirements specified in the EPP) for her eligibility and continuity of PPS payment. In her next review appointment, Ms X's EPP would be updated and a new set of participation requirements would be negotiated and determined from the options below:

- Job search requirements
- Referrals to employment services providers
- Paid work
- Referrals to specialised assistance, **and**
- Other approved activities that you will undertake now or in the future to improve your chances of finding work (Department of Human Services 2012).

The following is another example that demonstrates what happens in the next stage for a PPS recipient when her child turns eight.

Ms Y was a 34-year-old mother of three; her elder children were aged 13 and 10 and the youngest would soon be eight. Ms Y received a letter from Centrelink advising her that she would no longer be entitled to the PPS payment from the date her youngest child turned eight, and that she should contact Centrelink to test her eligibility for a different payment. Ms Y contacted Centrelink via telephone and was given the opportunity to test her eligibility for the Newstart Allowance (NSA). Ms Y completed her intention to claim for the NSA and booked an appointment with her JSA provider to update her EPP.

Under the NSA, Ms Y would be required to look for paid work and pass an activity test. The difference now was that her participation was not limited to 30 hours per fortnight, but was now full-time; for example, full-time employment.

## ***6.6. COMPLIANCE SYSTEM***

Recipients are obliged to comply with the conditions of their EPP to receive payments from Centrelink. A compliance system was introduced under welfare reform to determine the level of participation and to specify how accountable a welfare recipient is toward the government. The compliance system specifies different types of non-adherence to participation requirements. There are four types of failure: no-show, no-pay failures; connection failures; reconnection failures; and serious failures.

### **6.6.1. No-Show, No-Pay Failures**

Recipients lose a day's income support for each day they:

- do not participate in a compulsory activity included in [their] Employment Pathway Plan (such as training or Work for the Dole) without a valid reason

- do not attend a job interview without a valid reason, or
  - attend a job interview but deliberately act in a way that results in a job offer not being made
- (Department of Human Services 2014).

#### **6.6.2. Connection Failures**

A connection failure is noted when a recipient does not attend an appointment without a valid reason. This type of failure does not impose a financial penalty; however, a new appointment must be arranged by Centrelink. Centrelink uses SMS and email to remind recipients of their appointments. To use these services, recipients need to register with Centrelink to receive reminders (Department of Human Services 2014).

#### **6.6.3. Reconnection Failures**

A reconnection failure is noted if the recipient does not attend the new appointment without a valid reason. In this situation the recipient loses the PPS until they attend the appointment. The recipient is not entitled to any back payment for the time missed (Department of Human Services 2014).

#### **6.6.4. Serious Failures**

A serious failure may be noted if the recipient deliberately and persistently does not comply with participation requirements or refuses any suitable job offer without providing a valid reason. The penalty for these failures is an eight-week non-payment period. However, payment can be reinstated if the recipient participates in a Compliance Activity. Those who are not able to undertake any Compliance Activity but who would be in severe hardship as

a result of the application of the penalty may also have their payment reinstated (Department of Human Services 2014).

#### **6.6.5. Comprehensive Compliance Assessments**

In situations where the recipient has difficulty meeting requirements, as demonstrated by not attending activities or appointments, Centrelink conducts a Comprehensive Compliance Assessment to address the need for more or different assistance in meeting requirements (Department of Human services 2014).

#### **6.7. EXEMPTION FROM PARTICIPATION**

Recipients may be temporarily exempted from their participation requirements in special circumstances (Centrelink 2010). An exempted recipient need not undertake the activities agreed to in the EPP. Some circumstances that may permit an exemption include being a foster carer, homeschooling and distance education, having four or more dependent children in the recipient's care, caring for a child not one's own under a family-law order, caring for a child with a disability or medical condition or experiencing domestic violence or a relationship breakdown (Department of Human Services 2013).

#### **6.8. CENTRELINK'S OBLIGATIONS**

While an investigation of Centrelink's obligations is not the aim of this research, this section attempts to provide an understanding of the terms of compliance of the other accountable party (Centrelink, on behalf of the government) within the discourse of MO. Centrelink's obligations are based on the contracts-Business Partnership Agreements

(BPAs)-it has with client agencies. BPAs are sources of revenue for Centrelink; in return, Centrelink is required to deliver specified services on behalf of these client agencies (policy agencies) according to performance indicators specified in the BPA (Centrelink Annual Report 2002-03, 2003-04).

Centrelink takes a technical approach to accountability, where accountability is regarded as procedural, and little attention is paid to its ethical dimension. “Increasing reliance on performance measures (Robinson, 2003), financial reports (Stanton, 1997), limited audit investigations (English, 2003) and political debate that centres on a statistical or numerical discussion of events (Rose, 1991)” are evidence of Centrelink’s emphasis on the technical dimension of accountability (cited in Andrew 2007, p. 879). Centrelink’s public accountability, as articulated in welfare reforms, is specified within the framework of New Public Management (NPM). Accountability within this framework takes more of a procedural form, emphasising efficiency and effectiveness. “For the procedural functions of accountability to be satisfied there must be access to information that facilitates necessary scrutiny” (Andrew 2007, p. 888). Bezdek (2001) addresses methods of monitoring that “include the review of contractor reports and inspections or observations, but also may include citizen surveys or reliance on citizen complaints” (p. 1569). Information gathered by these methods is important “to ensure that social institutions are constantly under review and challenged to improve the quality of their services” (Andrew 2007, p. 888).

## **6.9. CONCLUSION**

MO is the backbone of WTW welfare reform and is fully integrated into the PPS payment.

This chapter investigated MO discourse as it appears in public documents. Van Dijk’s

(1993) framework was applied, enabling the researcher to explore the communicative relationships and structure of MO discourse.

Participation is encouraged within welfare reform. This chapter investigated this concept and identified that participation was not reached to the point of empowerment. In other words, social-welfare recipients are not granted empowerment under welfare reform; rather they are given a chance to participate. Participation within the context of welfare reform is a well-structured instrument used by the government to encourage social-welfare recipients to be accountable and adhere to their obligations. On the other hand, the notion of empowerment is lacking within the context of welfare reform, as the element of choice is almost nonexistent (this element is the factor that shifts participation towards empowerment). It indicates that PPS recipients are subject to MO, which is more of an obligation, as opposed to accountability, which brings with it empowerment and an eventual exit from the welfare system.

The next chapter investigates the Foucauldian theme of discipline to reflect on the power relationships in the discourse of MO.



## CHAPTER 7

### APPLICATION OF FOUCAULDIAN DISCIPLINE IN MUTUAL OBLIGATION OF PARENTING PAYMENT SINGLE RECIPIENTS

#### *7.1. INTRODUCTION*

In the welfare reform literature the concept of Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients' accountability is presented as co-accountability or mutual obligation (MO), where the government and social-welfare recipients are both accountable to the welfare system. The government's responsibility is to provide resources and job opportunities (Ferguson 2000), and the welfare recipients are required to actively look for work and improve their skills in return for welfare (Welfare-reform legislation 1997, 2003, 2006).

The rationale of MO is as follows:

[MO] is about helping people avoid and move out of welfare dependency and giving them real opportunities. And, it is about people on government payments accepting responsibility and an obligation to help themselves by making a contribution to the economy and society as much as they can (Newman 1999a, p. 1).

Different rationales have overshadowed Australian welfare policies since the introduction of welfare in this country. These welfare rationales have included: 'relief'<sup>32</sup> (1900-mid

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<sup>32</sup> Kewley (1973, pp.151-152) notes that under the welfare rationale of relief "governments [of each Australian state] mainly confined themselves to the provision of relief works, providing subsidies to charitable organizations and, in some cases, granting subsistence to families in need".

1930s), ‘full employment’<sup>33</sup> (1940s-1960s) and ‘mutual obligation’ (1970s-present) (Harris 2001). The third welfare rationale, that of MO, has been adopted by both the Australian Labor party (ALP) and the Coalition (Liberal and National parties): “in their public accounts of employment policy, both Labor and the Coalition have used similar terms: Labor, ‘reciprocal obligation’; the Coalition, ‘mutual obligation’” (Harris 2001, p. 19).

The widespread neo-liberalism in the time of the Howard government, which was also predominant during the Hawke and Keating governments in spite of their political stance (Beeson & Firth 1998), was a common ground for change and reform entailing “a systematic programme of deregulation and privatisation in line with the neoliberal ideology of minimalist government and the philosophy of individual responsibility” (Hartman 2002, p. 85).

Wilson and Turnbull (2001, p. 391) note that “one of the most important and contentious parts of the Coalition Government’s reform agenda has been in the area of social welfare”, where welfare fraud<sup>34</sup> and boosting resources to overcome fraud were nominated as an election campaign issue by the Howard government (Dunlevy & Hannon 1997; Kingston 1996; Prenzler 2010). Wilson and Turnbull (2001, p. 391) further note that the Howard

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<sup>33</sup> Full employment “involved a fundamental recasting of social as well as economic objectives.... Social welfare became an integral part of economic planning as it provided the preconditions for the security to plan, work, spend and invest” (Harris 2001, p. 13) and “the social order on which the rationality of full employment rested was one in which men and women played distinctly different roles. In the main it was male full employment that was under consideration (Harris 2001, p.14).

<sup>34</sup> Benefit fraud is defined “as any form of payment or other financial support which a citizen may be able to claim from a government, at any level” (Reeve 2006, p. 37).

election campaign was “targeting immigration, welfare and the unemployed in particular”. This government “defined welfare *as a problem* associated with ‘dependency culture’ and linked reforms to *specific social groups* (single mothers, young unemployed, new migrants)” (Wilson & Turnbull 2001, p. 396, emphasis in the original text).

The Howard government implemented what Hartman (2005) refers to as ‘anti-welfare rhetoric’ and justified its actions as preventing welfare cheating (Vanstone 2002). Then Senator Amanda Vanstone (2002) stated, “Lower-income people in a job are my greatest motivation for getting at welfare cheats” and “I don’t see why someone on a low income should work hard and have their taxes taken and watch as the Government doesn’t exercise its full power to ensure those taxes are spent diligently”. The notion of self-esteem was another factor put forward by the Howard government in their pursuit of welfare reform. Paid employment was considered ‘a major source of self-esteem’ without which “people can fail to develop, or become disengaged from, employment, family and community networks. This can lead to physical and psychological ill health and reduced life opportunities for parents and their children”<sup>35</sup> (McClure 2000a, p. 3).

Even though NPM was the dominant paradigm of thought at the time of initiation and in the implementation of MO, not much emphasis has been placed on individualism and empowering individuals, an important element within the notion of NPM (Chapter 6). This is also reflected in the ongoing changes that have been made to the PPS payment. The changes to the PPS payment that were implemented beginning January 2013 have resulted

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<sup>35</sup> Lower levels of self-esteem are common among the unemployed (McKee-Ryan *et al.*, 2005; Creed *et al.*, 2009; Manfusa & Jackson, 1994), and people with low self-esteem are less motivated to ‘repair’ their moods and overcome the adverse effects that result (Heimpel *et al.*, 2002).

in 68,000 PPS recipients moving to the Newstart Allowance (NSA) as their youngest child turned eight (7.30 Report, ABC). This has raised number of concerns and is considered a sensitive issue. Labor senator, Doug Cameron states “I didn’t join the party to take \$100 a week off single parents and I think there’s a real angst in the party that we’ve gone to this stage”. Labor MP, Stephen Jones said, “I criticised the policy in 2006 when it was introduced back then. I haven’t changed my view about my concerns about moving people off one benefit onto a lower benefit, particularly where you’re not providing the support and other additional assistance to get them into the workforce” (7.30 Report, ABC).

Besides the issue of fairness there is also a view that questions the appropriateness of the NSA as the substitute payment for those recipients of the PPS who are moved out of this payment. Kathy Lee from Single Parents Action Group states, “Single parents need their own payment system. And with 68 per cent of single parents already working in one form or another, why are we on an unemployment benefit?” Feminist commentator Eva Cox says, “all of the people that are transferred by the time their child turns eight have been on compulsory JobSearch since their child turned six, so the idea that moving them onto Newstart provides them with the incentive to actually look for a job is rubbish” (7.30 Report, ABC).

The welfare state in Australia instead offers “most notably the support of a capitalist dynamic and the process of constructing ‘docile bodies’ rather than active citizens...[through] “the contribution to the continued health of a capitalist economy, the maintenance of social cohesion and social control” (Hartman 2005, p. 64). This chapter acknowledges the social control and the selectiveness of the Howard government in

implementing notions of NPM in their policies. It argues that MO discourse is the centrepiece of disciplinary practices within the context of Australian welfare reform and considers MO more of a disciplinary instrument used to exercise power than one that encourages accountability, which carries empowerment within itself.

The application of Foucauldian discipline in this research assisted the researcher in identifying elements of control and power exercised through the discourse of MO. Foucault (2007) classifies discipline as one form of power, the other two being sovereignty and governmental management. He refers to these forms of power as a 'triangle' "which has the population as its main target" (p. 108). The application of Foucauldian discipline in this chapter in combination with the discussion of the communicative relationship of MO discourse in Chapter 6, demonstrates Foucault's acknowledgement of both power relationships and communicative relationships in the process of subjugation (in this case, the subjugation of PPS recipients to MO).

## ***7.2. FOUCAULDIAN DISCIPLINE***

Foucault (1995) notes that 'political anatomy' is a mechanism of power: "it define[s] how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines" (p. 138). Foucauldian disciplinary paradigms and techniques are a way to describe a political anatomy where "discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (p.139). In other words, "discipline is a political anatomy of detail" (p. 139).

According to Foucault, disciplinary techniques create ‘docile bodies’: “the organization, disciplining and subjection of the human body in such a way as to provide a submissive, productive and trained source of labour power” (McNay 1994, p. 92). Upcoming sections of this chapter provide details of elements within the structure of MO that are consistent with Foucauldian disciplinary techniques and regulate welfare recipients’ behaviour in a way determined by the MO discourse. Foucault (1995) says that “discipline organizes an analytical space” (p. 143) where “[its] elements are interchangeable” (p. 145). For Foucault, discipline incorporates three paradigms for analysis: ‘docile bodies’, ‘the means of correct training’ and ‘panopticism’, where each of these includes and elaborates on specific analytical techniques. “Foucault argues that disciplinary methods intensify the link between an ‘increased aptitude’ and an ‘increased domination’, producing ‘subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile bodies’” (McNay 1994, p. 102). The techniques of Foucauldian discipline used in this research are extracted from Foucault’s (1995) book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Chapter 4, Section 4.3 of this thesis). “*Discipline and Punish* (DP), originally published as *Surveiller et Punir*, is best understood as one part of a broader effort that Foucault makes to depict the mix of forces and phenomena that arose in the context of the industrial revolution” (Ransom 1997, p. 28).

### **7.3. APPLICATION OF FOUCAULDIAN DISCIPLINE IN MUTUAL OBLIGATION**

There are several power groups, including government, the media (publications, TV, radio, Internet), welfare groups and organisations, such as the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), and employer groups, such as the Australian Industry Group (AIG), who hold views and comment on social welfare. However, within the Australian welfare system, the government is an exceptional power

group. The government influences and persuades welfare payment recipients in three ways: through access, command and controlling the context. The Australian government has access to the public discourse of welfare payments, and takes a ‘symbolic’ position (through the exercise of command) from which it can enact policies and enforce rules governing the obligations of recipients. The government also controls the context by “controlling the participants and their roles” (Van Dijk 1997a, p. 21). These ways of exercising power (especially ‘controlling the context’) have enabled the government to set strategies that influence the behaviour of social-welfare recipients; in other words, controlling the participants and their roles. One method of the government’s influence is through the implementation of ‘discipline’. “For Foucault, discipline is a set of strategies, procedures and ways of behaving which are associated with certain institutional contexts and which then permeate ways of thinking and behaving in general” (Mills 2003, p. 44). The following sections of this chapter investigate disciplinary strategies and procedures that are implemented in the context of welfare reform through the discourse of MO.

### **7.3.1. The Docile-Bodies Paradigm; The Art of Distribution Techniques: Enclosure and Partitioning in the Discourse of Mutual Obligation**

Foucault (1995) states, “discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space” (p. 141), and more specifically “by the careful distribution of individuals over general purpose, self-contained places of confinement” (Macintosh 1994, p. 222). ‘Enclosure’ and ‘partitioning’ are among the disciplinary techniques in the docile-bodies paradigm and are identifiable within the context of welfare reform as part of the implementation of MO. For social-welfare recipients, enclosure and partitioning take the form of eligibility requirements for payments, which are initially classified according to the assistance

required and the claimant's condition (e.g., NSA for the unemployed, Youth Allowance for full-time students under 25 years of age and the PP for parents who are the principal carers of their young children).

However, Foucault (1995) notes, "the principle of enclosure is neither constant, nor indispensable, nor sufficient in disciplinary machinery" (p. 143). Instead, he introduces a much more flexible and detailed principle, which he calls "the principle of elementary location or *partitioning*" where "each individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (p. 143, emphasis in the original text). Enclosure on its own does not fully classify recipients of welfare, as individuals who might come under the same classification might vary in their age, marital status and whether they are a student or a job seeker. To position each individual in the right 'space', the technique of partitioning is instead applied to social-welfare payments. The PP is further classified based on the parent's marital status (partnered or sole). For the NSA, age is the partitioning factor (22 years and older but less than the aged-pension age). Job seekers under 22 are categorised under the Youth Allowance: jobseeker (the status of Youth Allowance: full-time student is allocated to those under 22 who are undertaking full-time study). Centrelink's application of these two techniques to claimants of welfare payments ensures that welfare recipients receive the right payment, directs them towards active social and economic participation, and ultimately produces governable bodies who are compliant social-welfare recipients, enabling easier governance. The following example is an illustration of these techniques in action.



Lili was a 23-year-old university graduate who had not been able to find employment. She has no means of financial support or any assets. She had contacted Centrelink for assistance. To direct her towards the right payment, ‘enclosure’ was applied. Lili was classified as a ‘job seeker’; the classification specified the reason for her claim, which was unemployment. However, this was not enough, and the further criterion of ‘age’ was considered; as she was over 22 years of age she could test her eligibility for the NSA rather than the Youth Allowance. This is an illustration of ‘partitioning’, which would determine the correct payment for Lili.

The idea of reform and change is an ongoing feature of the Australian welfare system, and also has an impact on the extent and coverage of disciplinary techniques. The recent change in the eligibility criteria in regards to the qualifying age of children for PPS recipients is an example. From January 2013 PPS recipients whose youngest child has turned eight are offered an eligibility test for the NSA. This also means that these techniques are subject to variation and adjustment under welfare reform.

### **7.3.2. The Docile-Bodies Paradigm; The Control of Activity Techniques: The Timetable Technique and the Discourse of Mutual Obligation**

Foucault (1995) associates discipline with time and states that discipline “must also be understood as machinery for adding up and capitalizing time” (p. 157). The timetable is a technique from the docile-bodies paradigm that “programs the individual” (Macintosh 1994, p. 223). This technique is identifiable in MO discourse where Centrelink organises/regulates welfare recipients’ time for them to be eligible for payment. The element of time is vital in MO discourse as it enables Centrelink to have control over

welfare recipients. The following sections identify the applicability of the timetable technique within various elements of MO.

#### ***7.3.2.1. Timetable and waiting periods***

The timetable technique is evident in MO discourse in the form of ‘waiting periods’.

Waiting periods<sup>36</sup> are considered to be one of the requirements of eligibility for the PPS.

Several types of waiting period are evident as part of the eligibility criteria under MO discourse. ‘Newly arrived resident’ is a two-year waiting period that applies to claimants of the PPS who are newly arrived in Australia and do not hold a refugee or humanitarian visa. The other waiting period that subjects a PPS claimant to the element of time is the ‘income-maintenance period’, which is applicable in situations where PPS claimants have received some sort of entitlement from their previous job, such as a redundancy package,<sup>37</sup> long-service leave, annual leave, maternity leave or sick leave. The waiting period is for the whole period that the claimant is covered by such entitlements.

PPS claimants are also subject to two other waiting periods, as determined by the claimants’ financial status. First, a ‘liquid-assets waiting period’ of up to 13 weeks applies to PPS claimants with liquid assets of \$6,000 or more. This waiting period is applied once a year and can be served concurrently with the income-maintenance period. Second, a ‘seasonal-work preclusion period’ applies to those PPS recipients “who work seasonally, intermittently, casually or on a contract and receive higher than average income from these

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<sup>36</sup> “A waiting period is the amount of time...[PPS claimants/recipients] have to wait before [they] can get a payment” (Centrelink 2011).

<sup>37</sup> The ‘rolled-over’ portion covered by the employer is exempt from the Income Maintenance Period (Centrelink 2011).

jobs [and] will have a period when income support payments are not payable” (Centrelink 2011). This second waiting period is demonstrated in the following example.

Tina was a PPS recipient who was subject to the ‘seasonal-work preclusion period’ waiting period. She was a full time fruit picker in the summer months, and during this time she received nil PPS payments. In this case her payment was not cancelled (as the total period of nil payment was not more than 13 weeks) due to her job being seasonal and temporary.

Foucault (1995) states that discipline “must also be understood as machinery for adding up and capitalizing time” (p. 157). Foucault outlines four ways to capitalise on time, and these are evident in the waiting periods. The first way is to “divide duration into successive or parallel segments, each of which must end at a specific time...in short, break down time into separate and adjusted threads” (p. 157). This approach is reflected in the waiting-period element of MO, where all waiting periods are specified in terms of duration and are broken down into separate periods of time, which have a beginning and an end. The second Foucauldian way to capitalise on time “organize[s] these threads [from the first method] according to an analytical plan” (p. 157). Accordingly, waiting periods are organised according to financial and residency status, which provides Centrelink with the analytical tools to make decisions about the length of time each PPS claimant needs to wait to meet the criteria for the payment.

In the third approach, a decision is made about “how long each [time period] will last and conclude[s]...with an examination”, which then leads to the fourth way, which “draw[s] up series of series; lay[ing] down for each individual, according to his level, his seniority, his rank, the exercises that are suited to him” (Foucault 1995, pp. 157-158). These two methods are also applicable to waiting periods and, in fact, complete the previous ways. Centrelink

determines each claimant's waiting period based on the individual's circumstances and examines these circumstances by requesting documentations such as visas (to determine residency), bank statements, letters from previous employers and pay slips for the other waiting periods mentioned previously, from the claimant.

Using the example of Tina, the four ways of capitalising on time are demonstrated for seasonal- work waiting periods as follows. Tina's payment was fortnightly (every second Thursday), which also meant she was required to report any income earned within this period on her specified day (every second Tuesday). She had advised Centrelink about the nature of her employment (which was seasonal), so even if she received nil payment for the 13 consecutive weeks, her PPS would not be cancelled. Finally, her earnings were examined and verified and her pay slips for the entire period of employment were lodged for Centrelink to determine the correct entitlement for the period.

#### ***7.3.2.2. Timetable and interviews***

One of the participation requirements highlighted in MO discourse that incorporates an element of time and the application of the timetable technique is the interview. Once PPS claimants register an 'intent to claim', they are advised to either attend an arranged interview (in a specified time) or show up for a walk-in appointment with Centrelink (Centrelink 2011). In addition to the one-off New Claim Appointment interview, there are mandatory ongoing interviews to discuss recipients' ongoing participation. These interviews are set on a 12-weekly basis; however, the frequency might change according to a recipient's personal situation. Interview appointments are confirmed two weeks in advance (Department of Human Services 2013). Centrelink's arranged interviews are not

only an example of the timetable technique, but they are also a demonstration of the communicative relationship between the government, as an elite group that has access to public discourse (welfare payments), and recipients, who are subject to requirements (social and economic participation and adherence to MO). Centrelink here has ‘privileged or preferential access to discourse’-in other words, “active access to the very communicative event as such, that is, to the situation...[where] (elite) participants may control the occasion, time, place, setting and the presence or absence of participants in such events” (Van Dijk 1993, pp. 259-260). This is an indication of the control and the dominant position the government holds through the ‘interview’ element of MO over the PPS recipients who are required to attend otherwise they risk suspension of their payment unless they provide a reasonable excuse (e.g., medical). In this case the interview will be rescheduled for another time, which requires the PPS recipients to adjust their personal schedule to attend the interview.

#### ***7.3.2.3. Timetable and lodgment requirements***

This technique is in evidence from the moment a claimant applies for the PPS payment. PPS claimants must provide the required documents and complete any additional forms based on their individual case within 14 days of their ‘intent to claim’ (Centrelink 2011). This is demonstrated in the following example. Mary applied for PPS payment over the phone on 1 March 2013. Even though Centrelink aims to arrange a new claim appointment within 14 days for every new claimant, the first available appointment at Mary’s local Centrelink was on 17 March 2013. Mary was advised over the phone that she was required to lodge documents and forms within 14 days of her initial contact; that is, prior to her appointment. If Mary provided the documents within 14 days and was later determined to

be eligible for the payment, her payment would be backdated to the date of her initial contact, 1 March 2013.

#### ***7.3.2.4. The timetable and the Employment Pathway Plan***

The timetable technique is also evident in the Employment Pathway Plan (EPP). The participation requirements for PPS recipients can be either regular and ongoing or a one-off activity based on the recipient's circumstances; in either case, participation requirements incorporate a timetable. For example, a PPS claimant who is not competent in literacy and numeracy will be required to participate in the Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) for 10 to 20 hours each week; the program is offered in blocks of 200 hours (Department of Human Services 2014). The element of time here is an important issue as it determines the eligibility of PPS recipients and is a controlling measure that is used to determine the continuity of payment.

#### **7.3.3. The Docile-Bodies Paradigm: The Control of Activity Techniques, Dressage and Mutual Obligation**

Dressage has “emerged as a highly effective mechanism for disciplining time” (Macintosh 1994, p. 224). It is characterised by “the strict timetabling, systematic procedures, and precise rhythm of the management control process” (Macintosh 1994, p. 239). However, Foucault extends this paradigm: according to dressage, “discipline is no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine [system]” (Foucault 1995, p. 164). Jackson and Carter (1998) state that dressage “contains significant connotations of performance” (p. 58). Dressage “requires the body to perform, requires knowing acts

which, implicitly or explicitly, demonstrate compliance to whatever demands the controller seeks to have satisfied” (p. 58). It “places the body in a world of signals, each with a moral imperative and each requiring instantaneous response” (Macintosh 1994, p. 224).

The following sections investigate the applicability of dressage in MO discourse, which includes a) discipline as denotation of dressage and MO; b) taming as a denotation of dressage and MO; c) signalisation and MO; and d) performance as a connotation of dressage and MO.

#### ***7.3.3.1. Discipline as a denotation of dressage and MO***

Jackson and Carter (1998) identify discipline as one aspect of dressage. The goal of discipline is “for everything to be done that should be done, and done at the right time and in the ways prescribed” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 56). Discipline as a denotation of dressage is evident in the EPP agreements of PPS recipients that specify participation requirements and their obligations.

Declaration of income<sup>38</sup> is an example of an obligation of PPS recipients that is specified: they are required to report any income earned for the period of reporting to ensure that their entitlement is correct. The reporting frequency is usually monthly, although it might vary based on the recipient’s situation. Reporting is usually done by lodging a ‘Reporting

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<sup>38</sup> ‘Income amount’ means:

- personal earnings (i.e., earnings for work performed including wages, salaries, bonuses, penalty rates, overtime, commission or honoraria, and stipends)
- monies (i.e., legal tender, cash)
- valuable consideration (i.e., you receive goods, services or some other benefit in exchange for some item, action or promise) profits (i.e., the amount of earnings in excess of its expenses, whether of a capital nature or not) (Centrelink 2011).

Statement' (also called an Application for Payment), which can be done in person, online or by phone-based self-service (Department of Human Services 2013).

As part of the EPP, Amy was issued a reporting statement that required her to lodge fortnightly and report her income for the period. Her reporting day was every second Tuesday and she used the self-service telephone facility to report her income. This requirement meant that Amy developed a compliant behavior: reporting on the right day resulted in Amy receiving her payment on Thursday, and any delay in her reporting also delayed her PPS payment; furthermore, failure to report might result in suspension of her payment. This element of EPP introduced discipline and routine into Amy's activities as well as an awareness of the consequences of non-compliance.

Once Centrelink received Amy's declaration of income, it applied the following formula to determine the right payment for the period:

- For maximum payment, your [PPS recipient] income must be no more than \$176.60, plus \$24.60 for each additional child, per fortnight. Income over this amount reduces your [PPS] payment by 40 cents in the dollar.
- A part payment may be available if your [PPS recipient] income is less than \$1,835.85, plus \$24.60 for each additional child, per fortnight (or possibly a higher figure if you are eligible for Pharmaceutical Allowance) (Department of Human Services 2013).

Amy earned \$1,508.76 for the fortnight ending Tuesday 19 March 2013, which was also her reporting day. Applying the above formula and considering she had two children, she



was entitled to a part payment of \$170.32,<sup>39</sup> which would be in her bank account on Thursday 21 March 2013.

#### ***7.3.3.2. Taming as a denotation of dressage and MO***

The second aspect of dressage, taming, is defined as “to tame or habituate to obedience” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 56). This aspect consists of three levels. First, “[a]t a primary level there is the straight-forward issue of accepting the requirement of submission to discipline” (p. 56). Also at this level “it is required to attend on certain days at certain times in certain places and to deliver a certain amount of finished work, however measured and in whatever time scale” (p. 57). The second level “concerns the modification and manipulation of behaviour in ways desired by those in control”. The focus of this level is to identify and model the ideal worker, “who is not only obedient but is willing to modify any behaviour which managers might define as deviant, and thereby to symbolize their submission to control” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 57). The third level of taming as a denotation of dressage “centres on the idea that work has intrinsic value” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 57), which is seen by ‘governors’ as good for the ‘governed’, “who must therefore be encouraged, or if need be compelled, to do lots of it” (Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 57).

All three levels of taming are identifiable within the context of WTW reform. Taming within MO discourse begins with the acceptance of requirements and a submission to discipline by PPS recipients in agreeing to an EPP. Within this level of taming subjects are also required to attend ‘interview-like’ meetings to report on their work for the specified period of time. Arranged interviews for PPS recipients are compatible with this level-one

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<sup>39</sup> The maximum fortnightly payment for the PPS was \$683.50 (this amount was current from 20 March 2013 to 19 September 2013). Amy was not eligible for the pharmaceutical allowance; otherwise she would be entitled to a higher payment.

feature of taming as a denotation of dressage, as they require the same thing from PPS recipients. At these interviews, recipients are required to attend Centrelink/Job Services Australia provider offices at a specific time and day to discuss or report on their participation requirements, and to have their participation activities measured against their individual agreements to determine their adherence to their obligations. If the PPS recipients' participation activities do not conform to the obligations specified in their individual EPP, they are required to modify their behaviour to adhere to their obligations and submit to their individual EPP (level two of taming), which is the control device; otherwise they will be subject to compliance.

The ultimate goal in implementing MO was for PPS recipients to enter into employment. The Howard government considered employment as an ideal source of income. Thus "a key issue for welfare reform [was] to ensure that increased opportunities for social and economic participation [were] made available to complement the changes to the income support system that [would] provide greater support and incentives for employment" (McClure 2000b, p. 45) (level three of taming). In line with these, Welfare to Work (WTW) initiated changes to encourage employment. It could be argued that taming is the technique applicable to the whole concept of MO, not just MO discourse. Social welfare contributes to an individual's financial needs while that person is looking for employment. However, there are conditions and requirements (e.g., interviews, lodgment requirements) as well as facilities and assistance (e.g., job-search services, training) to lead that person to employment.

#### ***7.3.3.3. Signalisation and MO***

Foucault (1995) discusses the concept of ‘signalisation’ within the context of dressage. He opens the discussion by stating that dressage “requires a precise system of command...[in which] the order does not need to be explained or formulated; it must trigger off the required behaviour and that is enough” (p. 166). Foucault then states that signalisation “is a question not of understanding the injunction but of perceiving the signal and reacting to it immediately, according to a more or less artificial, prearranged code” (p. 166).

Signalisation in the context of dressage is another disciplinary practice identifiable within the discourse of MO. An EPP is an agreement between PPS recipients and Centrelink that specifies the recipients’ participation requirements and obligations. In other words, it contains a ‘code of signals’ (specified obligations, activities and requirements) that, once signed by the recipient, indicates that the recipient has ‘learnt the code of signal’ and is expected to ‘respond automatically’ to the participation requirements. In other words, EPP “place[s] the bodies [PPS recipients] in a little world of signals to each of which is attached a single, obligatory response” (Foucault1995, p. 166).

A reporting statement is an example of signalisation within the structure of MO. The receipt of a reporting statement is a signal to the recipient, who knows that it needs to be filled out and returned by the due date to receive payment. If the recipient does not lodge the form, the corresponding code in the compliance system will be the delay/suspension of payment. The compliance system also contains a signalisation aspect. Recipients are expected to ‘perceive the signal’ and ‘react to it’ according to ‘prearranged codes’; cases of non-adherence to these codes are dealt with according to the compliance system. In addition, each EPP is “rationalized and justified in terms of a greater, collective interest”

(Jackson & Carter 1998, p. 51), which is finding employment and contributing to developing a better system of welfare.

Foucault (1995) specifies, “even verbal orders [are] to function as elements of signalization” (p. 167). This phrase extends the concept of signalisation within MO discourse from EPP, which is in written format to include the phone interviews arranged for PPS recipients, where Centrelink submits its ‘code of signals’ for that particular interview using verbal communication. This phrase also covers PPS recipients’ phone calls to Centrelink for advice (their code of signals) and to report their earnings over the phone (using the self-service options).

#### ***7.3.3.4. Performance as a connotation of dressage and MO***

Jackson and Carter (1998) state that dressage “contains significant connotations of performance” that “requires the body to perform, requires knowing acts which, implicitly or explicitly, demonstrate compliance to whatever demands the controller seeks to have satisfied” (p. 58). Performance as a connotation of dressage is also reflected within MO discourse through a set of participation requirements. PPS recipients are expected to understand the terms and conditions of their EPP, as it requires their signature and is considered a legal document from then on. PPS recipients are required to comply with their EPP and participate so as to avoid any non-adherence and subsequent failure. In other words they need to perform in accordance with and at the level required by their EPP.

#### ***7.4. THE PARADIGM OF THE MEANS OF CORRECT TRAINING***

Foucault (1995) states, “The success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination” (p. 170). Cronin (1996) points out that these techniques make disciplinary power productive, as they are “designed to control bodily behavior in a continuous manner, [in which] the modern subject [an individual] is literally constituted as a vehicle of power and an object of knowledge” (p. 58), contrary to sovereign power, which is negative because it “prohibits behavior that does not conform to the law” (p. 58). Macintosh (1994) regards this paradigm as ‘disciplining minds’, in which “the chief function of the disciplinary power is to ‘train’, rather than to select and to levy; or, no doubt, to train in order to levy and select all the more” (Rabinow 1984, p. 188). However, to train individuals it is also necessary “to establish standards that will act as performance goals for each individual” (Ransom 1997, p. 47). This paradigm includes three techniques: hierarchical surveillance, normalisation and examination. The following sections demonstrate the applicability of this paradigm and its techniques within MO discourse.

##### **7.4.1. The Correct Training Paradigm: Hierarchical Surveillance and Mutual Obligation**

The hierarchical surveillance technique functions within an organisation “as an uninterrupted, anonymous, automatic, and indiscreet disciplinary gaze which [plays] out over the entire organization” (Macintosh 1994, p. 226). Its function is extended in cases where “by means of such surveillance, disciplinary power [becomes] an ‘integrated’

system, linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practiced” (Foucault 1995, p. 176).

MO discourse functions as this gaze within the context of welfare reform that plays out over the entire system of welfare reform. Since its introduction to welfare in 1997 it has been at the core of all welfare reforms, including Work for the Dole (WFD), Australians Working Together (AWT) and Welfare to Work (WTW). The concept of MO is reflected in every stage of reform, from setting the eligibility criteria for PPS claimants to the compliance system. This complete coverage over the entire system of welfare on the one hand, and being specific and detailed on the other, imposes an automatic and anonymous gaze over PPS recipients. Parker and Fopp (2005, p. 115) also refer to the extent of MO in the welfare system and confirm that “[t]his surveillance occurs at both the initial point of contact with Centrelink when applying for income support and when receiving payment on an ongoing basis”.

MO is “linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practiced” (Foucault 1995, p. 176). Budget deficits are considered one of the major factors contributing to the instigation of MO. This concept considers recipients of welfare reform and the government equally responsible for the recipients’ wellbeing. Employment is considered an ideal way for individuals to support themselves, which also eases government expenditure. MO is also linked to ‘building a better system of welfare’ through recipients’ obligation to social and economic participation, which makes individuals active and involved in their own wellbeing.

Foucault (1995, p. 177) states, “[The] power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery”. MO also functions ‘like a piece of machinery’, because all its elements are linked and follow a purpose, which is to direct the PPS recipient toward employment. In cases where this machinery is not applied as directed, the compliance system is considered to be a reference book.

#### **7.4.2. The Means of Correct Training Paradigm: Normalisation and Mutual Obligation**

Foucault (1995) states, “Like surveillance and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age” (p. 184). “By ‘normalization’, Foucault means “a system of finely gradated and measurable intervals in which individuals can be distributed around a norm-anorm which both organizes and is the result of this controlled distribution” (Rabinow 1984, p. 20). Foucault (1995) states that, “the power of the Norm appears through the disciplines”, which not only “imposes homogeneity; but...individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another” (p. 184).

Participation requirements represent a technique of normalisation within the context of WTW reform. They function as a ‘system’ that ‘measures’ individuals’ levels of participation. The activities of PPS recipients are measured against the participation requirements specified in their EPP; adherence to requirements positions recipients around the ‘norm’, while non-adherence to requirements positions them around the ‘anorm’. Participation requirements provide ‘homogeneity’ among PPS recipients: social and

economic participation is required from all recipients, even though this participation is 'individualised' by the fact that each recipient's circumstances are taken into account when determining these requirements. For example, a PPS recipient who is not competent in reading and writing is referred to the LLNP rather than to WFD.

Macintosh (1994) states that an individual under this technique is considered as "a thing to be corrected, normalized, and treated in accordance with the discursive practice of that particular discipline" (p. 228). The participations of PPS recipients is treated in accordance with their individual EPP. Once it is determined that their participation is 'anorm' then their action needs to be 'corrected' and 'normalised' to achieve the level that, according to their EPP, is considered 'norm'. This practice stems from the idea that "control in modern societies is achieved, therefore, not through direct repression but through more invisible strategies of normalization" (McNay 1994, p. 97).

#### ***7.4.2.1. The punishment schema of normalisation and Mutual Obligation***

Punishment, a schema discussed as a factor in normalisation, is a practice that "compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes" (Foucault 1995, p. 183). The punishment schema of the normalisation technique is implemented in MO discourse through a 'compliance system'. The compliance system is an important element of MO. It was introduced as part of welfare reforms to be implemented in cases where the obligation/participation of PPS recipients is considered 'anorm'; in other words when there are cases of non-adherence to individual EPPs.

The compliance system reflects on the Foucauldian punishment schema. It "refers individual actions to a whole that is at once a field of comparison". The compliance system



“differentiates individuals from one another” by specifying actions that lead to non-adherence; in other words, ‘anorm’ actions. It then “measures in quantitative terms” the degree of non-adherence/anorm action and, accordingly, “the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved” by locating the corresponding type of penalty. Finally the compliance system “traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences” by the differentiation set between the different types of penalties (Foucault 1995, pp. 182-183).

Foucault (1995) mentions the function of disciplinary punishment as ‘reducing gaps’ and therefore ‘essentially corrective’. He also adds that “the disciplinary systems favour punishments that are exercise intensified, multiplied forms of training, several times repeated” (p. 179). The penalties specified under the compliance system are set as disciplinary practices to ‘reduce gaps’ between non-adherence (anorm) and adherence (norm) type participations.

#### **7.4.3. The Means of Correct Training Paradigm: Examination and Mutual Obligation**

This technique “establishes over individuals a visibility through [which] when one differentiates them and judges them” (Foucault 1995, p. 184). Foucault (1995) mentions that “the practice of placing people under observation is a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures” (Foucault 1995, p. 227). The participation of PPS recipients is constantly observed and examined through various methods and procedures. Personal-contact interviews are one method of examination. During these, PPS recipients are questioned about their adherence to their obligation and whether they have met the participation requirements specified by their individual EPP.

Foucault (1995) believes that “the examination opened up two correlative possibilities: firstly, the constitution of the individual as a describable, analyzable object” (p. 190), and “[secondly,] the constitution of a comparative system that made possible the measurement of overall phenomena, the description of groups, the characterization of collective facts, the calculation of the gaps between individuals, their distribution in a given ‘population’” (p. 210). MO also carries these two possibilities. It subjects PPS recipients to the participation requirements specified in their individual EPP. This makes PPS recipients objects for analysis and examination to distinguish between those who adhere to their participation requirements (docile bodies) and those who do not (non-docile bodies).

Comparison between agreed activities specified in the EPP and the actual participation of recipients also characterises the participations as ‘norm’ when the outcome of comparison is positive, and ‘anorm’ when the outcome is negative. The compatibility of MO with the examination techniques also correlates MO with the notion of power within technique of examination, which, “instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects” (p. 187).

Examination “also situates [individuals] in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them” (Foucault 1995, p.189). Foucault refers to the ‘power of writing’ “as an essential part in the mechanisms of discipline”, which “was modeled on the traditional methods of administrative documentation, though with particular techniques and important innovations” (p. 189). PPS recipients are examined according to what they write in the report they provide to Centrelink on their participation in the agreed

activities, as well as required documentation such as pay slips, bank statements, etc. The frequency of reporting is usually determined in a way that best fits the recipients' circumstances. They may lodge "a Reporting Statement ('Application for Payment') in person, in writing, or by using Online Services or Phone Self Service" (Department of Human Services 2013). Recipients are also required to report any change in circumstances such as change of address, marital status or earned income.

### ***7.5. THE PANOPTICISM PARADIGM AND MUTUAL OBLIGATION***

Foucault's paradigm of panopticism is greatly affected by 'Bentham's Panopticon', which he introduces as follows:

Bentham's Panopticon is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy (Foucault 1995, p. 200).

It is not just the architectural design that strikes Foucault; the concept beneath it contributes to the concepts of Foucauldian power and discipline and "automatizes and disindividualizes power" (Foucault 1995, p. 202). Foucault understands the panopticon "as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men" (p. 205). The EPP element of MO resembles the Foucault's panopticism paradigm in

several ways. It is ‘a generalisable model of functioning’ that states the general participation requirements for PPS recipients and makes them specific to recipients’ circumstances. It is a functioning model where PPS recipients are required to amend their activities and participate accordingly.

The Panopticon “laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable” (Foucault 1995, p. 201). These two principles are recognisable in the EPP in that the PPS recipient “will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower” (Foucault 1995, p. 201)-the EPP-which reminds the recipient of the requirements of adhering to his or her obligation. Moreover, the principle of power being unverifiable in the EPP lies within its structure (specification of participation requirements, limited time frame for each activity and regular interviews), which assures that sufficient power and control is invested in the EPP to make recipients adhere to it. In fact, like panopticon, the EPP ensures that “power [rests] less on direct control of the body [recipient] and more on techniques designed to elicit ‘self-regulation’ as people [begin] to act as if they [are] being observed” (Savage 1998, p. 68).

One technique that enforces self-regulation on PPS recipients is the ‘time frame’. The element of time is crucial in the EPP; recipients are required to fulfill the obligations in the EPP within a specific time frame to avoid failure, receive payments and move on to the next set of participation requirements, which might bring them closer to employment. The element of time is evident in the structure of MO (e.g., the reporting requirement that the

recipient lodge the required forms/documents by the due date and in arranged interviews). However, the EPP is not entirely an instrument of control and power; it also aims to introduce “efficiency, transparency and legitimacy as much as surveillance” (McKinlay & Pezet 2010, p. 487). It enforces efficiency and transparency by specifying participation requirements in a detailed and clear way and according to each individual’s specific condition and capacity. The EPP is also used “to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals” (Foucault 1995, p. 203)-in this case welfare recipients-to be disciplined and adhere to participation requirements.

One training scheme that recipients can take advantage of through their EPP is the LLNP. This training is offered to recipients to “improve their chances of getting and keep a job or succeeding in vocational training” (Department of Human Services 2014). The training, which is conducted through local training centres (distance education also can be arranged<sup>40</sup>), runs for 10-20 hours each week and is offered in blocks of 200 hours (Department of Human Services 2014). Participation in this scheme may entitle recipients to an additional payment of \$20.80 per fortnight (Centrelink 2010).

## **7.6. CONCLUSION**

This chapter investigated the applicability of Foucauldian discipline in the discourse of MO. It identified several Foucauldian disciplinary paradigms and techniques that were applicable to the MO of PPS recipients, an indication of the existence of power

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<sup>40</sup>Customers who have carer responsibilities or who encounter some other difficulty in attending training can get assistance in their own home through distance education (Centrelink 2010).

relationships and control within the MO discourse where the government is considered to be the dominant body. The next chapter examines the views of PPS recipients regarding MO, which will be used to confirm or reject the opinion of the researcher in this chapter.

This chapter also presented cases in which one disciplinary practice was applicable to different aspects of MO (e.g., the technique of timetable application in waiting periods as well as interviews and lodgment requirements), and cases in which one aspect of MO attracted various Foucauldian disciplinary techniques (e.g., EPP, which could be used to identify the panopticism paradigm as well as the technique of examination).

The next chapter will look at the questionnaire conducted to elicit the views of PPS recipients on MO.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **PARENTING PAYMENT SINGLE RECIPIENTS' VIEWS ON MUTUAL OBLIGATION**

#### ***8.1. INTRODUCTION***

As part of Australian public-sector reform, the Australian welfare system underwent changes as well. These changes affected the structure of social-welfare governance as well as accountability within the context of social welfare. The major change introduced by the Howard's Liberal-National Coalition government was the notion of mutual obligation (MO). MO was heavily emphasised and exemplified in series of welfare reforms: the 'Work for the Dole' (WFD) program, introduced to Parliament on 19 March 1997; Australians Working Together (AWT) (2003); and Welfare to Work (WTW) (2006) (the last of these is the focus of this study).

MO is an important part of the welfare reforms: it requires recipients of welfare to take an active role in enhancing their own wellbeing. This notion emphasises seeking employment and contributing to society and the economy (economic and social participation). It is "underpinned by the concept of social obligations. Governments, businesses, communities and individuals all have roles" (McClure 2000b, p. 6). MO is also designed to cause social and economic participation by social-welfare recipients according to their individual capacities so that they act accountably in the process of finding employment. Some of these mechanisms under MO include: part-time paid work, voluntary work, Job-search training,

the Advanced English for Migrants Programme, approved literacy and numeracy programs, part-time study and career counselling.

In addition to the welfare reforms initiated by the Howard government, Gillard's Labor government continued with welfare reform. 'Fair Incentives to Work' under the 'Social Security Legislation Amendment (Fair Incentives to Work) 2012' attracted controversy among public and professional bodies, academics and even some members of government. Under this change, "some 80,000 of Australia's most vulnerable families, generally single parent families, have been rushed into the position where they are to be moved off the parenting payment onto Newstart" (Commonwealth of Australia 2013, p. 4466). The first and main reason given by the government for the change was the unemployment level among PPS recipients. The then-Employment Participation Minister; Kate Ellis, stated that "there are almost 3,900 parents who had no fortnightly earnings on the first of January who are now working. I think that's good news for them, I think it's good news for their children and I think that's good news for our community" (The World Today with Eleanor Hall, 2013). Contrary to the government's view, Terese Edwards, chief executive of the National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, said, "It's a myth that single mothers don't work...[O]ut of the group that were impacted on the first of January we had two-thirds [who] were already in the workplace. So there was no need for this tough love approach. Single mothers are already working" (The World Today with Eleanor Hall, 2013).



This research included conducting a questionnaire to examine the views of PPS recipients on the notion of MO in light of recent changes. The questionnaire was developed using the structure of MO and Foucault's idea of discipline (Chapters 6 and 7), and was conducted in three locations: Griffith, and Wollongong in NSW, and Canberra. This study refers to MO as accountability within the context of welfare reform, and recognises the link between accountability and control, where accountability is referred to "as a means of achieving control" (Mulgan 2000, p. 11) and as "a vital mechanism of control" (Uhr 1993, p. 6). "Accountability is a form of control designed to force those holding power to own up for their conduct" (Uhr 1999, p. 99). Furthermore, "to be fully accountable implies the ability to exercise control" (Day & Klein 1987, p. 227). In order to practically examine themes of control/domination in the governance of PPS through discourse of MO, Foucault's disciplinary paradigms and techniques are applied to the participants' responses. The questionnaires were conducted in two medical centres (Griffith in NSW and Canberra), the Office of Women (also in Canberra) and public places such as a library and supermarkets in Wollongong, NSW. These centres were used only as points of contact between the researcher and the PPS recipients, and did not provide any input regarding the questionnaire itself.

The compatibility of Foucauldian disciplinary techniques with the structure of MO was examined in Chapter 7; this chapter analyses the responses to the questionnaires and examines the potential compatibility of Foucauldian discipline with these responses, which will provide a practical context for the disciplinary techniques within WTW and the MO discourse. This chapter also provides a background to various views on social welfare,

including those of the Howard government, which led to the introduction of WTW, and the compatibility of this view with the idea of Foucauldian discipline.

Furthermore, it brings the reader up to date with the recent changes affecting PPS payments under the post-Howard-era social-welfare reforms, which have continued regardless of which political party has been in power. It also provides a background to better understanding and contextualising the responses from the questionnaires which are discussed in Section 8.6 after the relevant Foucauldian techniques have been laid out.

## **8.2. VIEWS ON SOCIAL WELFARE**

There has been an ongoing debate over the costs/benefits and advantages/disadvantages of social welfare. The views on social welfare are countless, but the literature suggests that they could be categorised into two major streams: humanitarian/ethical and market inspired/economic that governments may apply to their social policies. Humanitarianism is based on “a sense of obligation to help those in need, and...this value can explain support for a wide variety of social welfare policies” (Feldman & Steenbergen 2001, p. 658). On the other hand, market-inspired concerns focus on the financial aspects of social welfare: “In 2011–12 the department<sup>41</sup> administered \$144.7 billion in payments or around 39 per cent of government outlays” (Centrelink Annual Report 2011-2012, p. 6) and “we [the government] supported Australians and their families with family-related payments worth

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<sup>41</sup> On 1 July 2011, Centrelink and Medicare Australia were integrated into the Department of Human Services (the department). The department already included the Child Support Program and CRS (formerly known as Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service) Australia. The department is now responsible for payments and services previously delivered by these agencies.

\$22.1 billion, over 750 000 payments to job seekers and Age Pension payments to more than 2.2 million Australians” (Centrelink Annual Report 2011-2012, p. 25).

There is also a view that addresses the compatibility of humanitarianism with market-inspired values. Dolgoff (1999) indicates that these two views could become more compatible, and suggests a “shift from countervailing arguments against the market to seek greater proof of the productive benefits of social welfare within market economies” (p. 304), such as reduction in the cost of social problems using appropriate social expenditure.

#### **8.2.1. Techniques Used to Measure the Cost-Benefit of Social Welfare**

This study does not intend to do a detailed cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of social welfare; rather, it intends to highlight the ideas that relate to the costs and benefits of social welfare and address the analytical tools applied to reflect on them. However, because CBA is such a common public-policy and social-welfare evaluative technique, the researcher has included a section on CBA so that the reader can be aware of the issues. Techniques applied to measure the costs and benefits of social welfare are also directly affected by the view of the person, organisation or government applying the technique. The following section addresses the technique commonly used to evaluate policies, which mainly does so in monetary terms.

#### ***8.2.1.1. Cost-benefit analysis***

CBA is a common tool used in the field of welfare economics. “Cost benefit analysis involves the use of theories and models designed to tell us why a program or one of its components works, in addition to how well it does its job” (Levine 1968, p. 173). It is “an analytical tool that compares the total costs of an intervention or program against its total expected benefits; it assists in answering the question ‘has the money been well spent?’”(Tomison 2011a, p. III). Public-policy analysts have applied CBA for a number of years to assess environmental, social and economic projects (Dossetor 2011, p. 1). Levine (1968) believes that CBA “is not a substitute for the decision maker. Rather it provides a package of relevant information on which to base certain kinds of decisions” He further mentions that CBA “does not favour the ‘cheapest’ or even the ‘best’ program, but the optimal program in terms of the available resources (money, trained personnel, facilities)” (p. 174).

Chisholm (2000) identifies two types of CBA used in allocating resources: ex-ante CBA<sup>42</sup> and post-action CBA. The way this tool is implemented is that “benefits as well as costs have been given a dollar value, and benefit over cost ratios have been computed. A ratio in excess of one indicates worth-whileness from an investment point of view-the higher the ratio, the better” (Levine 1968, p. 174). In other words, “the higher the cost-benefit ratio

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<sup>42</sup> Ex-ante CBA is conducted prior to the program’s commencement and can assist governments in their cost-effectiveness strategies and selection of competing programs. Post-action CBA is conducted after a project has commenced and has a limited effect on government decisions for future resource allocations as capital costs have already been expended. However, ex-ante CBA can provide greater information regarding the performance of a program, and subsequent benefits can be more accurately determined to inform further investment or whether a similar program should be funded (Dossetor 2011, p. 2).

and net economic benefit associated with the project, the more desirable the project” (Dossetor 2011, p. 2).

However, the application of CBA in the area of social welfare is not as straightforward or as easy as in programs that tangibly measure benefits and costs. “Measurement of the intangible social and psychological benefits is one of the biggest problems in evaluating the effectiveness or efficiency of a social welfare program” (Levine 1968, p. 176). However it is required in order “to provide the decision-maker not only with benefit-cost ratios for those benefits which are monetarily expressible, but also to give him[/her] a ‘serendipity package’ of sociopsychological and other important intangible benefits to use in his judgemental process (Levine 1968, p. 183). Dossetor (2011) also states that “estimating and assigning monetary values to the benefits arising from a program is commonly regarded as being the most difficult step of CBA” (p. 7).

On the other hand, there is an alternative to CBA that claims that “social welfare can be described by means of a so called ‘Social Welfare Function’ (SWF)” (Bellù & Liberati 2006, p. 3). SWF “is a systematic, normatively appealing methodology for incorporating distributional considerations into policy analysis”. “[W]hile CBA quantifies welfare effects in *dollars*, the SWF framework measures well-being in *utilities* (Adler 2012, emphasis in the original text). This tool is “currently used in various scholarly subfields within economics: optimal tax theory, growth theory, and some parts of environmental economics” (Adler 2012).

### **8.3. THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

Social welfare in Australia is part of the public sector and is subject to constant reforms, as are other areas of the public sector. Public-sector reforms were initiated within the framework of New Public Management (NPM), a branch of neoliberalism. NPM, which “accentuates change, decentralization, responsiveness to consumers, performance, and the need to ‘earn’ rather than to ‘spend’” (Maor 1999, p. 5), was the rationale behind all the Howard government’s decision and policy-making (Chapter 2, Section 2.5.3). NPM also reverses the doctrines of progressive public administration by “lessening or removing differences between the public and the private sector and shifting the emphasis from process accountability towards a greater element of accountability in terms of results” (Hood 1995 p. 94).

Centrelink was introduced to the Australian welfare system in 1997. Government departments (client agencies) entered Business Partnership Agreements (BPAs) with Centrelink and under public-sector reform took responsibility for policy-making, with Centrelink being responsible for delivering government services on behalf of relevant departments (Chapter 2, Section 2.12). Centrelink delivers “140 benefit types on behalf of 27 government departments and agencies” (Centrelink annual report 2009, p.28). The concept of MO was heavily emphasised as part of the welfare reforms initiated by the Howard government. The term began appearing in welfare literature in 1996, the year the Howard government came to office (Yeend 2004). “Mutual Obligation was based on a concept that welfare assistance provided to the unemployed of working age should involve some return responsibilities for the recipient” (Dale 2006). Considering that NPM, which

emphasises a limited government and economic individualism, was the reform theory applied to policy decisions and policy implementations during the Howard government, the concerns of the Howard government in implementing welfare reform are not surprising. In reference to this, the following sections will address ‘social welfare fraud’ and the employment status of single parents, each of which, in its own way, the Howard government considered an important reason for reforming the welfare and payment of PPS under the WTW reform.

### 8.3.1. Social-Welfare Fraud

Reeve (2006) notes the vulnerability of early welfare systems to fraud. “It was not without justification that the terms ‘dole bludger’ or ‘welfare queen’ became part of the social and political discourse in many countries in the 1970s and 1980s (Prenzler 2011, p. 1).

**Table 8.1:** People receiving selected social-security transfer payments

Year	Age pension recipients	Unemployment benefit recipients	Disability pension recipients	Sole-parent pension recipients	Total number of people	
					As % of population aged 16 years and over	number
1973	931,812	37,317	149,609	57,872	1,176,610	12.5
1975	1,097,225	157,948	168,784	102,533	1,526,490	15.5
1977	1,205,347	243,884	202,963	127,013	1,779,207	17.5
1979	1,292,476	312,924	219,843	151,181	1,976,424	18.8
1981	1,347,430	313,200	221,951	194,468	2,077,049	19.0
1983	1,390,838	633,281	220,289	224,489	2,468,897	21.7
1985	1,331,782	562,266	259,162	246,295	2,399,505	20.3
1987	1,322,174	553,653	289,050	248,907	2,413,784	19.6
1989	1,334,310	389,794	307,795	239,469	2,271,368	17.7
1991	1,375,849	676,705	334,234	265,720	2,652,508	20.0
1993	1,515,682	913,770	406,572	298,444	3,134,468	23.1

*Source:* ABS, Cast No: 4102.0-Australian Social Trends, 1994, Income Support: Social security transfer payments

There is a view that the availability of social welfare might attract fraud. Tomison (2011b, p. 1) states that “the availability of welfare also creates temptations for fraud and allegations of fraud contribute to controversy about the appropriateness of welfare. This controversy can detract from public perceptions of the legitimacy of the welfare system and the dignity of welfare recipients”.

Centrelink fraud includes, but is not limited to:

- someone receiving a Centrelink payment who is not declaring their income from employment, a business, a rental property, or another source
- carers receiving a payment who do not have care for a child or an adult
- a person receiving multiple payments under multiple names, which is identity fraud
- if a person dies and their Centrelink payment continues to be received by another person
- someone overstating an injury or medical condition to claim payments
- a person misusing or claiming an Australian Government Disaster Relief Payment falsely
- a person living as a member of a couple with someone and they have not advised Centrelink of this, and/or
- people receiving payments for study who are no longer attending an educational facility or have reduced attendance hours (Department of Human services 2013).

Prenzler (2011, p. 6) addresses welfare fraud as “a crime problem that is difficult to measure, but available indicators suggest that fraud represents an ongoing threat to the integrity of welfare payments”. In fact, the Howard government focused on this ongoing threat and made it an election agenda for his government, implementing ‘anti-welfare rhetoric’ (Hartman 2005) and conducting this form of judgment to stop welfare cheats



(Vanstone 2002). Similarly, Prenzler (2011) states that “demonstrable fraud represents a very small fraction of all welfare transactions, but it also represents significant losses, demand for prosecution and loss recovery action” (p. 1). In the case of PPS, in 2008-2009, there were “1,280 convictions which accounted for \$22,157,531 debt associated with prosecution”, which was ranked number one across the top 15 benefit types (Prenzler 2011, p. 4). However, to put the numbers in perspective, only 0.04 per cent of recipients of social welfare are convicted of fraud (Prenzler 2011, p. 5).

There are different views in relation to welfare fraud. Saunders (2003, p.11-12) notes that, “surveys of the unemployed show that up to 75 per cent are not genuinely willing to search for or accept available jobs and are therefore, in a sense, ‘fraudulent’”. The work of Hui *et al.* (2011) examines social-security overpayments and social-security fraud at the employment/benefit nexus; the authors argue that “social security overpayment prosecutions cannot be thought of only as an individual failure, but also as a failure of the state and its systems to its citizens (who comprise both the recipient of the benefits, and the wider community)” (p. III). Hui *et al.* recommend a contextualisation of social welfare fraud, which is believed will also better serve ethical concerns. Studies have also recommend primary rather than secondary prevention of fraud (Prenzler 2011; Hui *et al.* 2011). Proper identification checks, requests for additional documents, data matching with other government agencies such as Medicare and housing, and use of correct forms are some examples of primary prevention.

Centrelink implements the above methods, and states, “We protected the government’s investment in payments this year [2011-2012] through a variety of compliance and fraud control measures using sophisticated early intervention, prevention, detection, deterrence and prosecution strategies”. This helped to reduce debt as Centrelink “identified \$337.3 million in debts and saved \$58.2 million in fortnightly payments, compared with \$406.9 million in debts and \$72.3 million in saved fortnightly payments the previous year” (Centrelink Annual Report 2011-2012, p. 5). Welfare dependency is also a cost element associated with social welfare (welfare dependency is explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.10.).

### **8.3.2. The Employment Status of Single Parents**

Single parents were one of the two main targets of WTW reform (the other being recipients of the Disability Support Pension). The employment status of single parents was considered a major reason for implementing reform and change. Whiteford (2000) addresses the increase in the percentage of single parents in receipt of government payment from 35% in the late 1960s to 60% in 1980, 78.4% in 1986 and 71% in 1999. In addition to the increase in the number of single parents in receipt of PPS, there are other facts that are also relevant and important to consider in the assessment of the employment status of single parents. Baxter (2013, p. 6) mentions the change in family structure and notes “the overall increase in the percentage of families that were single-parent families-from 19% of families in 1991 to 26% of families in 2011”. However, other studies show a different pattern of employment among single parents. Baxter (2013) shows the relation between the part-time and full-time employment of single parents with the age of their child over the 20-year period between 1991 to 2011. The figures indicate an increase in the number of single mothers employed with younger children (youngest child 0-2 years of age), and an increase

in the number of single mothers working part-time among those with slightly older children (youngest child 3-5 years of age and youngest child 6-11 years of age). Furthermore, the number of full-time single mothers has also increased (youngest child 12-17 years of age), and “in 2011, among all single mothers with children aged under 18 years, 31% were in part-time work and 24% were in full-time work” (Baxter 2013, p. 3). The Baxter study also considers long-term employment, and indicates that “the estimated number of long-term unemployed single mothers was 7,200 in 2012, which was less than the estimates for 2010 (8,100) and 2011 (9,800)” (Baxter 2013, p. 7).

Table 8.2 provides details of trends in the number of recipients of various cash payments from the former Department of Social Security and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs for selected years from 1965 to 1998.

**Table 8.2: Recipients of cash payments at 30 June**

	1965 '000	1970 '000	1975 '000	1980 '000	1985 '000	1990 '000	1995 '000	1997 '000	1998 '000
Age Pension	628.1	779	1,097.2	1,321.9	1,331.8	1,340.5	1,578.7	1,680.2	1,682.6
Age Pension-Wives	3.5	6.6	21.9	30.8	22.9	23.8	39.6	36.6	36.2
Disability Support Pension(a)	107.5	134.5	171.5	236.8	271.5	328.2	464.4	527.5	553.3
Disability Support Pension-Wives	12.8	16.2	28.9	60.2	74.8	91.9	121.8	91.3	79.9
Carer Pension	..	..	..	..	2.7	8.8	20.1	29.6	34
Parenting Payment-Single(b)	29.7	44.1	102.5	161.6	246.3	248.9	324.9	358.9	372.3
Parenting Payment-partnered(c)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	239.3	236.6
Class B Widows(d)	35.7	42.8	54.3	75	81.6	79	55	18.9	13.6
Widows Allowance	..	..	..	..	..	..	8.7	17.5	24.7
Unemployment Allowances(e)	12.7	13	160.7	311.2	561.4	419.8	795.5	801.8	790.3
Unemployment Allowances-Partners(f)	3.5	4.4	33	66.3	147.2	126	..	..	..
Mature Age Allowance	..	..	..	..	..	..	39	53.4	50.7
Mature Age Allowance-Partners	..	..	..	..	..	..	15.1	7.3	4.4
Sickness Allowance	10.2	8.8	25.5	36.8	62	79.2	46.1	15.8	16.3
Sickness Allowance-Partners(f)	4.2	3.9	11.2	13.1	20.4	26.3	..	..	..
Special Benefit	2.4	3.8	5.6	20.9	18.9	27.9	20.5	14.6	10.2
Special Benefit-Partners(f)	0.9	1.3	1.7	3.4	4.7	8.2	..	..	..
Partner Allowance	..	..	..	..	..	..	216.7	72.1	77.7
Total Social Security Pensioners/and Beneficiaries	851.1	1,058.5	1,714	2,338	2,846.3	2,808.4	3,746.2	3,964.8	3,982.9
Student Assistance	18.5	35.2	67.2	81.9	93.7	339.1	433.8	404.7	384.6
DVA Service pensions(g)	65.2	74.4	121.6	240	392.5	386.3	347.7	389.5	387.6
<b>Total Cash Benefit</b>	<b>934.8</b>	<b>1,168.1</b>	<b>1,902.8</b>	<b>2,659.9</b>	<b>3,332.5</b>	<b>3,533.8</b>	<b>4,527.7</b>	<b>4,759</b>	<b>4,755.1</b>
<b>Recipients</b>									
Basic Family Payment (Children)	3,710.6	4,079.4	4,283.3	4,233.9	4,323.5	3,672.5	3,486.3	3,491.2	3,418.9
Income Support Payment(h)	..	..	372.9	524.8	779.2	710.8	983.4	1,196.2	1,220.4
Workforce Payment	..	..	..	..	74.9	437.5	687.9	625	579

(a) Includes Sheltered Employment and Rehabilitation Allowees in relevant years.

(b) Includes Class A Widows' Pension, Supporting Mothers'/Parents' Benefit and Sole Parent Pension.

(c) Originally Parenting Allowance-excludes those receiving only Basic Parenting Payment.

(d) Includes Class C Widows' Pension, Widowed Person's and Bereavement Allowances.

(e) Includes Youth Training Allowance.

(f) Partners of Unemployment, Sickness or Special Benefits recipients received Partner Allowance from September 1994 and Parenting Allowance from June 1995.

(g) Service Pensioners only.

(h) First reference period is 1976.

Source: Department of Social Security: Ten Yearly Statistical Summary; Annual Report; and DSS Customers: A Statistical Overview, various years. Year Book Australia, 2000; cat no: 1301.0, ABS.

The figures above show the number of people receiving cash payments as well as a range of supplementary payments (e.g., Basic Family Payment). The long-term trend indicates an increase in the number of PPS recipients; however, changes in family structure, an increase in the number of part-time and casual jobs, and high employment requirements such as being multi-skilled, all affect the number of people seeking the PPS benefit. The above figures also indicate an average increase in the numbers of almost all cash payments and considering the supplementary payments, could also indicate that a large portion of the population was receiving some sort of social welfare in different stages of their lives.

The government's idea of reform was based on its view that employment is an ideal source of income and that MO is to push PPS recipients to enter employment. Furthermore, within the context of MO, single parents are responsible in equal measure to the government for their own wellbeing and are required to participate according to their individual agreement, the EPP.

#### ***8.4. IDENTIFICATION OF FOUCAULDIAN DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT'S STANCE ON SOCIAL WELFARE***

The Howard government's approach to social welfare was based on the NPM theory of reform. This rationale emphasises limited government and the sharing of responsibility for the welfare of citizens with the citizens themselves. MO is a concept that calls into account the recipients of welfare in a way that requires them to participate socially and economically so that they become responsible for their own wellbeing and no longer

depend on government assistance, thereby becoming ‘docile bodies’ within the context of welfare.

The focus of the Howard government on the employment status of single parents was a way to justify the changes implemented regarding PPS, and to push the recipients of this payment towards employment and make them financially independent from government. To make them docile bodies, the government used a series of disciplinary techniques, which are evident within the structure of MO discourse. These techniques are addressed in the following section. Furthermore, the government used the idea of ‘social welfare fraud’ to justify its compliance policies within the context of WTW, which gave the government a dominant position as well as another disciplinary tool to assist recipients of PPS becoming docile bodies. The following section investigates the compatibility of Foucauldian disciplinary themes within the discourse of MO.

### ***8.5. FOUCAULDIAN DISCIPLINARY TECHNIQUES AND THE STRUCTURE OF MUTUAL OBLIGATION***

MO within the WTW literature is a concept that holds recipients of PPS equally responsible for their own wellbeing as well as a complex system that directs PPS recipients towards social and economic participation to obtain employment. Within this complex system of MO (Chapter 6) there is evidence of compatibility with Foucauldian disciplinary techniques; this evidence reflects on the way the government exercises its domination and power through the disciplinary exercises of MO.

### **8.5.1. Paradigm of Docile-Bodies: Disciplinary Distribution Techniques**

The disciplinary distribution techniques under this paradigm consist of ‘enclosure’ and ‘partitioning’. Enclosure and partitioning techniques take the form of eligibility requirements for payments. Initially payments are classified according to the purpose of assistance to the claimant and by the claimant’s condition (enclosure technique); for example, the PP for parents who are the principal carers of their young children. The technique of partitioning is then applied; in the case of PP, it is further classified based on the parent’s marital status (partnered or sole parent). Centrelink’s application of these two techniques to claimants of welfare payments is designed to organise recipients of welfare into the appropriate payment category and allow for easier governance by classifying them into various types of payments, direct them towards active social and economic participation, and ultimately produce governable bodies who are compliant social-welfare recipients.

### **8.5.2. The Docile-Bodies Paradigm: Control of Activity Techniques (Timetable Technique)**

Time is an important element within the structure of MO. Time has been emphasised by previous and current governments in their implementation of new changes. This element has also been used in WTW reform within the context of MO, which indicates compatibility with various techniques of Foucauldian discipline. The first is the ‘timetable technique’. This technique is identifiable in the discourse of MO where Centrelink organizes or regulates welfare recipients’ time to determine their eligibility for a social welfare payment. The element of time is vital in the discourse of MO as it provides Centrelink with an instrument of control over welfare recipients. The timetable technique is

evident in the MO discourse in the form of ‘waiting periods’. Waiting periods are considered to be one of the requirements of eligibility for PPS (e.g., ‘Newly arrived resident’ entails a two-year waiting period that applies to claimants of the PPS who are newly arrived in Australia and do not hold a refugee or humanitarian visa).

The other element of MO that fits within the Foucauldian technique of timetable is ‘interviews’. Once PPS claimants register their ‘intent to claim’ (in other words, have applied for the payment), they are advised to either attend an arranged interview (at a specified time) or show up for a walk-in appointment with Centrelink (Centrelink 2011). Centrelink’s arranged interviews are not only representative of the timetable technique, they are also an example of the communicative relationship between the government, as an elite group that has access to public discourse (welfare payments), and recipients, who are subject to requirements (social and economic participation and adherence to MO).

The timetable technique is evident throughout the claim process and also as an ongoing element of MO after the claimant becomes a PPS recipient. PPS claimants must provide the required documents and complete any additional forms based on their individual case within 14 days of their ‘intent to claim’ (Centrelink 2011). Time is also an ongoing element reflected in the EPP which plays a determinant role in the eligibility of PPS recipients and a controlling measure to rule the continuity of payment (e.g., an individual EPP requires a PPS recipient to finalise 200 hours of LLNP (15-20 hours per week)).



‘Dressage’ is another disciplinary technique that also attracts several elements of MO. Discipline as a denotation of dressage is evident in PPS recipients’ EPP agreements, which specify their participation requirements and obligations (e.g., it is an obligation of PPS recipients to report any income earned for the period of reporting to ensure that their entitlement is correct (usually monthly), although it might vary based on the recipient’s situation). Consequently, recipients are disciplined in a way that means they report their potential earnings and lodge their ‘Reporting Statement’ (also called an Application for Payment) in the required timeframe; otherwise, their payment is delayed or suspended. ‘Taming as a denotation of dressage’ is another technique also evident within the context of MO. Taming becomes evident where and when recipients accept all the requirements and submit to discipline by signing the EPP agreement. Arranged interviews for PPS recipients are also compatible with this denotation of dressage, as recipients are required to attend meeting with Centrelink and job-search assistance providers at a specific time and day and to discuss and report their participation requirements. In addition, their participation activities are measured against their individual agreements to determine their adherence to their obligations.

‘Signalisation’ in the context of dressage is another disciplinary practice identifiable within the discourse of MO. An EPP is an agreement between PPS recipients and Centrelink that specifies the recipients’ participation requirements and obligations. In other words, it contains a ‘code of signals’ (specified obligations, activities and requirements) that, once signed by the recipient, indicates that the recipient has ‘learnt the code of signal’ and is expected to ‘respond automatically’ to the participation requirements. EPP “place[s] the

bodies [PPS recipients] in a little world of signals to each of which is attached a single, obligatory response” (Foucault 1995, p. 166). The compliance system within the context of MO reflects on the signalisation technique where recipients are expected to ‘perceive the signal’ and ‘react to it’ according to ‘prearranged codes’; and cases of non-adherence to these codes are dealt with according to the compliance system. For example, EPP (which contains prearranged codes for recipients to perceive the requirements) requires recipients to attend an interview with JSA (which indicates the manner in which the recipients should react to the signal) for their payment to be continued.

‘Performance as a connotation of dressage’ is also a technique compatible within the discourse of MO through a set of participation requirements specific to each individual’s EPP. PPS recipients are required to comply with their EPP and participate so as to avoid any non-adherence and failure. In other words, they need to perform in accordance with, and at the level required by, their EPP.

### **8.5.3. The Means of Correct Training Paradigm**

This paradigm is applicable where “the chief function of the disciplinary power is to ‘train’, rather than to select and to levy; or, no doubt, to train in order to levy and select all the more” (Rabinow 1984, p. 188). However, to train individuals it is also necessary “to establish standards that will act as performance goals for each individual” (Ransom 1997, p. 47). All three techniques of this paradigm, ‘hierarchical surveillance’, ‘normalisation’ and ‘examination’, show compatibility with the discourse of MO. The discourse of MO within the context of welfare reform functions “as an uninterrupted, anonymous, automatic, and indiscreet disciplinary gaze” (Macintosh 1994, p. 226) that plays out over the entire

system of welfare reform. The concept of MO is reflected at every stage of reform, from setting the eligibility criteria for PPS claimants to the compliance system. This complete coverage over the entire system of welfare on the one hand, and being specific and detailed on the other, imposes an automatic and anonymous gaze over PPS recipients (hierarchical surveillance).

The technique of normalisation is also evident within the participation requirements of WTW reform. They function as a 'system' that 'measures' an individual's level of participation. The activities of PPS recipients are measured against the participation requirements specified in their EPP; adherence to requirements positions recipients around the 'norm', while non-adherence to requirements positions them in the 'anorm'. The participation of PPS recipients is treated in accordance with their individual EPP. If their participation is determined to be 'anorm', their action needs to be 'corrected' and 'normalised' to achieve a level according to their EPP, which is considered 'norm'. The 'punishment schema' of the normalisation technique is also compatible within the discourse of MO through the 'compliance system'. The penalties specified under the compliance system are set as disciplinary practices to 'reduce gaps' between non-adherence (anorm) and adherence (norm) types of participation. On the other hand, the examination technique becomes relevant where the participation of PPS recipients is constantly observed and examined through various methods and procedures (e.g., 'reporting statements' are examined to determine whether recipients have provided the required number of jobs which they were required to look for within the time frame of the reporting statement).

#### **8.5.4. The Panopticism Paradigm**

The disciplinary paradigm of panopticism is evident within the elements of MO. Characteristics of the EPP element of MO resemble the paradigm of Foucault's panopticism such that EPP determines the general participation requirements for PPS recipients and makes them specific to recipients' circumstances. It is a functioning model in which PPS recipients are required to amend their activities and participate accordingly. EPP requires recipients to be self-regulated; that is, they are required to account for the number of activities as well as the time frame for each specific activity to avoid failure.

#### ***8.6. PARENTING PAYMENT SINGLE RECIPIENTS' VIEWS ON MUTUAL OBLIGATION AND EVIDENCE OF FOUCAULDIAN DISCIPLINARY THEMES***

MO is a discourse and is subject to change. Changes implemented as part of welfare reform also affect the structure of MO. There have been changes since WTW was introduced that have affected PPS recipients' eligibility criteria and changed their financial status (Chapter 2, Section 2.6.3). From 1 January 2013, PPS eligibility criteria were changed so that the age of youngest child must be less than 8 years old to be eligible to receive the PPS payment. The questionnaires designed in this research are based on the concept of MO and the changes introduced to the PPS payment on 01 January 2013 to investigate the applicability of Foucauldian disciplinary themes in practice.

##### **8.6.1. Compatibility of Foucauldian Disciplinary Techniques According to Respondents**

The results of the questionnaires (Appendix 2 and 4) provide an indication of the extent to which the power/dominance relationship exists within the context of MO; there was a good

response in support of the concept of doing something in return for receiving payment, where 17 out of 29 believed that they should do something in return for receiving the Parenting Payment Single benefit:

Respondent 3 (R3). “Yes, you shouldn’t receive something for nothing especially when there are so many areas in the community that needs help.”

R10. “We should aim to at least study to enable a return to the workforce.”

R14. “Because it’s fair to do so.”

R24. “Because you receive the payments to support yourself so you can afford childcare so therefore you can work or study.”

And some respondents indicating that they should not do something in return as:

R28. “The stress of being a single parent is enough. Also depending on the situation of the parent. Working is sometimes harder because of childcare, picking dropping off kids.”

R22. “Already doing enough raising a family. Maybe after my kids are more independent.”

R15. “8 years old are still babies. Children under the age of 16 are still dependent on their mothers and since they’ve been through the trauma of their parents separating or passing away they need a stable and constant support and environment.”

R1. “My children are younger than school age and I want to stay at home with them, until they go to school. After they go to school I would be happy to then.”

These respondents mentioned the age of their children and their dependence as the main reason why should receive the payment without any obligation; however, they indicated that being obligation-free would be temporary and they would be prepared to start meeting

an obligation once their children were closer to independence, as shown in the above responses.

The results of questionnaires found that the PPS recipients' concern is not the concept of doing something for their payment, but the control, domination and unfairness, and the difficulty of managing time to spend with their young children along with the requirements. The majority of respondents (31 out of 41) indicated that they have no input into the decisions regarding requirements and selecting an activity test:

R.7. "I feel tired because I am trying to be mum, look for work, do the house work, and may be even study."

R10. "It basically their way or no way, so you're helpless."

R18. "I feel I have no power or choice."

R23. "Frustrated."

The responses here (Appendix 4 contains all responses) reflect the power relationship and lack of power balance between the government and the PPS recipients: the power to set activities is held by the government as the facilitator of the service (income support), which means that PPS recipients are not in any way involved in the activity-setting decisions.

The disciplinary paradigm of 'panopticism' is identifiable within the responses where EPP is the determinant factor of the required activities and PPS recipients are required to participate accordingly, without being able to be involved in the process of decision-making towards planning their activity tests and requirements.

Thirty-one out of 41 respondents also indicated that they hadn't been given the option of not entering an activity test agreement with Centrelink. When they were questioned how important is this, they indicated:

R10. "Very, it makes you feel less as a person. It feels like they hold your life in the push of a button, i.e. if you don't do this we will take your money."

R12. "If I don't do as requested of 30 hrs a fortnight I am cut off. I believe this creates more problems, I can't work if sick, my daughter is looked after by someone else if she is sick as I don't have the choice to care for her because if I do we are cut from Centrelink."

R18. "It's very important for me to have a choice because I am more aware of my situation."

R22. "Very important. It is essential not to feel forced/controlled."

The responses reflect that recipients of PPS are not given a choice in relation to their activity agreement. This carries the notion of compulsion, where PPS recipients are obliged to enter an activity test agreement as a requirement of receiving their payment. These responses touch on an important aspect of MO, which is the "proposition that compulsion is a reasonable strategy to ensure that people take up the available opportunities" (Kinnear 2000, p. 26).

The disciplinary technique of 'normalisation' is evident in R10 and R12, where their performances are measured in accordance with their individual agreement (EPP) and any non-adherence is considered 'anorm'. Responses also reflect on the 'punishment schema' of the normalisation technique, which in these cases are "take your money" and "I am cut off".

The technique of dressage from the disciplinary paradigm of docile-bodies is also evident here, where recipients of PPS are disciplined in a way that non-adherence to the requirements means facing consequences such as suspension of their payment.

Thirty-one out of 41 respondents also indicated that requirements give Centrelink the ability to regulate (control) their progress in seeking employment. When asked how beneficial are the regulating activities by Centrelink, respondents indicated:

R8. “This means that if I’m not fulfilling requirements it is picked up early before my payments are cut.”

R16. “It controls all my progress.”

R20. “I have to plan my daily life according to requirements.”

The disciplinary technique of surveillance is evident in these responses, which recount PPS recipients’ reactions to being monitored for their requirements. When asked how they avoid feeling regulated, they responded:

R6. “They aren’t interested.”

R11. “There are no choices with Centrelink. You follow their rules or they cut your payments.”

R24. “No, Centrelink doesn’t affect the progress in my studies. Although it’s important for Centrelink to keep in contact and continue to regulate people so they can stay on track.”

The technique of ‘panopticism’ is evident here, where all activities are set by Centrelink and recipients need to adhere to requirements (R6 and R11) as well as the technique of surveillance (R24) for the recipients to “stay on track”.



These responses also reflect on the position of power held by Centrelink (R11 and R6).

Twenty-nine out of 41 respondents indicated that they are required to apply for any kind of job regardless of having the skills, and that they consider this to be an ineffective requirement:

R5. “Doesn’t help-end up wasting mine and employers time.”

R6. “These jobs don’t suit a single mum trying to juggle work and school and family and lifestyle.”

R11. “I have to look after 2 jobs per week. Around every 6 months I have to hand in my activity report and no 2 job applications can be the same which means most I don’t have qualifications for.”

R18. “It’s effective but often you are pushed to do work you don’t want to do.”

R19. “As long as it’s employment, I need to apply for it. From labour work to unattainable managerial positions.”

The disciplinary paradigm of panopticism is evident again within the context of MO in PPS recipients’ responses to the requirement to account for the number of jobs specified in their EPP, and to participate accordingly regardless of having the required skills for the job or not.

The technique of dressage from the paradigm of docile-bodies is also identifiable in recipients’ responses to being disciplined to adhere to the requirements, which in this case involves looking for a specified number of jobs lest they face consequences.

Sawer (2000, p. 21) states, “Compulsion in labour market programs is a blunt instrument which has the effect for some unemployed people of the feeling that they have been denied agency and been compelled to do a program which does not meet their individual needs.” The dominant position of the government (through Centrelink) and the lack of choice on the part of recipients are also reflected in these responses.

Thirty-four out of 41 respondents indicated that Centrelink emphasises the requirements more than PPS recipients’ rights. PPS recipients stated that this negatively affected their motivation to complete their activity tests:

R5. “Makes me feel unimportant, like just another ‘bludger’.”

R7. “You become less motivated as you feel you have failed regardless of your efforts.”

R14. “Requirements need to be done to get paid.”

R19. “Not meeting requirements = no payments.”

R20. “It is not a positive motivation.”

The responses are in line with the government’s position that welfare is conditional rather than an entitlement. It also reflects on social and economic participation, which are requirements for receiving the payment within the context of MO.

The disciplinary techniques of normalisation (from the paradigm of means of correct training) is addressed by R14 and R19, when they note that requirements need to be compatible with their individual agreement. Accordingly, adherence to requirements positions recipients around what is considered ‘norm’, while non-adherence positions them in the ‘anorm’, needing to be ‘corrected’ and ‘normalised’ in accordance with their EPPs.

The technique of dressage (the paradigm of docile-bodies) is evident here as recipients are disciplined to adhere to their obligation to avoid consequences such as suspension of payment.

Also, the disciplinary practice of ‘signalisation’ in the context of dressage is identifiable within these responses, where it is seen that EPPs contain ‘codes of signals’ (activities and requirements) that, once signed by the PPS recipients, mean that they have ‘learnt the code of signal’ and are expected to ‘respond automatically’ to the requirements to get paid. As the respondents mentioned, “No meeting requirements=no payments” (R19) and “Requirements need to be done to get paid” (R14).

In addition, the responses of R5, R7 and R20 reflect on the negative impact of emphasis on requirements more than on their motivation.

A large number of respondents (31 out of 41) indicated that penalties on payments give Centrelink the ability to influence their activities:

R13. “I think you sometimes need to reconsider your activities especially if you will be penalised. You need to abide by their rules.”

R14. “I make sure to do my activities to not be penalised.”

R20. “It makes me worry all the time.”

R22. “I need to complete the activities regardless of my current situation. The agencies have no empathy. They are there to make money.”

R29. “You generally have to wait till the following fortnight for fix up. You get penalised even if it wasn’t your fault. You are restricted in what you can do/eat/afford/ that week.”

The two disciplinary techniques of ‘surveillance and normalisation’ (from the paradigm of ‘means of correct training’) are evident within these responses, which reflect the PPS recipients’ knowledge that their activities are being monitored. For example, R14 makes sure that her activities are done and R13 sees the need to “abide by their rules”. R20 states that she is “worried all the time” as she knows her activities are measured according to her EPP and that any non-adherence results in suspension of payment and thus financial difficulties. R22 states that she needs to complete the activities regardless of her situation, which also indicates an awareness of continuous surveillance.

The disciplinary technique of normalisation is evident as the participation of PPS recipients are treated in accordance with their individual EPP. In fact, the EPP sets the ‘norm’ and the ‘anorm’, and measures the requirements accordingly. Responses reflect on the point that respondents try to place their activities in the category of ‘norm’; for example, R14’s comment, “I make sure to do my activities...” and R22’s phrase, “...complete the activities regardless of my situation...”.

Kinnear (2000, p. 30) states:

[T]he selection of the ‘stick’ rather than the ‘carrot’ as a regulatory device in welfare or unemployment policy contrasts with neoliberal regulatory philosophy applied elsewhere. Self-regulation through persuasion and incentive (the ‘carrot’) rather than punishment (‘the stick’) is the strategy of choice for most governments in many contemporary situations.

Twenty-five out of 28 respondents did not think that the imposed penalties are fair:

R8. “Because sometimes things are out of your control and as a single parent there is no one there to help take up the slack and so things don’t get done...especially if children get sick or I get sick.”

R15. “Very unfair. People are already struggling.”

R18. “Because my kids should not be penalised for my actions.”

Responses reflect the PPS recipients’ concerns about the fairness of imposed penalties; however, because the government maintains the power in the relationship, recipients’ position is to adhere to requirements:

R28. “I don’t agree on all the interviews you have to attend only because of the waiting times, and only to update info.”

Thirty-two out of 41 respondents were concerned about the financial difficulty they would face when transferring to a different payment from the PPS:

R10. “The stress of it made me physically sick. I would spend nights lying awake wondering how I would cope and what I could cut out to ensure we would be ok.”

R13. “The cost of living increases so I would struggle, I don’t understand how they worked out to cut it down at 8 yrs??”

R17. “A cut down of almost \$170 means cutting down on essentials deciding between milk or bread. As bills need to get paid regardless.”

R19. “Essentials turn into luxuries.”

R22. “It is hard enough to pay for groceries and bills without the cut downs.”

Thirteen out of 29 also indicated non-financial concerns about the transfer from PPS to a different payment:

R15. "Further physical and mental stress."

R17. "Mental. Depression and further stress."

R19. "It is frustrating. Draining."

R22. "Burdens me mentally and emotionally."

R23. "Stressful."

R26. "On parenting payment single you get a pension card that entitles you to \$2.50 train, bus. For someone who is not driving losing this has not just financial effects but others like ability of freedom and independence and also the ability to get to places like job links and Centrelink."

The disciplinary technique of partitioning is identifiable within the changes introduced to the PPS. New rules that came into effect from 1 January 2013 have excluded many recipients by setting the maximum age of a recipient's youngest child to be less than 8 years, giving them the option to test their eligibility for another social payment such as the New Start Allowance (NSA). This has resulted also in changes to the financial status and family and personal lives of PPS recipients when they change to a different payment.

In addition, several disciplinary techniques were identified within recipients' responses when asked about how they felt about several conditions and requirements for receiving Parenting Payment Single such as attending interviews with Centrelink and job networks, returning requested forms and advising Centrelink of any change in circumstances, and having a child younger than eight years old.

The disciplinary technique of timetable was identifiable within R(K)'s remark, "If forms are not returned in time payments are withheld." According to this response there is a

scheduled time for returning forms, and if they are not returned within the specified timeframe, "...payments are withheld". This comment also touches on another disciplinary technique: the punishment schema of normalisation, which is compatible within the discourse of MO through the compliance system, where the specified penalties are set as disciplinary practices to reduce the gaps between non-adherence (anorm) and adherence (norm) types of participation.

This remark might also be a reflection of 'signalisation' in the context of dressage, where the recipient has 'learnt the code of signals' and is expected to 'respond automatically'.

The examination technique is identifiable in R(A)'s phrase, "difficult to fill out forms a lot of stuff [to] do", where PPS recipients' participation is constantly observed and examined through their lodged forms (e.g., 'reporting statements' are examined to determine whether a recipient has applied for the required number of jobs).

R(F) commented that it was "hard to get a sitter short notice to attend interviews" and "sometimes cannot get transport to hand in forms (don't have license)". Here interviews and forms were mentioned as participation requirements. Arranged interviews for PPS recipients are compatible with taming as a denotation of dressage as recipients are required to attend Centrelink and job-search assistance providers at a specific time and day to discuss and report their participation requirements. Also, the participation requirement of lodging forms falls within the technique of dressage unless recipients return their forms within the required timeframe, their payment is delayed or suspended.

These last two comments also suggest why PPS recipients can find it difficult to adhere to the requirements of their payment, and also suggest the possibility of facing penalties. With regard to penalties the punishment schema of the normalisation technique is applicable.

R7 states, “I feel that the expectations from single parents have increased. I am just an ordinary woman and I can’t be for instance at school meeting, job network and interview at the same time....” The disciplinary technique of timetable is evident within this response, where element of time has been addressed. Time, an important part of the discourse of MO, gives Centrelink the ability to control recipients’ time.

R8. “I can understand that they need the information to keep track of my progress but there are some things that bug me. Reporting is too often. If we could report monthly then I could meet requirement no problem as I could then juggle things to make sure requirements are met if unexpected things (such as illness) comes up.”

Centrelink implements various ways to collect information from recipients of PPS (such as reporting requirements) and, in a way, oversee the progress of their participation. The disciplinary technique of surveillance is identifiable here in the phrase “keep track of my progress”.

The reporting element of MO is also compatible with the disciplinary technique of timetable, where recipients are required to report their progress for a specified time and on a specified date during an interview or walk-in appointments; respondents reported considering this to be “too often”.

R19. “I do not like being controlled and governed. It is quite degrading.”



R22. “They control my day to day activity and gives me the feeling of almost second class citizen.”

R23. “It controls my life and the quality of it.”

The words of ‘control’ and ‘governed’ as used by these respondents are evident of the government’s dominant position within the context of welfare reform (through the discourse of MO). The paradigm of panopticism is identifiable here, where the government (through Centrelink) determines the participation requirements for PPS recipients and recipients are obliged to adhere to them.

### **8.7. CONCLUSION**

This chapter addressed the continuity of welfare reform from the Howard government to the Rudd/Gillard Labor governments. MO maintained its position as the core concept in welfare reform, despite changes and amendments articulated in the *Social Security Amendment (Supporting More Australians into Work) Bill 2013* and the *Social Security Legislation Amendment (Caring for People on Newstart) Bill 2013*.

This chapter also examined Foucault’s idea of discipline in practical terms through the implementation of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to seek the views of the female recipients of PPS regarding MO. The results from the questionnaire supported the compatibility of Foucauldian disciplinary techniques, and provided a practical insight into the relevance of Foucault’s disciplinary techniques within MO and the context of the WTW reform.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION

#### *9.1. CONCLUSION*

This thesis has presented some of the key ideas of Michel Foucault. It uses his idea of discipline as a lens to examine the Welfare to Work (WTW) welfare reform under the Howard government in relation to the requirement of accountability from Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients, who were one of the main targets of this reform. The thesis has discussed the implications of the management of this payment for its recipients and analysed and surveyed the relevance of Foucault's ideas in a case study of some responses to the payment and its recent modification.

Public-sector reform in Australia has been implemented by both Labor and Liberal National Coalition governments. The Hawke and Keating Labor governments implemented a combination of social-democratic policy in line with their party's principles and free-market policy designed to increase competition and efficiency.

Public-sector reform continued under the Liberal National Coalition from 1996; however, the approach of this government was different. New public management (NPM) formed the framework of the Howard government's policies in public-sector reforms, and, in particular, welfare reforms. The approach adopted could be described as fundamentally neo-liberal, and "develop[ed] indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them" (Lemke 2001, p. 201).

The Australian welfare system, as part of the public-sector reform project, was also subject to change and reform. In fact, systematic welfare reform was considered to be a major part of public-sector reform under the Howard government. The term ‘mutual obligation’ (MO) appeared in the welfare-reform literature from 1996 (Yeend 2004); however, “in their public accounts of employment policy, both Labor and the Coalition have used similar terms: Labor, ‘reciprocal obligation’; the Coalition, ‘mutual obligation’” (Harris 2001, p. 19). MO was considered the centrepiece of the Howard government’s policy, where responsibility for welfare recipients was shared, and “welfare assistance provided to the unemployed of working age...[involved] some return responsibilities for the recipient” (Dale 2006). More specifically, MO extended accountability within the context of welfare reform to four parties: the community, the business sector, the government and the recipients of social welfare (McClure 2000b).

There were three major welfare reforms in the time of the Howard government. The first was Work for the Dole (WFD) legislation, which was introduced to Parliament on 19 March 1997 “as the first part of a broader ‘Mutual Obligation’ approach to the structure of income support and support programs for unemployed people” (Dale 2006). This reform was followed by two other major welfare reforms: Australians Working Together (AWT) (2003) and Welfare to Work (WTW) (2006): the latter was the focus of this study.

Accountability (MO in this study) can be considered as discourse (Sinclair 1995). Various and non-standardised definitions of discourse provided by scholars have led to confusion. To overcome this issue, Leitch and Palmer (2010) suggest that a researcher define the key

terms in his/her research, including ‘discourse’, to provide an indication of what specific definition of discourse is applicable. This study adopted two definitions of discourse. The first is Foucault’s, which emphasises that a discourse can also be understood as a series of events. It is argued that “discursive practices occur at a particular time, and are like events in that they create effects within a discursive field” (Danaher *et al.* 2000, p. 34). This definition is relevant in cases, such as this study, where the discourse of MO is examined in relation to a specific set of welfare reform events initiated in Australia under WTW (2006). The second definition applied in this research relates to context and the social aspect: “Discourses are a structural part of their contexts and their respective structures mutually and continually influence each other” (Van Dijk 1997b, p. 15). And “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between, people and groups of people” (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, p. 258).

This study suggests that while the government regarded MO as a tool to direct Parenting Payment Single (PPS) recipients towards employment, there is evidence of compatibility with Foucauldian disciplinary techniques within the structure of MO, which can be found in the views of some PPS recipients. This point was demonstrated in two stages: first, by examining the elements of MO and investigating its structure (Chapter 6), and, second, by examining the applicability of Foucault’s disciplinary techniques to the elements of MO (Chapter 7). This research found that several disciplinary techniques were applicable. It also found that one disciplinary technique was applicable for several elements of MO, and that one element of MO could attract a couple of disciplinary techniques. These two stages

demonstrate the applicability of disciplinary techniques in theory; to investigate applicability in practice, a questionnaire was conducted where the result also indicated the applicability of disciplinary techniques in MO.

The existence of disciplinary techniques is also an indication of the existence of power relationships within the discourse of MO. Discipline and dominance/control are linked in that discipline is a form of power. Foucault (2007) addresses three forms of power-sovereignty, discipline and governmental management-which he refers to as a ‘triangle’ of power. This research examined the power relationships in the discourse of MO within the context of WTW. It identified accountability (MO) under WTW as an instrument of control. Control contributes towards understanding accountability, in that it defines accountability. Accountability and control are strongly linked: accountability has been referred to “as a means of achieving control” (Mulgan 2000, p. 11) and as “a vital mechanism of control” (Uhr 1993, p. 6), which indicates that making someone accountable is to use a technique of power.

MO is a term as well as a concept. This study considered context to produce meaning for its analysis and it took a contextual approach to the discourse of MO. It identified multiple contexts for the discourse of MO and addressed these contexts in various chapters: public-sector reform/welfare reform in Chapter 2; accountability in Chapter 3; critical context in Chapter 4; and an examination of public documents in Chapter 5 (the welfare-reform

legislation of WTW (2006), the McClure report (2000), Centrelink and government websites and Centrelink publications).

Foucault's concepts were the lens for the analysis of power relationships within the context of WTW and through the discourse of MO, whereas Van Dijk (1993) provided a research framework within critical discourse analysis (CDA). This study selected the work of Van Dijk (1993) as its research framework and method because it informs and develops the idea of Foucauldian discourse. Furthermore, these works consider discursive formation and investigate the structure of discourse, which is an important procedure in exploring dominance within the context of WTW. This is in light of the fact that "at no point does Foucault show the slightest desire to produce a theory to account for the 'structuring' of discursive formation by 'relations invested in institutions', etc." (Sheridan 1980, p. 214).

'Production' and 'reception' are the two dimensions considered by Van Dijk (1993) in the 'discursive reproduction of dominance'. These dimensions are reflected in the following statements:

[1] If powerful speakers or groups enact or otherwise exhibit their power in discourse, we need to know exactly how this is done. And [2] if they thus are able to persuade or otherwise influence their audiences, we also want to know which discursive structures and strategies are involved in that process (p.259).

Foucault does not provide a clear-cut methodology; and this is an area of Foucault's research that scholars criticise. However, at the same time, this provides researchers with

the freedom of choice to choose a method that best serves their need. This research considers these two points: that, on the one hand, there is no specific method of research within the umbrella of CDA, and on the other hand there is the flexibility offered by Foucault, which invites researchers to take anything from his tool box and use it the way they fit.

The combined method of Van Dijk (1993) with the application of Foucault's idea of discipline allowed this study to investigate dominance and power relationships within the discourse of MO. This combination allowed the researcher to capture both power and communicative relationships in the process of subjugating PPS recipients to MO. This combination also enabled the researcher to extract the 'regulated communication' in regard to MO discourse, which demonstrated the elements of MO (Chapter 6) and examined Foucault's disciplinary themes within the discourse of MO (Chapter 7). Foucault reflects on power relationships inherent in subjugation, and states, "in the modern era, individuals become subjects by being subjected to the forces of disciplinary power and normalization" (Allen 2009, p. 14). In Foucault's research, "power relations are reflected in language, but are not a consequence of language" (Hewitt 2009, p. 2). Foucault is interested in "the procedures and social interactions that shape communication" rather than 'definition of the term'" (Stahl 2004, p. 4330).

MO is a discourse that is bound up with Centrelink's institutional practices, which play a role in the subjugation of PPS recipients. The Australian government has 'access' to the

public discourse of welfare payments, and maintains a 'symbolic' position (through the exercise of command) from which it can enact policies and enforce rules governing the obligations of recipients. The government also 'controls the context' by "controlling the participants and their roles" (Van Dijk 1997a, p. 21). These ways of exercising power (especially 'controlling the context') have enabled the government to set strategies that influence the behaviour of social-welfare recipients; in other words, to 'control the participants and their roles'.

The Australian government (through Centrelink) implements "a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differentiation marks of the 'value' of each person and of the levels of knowledge)" and "a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy)" within the discourse of MO (Foucault 1983, pp. 218-219).

Van Dijk's (1993) framework was applied to analyse the 'regulated communication' in regard to MO discourse. The WTW legislation (2006) is the 'regulated communication' where all elements of MO are addressed and the structure and functions of MO are communicated. Furthermore, the first statement in Van Dijk's framework enabled the researcher to investigate the structure of MO discourse and how it is organised based on the idea/requirement of social and economic participation.



For Foucault, discipline incorporates three paradigms for analysis: ‘docile bodies’, ‘the means of correct training’ and ‘panopticism’, and each includes its own disciplinary techniques (see the disciplinary map in Chapter 4). This study demonstrated the applicability of these paradigms and their relevant techniques in the discourse of MO (Chapter 7) where their applicability is an indication of control and domination by the elite group (government, Centrelink and Job Search Australia). This research also presented cases in which one disciplinary practice was applicable to different aspects of MO (e.g., the technique of timetable was applicable in waiting periods as well as interviews and lodgement requirements), and cases in which one aspect of MO attracted a number of Foucault’s disciplinary techniques; for example, the panopticism paradigm and the Employment Pathway Plan, because it determines and oversees the participation requirements of PPS recipients, and the technique of examination, because a comparison is made between the set participation requirements and what a recipient of PPS has actually achieved.

This research also conducted a questionnaire, in which it was designed and executed to examine the participants’ perceptions of power relations in the MO discourse. The results from the questionnaire provided a practical insight into the relevance of Foucault’s disciplinary techniques within MO and the context of WTW reforms for PPS recipients. A number of Foucauldian disciplinary techniques were identified, including those of surveillance, punishment, partitioning, timetable, the punishment schema of normalisation, signalisation, examination and dressage. The participants indicated that recipients of PPS have no input into decisions made in regard to participatory requirements; that they do not have a choice in not entering into an activity test agreement with Centrelink; that there is an

element of monitoring within the context of MO; that there are power relationships within the discourse of MO; and that participation within the context of WTW is very much associated with the involvement of PPS recipients in the process of accountability. Crucially, the recipients were concerned about new changes in the eligibility criteria for PPS, that is, having to move to the Newstart Allowance once their youngest child turns eight.

Furthermore, the results from the questionnaire indicated the following:

- There is lack of empowerment on the part of recipients because decision-making about requirements, which is done by Centrelink, is separated from participation, which is required from recipients. The element of choice is missing, which further indicates the dominant position of Centrelink as the decision-maker in all requirement aspects.
- The ability of Centrelink to regulate recipients' progress in seeking employment is an indication of the power that Centrelink holds and the position of obedience and agreement required of PPS recipients as a requirement of receiving their payment.
- Centrelink emphasises requirements rather than rights, and penalties on payments give Centrelink the ability to influence PPS recipients' activities. In other words, social and economic participation does not deliver empowerment within welfare reform, as opportunities to initiate empowerment evaluation are denied due to the existence of a compliance system. This is in conflict with the notions of individualism and empowerment that are emphasised so extensively under NPM.

- The participation approach set by the government might create governable bodies and ease governance of social-welfare recipients; however, producing docile bodies is a challenge because there is no element of choice to shift participation towards empowerment. Instead it is a clear reflection of the role of power relationships in the process of subjugation of PPS recipients to MO.

This study finds that a range of disciplinary techniques (as described by Foucault) are in play under successive Australian governments' move towards MO in welfare policy. The outcome of this is that PPS recipients experience themselves to be controlled and disempowered, contrary to the rhetoric of release from dependency which MO was intended to achieve. The consequences of this disempowerment should be explored and taken into account in future policy decisions regarding the welfare system in Australia.

A number of areas for future research could be suggested. A further study could examine the MO of other parties such as government, business or communities, as under the introduction of MO to the social welfare system, "governments, businesses, communities and individuals all have roles" (McClure 2000b, p. 6). Future research could also be suggested as a result of findings that the researcher did not anticipate at the start of her thesis. The researcher started this research having in mind that Foucault does not provide a methodology; however, what was not anticipated was the level of flexibility a researcher can find in combining Foucault's ideas with other approaches in CDA. Combining Foucault's idea of discipline (1995) with Van Dijk's (1993) framework in this research is only one of the possibilities. Further research could extend and examine the possibility of

considering a mixed-research framework using Foucault's ideas combined with a CDA approach.

Future research also could look into the impact of the recent changes on PPS recipients' wellbeing when they check their eligibility for another social welfare payment, such as the NSA (New Start Allowance), when their youngest child turns 8. One future study could be an analysis of the financial consequences of the extensive adaptation of MO within social welfare payments and the effects (consequences) of the accountability on recipients. Also, a broader study could examine factors that affect recipients who are non-adherent (in breach) of the MO requirements.

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## **APPENDICES**

### ***APPENDIX 1***

#### ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

A questionnaire was conducted to examine the views of Parenting Payment Single recipients regarding the notion of mutual obligation (MO). MO, an important part of the welfare reforms initiated by the Howard government, requires welfare recipients to take an active role in enhancing their own wellbeing. This notion heavily emphasises seeking employment and economic and social participation. Work for the Dole (1997), Australians Working Together (2001) and Welfare to Work (WTW) (2006) are all reforms that have been introduced to the Australian welfare system. WTW mainly targeted recipients of the PPS and disability support pensions. Recipients of the PPS were the targets of this questionnaire.

A medical centre in Griffith (NSW) agreed to the researcher's request to use their facility to conduct the questionnaire. This medical centre provides health and medical services to a large number of local people including PPS recipients. This centre was used only as the point of contact between the researcher and the PPS recipients and was not involved in conducting the questionnaire.

The questions follow.

1. Do you receive Parenting Payment Single from Centrelink?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No                      (If no, please do not fill in this form)

2. Are you required to seek employment as a condition of receiving your payment?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No                      (If no, please do not fill in this form)

3. Do you have any input into the decision about any requirements set by Centrelink to receive your payment?              ☐ Yes                      ☐ No
4. Do you have a choice in NOT entering an activity test agreement with Centrelink?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No
5. Does your individual agreement with Centrelink which specifies your activity requirements involve their monitoring your activities?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No
6. Do requirements such as attending an interview to discuss your progress in looking for employment, returning requested forms or advising of changes in circumstances give Centrelink the ability to regulate your progress in seeking employment?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No
7. Are you required to apply for any kind of employment, whether you have the skills or not?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No
8. Does Centrelink emphasise requirements (what you have to do) rather than your right to receive payments?    ☐ Yes                      ☐ No
9. Do penalties on payments give Centrelink the ability to influence your activities?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No
10. Did you start receiving Parenting Payment Single before 1/7/2006?  
☐ Yes- go to Question 11                      ☐ No- go to Question 13
11. Does the move from Parenting Payment Single to Newstart Allowance (once your younger child turns eight) concern you?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No



12. Does the change in the rate of payment associated with a move to the Newstart Allowance concern you?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No

13. Do you foresee any money problems associated with the proposed move to Newstart?

☐ Yes                      ☐ No

14. There are several conditions and requirements for receiving Parenting Payment Single such as attending interviews with Centrelink and job networks, returning requested forms and advising Centrelink of any change in circumstances, and having a child younger than eight years old. Please indicate how these requirements affect you.

## ***APPENDIX 2***

### ***RESPONSES***

All 12 respondents were in receipt of Parenting Payment Single (Question 1) and all were required to seek employment as a condition of receiving their payment (Question 2). Responses to the remaining questions follow.

3. Do you have any input into the decision about any requirements set by Centrelink to receive your payment?

Eleven out of 12 respondents indicated that they had no input into decisions made with regard to participatory requirements. This may be because recipients are not given the opportunity to decide on the requirements they might feel more comfortable with. Furthermore, the separation of decision-making about requirements (Centrelink) and participation (recipients) indicates that a lack of choice is missing and highlights the lack of empowerment on the part of recipients.

This is also an indication of the position of dominance Centrelink holds as a decision-maker.

4. Do you have a choice in NOT entering an activity test agreement with Centrelink?

Ten out of 12 respondents indicated that they did not have the choice of not entering an activity test agreement with Centrelink. These responses also reflect the lack of choice given to PPS recipients. In addition, it brings the notion of compulsory versus voluntary to

the context of MO, where PPS recipients are obliged to enter an activity test agreement as a requirement of the continuation of their payment.

5. Does your individual agreement with Centrelink which specifies your activity requirements involve their monitoring your activities?

Eleven out of 12 respondents indicated that their individual agreement involved Centrelink monitoring their activity. These respondents addressed the element of monitoring within the context of MO, which reflects on the dominant position of Centrelink compared to the docile position of recipients.

6. Do requirements such as attending an interview to discuss your progress in looking for employment, returning requested forms or advising of changes in circumstances give Centrelink the ability to regulate your progress in seeking employment?

Ten out of 12 respondents acknowledged Centrelink's ability to regulate their progress in seeking employment. This ability to regulate is an indication of power, which Centrelink holds within the context of MO, and at the same time, indicates the position of subservience on the part of PPS recipients as a requirement of receiving their payment.

7. Are you required to apply for any kind of employment, whether you have the skills or not?

Nine out of 12 respondents indicated that they were required to apply for any kind of employment regardless of whether they possessed the necessary skills. This might indicate that recipients' personal skills are not considered by Centrelink in the seeking of employment. It also indicates that recipients are not granted the option of selecting and seeking the types of employment that might best suit their skills. In other words it might indicate a disregard for their skills. The lack of choice regarding possible future employment might also point to the position of power Centrelink holds in being able to direct PPS recipients to any kind of employment regardless of their skills.

8. Does Centrelink emphasise requirements (what you have to do) rather than your right to receive payments?

Nine out of 12 respondents indicated that Centrelink emphasises requirements over rights. This response is in line with the view of the Howard government, which initiated the WTW reform and MO for PPS recipients, where PPS payment was not an entitlement but rather a conditional payment. In accordance with the concept of MO, PPS recipients are accountable to the government for receiving their payment, and need to demonstrate social and economic participation.

9. Do penalties on payments give Centrelink the ability to influence your activities?

Eleven out of 12 respondents acknowledged that penalties on payments give Centrelink the ability to influence them. Two notions are identifiable using these responses. The first is the power and dominant position of the government (through Centrelink), which enables it to

enforce penalties on PPS recipients. The second is the compulsory requirements set by the government, which are considered 'norm', and any non-adherence to the requirements, which is considered 'anorm' and is dealt with according to the compliance system (imposition of penalties) within the context of MO.

10. Did you start receiving Parenting Payment Single after 1/7/2006?

Interestingly, six out of 12 respondents began receiving their PPS before 1/7/2006 and the other six after 1/7/2006. The importance of this date is that from 1/7/2006 the new claimants' eligibility has been considered according to the new rule, which requires the youngest child to be under eight years of age (previously the age was 16). Further changes applied and from 01/01/2013 the same rule applied to PPS recipients who had been receiving the payment before 01/07/2006.

11. Does the move from Parenting Payment Single to Newstart Allowance (once your younger child turns eight) concern you?

All of six respondents who were receiving PPS after 01/07/2006 indicated their concern in regard to the move to NSA once their youngest child turned eight.

12. Does the change in rate of payment associated with a move to the Newstart Allowance concern you?

Five out of six respondents who were receiving PPS after 01/07/2006 were also concerned about the change in the rate of payment associated with the move to the NSA. One of respondents wrote a side note[Y\*] next to her [Y] answer and indicated that this change will result in “Cut out eating lunch (myself)”. This is a reflection of the severity of the change for some households and arguably also undermines the core concept of the welfare system, which is welfare and the wellbeing of citizens.

13. Do you foresee any money problems associated with the proposed (the questionnaire was structured prior to 01/01/13) move to Newstart?

Five out of six respondents who were receiving PPS before 01/07/2006 also indicated that they were concerned about the proposed move to the NSA.

14. There are several conditions and requirements for receiving Parenting Payment Single such as attending interviews with Centrelink and job networks, returning requested forms and advising Centrelink of any change in circumstances, having a child younger than eight years old. Please indicate how these requirements affect you.

Five out of 12 respondents provided answers to this question.

1\*. -“Sometimes not possible to do”

-“Difficult to fill out forms a lot of stuff [to] do”

-“Other things in my life no time”

These respondents found the forms (as a participation requirement) difficult to fill out and lengthy. This could possibly be related to the literacy level of the respondents, which is an issue that needs to be discussed in order to arrange for a more individualised EPP where the respondent's specific needs are addressed (e.g., referring the respondent to LLNP).

These responses also touch on the 'time' component of MO that is needed to evaluate the requirements against the EPP.

2\*. -“Hard to get a sitter short notice to attend interviews”

-“Sometimes cannot get transport to hand in forms (don't have license)”

The first comment addresses an issue that might be a reason for non-adherence (in this case not attending an interview). It also indicates that regardless of the government's efforts in making child care easily available, there are still issues in accessing this service. Furthermore, it might also be that PPS recipients need much more warning for their notice of interview so they are able to make arrangements and hence avoid the possibility of dealing with non-compliance.

The second comment might also be a reason for non-adherence (not being able to hand in forms). However, in this case the respondent indicated that she did not hold a driving license. Finding employment would be much easier for the respondent if learning to drive were part of the participation requirements for her EPP. This response also highlights the importance of an EPP being individuality tailored to suit the individual needs of respondents.

3\*. -“Don't understand forms sometimes-questions repeat themselves”

-“No car to get down to office”

The first comment indicates that forms are used as part of the respondent’s participation requirements; however, she refers to the difficulty she has in understanding them and the structure of the forms, which contain repeated questions. This might be because the forms are unclear and poorly structured or it might also be because the respondent’s literacy levels are low. This latter point needs to be addressed in the respondent’s review of her EPP interviews.

In the second comment, the respondent refers to the issue of transport and indicates that she does not have a car, which, considering she is in a regional area with poor public transport, might result in her forms being lodged late and dealt with according to the compliance system. This response might offer a straightforward reason for non-adherence.

4\*. -“The whole Gambit-they use our circumstance/s to berate us and elevate themselves”

-“Walk a mile in my shoes”

This respondent provided two responses to this open question. The first refers to the power dynamic between the government and the recipients of PPS. It also indicates a sense of isolation with the use of ‘they’ (for government) and ‘our’ (for PPS recipients). Furthermore, it suggests a lack of trust in the government’s intentions and actions.

The second response reflects on the difficulty the respondent faces as result of the demanding activity test on PPS recipients.

5\*. -“If forms are not returned in time payments are withheld”



Three components of MO are mentioned in this single sentence: the participation requirement (lodgement of forms); the component of time, which is emphasised within context of MO to determine/consider the eligibility of payment (return form on due date); and the component of compliance (withholding payments).

This sentence indicates the powerful position held by the government (through Centrelink) to impose penalties in cases of non-compliance.

Table A summarises the respondents' (R) answers to the questionnaire.

R	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
A	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	NA	NA	Y	1*
B	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
C	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	NS	N	N	N	NA	NA	N	NA
D	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
E	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA
F	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	NA	NA	Y	2*
G	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	3*
H	Y	Y	N	N	NS	N	Y	Y	Y	N	NA	NA	Y	NA
I	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	4*
J	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	NA
K	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	5*
L	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	NA

Y=Yes ; N=No; NA= No Answer; NS= Not Sure.

- 1\*. -“Sometimes not possible to do”
  - “Difficult to fill out forms a lot of stuff [to] do”
  - “Other things in my life no time”
- 2\*. -“Hard to get a sitter short notice to attend interviews”
  - “Sometimes cannot get transport to hand in forms (don’t have license)”
- 3\*. -“Don’t understand forms sometimes-questions repeat themselves”
  - “No car to get down to office”
- 4\*. -“The whole Gambit-they use our circumstance/s to berate and elevate themselves”
  - “Walk a mile in my shoes”
- 5\*. -“If forms are not returned in time payments are withheld”
- Y\*. -“Cut out eating lunch (myself)”

### ***APPENDIX 3 (Expanded version of the original questionnaire)***

This expanded version of original questionnaire (Appendix 1) has been developed to respond to the comment of examiner A/Professor Samkin.

1. Do you receive Parenting Payment Single from Centrelink?  
☐ Yes ☐ No, please do not fill in this form.
2. Are/were you required to seek employment as a condition of receiving your payment?  
☐ Yes ☐ No, please do not fill in this form.
3. Do you think you should do something in return for receiving Parenting Payment Single?  
☐ Yes.... Why? (Please answer on the lines below).  
☐ No.....Why not? (Please answer on the lines below).

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4. Do you have a choice in NOT entering an activity test agreement with Centrelink?  
☐ Yes... Is this important to you? (Please answer on the lines below).  
☐ No.....How important is it for you to have a choice? (Please answer on the lines below).

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5. Do you have a say in selecting an activity test?

- ☐ Yes....How do you feel about this? (Please answer on the lines below).  
☐ No.....How do you feel about this? (Please answer on the lines below).

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6. Do requirements such as attending an interview to discuss your progress in looking for employment, returning requested forms or advising of changes in circumstances give Centrelink the ability to regulate (control) your progress in seeking employment?

- ☐ Yes.....How beneficial is Centrelink regulating your progress in the process of seeking employment? (Please answer on the lines below).  
☐ No..... How do you avoid feeling regulated? (Please answer on the lines below).

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7. Does Centrelink emphasise requirements (what you have to do) rather than your right to receive payments?

☐ Yes.....How does this affect your motivation in doing your activity tests? (Please answer on the lines below).

☐ No.....How does this affect your motivation in doing your activity tests? (Please answer on the lines below).

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8. Are you required to apply for any kind of employment, whether you have the skills or not?

☐ Yes.....How effective is this in your search for employment? (Please answer on the lines below).

☐ No.....How effective is this in your search for employment? (Please answer on the lines below).

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9. Do penalties on payments give Centrelink the ability to influence your activities?

- ☐ Yes.....How does this affect you? (Please answer on the lines below).  
☐ No.....How is so?

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10. Do you think it is fair how penalties on payments are imposed at the moment?

- ☐ Yes....Why? (Please answer on the lines below).  
☐ No.....Why not? (Please answer on the lines below).

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11. Does the move from Parenting Payment Single to a different payment such as New start Allowance (once your youngest child turns eight) have non-financial consequences for you?

- ☐ Yes.....What are some of your concerns? (Please answer on the lines below).  
☐ No.....Why are you not concerned or affected? (Please answer on the lines below).

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12. Does the change in the rate of payment associated with a move to a different payment (when your youngest child turns eight) such as Newstart Allowance concern you financially?

[ ☐ ] Yes.....How would this change affect your financial wellbeing? (Please answer on the lines below).

[ ☐ ] No.....Why are you not concerned or affected? (Please answer on the lines below).

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13. There are several conditions and requirements for receiving Parenting Payment Single such as attending interviews with Centrelink and job networks, returning requested forms and advising Centrelink of any change in circumstances, and having a child younger than eight years old. Please indicate how these requirements affect you? How do these requirements make you feel?

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Thank you very much for participating in my research project!

## ***APPENDIX 4***

### ***RESPONSES TO THE EXPANDED VERSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE***

A further 29 responses were collected and the original questionnaire was expanded in response to examiner A/Professor Samkin's comment.

1. Do you receive Parenting Payment Single from Centrelink?  
[ ☐ ] Yes                      [ ☐ ] No                      (If no, please do not fill in this form)
2. Are you required to seek employment as a condition of receiving your payment?  
[ ☐ ] Yes                      [ ☐ ] No                      (If no, please do not fill in this form)

All 29 respondents were receiving Parenting Payment Single (three of them within the last five years), and only two respondents were not required to seek employment at the time the questionnaire was conducted.

3. Do you think you should do something in return for receiving Parenting Payment Single?

Respondent (R)1: No. My children are younger than school age and I want to stay at home with them, until they go to school. After they go to school I would be happy to then.

R2: No. Raising my young children is very important. Also the cost of putting both my children into day care is too high. I don't make very much money from it.

R3: Yes. You shouldn't receive something for nothing especially when there are so many areas in the community that needs help.

R4: Yes. People on the 'dole' have to look for work to get payment.

R5: Yes. Raise [a] child to be productive citizen.

R6: No. I am a single mum trying to do my best.

R7: No. Because my oldest child hasn't reach the age of 12 (yr old) and they both are very dependent on me.

R8: No. because raising children by your self is enough. If I have to do something in return this will take me away from raising my children. If I must do something study at home is my preferred choice.

R9: No. I do believe there is no work absolutely in Wollongong. ! I have looked... Nothing here !!! so NO! NO! NO!

- R10: Yes. We should aim to at least study to enable a return to the workforce.
- R11: Yes. My daughter is 8 and at school which give me free time during the day.
- R12: Yes. I believe you should be further educating yourself or some work not 30 hrs a fortnight.
- R13: Yes. I believe when the children are young the parent should stay at home with them but once they are a little older parent should endeavour to start to get back into the work force starting with voluntary work in exchange for PP [parenting payment].
- R14: Yes. Because it's fair to do so.
- R15: No. 8 years old are still babies. Children under the age of 16 are still dependent on their mothers and since they've been through the trauma of their parents separating or passing away they need a stable and constant support and environment.
- R.16: Yes. Because it's rules.
- R17: No. As I already do my best to bring up accountable and good citizens of society.
- R18: Yes. Because it's fair.
- R19: Yes. I do not mind doing something in return.
- R20: Yes. Because I want to work for the payment.
- R21: Yes. Because I want to participate in the community.
- R22: No. Already doing enough raising a family. Maybe after my kids are more independent.
- R23: Yes. In theory.
- R24: Yes. Because you receive the payments to support yourself so you can afford childcare so therefore you can work or study.
- R25: Yes. I say yes you need to support your child for the rest of their life doing study or volunteer work gives you confidence to get a job. The longer you are out of work the harder it is to get a job.
- R26.No answer.
- R27: Yes. No one should get free money if they are capable of earning even just a little. I feel guilty but I'm working part time and studying full time. I will be finished Uni this year in November and will then be working full time.

R28. No. The stress of being a single parent is enough. Also depending on the situation of the parent working is sometimes harder because of childcare, picking dropping off kids.

R29. No. I would like to spend quality time with my baby. I don't receive child support. I have paid taxes and it only seems to greatly benefit those who don't work. A flexible workforce would be better. I have no option of part time.

4. Do you have a choice in NOT entering an activity test agreement with Centrelink?

R1: Yes. Very important.

R2: No. It is important to have a say.

R3: No. it is important to have a choice and depending on the circumstances we do get assistance and get an exemption. That is important when there are personal things going on in life i.e. death, illness, problem teens.

R4: Yes. I want to be able to choose.

R5: No. Very, not fair to force when trying to look after child. Child is most important.

R6: No. very important. I feel my family should come first and not be forced to work whilst 2 parent families don't have pressure that we do.

R7: No. I understand that I have to look for work, but job networks are very drilling. We could look for work from the library, home or anywhere with a supply of internet.

R8: No. very important as sometimes activity tests may not be able to be met due to sick children.

R9: Yes. Very important for everyone, as a person an individual do have an opinion.

R10: No. very, it makes you feel less as a person. It feels like they hold your life in the push of a button, i.e. if you don't do this we will take your money.

R11: No. I would like to be given the choice as I am my daughters' main carer.

R12: No. if I don't do as requested of 30 hrs a fortnight I am cut off. I believe this creates more problems, I can't work if sick, my daughter is looked after by someone else if she is sick as I don't have the choice to care for her because if I do we are cut from Centrelink.

R13: No. I agree that this needs to be done, I did not have a choice but think it is fair to be entering an activity test agreement if you are receiving cash payments from Centrelink.

R14: No. it is a condition of getting paid.

R15. No. Everyone is put in the same category. Widows and newly separated/divorced mothers should have a choice as their circumstance is different to a 16 year old who has fallen pregnant out of wedlock. UNFAIR.

R16. No. it's compulsory.

R17. No. Very important. In a democratic society everyone has a choice. That should not be taken away based on marital status and socioeconomic background.

R18. No. it's very important for me to have a choice because I am more aware of my situation.

R19. No. I need to be able to make my own choice.

R20. No. I have no real choice.

R21. No. I have no real choice.

R22. No. Very important. It is essential not to feel forced/controlled.

R23. No. Very important.

R24. No. Not that important. The activity test set out what I had to complete to receive payments.

R25. Yes. To receive my payment I didn't have to do study. I made them link me with a job network agency I guess I did this when I felt confident to.

R26. No answer.

R27. No. So you should have to. If you are not going to work then the least you can do is study.

R28. Yes. If you receiving the payment it's only fair you meet criteria.

R29. Yes. I haven't been in need to. I am receiving paid parental leave and family tax benefit A also.

##### 5. Do you have a say in selecting an activity test?

R1. Yes. Depends upon the choice.

R2. No. Frustrated.

R3. Yes. It is important as everyone is different, some are better hands on and some are better in a structured environment etc.

R4. Yes. Capable.

R5. No. Dis- empowered.

R6. No. No control over my family, work choices and money.

R7. No. I feel tired because I am trying to be mum, look for work, do the house work, and may be even study.

R8. Yes. I like the fact that I could choose to study to help me return to work.

R9. No response.

R10. No. it basically their way or no way, so you're helpless.

R11. No. I feel we all should be given a choice but I love that it was given the Salvation Army for my work for the dole activity.

R12. No. I don't actually understand the whole system it was never explained to me and the more I ask the more I get sent in circles.

R13. No. I was happy with the activity test I have. I never questioned my test.

R14. No. wished could have more choices.

R15. No. not really, bullied into looking for work.

R16. No. I should do them.

R17. No. we are pushed into low paying jobs.

R18. No. I feel I have no power or choice.

R19. No. Frustrated & bullied.

R20. No. not much choice is given.

R21. No. the government does not provide so many options.

R22. No. outraged.

R23. No. frustrated.

R24. Yes. Good. I chose to study for my activity test. This made me feel like I had more options rather than working.

R25. Yes. Once I got a job they wanted me to do three shifts or a minimum of 15 hours which I found manageable.

R26. Yes. You have a range of different things that qualify as an activity test, from study at tafe, volunteer work, paid employment and even job training.

R27. I'm not entirely sure on this.

R28. Yes.

R29. No. Haven't asked to.

6. Do requirements such as attending an interview to discuss your progress in looking for employment, returning requested forms or advising of changes in circumstances give Centrelink the ability to regulate (control) your progress in seeking employment?

R1. Yes. They have to because not everyone is completely honest about their job seeking.

R2. Yes. They should be giving support in the process.

R3. Yes. I'm not sure, as long as I keep up with my agreement with Campbell Page and do my best to meet my criteria, they seem to be happy.

R4. No. I try my best to seek work voluntarily.

R5. No answer. Unsure.

R6. No. they aren't interested.

R7. No. I apply for jobs all the time and some of the interviews I have been to were related to the jobs that I applied for at home.

R8. Yes. This means that if I'm not fulfilling requirements it is picked up early before my payments are cut. It also helps get onto the right place for when I have to return to work.

R9. Yes.

R10. Yes. Very, I personally was on a huge pathway and Centrelink got it reduced for me.

R11. No. There are no choices with Centrelink. You follow their rules or they cut your payments.

R12. Yes. For the unemployed that choose to be that it would be annoying to constantly hand in forms. For the people that are employed it's very inconsiderate as I have to take work off to attend the meetings.

R13. Yes. I agree that this process is a great opportunity to get you into the correct job and encourage you to be proactive in seeking employment.

R14. Yes. It makes me do it in specified time.

R15. Yes. Regulation is beneficial only if it's been customised to circumstances.

R16. Yes. It controls all my progress.

R17. No. It only causes inconvenience and an annoyance feeling towards Centrelink.

R18. Yes. It's not beneficial at all.

R19. Yes. They regulate the activity but not the progress. There is no realistic progress.

R20. Yes. Because I have to plan my daily life according to requirements.

R21. Yes. Because I need to meet the requirements.

R22. Yes. I understand that rules need to be followed, however does not influence the progress nor the outcome.

R23. Yes. I understand that it's step needs to be taken.

R24. No. no Centrelink doesn't affect the progress in my studies. Although it's important for Centrelink to keep in contact and continue to regulate people so they can stay on track.

R25. Yes. If you are wanting help and to work it is beneficial.

R26. Yes. I think these appointments don't make you feel regulated and Centrelink feel they are keeping up to date, but in all honesty these appointments are pointless and very easy to 'bullshit' your way through and tell them what they want to hear and write jobs you have applied for even if you haven't done anything.

R27. Yes. Yes you have to show progress however it's easily cheated. For those who are not really trying to look for work, they just apply for jobs you won't get or do a bad job in the application.

R28. Yes. The services are great to help get full time work. I always found it helpful going to job network offices to seek employment it gave me confidence and I'm now a full time worker in Aged Care and loving it.

R29. No. I am not required to do this. But previously, they aren't flexible.



7. Does Centrelink emphasise requirements (what you have to do) rather than your right to receive payments?

R1. No. It doesn't change anything cause you have to look for work.

R2. Yes. It makes the process more confusing.

R3. Yes. Centrelink have been understanding with my personal situation, yet they provide the staff that listen, understand and motivate me. I have had my self-esteem boosted due to this and has made me feel more comfortable in getting out there.

R4. Yes. But everyone has different ideas on requirements. Confusing.

R5. Yes. Makes me feel unimportant, like just another "bludger".

R6. Yes. We are all the "same". Single mothers with several kids to different fathers.

R7. Yes. You become less motivated as you feel you have failed regardless of your efforts.

R8. Yes. I feel I have to work for my payment. I don't feel I should just get it.

R9. No answer. Governut not government, get real women too take over Australia again. Stop taking women out.

R10. Yes. It's like jumping through hoops. Sometimes you would rather not but you have to.

R11. Yes. Being pushed into doing things that don't suit or work with your time is stressful and gives no motivation at all.

R12. Yes. I am reminded regularly to my requirements. It can get tiring at times a sometimes I feel Centrelink doesn't think I try.

R13. Yes. I find it a great motivation, I understand if I meet these requirement I receive my payments and also the chance of gaining employment.

R14. Yes. Because requirements need to be done to get paid.

R15. Yes. It is more of a dictatorship as in "if you don't meet the requirement you won't get paid" it is frustrating and depressing.

R16. Yes.

R17. Yes. Demotivates me. It's already hard enough to re-entre work force, let alone feel that I am being forced by an individual.

R18. Yes. I don't feel supported so don't feel motivated.

- R19. Yes. Not meeting requirements = no payments.
- R20. Yes. It is not a positive motivation.
- R21. Yes. It makes me feel that rules are more important than clients.
- R22. Yes. Stresses me out.
- R23. Yes.
- R24. Yes. I receive payments so I can finish my studies. It isn't free money.
- R25. No. I really wanted to get a job, I was happy for any motivation and help.
- R26. No answer.
- R27. Yes. It makes me do it. It's a requirement so you do it.
- R28. Yes. I guess it does motivate you to fill requirements in order to receive payments.
- R29. Yes. It's do a list of things and you may be eligible for payments.

8. Are you required to apply for any kind of employment, whether you have the skills or not?

- R1. No. sometimes yes but I only look at what I'm able to do.
- R2. Yes. Harder because those with skills would be chosen first.
- R3. Yes and No. yes, however they (Campbell Page) are willing to provide any required training necessary. No, in that they (Campbell Page) try their best to assist in finding work with the skills already obtained.
- R4. Yes. My children come first. Finding work during school hours is extremely hard.
- R5. Yes. Doesn't help end up wasting mine and employers time.
- R6. Yes. These jobs don't suit a single mum trying to juggle work and school and family and lifestyle.
- R7. No. so far I haven't been required to do so. We need to apply for jobs that we are capable of doing otherwise I doubt the performance and outcome.
- R8. Yes. Not very effective as I have to do applications whether I'm qualified or not.

R9. No. no, if you have young needing children. We as mothers and fathers should be there for our children. Our next generation.

R10. Yes. Not effective at all. But if you don't meet your requirements again you fail.

R11. Yes. I have to look after 2 jobs per week. Around every 6 months I have to hand in my activity report and no 2 job applications can be the same which means most I don't have qualifications for.

R12. No. I don't apply for a job that I feel I am not capable of handling.

R13. Yes. This gives you a broader range of opportunities and training can be provided through your employment agency.

R14. Yes. Not much as number of jobs are important.

R15. YES. At the job agencies I am told to apply for anything and everything as the government can't pay me anymore.

R16. Yes.

R17. Yes. Not effective. We are told that we need to apply for any job and we can not refuse offer of employment.

R18. Yes. It's effective but often you are pushed to do work you don't want to do.

R19. Yes. As long as it's employment, I need to apply for it. From labour work to unattainable managerial positions.

R20. Yes. The number of jobs are more important.

R21. Yes. Because they only look at the numbers.

R22. Yes.

R23. Yes.

R24. No. I need to finish my studies before finding employment.

R25. No. When I chose to link with a job network agency they helped me get into studying what I was interested in to help me get the job I wanted.

R26. No answer.

R27. I am not sure as I have always applied for jobs within my qualification.

R28. No. At job networks they do help you find jobs in your strengths rather than weaknesses.

R29. Yes. It's stupid especially if you don't have skills and apply. It wastes everyone's time. A job has to fit your needs and you have to fit theirs. If you have no skills- it would be very hard to get a job.

9. Do penalties on payments give Centrelink the ability to influence your activities?

R1. Yes. I don't think it is always fair.

R2. No.

R3. Yes. "who wants penalties?". I guess yes and no in that I always do my best to do the right thing so it isn't a worry for me.

R4. Yes. I need the money and constant amount each time.

R5. Yes. I need every last cent to survive.

R6. Yes. If I didn't need the money I wouldn't apply for benefit.

R7. Yes. Eventhough it is hard when they cut the payment but you instantly remember that you need look for work and attend meetings next time.

R8. Yes. If I don't do what they say I get no money.

R9. Yes. If I apply yes ! Like anyone. Get may be younger non worker into painting , building, getting rid of graffiti, more willing/make them receive payments for skills provided by government.

R10. Yes. Same situation. It's like holding something over your head i.e. if you don't do this we will take your money. It's stressful.

R11. No answer.

R12. No.

R13. Yes. I think you sometimes need to reconsider your activities especially if you will be penalised. You need to abide by their rules.

R14. Yes. I make sure to do my activities to not be penalised.

R15. No. they are no jobs. Cutting payment won't magically have me in employment.

R16. Yes. It does influence.

R17. No. further enforces poverty and stress on already overburdened parents.

R18. Yes. I feel penalised unfairly.

R19. No. I only can do what I can do.

R20. Yes. It makes me worry all the time.

R21. Yes. It stresses me.

R22. Yes. I need to complete the activities regardless of my current situation. The agencies have no empathy. They are there to make money.

R23. No. I can only do what I can do.

R24. Yes. If I stop studying I lose my payments.

R25. No. You get to choose what you want to do you only get penalties if you don't turn up or break your agreements.

R26. No answer.

R27. Yes. If you don't do it you don't get paid. I need the pay so I do what is required.

R28. Yes. If you don't comply you don't get paid.

R29. Yes. You generally have to wait till the following fortnight for fix up. You get penalised even if it was not your fault. You are restricted in what you can do/eat/afford that week.

10. Do you think it is fair how penalties on payments are imposed at the moment?

R1. No. because every situation is different.

R2. No. there shouldn't be penalties on them.

R3. No answer. I can't really answer this question, because I don't know the process of how they deal with penalties.

R4. No.

R5. Unsure.

R6. No. we all make mistakes and not always for financial gain.

R7. No. because some of us are so busy with our kids, their school, their after school activities, shopping, cleaning, etc. that we genuinely forget about our Centrelink related activities unlike others who just want to be lazy.

R8. No. because sometimes things are out of your control and as a single parent there is no one there to help take up the slack and so things don't get done...especially if children get sick or I get sick.

R9. No. please think now! Present moment. Gov up! Not down unemployment up HELP. Only going to get worst! We should all do a days work plus to get our share, but don't be nasty or judgemental.

R10. No. people are in all sorts of financial situations and stress, taking a benefit off someone doesn't help.

R11. No answer.

R12. No. I am not aware of any penalties on payment as I was told if I don't make the 30hrs I don't get Centrelink benefits and I'm cut off.

R13. No. I believe the penalties are quite harsh and this I believe is why some parents prefer not to work and just receive payments from Centrelink.

R14. No. they are harsh.

R15. No. Very unfair. People are already struggling.

R16. No. not fair.

R17. No. everyone is in different situation however, most single parents on government benefits already live below or just on the poverty line.

R18. No. because my kids should not be penalised for my actions.

R19. No. I have not always been a single woman. I have always been a contributing member of society and have paid my taxes and dues. Why should I be further reattributed in my time of need.

R20. No. it is not fair.

R21. No. it is not fair.

R22. No.

R23. No. very unfair.

R24. Yes. Otherwise approved activities would not be completed.

R25. No. Some people are lazy and don't want to work and need that kind of "motivating" to do anything.

R26. No answer.

R27. No. No they need imposing.

R28. No. I don't agree on all the interviews you have to attend only because of the waiting times, and only to update info.

R29. No. It seems to affect the ones that need it the most are affected the worst. The amount of money is very hard to line off and when you lose money how are you meant to but essentials.

11. Does the move from Parenting Payment Single to a different payment such as Newstart Allowance (once your youngest child turns eight) have non-financial consequences for you?

R1. No.

R2. No.

R3. No.

R4. No.

R5. No.

R6. Yes.

R7. Yes. Less room to move with your budget. Higher travel fair as well.

R8. No.

R9. Yes. I believe so. Help every single mother/father out!!! We are all responsible. HELP! BE CLEAR. Everyone enjoys to work that I know it gives you satisfaction!

R10. Yes. It affected me greatly, how someone can say you spend less when they get older is beyond me. I went from just making ends meet to absolutely struggling week in and out.

R11. No answer.

R12. No answer. This has not happened yet.

R13. No. only consequence is that you need to meet 15 hrs pw study/work. This relates to my personal situation.

R14. Yes. Need to manage time.

R15. Yes. Further physical and mental stress.

R16. No.

R17. Yes. Mental. Depression and further stress.

R18. Yes. Increased stress because of some financial issues.

R19. Yes. It is frustrating. Draining.

R20. No.

R21. Yes.

R22. Yes. Burdens me mentally and emotionally.

R23. Yes. Stressful.

R24. No. because by that time I plan to have finished university and to be in full time employment.

R25. No. Once my daughter turns 8 she will be old enough to not need me as much enabling me to take more shifts at work.

R26. On parenting payment single you get a pension card that entitles you to \$2.50 train, bus, for someone who isn't driving losing this has not just financial effects but others like ability of freedom and independence and also the ability to get to places like job links and Centrelink.

R27. No.

R28. No.

R29. No. I will be back at work before then.

12. Does the change in the rate of payment associated with a move to a different payment (when your youngest child turns eight) such as Newstart Allowance concern you financially?

R1. Yes. Because it's different rules again and the money won't go as far cause the kids are older and need more things.

R2. No. it shouldn't because I have had warning and just need to prepare for it.

R3. No. it is a matter of budgeting and planning. It is difficult at the beginning of the year with uniforms, school books, fees etc. but again I do my best to plan and budget- not easy.



R4. Yes. More expenses with growing children. Child care fees while working taking more money away.

R5. Yes. Will be less, feel punished for being a single parent.

R6. Yes. Less money, less choice, new rules, new forms etc. stressful.

R7. Yes. You get paid less with no other better alternative, therefore you will have less money to spend and no money to save for the children.

R8. No. I will have to find work anyway. This just means I need to be in work before they turn 8. I haven't really looked at the change in rate yet.

R9. Yes. If I was and have been on my own! Absolutely. You be a mother /father on the front forth on your own! LEARN TO BE AND NOT BE SOMEONEELSE. lucky you HAVE A WONDERFUL WIFE AND KIDS "(WITH MONEY)" \$\$

R10. Yes. Hugely the stress of it made me physically sick. I would spend nights laying awake wondering how I would cope and what I could cut out to ensure we would be ok.

R11. No answer.

R12. Yes. I had a girlfriend recently leave the area and move away as she simply could not financially support herself within the Illawarra on work and Newstart Allowance.

R13. Yes. The payments drop quite considerably and the cost of raising this child doesn't drop, if anything it increases as they want to get into after school sports and activities. The cost of living increases so I would struggle, I don't understand how they worked out to cut it down at 8 yrs??

R14. Yes. Makes it tough.

R15. Yes. I am already under financial stress as I have no other form of support.

R16. Yes. It makes it difficult.

R17. Yes. A cut down of almost \$170 means cutting down on essentials deciding between milk or bread. As bills need to get paid regardless.

R18. Yes. It definitely pays some bills when you are on parenting payment single, when I am moved to Newstart I won't be able to pay.

R19. Yes. Essentials turn into luxuries.

R20. Yes. It makes my budget tighter.

R21. Yes.

R22. Yes. It is hard enough to pay for groceries and bills without the cut downs.

R23. Yes. Can't make ends meet.

R24. No. Because I should be working by then.

R25. No. Everyone else without kids work 5 shifts a week once your kid is 8 you can do more shifts if I didn't work for 8 years I would be concerned and probably have no confidence to get a job.

R26. Yes. Although you still receive family tax the rate of payment is much lower and Newstart is based on 1 person not a family of 2 or even 3.

R27. Yes. However I'm planning on being fully financially independent by then.

R28. No. Because if your child is eight then working shouldn't be hard if you looking for work and finding work.

R29. No. I would not be on payments I will be back at work.

13. There are several conditions and requirements for receiving Parenting Payment Single such as attending interviews with Centrelink and job networks, returning requested forms and advising Centrelink of any change in circumstances, and having a child younger than eight years old. Please indicate how these requirements affect you? How do these requirements make you feel?

R1. Going to interviews are hard sometimes because one of the children might be sick, or just tired because they missed a day time sleep. Sometimes the interview needs to have the time changed.

R2. They have been very helpful. I would have seriously struggled raising my kids without the help of PPS.

R3. They don't really affect me in that I want to work and they are providing me with the facilities to do that. The positive attitude with my case manager at Campbell Page really motivates me even after the death of my father when I have been at my lowest.

R4. Lack of control, Being told what to do by a department, Scared for my kids.

R5. Scrutinised, Disempowered, Classed as a "blodger", Misunderstood, Unfairly picked on, when I am vulnerable and should be helped not penalised.

R6. Judged, Stressed-money

- Children
- Job during school hours extremely hard to find at good pay
- Cost of child care- before and after school care and holidays

Branded – “single mother” “using system”

Everyone at Centrelink have different ideas on processes and guidelines.

R7. I feel that the expectations from single parents have increased. I am just an ordinary woman and I can't be for instance at school meeting, job network and interview at the same time.

The other fact that hasn't been considered is the age of the eldest child as well. Single mums who have their children close e.g. 8 yr and 9 yr old are really facing difficulties because all of the children are still very dependent on the parent.

R8. I can understand that they need the information to keep track of my progress but there are some things that bug me.

Reporting is too often. If we could report monthly then I could meet requirement no problem as I could then juggle things to make sure requirements are met if unexpected things (such as illness) comes up.

Forms can be too confusing at times and as such aren't filled completely. Thus then slows the whole process down.

While over the phone interviews are fantastic, I try to at least make every 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> interview face to face to allow me to show what I am doing and it makes it easier to questions answered and I get hard copies of info straight away. I can then read it while I remember what have talked about instead of waiting a week for it to come in the mail.

R9. If don't want it!, Don't need it!!!

R10. It's like a merry go round of appointments, obligations and stressing about how to make ends meet and fulfilling all of their requirements job networks (in particular job find) don't seem to help other than make life harder, I know people who have put themselves through courses, obtained work all without their help, then suddenly you're in their top priority and want to claim your success it's not fair.

R11. Having a child of such a young age requires constant care and I am fearful Centrelink are going to make it so hard for people like myself which is hard enough already and my child will be left to look after herself.

R12. I can understand that these things need to be done, but they seem to “tar us all with the same brush”. If your single and you have a child working or not support is needed. Non-judgemental support is needed. I feel for working single mother with multiple part time jobs. I think they need to be taxed less and helped more. From personal experience I don’t want to be on Centrelink no one really does. I see my child less to work more to provide for her now and in the future. I think if I could do it all again I would be a stay at home mum and educate myself so much more.

R13. These appointments, forms, interviews *etc.* do not bother me. Usually, I only get annoyed when the system is not updated and you receive a letter saying your PPS has been cancelled as you did not attend an appointment.

It is sometimes frustrating when working and you are constantly bounded to attend for an interview.

R14. Takes so much time.

R15. I have personally been told by my job agencies that it’s not their job to find/help me find work. They are just there to enforce. This mentality and form of treatment affects me a great deal. I feel disappointed and ashamed of Julia Guillard. Shame!

R16. They make me feel the need to work hard.

R17. My problem is not with Centrelink wanting an interview/return forms. It is the emotional and the financial consequences and the fake employment agencies.

R18. I think these make it harder to focus on other parts of your life , your health and your kids wellbeing because these requirements are time consuming and stressful at times.

R19. I do not like being controlled and governed. It is quite degrading.

R20. I have to plan ahead and try to juggle my life with the requirements.

R21. I have to try hard to meet the requirements and take care of my children.

R22. They control my day to day activity and gives me the feeling of almost second class citizen.

R23. It controls my life and the quality of it.

R24. In my situation these circumstances don’t really affect me. I’m grateful I receive payments because it gives me the opportunity to afford childcare so I can finish my studies and get a job.

R25. Once I was working I got my payment report my earnings on the phone with my pin takes no more than five minutes once a fortnight. Also they send a letter every few months

asking if any of my circumstances have changed with an envelope I just send back and that takes no more than 5 min. I receive letters informing me my daughter can see the dentist free of charge. I got help with MediCare payments medication is cheaper. rego at RTA is free and travel is &2.50 to travel all day so even though payment are just enough to live on you can earn up to \$1700.00 a fortnight and still be entitled to a small payment and all benefits mentioned above.

R26. You can feel a little but like they might make you feel guilty for being a single parent and you don't deserve the right at home with your children as say someone with a working husband. A lot of woman on single payments including myself haven't chosen to be single parents and sometimes it isn't avoidable and you shouldn't be punished for that.

R27. Other than doing what I'm required it doesn't really affect me. They don't really make me feel anything, I feel blessed to have the system.

R28. Never really affected myself. Always attended.

R29. I haven't had to apply for work. I am receiving paid parental leave and single parent pension. I had to provide lots of information and being told the wrong information by customer service. I haven't had to attend Centrelink at all yet in relation to work only in relation to child support and how that it will affect my payments if I don't get child support or obtain reasonable support. I find it annoying as I don't have the money to take him (father) to court. There is no flexibility in any one's circumstances. Its black and white and no family is black and white.

## ***APPENDIX 5***

### ***PUBLIC DOCUMENTS***

The following references (public documents) were used to extract elements of MO.

#### **A) Governmental department websites**

Australian Parliament House

Australian Parliament House Library

Department of Family and Community Services

Department of Human Services, online

Guide to Social Security Law, online

Australian Public Service Commission

Home page of Workplace Relations

Homepage of Centrelink

Job Services Australia

Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary debates, Senate Official Hansard

#### **B) Australian government publications**

McClure, P [Reference Group on Welfare Reform], (2000a), *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society: Interim Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform*, Canberra, Department of Family and Community Services.

McClure, P [Reference Group on Welfare Reform], (2000b), *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society: Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform*, Canberra, Department of Family and Community Services.

Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment (Welfare to Work and Other Measures) Act 2005, AGPS, Canberra, 2005.

Family and Community Services Legislation Amendment (Australians Working Together and Other 2001 Budget Measures) Act 2003, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 2003.

Work for the Dole legislation 1997, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

**C) Centrelink publications (on behalf of the Australian government)**

Centrelink Annual Reports

Centrelink Office and Home Interviews, Your Rights and Responsibilities, CO021.0802, AGPS, Canberra.

Changes to Parenting Payment from 1 July 2006, MCLW029.0603ENG, AGPS, Canberra.

Flexible Arrangements for Parents and Principal Carers, no date, LW065.1005, AGPS, Canberra.

Future Directions (Centrelink) (2003-2006), AGPS, Canberra.

Information you need to know about your claim for Parenting Payment, Ci008.1005, AGPS, Canberra.

New Claim Interview Servicing newly arrived refugee and humanitarian entrants, no date, AH1694.0806, AGPS, Canberra.

The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program, ST011.0907, AGPS, Canberra.

Welcome to Centrelink Multilingual Call (CMC)-An Overview (No date), AGPS, Canberra.

Why it's important to meet your activity test or participation requirements, LW061.0906,  
AGPS, Canberra.