



ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/reso20>

# Affective technologies of welfare deterrence in Australia and the United Kingdom

China Mills & Elise Klein

To cite this article: China Mills & Elise Klein (2021) Affective technologies of welfare deterrence in Australia and the United Kingdom, *Economy and Society*, 50:3, 397-422, DOI: [10.1080/03085147.2021.1875692](https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2021.1875692)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2021.1875692>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 31 Mar 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 2078



View related articles [↗](#)





View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles [↗](#)



# Affective technologies of welfare deterrence in Australia and the United Kingdom

China Mills  and Elise Klein 

## Abstract

Across the political spectrum of different historical periods, welfare deterrence has shaped social security and immigration policy in both Australia and the United Kingdom. Deterrence discourages access to state welfare through the production and mobilization of negative affect to deter specific groups from claiming state support, and by crafting public affect (of fear and disgust) about these target populations in order to garner consent for punitive policies. In this paper, we argue that deterrence works as a human technology where the crafting of negative affect operates as a technology of statecraft. Through critical juxtaposition and multiple genealogies of deterrence, this paper meshes time and space, and colony/colonizer and metropole, to show the historical and contemporary connectivity of the affective nature of deterrence. We identify five main operations that produce the ‘feel’ of deterrence: stigmatization by design, destitution by design, deterrent architecture, the control of movement, and the centrality of labour; as well as tracing the political economy of deterrence.

Keywords: affect; deterrence; welfare; immigration; social security stigmatization.

*China Mills, School of Health Sciences, City, University of London, United Kingdom.*

*E-mail: china.mills@city.ac.uk*

*Elise Klein, The Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. E-mail: elise.klein@anu.edu.au*

Copyright © 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.



## 1. Introduction

From the Victorian workhouse to contemporary welfare reform, the provision of 'welfare' has long coexisted alongside policies and practices that mobilize negative affect to deter specific groups from claiming state support, and to craft public affect (such as fear and disgust) about these target populations. Across the political spectrum of different historical periods, welfare deterrence shapes social security and immigration policy in both Australia and the United Kingdom (the joint foci of this paper), deterring and discouraging access to state welfare through the production and mobilization of negative affect (whether by design or as a by-product/unintended impact), especially amongst and about already denigrated groups, including First Nations people,<sup>1</sup> asylum seekers, and disabled people. In many countries across Europe, the United States and Australia, social security, especially provision of welfare, is reliant on a 'vast web of disentanglement strategies' (Wacquant, 2009, p. 91), of which conditionality, 'surveillance, sanctions and deterrence' are key (Fletcher & Wright, 2017, p. 323). This paper argues that the political crafting of hostile conditions that produce negative affect (including fear, dread, shame and disgust) is central to operations of welfare deterrence in Australia and the United Kingdom. Who and what is being deterred is different across these different policy spaces, yet, as we will show, the production of negative affect seems to provide linkages across these diverse cases.

Alongside social security, deterrence is now the dominant policy paradigm and part of 'normal policymaking' in global immigration policy across Europe, the United States and Australia (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017, pp. 28–29). Deterrent policies include: increased policing of admission routes, detaining people in offshore and onshore detention, criminalizing asylum seekers and reforming policy, usually restricting access to welfare and healthcare, in the refuge country (Burnett & Chebe, 2019; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017). The crafting of 'hostile environments' in the United Kingdom, for example, is designed to make it 'as inconvenient and unpleasant as possible to live in Britain without documents' (MacDonald, 2017), and is closely tied to limiting provision of social security (welfare) for migrants, and the introduction of charging regimes in healthcare (Burnett & Chebe, 2019).

Whilst dependency is a well-examined trope of genealogies of welfare, less attention has been paid to the production of negative affect as a form of deterrence evident within technologies of statecraft, nor to the close connectivity between welfare and its deterrence. While most often mentioned in relation to military strategy and especially the nuclear strategies of the Cold War, the history of deterrence is usually narrated as beginning during World War 2 and intensifying during the Cold War (Freedman, 2004). Much of the literature on contemporary welfare deterrence frames it as 'new' and part of a 'punitive' neoliberal or neo-paternal turn (Fletcher & Wright, 2017; Wacquant, 2009). While it is important to be attentive to what is 'new' within contemporary uses of deterrence, this paper suggests that a focus on the 'new' – and the

conceptualization of a 'turn' – can obfuscate the longer colonial history of deterrence in relation to domestic and global welfare and immigration practices (Bhambra & Holmwood, 2018).

Juxtaposing very different examples of the affective nature of welfare deterrence can illuminate connections across divergent practices and populations spanning time and space. Both the United Kingdom and Australia have engaged in governmental and media construction of 'bogus' asylum seekers and welfare 'skivers', and First Nations peoples in Australia as pathological, to craft stigmatization of certain groups as 'undeserving', and to garner public consent for punitive policies (Fekete, 2001a; Jensen, 2014; Mirza, 2014; Soldatic & Pini, 2009), partly through a 'politics of fear' (Wodak, 2015).

A key assumption underlying welfare deterrence and central to welfare provision in England since at least the seventeenth century (developing later in the welfare regimes of some of England's colonies, including Australia) is a (racialized) moral economy of deservingness (Shilliam, 2018). For the state, this is interpreted as a problem in differentiating between the underserving and deserving; in order to prevent the undeserving from accessing welfare. Welfare deterrence is imagined to provide the solution to these problems by making reliance on welfare equal to the bare minimum required for survival. Deterrence, and the affect of deterrence, features in both social security and national security policy, putting into question the traditional separation of these two fields, the often overlooked embeddedness of domestic histories in 'global interdependencies' of empire (Goodfellow, 2019), and the integral role played by European colonialism in the development of welfare states (Bhambra & Holmwood, 2018). This separation also overlooks the ways national security has been informed by social security, including the detailed historical and contemporary accounts of the othering of groups within national borders, for example, the construction of particular groups as threats (especially poor, disabled, mad and racialized people, including refugees and First Nations peoples) to justify their management and governance (Howell, 2014), and how such othering shaped the 'global reach of social welfare policies' (O'Connell, 2009).

The specific focus of this paper on Australia and the United Kingdom comes about (a) because deterrent policies have featured heavily in liberal democracies including these two countries; (b) because the two countries share mutually constitutive colonial histories; and (c) because there is contemporary political cooperation and deterrent policy-borrowing between the two countries. The significance of the two countries lies also in that Australia, a British penal colony, was used as a deterrent: the threat of being transported there was in part used to deter crime in England (the metropole), while convict labour was enlisted in the genocidal elimination of First Nations peoples (Boyce, 2011). Policy exchange between the two countries follows a longer history of empire where Australia was imagined as 'the Little Brittan of the Indo Pacific', and 'all policy was designed to maintain the British character of Australia' (Peters, 2003, p. 4). Australia, both a colony and colonizer continued attempts to eliminate First Nations people on the continent (Wolfe, 2006), as

well as being the colonial power in the eastern side of New Guinea until 1975, and Nauru until 1968 (Vogl, 2017). Today, policy sharing continues between these nations, where governments have invited exchanges on approaches to immigration detention as well as welfare conditionality. For example, on the 27 October 2015, the former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott was invited by the Conservative Party to give the coveted Thatcher lecture. In his speech, he argued that, 'The Australian experience proves that *the only way to dissuade people seeking to come from afar is not to let them in*' (Abbott, 2015, emphasis added). Lynton Crosby, Australian political strategist, has also played a key role in crafting Conservative election campaigns in the United Kingdom, including the management of 'Project Fear' – which explicitly mobilized public fear in Britain's major referendum debates (the Scottish independence referendum, in 2014, and the UK referendum on EU membership, in 2016) (Ganesh, 2015). Further solidifying these cross-country linkages is the United Kingdom's adoption of the 'Australian-style points-based system' for immigration, which increases scrutiny of personal characteristics to rank migrants as 'skilled' or not, and to select only 'skilled' migrants to enter the country (Sumption, 2019). Thus, tracing genealogies between Australia and the United Kingdom is a useful starting point for further research into deterrence across colonial/metropole and temporal/spatial possibilities.

This paper proceeds first by defining deterrence as a human technology but one that specifically operates to change human conduct through affect. Second, we outline our methods. Third, we set out a brief genealogy of welfare deterrence to examine when and how deterrent logic has shaped contemporary and historical debates related to welfare across the United Kingdom and Australia; the linkages and policy-borrowing between the two countries; and the continuities and disjuncture between historical and contemporary welfare deterrence. Particular attention is paid to literature that draws historical parallels with contemporary deterrence, where early forms of deterrence (and especially the deterrent workhouses of the 1834 English New Poor Law), are seen as a blueprint for contemporary deterrent policy (Besley *et al.*, 1993; Fekete, 2001b; Fox-Piven & Cloward, 1993). Fourth, we identify five main operations that produce the 'feel' of deterrence: stigmatization by design, destitution by design, deterrent architecture, the control of movement, and the centrality of labour. Fifth, we outline the political economy of deterrence. Lastly, we discuss how ideas of rationality function in relation to deterrence; and conclude by focusing on the urgency of reimagining non-deterrent welfare environments.

## 2. Deterrence and affect: Definitions

Deterrence has been theorized within various social science disciplines, with a particular focus in law, criminology, psychology, international relations (IR), and with other applications in political realism, economics and game theory (see Lupovici, 2016). Criminologists and legal theorists, drawing on ideas

from utilitarianism, have positioned deterrence as essential to uphold the social contract, utilizing punishment, spectacle and hostile conditions to prevent offence and re-offence. Here ‘deterrence is usually defined as the preventive effect which actual or threatened punishment of offenders has upon potential offenders’ (Ball, 1955, p. 347). Psychological conceptions of deterrence frame it as a coercive strategy ‘concerned with deliberate attempts to manipulate the behaviour of others through conditional threats’ (Freedman, 2004, p. 6), often linked in the literature to conceptualizations of attachment, learning, identity and behaviour change. In international relations, and particularly in what has come to be known as the ‘RAND’ approach,<sup>2</sup> deterrence is described as emerging from Cold War military strategy, where it was seen as ‘the only legitimate way to think about nuclear strategy’, and came to be associated with and to reinforce the projection of power through rationality and civilization enacted by global superpowers (such as the United States) (Lupovici, 2016, p. 42). Here deterrence is defined as an act that ‘discourages an adversary from pursuing an undesirable action. It works by challenging the adversary’s calculation of costs, benefits, and risks’ (Krepinevich, 2019). In his discussion of deterrence, emotion and identity in relation to the United States and Israel, Lupovici (2016) describes deterrence as an idea that has ‘constitutive effects’ (p. 18), and that is a form of knowledge (p. 26). Thus, ‘how a state practices deterrence would tell us as much or more about the state itself than it does about the state’s opponents and the threats they pose’ (Morgan, 1985, p. 136).

What isn’t always made explicit is how affect is central to deterrence. The etymological roots of deterrence lie in the Latin word for terror (Morgan, 1985),<sup>3</sup> developed, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary, in the mid-sixteenth century, from Latin *deterreere*, from *de-* ‘away from’, with *terrere* ‘to frighten, fill with fear’, with a combined meaning to ‘stop or prevent from acting or proceeding by any countervailing motive’. The Oxford English Dictionary defines deterrence as the act of ‘detering or preventing by fear’; and ‘deter’ as a transitive verb meaning ‘to discourage and turn aside or restrain by fear; to frighten from anything; to restrain or keep back from acting or proceeding by any consideration of danger or trouble’. Despite the affective nature of deterrence, little research focuses on the relationship between, and the design of, affect and deterrence as a technology of statecraft.

By referring to affect, we are interested not only in feelings interpreted as individual emotions but to the political crafting of affect: reading ‘structures of feeling’ and ‘feelings of structure’ as indicative of how ‘feelings might be how structures get under our skin’ (Ahmed, 2010, p. 216; also see Williams, 1977). To inform this approach, we trace examples of the design of conditions that produce and intensify particular negative affect, by providing the ‘bare minimum for survival’ (Puar, 2017, p. 134); what Povinelli (2011, p. 143) calls the ‘lethal conditions’ produced through economies of abandonment; and what are described by Weheliye (2014, p. 72) as the ‘life support systems that sustain terror’. A key focus of this paper lies in thinking about the direct and indirect *design* of affect, drawing on literature into ‘destitution by design’

(Goulden, 2018, p. 2), plantation architecture (McKittrick, 2013), the politics of fear (Wodak, 2015), and the design of racism (Lambert, 2016); as well as historical examples, such as the design of the ‘deterrent workhouse’ and the concept of ‘less eligibility’ (see below). A combination of scholarship of affect with that of hostile design informs our thinking about the main operations of welfare deterrence technologies and the design of insecurity through restrictive administration of social security (i.e. welfare). We see this as occurring through both the production of particular affect in denigrated groups (shame, fear, insecurity), and the cultivation of public affect to garner consent for ‘hostile’ policies. While this paper focuses more on the former, it is worth noting that political and media crafting of public feeling, largely through a ‘politics of fear’ (Wodak, 2015), plays a key role in the affective nature of deterrence. For example, the UK government’s use of ‘Project Fear’ to shape contemporary anti-immigration discourse explicitly uses fear as a political tool: ‘Playing on people’s fears is not just effective, it is also right. Fear is a respectable emotion that is hard-wired into us as a design feature, not a glitch. We are meant to feel it’ (Ganesh, 2015). Public feeling, often framed politically as ‘genuine feeling’, including fear, is also politically mobilized to justify punitive policies, overlooking how public fears, and anti-immigration discourse, are partly crafted by government and media (Goodfellow, 2019, pp. 130–131). So, deterrence also operates biopolitically, using spectacle to incite fear, dread and disgust in order to deter the broader and untargeted population from ‘do[ing] as they ought’ (Foucault, 1991; Li, 2007, p. 5).

*Human technologies* are ‘assemblages of diverse forces, instruments, architectural forms, and persons to achieve certain ends, be they education, punishment, production, victory or adjustment ... [and] that seek the calculated transformation of human conduct’ (Rose, 1996, p. 121). Our paper suggests that policies and practices of welfare deterrence might fruitfully be understood as human technologies in that they ‘seek the calculated transformation of human conduct’ (Rose, 1996, p. 121). Taking this further we explore how the transformation of conduct is achieved through generating particular negative affect (usually but not limited to fear, dread and anxiety), thus extending the literature to take seriously the affective dimensions of human technologies (Million, 2014).

### 3. Method

The idea for the focus of this paper came from a number of different empirical projects carried out by the authors: Klein and Razi (2018) and Klein’s (2020) research into the use of the Cashless Debit Card (subsistence-level support for First Nations people in Australia, discussed in detail later) and settler colonialism in Australia, and Mills’ research into UK welfare retrenchment, suicide and disabled people’s activism (Mills, 2018) and hostile environment policies, immigration detention and suicide (Mills, 2020). This research has highlighted the historical continuities between contemporary welfare deterrence and its

historical manifestations. For example, one First Nations research participant who had experienced the Cashless Debit Card said that the card reminded them of Australia's 'ration days' (where European settlers distributed rations, and not wages, for labour) (Klein & Razi, 2018, p. 90); while various anti-austerity activist groups have made links between current day UK welfare and immigration reform, and England's nineteenth century New Poor Law (discussed later).

This paper asks a number of questions about deterrence, specifically what forms deterrence takes; when and how deterrence has shaped state practices related to welfare across diverse geographies and historical periods; and whether historical uses of welfare deterrence relate to, or continue to shape, contemporary practices? The formulation of these questions creates the conditions for their answers. For example, asking when welfare came to be associated with deterrence or talking about a deterrent 'turn' in welfare policy, implies that the two were once separate and overlooks their important historical connectivities. To attend to these connections, we draw on Coddington's (2018) work on the slow violence of cashless technologies used with both First Nations people in Australia and failed asylum-seekers in the United Kingdom, which mobilizes a method of critical juxtaposition of public policies across the two contexts, to 'hold alongside each other things that appear separate, in order to understand the underlying logics that animate their use' (p. 2).

This paper is a similar critical juxtaposition of the affective nature of historical and contemporary welfare deterrence policies enacted across the United Kingdom and Australia. In juxtaposing two different countries and different time periods, our method is partly, and partially, genealogical – borrowing from Fraser and Gordon's (1994) genealogy of 'dependency' (a concept that much welfare deterrence seeks to deter). Our genealogical approach does not trace a lineage, look for 'originary moments', or document a progressivist developmentalist history (Stoler, 1995, p. 9) of welfare deterrence. This means we do not present our analysis in chronological order. Instead, we are interested in how connectivities between welfare and deterrence 'wrap around contemporary problems; adhere in the logics of governance; ... and hold tight to less tangible emotional economies of humiliations, indignities, and resentments' (Stoler, 2016, p. 16), as well as how intensification (i.e. of deterrence) can make something appear as new (Gorman, 2017). This work is shaped by McKittrick's (2013) thinking on how plantation logic, seemingly left behind in the past, is 'part of the environment we presently inhabit' (p. 2), providing a 'persistent but ugly blueprint of our present spatial organization' (p. 10) and racial violence. Therefore, this paper uses genealogy and juxtaposition to remain cognizant of the ways that 'the historical time that we thought was past turns out to structure the contemporary field with a persistence that gives the lie to history as chronology' (Butler, 2004, p. 54), and also of how what we assume to be new may also have structured what has past. To do this, we follow Puar (2017) in paying attention to 'intensifications of biopolitical modes of control that are continuous and resonant with historical modes, and, indeed, across contemporary

geopolitical spaces' (p. 153). Puar (2013) engages with 'assemblages of sensations, affects, and forces' (p. 24) that 'do not accrete in linear time or within discrete histories, fields, or discourses' (Puar, 2013, p. 25) and are not 'bound to developmentalist or historical telos' but instead 'converge, diverge, and merge' (Puar, 2007, p. xxii). We thus use assemblage to refer to the messy connections and divergences across time and space, and colony/colonizer and metropole, in the production and mobilization of negative affect as a form of deterrence. Our writing style aims to disrupt a linear reading, to show there are no unproblematic straightforward connections between time and space.

Rather than an extractive approach to archival material, we follow Stoler (2002, 2016) in taking an ethnographic approach, attuned to the partial, messy, productive and constitutive nature of archival work. This means that even as we study deterrence, our work simultaneously constructs an archive of welfare deterrence. A wide diversity of resources, including primary and secondary materials, have been analysed for this paper. Secondary data of first-hand accounts of the impact of welfare deterrence have been used to get a sense of how these policies 'feel'. This secondary data takes the form of reports published by non-governmental and third-sector organizations, and activist groups, with emphasis on literature written by or with those who have experienced deterrence first-hand, for example ex-detainees, First Nations people and disabled welfare claimants. Primary sources include: the *Hansard* (transcripts of parliamentary debates and documents in both the United Kingdom and Australia); historical documents on pauper management and workhouse design (see later details); and archival documents found in the online Australian Archival collection (Trove), and UK National Archives.

We now turn to briefly and partially outline some of the contours of the relationship between affect and historical deterrence, before identifying some main strands of welfare deterrence, which we turn to discuss in Section 5.

#### 4. Historical parallels and continuities

While some literature conceives of welfare deterrence as part of a punitive turn in policymaking (Fletcher & Wright, 2017; Wacquant, 2009), other literature draws more on historical parallels and continuities. For example, Fekete (2001b), draws parallels between the contemporary UK deterrent asylum system and England's New Poor Law of 1834, pointing out that by stripping people of basic social rights and dignity in a system that denies access to the welfare state,

the state's approach to asylum seekers' 'welfare' is without parallel in modern times. Indeed, the only parallel lies within the ... Poor Law of 1834, which institutionalised the dreaded workhouse system, forcing paupers who passed the 'workhouse test' for indoor relief to submit to a regime so awful as to deter them from seeking refuge in the workhouse in the first place. (p. 32)

Similarly, in their landmark book *Regulating the poor* (largely focused on the United States), Fox-Piven and Cloward (1993, p. 35) show how the ‘deterrent doctrine of relief’ written into the New Poor Law ‘provided a formula for relief-giving in the urban industrial labour market’ (that continues into contemporary times) and is centred on the principle of ‘less eligibility’. O’Connell (2009) points to the Royal Commission into the Poor Laws as foundational to ‘policies and knowledge categories about deserving and non-deserving populations that continue to thrive today’, and that is ‘foundational to the history of social policy, political economy, and state formation’ (p. 171). Given this foundational nature, we will briefly outline the New Poor Law to give context, while at the same time considering the longer colonial history and continued coloniality of welfare deterrence, as well as examples of deterrence in British parliamentary acts that predate the New Poor Law, such as those related to vagrancy (see Foote, 1956; Kimber, 2013; Vorspan, 1977).

#### 4.1. *The New Poor Law, the deterrent workhouse and the colony as deterrent*

In 1832, a Royal Commission was established to examine the provision of poor relief in England (which pre-1832 was delivered in mixed ways at local parish level). The final report from his majesty’s commissioners (in 1834) laid out the idea of ‘less eligibility’, that is ‘the first and most essential of all conditions, a principle which we find universally admitted’ is that the recipient of relief’s situation ‘shall not be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class’ (Poor Law Commissioners Report, 1834, p. 228). The 1832 Commission recommended that the able-bodied poor could be given relief in the workhouse under conditions less eligible than the working poor. Less eligibility (what Fox-Piven & Cloward, 1993, see as providing a formula for contemporary welfare) meant crafting hostile conditions as a deterrent (see Longmate, 2003). The Poor Law Commissioners Report (1834) states that ‘into such a house none will enter voluntarily; work, confinement, and discipline will deter the indolent and viscous’, providing ‘an unerring test of the necessity of applicants’ relieving parish officers from the responsibility of deciding who is truly needy (p. 271). Here we see evidence of the ‘workhouse test’, where destitution could only be proved by accepting entry into the workhouse (Poor Law Commissioners Report, 1834, p. 264), reducing the need for time consuming tests of merit or means. The workhouse test was an ‘administrative device’, which played an informational and a screening role – distinguishing between those the Poor Law would support and those it would not, as well as symbolically signifying governmental ‘toughness’ (Besley *et al.*, 1993). Digby (1982) claims that, ‘the cruelty of the workhouse did not reside in its material deprivation but in its psychological harshness. Indeed, the Poor Law Commissioners themselves appreciated that it was through psychological rather than material deterrence that the workhouse test would operate’ (p. 17). This leads Besley *et al.* (1993: 17) to state that ‘the workhouse test worked through primarily psychological means’. Here the idea

of a deterrent workhouse worked in a future oriented direction – to change poor people’s incentives by encouraging them to avoid the workhouse through avoiding poverty (Besley *et al.*, 1993, p. 11).

The English poor laws were never introduced in the Australian colonies. The colonial government instead promoted private charities to establish and run institutions, including workhouses, which were shaped by deterrence (Kimber, 2013). These included the ‘workhouse test’ (relief only in exchange for work), the notion of ‘less eligibility’ (any relief offered to poor destitute people had to be worse than that obtainable through work of the lowest paid), and separation between the deserving and undeserving poor, particularly through the legislation related to vagrancy (Vorspan, 1977). Settlers in Australia also used deterrence in their attempts to eliminate First Nations people. For example, through the settler quest to disintegrate First Nations people’s access to land and livelihoods, First Nations people were deterred from living freely on their lands through the fear of extreme violence and hostility (Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006). Here deterrence intersected with attempts at elimination, both through the brutal spectacle of colonial sovereign power evident in killing, and the creation of hostile conditions outside the missions and stations in order to coerce First Nations peoples into accepting indentured labouring relations (Smith, 2000). Attempts of elimination in settler Australia were not just through killing outright, but also through processes of assimilation where First Nations people were compelled to take on settler behaviours and norms (Wolfe, 2006). Vagrancy laws coalesced with the assimilation process as a deterrent and were used to label and criminalize First Nations people who did not exhibit settler behaviour (Kimber, 2013), operating in part through the affective generation of both fear and shame (Shaw, 1992).

## 5. Operations of deterrence as an affective technology

The paper now turns to the main operations of affect in welfare deterrence: stigmatization by design, destitution by design, deterrent architecture, the control of movement and the centrality of labour. While the below operations are divided into sections for ease of reading, their multiple intersections should not be overlooked, for example, destitution and control of movement have strong linkages to stigmatization and fear; deterrent architecture links to control of movement; and moral economies that privilege paid labour run throughout. It is the affective dimensions of these multiple intersections that make up the assemblage of welfare deterrence.

### 5.1. *Stigmatization by design*

Stigmatization is central to the design of conditions that incite negative affect. The systematic vilification of asylum seekers as ‘dangerous,

fraudulent, manipulative, and most of all welfare-seeking' (Mirza, 2014, p. 226), and the mass stigmatization of welfare recipients as 'scroungers' and 'work shy', have been used to mobilize public emotional reactions of disgust in relation to those deemed 'undeserving'. Stigmatization is used to craft a punitive anti-welfare common-sense (Jensen, 2014; Tyler, 2020) that creates public consent for the retraction of the welfare state (Soldatic & Pini, 2009). These public feelings are used to justify the creation of a 'vast web of disentanglement strategies' around welfare provision (Wacquant, 2009, p. 91), of which 'surveillance, sanctions and deterrence' are key (Fletcher & Wright, 2017, p. 323).

Both the United Kingdom and Australia provide examples of government-led campaigns of stigmatization of welfare claimants – reconfiguring entitlement into individual fault and fraud. For example, in 2011, then UK Prime Minister, David Cameron (2011) called to dismantle a welfare system 'that encourages ... people thinking they can be as irresponsible as they like because the state will always bail them out'. In Australia, welfare dependency is seen as a scourge in a nation of hard workers, illustrated in 2014 by then Treasurer Joe Hockey's declaration that his government would end the 'age of entitlement' (Kenny, 2014).

The affective and psychic experience of stigmatization, and the deterrent policies it is used to garner public consent for, is often part of their design. In Polyani's (1944) *The great transformation*, he describes how 'the workhouse was invested with a stigma', and 'deliberately made into a place of horror' (pp. 101–102) where 'psychological torture was coolly advocated and smoothly put into practice by mild philanthropists as a means of oiling the labour mill' (p. 82). Echoing into today, foodbanks (providing basic goods to those left destitute by austerity and welfare reform) are also invested with a stigma, with users reporting 'a pervasive feeling of stress' and 'feelings of shame and embarrassment' (Hudson-Sharp *et al.*, 2018, p. 106).

Today, we see an onslaught of stigmatizing portrayals of welfare claimants, especially disabled people and asylum seekers, in print and online media (Briant *et al.*, 2013; Jones *et al.*, 2017). Negative press coverage has played a key part in crafting stigmatization and in creating a climate of fear towards asylum seekers, and fear among asylum seekers (Bloch, 2013), used to garner support for policy that increases hardship (Mollard, 2001).

This stigmatization is achieved in part through mobilizing ideas of 'asylum shopping', and of the 'bogus' asylum seekers and 'illegal immigrant' constructed as abusing liberal asylum and welfare laws (Fekete, 2001a). Like welfare claimants, migrants are constructed as a 'burden on the taxpayer' and compared against the hyper-productive 'model migrant' (Jones *et al.*, 2017, p. 125). Both framings assume rationality and individual free choice, where choices can be dissuaded through threat and conditionality. Contemporary media coverage has echoes of the popular English publication in 1833 of Harriet Martineau's (1833) *Poor laws and paupers*, which constructed paupers as idlers and rogues, helping solidify the idea that only by abolishing outdoor

relief, and making relief conditional on the workhouse, would people learn to rule themselves (Longmate, 2003).

In Australia, the racialized targeting of both income management and the remote work for the dole program were legitimized to the settler Australian public through the hysteria caused by bogus claims of First Nations men trading in child sex cells in remote Northern Australian communities. This claim, unsubstantiated still today, was made by the Federal Government's Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough, through the state broadcaster ABC's 7.30 program, and led to the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act (Watson, 2009). The UK provision of welfare to asylum seekers through vouchers and payment cards is, according to Fekete (2001b, p. 35), a central part in the State's 'systematic humiliation and stigmatization of asylum seekers'. Much evidence points to the stigma experienced by those using payment cards and vouchers (Mulvey, 2009; Refugee Action, 2006).

## 5.2. *Destitution by design*

Since the mid-1990s, pre-entry deterrent measures in the United Kingdom have occurred alongside increasingly restrictionist welfare policy (Zetter & Pearl, 2000). In 2007, the Home Office stated that 'those not prioritised for removal [...] should be denied the benefits and privileges of life in the United Kingdom and experience an increasingly uncomfortable environment so that they elect to leave' (Home Office, 2007, p. 17). In 2013, then UK Prime Minister, Theresa May introduced hostile policies that aimed to prevent people from coming to the United Kingdom 'because they're able to access everything they need' (Travis, 2013, n.p.). The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 states that those 'subject to immigration control' should have no recourse to public funds, prohibiting access to local authority housing assistance, most welfare benefits, and other forms of support such as free school meals. In 2012, these restrictions were extended to long-standing migrant families (who had previously achieved rights to residence) – making visible the intersections of welfare and migration regimes, and showing that enforced destitution is a core technology of the United Kingdom's migration regime (Dickson & Rosen, *forthcoming*).

Longstanding critiques of 'enforced destitution' among asylum seekers as an outcome of planned public policy (Cholewinski, 1998), continue to apply today. For example, the Joint Committee on Human Rights (2007, p. 110) concluded that the UK government is 'practising a deliberate policy of destitution', which pushes asylum seekers into extreme poverty aiming to 'disincentivize' certain groups to remain in the United Kingdom (Cholewinski, 1998) and to deter future arrivals (Allsopp *et al.*, 2014; Bloch, 2013) – what Goulden (2018) calls 'destitution by design'.

This design of destitution is also evident in historical deterrent policies. England's New Poor Law (1834), and the deterrent workhouses that it created,

practised the concept of 'less eligibility' – 'making relief more meagre and more onerous' than labour (Himmelfarb, 1983), and thought by Fox-Piven and Cloward (1993) to provide a template for current-day welfare regimes. The long history of stigmatization through the concept of undeservingness and the construction of certain people as 'workshy', also has echoes in discussions for the Prevention of Destitution Bill of 1910, where penal colonies were suggested as a remedy for thriftless and workshy individuals. Ample archival material documents the attention paid to making workhouse conditions hostile (uncomfortable sleeping arrangements, repetitive labour, restricted diet, separation between family members) (Himmelfarb, 1983; Longmate, 2003). For example, Captain George Nichols, sometimes known as 'the father of the Victorian workhouse', and a Commissioner for the New Poor Law, wrote a *History of the English Poor Laws*, stating that 'the pauper is yet subjected to so many disagreeable circumstances that the desire to escape from these constantly urges him onto renewed exertion' (Nichols, 2017 [1854], p. xiv). The workhouse logic of 'less eligibility' also appears to inform the 1998 UK Government White Paper on immigration – 'Fairer, Faster, Firmer' (UK Government, 1998)<sup>4</sup> – which took 'a tougher approach to deterring and preventing the arrival of inadmissible passengers' (Section 5.16), 'aimed at deterring multiple asylum applications and, hence, widespread benefit fraud' (Section 11.14). through providing 'for asylum seekers separately from the main benefits system' (8.17). Similar policy is evident in Australia with the temporary protection visas given to people with refugee status. The rights afforded to people on these visas are severely limited including temporary settlement rights meaning people don't have future certainty and have to reapply every three years. The temporary protection visas purposefully inflict future insecurity on refugees through the requirement to constantly reapply for protection, and in limiting rights to access, creating a cycle of poverty and disadvantage, as well as psychological trauma and distress (ASRC, 2019).

The design of destitution is also linked to settler colonial attempts of elimination through 'lethal conditions' (Povinelli, 2011, p. 143) and assimilation of First Nations people – what Altman (2018) refers to as cultural genocide. One example is the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) – a trial that began early 2016 in Australia as a type of income management, formally aiming to deter what the government sees as drug and alcohol use, anti-social behaviour and unemployment (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015). The Card compulsorily quarantines 80 per cent of state benefits received by all working age people to restrict alcohol and gambling product purchases. Doing so severely limits the amount of cash that can be withdrawn to 20 per cent of the total money recipients receive, causing hardship for many and generating feelings of shame, distress and embarrassment (Klein & Razi, 2018). Whilst the card is new, the trial reminds those subjected to it of the 'ration days' (Klein & Razi, 2018, p. 90), where quantity of rations given on stations was calculated by how much people needed to survive (Smith, 2000).

Coddington (2018, p. 2) draws on secondary data that emphasizes how cashless technology (providing subsistence-level support for First Nations people in Australia and refused asylum seekers in the United Kingdom) ‘feels’ for those subjected to it. A British Red Cross report on the ‘humanitarian costs of a cashless system’ (focusing on the Azure payment card for asylum seekers in the United Kingdom), shows that card users feel ‘embarrassed, anxious, and trapped’; and like a ‘beggar’ and ‘desperate’ (Carnet *et al.*, 2014, p. 9). In fact, much research evidences the affective nature of everyday experiences of destitution and poverty for asylum seekers and refugees, for example, impacting on confidence and enhancing fear, shame, dependence and isolation (Bloch, 2013; Refugee Action, 2006). Similar feelings are reported by those who have experienced the destitution caused by United Kingdom welfare reform. Multiple United Kingdom media reports of suicides and deaths thought to be linked to welfare reform hint at the psychic life of welfare deterrence, and particularly how the construction of people who require state support as economically ‘burdensome’ creates internalized feelings of being a burden (Mills, 2018). The means test, a feature of the Australian social security system since federation, also constructs certain groups as a burden, and connects to the deterrent logic evident in the British workhouse test. The means test functioned as a deterrent because claiming support was constructed as shameful – ‘Almost all other advanced countries walked away from that method as demeaning to personal dignity’ (Mendelsohn, 1996, p. 267). What draws the diverse examples above together then is that they produce an assemblage of ‘sensations, affects, and forces’ (Puar, 2013, p. 24) of deterrence that converge and merge across time and space, wrapping past around the present, and colony/colonizer around metropole (Butler, 2004; Stoler, 2016).

### 5.3. *Deterrent architecture*

Much scholarship and historical material charts the architecture and design of hostile spaces: what Lambert (2012) calls the weaponization of architecture; from plantation architecture (McKittrick, 2013), to Victorian workhouses, to current immigration detention centres (see Lambert, 2016). Jeremy Bentham, famous for his design of architectural surveillance in the form of the panopticon, proposed building industry houses for ‘pauper management’ (Bentham, 1812). While Bentham’s design never became a reality, workhouses were in fact designed to enact a deterrent function through cultivating particular negative affect, where ‘the forbidding look’ of the new workhouses was intended as a ‘terror to the able-bodied population’ set to ‘inspire a salutary dread’ (Driver, 1993, p. 59); and designed to be ‘looked to with dread’ (Longmate, 2003, p. 47; Newman, 2014).

In contemporary times, Pugliese (2008) argues that ‘the architecture of Australia’s immigration prisons, functions as a type of tutelary architecture that dispenses object lessons on deterrence whilst simultaneously generating the

production of refugee trauma-as-spectacle' (p. 206). This tutelary architecture of deterrence is significant for our analysis of welfare deterrence as a human technology, as it seeks to transform conduct through affect. This also hints at what Hanafi (2012), in the context of colonial occupation in Palestine, calls 'spacio-cidal' (rather than, or as well as genocidal) regimes, which target space through the deployment of colonization, separation, and the state of exception (Hanafi, 2012, p. 190). Settler colonial regimes in Australia used the vast distances between settlements, and the pain of separating First Nations people from their country, to use exile as a deterrent for non-conforming First Nations people. For example, First Nations prisoners captured for non-compliance in the Kimberley between the 1890s and 1930s, could be held in prison in Perth, some 3,000 kms away. Settler colonialism transformed the land itself, through the erection of townships, pastoral leases, mining and damming, meaning that whole landscapes filled with significance to First Nations cultures were dramatically changed and erased, and showing that settler colonial society was here to stay. These forms of hostile design are productive of affect, producing what Ernst (2015), in relation to the jailhouses of the early modern period, calls 'spatially structured emotions', or the spatial structures of feelings, and the feelings of spaces.

#### 5.4. *Controlling movement*

Controlling the movement of (usually poor and often racialized) people deemed to be a threat is also central to the practices of deterrence documented in this paper. The use of cashless payment cards in both the United Kingdom and Australia manifest a carceral logic that enacts a 'gradual erosion of mobility and control' over daily movements, signifying how welfare deterrence technologies can be immobilizing (Coddington, 2018, p. 11). In the United Kingdom, the Azure payment card has been described, by those subjected to it, as like an open prison, with one card user saying, 'I'm inside walls; I'm not going anywhere' (Carnet *et al.*, 2014, p. 42). Furthermore, provision of these cards is conditional on acceptance of dispersed accommodation (across the United Kingdom). Similarly, rationing of First Nations Australians in the 1800s and 1900s was designed to restrict movement by forcing people to come to the missions to work. Alexander Forrest was the first settler to transverse the Kimberley and saw the potential for large tracks of the Australian North to be turned into profitable pastoral leases. For this expansion, First Nations people needed to be moved out of the way (Wolfe, 2006). Whilst people were effectively either hunted or starved off the land, fear also circulated, and it was the fear of settler violence that led some First Nations people to accept the relative security of going to the station and missions (Shaw, 1992). In 2014, the great nephew of Alexander Forrest, mining billionaire Andrew Forrest, made a similar recommendation suggesting that First Nations people should be deterred from staying in remote communities, proposing punitive welfare measures such as

the Cashless Debit Card (Forrest, 2014), which in part operates through the generation of shame (Klein & Razi, 2018).

In England, since the fourteenth century, beggars deemed 'impotent' were sent back to claim relief from their place of birth. This was solidified into law in the 1662 Act of Settlement and Removal, meaning a person applying for residence in a new area had to prove they wouldn't become chargeable to the poor rates otherwise they could be removed (Longmate, 2003). Writing at the time of the laws of settlement, Henry Fielding proposed the creation of an internal passport system, where any 'suspicious persons' (left undefined) could be apprehended to present their 'pass' (Fielding, 1988 [1754], pp. 240–241). Thus, the passport was imagined as a tool for 'controlling and curtailing the geographical mobility of the lower classes', representing 'one of the earliest, comprehensive designs of a British passport regime' (Gulddal, 2015, p. 153). (While this passport remained a proposal, the use of 'passes' for paupers did exist in some English counties, see Longmate, 2003). Transportation of paupers and criminals to the penal colony of Australia, through the Transportation Act of 1717 (4 Geo I c. 11) (Brooks, 2016), was a way to deter criminality and vagrancy through instilling terror of servitude (Shaw, 1966). This Act was closely linked to ideas about vagrancy and was created to 'deter prospective vagrants' and 'prevent professional vagabonds from exploiting public assistance to the deserving' (Vorspan, 1977, p. 75). The affective dimensions of vagrancy laws lay in both promoting shame in those subjected to the laws as argued by May (2000) in their study of vagrants in England, as well as the generation of disgust in the broader population which assisted police targeting of vagrants in the United States (Goluboff, 2016).

Detention and incarceration are central to deterrence and used by both the United Kingdom and Australia as key planks in their contemporary immigration policies. Multiple reports document the negative affective and mental health impact of detention, with those who have experienced detention talking about feeling terrified, suicidal and depressed (Detention Action, 2014; Girma *et al.*, 2014). Offshore and onshore detention is notoriously torturous, not only because of the mandatory and indefinite nature of it, but also because these facilities do not always provide basic services, such as healthcare. The Australian government has been regularly criticized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for its treatment of refugees and asylum seekers detained indefinitely in the offshore detention camps of Manus Island in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. Behrouz Boochani a Kurdish refugee detained in Manus Island has written about how the systematic dehumanization in the offshore detention regime (Boochani, 2018a, p. 62) is symbolic of Australia's ongoing coloniality (Tofighian, 2018, p. 534). In his analysis of Australia's Manus Prison, Boochani (2018a, 2018b) notes the many forms of psychological torture inherent in the design – how 'over time the rules and regulations wear down the prisoners' mental health' – from the despair of indefinite waiting, to disgust at living conditions, to the shame of incarceration.

### 5.5. *Centrality of labour*

Framings of entitlement and deservingness shaped by the degradation of ‘the recipient self’ and glorification of the ‘working self’ (Wacquant, 2009, p. 101), have long been central within a ‘hierarchy of deservingness’ which itself is ‘central to considerations of affect’ (Soldatic & Pini, 2009, p. 83). Central to welfare deterrence is the idealization of paid labour, often through crafting conditions to ensure that paid labour is always the most attractive and incentivized option compared to alternative forms of, and especially state, support. Ideas about productivity, ability and willingness to work have long been a feature in deterrence technologies. Foote (1956) in reviewing eighteenth century debates around vagrancy in the United Kingdom remarks on the prominence of productivity stating that: ‘Those who refused to work although able to do so were viewed with hostile eyes, not only because of the suspicion they aroused but as a potential relief burden’ (Foote, 1956, pp. 615–616). Here market ‘value’ is used to negatively evaluate forms of life that require/are positioned as requiring state support and to construct them as ‘burdensome’ (Mills, 2018). Mirza (2014, p. 226) shows how the intersections of ableism with racial capitalism and colonialism are foundational to the nation state and its deployment of ‘disabling processes’, including the ‘systematic vilification’ of asylum seekers as ‘dangerous, fraudulent, manipulative, and most of all welfare-seeking’ (Mirza, 2014, p. 226). Controlling immigration, then, has long been linked to and justified through protecting welfare provision/the welfare state, while immigration policies in many countries discriminate against disabled people based on their categorisation as an economic ‘burden’ (Mirza, 2014).

## 6. **The political economy of deterrence**

A key element running throughout the above historical and contemporary operations of deterrence is the political economy of deterrence. In the United Kingdom, private companies, such as Mitie, hold contracts to run immigration detention centres; the UK voucher system for asylum seekers was contracted to French multinational, Sodexo Pass International; and the payment cards given to asylum seekers are run by Aspen Payment Ltd. The United Kingdom has a long history of income collection through immigration control, from the 1905 Aliens Act (where the Home Office charged shipping companies for the cost of removal of migrants) to current day charging regimes (charges for healthcare, confiscation of wages, etc) that ‘sit at the centre of immigration policy and practice’ (Burnett & Chebe, 2019, p. 1).

The United Kingdom Work Capability Assessment – which determines whether welfare claimants are entitled to Employment Support Allowance (ESA) – has been, since 2015, contracted to US outsourcing firm Maximus, who are paid by the Department for Work and Pensions. Before England’s New Poor Laws, utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham proposed the

privatization of ‘pauper management’ to be subsidized by the government on the model of the East India company, and the development of a chain of ‘industry houses’ to make a profit out of enforced work for paupers (Himmelfarb, 1983). Although Bentham’s plan never came to fruition, one of his ‘disciples’, Edwin Chadwick, drafted the New Poor Law, which came into being in the year of Bentham’s death. That the East India company should feature in Bentham’s imagination as a model for the ‘management’ of paupers, and that there should be movement of personnel from the company to be commissioners for the Poor Laws – is interesting given that the East India Company, despite coming to prominence in the 1600s, has many similarities to what is now known as neoliberalism (Tharoor, 2017). This raises questions about the potential limits of the ‘neo’ of neoliberalism and the tendency of some more unidimensional contemporary analyses to locate many societal ‘problems’ as beginning with neoliberalism.

In Australia – the private company Indue has been contracted by both the Department of Social Services and Department of Human Services to operate the Cashless Debit Card (CDC) and develop the technology (acquiring over \$10.8 million<sup>5</sup> of the \$18.9 million spent on the trial, up until April 2017). Other corporations have also engaged in the CDC process including the Commonwealth Bank that helped the Minderoo Foundation to refine technologies of the CDC, all profiting from cashless interventions. The CDC thus enacts accumulation by dispossession, on a continuum with the dispossession of First Nations people from their land and denial of sovereignty, through punitive welfare, aiming to make people’s subjectivities conducive to settler norms (and capitalist expansion) (Klein & Razi, 2018).

According to Polyani (1944), the ‘great transformation’ that signified England’s rise to a market economy, involved the displacement of ‘moral economy’ by political economy (Digby, 1982, p. 10). Yet, it seems significant here not only to chart the use of deterrence both during and before England’s ‘great transformation’, but also to explore how the centrality of ideas of deservingness in contemporary welfare deterrence imply that certain aspects of earlier moral economies of relief may persist in political economy (rather than signifying a break), and in the ‘economies of abandonment’ identified by Povinelli (2011).

## 7. Discussion and conclusion

Focusing on deterrence in Australia and the United Kingdom, we have documented some of its main operations: how stigmatization and destitution are fundamental to the design of deterrence, deterrent architecture and the infrastructure of affect, control of movement, and the ongoing centrality of labour. Through critical juxtaposition and genealogy, we have aimed to show how historical examples of deterrence fold into, and wrap around, the present (Butler, 2004; McKittrick, 2013; Stoler, 2016), providing a blueprint for contemporary welfare policy (Besley *et al.*, 1993; Fekete, 2001b; Fox-Piven & Cloward, 1993).

This approach enables us to question the sometimes assumed ‘new-ness’ of welfare deterrence – tracing the generation of negative affect as a relational connectivity between welfare and deterrence that is obscured if we conceive of contemporary deterrence as manifesting a punitive ‘turn’. Assemblage here refers to the messy connections and divergences across time and space (Puar, 2013), and colony/colonizer and metropole, in the production and mobilization of negative affect as a form of deterrence.

While its manifestations in different times and places are context specific and not necessarily comparable, our paper has shown that deterrence is inherently affective, and as it shapes welfare policies and practices, is closely tied to the crafting of affect through the production of conditions of hostility and destitution. This occurs not only through the cultivation of public affect to garner consent for ‘hostile’ policies but also through the production of negative affect in denigrated and stigmatized groups (shame, fear, insecurity). The psychosocial and mental health impact of practices of deterrence, and how this is used as evidence in activism against punitive immigration policies and welfare reform, are also highlighted (Mills, 2020). Significantly, this paper shows that the affective nature of welfare deterrence is not only a by-product of policies but is also part of their design.

Another key theme running throughout the operations of deterrence detailed in this paper is the mobilization of ‘will’ and rational choice – logics that have roots in Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism (key to the development of welfare in the United Kingdom). Deterrence, as practiced in military strategy and in welfare, often presumes rational choice, even if between few or hostile alternatives; assuming that one can perceive threat, calculate costs and benefits, and act accordingly (Krepinevich, 2019; Lupovici, 2016). As deterrence seems to operate largely through affect, this points to a potential relationship between rationality, choice, and affect that is currently under-theorized. This suggests that the subjects of deterrence have to be attributed rationality (narrowly conceived of as an ability to choose between limited alternatives). Yet, the relationship between coloniality and deterrence (where assumptions of colonized peoples’ rationality have differed over time) puts this into question, and illuminates differences in how deterrence functions alongside coloniality. The hierarchization of subjects has long relied on attributions of rationality, where certain groups (shifting over time), such as racialized and/or First Nations and/or mad and/or disabled people, have been constructed as not, or not very, rational, as a way to justify differing types of governance (often enacted through oppression and violence) (Blanco & Gear, 2019). However, deterrence also relates to the construction of threat through processes of othering which often did not consider these subjects rational (Joenniemi, 1989). Deterrence, thus, illuminates a tension between personhood, rationality and differing forms of disciplinary and biopolitical statecraft – showing how these modes of power may operate not separately but alongside each other. For example, attempts at elimination of First Nations people in Australia included both the sovereign power of outright slaughter and biopolitical assimilation. Power

relations are central to deterrence, including the combination of sovereign, disciplinary and biopower, where the spectacle of force may operate alongside the more banal administration of the bare minimum conditions for survival.

Bringing together very different mobilizations of welfare deterrence through affect is important for tracing linkages across time and space, yet we must not lose sight of the differential dispersal and experience of affect among different groups. For example, research shows different affective experiences of the UK asylum system and destitution according to gender (Querton, 2012) and age (Pinter, 2012). Looking at welfare deterrence as it operates across immigration and welfare systems enables attention to be paid to transnational intersections of ableism with racial capitalism and colonialism (Mirza, 2014, p. 226). Yet, questions also remain about the potential uniqueness of the Australian and United Kingdom experiences of deterrence. Are similar operations evident elsewhere? What are the differences of deterrence within different contexts: settler colonial, old empire, and post-colonial? From what other aspects of welfare, beyond social security and immigration, can we learn about deterrence? Examinations of deterrence in other parts of the British empire would also be of interest – especially those counted as postcolonial today such as India, as well as continued settler colonial contexts, such as Canada, Palestine, the United States and South Africa. Questions are also raised here about the limits of deterrence, and the assumptions that underlie when it is employed as a strategy and when it is not; and when it is conceived of as successful and when it is seen to fail.

Researching the long history of the relationship between welfare and deterrence at a time of austere welfare reform and privatization of healthcare raises ethical questions. Yet, if deterrence operates through generating negative affect in relation to the crafting of hostile environments, then this illustrates the importance of crafting other kinds of non-hostile and non-lethal affective environments. This is both speculative but also currently underway in many contexts (for example, see the work of the European Alternatives to Detention Network; continued activism around prison abolition; activism and campaigning to abolish national borders and border control – such as No Borders; and sustained activism by disabled people's organizations in the United Kingdom and Australia).<sup>6</sup> This paper, and the ongoing research in which it is embedded, speaks to the ethical urgency of reimagining welfare outside of the negative affect of deterrence.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### **Funding**

This research was funded by the British Academy's Tackling the UK's International Challenges Fund (IC2\100163) (2018–19).

## Notes

1 We have used the term First Nations here rather than ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ or ‘Indigenous’ as the term ‘First Nations’ recognizes First Nations people as sovereign people (see <https://www.commonground.org.au/learn/aboriginal-or-indigenous>). As Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, Anmatyerr elder explains ‘I am not an Aboriginal, or indeed Indigenous, I am ... [a] First Nation’s person. A sovereign person from this country’.

2 RAND (Research and Development) is an American non-profit global policy think tank.

3 Contemporary Spanish and French languages don’t translate deterrence in the same form as English and Italian. Spanish and French use the word *disuasión* and *dissuasion* respectively. Dissuasion is softer than deterrence, the meaning emphasis persuading to change conviction, negated with the (dis). Both deterrence and dissuasion come from the same Latin family, yet the meaning of deterrence for the French and Spanish was absorbed by the meaning of dissuade, and the Italian and English languages kept both.

4 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/264150/4018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/264150/4018.pdf)

5 Contract number CN3323493 awarded to Indue operational contract, \$7,939,809.00. Contract number (CN3290604) awarded to Indue for the information technology build contract, \$2,870,675.50

6 See <https://www.atdnetwork.org/>

## ORCID

*China Mills*  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0615-234X>

*Elise Klein*  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0930-0678>

## References

- Abbott, T.** (2015). Transcript: Tony Abbott’s controversial speech at the Margaret Thatcher Lecture, *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/transcript-tony-abbotts-controversial-speech-at-the-margaret-thatcher-lecture-20151028-gkkg6p.html>
- Ahmed, S.** (2010). *The promise of happiness*. Duke University Press.
- Allsopp, J., Sigona, N. & Phillimore, J.** (2014). Poverty among refugees and asylum seekers in the UK: An evidence and policy review. IRiS Working Paper Series, No. 1/2014. Birmingham: Institute for Research into Superdiversity.
- Altman, J.** (2018). Raphael Lemkin in remote Australia: The logic of cultural genocide and homelands. *Oceania; A Journal Devoted To the Study of the Native Peoples of Australia, New Guinea, and the Islands of the Pacific*, 1–24.
- ASRC. (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre).** (2019). Temporary protection visas. Retrieved from <https://asrc.org.au/resources/fact-sheet/temporary-protection-visas/>
- Ball, J.** (1955). The deterrence concept in criminology and law. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 46, 348–354.
- Bentham, J.** (1812). *Pauper management improved: Particularly by means of an*

- application of the panopticon principle of construction. Robert Baldwin & James Ridgway.
- Besley, T., Coate, S. & Guinnane, T. W. (1993).** Understanding the workhouse test: Information and poor relief in nineteenth-century England. Center Discussion Paper, No. 701. Yale University, Economic Growth Center, New Haven, CT.
- Bhambra, G. K. & Holmwood, J. (2018).** Colonialism, postcolonialism and the liberal welfare state. *New Political Economy*, 23(5), 574–587.
- Blanco, E. & Grear, A. (2019).** Personhood, jurisdiction and injustice: Law, colonialities and the global order. *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment*, 10(1), 86–117.
- Bloch, A. (2013).** Living in fear: Rejected asylum seekers living as irregular migrants in England. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(10), 1507–1525.
- Boochani, B. (2018a).** *No friend but the mountains*. PanMacMillan.
- Boochani, B. (2018b, August 11).** Manus Prison theory. *The Saturday Paper*. Retrieved from <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/opinion/topic/2018/08/11/manus-prison-theory/15339096006690> [accessed 29 November 2019]
- Boyce, J. (2011).** *1835: The founding of Melbourne & the conquest of Australia*. Collingwood: Black.
- Briant, E., Watson, N. & Philo, G. (2013).** Reporting disability in the age of austerity: The changing face of media representation of disability and disabled people in the United Kingdom and the creation of new ‘folk devils’. *Disability and Society*, 28(6), 874–889.
- Brooks, A. (2016).** Prisoners or servants? A history of the legal status of Britain’s transported convicts. PhD Thesis, University of Tasmania.
- Burnett, J. & Chebe, F. (2019).** Towards a political economy of charging regimes: Fines, fees and force in UK immigration control. *The British Journal of Criminology*.
- Butler, J. (2004).** *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. Verso.
- Cameron, D. (2011, August 15).** PM’s speech on the fightback after the riots. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-on-the-fightback-after-the-riots>
- Carnet, P., Blanchard, C. & Ellis, J. (2014).** *The Azure payment card the humanitarian cost of a cashless system*. British Red Cross.
- Cholewinski, R. (1998).** Enforced destitution of asylum seekers in the United Kingdom: The denial of fundamental human rights. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 10(3), 462–498.
- Coddington, K. (2018).** The slow violence of life without cash: Borders, state restrictions, and exclusion in the UK and Australia. *Geographical Review*, 1–17.
- Commonwealth of Australia. (2015).** The Social Security Legislation Amendment (Debit Card Trial) Bill 2015. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- Detention Action. (2014).** The state of detention: Immigration detention in the UK in 2014. London: Detention Action. Retrieved from [http://detentionaction.org.uk/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2014/10/The.State\\_of\\_Detention.pdf](http://detentionaction.org.uk/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2014/10/The.State_of_Detention.pdf)
- Dickson, E. & Rosen, R. (forthcoming).** ‘Punishing those who do the wrong thing’: Enforcing destitution and debt through the UK’s family migration rules. *Critical Social Policy*.
- Digby, A. (1982).** *The Poor Law in nineteenth-century England and Wales*. Historical Association.
- Driver, F. (1993).** *Power and pauperism: The workhouse system 1834–1884*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ernst, S. (2015).** Spaces of feeling and felt spaces: Spatially structured emotions in the jailhouse. *History of Emotions – Insights into Research*. Retrieved from <https://www.history-of-emotions.mpg.de/en/texte/spaces-of-feeling-and-felt-spaces-spatially-structured-emotions-in-the-jailhouse> [accessed 11 April 2019].
- Fekete, L. (2001a).** Asylum seekers, welfare, and the politics of deterrence. *European Race Bulletin*, 38, 4–7.

- Fekete, L. (2001b). The emergence of xenoracism. *Race and Class*, 43(2), 23–40.
- Fielding, H. (1988 [1754]). *A proposal for making an effectual provision for the poor (1753): An enquiry into the causes of the late increase of robbers and related writings*. (pp. 219–278). Clarendon Press.
- Fletcher, D. R. & Wright, S. (2017). A hand up or a slap down? Criminalising benefit claimants in Britain via strategies of surveillance, sanctions and deterrence. *Critical Social Policy*, 8(2), 323–344.
- Foote, C. (1956). Vagrancy-type law and its administration. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 104, 603–650.
- Forrest, A. (2014). *The Forrest Review: Creating parity. Review of indigenous employment and training*. Canberra: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Fox-Piven, F. & Cloward, R. A. (1993). *Regulating the poor: The functions of public welfare*. (2nd Ed.). Vintage.
- Fraser, N. & Gordon, L. (1994). Genealogy of dependency: Tracing a keyword of the US welfare state. *Signs*, 19(2), 309–336.
- Freedman, L. (2004). *Deterrence*. Polity Press.
- Gammeltoft-Hansen, T. (2014). The role of international refugee law in refugee policy: The case of deterrence policies. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 27(4), 574–595.
- Gammeltoft-Hansen, T. & Hathaway, J. (2015). Non-refoulement in a world of cooperative deterrence. *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, 53(2), 235–284.
- Gammeltoft-Hansen, T. & Tan, N. (2017). The end of the deterrence paradigm? Future directions for Global Refugee Policy. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 5(1), 28–56.
- Ganesh, J. (2015, December 29). UK politics: Why ‘Project Fear’ works with anxious voters. *Irish Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/uk/uk-politics-why-project-fear-works-with-anxious-voters> [accessed 9 March 2020].
- Girma, M., Radice, S., Tsangarides, N. & Walter, N. (2014). Detained: Women asylum seekers locked up in the UK. Retrieved from <http://www.refugeewomen.co.uk/2016/07/WRWDetained.pdf>
- Goluboff, R. (2016). *Vagrant nation: Police power, constitutional change, and the making of the 1960s*. Oxford University Press.
- Goodfellow, M. (2019). *Hostile environment: How immigrants became scapegoats*. Verso.
- Gorman, R. (2017). Quagmires of affect: Madness, labor, whiteness, and ideological disavowal. *American Quarterly*, 69(2), 309–313.
- Goulden, C. (2018). Destitution in the UK 2018. *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/sbrn167/Downloads/detritutionsummary2018.pdf [accessed 4 March 2019].
- Gulddal, J. (2015). Henry Fielding’s proposals for an internal British passport system. *ANQ A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles Notes and Reviews*, 27(4), 153–157.
- Hanafi, S. (2012). Explaining spacio-cide in the Palestinian territory: Colonization, separation, and state of exception. *Current Sociology*, 62(2), 190–205.
- Himmelfarb, G. (1983). *The idea of poverty: England in the early industrial age*. Random House.
- Home Office. (2007). *Enforcing the rules*. London: Home Office. Retrieved from: <http://www.medact.org/content/refugees/EnforcementStrategy.pdf>
- Howell, A. (2014). The global politics of medicine: Beyond global health, against securitisation theory. *Review of International Studies*, 40(5), 961–987.
- Hudson-Sharp, N., Munro-Lott, N., Rolfe, H. & Runge, J. (2018). The impact of welfare reform and welfare-to-work programmes: An evidence review. Research report 111. London: Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Jensen, T. (2014). Welfare commonsense, poverty porn and doxosophy. *Sociological Research Online*, 19(3), 3.

- Joenniemi, P. (1989).** Deterrence a story in decline? *Current Research on Peace and Violence*, 12(2), 45–46.
- Joint Committee on Human Rights. (2007).** The treatment of asylum seekers: Tenth Report of Session 2006–07. London, House of Lords/House of Commons. Retrieved from <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200607/jtselect/jtrights/81/81i.pdf> [accessed 14 January 2014].
- Jones, H., Gunaratnam, Y., Bhattacharyya, G., Davies, W., Dhaliwal, S., Jackson, E. & Saltus, R. (2017).** *Go home: The politics of immigration controversies*. Manchester University Press.
- Kenny, M. (2014, February 4).** Hockey calls end to ‘age of entitlement’. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/hockey-calls-end-to-age-of-entitlement-20140203-31xgl.html>
- Kimber, J. (2013).** Poor laws: A historiography of vagrancy in Australia. *History Compass*, 11(8), 537–550.
- Klein, E. (2020).** Settler colonialism in Australia and the cashless debit card. *Social Policy & Administration*, 54(2), 265–277.
- Klein, E. & Razi, S. (2018).** Contemporary tools of dispossession: The cashless debit card trial in the East Kimberley. *Journal of Australian Political Economy*, 82, 84–106.
- Krepinevich, A. (2019, January/February).** The eroding balance of terror. *Foreign Affairs*, 62–74.
- Lambert, L. (2012).** *Weaponized architecture: The impossibility of innocence*. DPR Barcelona.
- Lambert, L. (2016).** Design and racism. *Funambulist* 5, May–June. Retrieved from [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/584c4ae99f74564e31e28ede/t/584c5d595016e1303fed8140/1481399653113/Ticktin\\_The-Funambulist-Magazine-5-May-June-2016-Design-and-Racism.split-and-merged.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/584c4ae99f74564e31e28ede/t/584c5d595016e1303fed8140/1481399653113/Ticktin_The-Funambulist-Magazine-5-May-June-2016-Design-and-Racism.split-and-merged.pdf)
- Li, T. (2007).** *The will to improve: Governmentality, development and the practice of politics*. Duke University Press.
- Longmate, N. (2003).** *The workhouse: A social history*. Pimlico.
- Lupovici, A. (2016).** *The power of deterrence: Emotions, identity, and American and Israel wars of resolve*. Cambridge University Press.
- MacDonald, K. (2017).** What is hostile environment, Theresa May’s policy that led to the Windrush scandal and other problems. I-News, April 17. Retrieved from <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/what-is-hostile-environment-theresa-may-windrush-eu-citizens-legal-immigrants-145067>
- Martineau, H. (1833).** *Poor laws and paupers*. Charles Fox.
- May, J. (2000).** Of nomads and vagrants: Single homelessness and narratives of home as place. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 18, 737–759.
- McKittrick, K. (2013).** Plantation futures. *Small Axe*, 17(3), 1–15.
- Mendelsohn, R. (1996).** The welfare state as disputed terrain: A personal account. In J. Wilson, J. Thomson & A. McMahon (Eds.), *The Australian welfare state: Key documents and themes* (pp. 266–278). MacMillan.
- Million, D. (2014).** *Therapeutic nations: Healing in an age of indigenous human rights*. University of Arizona Press.
- Mills, C. (2018).** ‘Dead people don’t claim’: A psychopolitical autopsy of UK austerity suicides. *Critical Social Policy*, 38(2), 302–322.
- Mills, C. (2020).** Strengthening borders and toughening up on welfare: Deaths by suicide in the UK’s hostile environment. In M. Button & I. Marsh (Eds.), *Suicide and social justice: New perspectives on the politics of suicide and suicide prevention* (pp. 71–86). Routledge.
- Mirza, M. (2014).** Refugee camps, asylum detention, and the geopolitics of transnational migration: Disability and its intersections with humanitarian confinement. In L. Ben-Moshe, C. Chapman & A. C. Carey (Eds.), *Disability incarcerated: Imprisonment and disability in the United States and Canada* (pp. 217–236). Palgrave MacMillan.
- Mollard, C. (2001).** Asylum: The truth behind the headlines. *Oxfam GB*.

- Retrieved from [http://writing.berkeley.edu/users/mwald/tesol07/asylum\\_truth.pdf](http://writing.berkeley.edu/users/mwald/tesol07/asylum_truth.pdf) [accessed 14 January 2014].
- Morgan, P. M. (1985).** Saving face for the sake of deterrence. In R. Jervis, N. Lebow & J. Gross Stein (Eds.), *Psychology and deterrence* (pp. 125–152). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Mulvey, G. (2009).** *Even among asylum seekers we are the lowest: Life on Section 4 support in Glasgow*. Scottish Refugee Council.
- Newman, C. (2014).** To punish or protect: The New Poor Law and the English workhouse. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 18(1), 122–145.
- Nichols, G. (2017[1854]).** *A history of the English Poor Laws*. Routledge.
- O'Connell, A. (2009).** The pauper, the slave, and the aboriginal subject: British Parliamentary Investigations and the Promotion of Civilized Conduct (1830s). *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue Canadienne de Service Social*, 26(2), 171–193.
- Peters, N. (2003, March 23).** From aliens to Austr(al)ians: A look at immigration & internment policies. Paper presented at from Curtin to Coombs: War and peace in Australia seminar. Curtin University of Technology. Retrieved from <https://jcpml.library.curtin.edu.au/about/events/peters/#n1>
- Pinter, I. (2012).** *I don't feel human: Experiences of destitution among young refugees and migrants*. The Children's Society.
- Polyani, K. (1944).** *The great transformation*. Beacon Press.
- Poor Law Commissioners' Report. (1834).** *The commissioners for inquiring into the administration and practical operation of the poor laws*. His Majesty's Stationary Office.
- Povinelli, E. (2011).** *Economies of abandonment*. Duke University Press.
- Puar, J. K. (2007).** *Terrorist assemblages*. Duke University Press.
- Puar, J. K. (2013).** Homonationalism as assemblage: Viral travels, affective sexualities. *Jindal Global Law Review*, 4(2), 23–43.
- Puar, J. K. (2017).** *The right to maim: Debility, capacity, disability*. Duke University Press.
- Pugliese, J. (2008).** The tutelary architecture of immigration detention prisons and the spectacle of 'necessary suffering'. *Architectural Theory Review*, 13(2), 206–221.
- Querton, C. (2012).** 'I feel like as a woman I'm not welcome': A gender analysis of UK asylum law, policy and practice. Asylum Aid.
- Refugee Action. (2006).** *The destitution trap: Research into destitution among refused asylum seekers in the UK*. Refugee Action.
- Rose, N. (1996).** *Inventing ourselves: Psychology, power, and personhood*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shaw, A. G. L. (1966).** *Convicts and the colonies: A study of penal transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and other parts of the British Empire*. Faber and Faber.
- Shaw, B. (1992).** *When the dust come in between: Aboriginal viewpoints in the East Kimberley prior to 1982*. Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Shilliam, R. (2018).** *Race and the underserving poor: From abolition to Brexit*. Columbia University Press.
- Smith, P. (2000).** Station camps: Legislation, labour relations and rations on pastoral leases in the Kimberley region, Western Australia. *Aboriginal History*, 24, 75–97.
- Soldatic, K. & Pini, B. (2009).** The three Ds of welfare reform: Disability, disgust and deservingness. *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, 15(1), 77–95.
- Stoler, A. L. (1995).** *Race and the education of desire: Foucault's history of sexuality and the colonial order of things*. Duke University Press.
- Stoler, A. L. (2002).** Colonial archives and the arts of governance. *Archival Science*, 2, 87–109.
- Stoler, A. L. (2016).** *Duress: Imperial disabilities in our times*. Duke University Press.
- Sumption, M. (2019, July 22).** The Australian points-based system: What is it and what would its impact be in the UK? *The Migration Observatory*. Retrieved

- from <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/reports/the-australian-points-based-system-what-is-it-and-what-would-its-impact-be-in-the-uk/> [accessed 4 March 2020]
- Tharoor, S. (2017).** *Inglorious empire: What British did to India*. Penguin.
- Tofghian, O. (2018).** Behrouz Boochani and the Manus Prison narratives: Merging translation with philosophical reading. *Continuum*, 32(4), 532–540.
- Travis, A. (2013, October 10).** Immigration bill: Theresa May defends plans to create ‘hostile environment’. *The Guardian*.
- Tyler, I. (2020).** *Stigma: The machinery of inequality*. Zed Books.
- UK Government. (1998).** Fairer, faster and firmer: A modern approach to immigration and asylum. *UK Government*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fairer-faster-and-firmer-a-modern-approach-to-immigration-and-asylum>.
- Veracini, L. (2010).** *Settler colonialism: A theoretical overview*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vogl, A. (2017).** Sovereign relations? Australia’s off-shoring of asylum seekers on Nauru in historical perspective. In C. Epstein (Ed.), *Against international norms: Postcolonial perspectives* (pp. 158–174). Routledge.
- Vorspan, R. (1977).** Vagrancy and the New Poor Law in late-Victorian and Edwardian England. *The English Historical Review*, XCII(CCCLXII), 59–81.
- Wacquant, L. (2009).** *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. Duke University Press.
- Watson, I. (2009).** In the northern territory intervention: What is saved or rescued and at what cost? *Cultural Studies Review*, 15(2), 45–60.
- Weheliye, A. G. (2014).** *Habeas Viscus: Racializing assemblages, biopolitics, and Black feminist theories of the human*. Duke University Press.
- Williams, R. (1977).** *Marxism and literature*. Oxford University Press.
- Winter, A. (2004).** ‘Vagrancy’ as an adaptive strategy: The Duchy of Brabant, 1767–1776. *International Review of Social History*, 49(2), 249–277.
- Wodak, R. (2015).** *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. Sage.
- Wolfe, P. (2006).** Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocidal Research*, 8(4), 387–409.
- Zetter, R. & Pearl, M. (2000).** The minority within the minority: Refugee community-based organisations in the UK and the impact of restrictionism on asylum-seekers. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 26(4), 675–697.

**China Mills** is a Senior Lecturer of Public Health, in the School of Health Sciences, at City, University of London. She researches the policies and practices of global mental health, with a focus on suicides linked to welfare reform, border imperialism and corporate practices.

**Elise Klein** is a Senior Lecturer of Public Policy at the Crawford School, Australian National University. Her research focuses on development policy with a specific interest in work, redistribution, decoloniality and care.