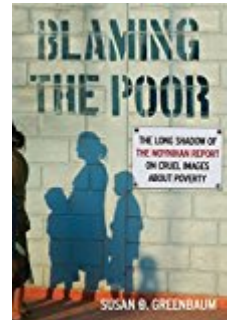
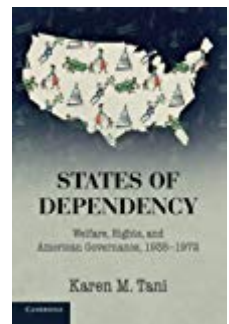


Susan D. Greenbaum. *Blaming the Poor: The Long Shadow of the Moynihan Report on Cruel Images about Poverty.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015. 190 pp. \$26.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8135-7413-4.



Karen M. Tani. *States of Dependency: Welfare, Rights, and American Governance, 1935-1972.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 427 pp. \$34.99, paper, ISBN 978-1-107-43408-0.



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What's at stake is the prospect of producing analytic inroads not only to the immanently human configurations that play out in poor neighborhoods, but also to the many ways in which these transformations have actively reshaped both subjectivity and the regulatory strategies of state and local governance. It is in the latter regard that the insights of welfare and regulation theory become crucial. – Robert Fairbanks, *How it Works: Recovering Citizens in Post-Welfare Philadelphia*

Black music, creativity and experimentation in language, that walk, that talk, that style, must

also be understood as sources of visceral and psychic pleasure. Though they may also reflect and speak to the political and social world of inner city communities, expressive cultures are not simply mirrors of social life or expressions of conflicts, pathos, and anxieties. – Robin D. G. Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*

To borrow Alice O'Connor's term, "poverty knowledge," as a field of social inquiry, has become highly perilous terrain.[1] Over the course of the twentieth century, the debates about poverty unfurled at the intersection of research, policy,

and mainstream, cultural discourse; these new intellectual trends propelled O'Connor to offer this term in order to frame these debates and their epistemological foundations as an object analysis. The common origin story often begins with two of the front-runners in the production of knowledge about the poor, the disciplines of social work and urban sociology, both historical traditions rooted in paternalism and white supremacy. This is not to say that these scholars did not--or do not--have good intentions; for the most part, social workers and city planners--a discipline also born in the earlier part of the twentieth century--genuinely wanted to improve the living and working conditions of the poor. But the question of *why* is one that has haunted the field of poverty studies since its very inception.

As familial, sexual, gender, and racial norms were shifting on a national stage in the latter half of the twentieth century, poverty scholars and policymakers lashed back, projecting conservative ideals in efforts to discipline the poor through welfare state practice. The boundaries between care and discipline and surveillance and support became increasingly blurry as white, bourgeois ideals around labor and family grew intertwined with expectations of the poor. Scholars like William Julius Wilson unabashedly sought to promote assimilation through their scholarship, arguing that the "underclass" needed to behave differently in order to more effectively economically and socially assimilate into white cities.[2] This perspective was echoed by scholars like Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton who worked with the concept of "concentrated" or "ghettoized" poverty. [3] These scholars caught the attention of the Clinton administration and were celebrated for their pragmatism and rigorous policy suggestions. Integration, assimilation, and the abolishment of certain forms of difference--cultural and racial--became the impetus for the amelioration of poverty. The questions of "culture" and "behavior" became prominent features in scholarly analyses of the urban poor.[4] And as mainstream discourse took

up these discussions, the question of "disorder" and "pathology" often eclipsed that of material deprivation and racism--the most important factors shaping people's lives.

This is all to say that rather than focusing on structural and systemic perspectives on the production of poverty--Marxist, feminist, black radical, or some permutation of the three[5]--large swaths of poverty studies have been tossed in the surf of pernicious and relatively fruitless debates on culture, behavior, and agency. These debates not only bear little fruit towards the end of policy change or revolution, but also do representational violence to the folks whose labor supports any economic success, historical or contemporary, that the United States has ever seen. This work also assumes that poor folks have not represented themselves and will not do so in the future; so much so that Robin Kelly felt the need to write, "Black music, creativity and experimentation in language, that walk, that talk, that style, must also be understood as sources of visceral and psychic pleasure" in order to remind us that folks living in poverty, especially those of color, are complex people with multifaceted lives--emotional, cultural, and political.[6]

So why continue to write about poverty or social suffering at all? I assume that each scholar has their own answer to this question, but speaking personally as a privileged, white woman, I think we can all afford to be a bit more discerning about what constitutes an acceptable answer. With such an extensive literature about the poor written from all different vantage points, one thing has become quite clear: if you are writing about poverty and the welfare state in the contemporary moment, you need to have something novel to say or document, be it political, historical, theoretical or methodological. If not, why do so at all? As Susan Greenbaum points out, doesn't the poverty knowledge industry threaten to turn scholars into *poverty pimps* (p. 117)? Why add to a literature so fraught and lacking in self-represen-

tation? As the body of self-representation literature grows—albeit slower than it should[7]—the contributions of the privileged, white scholar must be defended.

Despite this cynical preamble, there are incisive and elucidating pockets of this literature that are of great import. Historically, welfare state scholars have been some of the most successful in thinking critically and creatively about poverty and the transformation of the welfare state. Feminist Marxists like Mimi Abramovitz and radicals like Frances Piven and Richard Cloward write about the welfare state as an institution meant to placate the revolutionary potential of the proletariat *and* simultaneously ensure the continued subordination of women;[8] while ethnographers like Robert Fairbanks have detailed the ways in which welfare-state transformation and regulatory mechanisms are central factors in the shaping of subjectivity and the “immanently human configurations” of poor neighborhoods.[9] In many ways, this literature helps us comprehend the cultural forces that have sustained the paternalistic, colonial, and racist attitudes that the wealthy and white often display towards the poor. Yet this scholarship also affords us a better understanding of the production of poverty and the concrete machinations of the state and labor market that help produce and attenuate it. Within anthropology and sociology, there has been a troubling redundancy of simple “expository” accounts of life in poverty that has catalyzed important scholarly backlash. However, there is also important contemporary work being done that challenges nefarious representational trends and helps carve new understandings about the inner workings of housing instability, debt, and state violence in the lives of the poor.[10] Additionally, various review texts now exist that summarize and critique this literature in order to help us chart alternate directions for the future.[11]

The two books that I explore here stem from these two scholarly traditions. With time—and the

good writing sense that comes with such reflection—I realized that mapping the arguments, strengths, and weaknesses of each from within the historical narrative of welfare state transformation and its attendant cultural ideologies would be the most logical way to organize the review. In what follows, I frame Karen Tani’s book as a brilliant text that offers us a new perspective on rights and the legal system in the history of the welfare state and affords us key insight into foundational contradictions that undergird US governance. The theoretical insights about the binaries of care and discipline, support and surveillance, and local versus national are ones that shed light on many of the contemporary issues that plague the United States. I engage with Susan Greenbaum’s text as a strong historical review of poverty literature, a broad political text that makes supplementary arguments and conceptual reviews that help strengthen and clarify aspects of this narrative.

Rights and the Contradictions of US Governance

Let’s begin with Karen Tani’s primary thesis. *States of Dependency: Welfare Rights, and American Governance, 1936-1972* argues that the broad transformation of the welfare state from the early to middle twentieth century reflects more than just minor adjustments in how we aid the poor; rather, she contends that these changes expose a new form of liberal governance: a system anchored in universal equality and individual rights yet tolerant of—and deeply dependent on, as some might argue—vast inequality in wealth and quality of citizenship. This sounds like a familiar story: the wealthiest country in the world has both confusing and extreme levels of poverty and suffering. Yet Tani powerfully asserts that by looking at the transformation of the welfare state and the attendant modes of appealing to the state for material support, we can see these structural contradictions etched into the very “house” of governance that we live in. While rights and protection

for straight, white men have always been robust and central to the federal Constitution and law, those for women, children, and people of color have been “left to the whim of politics” and largely determined by local context (p. 19).

For Americans today, the realities of the New Deal Era would be shocking. Responding to the Great Depression, the US government was moving towards what it saw as a more “modern” system of governance: centralization, standardization, and a form of federal citizenship anchored in rights. In everyday life, this translated into expansive systems of relief payments: Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which generated thousands of jobs for the poor, and the Social Security Act (SSA), which protected the elderly, the blind, and the disabled. Eager to leave behind what US politicians called a “backward” system of poor relief—one left entirely up to local charities, churches, and philanthropists—they embarked on a journey to build a “modern state” that reflected federal power and centralization. Rights became a tool for administrators and lawyers to shift the conversation from “need” to one of rights, demands, and entitlements that some argued should be directly linked to the Constitution itself (see pp. 57-80). By decoupling the relationship between the poor and their domestic context and “articulating their bond with the state,” the US government helped reconceptualize the poor as rights-bearers.

This is not to say that the process was seamless: local social workers often resisted the impingement of federal standardization and grew frustrated over the lack of control they wielded to tailor care to their specific contexts. But over the years, beginning in the 1950s, it was the state legislators and administrators who resisted federal legislation, seeking to implement their own vision for welfare in their particular states. And thus, over the course of just three short decades, key contradictions and anxieties endogenous to US culture and democracy chipped away at this ideal,

pushing power back to the local level and eroding the rights and channels of demand available to the most vulnerable and discriminated-against members of society.

Though much of Tani’s thesis and corollary arguments is centered on rights and claims, I was surprised that she did not do further theoretical work to trace the lineage of Western liberal democratic conceptualizations of these entities—for example, natural versus social rights in the work of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant. Tani suggests that Americans began to think about negative rights—freedom *from* fear or need—after Roosevelt’s speech in 1941, and she tracks the decline of political “absolutism” as a movement that put tremendous pressure on legal process as the pillar of America’s democratic system. Yet I was curious to learn more about the tradition of American ideals around freedom and rights from a deeper historical and theoretical perspective. I think that addition would have strengthened her arguments and helped the reader understand the historical import of her powerful thesis. Her use of individual case studies was particularly effective and would have lent itself well to this more detailed theoretical investigation.

The Transformation of State Appeal

Tani’s emphasis on claims does serve, however, as one of the primary narratives that structures her arguments. Throughout each historical period that she works within, Tani focuses on the claims that welfare recipients make on the state. According to Tani, it has been generally assumed that the poor did not “assert” their rights to the welfare state that the federal government had just established for them. Some scholars posited that even up to the 1960s Americans generally considered welfare a privilege. She debunks this myth throughout the book, using local-level welfare data that tracks disputes as well as a legal history that offers larger case studies to expose these types of claims. Tani asserts, “If the availability of

fair hearings was part of what made the modern American state ‘modern,’ the traces of these hearings help us understand which Americans bought in, and why” (p. 115).

Working with individual cases, she follows these hearings throughout the entirety of the book while guiding the reader through the shifts in language, responses from judges, and cultural climate in order to help explicate the evolving cultural and political context around welfare entitlement. Additionally, Tani focuses on the emergence of community-based agencies that often served as mediators between the government and its citizens. While recipients of Older Americans Act (OAA) aid appealed decisions at the rate of eleven per 1,000, those of ADC only appealed at the rate of only two per 1,000. As the totality of the book demonstrates, the most vulnerable and discriminated-against members of society (women of color and their children) were reluctant to appeal because of how much “they stood to lose” and because they presumed correctly that they had less legitimate claims to stand behind. Tani summarizes this cogently here: “I show that welfare recipients *did* go to court before the 1960’s, but their ability to do so varied, depending on their location, resources, and presumed worthiness of government support” (p. 125).

In the first part of the book, Tani focuses on the years 1935-49, homing in most intensively on one particular case: *Mepatis vs. Ewing*. This was a civil rights-related dispute that was the first to be brought to the federal court. The plaintiffs were Native Americans contesting their exclusion from the welfare state, a case that established a legal precedent—albeit elusive, tracking the paucity of tracings in the records—that linked citizenship, belonging, and rights together in the context of the welfare state. The case was politically settled because of the near complete passage of the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act that sought to raise the standards of living on Native American reservations and funnel around 90 million dollars into

these communities to do so. Though the federal lawyers announced this as a victory and dropped the federal case, Tani persuades the reader that the conceptual significance of the dispute lies in the power of rights-based language to forge channels of legibility and claim that could reach the federal level and influence policy. Though Tani explicitly states her arguments and narrates her analytic movements, the chronology of the text—and of this section in particular—was a bit jumbled at points. She organizes the book by historical periods, yet frequently jumps around in the presentation of these case studies and the exposition of the influence they had across time periods.

From Tani’s narrative, it seems that as quickly as this new model of governance emerged, its political possibilities were met with serious retaliation from state-level administration, and the model threatened to recede. Culturally and politically, Tani links this shift to the end of the Depression and World War II as well as the beginning of the civil rights and women’s movements that threatened to topple white, patriarchal, supremacist practices. Jim Crow states responded by contracting in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the Civil Rights Act, fearing the new, racially progressive influence of federal power and leaning more towards state and local power. Additionally, post WWII, Americans began to devalue the role of tax payer as they saw the results of heavy federal taxation in their everyday lives.

To track these changes, Tani first outlines a 1951 case in Indiana where congressmen fought against the anonymity of welfare assistance. She summarizes: “These congressmen—who, in retrospect, epitomized the important affinity between conservative Republicans and southern Democrats—used the welfare secrecy issue to gesture toward everything that was wrong with New Deal public assistance, and with federal state relations more generally” (p. 166).

On the other hand, the two other cases Tani analyzes, those in Arizona and New Mexico,

fought to end the privilege and “status” of Native Americans living on reservation by asking: if they were indeed a special, federally demarcated population with unique federal privileges impregnable by state-level policy, why should the state treat and protect them as “normal” citizens with access to welfare benefits? These disputes constitute the majority of the evidence Tani presents to effectively demonstrate how the relationship between federal and state control became increasingly acrimonious at midcentury. This was also when the ideological connection between federal control and “communism” cemented into an unassailable tenet of American political culture.

It is in this section, however, which analyzes the years 1950-72, where the most central contradiction Tani traces become undeniably clear: we have a system anchored in the ideal of universal rights and citizenship, yet we anxiously reject the centralized power that might engender the very conditions that could make them a reality. Additionally, though welfare beneficiaries had the *right* to make claims on the state, American ideology surrounding individualism rendered the boundaries of legitimate claims very blurry. If one did make claims on the state, especially in the second half of the century, they were often saddled with the stigma of *dependence* and later “disorder” or “immorality.” I will expound upon this a bit more in relationship to race and gender later on, but here I would like to turn to critiques of liberalism that may further trouble the boundaries of governance and claim-making that Tani outlines.

Many legal and political theorists have problematized the very foundations of the liberal state and rights-based democracy as racist and patriarchal.[12] These scholars claim that women and people of color were never intended to be equal beneficiaries of the state, as the liberal, abstract, and faceless entity who made public claims was crafted around the figure of the white male. At the time of liberalism’s birth, people of color did not

have human status and women endured a greatly depreciated citizenship. Wendy Brown powerfully argues this point in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*: “Liberal discourse produces subjects without regard to their ‘social positioning’ by other discourse of gender, class and race ... it produces abstract, genderless, colorless sovereign subjects (a more discursive moment) whose sovereignty and abstract equality contend uneasily with the discourses marking relative will-lessness and inferiority according to socially marked attributes.”[13]

Due to the abstract equality of all citizens, any suffering or victimization experienced by some casts the culpability back on the sufferers as “will-lessness and inferiority.” It would have been interesting to read Tani think through these critiques in her work, as she localizes the source of diminished protection and stigmatization of women and people of color within the history of the welfare state rather than in the universal rights and claims of the liberal state itself.

The Pursuit of a Science: The Enduring Power of Race and Gender

A corollary narrative that follows this same historical trajectory—one of ambivalent centralization and then rapid devolution—is the development of a welfare “science” that attended the establishment of the social work discipline. As part of its modernization strategy in the earlier part of the twentieth century, the United States sought to standardize and centralize welfare administration. This push for uniformity catalyzed the development of an expertise that would christen welfare administration as a science: a strict set of rules, concepts, and methods that could be implemented nationwide. Even the local welfare workers who had been doing relief for decades were not qualified because they “carried with them ‘the local poor relief traditions and attitudes’ of the ‘colonial and pioneer days.’” The state desired a science that was objective, a system of “assessment” rather than “judgment” (p. 38).

Yet as social work and welfare administration became increasingly populated with female workers, and both people of color and women began to earn social rights, misogyny and racism were then wielded against the welfare state in the latter half of the twentieth century. Additionally, as psychoanalysis took the world by storm in the 1950s, women were deemed sensitive and emotional and thus the entire welfare state became “feminized” by association. Increasingly, Tani argues, welfare practice was seen as a biased system that continued to give entitlements to the “unruly Black poor,” especially single women and their families who were not adhering to mainstream cultural and labor norms. The efforts to modernize and standardize welfare devolved into predictable yet powerful strains of American classism, racism, and misogyny.

It was in the 1970s that the rhetoric of disorder, crime, and immorality really began to circulate about the poor, and it increasingly targeted primarily the black poor. The black “welfare queen” is still the iconic image of urban poverty today despite the fact that far more white families receive welfare benefits than black families. The boundaries between care and discipline and support and surveillance began to grow murkier as welfare bureaucrats now sought to cut off benefits for single women if they had a man staying in their home. These case workers generally tasked themselves with inculcating “morality” and mainstream cultural values in the lives of their clients. It was then that the devolution of the welfare state, and the corollary dismantling of welfare as a science, occurred with alarming alacrity. Culture, white supremacy, and the patriarchal family became inextricable from the explicit goals of the welfare state. It is in this historical period that Greenbaum’s text picks up, beginning with the Moynihan Report and the perennial incriminating attitude towards the poor.

The Endurance of Cultural Ideology

In her book *Blaming the Poor: The Long Shadow of the Moynihan Report on Cruel Images about Poverty*, Susan D. Greenbaum argues that the same cultural ideology which manifested in the 60s and 70s, and was most iconic in the Moynihan Report, has had enduring effects on the present. Her stated project is to unveil the historical and contemporary “intellectual origins” of this belief system in order to offer “more productive and humane policies” as alternatives (p. 15). In essence, the book serves as a review of the poverty studies literature and the policy responses that have sought to address poverty and its associated ills.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote his infamous report titled “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action” in the spring of 1965 while serving as an assistant secretary to the US Department of Labor during the Johnson administration. In the report, he acknowledges the important legacies of slavery and racism for black families, yet falters when he links the “Negro condition” to a “tangle of pathology” that starts in the female-headed household. Typically, the Department of Labor did not report on such matters, but Moynihan linked male joblessness with these other “cultural” forces that were endangering the black family and posed a threat to the nation writ large. Released in tandem with the surge of race riots in Los Angeles, the report received a hailstorm of critique that exposed it as racist and victim-blaming. Though only seventy-eight pages long, the report is an iconic fixture in the poverty studies literature that helped generate a discursive plume around culture, pathology, and the moral disorders of the poor. Its racist, classist, and misogynistic underpinnings have all peppered the debates between more mainstream and radical components of the poverty studies literature.

The structure of Greenbaum’s book thus rests on the core strains of the poverty studies literature and the primary issues that have long been associated with the poor (and in the latter half of

the twentieth century, predominantly the black poor): kinship/family structure, pathology and disorder, crime and distressed neighborhoods, and marketized approaches to poverty amelioration. In between her reviews of the literature and policy approaches, she introduces data to debunk the myths that so often undergird these projects. Greenbaum's own research remains in the background of the book, yet makes an appearance towards the end as she promotes more community-based, participatory methods of research that tailor policy recommendations to the needs and desires of the people living in poverty rather than to the ideological penchants of the researcher.

Given the extensive review literature on denigrating representations of the poor,[14] I was a bit surprised that Greenbaum did not have a more focused addition to the conversation. Though a great review text for undergraduates or early-stage graduate students, I suggest that the book lacks a centering argument. Additionally, her appeal to community approaches and a cross-cutting, utopic, and collective mentality often counters the radical, political perspectives she espouses around racism and economic oppression that would typically critique "diversity" or "multiethnic" as whitewashed, liberal democratic goals. For example, despite arguments against assimilation, Greenbaum lauds a multicultural, diversity-based approach to governance in the form of neighborhood organizations in Kansas City. "Indeed, one of the effects later attributed to the neighborhood organizations was a successful movement during the 1980s to restructure city government in KCK, from three White commissioners elected at large, to an expanded multiethnic commission based on district representation with a strong mayor--a large step in the direction of better democracy" (p. 147). She discloses that this formation was "comforting" to her and signaled significant progress.

A Review of Historical Approaches to Poverty

A key strength of Greenbaum's text, however, is her thorough review of popular policy approaches that have accompanied these broader research trends and ideological narratives. As reviewed in the introduction, assimilationist perspectives--like those of Wilson and Massey and Denton--politically spurned the development of the Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) VI and Moving to Opportunity (MTO) projects. HOPE VI was a federal grant to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that funneled over six billion dollars between 1992 and 2011 to the department in order to run MTO, the experimental research conducted to test Wilson's hypothesis. These programs would give folks living in public housing subsidized vouchers to live in other, more affluent neighborhoods. After the move, the family was to be tracked through a number of physical and psycho-social instruments to assess whether the deleterious effects of living in poverty could be ameliorated through a change in environment; the broader strategy was termed "desegregation."

As could have been expected, affluent, largely white residents gawked at the recent transplants to their neighborhoods, unleashing a tremendous amount of backlash. As a consequence of more intensive policing, reduced social ties, and a significant increase in stress, the participants fared the same or in many cases worse than they did in their old neighborhoods. The programs were backed by both Bush administrations and wildly endorsed by Clinton, and although the HOPE VI and MTO initiatives show little promise they are still widely supported by policymakers. Greenbaum expounds, "Researchers who invested in the project and staked their careers on making it work have shown a great reluctance to give it up. The search has continued in earnest for evidence that 'where you live affects your life chances'" (p. 85). She effectively excoriates the mainstream obsession with culture and behavior, pointing to structural events like deindustrialization, housing

corruption, and the Great Recession as the more accurate historical axes of causation.

As research and policy work on poverty grew from a cottage industry to a veritable national project, and perspectives on poverty became increasingly marketized and dependent on neoliberal logic, for-profit businesses like Aha, Process Inc. emerged as purported solutions. This company is a private corporation run by Ruby Payne which markets videos and educational tools that help explain lower- and middle-class “perspectives” and contract with schools and other institutions that have diverse populations. The most infamous of her programs is titled “Bridges” and instructs institutions to pair lower-class students with a middle-class “mentor” who can help them assimilate to middle-class culture. Largely anchored in cultural and behavioral stereotypes, Payne's work has received a tremendous amount of criticism yet has also garnered significant praise. Greenbaum powerfully dismantles the very premise of the program as pejorative and paternalistic, and highlights the profit-oriented approach that has made the program a success: “She [Payne] has developed a corporate powerhouse in the poverty industry, and the product she is vending resonates extremely well with neoliberal thinking about both poverty and the appropriate solutions for fixing it” (p. 125).

The other type of program Greenbaum highlights is the social impact bond (SIB) funded by large, private investment firms—Goldman Sachs Inc. is the most prominent investor as of late. These investment firms will partner with local philanthropies and research organizations to generate evidence-based programming intended to ameliorate social problems. One of the most well-known examples was the ABLE program, run in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies and MDRC (a research institution based in NYC) to reduce prison recidivism rates at Rikers. The problem with SIBs (see Geoffrey Canada and the Harlem Children's Zone for another classic case

study) is that they mandate concrete deliverables in order to maintain funding. For example, in the case of the ABLE program, recidivism had to decline by 10 percent in order for Goldman Sachs to make good on its investment. Additionally, if other types of data are collected throughout the course of the investigation—in the case of ABLE it happened to be prison guard abuse—the data cannot be utilized or published because it is not part of the initial agreement. If deliverables are not met, the program is considered a bust and the investment money is withdrawn. This narrative ends with these marketized solutions to poverty—despite their glaring failures—as they are currently still the gold standard of poverty research and intervention.

The Contemporary Welfare State and Labor Market: Marketized Approaches to Ameliorating Poverty

Taken together, these two texts make it abundantly clear that the United States has regressed to exactly where it sought to depart from at the turn of the twentieth century. Due to the Clinton administration's 1996 welfare reform, the welfare state has devolved back to being almost entirely under local jurisdiction and has been grossly subcontracted and marketized as part of a broader neoliberal turn. Joe Soss, Richard Fording, and Sanford Schram articulate this well in their text *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*: “Increasingly, poverty governance is structured by contractual relationships rooted in market principles, decentralized to facilitate entrepreneurial innovation, and evaluated on market terms rather than democratic values.”[15] The stigma around welfare dependence and negative ideologies around the poor are as powerful as ever. Additionally, state-run social programs that are now subcontracted through non- and for-profit companies reap tremendous profit from the plight of the poor, what Daniel Hatcher has called *The Poverty Industry* in the title of his new book.[16] Responses

to distressed neighborhoods are now increasingly in the form of gentrification and marketized economic incentivization (see Richard Florida's *The Rise of The Creative Class* for perhaps the most controversial example of these strategies).[17] As inequality rises and Donald Trump has become a strong contender in our next presidential election, the urgency of the need for change could not be more pronounced.

The question remains: where do we go from here? What role should poverty studies play in urging the country (and the welfare state) away from these types of logics? I for one am quite cynical about the possibility for economic change despite the abject failures and strategic violence of neoliberal logic. However, I do believe that social science geared towards understanding, documenting, and theorizing the machinations of these systems--rather than simply exposing the suffering they engender--is central to any liberatory agenda that we might set. Karen Tani's book sets a strong precedent for welfare state history, offering new theoretical insight into understanding the animating forces in contemporary American governance, while Susan Greenbaum's text offers an accessible review of approaches to poverty in the second half of the twentieth century that can help educate students of all kinds about how we ended up in the mess we find ourselves in today.

Notes

[1]. Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century US history* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[2]. William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

[3]. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[4]. See Elijah Anderson, *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000); Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

[5]. See Lisa Levenstein, *A Movement without Marches: African American Women and the Politics of Poverty in Postwar Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage, 2011).

[6]. Robin DG Kelley, *Yo'Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (New York City: Beacon Press, 2001), 17.

[7]. See Randol Contreras, *The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, and the American dream* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012); Victor M. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino boys* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Luis J. Rodriguez, *Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang days in LA* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005).

[8]. Mimi Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: South End Press, 1996); Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Vintage, 2012).

[9]. Robert P. Fairbanks, *How It Works: Recovering Citizens in Post-welfare Philadelphia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[10]. Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American city* (New York: Crown, 2016); Angela Garcia, *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession Along the Rio Grande* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,

2010); Lynne Allison Haney, *Offending Women: Power, Punishment, and the Regulation of Desire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

[11]. See Mitchell Duneier, *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux); Gavin Jones, *American Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in US Literature, 1840-1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

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[13]. Brown, *States of Injury*, 42.

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