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# Sex Panic and the Welfare State

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*2006 marked the tenth anniversary of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. The 1996 law was the culmination of decades of erosion in backing for basic provisions of the U.S. social safety net. The following reviews the political campaign that undermined the foundation for this vital component of the New Deal/Great Society income supports. A series of panics diminished approval for the welfare state, leading to the 1996 "reform." Panic discourse increasingly accompanies policy debate. Examples of anti welfare, anti outsider panic discourses are explored.*

*Keywords: sex panic, reform, social safety net, welfare state, public policy, public debate, moral panic*

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004, President Bush proclaimed gay marriage was a threat to "the most fundamental institution of civilization," (Sandalow, 2004). With this declaration, public concern over war and budget deficits receded as a sex panic over gay marriage and abortion shifted the terms of public debate. Faced with a 'threat' to a "fundamental institution of civilization," the electorate awarded Bush a second term. And he claimed a mandate to dismantle core foundations of the U.S. welfare state (Krugman, 2005).

2004 was not the first time a sex panic had struck fear into U.S. electorate, thus undermining support for public welfare

provisions. Panic has long accompanied shifts in the ways public policy enters and exits public life. In this, the tenth year since the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, better known as 'welfare reform', it is useful to consider the generation-long political campaign that undermined public backing for this and other safety net provisions. While many consider the 1996 law a success, others describe it as regressive and punitive (Abramovitz, 2000). Explanations vary as to when Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) first lost support. Some suggest that the racialization of welfare is the primary reason for the loss of confidence in the program (Hancock, 2004; Schram et al, 2003). Others suggest that since 90 percent of the program's recipients are women, sexism is a primary cause for the program's lack of popularity (Abramovitz, 2005, p. 387). This essay posits that a series sex and moral panics, encompassing these themes, undermined support for the welfare state, leading to the 1996 "reform."

Paralleling the demise of the welfare state, there has been a proliferation of sex and moral panics (Cohen, 1972/2002; Crimp et al, 1998; Duggan, 1995; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Hall et al, 1978; Thompson, 1998). Studies of the discursive contours of moral panics highlight the ideological quandaries at the center of thirty years of debate over social welfare policy. A number of recent comparative studies of current welfare policies (Sidell, 1998, p. 26-27; Wagner, 1997a, p. 42-48) have specifically located conditions of moral panic within policy debates over public assistance and services for the poor. Other studies (Abramovitz, 1996, 2000; Piven and Cloward, 1993) consider the increase in policies aimed at the moral regulation of the personal and sexual lives of those on public assistance. These works consider the backlashes over public sexuality and the ensuing social controls which usually follow sex panics.

At their core, studies of sex and moral panics investigate social hierarchies. These studies become inquiries into social tensions, ambiguities, and fears, as themes of gender, race, crime, youth, immigration status, and social upheaval are projected onto highly charged acts including public sex, drug use, non-monogamy, birth control, and teenage pregnancy. These symbolic acts—and the calls for their suppression—can be

used to assess shifts in social and economic life. For scholars of panic, discourses of fear typically inspire pessimism, which result in the allocation of resources to secure a worthy 'us' from fear of an 'impure' them (Altheide, 2002; Glassner, 1999; Morone, 2003).

"Sex panics, witchhunts, and red scares are staples of American history," Lisa Duggan (1995) elaborates. "While often promoted by relatively powerless but vocal minorities hostile to cultural difference, they have been enthusiastically taken up by powerful groups in an effort to impose rigid orthodoxy on the majority" (p. 75). In the case of the panics over the welfare state, "moral reform" functions as a trope for the neglect of substantive social problems related to income inequality, race, and sexism.

The concept of sex panic builds on the idea of moral panic first coined within British sociology and cultural studies described by sociologist Stanley Cohen (1972/2002). The term builds on themes from sociology of deviance, collective behavior, social problems, structuralism, and critical theory. It conceptualized a process in which cultural institutions draw perimeters around deviance to generate hysteria. Here outsiders are viewed as social threats, and a spiral of condemnation from interest groups, including politicians, the media, and police follows. For Cohen, who analyzed British youth subcultures in the 1960s, the moral panic scapegoat becomes a "folk devil" onto whom cultural anxieties can be projected. In the case of the welfare state, the folk devil in question has consistently been the promiscuous "welfare queen" who has transgressed community norms. Sociologist Jeffrey Weeks (1985) concisely describes the cycle:

The mechanics of a moral panic are well known: the definition of a threat in a youthful event (a youthful 'riot', a sexual scandal); the stereotyping of the main characters in the mass media as particular species of monsters (the prostitute as 'fallen woman', the pedophile as 'child molester'); a spiraling escalation of the perceived threat, leading to a taking up of absolutist positions and the manning of moral barricades; the emergence of an imaginary solution; a symbolic court

action; followed by the subsidence of the anxiety, with its victims left to endure the new proscription, social climate and legal penalties (1985, p. 45).

As theorists grappled with public policies aimed at alleviating social problems such as AIDS, homelessness, and poverty, dynamics of moral panic overlapped with debates about the urban "underclass." Here a distinct panic discourse took shape. Political scientist James Morone (2003) suggests panic discourse involves a familiar schema. In times of social flux, interest groups: 1) stir a moral frenzy; 2) identify a demon; 3) mobilize interests; and 4) increase police powers.

Goode & Ben Yehuda (1994) have outlined five specific indicators of collective behavior that occurs during such episodes. These include: *volatility*, *hostility*, *measurable concern*, *consensus* and *disproportionality*. Panics over the welfare state share many of these historic discursive contours. A racialized view of women on welfare combined with anxiety about shifts in the nuclear family contributed to the *volatility* witnessed within debate involving 'doing something about welfare.' Fear about the social threat presented by outsiders resulted in *hostility*. Most panics involve unsanctioned activities or cultural groupings that threaten the status quo or the traditional family. This helps explain the rise of panics around teenage pregnancy (Luker, 1996; Sidell, 1998). Shifting sexual mores have inspired *measurable concern* (McClaren, 1999; Thompson, 1998). Similar panics involve questions about the control of behaviors believed to lead to disease (Wagner, 1997a). This is where panics over sex and drug use accompany public policies ranging from methadone maintenance to HIV, prevention, and service provision for undocumented immigrants. Here, panic over the use of public services resulted in a *consensus* about the need to do something to address the problem (Altheide, 2002). Concern about welfare could be witnessed in poll after poll by the 1990's. And while anxiety *disproportionately* expanded beyond proportion of the actual threat, the signs of collective behavior which propelled the welfare panic took a life of their own.

Each marker of panic has significance as a cultural symbol. French structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault described the

social, professional, and linguistic construction of such symbols as elements within "discourses." By discourse, he referred to a linkage of symbolic representations to a series of social actions and actors. Their interaction produces social meanings embodied by cultural "objects," including those that become the subjects of moral panics (Zukin, 1995). A theoretical approach to studying moral panics is to analyze "discourses" that regulate and demarcate hierarchies of what is normal or natural, neutral or immoral, worthy or unworthy (Thompson, 1998: 72).

In a study of the birth of the modern prison, Foucault asserts, "A corpus of knowledge, techniques, 'scientific' discourses is formed and becomes entangled with the practice of power to punish" (1977, p. 23). This framework assumes that tools of professional knowledge, diagnosis, and assessment influence the ways actors are rendered sane and insane, healthy and unhealthy, normal and abnormal, worthy and unworthy. These forms of what Foucault called 'bio-power' help establish parameters of the normal, while pathologizing otherness. Here government programs, from police to social services, use bio-power to regulate and control social interactions. Along the way, desires are regulated, described, punished, organized, and sanctioned by dominant social, economic, and cultural discourses (Warner 1993, p. xxv-viii; Floersch, 2000).

Kenneth Thompson notes that many studies of sex and moral panics "focus on processes of representation and on mapping the discourses which the mass media use to construct a view of events which gives rise to a sense of increasing risk and possibly moral panics, particularly about sexuality" (1998, p.72). Most sociological analyses of moral panics focus on discourses organized by stakeholders to frame arguments about social issues. Thompson suggests that discourses over worthy vs. unworthy sexuality address a central concern of modern life: the besieged nuclear family. "Familial ideology is obliged to fight a continual rear guard action in order to disavow the social and sexual diversification of a culture which can never be adequately pictured in the traditional guise of the family of cohabitating parents and children," (1998, p. 72-73). Such discourses provide the raw evidence of the panics and their impacts (Cohen, 2002, p. viii). Here social interactions involving dominant and dominated social groups are impacted by an

ongoing process of social and cultural demonization (Zukin, 1995).

Panics over public welfare involve four key themes: laziness, drugs, violence, and, of course, sex (Morone, 2003: 17). What emerges within such cases is a series of competing narratives and intersecting discourses that frequent discussions of public sexuality. On the one hand, social movements aim at reducing inequality, while increasing social mobility; on the other, countervailing forces call for regulation and social controls, which halt the advances of social outsiders into fuller democratic participation (Fraser 1989). The following examines four such welfare panics: the Newburgh panic of 1961; the Goldwater race panics; the teenage pregnancy panics; and, the panics over public sexuality which raged throughout the 'Welfare Reform' debates in the mid 1990s.

Moral panics overlap with countless chapters of U.S. history. Even the Witch Trials have been described as a "panic" (Godbeer, 2005, 7). Here, hysteria justified stifling a challenge to sexual norms which might have established more egalitarian social relations (Federici, 2004, 22). As social mores shifted toward increased social autonomy, fears of insurrection followed (Heale, 1990). Richard Hofstadter (1964) has come to describe this mode of thinking as the "paranoid style" of US political thought. "Whatever combination of guilt, sexuality, aggression, or other impulses produce the counter-subversive mindset, Americans have never suffered from a shortage of scapegoated aliens," Ellen Schrecker (1998) writes. In addition to the witches, the list of 'others' – native Americans, slaves, Catholics, immigrants – who represented a threat - is not short. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, communists, anarchists, queers, suffragettes, and welfare queens followed in this long line of, "substitute others" (p. 47). The association between these "substitute other[s]" feeds a cultural xenophobia in any number of policy debates. As Gayle Rubin notes, "Popular sexual ideology is a noxious stew made up of ideas of sexual sin, concepts of psychological inferiority, anti-communism, mob hysteria, accusations of witchcraft, and xenophobia" (1984/1997, p. 108). This logic mirrors much of the rise and fall in history the U.S. welfare state (Reisch and Andrews, 2003).

Panic discourse extended well into the formation of the

New Deal. The notion that the New Deal was a plan to undermine free-market capitalism was a frequent conspiracy theory of the 1930s. Many contended that the U.S. government was being taken over by communists (Hofstadter, 1964, p. 31). This anxiety about collectivist thought often undermines efforts at broad social programs (Skocpol, 1995). It also resulted in a widespread hostility toward the growing welfare state and the people it employed. More workers lost their jobs in the federal government for being alleged "sex perverts" than "communists" during the peak McCarthy years of the 1950s (D'Emilio, 1983). Despite the limited numbers of communists located, the link between sexual nonconformity and government established a framework for forty years of sex panics over the welfare state.

Just as the Red Scare was receding, a new and profoundly influential anti-welfare discourse emerged. Newspapers in June 1961 raised an alarm over relief services for "migrant relief cheats" in Newburgh, New York (Abramovitz 1996, p. 318-28; Levenstein, 2000). Much of the anxiety unfolded with City Manager Joseph Mitchell's new policy of limits on recipients for Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, the predecessor to AFDC). Here, ADC was thought to subsidize promiscuity among black women who had migrated north. From 1950 to 1960, the African American population of Newburgh rose 151 percent, while the white population declined 14 percent. Many hailed Mitchell's efforts to impose work requirements, preventing licentious women from "milking unwed mother aid." Since the 1930's, ADC had been understood as a pension for widows. With the Newburgh panic, views of this program were transformed through a media frenzy, as news stories highlighted the looming menace of "lazy welfare cheats" who migrated to Northern cities. In fact, only 2.9 percent of Newburgh's population received welfare services, and white people constituted a majority of the recipients (Levenstein, 2000).

Panics often emerge to justify policies aimed at controlling outsider groups, in this case those receiving public aid in a period of rapid economic and demographic flux. As the backlash takes hold, panics conflate race, sex, and ideological biases into a moralistic frame, as talk of traditional "values" conceals



social bias. The symbolic linkage between women on public assistance and "promiscuity" in Newburgh built on age-old conceptions of social purity. Racism is, after all, said to find its fait accompli in the sexualization of otherness (Calvin, 1988, p. xii-xiii; Kushnick, 1999; Nagel, 2003).

Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater was particularly impressed with Mitchell's work in Newburgh. Goldwater sent the city manager a letter stating he thought the cuts to services were as "refreshing as breathing the clean air of my native Arizona." The Senator added that he would "like to see every city in the country adapt the plan" (Levenstein, 2000). In many ways, the Newburgh welfare panic anticipated the Goldwater/Nixon southern strategy that followed (Kushnick, 1999).

By far, the most influential welfare panic began with the southern strategy race, crime discourse advanced by Goldwater. Crime first became a national issue during the presidential campaign of Republican candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964. While he "sounded the alarm" about "crime in the streets," initially few Americans were concerned about the issue. Public opinion polls at the time cited war, civil rights, poverty, and unemployment as more important issues to most voters. Still Goldwater's language about the danger to mothers and children presented by escalating crime rates and the threats of desegregation represented the makings of a classic sex/moral panic (Chambliss, 1995).

Although the strategy did not work in 1964, a coalition of conservative legislators, the crime control industry, and media continued to push the issue. By 1968, years of race riots offered fertile ground for a political shift. This time, the anti-crime strategy proved successful. Faced with a shift in social foundations, the right wing succeeded in generating a moral panic over race, crime, and declining public order. It did so by sustaining public anxiety over threats from specific population groups, including youth, people of color, and welfare recipients (Hall, 1978; Victor, 1998: 547). By linking crime and race, the conservative coalition justified an ongoing expansion of federal authority in the arena of crime control under the guise of a War on Drugs. Along the road, they created a new scapegoat – the War on Poverty and the welfare state. "People react to fear, not love" a Machiavellian Nixon explained. "They

don't teach you that in Sunday school, but its true," (quoted in Glassner, 1999, p. xxviii). In the ensuing years, support for public education and services dwindled while programs aimed at control of those on public assistance gained support (Chambliss, 1995; Davey, 1995; Harcourt, 2001).

The Goldwater, Nixon panic triggered a profound transformation in U.S. policy priorities. In the years after 1968 and more intensely after 1972, discourses of fear helped divert attention away from real problems, which if solved could shift power arrangements away from the elites (Hall, 1978). Faced with an oil embargo, cheap foreign goods and labor, and business downturn, a well-connected elite comprised of a triumvirate of America's upper social classes, corporate communities, and policy formation organizations lobbied to restrict policies that created jobs for the unemployed, made health and welfare policies more generous, helped employees gain workplace rights and protections, and helped workers organize. Social and economic policies which redistributed income upward, cheapened the cost of labor, shrunk social programs, weakened progressive social movements, and limited the role of the federal government. This panic discourse served as a key ingredient of the New Rights' efforts to turn back the progress of the Labor, Civil Rights, and Women's Movements (Abramovitz, 2000, p. 17). It helped advance an agenda supporting tighten concentrations of wealth, social inequality, and increased mechanisms of social control (Domhoff, 1998). Following 1968, neo-liberal political ideology continued to support privatization, while watering down of the state's ability to address social needs. Wide-spread social anxiety and alienation only followed as discord between community, work, and family become widespread. As the viscous cycle continued, the Right offered solutions to this anxiety which amounted to still further technologies of control requiring additional sacrifice of social liberties (Knight 2003). Fear remained a piece of new right political advocacy.

By the 1980s, these policies became a *fait accompli*. Panic took countless forms. While some panics inspired grassroots responses, others further undid the work of progressive social movements. Panics over an "underclass" in poverty-ridden urban areas involving crime, crack, and teenage pregnancy

were used to scale back social programs for the poor (Goodwin and Jasper, 2003, p. 259). These panic discourses over family, race, poverty, and sexuality anticipated the call to do away with AFDC itself in 1996.

Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush both exalted a new political philosophy of "family values," while Attorney General Edwin Meese hammered away about the dangers of predation against children. After 1977, preoccupation with normal sexuality and the safety of children led to an unending discourse on their seduction. One example was the Meese Commission's use of child seduction hysteria. Here, the message became that women should get their kids out of nurseries and daycare facilities. The best way to do this was to leave work to stay home with the kids. Anti-censorship feminists succeeded in pointing out that child sex panic was employed to turn back the advances of the women's movement, justifying keeping women out of the labor force (Michelson 1996, p. 8-10).

The panic did not end with Meese. By the mid 1980s, the persistent poverty of U.S. inner cities could be viewed as one of the primary concerns of end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In attempting to explain the ongoing and deeply ingrained poverty among African Americans, many began to reconsider the role of the 1935 Social Security Act, which laid a foundation for the U.S. welfare state. At its most controversial, Social Security was credited with incorporating "racial and gender assumptions that led millions of women to become dependent on the most stigmatized and limited forms of public aid" (Luker, 1996, p. 52). "What some writers are calling 'the coming welfare wars' will be a largely wars about, even against, women," noted Nancy Fraser (1989, p. 144).

These "welfare wars" would include inquiry into the most intimate aspects of women's lives as the autonomy of the women on public assistance became contested terrain. From inquiries into their sexual lives (Gordarn, 2001), to crusades against reproductive choice (Hunter, 1985), to renewed calls for a "man in the house", to increased funding for abstinence-only sex education programs (Bader, 2002), panic discourses would take countless forms. Yet, they all involved calls for control of "deviant sexual behavior" of low-income women (Handler, 1972, p. 34-5).

A primary arena of this struggle involved debate about

teenage pregnancy. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, teen pregnancy, child-rearing, and the sex lives of those on public assistance became the primary subjects of the "welfare wars." Reports suggested that nearly a million teenagers were becoming pregnant each year, at profound costs to both themselves and the public welfare rolls (Christensen and Rose, 1996). For many, welfare programs seemed to encourage "irresponsible" sexuality; thus it came to be viewed as a "dysfunctional" government program (Miller and Markle, 2002).

A nationwide debate over the urban "underclass" ensued. While many of the themes of this debate can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the prime mover of the contemporary discussion was Charles Murray. With his 1984 work, *Losing Ground*, the "underclass" poor, particularly "immoral" single mothers and their illegitimate kids, were depicted as a threat to social norms. For Murray, social problems related to the poor stemmed from a decline in moral values, permissiveness and access to welfare benefits. He called for a moral revitalization and stigmatization of social outsiders and welfare beneficiaries (Thompson, 1998: 89-90). Others would suggest that if advocates such as Murray really cared about the welfare of children, they would have to "move beyond the moral panic and denial that so often distort the discussion" (Christensen and Rose, 1996).

"There is a welfare queen who has three different names," Reagan famously bemoaned, building on the Goldwater and Nixon panics over the validity of public welfare. This use of labels thus transformed poor women from citizens into "welfare mothers." Murray's work was an inspiration for Reagan, providing cover for his reversal of tax policy from progressive to regressive favoritism of the affluent. By labeling those who used these services as lazy and dishonest, Reagan delegitimized the validity of the welfare state itself (Kushnick, 1999). While social welfare advocates fought for social mobility for the poor, Reagan advanced panic after panic which supported policies supporting social control and mandatory reproduction (Abramovitz, 2000, p.92-3,36-7).

Perhaps the most paradigmatic episode to be addressed in this essay involves the panics which paved the way for the passage of 'welfare reform' in 1996. Ruth Sidell suggests that

in the wake of the Cold War, welfare recipients filled a distinct void in U.S. politics (1998) becoming one of a long list of convenient "others" (Heale, 1990). Like the ungodly communists before them, welfare recipients offered a convenient distraction. As House Republicans debated welfare reform in 1995, they actually referred to women on welfare as wild animals, "breeding mules," and "monkeys" (Kushnick, 1999: 160). By dehumanizing welfare beneficiaries as "others," it became all that much easier to claim they were undeserving (Miller and Markle, 2002). "A society does not simply discover its others," Ruth Sidell explains, "it fabricates them" (1998, P. 24).

Throughout these years, panic discourses conflated permissiveness, sex, crime and race with public assistance and the unworthy poor. This justified countless forms of subtle and not-so-subtle control of women's lives (Luker, 1996). This pattern reached an apex in 1996. As a result, much of the substance of the 1996 law aimed to regulate female sexuality. Among other things, the law tied financial aid to a woman's age, marital status, and the number of children she had on public assistance. It furthered a family ethic by stigmatizing single motherhood, encouraging the formation of two-parent families, and calling for a family cap. Here, it rewarded states that reduced non-marital births and abortions while earmarking money to states that promoted ineffective abstinence-only sex education programs (Flanders, 1998). This policy continued with Bush's push to divert welfare funds from poverty reduction to marriage promotion (Badar, 2002).

A core component of the dividing process of the mid-1990s was an effort by municipalities across the country to shut down public spaces where social outsiders build community around non-monogamy (Dangerous Bedfellows, 1996). In 1997, a group argued that the local and national manifestations of these trends, including New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani's Quality of Life crusade, fit a distinctively political schema:

This is not the first time that officials have launched repressive measures against sex in the name of public good. Since the nineteenth century, it has been a recurrent pattern: Public morals and health have been invoked; scapegoats have been found in homosexuals, sex workers and others who are unlikely to fight back; and a fantasy of purity is held up as the norm. Historians have come to call this pattern a "sex panic" (Crimp et al, 1998).

The group, dubbed SexPanic!, recognized a Temperance-era logic in the crusade to close adult businesses, curtail welfare provisions, and sanitize urban space (Wagner, 1997a).

The Quality of Life crusade was chock-full of contradictions. While Giuliani (1998) called for work - rather than welfare - to become the center of life for all New Yorkers, the cornerstone of the crusade called for zoning changes that would close adult businesses that he found distasteful. Yet, by pushing to shut down businesses where many women and men made their living, the mayor simultaneously contributed to unemployment in New York City (Warner, 1999). "This is an economic issue. I am really frightened. I am really angry, not just for myself but for the thousands and thousands of women who are going to be unemployed and out of work," Cindra Feuer, one of the organizers against the proposed zoning changes who also worked in an adult business, explained in a 1998 radio interview. "And as we all know, unemployment is really high; its above the national average in our city. Jobs are not easy to come by." Like many others, Feuer, whose place of work was shut down, faced an uncertain future

SexPanic! recognized that adult entertainers, men who have sex in public, and those with children on welfare are attacked because of a similar sex-phobia. Douglas Crimp specifically referred to these patterns of state-sanctioned control of sexual choice:

Not so long ago it was illegal and considered unnatural for people of different races to have sex with each other. Our country has a long and ignominious history of fearing and punishing nonwhite people for their sexuality and particularly having sex with white people. The history of lynching black men is largely a history of murdering them for accusations that they desired white women. Today, poor women of color are forced to cede reproductive choices to qualify for welfare benefits. Men of color are routinely treated more harshly when entrapped and arrested on charges of public lewdness (1997, p. 12).

Such debates about public sexual culture involve core themes of public-sphere theory originated by Jürgen Habermas (1962/2000) and Nancy Frazier (1989). Habermas contends

that only those with capital can participate in the formal confines of the public sphere and its social privileges. Those with capital enjoy social privileges, including privacy from the public glare. Those who do not own or maintain control of their living spaces - and thus must have sex in "public" - are considered socially deviant and relegated to outsider status (Rubin, 1984/1997). Wagner (1997B) notes that the deviant behavior of poor people is harder to conceal because low-income people - including the homeless, queer youth, and people on welfare - have fewer resources to enable them hide their activities from public view, subjecting them to increasingly aggressive "zero tolerance" policing of public space (Dangerous Bedfellows, 1996; Harcourt, 2001).

While the era of big government for social programs ended in 1994, big government for policing has expanded. While rates of crime decreased from 1975 to 1995 "a moral panic about crime and lawlessness [was] in full swing throughout the country" (Platt, 1995). And controls followed with the passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 and the Patriot Act of 2001. Thus, over the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the policy landscape in the U.S. shifted from an emphasis on public welfare toward crime control (Chambliss, 1995; Davey, 1995). Today, one of the fastest growing public spaces is prisons (Kolodner, 2006; Zukin 1995).

Race, crime, and sexual panics function in the same fashion. They are part of a frenzied drive to cultivate support for politics favoring a better business climate for economic polices poised to privatize, control, and profit from everything from water to public space to social welfare services (Duggan, 2003).

As of today, welfare services are diminished, while policing and military expenditures only grow. In 1964, Herbert Marcuse alluded to a merging of mass media, corporate power, and the blurring of social welfare programs into ever-greater mechanisms of social control. "The society of total mobilization, which takes shape in the most advanced areas of industrial civilization, combines in productive union the features of the Welfare State and the Warfare State" (p. 19). He continues, "The main trends are familiar: concentration of the national economy on the needs of big corporations, with the government as a stimulating, supporting, and sometimes even controlling force," (p. 19). Here media, public opinion, and market pressure

creative a coercive context to further erode line between the welfare and warfare state. Services fade; neo-liberal policies advance and the welfare state recedes (Duggan, 2003). The panics serve as the distractions to the process. When fear rises, policing follows. Yesterday, they were welfare queens. Today, they are immigrants and Arabs. The beat goes on.

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