

Austerity Media, 'Poverty Porn' and Welfare Reform



Living With The Cuts
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'Poverty Porn' – a new cultural industry



We All Pay Your Benefits (BBC, July 2013)



“In an ambitious experiment, [...] four claimants and four taxpayers come face-to-face to explore each other's lives, examine their values and speak their minds [...] with the battle lines drawn between 'scroungers' and 'strivers', this series brings the two sides together”

Benefits Britain 1949 (Channel 4, August 2013)



“In this bold piece of living history, current benefits claimants volunteer to live for a week by the rules of 1949 to explore how our safety net should work [...] nearly seventy years later, something has gone wrong: the system is in crisis”

On Benefits and Proud (Five, October 2013)



“[Viewers will] meet Britain’s most brazen petty criminals and people who know how to really work the welfare state. The characters are frank and unapologetic”

Benefits Street

(Channel 4, January 2014)



“This documentary series reveals the reality of life on benefits, as the residents of one of Britain's most benefit-dependent streets invite cameras into their tight-knit community”

Fast Media



Big Benefits Row, Channel 5



Benefits Britain: The Live Debate, Channel 4

Doxosophers: “technicians of opinion who think themselves wise... would-be scholars of the obvious” (Bourdieu, 1998)

Post-Benefits Street: Manufactured ‘debate’, repeating opinion polls, devoid of intellectual weapons - Not a single sociologist!

Fast Media



Britain on the Fiddle (BBC, November 2013)



Gypsies on Benefits and Proud (Five, April 2014)



Famous, Rich and Hungry (BBC, March 2014)



Benefits Street 2nd Series (Channel 4, location scouting)



Immigration Street (Channel 4, location scouting)



Living on the Social (Five, in production)

Doxic Media



“Love Productions are in development and researching potential new locations for a second series of Benefits Street.

The first series ignited an important debate about the welfare system and we are interested in seeing if we can revisit this through the experiences of residents of a street in a different part of Britain.”

Rewriting crisis: a crisis of work + welfare



“The alchemy of austerity” (Clarke and Newman, 2012)

“‘Public opinion’ about crime (**welfare**) does not simply form up at random. It exhibits a shape and a structure. It follows a sequence. It is a social process, not a mystery. Even at the lowest threshold of visibility – in talk, in rumour, in the exchange of quick views and common-sense judgements – crime (**welfare**) talk is not socially innocent [...] the more an issue passes into the public domain, the more it is structured by the dominant ideologies about crime (**welfare**)”

(Hall, *Policing the Crisis*, 2013 2nd Edition, p136)



Has the Secretary of State, like me, been struck by the number of people on there [*Benefits Street*] who manage to combine complaining about welfare reforms whilst being able to afford to buy copious amounts of cigarettes, have lots of tattoos done and watch Sky TV on the obligatory widescreen television? Does the Secretary of State **understand the concerns and irritations of many people who go out to work everyday**, pay their taxes, and cannot afford these kinds of luxuries for themselves? ”

“Many people are shocked by what they see. The reality is **that is why the public backs our welfare reform package**, to get more people back to work, to end these abuses. All of these abuses date back to what the last Government left, which was massive spending and trapping people in a benefit dependency.”



MILLIONAIRE TORY CASHES IN ON BENEFITS STREET

A SPOT THE DIFFERENCE **B**



HIS TENNANT'S HOUSE HIS HOUSE

WEAR
A STARK CONTRAST? **RED**
FIND US ON **IT**

Interruptions



- 'Twitterstorming'

#WeAllPayYourBenefits/
#HappyToPayYourBenefits
#WeAllBenefit

- 'Commoning'

