

Reproductions of vulnerability

The inequitable realities of the Welsh policy and pandemic response procedures

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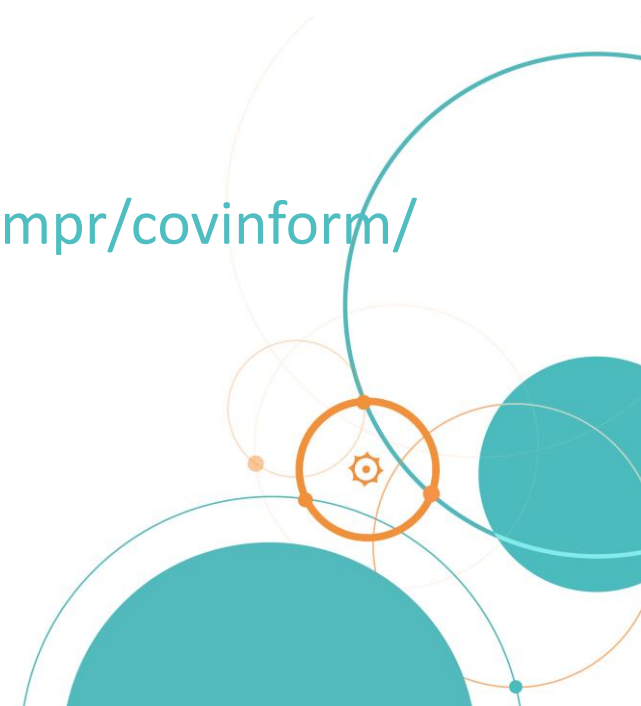
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AAG 2022: Session “Interlocking Oppressions and COVID-19 III”

1 March 2022



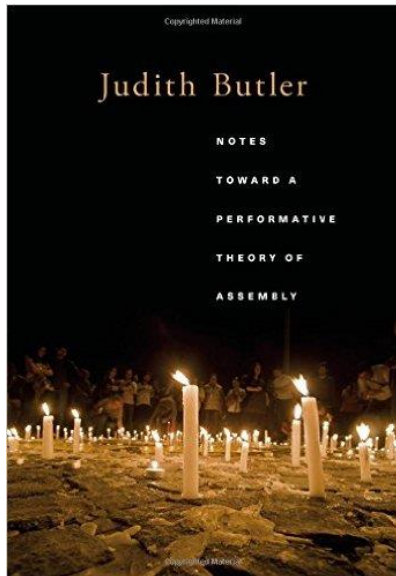
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1. Pre-pandemic policies & vulnerability I

“Our approach to equality seeks to recognise the impact of intersectionality where people who share more than one protected characteristic are at risk of multiple disadvantages, inequity, discrimination, harassment and victimisation.”

(City and County of Swansea Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024”, p.4)



This interpretation of vulnerability expresses a...

“...politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support more than others, and become differentially exposed to injury, violence and death”. (Butler, 2015:33)

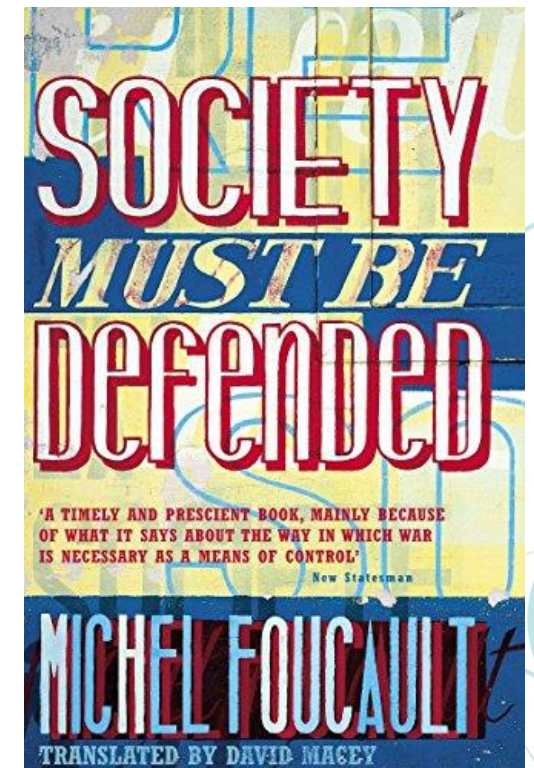
1. Pre-pandemic policies & vulnerability II

*“Feedback from the consultation also suggested that we explore ways in which **community cohesion** can be increased and the use of other community safety measures to address the problem.”*

(City and County of Swansea Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024”, p.25)

Biopolitics that support the functioning of existing policies are aimed at identifying vulnerabilities and...

“...intervene at the level at which these general phenomena are determined, to intervene at the level of their generality” (Foucault, [1976] 2003: 246).



2. Pandemic policies & vulnerability I

*“The Welsh Government is responsible for the public health response to the coronavirus pandemic in Wales. It is doing this by exercising its legal powers to impose restrictions that **prevent or slow the spread of coronavirus**, and by overseeing the Welsh NHS”*

(Welsh Government website, dated 5/5/2020)

The pandemic reveals how the impotentiality in politics...

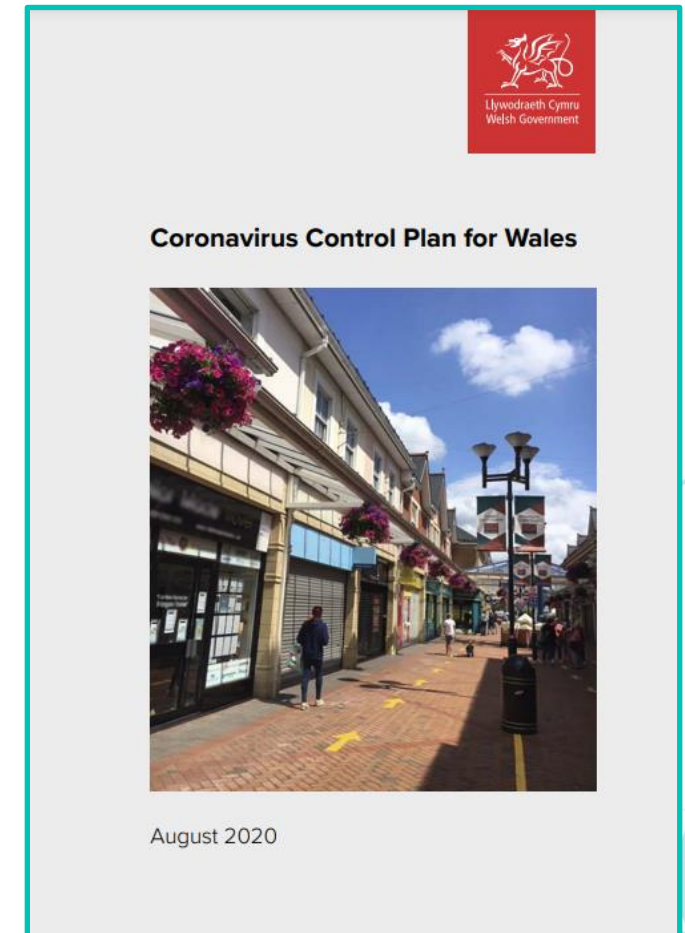
“corresponds to the essential inoperativity of humankind”

(Agamben, 2015: 278)

2. Pandemic policies & vulnerability II

*“Any decisions will first and foremost prioritise the **right to life**, identifying those measures that can have the greatest impact whilst minimising other harms. This includes minimising the differential impact on **children, vulnerable people and those with protected characteristics**.”*

(“Coronavirus control plan for Wales”, August 2020: p.20)



2. Pandemic policies & vulnerability III

The construction of a category of vulnerable people that can be “let die” (Butler, 2020):

1. Narrow assumptions of people’s organisation of life

“A more targeted approach should mean there are fewer restrictions to unwind.”
(Coronavirus control plan for Wales, August 2020, p. 23).

*“Especially with a background in health improvement and wellbeing, it's a massive impact, isn't it, being isolated. Sometimes health protection and that precautionary principle didn't quite marry up what I felt with like, **the kind of human side of the pandemic, which got lost a little bit sometimes.**”*

(Public Health Wales ‘Guidance Cell’ official)

2. Pandemic policies & vulnerability IV

The construction of a category of vulnerable people that can be “let die” (Butler, 2020):

2. Ethics of care shifted upon infection

“Because we're going to be overwhelmed with patients needing hospital beds, we have to put up a cut-off point, we have to draw the line. This is just dreadful, really at that the time was dreadful that those over 50, we may need to have to make more harsh decisions about their care needs and whether or not we can facilitate for example, an ICU bed or providing them with CPAP. So it wasn't even patients of like 70, 80 or 90. The cut-off was 50. So they were definitely focusing on and willing to provide more high-level care to a younger population as opposed to an older population.”

(Senior Nurse in a South Wales hospital)



**Stay Home
Protect the NHS
Save Lives**



DIOGELU CYMRU
KEEP WALES SAFE

Keep Wales Safe



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

3. Conclusions

NMC Nursing & Midwifery Council

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Statement on the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

27.04.20
27 April 2020

Commenting on the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, Andrea Sutcliffe CBE, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), said:

FRIENDS, FAMILIES & TRAVELLERS

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Covid-19: FFT raise Government's lack of support for Travellers with Council of Europe

8 April, 2020

Today, Friends Families and Travellers wrote to Dunja Mijatovic, Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe to voice concerns about the lack of UK Government support for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers during the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19).

The letter urges the Commissioner for Human Rights to put pressure on the UK Government. The content of the letter can be found below:

"Re: Lack of UK Government support for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers during Covid-19"

Dear Commissioner

We write in response to your statement urging Governments to ensure equal protection and

Learning Disability Wales
Anabledd Dysgu Cymru

Home © Joint response to Coronavirus outbreak across Wales

Joint response to Coronavirus outbreak across Wales

Published: 19.03.2020 | Written by Grace Krause, Policy Officer

Welsh national disability organisations raise concerns about the impact on disabled people living with pre-existing medical conditions

Disability Wales, All Wales People First, Wales Council of the Blind, All Wales Parents and Carers Forum, Learning Disability Wales and Mencap Cymru call on the UK and Welsh Governments to act decisively to safeguard the well-being and survival of disabled people and others categorised as being

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Questions?