Discourses of Deservingness in the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment

PETER SKILLING*

Abstract

This article presents an analysis of the Covid-19 Income Relief Payment (CIRP) scheme that was instituted for a limited time in 2020 to support those who had lost their income as a result of the pandemic. More specifically, it analyses the ways in which CIRP recipients were discursively constructed as deserving of a higher level of support (albeit for a limited time) than that available for other unemployed people and other welfare recipients. To this end, this article conducts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of relevant policy documents, parliamentary debates and media coverage to assess how key actors constructed the deservingness of CIRP recipients, as well as how these constructions were contested by other groups. While the CIRP was positioned as a short-lived response to an exceptional event, the design and the discourses of this scheme reveal how policymakers understand the deservingness of different groups of New Zealanders. It is important to understand these discourses of deservingness, especially as the architects of the CIRP scheme linked it to the development of a permanent scheme for supporting displaced workers.

Keywords: Covid-19, Income relief payment, CIRP, wage support, social unemployment scheme

Introduction

The Covid-19 Income Relief Payment (CIRP) was a short-lived programme in 2020 that provided "up to 12 weeks of financial support to people who had lost their job or business … between 1 March to 30 October … because of the impacts of COVID-19" (Beehive, 2020a, p.1). The CIRP scheme, designed to "help soften the shock and minimise disruption from sudden unemployment" (Beehive, 2020a, p. 1) was paid at a rate of $490 per week for a full-time worker and $250 per week for a part-time worker. The payment was non-taxable and calculated on an individual rather than a household basis, such that an unemployed worker would remain eligible if their partner was still working, so long as that partner was earning less than $2,000 a week (Beehive, 2020b). The payment rate of the CIRP was deliberately set so that recipients were "generally provided with *a higher level of support than a main benefit*" (MSD, 2020a, p.2, emphasis added).

According to the responsible Minister, Hon. Carmel Sepuloni, the scheme would help workers and their families deal with the immediate economic impacts of "an unexpected job loss due to the economic impacts of COVID-19" and the ongoing challenges of finding themselves "unemployed at a time where the labour market is going to be much more difficult to navigate"

* Senior lecturer, Department of Management in the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

(Sepuloni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). While (almost) all political actors accepted the need to provide support to those left unemployed by an extraordinary and unexpected event, many critiques were raised against the design of the CIRP scheme and the process that led to it.

The CIRP scheme was established "by a welfare programme approved by [Sepuloni] as the Minister for Social Development", with the backing of Labour's support partners New Zealand First and the Greens (Sepuloni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). Since the scheme was enacted, as Sepuloni (in NZPD, 27 May 2020) put it, by "the power of Cabinet to make decisions around how we spend money", the only opportunity to debate the Bill in parliament was at the introduction under urgency of a subsequent technical Bill (the Social Security (COVID-19 Income Relief Payment to be Income) Amendment Bill) that clarified the tax status of the CIRP. Despite repeated claims by government members that this Bill contained nothing more than "minor and technical amendments" (see, for example, Sepuloni and McAnulty, both in NZPD, 27 May 2020), this parliamentary debate on this Bill became a *de facto* debate about the CIRP scheme itself.

In terms of process, National MPs contended that the CIRP scheme should have been subjected to a Select Committee process, even if that process was truncated (see, for example, Upston and MacIndoe, both in NZPD, 27 May 2020). In terms of the scheme itself, their main critique was that it was unfair: that it discriminated unfairly – for example – against those who lost their jobs outside the "arbitrary window of time" stipulated by the scheme (Loheni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020), against those who received a redundancy payment just above the $30,000 limit (O'Connor, in NZPD, 27 May 2020), and against migrant workers who faced similar challenges to citizens and residents (Ngaro, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). Other parties accused the National Party of hypocrisy in making these claims (see Radhakrishnan, Martin and Logie, in NZPD, 27 May 2020), given its historical reluctance to significantly increase benefit levels.

Inside and outside parliament, critics held that the CIRP scheme instituted a 'two tier welfare system' that provided a higher level of support to some than to others. In doing so, these critics argued that the scheme "strengthened the social stigma already associated with benefit receipt" by "suggesting that the newly unemployed are more 'deserving' than those who received a benefit before the Covid-19 pandemic" (Humpage & Moore, 2021, p.2). Given that the CIRP scheme had been explicitly designed to provide its recipients with "a higher level of support than a main benefit" (MSD, 2020a, p.2) while benefit levels overall had not been substantially increased (as had been urged by the Report of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG, 2019)), it is valid and important to ask why the scheme's architects and advocates saw CIRP recipients as deserving of this higher level of support.

While the CIRP existed only for a short time, this analysis is important as the scheme was linked to the development of a permanent social unemployment insurance (SUI) scheme (see Sepuloni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). Even if the CIRP is not taken as a direct policy model for a permanent scheme, the discursive construction of CIRP recipients as more deserving than other welfare recipients provides insights into how policy makers will approach the design of such a scheme. If accusations that a SUI scheme would entrench the sort of "two-tier system of the deserving poor and the undeserving" (Pao, cited in Macfie, 2022, p.21) enacted by the CIRP scheme are at least plausible, then it is worth paying attention to how those eligible for the CIRP were constructed as more deserving than those who were not, since a permanent scheme will raise the same questions of deservingness, fairness and justice. This article thus presents an analysis of how the policy design and the policy discourses of the CIRP scheme

constructed its recipients as deserving of a payment that was more generous than the standard job seeker support allowance.

In the following section, the article sets out the theoretical framework for its analysis, summarising relevant literature on perceptions of deservingness, and justifying the article's focus on political discourse. The Methods section then explains how the data considered in this article were generated and analysed, focusing on the approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA). The Findings section shows how CIRP recipients were discursively constructed as deserving of the high level of support they received (and how these constructions were contested) before the Discussion section shows how advocates of the CIRP scheme drew on a specific conception of justice. The article concludes by making some suggestions as to how its analysis might help inform the development of a permanent social insurance scheme.

Theory

The concept of deservingness

Laswell (1958) describes the key question of politics as, fundamentally, the question of distribution: "who gets what, when and how". Since the answers to these questions are always contested, politics is also fundamentally about deservingness: who *should* get what, when and how? In his discussion of the various principles that (should) guide society's distribution of various goods, Lane (1986) distinguishes between "political justice" and "market justice" (p. 383). In Lane's framework, different goods are distributed on the basis of *need*, of *equality* (the two principles of "political justice") or on the basis of the "market justice" principle of *earned desert*. For example, societies tend to distribute certain forms of healthcare (heart surgery, for example) based on a person's *need* for that particular good, while other goods (such as the right to vote) are, within set limits, distributed *equally*. Meanwhile, the good of income is often distributed, in the first instance at least, according to the market justice principle of *earned desert*. At the broadest level, Lane's point (see also Walzer, 1983) is that different goods are allocated according to different distributive principles, and societies get to decide which principle (or combination of principles) is most appropriate for a particular good.

In New Zealand, social welfare has largely been distributed based on a combination of the principles of *need* (targeted support for those who need it the most) and *equality* (support based on the objective of equalising outcomes and/or opportunities). It is true that some forms of income support are allocated, at least in part, on the basis of the market justice principle of *earned desert*, for example when social insurance against loss due to unemployment, sickness, and disability is calculated based on a recipient's income or previous contributions. Earned desert as the basis for welfare support is, however, always contentious, since it can be argued that those who perform successfully in the market are typically not those most in need of state support. It is also relatively marginal in New Zealand, where Chapple and Fletcher (2021, p.3) describe the welfare system as "mainly about family poverty alleviation".

While many authors have explored the ways in which the public draws distinctions between the deserving and the undeserving, this article draws on Wim van Oorschot's (2000) summary of that literature, and his discussion of four criteria that are commonly used: control, need,

identity, and reciprocity[1]. These dimensions of deservingness codify the following considerations:

1. **control**: judgments about people's responsibility for their situation and their control over it: "the less control, the more deserving";
2. **need**: judgments about the level of people's need: "the greater the … need, the more deserving",
3. **identity**: judgments about how similar poor people are to the rest of society: "the closer to 'us', the more deserving", and:
4. **reciprocity**: judgments about whether people have made (or are likely to make) a reciprocal contribution to society for the support they receive: "the more reciprocation, the more deserving"

(van Oorschot, 2000, p. 36)

By way of example, survey data shows that the New Zealand public is consistently more supportive of social assistance for old people (whose age is obviously outside of their control, who are typically seen as 'part of the community', and who are widely accepted as having already made a contribution to society) than for unemployed people (whose lack of employment might potentially be their own fault, who are often stigmatised and 'othered'; and of whose reciprocal contribution to society the public might be unsure) (Humpage, 2014). In the Dutch context, van Oorschot (2000) concludes that "the most important questions the … public would ask when confronted with somebody who requests their support are: 'Why are you needy?' [control], 'Are you one of us?' [identity] and 'What have you done, or can you do, for us?' [reciprocity]" (p.38). Of these, van Oorschot suggests that *control* might be seen as the most important, noting that "whether people in need can be blamed or can be held responsible for their neediness seems to be a general and central criterion for deservingness" (p.43). Inevitably, judgments surrounding these criteria are subjective and contested. People – and policy-makers – will disagree over the extent to which various people are in need due to factors outside of their own control. Van Oorschot's criteria do not amount to a mathematical formula, but they can provide a framework of sorts for debate.

Accepting that potential recipients of public support are seen as deserving to the extent that they satisfy these criteria, this article assesses how the policy design and the policy discourses of the CIRP scheme have constructed its recipients as being (1) unemployed and in need of support due to factors outside of their *control*; (2) in *need* not just of support, but of more support than other unemployed people, (3) holding a shared or common *identity* with broader society, and (4) having made, and being likely to make, a *reciprocal* contribution to society in consideration of the support they receive.

Discourse

Traditional models of policy analysis understand policy making as a rational and technical process where a problem is clearly defined, and various potential policy responses assessed to determine the optimal response (see, for a discussion, Weimer & Vining, 2017). Against this 'rational-comprehensive' view, Hay (2002) insists that "politics and the political" are primarily

[1] Van Oorschot (2000) lists an additional criterion – attitude, where deservingness is related to the compliance and gratitude of recipients – but he accords it only a subsidiary role, and it did not emerge as a salient factor in this analysis.

concerned "with the distribution, exercise and consequences of power" (p.3). Since power includes "the capacity to impose and maintain a particular structuring of some domain" (Fairclough, 1989, p.13), policy knowledge can be understood in argumentative terms as "the product of interaction – even conflict – among competing interpretations of a policy problem" (Fischer 2007, p.224). As Bacchi (2004) notes, "policy 'problems' do not exist separate from their representations" (p.131). Rather, she argues that "[r]epresentations of a problem must … be closely examined to see what assumptions underpin different representations, what effects follow from them, and how subjects are constituted within them" (p131).

This article's analysis of a policy dispute focuses on how policy actors represented (a) the relevant policy problem, (b) their preferred policy responses, and (c) the subjects of those problems and responses. Taken together, these representations can be understood as a policy discourse. A discourse is understood here as a particular representation of the political world (Fairclough, 2000). The word 'representation' in this definition indicates that a discourse is not just a neutral description of political 'reality' but, rather, that it also actively "constitutes much of the reality that has to be explained" (Fischer, 2003, pp.vii-viii). Through a discourse lens, the four dimensions of deservingness discussed above are not objective properties possessed to different degrees by different people or groups. Rather, representing certain people and groups as more or less undeserving is the active and ongoing work of politics, and the division drawn between deserving and undeserving is part of that work. This sort of focus on political language and discourse does not commit one to "naively take the world to move just because of words" (Fischer, 2003, p.viii). A discourse consists not just of words and ideas, but also of the policy settings, cultural norms and material practices that embody those words and ideas.

While discourse can be considered the active production of knowledge on a subject, this production is not unconstrained or arbitrary. As Fischer (2003) notes, the "discursive constitution of society does not stem from a free play of ideas in people's heads" but emerges, rather, "from practices that are rooted in and oriented to basic social structures and ideological practices" (p 76). In analysing policy discourse in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand, it is thus necessary to acknowledge as background context the interplay between multiple ideological frameworks. While politicians and parties sometimes explicitly challenge the dominance of neo-liberalism, and while the Labour-led government's Covid-19 response in 2020 demonstrated an acceptance that certain situations demand an active state and the limiting of individual freedoms, the neo-liberal norms of individual responsibility and economic competitiveness (Dardot & Laval, 2014) continue to hold considerable (although certainly not absolute) power, such that it is politically challenging to argue, for example, for a generous, universal scheme of social support (Humpage 2014; Skilling, 2021).

In analysing the discourses of deservingness associated with the CIRP scheme, this article follows Dvora Yanow (1995) in holding that public policies can be understood as stories that tell "ourselves ... as well as others … what it means to be … a 'good citizen'" (p.123). An analytical focus on discourse in relation to the CIRP scheme thus allows us to assess how the scheme constructed its recipients as deserving, and how other actors contested those constructions.

Methods: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In order to analyse the discourses of deservingness associated with the CIRP scheme, the article draws on publicly available texts in which arguments for and against the scheme were made. The texts for analysis include the almost 40,000 words of parliamentary debate over the Social Security (COVID-19 Income Relief Payment to be Income) Amendment Bill (NZPD, 27 May 2020), policy documents, media coverage of the scheme, and responses by academics and interested organisations. As noted above, the CIRP scheme was not enacted through a full legislative process, therefore documents such as formal submissions and Select Committee reports are limited or not available. The background policy documents (for example MSD 2020a, 2020b, 2020c) explain much of the thinking behind the design of the scheme, and there is a lot of repetition between these documents and speeches by government MPs in parliament and in the media. Given the quick development of the scheme, it was more challenging to get a representative sample of criticisms. A comprehensive search of media, academic and civil society coverage of the scheme (for example AAAP, 2020; Humpage & Moore, 2021) was conducted to ensure the full range of views was covered.

There are many variants of discourse analysis, but they share the belief that language and discourse are centrally involved in creating and maintaining power relations within society. This article draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as explicated by Norman Fairclough (1989; 2000) for its emphasis on the relationship between discursive practices and broader economic-ideological forces (Fischer, 2003). The 'critical' in CDA emphasises its focus on the "non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 229). In terms of its analytical approach, CDA contains three phases: description, interpretation, and explanation.

The *descriptive* phase identifies the formal features of the text in question. The analytical work of description focuses on how words have been selected and used, how categories have been defined and enacted, and how metaphors and other textual features construct meaning. Of most interest in this case is how the arguments found in the data represented those eligible for the payment as deserving of this level of support, and the analysis here is structured around van Oorschot's (2000) deservingness criteria discussed above. The *interpretative* phase gives an account of the interaction between the text and its producers (focusing on the intended effects of the text, or what Austen (1957) calls its illocutionary force) and of the interaction between the text its audience (focusing on its actual effects, or its perlocutionary force). The *explanatory* phase gives an account of the durable social structures and wider forces that shape these interactions. The analysis of the CIRP scheme is thus situated within both its immediate context (the disruptions caused to the labour market by Covid-19) and within the wider structural and ideological context. Specifically, the scheme is analysed in the context of the nature of – and criticisms of – the broader system of welfare support in New Zealand. The analysis presented in this article shows how the discourses of deservingness constructed by the CIRP scheme are related to this context, and to the broader norms and values that shape New Zealand society.

Findings

Drawing on van Oorshot's (2000) criteria of deservingness, this section shows how the CIRP scheme and the discourses associated with it constructed those eligible for the payment as having less *control* than other welfare recipients over their need for support, a greater level of *need*, a stronger shared *identity* with society at large, and a greater likelihood of *reciprocating*

for their support. Instances of each of these four deservingness criteria are summarised in Table 1 (below) before being discussed in more detail. Critics of the CIRP did not typically argue that its recipients were not deserving of income support, but simply that they did not deserve *more support* than that available for other categories of welfare recipient. For example, no one within the data argued that CIRP recipients' need for support was caused by factors within their own control. There were, however, arguments that there were others who were also in need, also due to factors outside their control, who were thus equally or more deserving of a greater level of support.

Table 1: The Construction of Deservingness

Deservingness Criteria	Representative Quotes
Control	• "Further support … for those facing job loss [is needed in] "economic conditions where there are widespread redundancies, reduced employment opportunities, and shortages of affordable accommodation" (MSD, 2020c, p.4). • The CIRP supports those who find themselves "unemployed at a time where the labour market is going to be much more difficult to navigate" (Sepuloni, in NZPD 27 May 2020). • The CIRP responds to an "unprecedented" event, where "one thousand people a day are losing their jobs" (O'Connor, S., in NZPD, 27 May 2020). • "Our New Zealand people cannot be blamed for the economic devastation that we now face" (Loheni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020).
Need	• Those on "high incomes may still have trouble adjusting costs if someone in the relationship has lost a job, particularly if they have a large mortgage" (MSD, 2020b, p.17). • Some who experience a "sudden income drop … will struggle to meet essential costs, some may take on significant debt, and some will be unable to afford their housing costs" (MSD, 2020b, p.2). • "[s]omebody who is used to that big income … wouldn't have coped on the normal benefit. They woulda been screwed" ('Nina', in Humpage & Moore, 2021, p.33).
Identity	• The CIRP provides "income support to New Zealanders who, through no fault of their own, are unemployed" (Loheni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). • The CIRP reinforced New Zealanders' tendency to "separate ordinary … beneficiaries from people who are accessing state support because of COVID" ('Maria', in Humpage & Moore, 2021, p.37).
Reciprocity	• "Anyone who loses a job during COVID-19 has been paying taxes … [and now] those that have been paying taxes … who have lost jobs are needing support" (Sepuloni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). • "What we're seeing now is tens of thousands of people suddenly dependent on a very, very small benefit in comparison with the taxes that they have paid in" (Seymour, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). • The CIRP "will make it easier for people to retrain and upskill for their next job … [meaning that] business can hit the ground running with staff who bring the skills that they need" (Business New Zealand, 2020).

Control

As is evident from its name, the CIRP scheme was designed to support people who lost their jobs as a result of Covid-19. The pandemic and its labour market impacts were seen as constituting "extraordinary circumstances" that warranted "further support" beyond what was already available (MSD, 2020b, p.14). The relevant impacts were held to be "economic conditions [that resulted in] widespread redundancies, reduced employment opportunities, and shortages of affordable accommodation" (MSD, 2020c, p.4; see also Sepuloni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). Sepuloni and other MPs described the pandemic as "unprecedented", as a "crisis unlike any other" or as possibly "a one-in-160 [year] event" (Radhakrishnan, Upston and Martin, all in NZPD, 27 May 2020). In the relevant parliamentary debates, the word 'unprecedented' was used 21 times, and the word 'crisis' 36 times.

The responses necessary for this extraordinary event were contrasted to the "usual policy settings" appropriate to "ordinary circumstances" (MSD, 2020c, p.4). In 'ordinary' times, it was assumed that those who lose their jobs will be able to find "alternative employment, or adjust to their new financial circumstances by reducing their costs over time" (MSD, 2020c, p.4). By contrast, it was argued that those left unemployed during the pandemic had lost their jobs with almost no warning, at precisely the time where finding another job was "going to be incredibly difficult" (Sepuloni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020).

The idea that Covid-19 was an extraordinary crisis that created labour market impacts outside of workers' control was widely accepted. National MP Agnes Loheni (in NZPD, 27 May 2020), for example, stated that her party supported income relief because "[o]ur New Zealand people cannot be blamed for the economic devastation that we now face". The implication, however, that unemployment during the 'normal' pre-Covid era was within workers' control was vigorously contested. While it is true that unemployment did spike during the pandemic (albeit to a lower level and more briefly than expected) (Robson, 2021), critics of the CIRP scheme held that those already on core benefits were also in need due to factors outside of their control. This point emerged clearly from Humpage and Moore's (2021) interviews with main benefit recipients. For example, 'Meredith' felt that that the scheme amounted to the government saying to other welfare recipients that "you don't deserve to have that money because you somehow brought this upon yourself [or that] you're not trying hard enough" (as cited in Humpage & Moore, 2021, p.32). Elsewhere, union leader Robert Reid (2021) noted that workers had been facing redundancies for decades due to external forces such as "globalisation and international wage pressure".

Need

On the face of it, it would appear difficult to demonstrate that CIRP recipients (those who lost their income due to Covid-19) were in greater need than those who have been surviving on a core benefit for an extended period of time. The Welfare Expert Advisory Group (WEAG) Report makes it clear that "[c]urrent levels of [welfare] support fail to cover even basic costs for many people, let alone allowing them to meaningfully participate in their communities" (WEAG, 2019, p.7). Humpage and Moore (2021) note that while Covid-19 made life more challenging for those already on benefits, it simply "increased the severity of the enduring poverty that most benefit recipients … face on a day-to-day basis" (p.2). On average, it seems likely that someone who had been working up until Covid-19 intervened would have been better able to create a level of security than someone who had been reliant on welfare for an extended period. It seems unlikely then that CIRP recipients could satisfy the criterion of need

to an extent that would justify the "high-level principle" that recipients should receive "a higher level of support than a main benefit" (MSD, 2020a, p.2).

In policy documents relating to the CIRP scheme, however, the fact that a worker or a household had been on a relatively high income before the pandemic became precisely the reason that they were seen as needing a higher level of support. The argument was that the expectations and commitments taken on by a worker while in paid employment generated valid obligations and needs. While accepting that "people with higher incomes are more likely to have resources to draw-on", it was argued that those on "high incomes may still have trouble adjusting costs if someone in the relationship has lost a job, particularly if they have a large mortgage" (MSD, 2020b, p.17). Some of those who experience a "sudden income drop … will struggle to meet essential costs, some may take on significant debt, and some will be unable to afford their housing costs" (MSD, 2020c, p.2). 'Nina', a benefit recipient in Humpage and Moore's (2021) study said that for "[s]omebody who is used to that big income … wouldn't have coped on the normal benefit. They woulda been screwed" (p.33).

To critics, this was seen as privileging the capacity of CIRP recipients to keep paying, for example, the mortgage on a home over the capacity of other welfare recipients to ever be able to buy a home. Humpage (2021), for example, argued that it acknowledged and normalised a situation where "New Zealand's poor have been effectively excluded from home ownership by low benefit payments and an insecure labour market over several decades". Indeed, the CIRP scheme was criticised in parliament and by advocacy groups for its implication that the needs of those who lost their jobs in 2020 carried more weight than the needs of others reliant on state support. Echoing the WEAG Report, Green MP Jan Logie (in NZPD, 27 May 2020) argued that the design of the CIRP stood as an indictment of New Zealand's current levels of income support. In stating that the existing "welfare system and levels of support are not high enough to enable … people to transition from work and into our welfare system and maintain and care for their families", Logie was arguing that the CIRP simply demonstrates that most welfare recipients live in significant need and deserve more support.

Identity

Of the four deservingness criteria considered here, 'identity' is perhaps the most intangible. As van Oorschot (2000) explains this criterion, "the deserving are those poor people who belong to 'us'" (p.35). Constructions of 'us' in political discourse are often left implicit rather than clearly spelt out. Predictably, no one in the data explicitly stated that those eligible for the CIRP are more like 'us' than recipients of other forms of income support. It is true that those eligible for the CIRP were constructed as sharing an identity with 'us' when they were consistently referred to as "New Zealanders" (see, for example, Sepuloni and Loheni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020) At the same time, however, other welfare recipients were also referred to inclusively as "New Zealanders" (rather than, for instance 'the unemployed' or 'beneficiaries') (see Sepuloni, O'Connor and Loheni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020).

While CIRP recipients were not explicitly represented in political language as any more part of 'us' than other groups of welfare recipients, discourse is not merely about words and ideas. As Yanow (1995) argues, policies themselves can be read as stories about "what it means to be [a New Zealander] or a 'good citizen' today" (p.123). The design of the CIRP scheme clearly positioned some New Zealanders (those eligible for the CIRP) as more deserving of a reasonable level of income support than others. This was certainly how it was understood by welfare recipients not eligible for the CIRP. As 'Maria' (in Humpage & Moore, 2021) argued,

the CIRP reinforced New Zealanders' tendency to "separate ordinary … beneficiaries from people who are accessing state support because of COVID" (p.37). Making the same point, National MP Agnes Loheni argued that paying those who were unemployed prior to March 2020 "half of what New Zealanders who lost their job in March will be paid" amounts to the government saying, "The team of 5 million, except for those of you who lost your job a few months ago. Sorry, not for you" (Loheni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020; see also Logie, in ibid.)

Critical discourse analysis looks not just at words, or the concrete design of policies, but also at how those words and policies relate to broader social forces and structures. In determining whether or not certain people "belong to 'us'" (van Oorschot, 2000, p.35), we need to also assess how prevailing economic systems and ideologies construct an ideal citizen. While the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the labour market can be seen as a striking example of the ways in which the causes of disadvantage are often entirely outside of people's control – this was the basis for hopes that Covid-19 might help New Zealanders gain a "greater understanding of the structural causes of unemployment" ('Karen', in Humpage & Moore, 2021, p.36) – public opinion research demonstrates the underlying potency of the neo-liberal ideal of individual responsibility within a competitive system (Skilling, 2021). Representing CIRP recipients as successful subjects who have been rendered temporarily unemployed by an extraordinary event outside of their control aligns them with this ideal neo-liberal citizen.

By contrast, participants in Humpage and Moore's (2021) study experienced their status as welfare recipients (i.e. as 'failures' within the labour market) as placing themselves outside the norms and ideals of mainstream society. Separate participants felt that other New Zealanders see the long-term unemployed as "in a different class to them" and just "a group over there who are bludgers on the country" ('Karen' and 'Nina', in Humpage & Moore, 2021, pp.33-4).

From this perspective, the CIRP scheme was seen as a deliberate (or, at best, a thoughtless) way of reinforcing existing divisions, placing its recipients "into a separate category" ('Meredith', in ibid., p.32). Welfare recipients and advocates described the scheme in visceral terms: as a "huge kick in the gut" ('Karen', in ibid., p.32), as being "shafted by the government" ('Ryan', in ibid., p.32), and as "a slap in the face" (AAAP, 2020).

Reciprocity

In noting that people are perceived as deserving of support to the extent that they have or will make some reciprocal contribution to society, van Oorschot (2000) notes that this criterion can be flexible in terms of its timeframe. Even when people in need are not able to reciprocate immediately, they may yet be considered deserving because they contributed to society "*in earlier times*" (van Oorschot, 2000, p.36), or because of the perceived likelihood that they will 'pay society back' *in the future*. The discourses of deservingness in the data referred to CIRP recipients' past and future contributions.

Sepuloni (in NZPD, 27 May 2020), for example, drew on the past-facing orientation when she argued "that anyone who loses a job during COVID-19 has been paying taxes" and that those who "have been paying taxes [but have now] lost jobs are needing support" concluding that this makes it "a good use of taxpayer money as far as I'm concerned". Generally speaking, the reciprocity criterion supports public assistance for those seen as making – or as having made – a positive contribution to society (van Oorschot, 2000), and CIRP recipients were typically seen as better able than other welfare recipients to satisfy this criterion. This financial interpretation of the idea of reciprocity was taken to its extreme by ACT leader, David Seymour

(in NZPD, 27 May 2020), who noted that "what we're seeing now is tens of thousands of people suddenly dependent on a very, very small benefit in comparison with the taxes that they have paid in …" Seymour's policy response (in ibid.) flowed from this idea: "there is a need to ensure that what people get paid out is somehow proportional to what they've been paying in".

Sepuloni (in NZPD, 27 May 2020) also drew on the future-facing orientation when she argued that the scheme is needed "so we can support New Zealanders in rebuilding together". The support for displaced workers offered by the CIRP scheme was presented as benefiting multiple stakeholders: it was said that such support would provide future benefits to workers (who would "receive a better income"), firms (who would "benefit from better skills matching"), and the broader economy (through raising "productivity more widely … and through maintaining higher levels of consumption") (MBIE, 2020, p.2). According to Business New Zealand (2000), the CIRP scheme made it "easier for people to retrain and upskill for their next job" so that firms could "hit the ground running with staff who bring the skills that they need" (see also Labour, 2020).

This question of reciprocity – specifically, the capacity of those receiving the CIRP to quickly return to making an economic contribution – was seen by welfare recipients as a key reason why they were being treated differently. 'Daniel' (in Humpage & Moore, pp.31-2) stated that "[t]he government is essentially prepared to help people [so] they can get them back into work …. and creating taxes for them [the government]" whereas for "people like us … we seem to not qualify for any assistance because there's no chance of us to provide taxes to the government". It is worth noting that this emphasis on workers' capacity to make an economic contribution in terms for social support is a very specific conception of deservingness. When Tony Blair announced that New Labour in the United Kingdom was rejecting the 'old left' goal of equality of outcomes for a 'third way' focus on equality of opportunity (see Giddens, 2001), he triumphantly announced this change as the "end of the something for nothing days" (see Peck & Theodore, 2000, p.730). Yet most conceptions of social citizenship hold that members of a society are entitled to certain social goods (rights, recognition, a certain level of dignity) for, precisely, nothing.

Summary of Findings

We noted above that the welfare system in Aotearoa New Zealand has historically been mainly focused on "family poverty alleviation" (Chapple & Fletcher, 2021, p.3) based on the "political justice" principles of *need* and *equality*, and that distributing income support based on the "market justice" principle of *earned desert* (Lane, 1986, p.383) has remained marginal and contested. The analysis presented above demonstrates, however, that the CIRP scheme constructed deservingness, to a striking degree, on people's prior and potential performance (their 'earned desert') in the labour market. The CIRP scheme constructed Covid-19 as an extraordinary event and represented its recipients as less in *control* of their need for support than those who lost their jobs in an earlier, 'normal' time. Its emphasis on the norm of reciprocity (under which people are deserving of support to the extent that they make or have made a reciprocal *financial* contribution for that support) places this construction of deservingness in the realm of market justice. Since recipients had been meeting the neo-liberal expectation of supporting themselves through paid work, they avoided the stigma of being unemployed and were positioned instead as temporarily inconvenienced economic contributors. They were seen as deserving because they had been successfully competing in

the labour market and because, it was assumed, they would quickly return to making a *reciprocal* contribution by generating tax revenues for the government, and by assisting firms to recover.

These two criteria - *control* and *reciprocity* – were the most prominent justifications in the data for the CIRP's higher level of support. The other two deservingness criteria considered above – *identity* and *need* – were dependent on these constructions of *control* and *reciprocity*. If successful performance in the labour market is accepted as a valid basis for deservingness, it follows that this performance (and the associated trait of taking responsibility for enhancing one's human capital) will be taken as the marker of an ideal and approved *identity*. It also suggests that the *needs* (the pre-existing obligations such as mortgage payments taken on while they were in work) of CIRP recipients were just as weighty as the material and emotional needs of long-term unemployed and other welfare recipients who had, for many decades, been compelled to re-structure their needs to match the income available to them within a system where "levels of support fail to cover even basic costs for many people" (WEAG, 2019, p.7).

Discussion

Deservingness and the 'meritocracy'

The policy settings and the subjectivities of neo-liberalism are justified by a discourse of meritocracy (Littler, 2017; Simon-Kumar, 2015). Neo-liberalism accepts the 'market justice' distributive principle of earned desert (Lane, 1986) as an appropriate guiding principle because the economy is imagined as a realm of fair competition in which one's outcomes are directly related to one's effort, choices and talent (one's 'merit'). Critics, however, insist that there are many ways in which the free market is not fair: that there are many sources of advantage and disadvantage that have little or nothing to do with an individual's personal merits. If outcomes are seen – even partly – as based on unearned, arbitrary factors such as one's starting point in life, gender or ethnicity, or knowing the right people, then earned desert needs to be supplemented to greater degrees by the 'political justice' distributive principles of need and equality.

The CIRP scheme did not arise in a vacuum but within a policy context that has for a long time assumed that society operates (or should operate) along meritocratic lines. Ruth Richardson's 1991 'Mother of All Budgets' slashed welfare benefit levels, based on a belief that doing so would "place greater incentives on New Zealanders to move off welfare into work" (Richardson, 1995, p.218). While governments over the intervening 30 years have altered and softened some of the policy settings enacted in 1991, the WEAG (2019) Report suggests that these policy settings have not been effectively countered, and that benefit levels remain damagingly low. Further, the underlying belief in a meritocracy within a fundamentally fair system retains considerable power. While no discursive or ideological formation is ever absolute or uncontested, meritocratic assumptions continue to be expressed in calls for "tax relief to hard working Kiwis" (Luxon, 2022) and in the decision, for example, to restrict the Working for Families scheme's In-Work Tax Credit (IWTC) to those families who worked over a prescribed number of hours per week, even though this excludes many of the New Zealanders in the most severe need (Berentson-Shaw, 2016).

At the beginning of the pandemic, welfare advocates expressed their hope that the pandemic and the associated might challenge the public perception of "beneficiaries [… as] dole

bludgers" and as undeserving ('Karen', in Humpage & Moore, 2021, p.36). If many New Zealanders went through an unexpected period of unemployment, they might – it was hoped – gain a "greater understanding of the structural causes of unemployment" ('Karen', in ibid., p.36) and thus a new appreciation of how unemployment and financial need is often caused by factors outside of people's control. In the event, there is no evidence of any such shift in public perception (Humpage & Moore, 2021). This was, in part, because relatively few New Zealanders ended up directly experiencing the income support system. Covid-related unemployment rates in New Zealand never approached the very high levels that had been predicted (Robson, 2021). Hopes that Covid-19 might help mainstream New Zealand society understand that unemployment often occurs due to factors outside workers' control were also undermined by justifying the CIRP on the basis that Covid-19 was an unprecedented crisis: an extraordinary situation relative to pre-COVID "ordinary circumstances" (MSD, 2020c, p. 4).

Further, for those that did lose their income due to Covid-19, the CIRP scheme shielded them from the harshest realities of being unemployed in New Zealand. Beyond the income relief payment itself (deliberately set to provide "a higher level of support than a main benefit" (MSD, 2020a, p.2)), the government established "an employment service specific to those directly impacted by Covid-19, who are not on a main benefit" specifically, Humpage (2021) speculates, so that "'ordinary' (i.e., working) New Zealanders" would not have to experience "the 'toxic culture' endemic in [WINZ] offices". An effect of the CIRP scheme, then, was to shield its recipients from any direct contact with the material and emotional struggles experienced by welfare beneficiaries. As Humpage (2021) concludes, "the newly unemployed [were not] treated like main beneficiaries at all". This was achieved through concrete policy design and also through language. The CIRP scheme constructed its recipients as "newly jobless" rather than "unemployed" and offered "an 'income relief payment' rather than an unemployment benefit", thus avoiding the stigma associated with welfare receipt in New Zealand (Humpage, 2021).

The emergency response and the permanent scheme

None of this is to say that the CIRP scheme was, *in and of itself*, unfair or poor policy. It is hard to argue that those who lost their income due to a global pandemic were not deserving of financial support. Further, the various forms of support that were offered in 2020 (not just CIRP, but also the wage subsidy, the winter energy payment, and a small increase in core benefits) were broadly popular with the public, who believed that they allowed the country to weather the Covid-storm in reasonable shape. The major criticism identified in the data is not that the recipients of the CIRP were undeserving of support, but that the government did not extend the same level of support to others who also lived in demonstrable need, plausibly also due to factors outside of their control. The critique, in other words, is not that those left unemployed by Covid-19 were undeserving, but that the design and the discourses of the CIRP scheme positioned others as *less deserving* of further support, even though the level of support offered by the CIRP scheme might be seen as official acknowledgment that "core benefits are too low to live on" (AAAP, 2020).

While it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of any policy initiative, none of this would be so pressing if the CIRP scheme was simply a short-lived, emergency policy response to an exceptional event. A rationale for this article's analysis of the design and the discourses of the CIRP scheme is that the scheme (and the additional policy response that were not adopted) offer important insights into how different groups of New Zealanders-in-need are seen as deserving or undeserving of public support. While Sepuloni (in NZPD, 27 May 2020) linked

the CIRP scheme to plans for a permanent unemployment insurance scheme (the CIRP, she said, is "not a permanent fixture of our welfare system", *but also that* "we should explore [a more permanent scheme] because on too many occasions New Zealanders lose jobs unexpectedly") it is stretching things too much to see it as a direct model for current proposals for a permanent social unemployment insurance (SUI) scheme. It is important, however, to analyse the discourses of deservingness surrounding the CIRP scheme, and to assess the impact that those discourses would have if they influence the development of a permanent scheme.

New Zealand has long been seen as an outlier in terms of the weakness of its support for workers who find themselves unemployed (Macfie, 2022; Rosenberg, 2021, OECD, 2017). Given the rise of precarious work and the likelihood of labour market shocks in the future, this was an area of work explored by the Future of Work commission established by Labour prior to 2017, when it was in opposition (Macfie, 2022; Sepuloni, in NZPD, 27 May 2020). Still, Grant Robertson's announcement that the government had "committed to developing a [SUI] scheme" was seen as "considerable surprise", since Labour had not campaigned on this policy (Chapple & Fletcher, 2021, p.3). Since 2020, work on a permanent SUI scheme has been progressed by a working group involving Business New Zealand and the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) alongside government officials (Council of Trade Unions and Business New Zealand 2020). Indeed, Business New Zealand CEO, Kirk Hope, saw the CIRP scheme as "a great interim step towards a more sustainable model" and welcomed Grant Robertson's announcement "that work is underway on a more permanent unemployment insurance scheme". Further, Sepuloni noted that strengthening "redundancy support policies to better support displaced workers" was a recommendation of the WEAG Report on New Zealand's welfare system. This last justification may have been galling to those welfare advocates who have accused the government of ignoring most of the 42 recommendations in this Report, especially those that related to enhancing the situation of welfare recipients, such as the recommendation to increase "main benefits by between 12% and 47%" (WEAG, 2020, p.23). And especially galling, since the WEAG did not specify a SUI scheme as the means to provide redundancy support.

Despite support from many quarters for a permanent SUI scheme, the details that have so far been released for such a scheme have attracted criticism. Chapple and Fletcher's (2021) critique of the initial proposals argues that a SUI would represent a "major philosophical shift from a welfare system which is mainly about family poverty alleviation towards a welfare system which has a stronger focus on market income replacement for individual low- and middle-income earners" (p.4). Echoing major criticisms of the CIRP scheme, they argue that the sort of scheme currently proposed would be of most benefit to full-time middle income earners, and of little or no benefit to many others, including "precarious workers and dependent contractors, young new labour market entrants … and people not able to work in the first place because of disability" (Chapple & Fletcher, 2021, p.7). While social insurance schemes like this have arisen in conservative, Bismarckian contexts (Chapple & Fletcher, 2021, p. 3), Pao (in Macfie, 2022, p. 21) identifies a neo-liberal basis for the proposed scheme, seeing it as representing a "fundamental shift in values 'from providing support based on need to providing support based on prior income'".

Fletcher and Chapple (2021) argue that any moves towards a two-tier system run "some significant centrifugal dynamic risks" (p.5). If people receive income support through a SUI mechanism and not through the core welfare system, they are likely to feel less attachment to – and thus offer less support for – that system and its aim of providing a welfare floor for all New Zealanders. As Humpage (2021) notes, the CIRP scheme had the effect of ensuring that

those left unemployed due to the impacts of Covid-19 never had to encounter the welfare system, or the inside of a WINZ office. A permanent scheme that had a similar effect would reinforce the idea that those eligible for SUI support exist in a separate category from the long-term unemployed and other welfare recipients. In this respect, it will be interesting to see where the eventual SUI scheme is institutionally located. While Chapple and Fletcher (2021) note some "strong arguments" for locating it within the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), they also note that "ACC doesn't have the stigma associated with it that MSD does, which makes it more attractive to the middle classes" (p.10).

There are, of course, other potential justifications and critiques of current proposals for a permanent SUI scheme that are outside the scope of this article. Leaving these considerations aside, this article has focused on the 'discourses of deservingness' of the 2020 CIRP scheme, noting that consideration of fairness and deservingness will also be central in the development of a permanent SUI scheme. It has shown how CIRP recipients were constructed as deserving of a "higher level of support than a main benefit" (MSD, 2020a, p.2) by paying attention to van Oorschot's (2000) four criteria of deservingness: control, need, identity and reciprocity.

The article has also analysed criticisms of the CIRP scheme that hold that the scheme (and any permanent scheme built along similar lines) unfairly positions welfare recipients and their families in extreme need as less deserving of support than those who more closely align with the neo-liberal ideal of the individually-responsible, economically-competitive subject.

Conclusion

The data analysed in this article demonstrate widespread acceptance that those made unemployed in 2020 by the pandemic were deserving of support. This empathetic stance is at odds with policies and discourses that consider the long-term unemployed and other welfare recipients to be less deserving. If, as Humpage and Moore's (2021) participants hoped, the New Zealand public were to have their assumptions about welfare recipients challenged, it would be through seeing that anyone can find themselves in *need* due to factors outside of their *control*. This realisation would make it easier for the public to see welfare recipients as sharing an *identity* with themselves, and it would weaken the salience of the criterion of (economic) *reciprocity*. The discourses of deservingness associated with the CIRP scheme worked against seeing those on core benefits as deserving on each of these four criteria.

In developing plans for a permanent Social Unemployment Insurance (SUI) scheme, the government has a choice of which lessons it could learn from 2020. If it adopts the discourses of deservingness outlined in this article, it is likely to propose a scheme that would entrench "a two-tier welfare system where the newly unemployed receive higher incomes than those on main benefits who live below the poverty line" (AAAP, 2020) by introducing a "second, conceptually distinct and more generous tier into our core welfare system" focused on "market income replacement for individual low- and middle-income earners" (Chapple & Fletcher, 2021, p.4). It would reinforce the claim that the recipients of core benefits are less deserving than the 'newly jobless' by representing their *needs* as caused by factors and decisions are largely within their own *control*, and their inability to guarantee a *reciprocal* (economic) contribution to society as a salient factor in determining whether they deserve support from that society.

There are, however, other lessons that policymakers could take from the CIRP scheme. Robert Reid (2020) argues that the scheme "served as an inadvertent trial of two of the main findings of the Welfare Expert Advisory Group: higher main benefits, and a form of individualisation of benefits". If the government takes seriously the findings of the WEAG and other welfare advocates that "core benefits are too low to live on" (AAAP, 2020), then they might decide that a SUI scheme should not conceptually separate its recipients from other New Zealanders also reliant on social support, and that a SUI scheme should not be so clearly separated from the rest of the welfare system.

In the terms of the deservingness criteria considered in this article, this would imply that it (1) would not count the *needs* of the 'newly jobless' (i.e. their needs relative to expectations and obligations based on their prior income) as more weighty than the absolute material and emotional *needs* of those on core benefits; and (2) would acknowledge that many long-term unemployed and other welfare recipients find themselves in need due to forces (including the very nature of the contemporary labour market) outside of their *control*; (3) affirm that *identity* (i.e. one's acceptance as being part of 'us') is not based solely on the neo-liberal ideal of one's successful performance in a competitive market, and (4) accept that offering a *reciprocal* contribution to society is not limited to the economic value that one can offer.

References

AAAP [Auckland Action Against Poverty] (2020). *Govt Income Relief Payment Creating Two-tiers Of Unemployed*. Scoop Independent News. https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO2005/S00330/govt-income-relief-payment-creating-two-tiers-of-unemployed.htm

Austen, J. (1957). *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955.* In J. O Urmson (Ed.). Clarendon Press.

Bacchi, C. (2004). Policy and discourse: Challenging the construction of affirmative action as preferential treatment. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *11*(1), 128-146.

Beehive. (2020a). COVID *Income Relief Payment: Fact Sheet.* https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-05/COVID%20Income%20Relief%20Payment%20fact%20sheet%20FINAL.pdf

Beehive. (2020b). *COVID Income Relief Payment: Q&A.* https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-05/COVID-19%20Income%20Relief%20Payment%20Q%20and%20A%20FINAL.pdf

Berentson-Shaw, J. (2016). *Working for Families Does Not Work for Families. Ironic Really.* Child Poverty Action Group. https://www.cpag.org.nz/fix-working-for-families-guest-blog-working/

Business New Zealand (2020). *Income Relief Payment a Welcome Boost.* https://businessnz.org.nz

Chapple, S., & Fletcher, M. (2021). A Critical consideration of current social insurance policy developments in New Zealand. *Policy Quarterly, 17*(4), 3-11.

Council of Trade Unions and Business New Zealand. (2020, February 25). Joint social partners' memo on support for displaced workers. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/12800-joint-businessnz-ctu-memo-support-displaced-workers-and-skills-and-training

Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2014). *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*. Verso Books.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2000). *New Labour, New Language?* Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2001). The discourse of New Labour: Critical discourse analysis. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor & S. J. Yates (Eds.), *Discourse as Data* (pp.229-266). London: Sage/Open University Press

Fischer, F. (2003). *Reframing Public Policy: Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices*. Oxford University Press.

Fischer, F. (2007). Deliberative policy analysis as practical reason: integrating empirical and normative arguments. In F. Fischer, G. Miller & M. Sidney (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods* (pp.223-236). RC Press.

Giddens, A. (2001). *The Global Third Way Debate*. Polity Press.

Hay, C. (2002). *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Humpage, L. (2014). *Policy Change, Public Attitudes and Social Citizenship: Does Neoliberalism Matter?* Policy Press.

Humpage, L. (2020). In our welfare system, it's 'us or them'. *Newsroom: Ideasroom*. https://www.newsroom.co.nz/ideasroom/in-our-welfare-system-its-us-or-them

Humpage, L. (2021). If New Zealand can radically reform its health system, why not do the same for welfare? *The Conversation*. https://theconversation.com/if-new-zealand-can-radically-reform-its-health-system-why-not-do-the-same-for-welfare-160247

Humpage, L., & Moore, C. (2021). *Income Support in the Wake of Covid-19: Interviews*. Child Poverty Action Group. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60189fe639b6d67b861cf5c4/t/62280a771bbc7f2c4d16eb7a/1646791290125/Income+support+in+the+wake+of+Covid+19+interviews.pdf

Labour [Labour Party of New Zealand]. (2020). *Our Plan to Keep New Zealand Moving*. https://www.labour.org.nz/rebuild-plan

Lane, R. E. (1986). Market justice, political justice. *American Political Science Review*, *80*(2), 383-402.

Laswell, H. (1958). *Politics: Who Gets What, When and How?* Meridian Books.

Littler, J. (2017). *Against Meritocracy: Culture, Power and Myths of Mobility*. Taylor & Francis.

Luxon, C. (2022). *Kiwis Deserve Tax Relief From Cost of Living Crisis*. National. https://www.national.org.nz/kiwis-deserve-tax-relief-from-cost-of-living-crisis

Macfie, R. (2022). Weathering the storm. *New Zealand Listener*, (May 14-20, 2022), 16-21.

MSD [Ministry of Social Development]. (2020a). *Report: Further Detailed Advice on a Temporary Income Relief Payment.* https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/proactive-release-2020-june/Report-Further-detailed-advice-on-a-temporary-income-relief-payment-23-Apr-2020.pdf

MSD. (2020b). *Report: Key Policy Decisions on Temporary Income Relief for People Who Have Lost Their Job Due to COVID-19 (updated)*. https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/proactive-release-2020-june/Report-Key-policy-decisions-on-temporary-income-relief-for-people-who-....pdf

MSD. (2020c). *Paper and Minute: Temporary Income Relief for People Who Have Lost Their Job Due to COVID-19.* https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/Proactive-Releases/proactive-release-2020-july/ISM4-Paper-and-minute-Temporary-income-relief-for-people-who-have-lost-thei....pdf

MBIE [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment]. (2020). *Enhancing Support for Displaced Workers Over the Medium Term: Work Stream Update for the Tripartite Forum, 27 July 2020*. https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/12803-officials-discussion-document-support-displaced-workers

NZPD [New Zealand Parliamentary Debates] (2020, May 27). *Social Security (COVID-19 Income Relief Payment to be Income) Amendment Bill*. https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/combined/HansDeb_20200527_20200527_16

OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development]. (2017). *Back to Work, New Zealand: Improving the Re-employment Prospects of Displaced Workers*. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/newzealand/back-to-work-new-zealand-9789264264434-en.htm

Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2000). Beyond 'employability'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *24*(6), 729-749.

Reid, R. (2021). First Union's Robert Reid argues the Government ought to take on board lessons from 2020 about how important it is to better support our most vulnerable people. *Interest.co.nz.* https://www.interest.co.nz/opinion/110432/first-unions-robert-reid-argues-government-ought-take-board-lessons-2020-about-how

Richardson, R. (1995). *Making a difference*. Shoal Bay Press.

Robson, S. (2021, 25 March). *Covid-19 Employment Hardship: Where Does New Zealand Stand a Year On?* Radio New Zealand. https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/439092/covid-19-employment-hardship-where-does-new-zealand-stand-a-year-on

Rosenberg, B. (2021). Support for workers in the Covid-19 emergency: What can we learn? *Policy Quarterly 16*(3), 67-72. t.

Simon-Kumar, R. (2015). Neoliberalism and the new race politics of migration policy: Changing profiles of the desirable migrant in New Zealand. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *41*(7), 1172-1191.

Skilling, P. (2021). Collective desolation, individual consolations: Contours of everyday neoliberal subjectivities. *Critical Policy Studies*, *15*(1), 55-73.

van Oorschot, W. (2000). Who should get what, and why? On deservingness criteria and the conditionality of solidarity among the public. *Policy & Politics*, *28*(1), 33-48.

Walzer, M. (1983). *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. Basic Books.

WEAG [Welfare Expert Advisory Group] (2019). *Whakamana Tāngata: Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand*. http://www.weag.govt.nz/weag-report/whakamana-tangata/

Weimer, D., & Vining, A. (2017). *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. Routledge.

Yanow, D. (1995). Practices of policy interpretation. *Policy Sciences*, *28*(2), 111-126.

In terms of the Hansard records, a full set of these references is available from the author on request.