

ACTIVATING JOBSEEKERS:
STRATEGIES OF
NEGOTIATION AND
RESISTANCE
IN IRELAND

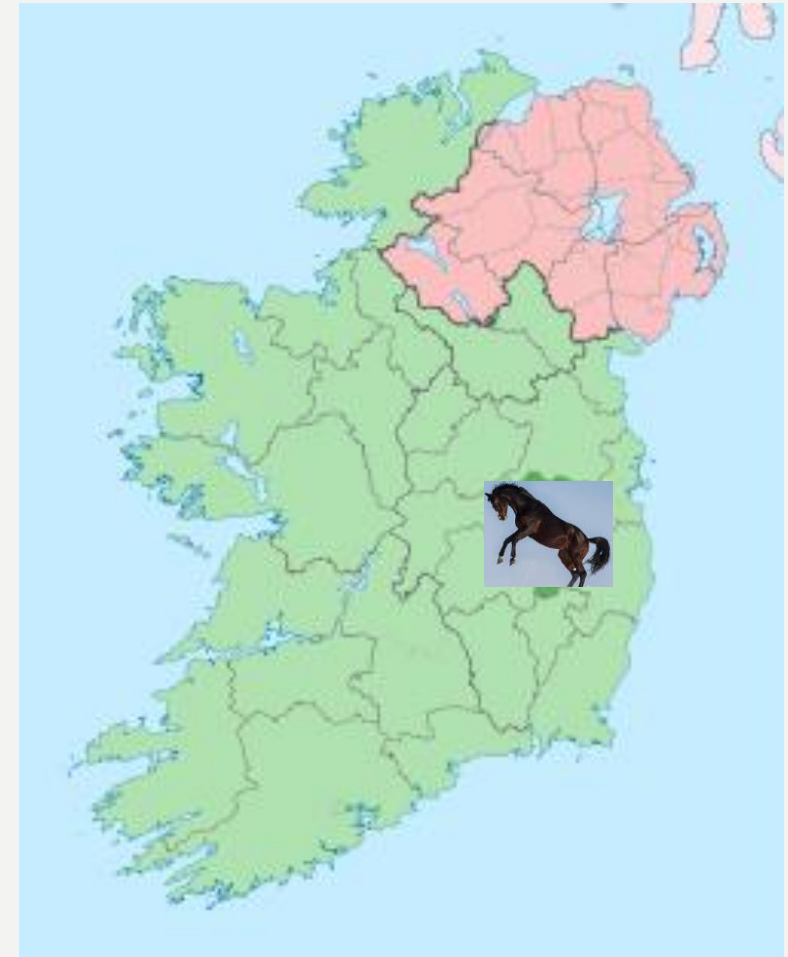
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IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

METHODS

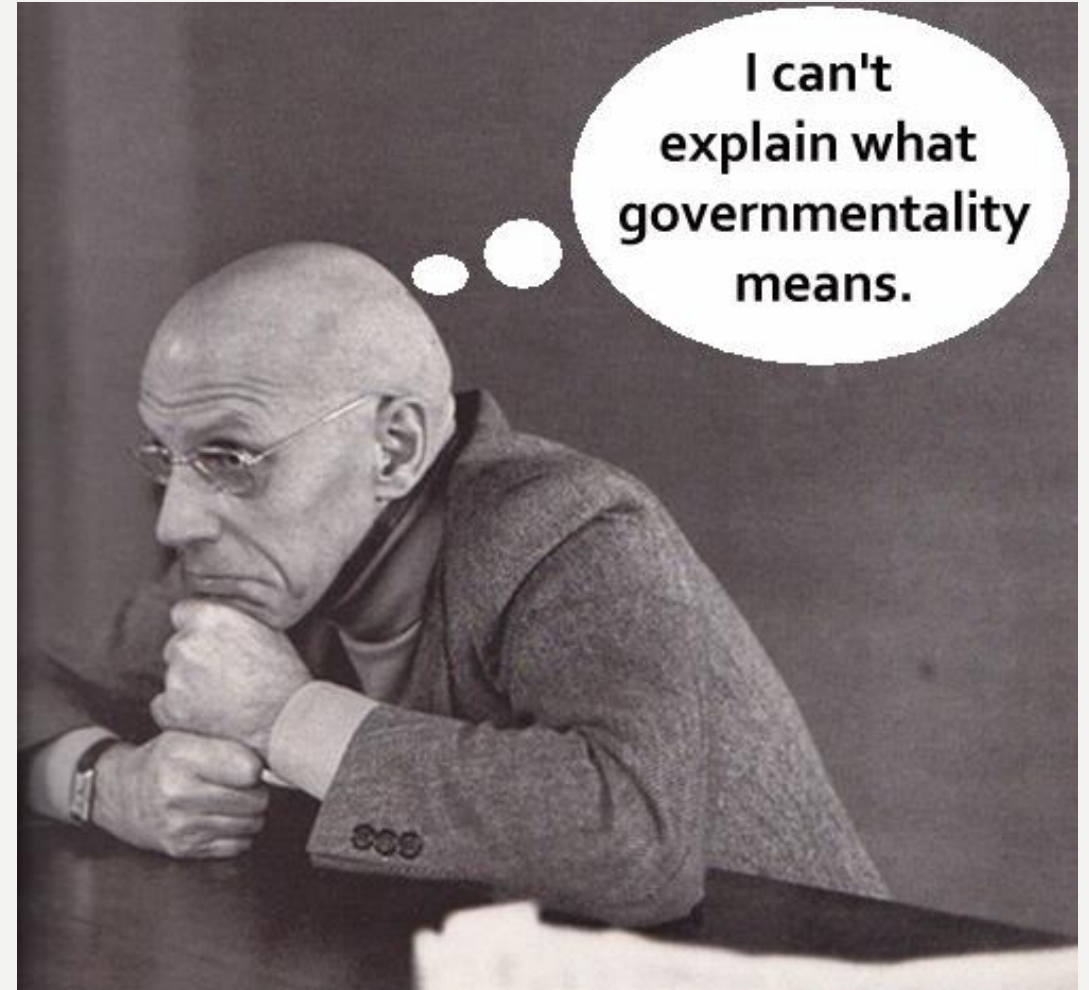
- 40 Qualitative Interviews
- 3 Cohorts: Jobseekers; Discouraged Jobseekers; Lone Parents
- Kildare, East of Ireland (just outside of Dublin...)



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Kildare

FOUCAULT

- Governmentality
- Dominant Rationalities and Techniques of Practice
- Top-down governance and subject formation
- Not sufficient!



Source: <https://adrianblau.wordpress.com/2013/06/07/when-foucault-says-eff-all-part-1/>

GOVERNMENTALITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN IRELAND

- Pathways to Work


– *Intreo, LES*

- JobPath (Turas Nua, Seetec)

- Conditionality and Sanctions

- Counter Conduct?

Seirbhísí Fostaíochta agus Tacaíochta
Employment and Support Services



Record of Mutual Commitments

Between: Department of Social Protection and _____ PPSN: _____

The Department of Social Protection is committed to providing comprehensive employment support and income support services to our clients. Our goal is to help our clients in two ways: firstly by providing income support during periods of unemployment; secondly by helping clients to find work. In return we would like you, our client, to commit yourself to work with us as we work to help you. This document records our mutual obligations to each other.

Our Promise to You	Your Promise to Us
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will do all we can to process claims as quickly and as efficiently as possible.• We will pay income support payment(s) as provided for in legislation in an efficient and timely manner.• We will work to identify suitable employment, work experience or training/education/personal development opportunities for you.• We will work with you to help you prepare your Personal Progression Plan to assist you to take the right steps to employment.• We will monitor and review progress against this plan with you.• We will meet with you by appointment and give you fair notice of all such appointments.• We will treat you with dignity and respect and honour the confidentiality of our relationship with you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I will work to secure employment at the earliest possible opportunity.• I will work with the Department to agree my Personal Progression Plan.• I will attend meetings to which I am invited by the Department.• I will follow up all suggestions and take up any work placement, work experience and/or training/personal development places notified to me by the Department.• I will inform the Department immediately if I find work, or if I am no longer available for work.• I will treat the staff of the Department with dignity and respect and honour the confidentiality of my relationship with the Department.• I will provide the Department with all information requested to assess any claim for income support.• I will abide by the Declaration in my Jobseeker's Allowance or Benefit Application Form.

For and on behalf of the Department of Social Protection, _____

I understand that failure to adhere to my promises above may result in the reduction or withdrawal of any income support payments which would otherwise be due to me and that I could be prosecuted for making a false declaration or withholding information in relation to my claim.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Source: Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

RUTH LISTER'S FORMS OF AGENCY



- Strategies
- Tactics
- Offensive/Defensive

'GETTING BY'

Going through the motions	Managing resources	Self-worth
-Job search sabotage; courses; case worker interaction	-Budgeting; Borrowing; Childcare arrangements	-Othering; Avoiding socialising; Rejection of othering/ stigma; Humanizing
"I applied for a job as a beauty consultant...an eyebrow threader...I've no idea what that is actually" (Nick, 57)	"On the Monday I borrow off the brother and then come Friday I have to pay him back...so I'm getting money of my daughter again on the Thursday til the Friday" (Jessica, 52)	"I literally probably buy myself a pair of socks, that's how bad it was, I literally couldn't buy socks, I knew someday I'd be able like now" (Louise, 31)

'GETTING OUT'

Payment Switching	Work	Courses
-Disability Allowance (permanent); Illness Benefit (1 year temporary)	-Formal; Informal/ Unreported	-Education; Training/ Upskilling; Meritocracy
“The chances of me actually finding a job...I’m just actively seeking the invalidity now...I’ll just keep appealing it now you know, I’ve no other choice” (Jimmy, 47)	“I got really really desperate to just get away from them...just apply to any bit of shitty cleaning job” (Nadine, 47) “I need to keep money coming in irrespective of where it’s coming from... where I currently am taking cash for work I will be legitimate within 18 months” (Bob, 49)	“I’m going on ta college, it’s life...the state in this country have a lot to do...until they give me a council house.. I will be in education and if it takes 10 year then I’ll have a fucking PhD in Social Care” (Peter, 30)

'GETTING (BACK) AT'

Fraud/ Unreported work	Covert vindictiveness
<p>-Fraud; Unreported work; Concealment</p>	<p>-Hostile interactions; Ignoring advice; Not informing; Data Protection</p>
<p>“One of the boys said to me there was a bit of painting in Dublin, I was in his Jeep every fucking morning for a week... Do I regret it? No I don't, because Bertie and Enda and all the boys with their whip around at the Manchester United matches getting two and three hundred grand” (Peter, 30)</p>	<p>“But I didn't use their CV, I used my CV and I didn't use their form, cover letter either...I'd laugh at it seriously shit cover letter” (Nadine, 47)</p> <p>“they used to shove people in where it doesn't work, target driven and I can't, I can't wait to walk away from it. "Good luck and fuck yous. Leave me alone" ... I'm walking in Friday there and I'm just going, "Up yours!"” (Eamonn, 42)</p>

'GETTING ORGANISED'

Collective self-help	Collective resistance
<p>-Mojo; Mens' Shed</p>	<p>-Water Charges; Abortion Rights; SPARK; Welfare Privatisation; Community activism; Pub meets</p>
<p>"I was involved in the men's shed ... that's what kept me going cos there's lads up there you can talk to. I was talking to people." (Simon, 47)</p>	<p>"We went up to every march there was... I wasn't involved in the local group here no and that was the time I had the two jobs so it was very selective with what I could do...give out a few leaflets" (Kathi, 29)</p>



A NEW POLITICS OF WELFARE?

- Displacement of political anger from possible collective into personal
- Strategies and tactics
- Intentionality
- PAR

