

PRISM Nomination

Ingham, A. G. (1985). From public issue to personal trouble: Well-being and the fiscal crisis of the state. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 2(1), 43-55.

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The first sound in the mornings was the clumping of the mill-girls' clogs
down the cobbled street. Earlier than that, I suppose, there were factory
whistles which I was never awake to hear.

-George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*

Like clogs on a cobblestone road, the echoes of Alan Ingham's work can be heard throughout our efforts to develop the PCS project. This is a given, perhaps, considering that it was Ingham (1997) himself, who first sounded the call for (a Department of) *Physical Cultural Studies*. Today, we in the PCS program continue our efforts to fulfill Ingham's lofty ideals, if only in a single program. Yet, we would be remiss to characterize PCS – as it exists today – as a mere aspirant towards Ingham's ambitions. Rather, we can look to Ingham's work as a foundational force that compels us forward towards new and previously unimagined avenues. Thus, while PCS moves forward, and perhaps even away from his initial ideas, we nominate Ingham's (1985) *From Public Issue to Personal Trouble: Well-Being and the Fiscal Crisis of the State*, to recognize the presence and continued relevance of this piece within PCS and the role in which it already functions – a PCS Prism.

Ingham (1985) begins the essay by explaining the presence of a welfare state in the capitalist political economy, while simultaneously explicating the rise of moral judgment within this system. In doing so, Ingham (1985) forges a critical link between the structural practices and ideological forces of the state. Citing the rise of the 'new-right' and their attack upon, and impending reduction of, social services for the "economically unproductive," Ingham (1985) notes that, "[t]he time had arrived to reassert and celebrate individualism as *the* American way and as a corrective for the past "excesses" of collectivism" (p. 45, original emphasis).

The effort to reinscribe an ethos of individual responsibility and control is not 'new,' but rather a "reassertion and re-insertion of a fairly well established, or *naturalized*, liberal democratic ideas into a new set of structural circumstances" (Ingham, 1985, p. 46, original emphasis). This allows for the invocation of a former state and idealized "American" ethic as the solution to current social problems (Ingham, 1985). This process heralds a shift from the understanding that "[s]ocial problems required social solutions" (Ingham, 1985, p. 46) to one in which the individual and their actions are central. Within this context, Ingham (1985) argues that this becomes not simply an individual but a moral issue where it is said that, "the generosity of the State had weakened moral fiber and produced a culture of dependency" (p. 47). Placing individual actions within the larger context of State health and well-being allows for the waging of a larger battle:

Vigilance, both on the part of society and of conscience, is required to protect the seed of Good in all of us. Perpetual warfare must be waged against Evil...Recidivists are uncivilized – they have chosen not to fight the good fight. The criminal, the maligner, the profligate represent a threat: They undermine our moral duty and our social code. (Ingham, 1985, p. 47)

Within this section Ingham (1985) effectively foreshadows the subsequent re-emphasis of lifestyle which, ultimately, brings forth renewed interest in the body.

Ingham (1985) argues that the increased focus on the lifestyle of the individual is not a shift in ideas but rather an effort to conceptualize “the body as *something* which must be selectively developed” (p. 47), which subsequently leads to “the policing of the body” (p. 50). Under the auspices of personal choice and responsibility, a person's lifestyle becomes subject to and constitutive of, “an ideology of self-discipline [that] continues to define structural impediments as personal troubles” (Ingham, 1985, p. 48). The focus upon lifestyle is inherently one based upon the body wherein, “the urge ‘to do something about my life’ is most eagerly translated into a precept ‘to do something about my body’” (Bauman, as cited by Ingham, 1985, p. 48). In essence, ‘life’s problems’ became the ‘bodies problems’ and lifestyle became both the problem and the solution, both allowing for and justifying a decreased focus upon “social expense” (Ingham, 1985, p. 44). The illogical nature of this ‘solution’ is best described by Ingham’s (1985) observation that, “[t]he fusion of new right ideology and right-thinking common sense thus promotes a lifestyle which exhorts us to save our hearts by jogging in the arsenic filled air of Tacoma” (p. 50).

It is within this mapping that we find Ingham’s (1985) piece as having illustrated its importance to Physical Cultural Studies by articulating and contextualizing the role of the body within larger social formations, patterns and shifts. Furthermore, while Ingham’s (1985) critical and political contextualization of the issues at hand exemplifies that to which PCS aspires and would, perhaps, on its own merit its inclusion as a PCS Prism...but alas, there is more. The final section of Ingham’s (1985) paper is devoted to a biting and forceful indictment of the response to this ‘crisis’ in the field of kinesiology and health sciences.

Ingham (1985) outlines the complicity of physical and health education researchers in the production of this crisis, arguing that the field operates “without much regard for the changes in political economy” (p. 51). He goes on to argue against apoliticized notions of science within the field while noting that “research in physical and health education occurs within an institutional framework that favors the analysis of personal factors and discourages the analysis of social factors” (Ingham, 1985, p. 53). The result is that “[k]inesiological and health science can be and has been incorporated instrumentally into ideology and State policy” (Ingham, 1985, p. 53). In short, Ingham (1985) puts forth a compelling and cogent rationale for the necessity of Physical Cultural Studies.

In closing, we are compelled to nominate this piece – and this author – for, both, its generative role in the creation of a Physical Cultural Studies and as an exemplar of the work that PCS seeks to undertake. In this piece, the role of the body and bodies is both contextualized and questioned. The theoretical implications are both groundbreaking and long-lasting. Its politics are both present and prescient. Its impact upon the field and upon PCS is (we argue) undeniable. Undoubtedly, we may be dangerously close to romanticizing this piece. Nevertheless, we can not help but call attention to the critical importance of this work to our project.