

## **Punishing the Poor**

A JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN CENTER BOOK



**Politics, History, and Culture**

*A series from the International Institute  
at the University of Michigan*

Series Editors: George Steinmetz and Julia Adams

*Series Editorial Advisory Board*

Fernando Coronil

Mamadou Diouf

Michael Dutton

Geoff Eley

Fatma Müge Göcek

Nancy Rose Hunt

Andreas Kalyvas

Webb Keane

David Laitin

Lydia Liu

Julie Skurski

Margaret Somers

Ann Laura Stoler

Katherine Verdery

Elizabeth Wingrove

Sponsored by the International Institute at the University of Michigan and published by Duke University Press, this series is centered around cultural and historical studies of power, politics, and the state—a field that cuts across the disciplines of history, sociology, anthropology, political science, and cultural studies. The focus on the relationship between state and culture refers both to a methodological approach—the study of politics and the state using culturalist methods—and a substantive one that treats signifying practices as an essential dimension of politics. The dialectic of politics, culture, and history figures prominently in all the books selected for the series.

# Punishing the Poor

---

THE NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOCIAL INSECURITY

**Loïc Wacquant**

Duke University Press  
Durham and London  
2009

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITION  
© 2009 DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Original French-language edition  
© 2004 Loïc Wacquant

All rights reserved.  
Printed in the United States of  
America on acid-free paper ∞  
Designed by C.H. Westmoreland  
Typeset in Warnock by Tseng  
Information Systems, Inc.

Duke University Press gratefully  
acknowledges the support of  
the International Institute at the  
University of Michigan, which  
provided funds toward the publication  
of this book.

Library of Congress Cataloging-  
in-Publication Data  
Wacquant, Loïc J. D.

[Punir les pauvres. English]  
Punishing the poor : the neoliberal government  
of social insecurity / Loïc Wacquant.

p. cm. — (Politics, history, and culture)

“A John Hope Franklin Center book.”

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8223-4404-9 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-0-8223-4422-3 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Imprisonment—Social aspects—United  
States. 2. Imprisonment—Social aspects—  
European Union countries. I. Title. II. Series:  
Politics, history, and culture.

HV9471.W3313 2009

365'.6086942—dc22 2009003275

*A la mémoire de tata Odile et tonton André,  
pour m'avoir donné mes palmes de vie*

