NEW ZEALAND
SOCIOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

ISSN: 0 0010 06083487

New Zealand Sociology

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REVIEWS

Apology:
Marian Hilder, reviewed the book *Starting Fieldwork*, for
which we are very grateful. The review appeared in
Volume 15(1). Marian please accept our apologies for
having misspelt your name.

EDITORIAL

Much of this issue of the Journal features a symposium on the State of New Zealand Sociology. The purpose of this is twofold: to reflect on the current state of sociology within New Zealand and developments elsewhere; and to encourage interaction and debate between readers and the Journal. The contributions to the symposium were not intended to be conventional academic journal articles, rather they were intended to be expressions of opinion and as such provoke reactions from readers of the Journal. We hope that some of you will feel provoked or inspired enough to respond. Debate and dissent are features of a healthy intellectual community.

As part of the attempt to encourage more dialogue amongst journal readers we would also welcome considered responses to the more traditional academic articles which appear in the Journal, and would also be pleased to receive responses to book reviews carried in the Journal.

This issue also includes a Notes on Contributors section which will be a regular component of the journal in the future. This is an important courtesy for contributors and may also assist us in keeping abreast of one another's interests. Forthcoming issues will sport a new cover and layout which we hope will be easier on the eye and more attractive. But of course all good sociologists know that the book – in this case the journal – should not be judged simply by its cover. The aim of the new look journal is primarily to do with content rather than form. The new initiatives are intended to help the Journal to

achieve its objectives of promoting research and thought that has as its objective the clarification and development of theoretically informed research in sociology and related disciplines.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Dissolving Dualisms:
Changes in the World of Work and Employment[1]

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Abstract

The analysis of the area of work and employment has conventionally made use of a number of dualistic models of reality. This article explores three such dualisms, those of: work and home; being 'in work' and being 'out of work'; and of paid labour and leisure.

It is argued that, at the very least the boundaries between the two sides of these models have become blurred, at the most the real life dichotomies the models are meant to represent are in the process of dissolving.

Recent developments in New Zealand, such as the growth of home working, the invasion of leisure time by the sphere of paid employment, and the requirement that the unemployed and other beneficiaries be subjected to work testing and exhorted to improve their suitability for paid labour, are explored to support that argument.

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[1]   Thanks to an anonymous referee and to the journal editor for useful and productive comments. I take full responsibility for what follows.

Introduction

Dualism in the realm of social theory and analysis has a long history, but the value of dualist models of analysis has increasingly come into question of late in a number of areas of social investigation (for example, Knights and Wilmott, 1989; Luck, 1991; Sayer, 1989; Wilmott, 1994; Knights, 1997).

A number of feminist analysts have gone so far as to argue that dichotomous categories as applied to areas such as work, production and the home are inherently over-simplistic and perpetuate a patriarchal system which oppresses women (Foggo, 1992). Even if one does not subscribe to that perspective, the continuing validity of dualist models is open to questioning in Western societies which are increasingly seen as highly differentiated, individualistic and pluralistic (reflexively) modern (Giddens 1991; Beck et al, 1994) or postmodern (Jameson 1991; Kumar, 1995; Bauman 1997) social formations.

What I want to do in this paper is to argue that in the area of work and employment, a number of the dualist models with which we are familiar are no longer adequate, either conceptually or because the reality they purport to represent has altered so that the boundaries between the two poles of the dualisms concerned have become blurred at the very least.

The particular dualisms to be considered are those of work and home; of being 'in work' and being 'out of work'; and of paid labour and leisure.

Work/Home

I would like first to explore the concept that work means paid labour (or a job) and that it occurs outside the home and the converse concept that the home is not a site in which paid labour occurs. In the jargon of the economists, as McKinlay (1992:53) has put it, 'work is what we are paid to do...the household [is] a unit of consumption where no "work" is done...'.

As we know from history, the distancing of paid labour from the home, and its location in specialised workplace units known as factories, offices, shops etc. is a comparatively recent one. As Berg (1988), amongst others, has shown, it was not until late into the industrial revolution that the home ceased to be a site of paid employment.

As she also points out, the industrialisation process also led to the situation in which women were deprived of paid employment in the home but were left with the realm of domestic labour. And as we also know, domestic labour, because it was not done within the realm of the market, and not directly part of the production of commodities, was excluded from definitions of work and from the calculus of the national product (Waring, 1988).

Hence the division arose between the world of work, which was male dominated and involved paid labour, and the home, which was the sphere of female unpaid labour, defined as non-work, although still a site of male dominance. This division was never absolute or universal. For example, goods produced by female labour in the home, such as butter, cakes, and knitwear,

could be for domestic consumption but they could also be saleable commodities (Foggo, 1992).

However, the work/paid labour and home/unpaid domestic labour division provided the basis, even if it was more an ideological than a material one, for policies which assumed women's home based economic dependence. A good example was the 'breadwinner's wage', which was established in 1907 by the Australian Arbitration Court as being sufficient to enable a male unskilled worker to support a wife and three children in "frugal comfort" (Hampson and Morgan, 1999:761). After many years of campaigning for it by unions, it was in introduced in 1936 in New Zealand by the first Labour government. The government amended the law to require the New Zealand Court of Arbitration to 'fix the basic minimum wage for adult males at an amount sufficient to maintain a man, his wife and three dependent children "in a fair and reasonable standard" of comfort' (Woods, 1963:133).

The implication was clear: women at home were dependants who did not undertake paid labour and paid labour was something that took place outside the home. Toynbee, writing of 1950's New Zealand, refers to women 'returning to paid employment when the youngest child was of secondary school age' (1995:90). 'Returning' is a particularly apt word here, signalling not only a return to a previous situation, but also to a space outside the home. The world of paid labour is envisaged as being physically external to the home, and women are seen as having to travel outside the home to access it.

Three developments in particular have undermined that dichotomy. First is the belated and partial recognition by officialdom that the labour women perform

in the home is socially valuable work. This recognition was campaigned for by Waring (1988) and to her must go some of the credit for the United Nations recommending in 1989 that nations include a measure of household productive work as a supplement to their national accounts (McKinlay, 1992).

In New Zealand the first steps towards measuring domestic labour was the 1990 pilot time use survey which, inter alia, found that women spent about five hours in a twenty four hour day on unpaid work, compared to three hours for men (Statistics New Zealand, 1993a, 1993b). Another pertinent finding was that on average people spent slightly more time on unpaid work per twenty four hour day than on paid work (Statistics New Zealand, 1993b). From 1998 to 1999 a full national time use survey was undertaken and initial results demonstrate that women spend two hours per day more than men on unpaid labour and significantly more time then men on meal preparation and housework, and on looking after other people in the home (Statistics New Zealand/Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1999).

The second development is the demand now being made by some employers that their workers identify themselves with the organisation whilst outside the place and time of employment. This can include presenting, at all times, an appropriate image. Bunkle (1992:9) cites an example of a consultant who has argued that 'today more than ever image is important in business... Companies are saying that they want their staff to represent them seven days a week, 24 hours a day'.

But even companies which are not too concerned about the image of their employees can demand that they 'commit' to the organisation. Thus the manager of Champion Flourmills Auckland has been reported as stating that 'he values an attitude to the job that is all-embracing: "There will come a day when there will be no place for people who choose to think of work as a separate part of their life"'. (Network News, 1994:4). To the degree that working extended hours is expected of a growing number of employees, especially higher ranked ones, this is already the case. Else (1996:76) refers to 'an emphasis on long hours and total commitment' in the context of 'status and promotion' being linked to 'the ability to stay in the office for 60-plus hours a week, then take the office home with you'.

Taking the office home leads on to the third development to be discussed – the spread of homework, by which I mean the use of the dwelling area as the primary site of paid labour. Paid employment in the home is gradually increasing in New Zealand, and so too is the use of the home as the business site by small employers and the self-employed, and it is within that last category that the majority of those performing homework in New Zealand place themselves (Loveridge and Schoeffel, 1991; Loveridge, Grahamand and Schoeffel, 1996). New Zealand, in this case, is following a pattern common to the Western democracies. For example, Harper Simpson (1999) reports a steady increase in the 1990s in home-based paid labour in the USA, and Hakim (1996:37), notes that from 1981 to 1994 in the UK there was a 'substantial increase' in the number of homeworkers.

Armstrong (1992:49) has noted how 'the existence of home working calls into question the classic distinction between work and home'. As she also argues, its growth

can be seen as a part effect of a strategy of flexibilisation of production by employers, a strategy which has been facilitated in New Zealand by the Employment Contracts Act and its attendant deunionisation and individualisation of large sections of the paid labour force.

Homeworking now encompasses a wide range of industries and occupations and is often associated with low paid, low skilled and unskilled manual labour performed predominantly by women (and children). That female homeworkers are often low paid and excluded from many of the protections available to workers in factories, offices and shops seems to be a common feature of homework both in New Zealand and internationally (Allen and Wolkowitz, 1987; Armstrong, 1992). In New Zealand, for example: 'there are no labour regulations governing work in the home, aside from council by-laws' (Schoeffel, Loveridge and Davidson, 1991:13). Conversely, in the USA, news of Labour Department ruling that employers who allowed workers to work from home would find that the homes would be covered by federal health and safety standards governing workplaces caused such a negative reaction from employers that the department moved very quickly to quash this ruling (Anchorage Daily News, 5 January, 2000).

New technologies are extending the scope of homework, both in what is done from the home and who does it. This development is part of a growing trend in what is known as teleworking which refers to work carried out at a distance from clients or employers in satellite offices, specially designed centres or in the home (Loveridge, Graham, Schoeffel, 1996). At its most extreme, it can lead to the situation in which a firm – the

British firm Catalyst Technology Solutions is an example – has no on site employees at all, but only employs homeworkers (Denny, 1997).

Telecom has produced its own guide to what is known as teleworking (Telecom, 1991), and in it lists some of the tools of the trade of the contemporary teleworker: the phone; the fax machine; the computer/modem; and the electronic mail system. Kumar (1995:57) notes that the new technologies have encouraged the growth of 'new homeworkers' such as professionals in the fields of 'architecture, accountancy, advertising, computer programming, business consultancy, higher education and the law'.

By 1990, over 60% of all US home-based workers were employed in services and almost one third of those workers were involved in managerial and professional tasks and, in 1994, over 60% of all US home-based workers were female (Harper Simpson, 1999). As Kumar's list of male dominant professions cited above shows, the new technologies have made homeworking a much more acceptable option for male workers. However, there are significant differences between the female and male experiences of teleworking.

For example, in their study of what they call new technology outwork, Wajcman and Probert (1988) studied two groups of workers. They were wordprocessors, of whom all but one were women, and programmers, of whom the majority were men with tertiary education qualifications. One significant difference between the two groups was that the male programmers became even more job oriented and adopted 'obsessive work patterns in the home' (ibid:61) thus reinforcing the gender division of labour within it.

A later study, of British workers, found that 'women are more likely to work at home for child care reasons and men through redundancy. There is then a tendency for men to be "pushed" into teleworking and for women to "choose" to work at home' (Fothergill, 1994:346). Hakim (1996) notes that the majority of British female homeworkers are part-timers and have short job tenures, whereas the majority of male homeworkers work full-time and have long job tenures.

Another interesting gender difference in the US experience of homeworking is that male homeworkers were much more likely to be 'moonlighting' on a second job than female homeworkers. According to Harper Simpson (1999), in the USA the (female) majority of homeworkers 'earned substantially less than on-site workers' and homeworkers as a whole can be classified as contingent workers who are deprived of the 'organisational resources to defend their interests in the market-place' (66-67).

Even when the work done by female homeworkers falls into the category of professional work, New Zealand research indicates that on average, the earnings of full-time male homeworkers are greater than, and the earnings of full-time female homeworkers are lesser than, the median earnings for all workers of their respective genders (Loveridge, Graham and Schoeffel, 1996).

As well as homeworking, i.e. turning the home into a site of paid labour, we can also include extending paid labour from the office/firm to the home as a category which has been greatly extended by such new technologies. The laptop with modem that is taken home

from the workplace, the cellphone, the home-based fax machine, all open up the time during which the home can be used for work and open up the employee to extended hours of employment and to more extensive control by the employer. One British employer of homeworkers summarises his span of control as follows:

> I can be in the Bahamas and still know what is happening on an account just by plugging in my computer (Denny, 1997:6).

As Armstrong (1992:184) notes, in New Zealand Telecom is keen to present an 'idealised' version of teleworking as a precursor of a cosy 'electronic cottage' based industrialisation of the future. As part of a collective academic attempt to denigrate post-Fordist models of flexibility, Lloyd Smith and Anderson (1992:184) reject the idea that what they call new technology home working will have a major impact on the future of paid labour. In their words 'Optimistic and pessimistic visions can be rejected because of their technological determinism and rhetorical urgency'.

Significantly, and in contrast to the work of Armstrong and other women analysts of homeworking, in a fifteen page book chapter they almost totally ignore the impact of new technology homeworking on the gender division of labour within households, other than to make the rather simplistic remark that 'Men remain particularly keen to go out to work' (Lloyd Smith and Anderson, 1992:183). They also ignore the significance of homework of all kinds for the strategy of constructing the individual worker as an autonomous, responsibilised, self. Armstrong (1992:36) makes the very clear point that both the state and employers depict homeworkers as 'an

autonomous and *flexible* workforce' (emphasis in the original).

The promotion of autonomy is assisted by the practice of redefining some homeworkers as self-employed contractors (which calls into question precisely how many of the New Zealand homeworkers who claim to be self-employed are in fact contractors) so that they can 'be their own bosses'. Armstrong (1992:40-42) notes that despite the exploitation to which such contracted labour can be subjected, the 'ethos of self-employment which encourages home workers to take on the responsibilities (and thus expenses) of the production process ... has ... a significant cultural resonance in Aotearoa/New Zealand and is a goal to which women as well as men are encouraged to aspire'.

And we can turn to Telecom for a description of how teleworking in particular promotes autonomisation and 'responsibilisation 'within the parameters of managerialist discipline:

> Teleworking provides the freedom to work at one's own pace, in one's own time, in one's own way, yet provides management with the necessary supervisory controls. Teleworking gives employees a sense of control and the ability to work in the style that suits them (Telecom,1991:4).

In contrast to this optimistic vision, Canadian research suggests that teleworking contributes to a blurring of the distinction of work and home which can lead to workaholism. (Fulton, 1997). This supports the more general point that the workplace/home distinction is

being eroded, a development on which a growing number of social analysts are now commenting. Hunter (1999:5), for instance, states that 'The border between work and home is disappearing', whilst Johansen and Swigart (1994:63) note that 'The boundary between office and home is thinning to transparency in the information era'. However, this is not the only boundary that is being breached.

In Work/Out of Work

Just as it was once commonly accepted (even if this acceptance was not totally justifiable, empirically) that there was a clear distinction between the workplace and the home, so it was also commonly accepted that there was a real difference between being 'in work' and 'out of work'. This was especially so in the immediate post-war era and the subsequent years of the 'long boom' in New Zealand, in which on the one hand society had a goal of full employment whilst on the other it had an expanding Welfare State to cater for the (relatively small) number of the unemployed or on another benefit.

For those 'out of work' because they were on a benefit, the past practice has been for them to fulfil some minimum requirement to maintain their status, e.g. to attend an occasional interview at the Labour Department, or to see a doctor. But, in the later 1990s, the ideological thrust by the State to 'normalise' the unemployed and beneficiaries into accepting that paid labour is the socially desirable goal to which all must aspire, transformed that situation. The Treasury (1996) made it clear that it saw the most fruitful approach to those on benefits as being one of keeping them oriented to employment and training in order to enhance their prospects of paid labour.

With that shift in emphasis also came a disciplinary regime of policing all benefits far more rigorously. The then Government stated that it intended to make the unemployed take up work or be in training as a qualification for their benefit. This was to be over and above the existing work testing imposed on the unemployed and increasingly on DPB and widow beneficiaries. To which can be added the policy of removing from accident compensation those longer term ACC beneficiaries who were declared to be fit, and giving them three months to find a job, during which they would have to be prepared to switch occupations and to take a pay cut if need be. In each case, the beneficiaries were to be 'refocussed' on paid employment; that is to be their gaol, no matter how unreal it might appear given current unemployment levels.

As well as being subjected to a harsher disciplinary regime, the unemployed and other beneficiaries found themselves redefined, or rather, they found themselves caught within the mesh of a new definition of unemployment/being a beneficiary. With the exception of superannuitants, beneficiaries as a whole were redefined as individuals with a problem: that of being a person who lacked sufficient incentive and/or human capital to find paid employment. The beneficiary was reclassified as a job seeker or someone in training, an individual who could practice self-help as a method of achieving paid employment, and as someone who could also be 'counselled' to make an assiduous use of job search and to present her/himself better to potential employers.

The state hoped that this redefinition and respositioning of the unemployed would 'reduce the psychological exclusion of the unemployed person from the contemporary regime of subjectivity: being

unemployed is to become as much like work as possible' (Rose, 1996:161). In following this track, New Zealand was in line with trends in the OECD as a whole where, for instance,

> 'a general policy trend' was to 'bring about a closer link between income support and active policies designed to promote out-flow from unemployment into work' (OECD, 1998,p.75).

New Zealand's community wage policy followed in the wake of the USA's work fare policies, and as in the USA the New Zealand authorities sought to apply the work-for-a-benefit principle to all categories of beneficiaries. Concurrently, the unemployed and other beneficiaries were also redefined from being citizens with a rightful claim on the state to being welfare dependants who needed to be retrained in the habits of paid labour.

This status was re-emphasised by the Government's announcement, in the 1997 Budget, of a code of social responsibility for beneficiaries, a code described by the Treasurer, Winston Peters as a contract between individual beneficiaries and the taxpayer (Peters, 1997). Just as the paid labour force had been placed on a system of individual contracts with employers (and recall that so-called collective contracts are in fact no more than contracts applying to a group of consenting individuals), so too were beneficiaries to be placed on an individual contractual basis with the state.

And just as workers in paid employment had been 'responsibilised' to take more, albeit low-level, decisions by mechanisms such as the 'internal customer' and team work, and to increase their job prospects by developing new skills, so too were beneficiaries to be

'responsiblised' to take more decisions concerning their continuing benefit eligibility. Peters (1997) traces the process of 'responsibilising' beneficiaries in New Zealand back to arguments put forward by Treasury in 1984. The discourse of responsibilisation underpins previous governmental policies which stated very clearly that beneficiaries who did not seek to 'improve' themselves, (see the section on Curriculum Vitae below) or who failed to bring up their children according to approved methods, would find their benefit income in jeopardy.

Since November 1999, we have had a change of government. The current Labour/Alliance regime has made clear its opposition to the community wage. To that extent, the New Zealand government is out of step with its British counterparts who appear keen on extending workfare and on 'moralising' and 'responsibilising' the beneficiary population. What remains to be seen in New Zealand is to what extent, if any, the new Government will break with the ideology (and the practices which flow from it) of redefining beneficiaries as individuals whose primary goal should be the achievement of paid labour and who merely lack the skills, training, confidence and incentives to attain it.

The 'in work/out of work' division also erodes for those with an uncertain, intermittent and discontinuous relationship with paid labour. For a growing number of those officially classed as being in paid labour, the actual amount of time spent at paid labour is sporadic or truncated at best. An obvious example is those workers who are part-timers. Part-time work has increased rapidly in New Zealand in recent years (Statistics New Zealand, 1997) and the nation has amongst the highest involuntary part-time employment rates for both women

and men amongst the OECD nations (OECD,1996). The shortest duration of paid labour amongst the part-time workforce is by those who are in paid labour for only a few hours a week, and by 1991 sixty percent of all women part-timers were working less than twenty hours a week (Statistics New Zealand, 1993a). That so many women part-timers work such few hours a week is a contributory factor to the generally low income levels of New Zealand women.

To those we can add people with an intermittent relationship with paid labour. At one extreme here are regular seasonal workers who might work full time for several weeks a year over an extended number of years yet still do not have permanent job status, whilst at the other extreme are 'call back' workers who are occasionally called into paid labour for a few hours or days at a time. In each case, their position vis-à-vis paid labour is an ambiguous one: they are neither 'full' members of the paid labour force nor 'permanent' beneficiaries.

Even workers employed on what the ILO defines as 'standard' terms of employment, that is, they are employed full time and supposedly long term, are increasingly likely in New Zealand to be on fixed term and often short term contracts. Further, their employment situation is made precarious by the continuing threat of redundancy as firms cease production, or 'downsize' or shift production offshore. The rapid destruction of the New Zealand car assembly industry as a result of tariff reductions, and the closure of Bendon's Hamilton factory, because it decided to locate production in Asia, are cases in point.

Once again, the New Zealand experience is not a unique one, but rather a product of the changed nature of contemporary capitalism. In the USA, for example, jobs are becoming increasingly insecure and it has been argued that long term employment with a single company in the USA is now a thing of the past (Johansen and Swigart,1994; Hunter, 1999). Bauman, looking at the Western economies as a whole, refers to the 'expanding insecurity of the millions dependent on selling their labour' (1999:20).

Thus the idea that there are on the one hand 'workers' and on the other hand a separate realm comprising the unemployed and other beneficiaries becomes more difficult to maintain. It might have represented reality in the days of full employment but it no longer does so. At all levels, paid employment has become more insecure and those in jobs are at constant risk of losing them. Within Western societies, there is a growing stratum of those whose relationship with paid labour is intermittent, contingent and sporadic. And the unemployed and beneficiaries are subjected to a process of being redefined as work tested job trainees or are being made to work for their benefits.

Paid Labour/Leisure

The third theme to be explored is that of the distinction between paid labour and leisure. The conceptual difference is an apparently simple one: leisure is what one does in one's free time away from the site of paid labour. However, as Hardings and Jenkins (1989) point out, leisure is difficult to define. They go on to approve Parker's (1983) identification of leisure as a sub-division of non-work time, one characterised by the freely chosen

nature of leisure activities compared to the constrained nature of paid labour.

Parker adds that 'leisure is time free from obligations either to self or to others - time in which to do as one chooses' (Parker,1983:10). On that basis, leisure can be distinguished from time spent in necessary and obligatory activities such as doing domestic labour. It also dispels any myths about beneficiaries living a life of leisure, for given the constraints put upon them by their lack of income and by the state, they have restricted opportunities for doing as they choose with their time.

Leisure has, of late, increasingly been colonised by imperatives from the realm of paid labour. This is so both for the employed and for those outside paid labour. One agency of this colonisation for the employed are the same information and communications technologies which have also been used to perpetuate work from the home and which place the employee within reach of the employer at literally all times and in almost all places. These technologies also allow for the job to invade time supposedly given to leisure pursuits.

Of these, the pager and the cellphone, both of which are small, light and easily transportable, are the most facilitative of the extension of the job into the arena of leisure. The pager is the lower status of the two, as it is a one-way instrument of control that sends a message which is meant to be obeyed by the recipient. The cellphone is a status symbol of the high-flier, the manager and the professional. As a two way device it permits interactive communications which can be instigated by its bearer and not only by their superiors. Hence the not very enjoyable social development of (often white male) people in bars, cafes and restaurants

disrupting the leisure time and space of others by making or taking cell phone calls.

An article in the American section of the Guardian Weekly (Goodman, 1997:14) refers to a television advertisement in which 'a woman getting ready to abandon her neglected kids to a sitter...decides to take them to the beach and do business in a swimsuit with a cellphone'. The author goes on to make the point that: 'Indeed, with the tools of the trade we can now get anywhere – except of course, away from it all'.

The technologies referred to facilitate the invasion of leisure time, but that invasion has to be put into a broader, societal, context. In the USA, for example, they reflect a shift towards enhanced managerial power in the employment relationship, declining real wages for the majority of workers and a consequential trend to increased working hours: on average American men now work 2.8 hours more a week, and American women 5 hours more, than they did in 1977 (Hunter, 1999). The home is also targeted as a market by information technology transnationals who see it as site of both production and consumption, work and leisure (Kumar, 1995). The same array of technologies can be used for any or all of these functions, and this is the trap. As an American survey respondent put it: 'We seem to be working harder and harder to buy techno-toys that in the end are nothing more than glorified work tools. And we need these tools to earn the money to pay for them' (cited in Hunter, 1999:5).

Nor is technology the sole source of the invasion of leisure time by imperatives from paid labour. Employer expectations of 24 hour commitment from the worker to

the firm, as cited above, also operate to obliterate 'leisure' as a separate category of everyday life. And even sleep can be redefined as time which should better be spent working for the employer: 'The erosion of the comfortable routine of the workday, at a designated workplace, with evenings and weekends off for rest and relaxation is reflected in the lifestyle of former Apple Computer chairman John Sculley, who commented recently that the notion of sleeping eight straight hours through the night is an "obsolete remnant of the agrarian and industrial eras"' (Johansen and Swigart , 1994:64).

For both the employed and the unemployed person, there is growing pressure to devote leisure pursuits and leisure time to techniques of self-improvement. These techniques are seen as means of improving one's curriculum vitae, which may be described more colloquially as 'doing CV'. By 'doing CV' I am referring both to the strategies by which individuals manage their selves better to present their selves to meet the requirements of paid labour, and to the tactics of producing the document called the CV – a document which, when received from job applicants, the average boss takes eight seconds to read through.

According to Giddens (1990, 1991), we live in an age of reflexive modernisation in which individuals are constantly placed in a position of having to make choices, and as part of this process they create and recreate their own biographies. 'Doing CV' is, then, a process of constructing a fluid and shifting autobiography – an autographical practice, as Miller and Morgan have interpreted it (Miller and Morgan, 1993).

What individuals now do with their leisure impacts on their CV in both sense of a strategy for managing the

self, or as a document which, like the self, can be worked on and improved. Leisure time can be recast around possible CV requirements. For example, people might choose to use 'personal' time to take certain courses broaden their range of skills and/or knowledge. These can be job or occupation specific skills/knowledge, or generic ones directed towards the paid labour market as a whole. By doing either, the people concerned will have improved their 'human capital' and thus be in conformity with the prevailing ideology governing training (Fitzsimmons and Peters, 1994).

The physical presentation of the self, the bodily image encapsulated in the photo which can play such a crucial role at the beginning of the 'quality' CV document, is now a matter by which employment can be won or lost. Hence the incentive to use discretionary time and money to reshape and/or update one's appearance, e.g. by a change of hairstyle, by buying new clothes, having a nose job, or following the latest dieting fad in order to improve one's body shape. Doing aerobics or weight training or taking up running are other ways in which the body can be worked upon, not only to reshape one's body in a socially acceptable way, but also, as part of CV, to signal to potential employers an appropriate concern to take care of one's self. The availability or otherwise of discretionary income is a constraint on which of these forms of self-improvement are viable for individuals, and clearly beneficiaries have more limited choices than do people in paid jobs, and especially so when compared to highly paid employees. Even so, they are not bereft of options, for instance whilst attending a gym might be too expensive for beneficiaries, road running is a much more affordable possibility or, they

might participate in voluntary community and social activities.

In New Zealand, beneficiaries are active participants in voluntary labour: 'One in four unemployed voluntary workers contributed 15 or more hours in the week before the 1991 Census, compared with...one in eight who were in full-time or part-time jobs" (Statistics New Zealand, 1993b:51).

Sabel (1991:43) has captured the importance of such participation and networking for those in paid employment: 'individuals secure their long-term employability through participation in neighborhood groups, hobby clubs, or other professional and social networks outside the firm. Only those who participate in such multiple, loosely connected networks are likely to know when their current jobs are in danger, where new opportunities lie, and what skills are required in order to seize these opportunities'.

But they are equally valuable mechanisms for those 'not in work' who are looking for paid employment. How valuable these are in practice depends on the type of voluntary work concerned. Being a paper seller for a revolutionary organisation would hardly help in job search, but being a raffle ticket seller for a socially approved charity such as IHC would help. So too would being a part-time (so as to lessen the risk of disqualification from benefits) administrator of a sporting club, say rugby for men or netball for women and such an activity might have a more positive spin off in that it might lead to contacts with someone in paid employment who will be impressed enough by the unemployed person's public spiritedness, or work abilities, or keenness, to offer them a paid job.

A seemingly socially positive aspect of doing CV would seem to flow from the acceptance by the NZQA of the concept of lifelong, 'seamless', learning and the recognition to of the skills acquired by women in domestic labour. as relevant prior learning. One non-profit organisation in Hamilton, for instance, provides an assistance with prior learning service to TOPs-eligible women to help them write the domestic labour component of their CV's in ways that stresses the skills they have gained in such areas as household management and which fit with the unit standards of the qualifications framework.

However, the skills concerned are being valued by this process as a means to achieve paid labour, not as an end in themselves. In other words, the individual's domestic labour experience will be used to upgrade her CV and enhance the value of her paid labour market assets. What will be 'seamless' here will not be the training framework so much as the extension of human capital theory to every form of work and most forms of leisure and to every domain in which those functions are performed.

In each of the above cases, the CV as a document, rather than as a practice, must be a selective one. As has been noted, the CV as document is 'always open-ended. Others are encouraged to read the gaps or to listen to the silences' (Miller and Morgan, 1993:135). But at the same time, there is scope for inventiveness and discretion in deciding not only what the gaps and silences are to be, but also what the content and the voices used are to be. What to include, what to leave out, what to emphasise and what to stress, are all tactical issues for the individual to resolve.

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There is scope for shaping one's written CV according to the circumstances, and with the written document, so with the lived experience. There is scope in how one conduct's one life if the objective is to seek employment or to gain promotion. One can, within limits – but everything we do is within limits – constantly invent and reinvent one's life, write, edit, amend and censor one's biography. Just as it is possible to be 'economic with the truth', so one can be flexible about the self. One can have a range of CV documents tailored to particular labour markets or employment possibilities, and in the 'self-conscious' society the yellow pages of the telephone directories now contain a growing number of firms which specialise in preparing CVs, who for a fee will help the individual present her/his self in the best possible light.

For the unemployed and other beneficiaries, under the present benefit regime the scope for being inventive about one's self is restricted by the demands made upon them by the state. And whereas the unpaid labour that employees donate to 'doing CV' is principally contributed on a voluntary basis, for the beneficiary population there is a growing element of state compulsion in the amount of time and effort they spend on this, and on the directions which they can take. For them, leisure time becomes increasingly a time when one can direct one's efforts to the requirements of the paid labour market as mediated through the demands of employers and/or of the State.

For both the employed and the unemployed and other beneficiaries, paid labour/leisure are ceasing to be opposites. In the case of the employed, the correct use of leisure is a strategy for maintaining or enhancing one's job, whereas for those outside paid labour, the

correct use of leisure becomes a means of self-improvement with the objective of making oneself suitable for paid labour, or gaining the State's approval as a bone fide job seeker, if not actually gaining a job.

Concluding Discussion

This paper has considered three areas within the broad field of work and employment in terms of dichotomous categories, or dualisms, which have been used as models of analysis and, from time to time, as guides to policy.

It has been argued that these dualisms no longer, if they ever did, reflect the empirical reality of the areas concerned and that any dualistic theories claiming to be based on that reality are therefore inadequate conceptual tools.

Why is dualism inadequate both as a theoretical tool and as an empirical description of social reality in the areas the paper has examined? At a general level, simple binary categories do not capture the rich complexities of reflexively modern or postmodern society. They posit a reality that is both static and bi-polarised, that can be captured in fixed, and oppositional categories: men/women, work/play, work/home, and so forth. But contemporary reality is dynamic; as Else (1996:14) puts it in reference to labour: 'There is nothing static about unpaid work. Like paid work, it is constantly shifting and changing'.

There are several forces currently driving the changes that are rendering dualism redundant. The dichotomies work/home and 'in work/out of work', for

example, had their basis in a world in which, for men, paid labour in long term, fulltime (40 years, 40 hours a week) employment was the norm. This world has been shattered in the New Zealand case by the deregulation, restructuring and globalisation of our economy which has brought in its wake increased job insecurity for all levels of the male workforce.

For women, the shift to a service sector based economy has created new job opportunities albeit in jobs which are often low paid and low skilled, and are also often part time or temporary and also insecure. Concurrently, the two income family has become an economic necessity for many people. The drive by feminists to open up a wider range of occupations, and the higher levels of all occupations to women, has dovetailed with these changes, so that the idea of women working long term and full time, if they can obtain such employment, is now widely accepted in this society. The popular support for paid parental leave can be seen as one indicant of this change in attitude.

The work/home and paid labour/leisure dichotomies were also premised on a clear distinction between the site of paid labour and a separate sphere of domestic labour in the first case, and a definite time for paid labour and a zone of 'free' time in the latter. A resurgent, managerialist, capitalism has put paid to both distinctions. As we have seen, for those who want to succeed in their occupation or career, it is increasingly demanded of them that they commit to it seven days a week and fifty two weeks a year. At the same time, technological changes have meant that using the home as a place of paid production has become feasible for a wide range of occupations.

It is necessary to avoid technological determinism: technologies such as the modem and the home based fax machine do not cause change, but they do facilitate it. They make it easier to work from the home, or the beach, or the car, and they make it easier for the employer to disperse the workforce and to maintain control over it over time and distance. In the process, another established dualism of modernity, that of the private/public, is also undermined.

As a final example of change, it is necessary to acknowledge the neo-liberal project of promoting the individualisation of our society and the repositioning of individuals as autonomous, responsibilised subjects who are 'normalised' into accepting continuous self-improvement, and the upgrading of their 'human capital', as a goal. Within that framework, whilst recognising the major differences in life situations of the individuals concerned, the paid employee, the unemployed and beneficiaries, and women looking after babies in the home, for instance, can all be seen to be open to the same techniques, strategies and ideological exhortations, to become 'enterprising selves'.

The causes and the implications of these changes for our society are worthy of serious consideration. But if we wish to attempt think through those issues, then we must accept that dualistic models are no longer adequate as tools of analysis nor as representations of empirical reality.

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THE STATE OF NEW ZEALAND SOCIOLOGY: A SYMPOSIUM

Instigated by
Peter Beatson and Chamsy El Ojeili
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From:	Peter <P.Beatson@massey.ac.nz>
Sent:	Around the middle of last year
To:	Greg; Maureen; Steve; Mike; Georgina; Carl; Charles; Tom and George
cc:	New Zealand Sociology Journal
Subject:	A symposium on the state of New Zealand Sociology?

Hi folks!

Chamsy El Ojeili and I were having a natter over a pint the other evening about ways of injecting a sense of excitement into *New Zealand Sociology.* There wasn't, we agreed over our second pint, enough interaction between the mag and its readers. As we sipped our third beer, we decided what was needed was something challenging, stimulating, even inflammatory, to provoke readers into reaching for their PCs and retaliating.

But who, we mused, would have the bottle to write the kind of article we had in mind? Its author might get lynched. Life for New Zealand academics is already too imperilled by managerial piranha to ask any of them to risk their necks by penning self-opinionated broadsheets that might provoke their own colleagues to vengeance.

Illumination came half-way through the fourth pint. Get someone who knows the NZ sociological scene from close quarters, but is now safely overseas, out of reach of local lynching parties. Someone like....? We didn't have to ruminate for long. What about Greg McLennan? Or Charles Crothers? Or Georgina Murray? Or... the list grew. And then there's Carl Davidson: he's still in New Zealand, but he's not in the university world any more. Yes, and what about Michael Pickering – not a sociologist, true, but good as. Same again, please barman.

Hey, we don't have to choose – let's ask them all!

Well, folks, there you have it. Chamsy and I are proposing to put together what we grandly call a Symposium on the state of NZ sociology. We are soliciting pieces from people like you who have been on the inside, but are now at a safe distance. All we are after is short, off-the-cuff cameos (no heavy research or prolonged cogitations required – it's your personality we're after, not your mind!) reflecting on the state of the discipline in this country – or anywhere else, for that matter. You can be as formal or informal, serious or flippant, judicious or eccentric, balanced or biased as you like. Our main objective is simply to orchestrate a composite piece that will entertain the readers of *New Zealand Sociology*, and hopefully intrigue some sufficiently to write responses for the next issue.

A skeletal finger beckons. Are you game to answer its summons?

Cheers – Peter

New Zealand Sociology in the New Millennium

Charles Crothers

There has been far too much ink spilt (or perhaps rather too many computer typing-board depressions) on the 'Sociology of no (NZ) sociology' (in Harvey Franklin's snide phrase). However, some time has passed since the last crop, so that a revisitation of this issue from the perspective of expats may be useful. Despite the time-lag, the range of points made in this previous literature about the difficulties of New Zealand sociology still has considerable pertinence as we move into the new millennium. These can be grouped under three broad headings – structural difficulties, questions of personnel, and performative issues.

Firstly, these difficulties have been seen as structural: the lack of an adequate link with Australian sociology ('big brother'); being ignored and yet overshadowed by Australian sociology; and opposition to the uncouthness of sociology from 'Oxbridge-orientated' university power establishments (especially amongst the older-established Humanities disciplines) to the development of a broader-based social science approach.

Secondly, there are a range of personnel issues: lack of local sensitivity through a failure to hire New Zealand-born professors (or New Zealand-born staff more generally); lack of professorial-level intellectual leadership; the considerable and continuing presence of the generation of '60s sociologists, many of whom were swiftly recruited, despite being formally under-qualified, at a time of major expansion of the discipline, and who

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have since tended to have taken a slow trajectory of personal professional development; poor levels of theoretical and methodological competence; a cloying tendency to substitute PC sentiment for hard-nosed analysis; and vulnerability to social researchers without any formal sociological expertise still claiming the title of 'sociologist'.

Thirdly, the problems have been viewed as performative: lack of visible engagement with public issues in the media; limited involvements with NGOs and more broadly with social movements; lack of the development of shared data-collection enterprises (such as an annual national social survey, and the faltering status of the national survey data archive), let alone shared enterprises of social analysis.

But it is inappropriate to launch off yet further theoretical speculation about New Zealand sociology's limitations without the better establishment of the facts of the matter. Nor should we over-emphasise the negative. Sociology was established in New Zealand only in the late 1950s: partly as an offshoot of social work training and more generally as a result of fostering from education, psychology, political science and the other more early-established social science disciplines.

What is there to celebrate amongst our accomplishments over the last 40 years? In the first place, the rudiments of a national sociology have been developed through the production of edited textbooks and collections of 'the best of' New Zealand Sociology (Foster, Webb/Collette, the several Spoonley et al. editions and, apparently, at the end of the millennium – a small flourish of further forthcoming texts), a small scatter of scholarly books (e.g. Newbold, Pearson, Thorns), a

steadily producing journal, a heap of theses and departmental working papers, and an avalanche of conference papers. A New Zealand Sociology branch or separate association has flourished now for this period with at least 30 years of annual conferences each of which miraculously mobilises some 50-100 papers (which disappear magically into thin air after being delivered!) and rather more attendees (who also return to the 'woodwork' shortly after). There has been a steady infiltration of sociologists into government department research apparatuses (e.g. the Social Policy Agency), while others flourish as independent consultants, and sociologists have won a considerable share of the research moneys to be garnered from FRST.

But there seems to be a major lack in terms of a cumulative building up of sociological knowledge relevant to New Zealand society. Some really important accomplishments within New Zealand sociology in the most general sense do not immediately appear directly attributable to Sociology, although it can be shown that sociologists (or at least quasi-sociologists) have been particularly involved in their launching:

- women's studies/gender studies (e.g. SROW, WSA)
- Polynesian/Maori studies (e.g. Bedford/Macpherson/ Spoonley)
- Cultural studies (e.g. CSWG at Massey and then the journal Sites)
- Social impact analysis (especially in Christchurch and Wellington)
- Recreation/leisure studies (e.g. Lincoln)
- Social Research Methods (e.g. Waikato)
- Social Policy (e.g. Massey, Waikato and especially VUW)

- Social Reporting (e.g. NZ Planning Council and then VUW)
- Health research (at several different sites)
- Demography (e.g. Population Studies Center at Waikato, VUW)
- Poverty Studies (e.g. VUW, Easton, Auckland)
- Political Economy (e.g. at Auckland and Rudd at Otago)
- Political Sociology (especially at Waikato with the NZES and at VUW)
- Educational Sociology (in the many separate departments).

What made these rather more focused and partial exercises 'work'? It seems to me that as each has a clearer and more limited focus these efforts could identify research issues more clearly and mobilise intellectual resources to investigate them, and with a smaller network of people involved co-operation was possible to achieve cumulation and deeper levels of insight. In particular, too, each of these research clusters has been involved with policy concerns and the 'real world' more generally and those involved have often spanned not just academic sociologists, but also those working for government, other agencies or as consultants – and have also included social scientists from other disciplines. Such 'mixed environments' may be particularly productive.

It is possible that the broad mother discipline which has helped spawn these various efforts might learn something from the at least partial success of its offspring. Sociologists with broader interests than those in the above listing should continue to try to develop more specific research clusters, but they must also pay

particular attention to rather more abstract work (which is too often slighted when much specific attention is devoted to particular issues) on the basic social structures and social processes at work within New Zealand society: especially class, race/ethnicity and gender. This more basic sociology not only can form a framework within which the more specific studies are pursued, but can also draw vital data and understandings from the more penetrating, albeit partial, efforts.

Moreover, there are more general responsibilities which are placed on any national sociology which necessarily limits the extent to which it can take aboard the more nationally-focused agenda of tasks I have adumbrated. Unlike the rather more descriptive social sciences, since sociology still holds to a central core of theory and methods, this means that many sociologists do not want merely to turn their attention to the local (New Zealand) situation, but rather wish to keep alive on the periphery of the world-system of sociology, various of the major theoretical and methodological currents which are capturing the attention of the core. (Indeed, often it seems New Zealand Sociology is rather too busily maintaining sociological perspectives which have faded from attention in the core!) So there are always sources of resistance to a merely locally-focused national New Zealand sociology.

The current pressures from axe-wielding university 'reforms' are beginning to bite. I can report – based on casual 'fieldwork' on a recent return visit to New Zealand – that there are mixed reactions in various departments to the current conjuncture: while some departments feel pressured as resources and students seem to be sliding

away, others are reacting creatively and strongly to the exigencies. Perhaps this will be a benevolent pressure to increase the relevance and efficacy of sociological teaching and research in New Zealand.

Nevertheless, the lack of a visible New Zealand sociology on book-shop sales shelves (compared to the plethora of political science and more general social criticism and commentary material in particular – a literature remarkably devoid of sociologists' contributions) and the lack of media attention are deep signs of at least the lack of a 'critical intellectual mass'. I feel that New Zealand sociology continues to have no shared 'vision' of where its intellectual endeavours might head, and indeed any shared 'vision' of what its history may have been. New Zealand sociologists continue to fail to heed each other's work or to co-operate with each other in order to push back the frontiers of social knowledge on any particular aspect of society. There is a lack of organising in order to confront deep issues with theoretical models and with appropriate empirical data. So, cumulation of sociological knowledge, let alone an improvement in the quality of the sociology produced, do not take place. A classic example is the lack of engagement with Rogernomics and its successor ideologies by New Zealand sociologists: sociologists have failed to harness New Zealand's quite unique situation as a social research laboratory to gain world sociological attention. And in this lack they have failed their clientele in New Zealand and in the rest of the world. In comparison, New Zealand geographers have effectively mounted a collective project to examine changes in New Zealand economy and society. There are other issues which could similarly be examined in greater depth within New Zealand so that we could

ambitiously aim to contribute to world sociology – since a parochialism focused solely 'on itself for itself' is a pathetic fate for any national sociology. The local must always be studied with the best conceptual tools world sociology has to offer, must be situated comparatively, and must contribute to world debates.

Finally, a comparative perspective may throw some further light on these issues. Is New Zealand sociology very different from the national sociologies of Australia, South Africa or Canada – to list possible useful comparisons? Certainly, the small size of the academic sociology community in New Zealand and it localisation in only a few sites may be a major difference, which gives us some comparative advantage. In comparison, Australian sociology in particular seems large enough to sustain a publishing base, such that there are now Australian texts in most specialist areas of Sociology. South African sociology fails to capitalise on advantages such as its size and the flush funding from government sources, potential involvement with the widespread network of policy analysis NGOs, and indeed on an analytically-sophisticated theoretical tradition of Africanist political economy. But more generally, these three national sociologies seem to me to reproduce similar difficulties: poor conceptual and methodological levels of skill and low concern for quality control, compounded by a lack of sufficient shared attention and co-operative working arrangements to facilitate a better quality sociology. It is perhaps only in very large-scale national communities of sociologists that sociology is able to more successfully mobilise its differences and skills in order to create a sociology which is capable of effective engagement with theoretical and real-world issues.

Three Comments on New Zealand Sociology:
A Reflection from Latin America

Tom Dwyer

This contribution is based upon three simple ideas: it is necessary to deprovincialise sociology, to increase its public role and to produce empirical and theoretical research of quality about New Zealand which is comparative in focus and capable of affecting both international and local debates.

I believe that Latin American sociology permits some lessons to be drawn that are important for New Zealand sociology and especially for the discipline's capacity to change views held about New Zealand. Throughout this article I shall mainly use the term 'sociology' even though a better term is probably 'social sciences' which includes reference to anthropology, political science and areas in both history and economics. At least two important points will not be treated in this article: academic sociology appears to be losing its identity as accounting decisions force some university departments to merge (Massey is a recent case); and the balkanisation of knowledge has led to general demands for greater interdisciplinary dialogue which threatens to remodel the structure of scientific disciplines.

Transformation of Teaching

As someone who meets with New Zealand politicians, business people and civil servants, especially when trade missions breeze through Brazil, I am struck by the extraordinary ignorance shown about Latin America (with the exception of Chile). Frequently the knowledge held

reduces to stereotypes. Some thirty years ago a similar judgement could have been made about similar New Zealand visitors to Asia (except, perhaps, to former British colonies).

Academic and secondary school exchange programmes, specialised university courses, newspaper and television stories, tree planting and tourism played roles in increasing New Zealanders' understanding of Asia and led to the development of opportunities in new markets. Sociology contributed through leading players like Bill Willmott and Allan Levett whose teaching, research and publications included an Asia focus. Through such efforts stereotypes were reduced and New Zealanders' capacities to relate to Asia increased. Traders learnt about history and society, Ramadan, the need to offer business cards with both hands, negotiating processes and tea ceremonies. Increased understanding opened up new possibilities for trade and tourism. However, when the Asian economies collapsed in 1997 dependence on Asia came to be interpreted as vulnerability. Suddenly hoards of businesspeople and civil servants started to look for new markets, and many turned to Latin America, a region they had mostly ignored in the past. Nevertheless, perhaps in a similar way to pioneer exporters who went to Asia three decades earlier, they are generally ill-prepared. International business case studies commonly tell of how unaware traders commit deal-spoiling cultural gaffes. Experience shows that the greater the level of ignorance, the higher the stakes, the greater the risks of deadly gaffes. Latin America, because it shares the same major cultural traditions of Australasia, - Christian and Greco-Roman – seems familiar to most. However, rituals are practiced and customs observed that dash the

reasonable expectations of the unprepared. It can be added that the difficulties of inter-cultural communication are particularly strong when a local company is taken over by or merged with a foreign one.

However, there is a more positive side to 'knowing the other' than being able to avoid gaffes and create opportunities for commerce. Australasia and most of South America have much in common: their industrialisation processes took place in a situation of economic dependency, import substituting industrialisation was widely adopted as a policy in both regions, both have received many immigrants over the past century and a half, both are still major agricultural exporters and share common Southern Hemisphere geopolitical interests. These translate into the Cairns group, negotiations of treaties on the future of Antarctica, anti-nuclear politics and more recently the defence of the right to self-determination in East Timor of a Christian population that speaks Portuguese. Brazil's president Fernando Henrique Cardoso is aware of such common themes and shared interests and his government has bent over backwards to strengthen relations. A Brazilian embassy has been set up in Wellington. As the President of the Southern Hemisphere's largest country and economic power Cardoso issued repeated personal invitations to at least one recent New Zealand Prime Minister to make a first official visit. New Zealand's response has been to prefer setting up an embassy in Argentina and then to seek rarely granted permission to set up a diplomatic status Consulate General in the Southern Hemisphere's largest city Sao Paulo without installing an embassy in Brasilia. Here again the Brazilian government showed goodwill. The absence of an understanding of Latin America in New Zealand led to

a decision by the government to give lesser priority to Brazil (the second emerging market in terms of foreign capital investment after China) than to a country such as Argentina which is economically and politically far less important on the world stage.

Such a decision reflects just how poorly informed New Zealanders are. Who is to blame? Today the media is the major provider of information about Latin America to New Zealand. Even those journalists who travel to this part of the world rarely speak Spanish or Portuguese and in my experience seem to depict the folklore or macabre aspects of the countries they pass through. They come with stereotypes, leave with stereotypes and transmit these to New Zealanders; they do not inform, they misinform!

It is in this context that the university, and particularly sociology and anthropology, has a responsibility to teach about contemporary Latin America, and to analyse the many challenges faced by it in order to promote better understanding of the region. Data available on the world wide web reveals, however, that Latin America is not contemplated in courses run by university sociology departments! The incorporation of Latin American themes into teaching would no doubt enrich the discipline. The sociology of development, which sadly is no longer taught in all New Zealand universities, would thus open its horizons to include cases beyond Asia and the South Pacific. New Zealand is most frequently compared with Australia, Britain, United States and Canada; however, countries with which it shares defined similarities, such as Chile, Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, should also enter into the list.

Contemporary Latin American social science conducts theoretical and empirical research into a variety of themes and issues which are pertinent to New Zealand – multi-party government, proportional representation, indigenous rights and strategies by which dependent economies may confront the challenges posed by contemporary capitalism. Knowledge of such literature would help New Zealanders understand those societies and significantly increase their capacity to understand their own. An additional advantage is that the incorporation of such reflections would both help deprovincialise New Zealand sociology and reduce its heavy subservience to Anglo-American perspectives that today seem to be accepted as 'natural'.

To include greater emphasis on Latin America in university curricula and especially in the social sciences requires both resources and adequately trained personnel. It also probably implies increased co-operation between departments. In other words it is necessary to find resources, make appointments and then to share the resources around. This appears to be a tall order in today's penny-pinching and chicken-hearted environment. Indeed a timid but pioneering effort appears to be being made at the University of Auckland where four joint appointees, including the historian Matthew O'Meaghar and the political scientist Paul Buchanan, have set up a programme for the study of Latin America. However this is insufficient. Prominent universities in the United States and Britain harbour regional studies programmes and set up specially funded research and teaching centres, visiting staff from overseas are regularly invited to meet needs. In many cases local businesses contribute heavily to funding these centres and chairs for visiting professors, and

foreign governments provide additional support. Students are encouraged to conduct empirical research overseas in their region of interest: comparative politics, protectionism, globalisation, gender relations, poverty and state reform are themes of empirical and theoretical investigation in Latin America that could interest New Zealand students.

A question remains for the future: will the sociological community, spurred on by its previous success in promoting teaching and research into Asia, be able to open up the horizons of higher education so that Latin America may become a focus of reflection?

Public Sociology

I have constantly defended the idea that sociology must play a public role, carrying out scientific investigations and subsequently engaging in pertinent interventions in public debates. In this way the discipline makes a contribution not only to science but also to society, it addresses key political and social issues in a way that is meaningful not only in theoretical terms but also for clarifying public opinion and choice.

The tradition of public sociology is not well diffused in Anglo-Saxon countries which generally have an anti-intellectual tradition – this is quite different to most Latin countries. In recent years the role of public sociology in specialist areas appears to have grown in New Zealand. I believe that the survival of sociology as a discipline and the perception of its success increasingly depends on its capacity to 'make a difference' in the way that public debates are framed and conducted.

Comte saw sociologists, carriers of positive science, as key advisers to the monarchy. What Comte did not envisage was that democracy would prevail over monarchy as the dominant form of government in modern societies. A consequence is that three distinct roles have opened up for sociology: public policy advice (a role that is close to that imagined by Comte), analysis and critique of social and political developments expressed mainly in the democratic press (the role played by public sociologists) and governing. For the second time in a decade and a half New Zealanders have elected a government in which a significant number of trained and well known social scientists play key roles. At least three social science graduates occupy prominent positions in the new cabinet: Steve Maharey, Paul Swain and the Prime Minister.

In Latin America active sociologists have commonly played similar roles in political life, and it is instructive to reflect on consequences. In Brazil a prominent sociologist and former president of the International Sociological Association has been the nation's president for the past five years and has three more years in office. His training and research as a sociologist and political scientist has permitted him to build an excellent overview of society and politics. However, the excessive caution that surrounds every step made in academic life has permeated the governmental decision-making process. To give just one example, the President's 'first companion' Ruth Cardoso, an anthropologist, co-ordinates a programme designed to help fight social inequality and increase fraternity building from the grass roots level. The slow pace of decision-making and policy implementation that shadowed the programme's early

days led one cabinet minister to criticise the underlying orientation as 'sociological masturbation'.

One could imagine that having a number of social scientists in power should be good for the field because they would increase research funding. Will New Zealand's current government confirm such a notion?

Besides putting the social sciences under the spotlight (and today the profession 'sociologist' is known to nearly all Brazilians) the arrival of sociologists in positions of political power has increased the demands by researchers on public monies. However, the role played by the discipline in public debate in Brazil has been negatively affected. Scientifically based knowledge no longer appears to inform sociological contributions to public (and even purely intellectual) debates. This has been accompanied by a rise in 'sociology as ideology' in the public sphere. Thus government critics and supporters abuse the discipline's name as they use the prestige of their profession to confer authority on their critiques and praise. Others, instead of risking offending friends holding political office or who make ideological critiques of those who exercise power, have replied to the situation by retreating into a purely scientific sociology.

It must be disturbing for some sociologists in a small country like New Zealand to think that in a country with as large a social science community as Brazil the public face of sociology has been deformed by the election of a sociologist to the nation's highest position. The lesson which can be drawn from the Brazilian case is that a significant group of sociologists must always be prepared to defend the role of public sociologists and that

sociologists practising this role must act primarily as sociologists. In this way the discipline's public role will be preserved and sociology will be able to maintain this role even in times when sociologists no longer occupy positions of political power.

Research – Helping New Zealanders Understand Their Own Country and Explaining New Zealand to the World

What type of a society will New Zealand become? No longer a relatively egalitarian appendix of Britain, self-proclaimed as 'godzone', it is now dominated by a growing realisation that it is becoming something else: South Pacific or Southern hemisphere, European or Asian, community based or individualist, provincial or cosmopolitan?

The anti-nuclear spirit of the eighties, which led citizens to proudly redefine the country in terms of ecological values and as a primarily Pacific nation, has lost its capacity to agglutinate in the post-Cold War world. One lesson however has not been lost: all New Zealanders know that their country, small as it may be, can abandon its customary political subservience to the United States. One alternative project had linked New Zealand's future to a northwards reorientation of trade and diplomacy. The solidity of this has been put into doubt by the Asian crisis. The question of New Zealand's place in the world, a question of national identity, appears to be still very much in the open. Universities have, through teaching and publication, important responsibilities in helping citizens learn about their own and other countries. Such learning constitutes a basis

upon which they may confidently redefine themselves and their relationships with others.

However, in spite of this unfilled vacuum, the outside world constructs views on New Zealand. The country is occasionally cited in the Brazilian, Chilean, Argentine and Uruguayan media. Not infrequently, the economic reforms are commented upon and held up as an example to be followed. Ruth Richardson and Roger Douglas are the two people who have most weight in supplying New Zealand content designed to transform the perspectives that political and business leaders in Latin America have of the state, the market and their interrelationships. When Latin Americans seek a more critical analysis of New Zealand this is provided principally by those who represent counter-ideologies, particularly trade unionists. The Douglas-Richardson view of the world is propagated without an appropriate academic counterweight.

Latin American business people and civil servants express curiosity as to why their New Zealand counterparts appear so fervent in their praise of the model of society adopted – to them the praise seems to be endowed with an almost religious 'true believer' flavour. My reply to such an observation is that New Zealand as a nation suffers from a profound insecurity complex that comes from the undermining of its identity that has taken place. Such reactions constitute collective defense mechanisms which involve the choice of elements to be incorporated into the construction of a new identity (including the penetration of 'business speak' into all parts of the New Zealand daily language) that seeks to ignore the risks and losses incurred during the course of the 'Quiet Revolution' (James, 1986) or the

'New Zealand experiment' (Kelsey, 1995), by enthusiastically embracing the new.

However, the changes that have occurred in New Zealand over the last decade and a half are far deeper and more multi-dimensional than the ideological representations would have people believe. Some changes have close equivalents in other countries, others do not. For example a better understanding of neo-liberalism in New Zealand could be produced by comparing and contrasting its diverse dimensions with similar processes in other parts of the world, for example, with Argentinian deindustrialisation, Chilean agricultural change, Brazilian privatisation. However, it is important to point out to local and foreign audiences that changes have frequently been multi-faceted and contradictory. This of course is obvious to New Zealand sociologists. Explaining change in wider terms may make the New Zealand developments and reactions less puzzling and more comprehensible to foreign audiences.

The biggest challenge facing contemporary New Zealand sociology is to build an image of the society and its changes that is sociological. I have recently made this point in the following terms: 'The curiosity that currently surrounds New Zealand's path towards building a new economy and society constitutes a major source of interest for reformers the world over. An important contribution made over the last decade and a half has consisted of indigenous and foreign attempts to understand the economic and political reforms made and their social insertion. The use of such material in theory building exercises is clearly on the agenda, however there exists an important methodological problem, the events are very recent in historical terms and for this

reason it is difficult for researchers to establish the distance necessary to move towards a series of more ambitious theoretical statements' (Dwyer, 1998). The production of ambitious theoretical statements is relevant not only for New Zealand but also for clarifying debates in other parts of the world and this includes Latin America.

Conclusion

I have discussed three issues that confront New Zealand sociology: the necessity to be more cosmopolitan, the development and maintenance of its public role, and the necessary provision of a statement that can help both New Zealanders and foreigners understand recent changes and interpret their consequences.

I defend a sociology that is constructive and critical in its teaching, scientific investigations and public role. I am currently too far away from the country of my birth and its debates to formulate a critical diagnosis of the current state of New Zealand sociology. However, I reiterate my belief that social science disciplines make a difference when they produce new knowledge about societies in a precise, scientific and responsible manner, where this is published in a public forum and is seen by the influential audiences as significant. When this occurs, as it has for quite some time in France and Brazil, public support for the discipline follows. Through asking questions that reflect national dilemmas, responding to interrogations raised in international debates and opening up chances for seeing the world in a new way, sociology reinforces its credentials as an approach that is capable of providing analyses that are relevant in facing the future.

Confronting the issues raised from Latin America (and indeed by other articles in this symposium) will require debate to establish their pertinence and subsequent intellectual leadership, vision, and resource mobilisation to implement those reforms deemed necessary.

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Selling Sociology:
Better Brands or Bargain Bins?

Carl Davidson

This paper argues that the future of sociology lies in how sociologists position the discipline in the academic 'marketplace'. It adopts the language of that marketplace, the new *lingua franca* of academia, to argue that there is a bright future for sociology as long as sociologists market the discipline in a sufficiently innovative manner. A key component of this argument is that there is nothing wrong with our discipline's 'product' even if there is much wrong with the signals we send our clients about it. This paper offers a number of suggestions about how we might improve those signals, reconceptualise our marketing, and rethink our market positioning.

'What did you study sociology for?'

One of the most important elements of perspective is distance. To be able to see something clearly you need to put some distance between yourself and it. Get too close and the big picture becomes swamped by the details. As someone intimately involved in sociology for the last decade of my life I, too, was very much caught up in the details. However, in the last year I have left the academic world and have resettled in the corporate one, among the suits and ties, learning the joys of expense accounts and effective computer support networks. This truly is a completely different 'world' to the one I left behind. And being immersed in this world has given me an entirely new perspective on sociology. Even more

than a new perspective, this distance has given me a renewed passion for the discipline.

That rekindled passion comes from a realisation of how well sociology prepares its students for the world of contemporary work (a point I pick up on below). Yet that passion is tempered by the frustration I feel when I realise how poorly understood sociology is by those outside the discipline. Moreover, given this lack of understanding by virtually everybody, our students need to struggle to gain the opportunity to demonstrate how well sociology prepares them for the world beyond the university.

I have lost count of the number of times I have been asked, after explaining to someone that I was previously a lecturer in sociology, 'what did you study that for?'. In the same vein, we all have heard stories of students being asked 'what are you going to do with that?' when they have told their friends or family that they are studying sociology. On one level it is easy to understand where these questions are coming from. Do a law degree and you end up a lawyer. Study accountancy and you get a job as an accountant. But what does someone with a degree in sociology do? The root of this argument, clearly, is an assumption that practical utility is the only criterion which should matter when one chooses what to study.

Of course, you could counter that the value of sociology is precisely that it has no direct practical utility (in the sense that there are no jobs as 'sociologists') and that it is only such subjects that have any legitimate place in the university. All of those subjects which simply train people how to do something specific should be

shipped off to the polytechs where they belong. In this regard, sociology can be seen as upholding education in its most literal sense, as though our discipline is nobly fighting a rearguard action for the grand tradition of the seven liberal arts.

However, while this is an argument that I have some sympathy for, and is one that I know many of our colleagues seek succour in, it is not very helpful for the discipline as a whole. The future of sociology, to my mind at least, requires innovative solutions. Make no mistake, no matter how noble its intent, retreat is the path of the vanquished. Such a path would spell doom for the discipline. To paraphrase Kenneth Boulding, it would see sociology

> grind to a stop in an assemblage of walled-in hermits, each mumbling to himself words in a private language that only he [sic] can understand (1956:198).

Besides, as I will argue below, sociology is in the fortunate position of being able to 'advance' while maintaining its grand traditions. There is a path open to the discipline which can argue both for practical utility and preservation of its traditional emphases on scholarship and academic excellence. Indeed, it is that very excellence which provides the discipline with its utility. To put this another way, I am not arguing that we should radically change what we do – only how we present that to those who are rightly considered our 'clients'.

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Selling Sociology: 'Insider Trading' in the Global Economy

Many sociology departments have already started down the path of 'selling' sociology by emphasising its practical utility. For example, the Massey University Department of Sociology brochure, *An Invitation to Sociology at Massey University, 2000*, talks about the kinds of jobs students can get with sociology. It also has a couple of recent graduates with decent jobs talk about how sociology helped them get those jobs. Such an approach is a start, even if it is a conventional and remarkably disingenuous one (some ideas about how to be more innovative are offered below).

There is another perspective that might help us think about how we package our discipline: One can think of a degree as something that provides a 'license' to do something. But one can also think of a degree as a 'toolbox' that provides its graduates with a range of skills that enables them to respond to a wide range of problems. If we think of degrees in terms of toolboxes, then I think there is a very strong argument for sociology. Indeed, I think our discipline uniquely prepares students for life in the fast changing, blurred world of the 21st Century.

The reason I described current attempts to market sociology in terms of 'will it get me a job?' as 'remarkably disingenuous' is that such an approach itself fails to demonstrate any sociological imagination. Instead of helping graduates find a job, why aren't we all telling them to create one? Instead of looking for employers, why not encourage them to look for customers? I have been genuinely surprised to see how well sociology

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prepares its students to do this. Look to the facts, we live in a world that:

- is increasingly determined by globalisation;
- where 'the knowledge economy' and the 'symbolic analysts' who work within it are seen as the future for the domestic economy;
- where the future of that economy is in the tertiary sector;
- where companies are increasingly outsourcing service provision.

Add to this the changes in families and communities that follow these trends and there are employment opportunities emerging that nobody foresaw even a decade ago. Many of these opportunities remain open because large corporations are often slow to respond to genuine changes in demand (i.e. consumption patterns) and supply (i.e. employment trends – and you only have to think of the 'skill shortage' to see how poorly prepared most large companies in this country were to deal with the inevitable consequence of a change in government policy).

And here is the rub: sociologists study how society is changing. This means we should know better than anyone where these new opportunities are or are likely to emerge. In this regard, the discipline provides a kind of insider trading in the global economy. Why would we not encourage our students to use this insight? More pertinently, why don't we encourage them to do so?

To take just one obvious example: anyone with an understanding of sociology and half-an-ounce of entrepreneurial nous could start a business trading in

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information about the likely impacts of globalisation. This would simply be a case of dividing the most obvious trends into market sectors and then running seminars about the ways these impacts are most likely to develop within those sectors. Along with the seminars, this business might provide regular updates via a newsletter to the companies which subscribe to the service. With the right kind of branding (something that combines 'globalisation', 'the information economy' and 'New Zealand') this business would be a terrific success. I know this both from first principles and because I have heard any number of senior executives speak of the need for such a service. This is an opportunity that has 'sociology' written all over it. However, my bet is that it will be filled by someone with a background in marketing.

I say this because I think the reason why so few sociologists encourage students to use their degrees in innovative and entrepreneurial ways is that so few sociologists are themselves innovative and entrepreneurial. In other words, most sociologists provide poor role models for sociology students. That more sociologists don't make use of this 'insider' knowledge seems strangely schizophrenic to me. On one level it reminds me of those old jokes about mystics who argue that the whole world is nothing but an illusion but still stop at red lights on their way home from the ashram. The point here is that sociological knowledge is not purely theoretical. If our task is to understand the way society is changing, then the acid test of that understanding, the key performance indicator if you like, has to be how well it prepares its students to engage with that world. But as long as that understanding is perceived as theoretical (by our clients as much as fellow practitioners), then why should our students believe

whatever employment guidance we give them? Try putting yourself in your students' shoes: you would never seek financial advice from a bankrupt accountant, so why would students seek employment advice from those in the bizarre position of having a tenured job in a university?

The notion of sociological knowledge as 'insider trading in the global economy' alerts us to the fact that sociology provides our students with a head start when it comes to leaping into the job market of the 21st Century because it tells them where to jump. But more than this, wherever those students land, it provides them with the skills to survive. I see at least three distinct reasons for this:

1. Firstly, and most obviously, it provides students with the ability to think critically. This is both a precious and a rare skill. You only realise how precious, of course, when you are around people who do not possess it.

2. The second and third sources of 'competitive advantage' for sociology graduates come from two powerful ideas that are at the core of the subject. They confer competitive advantage because they so often seem like startling insights to the graduates from other disciplines I have worked with. The first is that things are rarely what they seem. This seemingly simple idea means sociology graduates are alert to hidden motives (and, I suspect, helps explain why critical thinking is such a crucial part of an active sociological imagination). In a recent discussion I had with a senior manager about the value of the Employment Contracts Act, he could not understand

why the Labour and Alliance parties had made an
election issue out of repealing it. When I tried to
explain about the perceived imbalance in negotiating
power it institutionalised (thus privileging the position
of managers while marginalising that of unions), he
argued 'yes but once a law is passed its effects must
be objective ... after all, the law is always neutral'.
Needless to say, the discussion didn't get much
further.

3. The second idea is the recognition of (and, for some,
    comfort with) pluralism. This is an idea that can be
    found at the very cutting edge of management
    theory. Globalisation has meant that multinational
    corporations need to acknowledge, value, and
    respond to pluralism. Moreover, the rhetoric of
    management theory also maintains that democratic
    and pluralistic organisations respond more easily to
    changes in the market, are more resilient in the face
    of threats, and are capable of sustaining excellence
    longer. Yet compared to sociology's relationship with
    ideas of pluralism, the one developing in the
    corporate world is the most superficial flirtation.
    Pluralism necessarily goes to the heart of
    sociological thinking because the social world is a
    world of multiplicity and contradiction. As *New
    Scientist* put it:

    > While the student of physics faces a vast body
    > of accepted wisdom to be mastered before the
    > occasional genius can push the frontier,
    > sociology is all frontier ... this openness can be
    > very exciting (Collins, 1998:48).

I want to argue that these three things, (i) the ability to think critically; (ii) the recognition that things are not always what they seem; (iii) and the appreciation of pluralism and diversity, give sociology graduates serious competitive advantage over graduates from other disciplines. Add to this the ability to predict some of the grosser changes that are likely to occur in society, and our graduates start to look seriously well prepared for the world of work they will find themselves occupying. Of all people, Bob Jones agrees. He once wrote:

> Imaginative capability, the greatest asset anyone can possess, is not something one is born with. Rather, a rich imagination and the ability to think laterally and creatively is something that must be nurtured and cultivated. Make no mistake, it is through the study of the humanities that this will best be accomplished (in The Press, 16.4.90).

In sum, sociology graduates have a number of skills that are invaluable when it comes to creating their own jobs. As I have noted, many will not have the desire to start their own businesses simply because such initiatives are neither modelled nor supported by sociologists themselves. This remains the case despite the fact that, as self-employed 'knowledge workers', our graduates would:

- have far more autonomy than those employed by someone else;
- make far more money (and, perhaps, work less hours);
- reap self-efficacy benefits from succeeding on their own;

- be able to set the tone and pace of their working days, and lives;
- be as creative or as dull as they wished.

Now contrast this with the world of work that graduates are actually entering, one of little employment security, constant petty bickering and career jostling, long hours of work for someone else, usually for very few tangible rewards. The simple fact is that no-one is able to take charge of their life until they have taken charge of their work. To put this simply: If you want to leave the world a little better than you found it, then it is going to be hard to do it if you have a job that doesn't allow you to do that to yourself.

I concede that there will always be those who just do not want to create their own jobs. Some of these people will simply desire the security of a salary, health care benefits, and a company superannuation scheme. For others, their interests may rule out starting their own company as a realistic alternative. For instance, it is hard to get read as a journalist in a newspaper you start on your own. Regardless, the good news is that – for those that want someone else's job – sociology provides its graduates with considerable competitive advantage here too. The things which draw people to sociology and the skills they learn while studying to think like a sociologist make sociology graduates very appealing to prospective employers. But, as I suggested earlier, the difference here is how those graduates sell those skills. Given sociologists' poor image in the employment marketplace, it is important that graduates are taught how to package their degree in a way which emphasises the skills required to complete that degree. Unless the job description specifically asks for someone with a degree

in sociology, the key is to counsel graduates to stop thinking in terms of having a degree in sociology but rather as having that collection of sociological skills they had to learn to earn that degree.

Moving on up (Market)

As should be clear by now, the shift in my perspective over the last year is one that sees a lot of good news for those associated with sociology. While I personally see more, and better, opportunities for our graduates in self-employment, there are important contributions to be made in the conventional world of work too. But none of this good news means there isn't some bad news too. My new perspective has also enabled me to see a number of downsides to sociology as currently taught and 'sold'. The following points have emerged in response to my questions:

- What does sociology not provide its graduates that it should or what is it providing only poorly?
- What are the downsides of studying sociology in terms of the future employability of graduates?
- What kinds of things could make sociology more relevant (read 'more saleable') in the marketplace?

1. Emphasise the real world relevance of sociological ideas

The reality is that only a small number of sociology students will ever become academics, so why do we have a graduate education that is aimed at producing academics? Even if this is not the goal of that education, it is certainly how that education looks to others. For a subject that is purportedly about everyday things, this is one very large black mark. If you do not believe me that

sociology has a problem connecting with the everyday world of people outside of the university, ask yourself this question: where are the sociologists in the media explaining changes to the world we live in? In September 1999 the National Programme ran a piece about how paid work was changing in New Zealand using David Thomson to interpret those changes. Now David, as many of us know, is a fascinating and interesting person to listen to, but he is also a historian. Where were the sociologists? Equally, Jane Kelsey led the debate about alternatives to APEC and she is a lawyer. Again, where were the sociologists? Finally, even Russell Brown is really a computer geek at heart. In all three cases, sociologists are conspicuous by their absence. In brief, the future of sociology has to be more with the W.C. Runcimans of the world rather than the Derridas.

2. Take a broader view
The most obvious way that sociologists could increase their 'real world' relevance is by taking a broader view of things. Generalists, not specialists, are what are needed. Equally, just because we are unable to say everything about a particular development, there is no reason to say nothing at all about it. The important thing is always to open the debate. Let others close it. International best practice here is provided by Thomas Friedman's (1999) model of 'arbitrage'. As we all know, there is a sociological angle to everything. Journalists should be beating paths to our doors every day and night.

3. Think solutions
Sociologists can often appear irrelevant (and interminably dull) simply because they always seem to be saying the sky is about to fall on our heads. No-one wants to listen to doomsayers all the time. Yet, while

sociology is good at identifying problems, it is much poorer at offering solutions, and even less good at offering practicable solutions that people and policy makers want to listen to. An obvious solution here is to make our criticism solution-focused. Whenever we criticise something ensure we emphasise those things that could make it better. What solutions are there and why? No one made the world a better place simply by pointing out what was wrong with it.

4. Communicate better

Sociologists are poor at communicating with those outside their discipline. I think they make two important mistakes here: They use a vocabulary that few outside the discipline can understand, and they tend to talk or write too much. If we want to sell sociology to a wider market, then we all need to learn how to communicate complex ideas in everyday language by using metaphors and examples, and avoiding our beloved jargon. Secondly, we need to learn the art of brevity – the ability to present our arguments in paragraphs, not entire paradigms.

5. Practical skill gaps

While on the question of skills, we also let our students down in regard to both presentation and computing skills. This is noteworthy because these are essential skills in virtually all the employment situations our graduates are likely to find themselves in. In regard to presentation skills, it doesn't matter how important what you have to say is if everyone falls asleep while you say it. I know we all understand this at one level, but students spend so little of their degrees actually presenting that they rarely get to hone these skills. And even if they did have more opportunities, are sociology

lecturers really the people who should be teaching these things? Again, who seeks financial advice from a broke accountant? As for better computer skills, the 'knowledge economy', whatever else it means, is about some kind of combination of brains and technology. Yet the level of technological literacy in sociology as a whole is woeful. This is one area where our graduates look like amateurs compared to others. Computers need to be at the centre of our education, not merely window dressing.

6. Learn how to network, then work at networking

New Zealand is much smaller than you can ever imagine. People knowing people, and recommending people, is what makes the business world go around (it's not what you know, or even who you know, but who knows you that matters). We all need to work harder to get sociology plugged in to wider networks. Why not start by arranging cross-disciplinary seminars or combined presentations? Our graduates will inevitably be working alongside those who are currently studying management, human resources, marketing, planning, social policy, etc., so why not help them demonstrate the value of sociology to those subjects as early as possible? Equally, for sociologists themselves, formal links need to be formed with much wider professional circles.

7. A call for a proactive, and truly professional, sociological association

The final point I want to make is that sociologists everywhere need to work harder at promoting sociology. For all the positive things I see in sociology, there remains no doubt in my mind that the 'brand' is in serious trouble. Marketers will tell you organisations have an 'internal' brand (the values those on the inside associate

with what you do) and an 'external' brand (the way your customers and competitors see you) and sociology has trouble in both areas. To take just three examples from the popular media:

> Ah, sociology. As academic disciplines go it's a bit of a goulash, mixing history, psychology, anthropology and, well, the blindingly obvious (Sunday Star Times).

> With so much pursuit of the blindingly obvious, sociologists will always be busy. (New Zealand Herald).

> 74.6% of sociology is bunk (The Economist).

These external brand issues rub off on those who study sociology, reflected most obviously in a need to justify why they study it, make jokes about it, and even apologise for it. The future of sociology, it seems to me, lies with sociologists becoming far more proactive in promoting their discipline.

It is here that I see the Sociology Association becoming much more proactive. For instance, the Association could appoint a full-time marketing manager to work at 'selling' sociology. Among the other tasks that such a person would fulfil would be to aggressively promote sociological insights to the media. By acting as a clearing house for sociological expertise, this person could put the media in touch with the best qualified sociologist to provide commentary on the big story of the day. Equally, they could ensure a co-ordinated campaign of writing op-ed pieces for newspapers and magazines, as well as letters to the editor. As I said earlier, sociology

has something valuable to say about everything. We need to make this value clear to others.

As for the internal brand, the Association could sponsor an alumni of sociologists and hence demonstrate to students that sociology does provide both competitive employment advantage and a useful set of life skills. Once created, the challenge would be in forging close links between university departments and the alumni. Again, the Association could take the lead in such a brokering role. Of course, the Association will not be able to do any of these things as long as it remains simply a loose collection of academics. The nature of the Association would have to change, as would the kinds of fees it charged to belong. There is an important 'chicken and egg' problem here – people will only pay higher fees to belong to an organisation if they see value in what it offers, and there are few ways that the Association can increase that value without first creating a revenue stream to fund it. Still, the imperative for change means this is a challenge that we need to overcome. To stand still in a world that is rapidly changing means that we will only get left further behind.

A (Very) Brief Conclusion: Buggy Whips and Brands

This paper, which reflects nothing more than my own opinion (based on nothing more rigorous than my own meandering experience), has argued that sociology is in a paradoxical position. On one hand, sociology graduates are uniquely placed to meet the challenges of the economy and society of the early 21st century. On the other hand, however, few people outside of sociology understand or recognise

this advantage. Furthermore, sociology is in increasing danger of being perceived as irrelevant 'in the marketplace' at a time when its insights have never been more relevant or timely. I have suggested how a few small changes to what we do, and a few larger changes to how we sell what we do, could make a significant difference to the future direction of sociology. To ignore the challenge to 'rebrand' and 'reposition' sociology will ensure that our 'clients' begin to see us as the buggy whip manufacturers of the academic world. And no matter how good our product, in a world of automobiles, nobody buys buggy whips any more.

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People, People, People

Georgina Murray

He aha mea nui o te ao?
Tangata! Tangata! Tangata!

What is the most important matter in the world? People, People, People.

Do New Zealand sociologists write in ways that convey this fight for the human condition and social justice? No. I do not think that on the whole they do fight for social justice or for People! People! People! Nor do they admire those who still do. On the contrary they dismiss them as Troglodyte Materialists, Methodological Geeks, Neanderthal Marxists or just a mealy ragbag of anachronistic leftovers.

I might be wrong and if I am you can dismiss this as the impressionistic ramblings of a New Zealander who has not lived or worked in the country for ten years – an expatriate who is now an expediently naturalized Australian, writing and teaching political economy in a more secure, growing economy, in a bigger and better funded university sector. Someone, in other words, who can more easily be a Marxist and proud. So rest assured my qualification for sitting in judgement on the work of any New Zealand colleague is both shallow and partial, but bare with me whilst I enjoy myself.

I would like to do this circuitously, in a girly way, by using my family and friends as the entrée into the New Zealand condition and then look at how New Zealand sociology is facing up to its post-1984 challenge.

My Family and Friends as a New Zealand Microcosm

Over the ten-year period since I left New Zealand my visits back, with two exceptions, have been frequent and family driven. These visits have been frequent because times have been hard for my middle class family. My father was a headmaster and his devalued pension now provides just enough support for himself and my mother as well as paying the ever increasing, expensive medical bills that he now requires. While they are surviving, my partially university educated daughter struggles. Since returning to New Zealand she and her husband battle daily to pay the rent and the food bills on his better than average salary. The bills are for four because her family now includes two-year-old twins. To supplement her family's income my daughter spends her weekends, from 7.30am-5.30pm, working in a shop. Some mentally challenged individuals who reside in boarding houses in the area frequent this shop. She has been threatened with a knife, menaced and chased by them. Neither my daughter nor her husband gamble, smoke or drink alcohol to excess. Last Xmas he was laid off and told to re-apply for his job after the Xmas holiday. Whilst he got his job back a number of others at his work did not and the experience necessitated a visit to the bank to get an emergency overdraft. The bank turned them down and the debt collectors came battering at their doors demanding money that neither of them had. However, they are 'lucky' because they have had family to help them out.

At the other income extreme are my Law School friends who I also visit when I go to New Zealand. Ten years on they earn extremely large salaries and are multiple property holders. One of them has a $250,000

Porsche, a farm, two Swedish *au pair*, a gardener and a new home in Herne Bay, doors along from one of the many unoccupied properties of the Sultan of Brunei.

What has this family and friends trivia got to do with Sociology in New Zealand? The answer is two-fold. First, my family and friends are, I feel (and the 1992 Yearbook bares me out in a never repeated income distribution chart), a microcosm of what is happening in New Zealand. The welfare state is atrophying – medical treatment is expensive and nearly exclusive to the rich; university education is outside the ambit of working people; food costs are too high, workers need to work seven days a week because they work for low wages in appalling and insecure conditions; banks and debt collectors are circling the poor who are now reliant on the benevolence of their extended families. In contrast to this picture of the working and almost coping poor is a burgeoning parasitic service-ruling class. Second, although I can see this social deterioration with my own eyes and heart I do not come to New Zealand bookshops confident that there will be a plethora of work looking critically at this sad maelstrom of private corporate greed and public misery.

New Zealand Sociological Response to an Economic Liberal Nightmare

All is not completely lost. There are a few sociological stalwarts who continue to pen a fight against economic liberalism – Bedggood (1999, 1996), Roper and Rudd (1997), Poata-Smith (1997), Easton (1997, 1996), Kelsey and O'Brien (1995), Boston et al. (1997), etc. The later writers – Easton, Kelsey and Boston – are neo-Keynesians who argue that all that needs to be done

about the now appalling social conditions of the poor in New Zealand is to turn around Rogernomics. Their solution is to bring back the fifties welfare state. They would no doubt argue that given the correct Keynesian policy orientation the new look New Zealand Labour party will do just this. The new Labour Party, with the Alliance and the Greens will save them ('them' as in the cash-strapped university sector) and the poor workers.

Pigs will fly! Look how much saving of the public and welfare sector Tony Blair, Bob Hawke, Paul Keating and any number of other Labour-led parties have done – very little. Look at the decline of Sweden, with its tightly concentrated, extremely wealthy capitalist class and its growing number of unemployed, once the shining proof that social democracy and reformism work. All social democratic governments are fatally flawed by having to work within the capitalist system. Whilst global profits are low (Brenner, 1998) corporations will continue to squeeze workers to maintain the same high level of corporate profit. Real wages will continue to fall and conditions will get worse.

What is really sad for academics is that they are now personally experiencing the nasty real world where the university acts as a business like any other business. The university exploits its workers, its students, and it produces information (often through Sociology Departments) to help capitalists and the capitalist state keep its subject population down. Sociologists should wake up, whilst they still have their jobs, to realize that they are workers, they have common interests with other workers and, like other workers, their security of tenure, conditions of employment and wages are under threat. Sociologists everywhere have to join the fight, by making

their research pertinent to the conflict, by making their unions strong, by joining (rather than disdainfully dismissing) the class struggle.

For example, New Zealand sociologists should have prepared all the groundwork so that the new labour-sympathetic alliance could quickly rid the country of the 1991 *Employment Contracts Act*. The alliance should have all the possible sociological data and theory at its fingertips ready to go to remove this iniquitous law. Has this happened? If interested Australians look up on the Expanded Academic indexes (the Australian online access to sociological journals of the world) they will find a list of eleven articles written on the New Zealand *Employment Contracts Act*, most of them written by lawyers including reference to work by Dannin (1997, 1991) and an excellent critique of Dannin's book by Bedggood (1998). But they will find nothing original written by Sociologists. Sociologists have the skills to keep up a devastating critique of capitalism and to continue a fight back. Why aren't they?

Why don't New Zealand Sociologists Challenge Capitalism?

Sociology has never been at the forefront of revolution, although it has gestated students who have been revolutionary leaders (e.g. in 1968, Nicholas, Cohn-Bendit, Taraq Ali, etc.). It has instead always been a business within a business. Recently this quiescence is largely due to an overdose of passivity brought on by an addiction to poststructuralism or more loosely postmodernism. This conservative-individualism infests Sociology Departments. Poststructuralists/postmodernists applaud capitalism's pretty pictures, chase its cute

symbols and use its anodyne imagery for coffee table books. Cute these pictures may be and better artists (e.g. Barbara Kruger) than they have used and satirized capitalism (e.g. Dada) much earlier and with more wit. But capitalism is neither cute nor funny as it manifests in debt, disease and disaster for non-core countries. (Is New Zealand officially a third world country yet?) Post structuralists in their denial of the universal, their worship of pastiche, relativism (e.g. manifest as anti-activism) and their preference for fragmentation (e.g. sometimes manifest as articles on train spotting of the non-heroin kind, Zeppelins, postage stamp collections etc.) have completely lost sight of the unfunniness of capitalism. These sociologists languish lugubriously in the let-them-eat-cake world of academe whilst they navel gaze at their trivia.

Paeans of Praise

Now to the good part where I can give paeans of praise to the New Zealand sociologists who see a material reality and a sociological plan of action I share. That is, one in which capitalism is a system that has to be constantly attacked and rejected for its cruel injustice. Here are my sociological academe awards. Congratulations to Dave Bedggood as the only sociologist on the Onehunga Wharfies picket line in January 1999, and still writing on why economic liberalism will not be fixed by Keynesianism (Bedggood, 1999). A shared prize to Brian Roper and Chris Rudd (1997) for continuing to bring the class struggle into classrooms, debate and to activism. An award of merit goes to Poata-Smith (1997) for bringing a much-needed non-identity politics into the understanding of ethnicity. For continuing to centre research around critiques of the

conditions of workers, more awards of merit go to Loveridge et al. (1996) and Tolich (1996). At the other end of town, doing some damage to the machinations of the capitalist class, the award goes to Holmes (1996). For being a great teacher, mentor, writer and supporter of social justice, the award goes to Merv Hancock (1996). My apologies to all those others who write glorious critical sociological prose but have been ignorantly left out.

Conclusion

New Zealand sociology as a vehicle of critique against capitalist society, like sociology elsewhere, has a long way to go. You will have gathered by now that I do not think that the answer is sociologists embedding themselves in a morass of national identity hunting, a surfeit of superficiality or post structuralist individualism. The challenge for all sociologists is to document with disgust what they see and theorize a way out.

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New Zealand Sociology and Difference

Maureen O'Malley
Steve Kemp

The very term 'New Zealand Sociology' implies its comparison against a putative 'other' and raises the question of how that other should be conceived if current postcolonial concerns are to be taken seriously. Should New Zealand sociology be different from Euro-American sociology and thus require its own distinctive categories and analyses? The answer to this question is based on a more fundamental issue: does the difference between New Zealand and Euro-American societies warrant different categorizations and understandings? Addressing this question requires a careful analysis of what difference amounts to in the analysis of society. In particular, it is crucial to grasp that difference *per se* cannot be an end point for such analysis unless sociology is to be abandoned.

There are two steps that lead us to that conclusion. In the first place, what appear to be differences may on further investigation resolve into similarities. For example, on a surface appraisal the members of our society may appear to be highly individual and distinctive, an impression one often finds voiced by first year sociology students. One of sociology's most important contributions, however, has been to indicate the structured nature of social activity and systematic features of social life. These include phenomena such as the effect of social class on educational attainment, the influence of gender upon career advancement, the impact of institutionalized racial discrimination upon ethnic minorities, and the connections between geo-

economic positioning and the standard of living within nation-states. The apparent difference of individuals turns out to be undergirded by important similarities – similarities that impact upon the ability of members of certain groups to live successful and fulfilling lives within society. When such categories are formulated, of course, they do not remove difference altogether but rather, place it within the framework of a scheme in which both differences and similarities are accounted for. To go back to one of the above examples: there are different social classes, but individuals within those classes have similar life chances. The very intelligibility of those claims is based in a wider class scheme which makes equal sense of difference and sameness.

That still leaves a second question, however, of what happens when investigation reveals a difference that cannot be given a systematic place in existing explanatory schema. One such example might be when considering the place of New Zealand society within a framework that analyses the post-industrial nature of Western capitalism. If, after thorough examination, the processes indicated by post-industrial analyses were found not to apply to New Zealand, it might then be argued that a genuine case of difference had been found. Would such a finding provide a basis for insisting that New Zealand must have its own distinctive categories of analysis dissociated from those of Euro-American sociology? Our argument here is that this failure would necessitate two types of rethinking rather than a capitulation to difference and with it, the end of analysis. Either the findings were shoddily collected and interpreted, or the theoretical framework employed is inadequate. Trusting our research at this point, we would have to question the explanatory force of the post-

industrial model used. If the processes specified by post-industrial theory failed to emerge in a Western capitalist economy such as New Zealand undeniably is, then the theory itself would have to be rethought and re-specified. Once a more coherent account was produced, one capable of encompassing both New Zealand and other economies, the difference of New Zealand would become explicable. A systematic analysis would have to account for the different character of these societies, in the same way that an adequate class analysis would have to account for the different life chances of various groups in society.

The crucial point here is that social analysts can never avoid and should never shy away from offering a coherent account of difference, whether within societies or between them. If statements of difference are not placed within a wider scheme, they merely proclaim a superficial sense of distinction but are unable to make sense of it. To adequately understand New Zealand society and effectively address practical local problems, we must theorize the regular character of New Zealand's internal and external relations. Without such theories we return to a pre-sociological approach in which unexamined individual differences reign. The unaccounted-for individuality of New Zealand as a society would be as problematic for sociology today as the unaccounted-for individuality of the economic actor was for the sociologists of the 19th century. A systematic understanding of the features that New Zealand shares with other societies, as well as those it does not, could never result from a parochial sociology that did not seek a coherent relation with sociological theories generated in the rest of the world.

This, then, brings us to the question of what the 'other' of New Zealand sociology might be. Although we have so far been holding our discussion against the backdrop of Euro-American sociology, this very argument proposes a global sociology – one able to cope productively with the similarities and differences of all the societies in this postcolonial world. This moves against any presumption that the proliferation of different viewpoints, conceptual schemes and political claims is the laudable aim and sufficient object of a non-Eurocentric sociology. The specific, local and disconnected sociologies that are produced in the name of difference achieve neither their critique of 'Eurocentric grand narratives of the Enlightenment' nor a more successful alternative. The critique fails because it does not accept the challenge to reconstruct the insights of all the frameworks involved (whether these have emerged from 'self' or 'other') into a coherent scheme. Likewise, progressive alternatives do not emerge from local sociologies that focus fixedly on their own findings and give up the possibility of producing more general, global reconstructive achievements.

A possible objection to the success of this type of understanding might be made by theorists of power. They are likely to claim that oppressive forces blind and bias us to such an extent that only analyses reinforcing social dominance will succeed. Our discussion above, however, counteracts such a nebulous and all-encompassing theorization of power. Local studies and coherent conceptual schemes are the very tools that are going to point to the specific operations of power, thereby allowing us to work out their origins and consequences. An argument against difference for difference's sake does not discard the local; general

schemes rely upon specifically situated evidence to test and elaborate their claims.

Further to this line of reasoning, we would add that settling for local particularities does grave disservice to sociology as a discipline – a discipline that due to its current fascination with difference and self-contained contentment with incomplete analyses has heaped more prolific attributions of 'crisis' upon itself than ever before in its history. By striving for coherence and engaging in the systematic cross-analysis of contradicting accounts, New Zealand sociology can contribute to the proper revitalization of sociological inquiry. This is the type of difference it is worth trying to make.

Acknowledgements

The themes discussed in this piece are raised and elaborated in a more general and systematic fashion by John Holmwood in *Founding Sociology? Talcott Parsons and the Idea of General Theory*, (1996, London: Longman) and Gregor McLennan in 'Post-Marxism and the "Four Sins" of Modernist Theorizing' (*New Left Review*, 1996, # 218:53-74).

In Search of Sociological Distinctiveness

Michael Pickering

One of the problems which first strikes anyone coming to New Zealand sociology and cultural studies from outside the country is their lack of distinctiveness. The basis of their understanding of 'culture and society' relations is largely derivative. They lack a sense of their own theoretical locatedness and their own key problematic in relation to that, centred in any social philosophy or sociological school particular to New Zealand and emerging from its own 'culture and society' relations, conceived both locally and globally.

The problem, at least as it seems to an outsider, is not one of empirical evidence and analysis. It is rather that the basis for considering what is socially and culturally specific to New Zealand both in itself, and in its various but also specific relations with the rest of the world, consists of models and theories taken from elsewhere, and particularly from European and North American sources. This is not necessarily a problem in itself, for such borrowings have always been characteristic of the social sciences and have often added to their development. The problem arises when concepts and theories tend to be adopted, taken over, rather than adapted and made over. It also occurs when, despite the admirable work that has actually been done, insufficient attention is given to the ways in which what is taken over is relevant to the relatively local evidence and analysis.

What the study of 'culture and society' relations should always remind us is that the borrowings of

concepts and theory entail the enhancement of critical transformations if they are to have a vitalising influence on what is studied and how it is studied within any particular social and cultural context. In this sense, the promise of a distinctively New Zealand sociology and cultural studies has not been fulfilled.

What would this consist of? There are at least three important steps that might be taken. Firstly, developing a distinctively New Zealand sociology and cultural studies would involve working more actively with the recognition that the transmigration of symbolic forms, along with the difficult negotiation of the formative practices associated with them and the forms of life mediated by them, is one of the characteristic features of historical modernity. It is characteristic in the sense that making sense of symbolic forms and practices is not limited to the groups and communities with whom those forms and practices in some way originate. It is also central to the ways we view cultural diversity and 'difference'. While the problems of inter-cultural understanding which follow from this are rarely straightforward, processes of borrowing, secondary-signification and conceptual reworking, of the relocation, transformation and recontextualisation of cultural and intellectual materials, occur today on an increasingly widespread scale.

Secondly, it would involve working with the recognition that it is not so much the distinctiveness of New Zealand which is what counts, especially when this arises as a chimera of the nationalist imagination, but rather the distinctiveness of its cultural borrowings, and the adaptations, re-assemblings and mutations which ensue. It is these which should constitute the objects of study of New Zealand sociology and cultural studies, or

at least be more centrally placed within them. This is not to ignore or sideline the relative distinctiveness of any particular social grouping or cultural tradition within the New Zealand mix, but it is to suggest a re-centring of such relative distinctiveness within the mix, and an ascendant rise of the complex question of cultural mix on the agenda of social and cultural analysis. It is also to reject the idea that the problem of sociological derivativeness should be overcome by concentrating on what is most distinctive about a society, for this would be to operate within untenably exclusive parameters.

The third point follows from this, for in the short term what should be distinctive about New Zealand sociology and cultural studies are neither their analytical methods nor their theoretical models, but rather what in relation to their objects of study they do with what they have derived, methodologically and theoretically, from elsewhere.

It is only in this way that they would be able to resist three illusions: the illusion of wholly indigenous solutions, the illusion that extraneous models and theories can be applied directly to 'culture and society' relations outside of the contexts in which they have been developed, and the illusion of a universalism of sociological knowledge.

This short note is intended to be provocative, and any fuller response to the invitation to contribute to this forum would obviously add a number of important qualifications. But the problem it identifies is one which seems a real and abiding one for those working in sociology and cultural studies when they arrive in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and start looking around at what has been achieved in these areas of enquiry and analysis. It is real and abiding in the sense that the need

always to attend to what is going on elsewhere distracts from the need to develop concepts and models appropriate to what is going on in the society you are studying. Certainly, to move towards the break with other schools and traditions of sociological thought is always a difficult, indeed a momentous task. All I am pointing to here, as a way of thinking about how that move may be initiated, is to act on and work with your own generative structure of feeling, now, there, on the cusp of a new century, about what seem to be the most compelling and troublesome features of past and present as they stand in relation to the future, and to the future of the world as you stand in relation to it. The steps I am suggesting, with all the temerity of an outsider, turn around the modification, transmutation, even in the end the reversibility of symbolic forms, as they move from place to place, and around what can be learnt from these processes in sociological practice.

The significant way forward would then be to concentrate, at least initially, on what occurs in the in-between space involved in taking and making over concepts, models and theories from elsewhere. When this is done with respect to what is specific about a particular set of 'culture and society' relations, it is a fascinating process, for it not only says so much about the relations to which they are then applied, but also shows that the vitality of the basic tools of sociology and cultural studies lie in their flexible transformations. The promise of New Zealand sociology and cultural studies lies in this in-between space of hermeneutic negotiation, manoeuvre and recontextualisation, but it is a promise it has yet to fulfil. It is only by attending more to this space that they could become truly distinctive, and maybe develop new models and theories for themselves.

Summoning Sociology:
Response To A Beckoning Finger

George Pavlich

..the profile of Mount Kilimanjaro rises spectacularly out of the distance, its crags unfamiliar but indescribably beautiful. It heralds an experience of being amidst a departure, a move away from familiar Southern African plains into, for me at least, the unfamiliar accents of my British Columbian destination. Over the years, the departure brings with it profound, even if inevitable, longings that come and go while negotiating shades of displacement...

At last, the swells of the Pacific Ocean break on the shores of Aotearoa/New Zealand; a first glimpse is coloured by the green hills that roll gently into the Auckland sprawl. The accentuated light that mirrors fertile land, dark clouds and bright sunlight propels one again into horizons of unfamiliarity...

The snow falls gently into the small window I have made betwixt my scarf and tuque, clouding the night that opens before me as sheer cold. The squelch of snow beneath is remarkably audible against the muted tones that trace out anew what appears foreign...

The signalling landscapes could be substituted, but I use them here to summon a version of sociology; my sociology which is also not mine (and to be sure the remainder makes for important differences). This paradoxical my provides several openings from which to narrate a practice that could betoken one logos of socius, a way of speaking to undecided and changing

modes of association. Mine, or perhaps mining seams of thought that continuously search for elusive promises of just companionship, solidarity and democracy akin to open friendship.

Departures, and the associated negotiations of passages from familiar to unfamiliar apparatuses of thought, remain an important practice for this mining. Standing amidst the illusory comforts of textual formations posited upon practices once so strange, but now familiar, should not allow tyrannical closures. No doubt, to speak is to unify, in part at least. However, there are totalitarian dangers that coalesce around any attempts to make contingent enunciations serve as necessary, fixed, or inevitable totalities. The heterogeneity required to utter statements that claim unity might equally serve as the raw material for a logos of socius unconcerned with the sanctity of a given present, but with critical transformations of historically identifiable dangers that reside therein. The dissociation of texts gathered into unities, or seemingly fixed constellations of signs, belies the shifting practices of a deconstructive sociology. Not destruction, not elimination, not extermination; instead, it is precisely resistance to the authorised fixing of texts that licensed the gas chambers, the tyranny of apartheid, the tragic closures of ethnic cleansing, and so much more.

Focusing critical attention on such heterogeneity may refuse demands to serve the technocratic, applied realities as authorised by one or other party line. It is not a matter of deferring to this or that authority, be it the dulled bleats of free-market economists, the crest-fallen solemnity of social liberals in search of renewed agency, the twitter of those who uncritically laud postmodern

pastiche, or the ongoing condemnations of those who ordain themselves as the new guardians of Marxism. There is in some of these, instead, the spirit of a different sociology ... a sociology that narrates its stories from within a given genealogy, but seeks to transgress previously authorised limits, realities. Its practices try to prevent any textual closures by relentlessly pursuing new forms of textual and procedural legitimacy. The practices are without end; situated departures that decline the comforts involved with fixed closures, such as hiding behind dangerous shelters of universality or inevitability. Another quest is to open up and prevent any power-knowledge relation – any identity formation – from closing itself off as necessary, inevitable, beyond change, etc. At stake is, perhaps, a continuous departure: Aurevoir!

Positivity, Reflexivity, Indigeneity.

Gregor McLennan

There is, I feel, a 'new positivity' within sociological discourse today. This does not amount to a full rehabilitation of positivism in any doctrinal sense, but it does represent at least three rediscovered impulses: a) the aim to say something about what is going on in the world today as well as, or even instead of, dwelling upon the dilemmas of interpretative reflexivity; b) the sense of the need for greater consensus amongst serious observers and critics about the state of empirical understanding and the theoretical categories which encompass it; and c) the desire to put those results to progressive and effective use in the public realm.

This still leaves a lot for sociologists to disagree about, but even characterised so vaguely, it strikes me that our discussion in these pages clearly falls more within the 'new positivity' mode than in the sometimes querulous and nebulous 'crisis of sociology' genre. Indeed, on encountering the stronger formulations in Carl's vocationalism, or in Maureen and Steve's unqualified cognitive universalism, or in Tom's revival of Comptean expertise as the guardian of progress, and even in Georgina's (after Brenner) 'factual' anti-capitalism, I confess I found myself warming again to the virtues of self-critical reflexivity! But still, this positivity is on the whole salutary and interesting, and it helps us think about the respects in which sociology needs to be defended as well as the respects in which we might countenance its demise.

As Charles rightly implies, we should not be too negative about Sociology as an institutionalised academic profession, whether in New Zealand or abroad. Many of the problems that we anguish about are simply 'structural' problems widely shared throughout the human sciences, indeed throughout academia as a whole (including the more orthodox sciences) – problems of student recruitment, jobs-relevance, curriculum spark, destabilisation of the canons, fragmentation of expertise and inclination, academic commodification/proletarianization, and so on.

Secondly, despite what many people say, I think sociologists and sociology are more prominent, not less so, in the public sphere. Its typical findings, terms, concepts and styles of thought, as Giddens and others have noted, are evident throughout the discourses of social policy, training and business, counselling, journalism and serious TV, and even, yes, everyday consciousness. The impact of sociological thinking on a range of other academic pursuits once thought superior or radically different – science and technology, psychology, geography, economics – has also been very significant. And despite still-continuing turf-wars, a strenuous sociological strand has continued to prove quite central within discourses which have only very recently threatened to overwhelm and replace it – cultural studies and media studies above all, but also postcolonialism and postfeminism.

Thirdly, confirming Carl's main point from the British perspective, dependency on Economic and Social Research Council recognition for higher degree funding and for large scale project monies has, whatever its downside, at least ensured that sociology graduates do

come out of their studies well clued-up in the combined 'skills' of analysis/conceptualisation and research, and this still looks good by comparison with the one-sidedness of a range of other university pathways.

Yet Sociology in any narrow institutional sense can only be defended so far. We all know very well the utilitarian and administration-centred causes of the growth of 'the discipline' in the first place, and we also know, and are often required to voice, the sometimes absurdly conservative and sectarian tendencies associated with defending 'our' disciplines. Equally, even if a new positivity is emerging, the element of irony and scepticism injected by interpretative critiques of 'legislative' sociology has been important – not a debilitating nuisance – keeping alive within sociology a necessary anthropological and philosophical spirit of enquiry.

It could be, then, that sociology in a generic sense could perfectly well thrive in the absence of departments of Sociology as such. Of course, the condition for such postmodern nomadic disciplinary subjectivity is that funding and recruitment machines must be accommodating to organisational shifts of that kind. Intellectually, though, we very often are talking about 'the human sciences' when we are talking about the pros and cons and tasks of 'sociology'. Tom explicitly says this, whilst Michael brackets together 'sociology and cultural studies', and Maureen and Steve could be talking about social theory generally rather than sociology specifically.

A further thought – pitched somewhere between the defence and the demise modes – is that on many questions about the identity, prospects and future of

sociology, we need to be deflationary, or at least to shift target slightly to the people rather than the discipline. 'Sociology' as such does nothing, enlightens no-one. Sociologists do, or don't. Georgina goes for the jugular here, repeating the old and powerful interrogation: Whose side are you on, you sociologists, when capitalism is no longer denied by anyone anywhere in the world, and when it is hurting many, home and away? At the same time, whilst it would be depressing to think that few sociologists will respond to this call, it cannot be right to demand that all of us devote ourselves to exactly the same matter in exactly the same way. Sociology is a terrain and an ethos, not something that can be ideologically galvanised in any uniform and directive way. All to the good, in my view, if anti-capitalism can be widely revived, and generally if more explicit and developed theoretical/ideological allegiances come to the fore. But this is a matter of contingent struggle amongst people and discourses, not essentialist disciplinary identification. We should expect less, not more, of the disciplinary terrain, and more, not less, of the people involved.

Talking of essentialist identification, what of the prospects of a specifically New Zealand sociology? It would be good to hear the response of people still in the country on this issue, since the exiles clearly think that this is simply a matter of getting your act together. Thus: Discover Latin America! Market the brand! Get a vision! Flay the rich! Forget (too much) Difference! There's no reason in principle why some of this couldn't happen, and actually (inveterate pluralism creeping in here), several of these different priorities can surely be pursued simultaneously. Note, though, that Charles really hits a nail on the head when he talks about critical mass. If we

want sociology to be publicly effective, then substantial collaborative and empirically-orientated research is a *sine qua non.*

In the mid-90s, I more than once proposed to my colleagues what I thought would be an exciting large-scale collective project: the Massey sociology of the 'New' New Zealand. There were sincere nods of approval in principle, and an Albany wing of the venture did take off; but the dominant sense was that the claims of individual research, teaching and scholarship made such a project impractical. Being a bookish and chalkface person myself, I could well understand this, up to a point. But it was the wrong line to take, and now the geographers and others are doing some of that work instead.

What, finally, about the oft-stated, and reflexivity-rather than positivity-minded, claim that an 'indigenous' sociology must perform some kind of mental overthrow of Eurocentric concepts in order to somehow become authentic and postcolonially grown up? Is that still an issue, and if so, how is it being played out? Michael's statement in this debate to the effect that New Zealanders cannot simply take over concepts developed 'elsewhere' sounds like a version of the more militant argument for socio-affective difference in intellectual comprehension, though I still find it rather perplexing in his argument, as elsewhere. According to Maureen and Steve, whether here or there, once a useful category is articulated, it is potentially useful every elsewhere, and I think I agree (I'd better, since they cite me as an influence, though that is neither here nor there).

REVIEWS

Ariel Salleh, 1997 **Ecofeminism as Politics: Nature, Marx and the Postmodern.** London, Zed Books, 208p. $39.95.

Reviewed by Richard M. Fisher

Ecofeminism emerged in the 1970s as an attempt to link the harmful effects produced by the domination of nature with the way in which that domination is related to the domination of women. At first blush, such an attempt is intuitively appealing, raising as it does concepts of 'mother earth' and the feminisation of nature. At its most basic level, ecofeminism is a non-hierarchical sociology which attempts to radically restructure political and social institutions so as to eliminate constricting dualisms, particularly superior male/inferior female, and superior human/inferior nature. Much of the focus of ecofeminism is upon the necessary integration of nature and culture, and of mind and body.

The importance attached to that integration varies among authors. Consequently, ecofeminism has come to mean different things to different people, and there is presently a lack of consensus concerning its central tenets. Some contemporary researchers in the field, most notably Vandana Shiva[2], emphasise the importance of incorporating the experience and culture of third world women into any attempt to globalise the environmental ethics of ecofeminism. These authors believe that third world women, working in harmony

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[2]   See, e.g. Shiva, V. 1988, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development.* London, Zed Books.

within local ecosystems, have been the most successful people in realising a truly sustainable interface between humans and the environment. In contrast, other feminist writers[3] believe that the philosophy and institutions of Western tradition have merit in ecofeminism analysis, offering various degrees of useful scientific discourse and enquiry, including much of the development of contemporary ecological research.

Another controversial issue in ecofeminism analysis is the extent to which its proponents are prepared to acknowledge that the separate reality of women does not necessarily imply that all women share the same reality. In fact, people live in various contexts, and therefore it is arguable whether ecofeminism is of universal applicability. The most expansive role for ecofeminism, and the one which may illustrate its most tantalising promise is to develop a significant liberationary theory that will permit a truly multidimensional interconnectivity among peoples which can be used to overcome all forms of oppression.

It is into this daunting global arena that Ariel Salleh has chosen to step. In her strong position piece, Salleh advocates a global ecofeminist perspective in which importance is attached as much to concepts of global sustainability as to gender justice. She does so successfully, subject to some minor caveats outlined below.

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[3] Perhaps the most noteable among them being Biehl, J. (1991), *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics.* Boston, MA: South End Press.

In the first portion of the book, Salleh offers a crisp and succinct global perspective on the first two decades of ecofeminism. The sources which she cites are a cogent summary of the holistic, integrated sensibilities of women and women's appreciation of nature which have legitimised ecofeminism as a cogent voice in ecological debate over the last two decades. This is a good reference source for those interested in the history of the global ecofeminist movement.

In summarising current ecofeminist discourse respecting the environment, Salleh attempts to resolve one of the central criticisms of ecofeminism, that it is essentialist in nature. That criticism is predicated on the view that ecofeminism furthers women's oppression by having to rely on the attribution of feminine characteristics to the environment in order to build consensus and to provide legitimacy. Salleh avoids this dilemma to some extent by advocating a multi-dimensional rather than linear relationship between women and nature in which women are argued as having an intuitive, 'indigenous knowledge' of the environment which melds in a seamless fashion concepts of earth, sex, and women's experience of exploitation.

Salleh argues that women's special knowledge respecting the environment is paralleled by the indigenous knowledge of both men and women living in exploited, subsistence economies. Residents of such marginalised realities are subject to patriarchal capitalist policies which are removed from direct nexus to the environment, as a result of which there is no vested interest in those policies to avoid or mitigate environmental degradation. The unfortunate result is that

exploited groups which are the most likely to have direct knowledge of the principles of practical environmental stewardship are denied the right to exercise it.

Salleh invokes the continuum of human experience, from feminism to culture to planet as the springboard to find a route to global environmental sensibility. The next portion of the book teases out the link between the exploitation of women and other marginalised groups in the context of current environmental practices, including such disparate fields as land use, green technologies, and *in vitro* fertilisation. Salleh argues, for example, that the exacerbation of prior gender inequities occurs as a by-product of green technologies, whereby labour intensive but nonetheless sustainable traditional agricultural practices in third world countries have been replaced by short-term intensive technologies which maximise agricultural return at the cost of increased violence and discrimination against women. To counter this, Sallah recommends a 'barefoot epistemology' which is related to the full breadth of human experience. The role of third world women is particularly important in this regard, possessing as they do the 'moral authority' of their communities and shared experiences of exploitation and suffering.

In a chapter entitled 'when feminism fails', Salleh outlines the ways in which feminist discourse originating primarily in the north needs to address more explicitly the ethnic and class schisms inherent in north-south dialogue, by incorporating third world and indigenous realities. In particular, Salleh argues that ecofeminism is an attempt to bring environmental awareness to main stream feminist dialogue, so as 'to help equality feminists

see how their emancipatory dreams assist capitalist patriarchal colonisation and environmental degradation'.

In the last part of the book, Salleh offers a global view of ecofeminist politics. In so doing she transcends the nescient and proximate goals of equality sought by other feminist teachings, particularly liberal feminism, which she argues leads to limited and token accredited elites. Salleh attempts to bring into the gender fold concepts of class, age, race, religion and nation which in their totality legitimise and give coherence to ecofeminist historical agency. Salleh argues that to ignore the holism which ecofeminism affords is to unwittingly fuel capitalist patriarchy and its by-products of environmental degradation. In this sense, Sallah sees ecofeminism as a type of 'reflexive anthropology' which aims to bring a consciousness of feminism to environmentalism, and vice versa.

This is a book of impassioned advocacy for a global, heuristic view of ecofeminism. As such, it cannot be recommended as a balanced introduction to the subject.[4] Other potentially complementary views of holistic ecology are given only cursory attention. In particular, Salleh dismisses recent developments in the field known as 'deep ecology' as of 'little political effect' and describes its literature as being largely 'mysogynistic'. This is almost certainly an unfair assessment. Deep ecology encourages egalitarian attributes on the part of humans to all the identifiable entities with which we share the ecosphere, including living and non-living

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[4] For a good collection of essays offering a variety of viewpoints respecting contemporary issues in ecofeminism, see instead Warren, K.J. (ed) (1994) *Ecological Feminism*. London: Routledge.

components. The goals of deep ecology are not necessarily incompatible with ecofeminism. On the other hand, it is not entirely clear in what place in multidimensional living space deep ecologists aspire to have us reside, or in practical terms how we are to get there. As that field and concepts of environmental ethics develop, ecofeminism may offer an alternative, more immediate resolution of the thorny dualism respecting theory and practice.

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Ian Culpitt, 1999 **Social Policy and Risk**. Sage, 180p. NZ$39.95.

Reviewed by Jane Higgins
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How is it that neo-liberalism has so effectively gained and defended the high ground of common sense in the social policy debates of the nineties? And why, in the austere climate of individual autonomy generated by this success, have the traditional concerns of social policy gained so little traction? In crafting an answer to these questions Ian Culpitt sets out to explore risk as one of the key organising principles of neo-liberalism and, in the process, to offer a path by which social policy theorists can re-enter a debate from which, he suggests, they have been largely excluded.

Culpitt argues that because social policy theorists, welfare state defenders and social democrats have failed to move their critiques beyond the level of normative epistemology they have failed to engage neo-liberalism

in effective debate. In other words, arguments at the level of ideas alone, and in particular ideas about 'what ought to be' rather than 'what is', are ineffectual in the face of neo-liberalism's claims on rationality, 'common sense' and the apparent obviousness of 'practical and manageable' solutions. Culpitt argues that 'exposing and challenging [neo-liberal] beliefs, while important, has not altered the ideological power of the welfare reform agenda. It will be important to find other 'tools' to comment upon and challenge this agenda' (p.14). To find these tools, Culpitt advocates taking the welfare debate beyond the purely epistemological to examine the 'messy realm of practices and relations and the compromised, corrupted, partial ways in which these entities ['neo-liberal rationality', the 'spirit of capitalism'] inhabit the real world' (Garland, 1997:199 cited in Culpitt, p.1). The tools most readily to hand to undertake this kind of analysis lie, he suggests, in Foucault's thoughts on governance and in the governmentality literature generated by these ideas. What is required is attention to the mechanisms of neo-liberal rule and the practices and arts of government by which this rule is produced.

Culpitt is primarily interested in the way in which certain understandings of risk, 'as threat rather than happenstance' (p.51), operate as organising principles for neo-liberal governance, especially in the arena of welfare reform. Practices that are fundamental to the neo-liberal project, contracting in particular, are investigated here with attention to the ways in which these are now structured around minimising risk rather than, in the welfare context, the more traditional pursuits of justice and the meeting of need. 'Risk' argues Culpitt, 'is structured into the very core of the neo-liberal contractual society' (p.55). This leads into a discussion

about the advent of professional and bureaucratic contracts and various practices associated with this including the rise of discipline-based expertise, of statistical analysis and of the categorisation of populations, especially populations of the 'deviant'. These latter, in the neo-liberal environment, have come to include 'the welfare dependent', a group constructed through these practices as 'other', and 'dangerous other' at that, in so far as they fall outside the calculable safety of the contract relationships that characterise neo-liberal social relations and position individuals as consumers, employees, managers, investors and so forth. Diminishing the risk (or threat) that the 'welfare dependent' pose requires that they enter into coercive contractual relationships as 'clients' subject to the surveillance of the professional gaze of case managers.

In the light of this scene setting analysis that explores risk as a central feature of late modernity, and of neo-liberalism in particular, Culpitt moves on to consider and critique the work of critical theorists such as Habermas, and theorists of risk, particularly Beck but also Giddens and Douglas. Chapters on citizenship and the 'death', or at least reinvention, of the social under neo-liberalism, on Beck's influential analysis of risk and on Honneth's 'politics of recognition' explore both the limitations and the possibilities that this theorising brings to refashioning the welfare debate. Throughout, Culpitt is looking for ways to attack neo-liberalism 'from *within* its presumptions – which are varied reifications and valorisations of risk' (p.105). Such an approach is necessary, he argues, because neo-liberalism is not 'just a political philosophy' that can be challenged at the level of normative debate about needs and rights. It is, rather, the 'side, back and middle of the whole canvas', a

canvass upon which certain categories, such as welfare dependency, are inscribed prior to any specific individual become a 'welfare client'. Neo-liberalism is, in other words, 'a totalizing and normative political epistemology – a sophisticated Foucauldian set of governmental "practices" waiting to be deconstructed' (p.161). This book is a call to social policy theorists to do this work of deconstruction, particularly through constructing a genealogy of risk.

This is a tantalising if difficult book. Tantalising because it is a complex philosophical reflection that promises a possibility, at least, of creating a breach in the bulwark of neo-liberalism. The chapters on citizenship and the public sphere, and on Honneth's work in attempting to re-establish a 'logic of the social' provide particularly interesting discussions that build on the Foucauldian work of the earlier chapters to offer promising directions forward.

The book is, thus, an invitation for social policy theorists to proceed from the philosophical groundwork offered here, to the concrete, that is, to an investigation of the specific practices of neo-liberal governance. This concrete analysis is not the task of the book itself and that is not Culpitt's aim here. This means that there is little of the concrete in the discussion throughout and this is one of the reasons why the book is rather difficult. The discussion is not strongly located in either time or space; there are few examples of specific welfare state contexts and, although the argument concerning the development of neo-liberal governance is often historical it is not clearly positioned in historical time. What is offered instead is a complex working together of the ideas of key social theorists whose thinking is increasingly being

recognised as insightful for the discipline of social policy. Comments on the blurb, that the book will be a useful introduction for students and others to some key thinkers in social theory are perhaps a little optimistic. The discussion is likely to be a struggle for those not already familiar with the work of Foucault, Habermas, Beck, Giddens, Fraser and others. On the other hand, this book will, it is to be hoped, allow those who are familiar with these theorists to take up the challenge posed here.

Reference

Garland, D., 1997. 'Governmentality' and the problem of crime: Foucault, criminology, sociology, *Theoretical Criminology,* 1(2):173-214.

David Robinson (ed.), 1999 **Social Capital in Action.** Wellington, Institute of Policy Studies, 110p, NZ$25 (plus NZ$10 p&p - international only).

Reviewed by Ruth McManus
Sociology Programme
Massey University.

This little book is the second produced by the Institute of Policy Studies on the topic of 'social capital'. Social capital is a theoretical label given to the bridge between state and civil society. Regarded as the heir to Durkheim's 'social cohesion', it was developed to analyse the lynchpin role of voluntary associations. Since its rise in popularity, 'social capital' has sparked much controversy. What exactly does it mean? What can it tell us? Is it useful? These questions have inspired the

Institute of Policy Studies in Wellington to analyse this term more rigorously. Their first publication on the subject '**Social Capital and Policy Development**' (Institute of Policy Studies, 1997) highlighted the question of its practical value. The Institute then organised a conference for community representatives from around New Zealand and asked How useful is the term 'social capital?' Participants were given a working definition of social capital and asked to assess its practicality. '**Social Capital in Action**' is the outcome of that process. Authors assess social capital in terms of their own professional expertise in community relations.

The collection is made up of an introduction and eight chapters, split into three sections: 'strategies for using social capital', 'locality case studies', and 'voluntary associations'. The introduction summarises the methodology used and gives brief chapter outlines.

Part one gives accounts of how social capital can be generated through direct community participation. Chapter two is an inspiring reflection on the development and impact of Tu Tangata programmes in Wainuiomata. Tu Tangata involves the local community in education by bringing community members into the classrooms to support and guide children in their journey through the education system. This project's success builds social capital through community self-determination. In chapter three, Shalema Witten-Hanna uses the Waitakere City's West Coast Plan process to identify strategies and procedures which seem to foster and restrict the development of social capital in real life situations. From this she concludes that Government has to trust the community, give it self-determination, let it lead initiatives, and fiscally support it if social capital is to be

generated effectively. So, section one outlines the conditions that should foster social capital.

Part two focuses on initiatives where people have been put in place (often through government initiatives) to act as community co-ordinators to integrate formal and informal spheres. In chapter four, John Cody understands social capital as a definable procedural method that can build links between the state and community. He outlines a community-focused initiative, Porirua Health Partnership (PHP) working to improve co-ordination of and access to health care in Porirua. Barriers between services and communication difficulties between service providers, services, and clients were identified. PHP co-ordinated all these using a 'social capital' process model (information exchange; expectations and obligations; norms and sanctions; mandate; and organisation). Despite gains in community health care uptake, PHP is vulnerable as it depends upon constantly reviewed fiscal support. Chapter five ratifies the role of a co-ordinating position to recuperate social capital. Marg Gilling describes how a Rangitiki rural community has experienced tiredness, depression and a betrayal of trust in the last 15 years of economic restructuring. This has lessened the practical and psychological ability for people to come together voluntarily, so social capital has dropped. Even though a community facilitator has been appointed on the recommendations of a MAF report, the position is under-funded and insecure. Section two uses the practical experiences of small-scale projects to ratify the necessary conditions identified in section one.

Part three focuses on the experiences of two national voluntary organisations in their attempts to work with new policy strategies for health in New Zealand. In

Chapter six, Florence Trout argues that large-scale voluntary organisations can and do have an impact upon social capital, and social capital does have an impact upon child healthcare. Trout describes the different ways in which Plunket fosters social capital through its voluntary social organisation, participation in collaborative community activities, professional volunteers, and health provision and support for mothers in their own environments. However these networks and provisions are inconsistent with and under threat from recent health policy initiatives in NZ. This has led to decreasing social trust and cohesion within Plunket as an organisation, and the community at large. Druis Barrett follows the thread of community health care provision. In chapter seven Barrett outlines the role of the Maori Women's Welfare League (MWWL) and the effect of 'top-down' policy initiatives. The National Office is 'caught between responding to needs and priorities as expressed by the grass-root membership and implementing a government contract' (p100, Robinson, 1999). Trust has been undermined internally, and between the league and its funding agencies. Barrett concludes that building social capital is only possible if people are allowed to manage their own projects with adequate support and minimal interference. Section three uses the practical experiences of national organisations to ratify the necessary conditions identified in section one.

Curry sums up by suggesting that the relationship between the state and civil society could be improved if the government took more care with its social capital institutions across the board. Picking up the question 'Can we communitise government?' from the floor discussion, Curry no more than hints that this may be a

viable method to halt the present drain on social capital and build up community reciprocity and trust again.

Overall, this collection has theoretical and political potential. However, such benefits are indirect. The individual accounts give insight; the section sequence offers critique and suggestions for present policy practices; but the editorial infrastructure dilutes the political and theoretical impact of the collection.

The individual accounts intrigued me. I learned of community programmes and projects that I never knew existed. I also learned about their struggles to cope with far-reaching changes in government support and community needs. From this I gleaned that voluntary associations are resilient social practices embedded in the New Zealand social landscape.

I came to understand why the Institute is so interested in 'social capital' when I searched through the 'Sociological Abstracts'. I could find no mention of social capital and discussions of community and voluntary associations revolved around empirical analyses of particular schemes, with little theoretical reflection. Voluntary associations are under-theorised at a time when voluntary associations are expected to play a more prominent role in civic relations. The Institute hopes to use 'social capital' to link contemporary institutional practices with policy theory. Despite the need for 'new terms' to understand voluntary associations, this practical analysis does not further this aim due to the overall lack of theoretical grounding, methodological limits and partisan application. The articles alluded to sociological concepts that lie behind their notions of community, voluntary associations and social capital. 'Anomie', 'cohesion', and 'group interaction' were

bandied about, but the theoretical connections were never articulated. As these links are presumed rather than constructed, the theoretical argument becomes circular. Nevertheless, the collection is useful (as an example of a particular perspective) for sociologists interested in voluntary associations and deliberative democracy. It also has passing relevance to classical social theory as it mainstreams the Durkheimian concept of social cohesion, all be it in a new guise.

Even though the Institute's aims are laudable, I am of the opinion that its methodology is counterproductive and undermines its political and theoretical potential. The Institute only drew contributions from government funded community initiatives, and all use a communitarian model to understand social capital. Hence the critical stance and solutions offered reflect only one perspective from within the community.

This limited perspective is further undermined when we examine the way 'social capital' is applied. The basic argument uses social capital as a 'litmus test' for government policy, concludes that present government policy lowers social capital because it under-funds and over-determines community relationships, ergo increased social capital will be achieved through increased funding and increased self-determination. However, these demands tend to negate each other. Using social capital in this mechanical way leaves this position open to charges of inconsistency due to an uncritical acceptance of a communitarian politics. The methodology and application renders the accounts limited and partisan. The overall effect is to weaken the force of the critiques, and diminish their political effectivity.

As well as its methodological weaknesses, the introduction and summary do little to support the collection. Many of the contributions rely on acronyms and terminology used within the field of government funded community initiatives. Even though the sections are clearly labelled, it takes quite a lot of reading between the lines to see how each author has approached and evaluated the concept re their own area of expertise. This gives the book an 'in-house' feel that also undermines its political and theoretical potential. To counteract this, more extensive evaluation of the contributions would have been welcomed. This publication could have been strengthened overall if the editor and commentator had pulled the contributions into already existing debates on social capital (Norton 1997, Putnam 1993) and been more explicit about the political implications of these 'practical reflections'. This would also extend the potential audience beyond those working within social policy and community organisations.

All in all, there are excellent accounts contained within this collection, with insightful criticisms of present policy procedures and directions. However, its contribution to the concept of social capital is limited because of both methodological and editorial flaws. This in turn weakens its political and theoretical potential. Despite these shortcomings, this collection is useful for those in voluntary organisations, social policy, and sociology.

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S. Boggess, and M. Corcoran with S.P. Jenkins 1999. **Cycles of Disadvantage?** Institute of Policy Studies, Wellington

A. Grimes and J. Tyndall, (eds) 1999. **Counting the Beat: Culture, Democracy and Broadcasting.** Institute of Policy Studies, Wellington.

Reviewed by
Chamsy Ojeili

Cant about the previously vaunted 'Reagan recovery' and the present American economic boom aside, from the late 1970s poverty in America has grown. In 1994, 38 million Americans were living in poverty, and 6 million of these were children under 6 years of age. The distribution of disadvantage is not even, and research indicates that a staggering 29% of African American children have spent two-thirds or more of their childhoods in poverty.

In the first of these papers issued by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) at Victoria University, Scott Boggess (Georgetown University) and Mary Corcoran (University

of Michigan) have approached the mammoth task (signalled in the 50-plus pages of tables and a hefty references section) of summarising and evaluating the studies of disadvantage in America. These researchers have been able to make use of newly available longitudinal data sets in order to properly address that oft-debated issue of the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Countering the optimism that held that America's remarkable social fluidity meant that background disadvantages would not translate into adult poverty, Boggess and Corcoran find that, while there is real diversity in children's experiences of poverty, mobility has been much overstated. The evidence of this and the resulting concern have been theoretically translated into five predominant models of the transmission of economic disadvantage: the economic resources model; the family structure model (for instance, the issue of single parent families); the correlated disadvantages model (that is, non-economic disadvantages); the 'welfare culture' model (emphasising deviant cultural factors and the fuel given to these by excessive government welfare intervention); and the social isolation model (for example, the high concentration of poverty in some neighbourhoods). Half of the Boggess and Corcoran paper is dedicated to a chapter by chapter assessment of each of these broad explanatory apparatuses.

The last twenty or so pages of the IPS paper are given over to a consideration by Stephen Jenkins (University of Essex) of the applicability of this collation of American research to the UK, with speculative concluding comments on the significance of these findings for New Zealand. Arguing that one must avoid

deploying mono-causal explanations of disadvantage, Jenkins contends that the UK data bears out Boggess and Corcoran's conclusions, and he maintains that, despite the lack of longitudinal data sets in New Zealand, the results are most likely generalisable to this country.

Another valuable and timely paper from the IPS, *Counting the Beat* is the published result of a conference on broadcasting policy in New Zealand, organised jointly by the IPS and NZ On Air and held in August, 1999.

New Zealand broadcasting is characterised both by relatively little local content and comparatively little government intervention. For the contributors to this paper, this situation is of concern. The domination of broadcasting by the commercial imperative has meant a move away from locally-made programmes of substance, which are much more costly, and the present state of affairs is detrimental to the search for a distinctive New Zealand cultural identity and indeed to democracy itself.

The paper's centrepiece is a contribution from Ireland's former Minister for Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht, Michael D Higgins. Higgins passionately puts forward a left-communitarian critique of the current situation and an alternative that is both intellectually impressive (the paper is scattered with names such as Charles Taylor, Benjamin Barber, and Raymond Williams) and persuasive. According to Higgins, the increasing presence of commodified entertainment 'product' and the corrosive influence of 'alleged technical managerial expertise' is a significant aspect of a contemporary social and cultural malaise that threatens to eclipse the public sphere and democracy, and to issue in anomie and violence. Against the slippage that has seen societies

thought of simply as economies, and against the decline of broadcasting, particularly television, into the fascination with crime, disaster, and pornography, Higgins champions a vigorous but modern public broadcasting intervention strategy. This strategy would seek to make possible active citizenship within a cultural community, and it would display a commitment to those great utopian aspirations to infuse everyday life with art and play.

These critical perspectives and hopes for the future look less like cries from the wilderness today with the arrival of the new government and, in particular, with the recent statements on arts and culture by Helen Clark and Marian Hobbs.

Bronwyn Elsmore, 1998 **Te Kohitianga Marama - New Moon, New World: The Religion of Matenga Tamati**. Reed, Auckland.

Reviewed by Paul Morris
Religious Studies
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There is a growing and increasingly sophisticated academic literature on the Maori 'prophets' and the importance they and their communities have played in our national history. Their spiritual significance in a world of changing Maori traditions, evangelical preachers and healers and Victorian biblical hermeneutics has not yet been systematically studied as theology. Nor have their followers been examined in the light of the important sociological insights concerning the formation

and structure of new religious movements. Such studies would reveal the ways in which 'native' preachers reconstructed Christian teachings in spiritually creative but clearly patterned ways, created specific forms of community and authority and developed new theologies of land and of the meaning of their colonial encounters.

Furthermore, these prophets have important parallels with other new religious movements in other colonial contexts. Christians, the military, settlers and missionaries created a dual system of believers, baptised native converts and European Christians, never quite the seamless communion promised. Across the empire indigenous groups rejected imperial Christianity and identified with biblical Jews with their own local versions of redemption from bondage and entry into the land of Israel.

In Aotearoa and elsewhere alongside the notable prophets were many others whose activities were deemed less newsworthy by the settler press or courts. This study by Bronwyn Elsmore attempts to recover one such prophet, Matenga Tamati (c1838-1914) and his Kohiti movement (new moon) which thrived around Wairoa in the early years of this century. The importance of these 'lost' prophets is that they indicate something of the local variety and duration of the religious responses to Christianity and allow us a fuller picture of these developments.

After Te Kooti's death in 1893 and following his own reported divine revelation, Matenga (Ngati Kahungunu) became the Ringatu prophet's self-proclaimed successor. In particular, he was given the dimensions and instructions on how to build a tabernacle/ temple

(tapenakara/temepara) for the Lord. He quickly developed a reputation as a healer and prophet and was accepted as Te Kooti's spiritual successor by Maori in the Wairoa area. And, just as the biblical King David had not be allowed to build God's temple because he had 'blood on his hands', so Matenga would build God's house in place of Te Kooti.

The amazing temple project, like its biblical precursor, would take seven years although unlike Solomon's temple it was not to be completed. Twelve huge totara trees (the twelve tribes of Israel) were selected, felled, transported from the hills to the coast, and after many setbacks, caused by the sheer scale of the task and in part by breaches in tapu, brought to Korito near Wairoa. The trees were to form the pillars of a huge open-air stadium that would be finished and ready for God's new revelation when the Ark of the Covenant was installed. After many years Matenga finally announced that it would be a later prophet after him that would complete God's house and usher in the new era of peace and blessing.

Matenga led his followers in what some came to call 'a second Ringatu' for a total of some twenty years and the movement lasted ten or fifteen years beyond that. On the beach at Korito where the great logs lay at a place known as Te Karauna (the crown) a meeting house was erected where Matenga healed and gave advice and regular services and rituals were conducted. The Kohiti based many of their beliefs on Matenga's intriguing and often original readings of the Old Testament in his attempt to understand then contemporary events in terms of biblical precedents. There are significant overlaps with Ringatu practices and

teachings, including starting holy days in the evening and marking off the first days of January and July. Whilst Ringatu observed the twelfth day of every month as holy, Kohiti's monthly observances celebrated each new moon with three days of karakia and prayer and asking for guidance. Apparently there was also harp playing in anticipation of the heavenly redemption to come. The monthly meetings required a contribution of 1/6 by each follower. The twelve pillars are still there on the beach today awaiting Matenga's successor and the building of the temple.

The biblical references in this study are problematic and the author seems unaware of the Victorian traditions of biblical exegesis and the missionary foci. At times she presents nothing less than a caricature of Old Testament teachings (e.g. on page 53) and at others is just plain wrong: for example, the biblical Joseph did not 'lead his brothers to the chosen land' (p. 40). The descriptions are much too general and more detail is required of biblical usage, of the specific karakia used, and of the ritual practices followed.

The literary and methodological style is unusual. It is often not clear whether the views reported are those of an informant or the researcher herself and claims about revelation are baldly stated ('God did', or 'it was revealed') in a literalist fashion which serves to undermine the essential historical narrative. The wholesale rejection of the value of the literature on new religious movements (p. 79) is lamentable as there is much that might well help to understand something of the form that Kohiti developed. Examples include Matenga's power structure, particularly that of his deputies, the ways in which his authority was legitimated

by Christian and Ringatu precedent but not assimilated by these external authorities, and the nature of the impact on an existing community of his particular community model and disciplines.

This book began life as a Massey University M.Phil thesis in the early 1980s and this material forms the basis of chapters on Kohiti in two of Elsmore's already published works. The current study while lengthier is repetitive in places and contains no new material or analysis. The present book is, however, attractively presented and has a number of excellent photographs and useful appendices, including an annotated guide to historical sources.

We still know much too little about the details of local Maori religious belief, teaching and practice, historical and contemporary. We do need additional primary materials but even more we need some account of the forms these movements took, the forces that shaped them, and the processes involved in their genesis, maintenance and, in most cases, decline. This involves historical, sociological, religious and theological analysis based on the parallels with other Maori and overseas movements. Bronwyn Elsmore does not do this, but she does deliver a truly interesting story and this accessible local labour of love will surely help to ensure that this fascinating prophet from Wairoa will not be lost.

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S. Chatterjee, P. Conway, P. Dalziel, C. Eichbaum, P. Harris, B. Philpott, R. Shaw, 1999. **The New Politics: A Third Way For New Zealand.** Dunmore Press, Palmerston North.

Reviewed by
Chamsy Ojeili

The notion of a 'third way' is no new political thing. The phrase has long been associated with those seeking a way between and beyond rampant capitalist and intrusive statist social formations. As neo-liberal confidence has gone into decline, and with the eclipse of both variants of socialist orthodoxy (Leninism and the Keynesian management championed by post-War social democracy), the contemporary left is struggling to forge a utopian alternative in the post-modern age. With respect to such a political aspiration, this excellent volume, by a number of progressive intellectuals both within and outside of the university, promises to fill a gaping intellectual hole in this country and to stimulate a much-needed debate. Cohesive (so much so, that a contributor by contributor review is not suitable), reflective, and challenging, *The New Politics* provides detailed consideration of all the major dilemmas (globalisation, monetary policy, industry, the public service) for the left in the present period. The book, that is to say, contains real political substance rather than merely social democratic sound-bites.

The big question, raised frequently in response both to the less than impressive aspects of Blair/Clinton domestic and foreign policy and to the sort of third way intellectual intervention offered by sociologist Anthony Giddens, has been whether the third way simply

amounts to an acceptance of neo-liberal commonsense, softened by nebulous appeals to the moods and tendencies immanent in civil society. Social democracy, critics have argued, will not be effectively revived by grafting communitarian, decentralist, and populist emphases onto a basically free-market approach. Painfully aware of this possibility, the contributors have set themselves the task of giving real content to the third way notion, taking enlightened stock of the past 15 years of reform, criticising the 'Washington/Wellington Consensus' – without, for all that, romanticising the past – and advancing practicable, social democratic alternatives for the contemporary period.

Part of the third way approach involves calmly charting the movement that has been made from the Keynesian consensus. We have today become accustomed to talk of globalisation, privatisation, market liberalisation, fiscal discipline, the increased power of finance capital *vis a vis* the state, and the entrenchment of private property rights. To greater or lesser extents, third way thinkers have come to accept the inescapability of the market, globalisation, a flexible labour market, and more targeted welfare, insisting that the way back to statist regulation is not only impossible but undesirable, given the intrusiveness and stifling uniformity that had often characterised the old Keynesian approach.

On the other hand, neo-liberalism, as it has played itself out world-wide, stands accused. We have witnessed sustained economic failure: a lack of research, development, and creativity, instability caused by short-term capital flows, burgeoning unemployment, poor growth, and overseas indebtedness. Socially, the neo-liberal record has also been unfortunate: a widening gap

between rich and poor, both within New Zealand and on an international scale; diminished solidarity and democracy, in favour of populist rhetoric and elitist/technocratic political solutions; damage to the fabric of the public sector, with fragmented administration, an obsession with costs over results, and an only short-term, economic reductionist orientation.

What, then, might be the contours of a revived social democratic response in this country? For these thinkers, there is a vital role for a confident, liberal state in building indigenous industry - tariffs, better employment relations around the idea of a real partnership in developing social capital, development of educational infrastructure. The state also needs to move to control short-term capital flows, to balance the containment of inflation with macro-economic stabilisation, to redistribute income (especially to families), and to extend civilised wages and working conditions. However, an equally important third way emphasis has been the necessary democratisation of civil society. Here, one finds a combination of accents on solidarity and the public good as well as on genuine decentralisation and recognition of the various levels of societal functioning – individual, familial, community, nation, etc..

The popular and community thrusts of the third way political venture are essential. A real third way, as the contributors insist, must be a new economic way – this guarding against the third way as a mere restatement of neo-liberalism. However, the book also makes it clear that a sustained social democratic rebuilding can only be part of a cultural and moral renewal or shift that takes as a fundamental basis the grass roots community and social organisational forms that emerged in response to

neo-liberalism's short but destructive reign over the last 15 years.

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T. Nichols, 1997 **The Sociology of Industrial Injury**. London, Mansell Publishing Ltd. (Originally published in Hardback. Paperback edition published in 1999, and now available in New Zealand for approximately $80.00 from university bookshops.)

Reviewed by John Wren
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The study of industrial injury is a Cinderella subject in many disciplines. In sociology, it tends to be overlooked as a useful mechanism for examining wider social forces and interactions. Theo Nichols, Professor of Sociology at Bristol University aims to challenge this perception and hopes to stimulate sociologists to take the subject seriously as a measure of social well being, and endeavours to show how the topic can usefully elucidate social structures and systems (p.210). He does this by using labour process theory to explain longitudinal fluctuations in industrial injury trends in British manufacturing between the 1970s and the 1990s, and in the Zonguldak coal-mining region of Turkey since the 1920s.

The book consists of 9 chapters, which are divided in to two parts. Part One presents a critique of traditional approaches to explaining differences in industrial injury rates, and introduces the political economy perspective,

which is used in Part Two to interpret the trend data that has been collected.

For those familiar with the subject area, the first thing that becomes apparent is the fact that the chapters largely consist of reworked material that has been published by the author in various places since the 1970s. In some books this can give rise to problems of textual continuity and relevance, which results in a book that does not flow and appears to lack focus. This is not the case here. Textual flow and relevance is maintained by the conscious but not overpowering use of Marxist philosophy and theory, which is combined with a subtle interweaving of a range of macro and micro issues such as ideology, law, business size, workers representatives and safety committees into the discussion. The result is a book where each chapter can be read separately, yet each contributes to the general argument that trends in injury rates reflect the flow of political and economic cycles, changes in the composition of the workforce and the level of union density.

Construction of the argument begins in Chapter Two with an extensive critique of the influential 1950s work of the Tavistock Institute and of Hill and Trist (1953) in particular, who suggested that taking work time off for injury represented a form of legitimate 'absenteeism'. In Chapter Three the 'apathy' thesis and idea of 'self-regulation', espoused in the 1972 Robens Report, is examined. Chapter Four focuses upon the psychologically based ideas of 'accident proneness' and the notion of 'human error' in a socio-technical system. Later in the chapter, economic analyses, where injury rates are treated as function of 'risk by choice' (Viscusi, 1983) are critiqued. The sociological accounts of

industrial injury by Dwyer (1991), Baldamus (1979) and Perrow (1984) receive attention in Chapter Five. The author concludes that workplace safety, irrespective of organisational forms – including worker co-operatives, has to be thought about in terms of resource allocation and the labour process and their location in the wider political economy. The key components of the labour process are the intensification of labour, union density, productivity, technology and the social relations of work. The influence of each these items upon the incidence of injury is scrutinised, using quantitative and qualitative data, in Part B of the book.

Part B begins with Chapter Six and the assertion that to accredit the decline in British manufacturing injury rates in the 1970s to the philosophy of 'self-regulation' and changes in the law and institutional policy is to simplistic. Rather changes in the rates of labour intensification, labour engagement (i.e. accession rate) and levels of investment can statistically explain over ninety percent of the variation in fatality rates. This notion is developed further in Chapter Seven, in the context of discussing the degree of influence that various forms of worker participation, levels of union density and business size have on injury rates. Nichols concludes that where health and safety arrangements are determined by management alone injury rates are highest, and injury rates are lowest where health and safety committees have high trade union representation and focus solely on health and safety issues (p.152-153). When it comes to injury rates and business size, Nichols argues that 'small is not beautiful' (p.158). This is because a linear correlation between injury rates and the size of the manufacturing unit is found to exist, with smaller units having higher injury rates than larger units,

irrespective of their place in any given organisational structure.

The next chapter, Chapter Eight, appears as an apparent anomaly in that the focus shifts from an examination of British manufacturing to an examination of injury rates in Turkish coal mining. For me, this chapter is the most powerful of all. Quotes from interviews with miners are used to illustrate how workers know the manifest dangers of their work, and have a clear perception of the existence of a relationship between the risk of an injury and productivity demands, technology, and different forms of management control of their work. The use of the qualitative material, along with an historical analysis of injury trends in the mines since the 1920s, provides a compelling account of how injuries are socially produced at the macro level.

Chapter Nine, the last chapter, completes the analysis by updating the discussion to include 1990s injury trend data, discusses the likely influence of European social law on Britain, and acknowledges the problems that exist with using official measures of injury. The conclusion is reached that the incidence of occupational injury in a society is a measure and function of the relative strength of capital and labour in the society. While injury rates have declined in Britain, the changes substantially reflect alterations in workforce and industry composition rather than an improvement in safety. Furthermore, it is argued that injury rates will be higher where there is a political economy promoting non-unionised small businesses with no institutional arrangements for effective worker participation in decisions about their health and safety. This is a description of New Zealand occupational health and

safety arrangements in the 1990s; the analysis does not bode well for New Zealand workers.

In summary, the beauty of this book is that it examines reasons for fluctuations in the incidence of injury in a clear, subtle and cogent manner using quantitative and qualitative evidence, from an unambiguous philosophical viewpoint. The author has something to say, and says it unequivocally. The author's clear and succinct discussion of the role of law, enterprise size, and health and safety committees in reducing occupational injuries clearly demonstrate the author's command of the material. The analysis provides a benchmark for any one in the future who may try to explain the trends in New Zealand occupational rates, which have recently been described by Feyer & Langely et al (1999). The book will be valuable for sociologists wanting to challenge students' 'common sense' understandings of everyday working life. Industrial injuries are not 'accidents' they are socially produced, and the rate of incidence varies according to changes in social structures and influence. For those interested in the sociology of work and industry, and other specialists interested in occupational safety, the book brings to together in one place a key set of sociological studies on the topic of industrial injury that have been undertaken by the author since the early 1970s. The Cinderella of industrial injury has been revealed as a useful focal point for studying the effects of social forces and structures on everyday working life.

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REVIEW ROUND-UP

Judith Davey, 1998, **Tracking Social Change in New Zealand: From birth to death**, Wellington, Institute of Policy Studies.

Chris Watson and Roy Shuker, 1998, **In the Public Good: Censorship in New Zealand**, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press.

Richard Thompson, 1998. **The Challenge of Racism: A discussion paper**, Christchurch, The Peacemaker Press, 119p, NZ$10 + $1 p&p.

Augie Fleras & Paul Spoonley, 1999, **Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous politics and ethnic relations in New Zealand,** Melbourne, OUP,.288p, ISBN: 019 558371 X, NZ$39.95.

Gregor McLennan, Allanah Ryan & Paul Spoonley, 2000, **Exploring Society: Sociology for New Zealand students,** Auckland, Longman.

Reviewed by Peter Beatson
Sociology Programme
Massey University

Preamble

As review editor, my primary function is merely to act as a pointsman. When books come down the line, I pull the lever and send them off to different destinations to be reviewed. I then collect the returning reviews and hand them over for publication in the journal. In this issue, however, I have decided to play a more hands-on role and do some reviewing myself.

I have two reasons for jumping temporarily into the driver's seat. On the one hand, there is a small backlog of books that were sent to us some time ago, but either no reviewer was on offer, or else no review materialised. In order not to keep authors and publishers waiting too long, I thought it best to dispense with formalities and do the job myself. On the other hand, a couple of books have come to my attention hot off the press that are of such potential interest to readers of this journal I thought they merited instant treatment.

The review round-up, then, is intended both to eliminate the backlog and to put readers in touch with some brand new titles. This is in line with our resolution of providing a quick turn-around for all review copies sent to *New Zealand Sociology*.

I hope these editorial review round-ups will not need to be a regular feature in the journal. It is preferable that reviews should come from a wide pool of experts in the subjects addressed by specific books. Unfortunately, potential members of that pool are often preoccupied with more pressing commitments, and it is not always easy to locate willing volunteers for reviewing duties, so we may from time to time revert to the 'round-up' expediency just to keep the trains rolling. I should add that we are open to unsolicited reviews as well. If you have read an interesting new book and would like to draw it to the attention of other *New Zealand Sociology* readers, you are welcome to submit a piece on it (500-1000 words) for consideration. We would prefer New Zealand books, but are not exclusively patriotic.

One final word. We would like if possible to make the journal slightly more interactive. At present we scatter

our bread on the water, but don't know who is eating it, nor what they think of the fare. If you have any views on the reviews we publish (or any other articles, for that matter) you are very welcome to air them in our pages. At the end of the review section in future issues, we shall allow space for any feedback we receive on reviews in previous numbers. Amongst other things, this will offer authors who feel their books were not given a fair go by reviewers a chance to put their own side of the story!
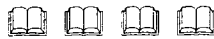
Tracking Social Change in New Zealand

This is the fourth in the 'From Birth to Death' series which began in 1985. The first two were published by the now-defunct Planning Council, the second two by the Institute of Policy Studies. Judith Davey has been involved in all four, and was the author of the third volume as well as the present one.

The series was launched to help implement the Planning Council's brief on social policy: to chart social trends in this country, highlight problem areas, reveal significant inequalities, trace the complex causal links between different sectors of society, and clarify policy issues. All this was underpinned by a drive to promote national well-being and eliminate glaring inequities, in line with the social democratic spirit of the old (and perhaps reviving) Welfare State.

In the preface to *Tracking Social Change*, it is pointed out that since the demise of the Planning Council there is no longer any co-ordinating agency within government capable of taking such an overview,

but it is hoped the present book will help fill the gap. (This aspiration may fall on more receptive ears today than it would have when the book was published in the heyday of neo-liberal anarchy.)

It is a massively quantitative reference work, laden to bursting point with statistics. In the first instance, these are drawn from the 1996 census, and provide a snapshot of New Zealand society as it was that year. The book is much more than an organised summary of key census data, however. It interlaces them with a wide range of other research findings that amplify, illustrate or qualify the raw census figures. Just as importantly, it looks back to previous census results from 1981, 1986 and 1991 in order to highlight major continuities and changes over the turbulent 15 years encompassing the Douglas/Richardson revolution.

In line with the 'From Birth to Death' theme adopted by the series since its inception, the daunting wealth of facts and figures is organised around the stages of the life cycle, starting off with the 0-4 group and working its way through the various tiers of the age hierarchy till we reach the 75 years and over category, the whole rounded off by synopses of fertility patterns at the start of the book and mortality trends at the end. Within each life cycle stage, the material is organised into three broad themes – household patterns, employment and well-being – which in turn contain a vast array of quantitative indicators, such as family composition, educational qualifications and hospitalisation rates.

This is not light bed-time reading, but is unquestionably very useful for those who need hard facts at their fingertips. For readers wanting to get the

general gist of the findings without wading through a quagmire of detail, a useful overall summary is contained in Chapter 10 'Policy Implications' and in the conclusion.

There is nothing particularly new and startling about the findings. Anyone reading this book knows already that there are major ethnic inequalities in this country, that we have an abnormally high suicide rate, that our track record on child health is rather dismal, that there are a growing number of lonely old ladies out there in the community and so on. We also probably know about the trends that the book's statistics reveal, such as the major blip in the economy that occurred around 1991, and our subsequent partial recovery. *Tracking Social Change* is useful, however, in that it clothes our general knowledge or hunches in hard statistics.

On the critical side, I feel this usefulness was severely impaired by the life cycle structure adopted by the series. By chopping the material up into discrete age compartments, then doggedly reporting on household circumstances, educational participation, work force status, alcohol consumption etc for each, important overall patterns get obscured. It is hard to see the wood for the trees. Age is certainly one key sociological variable, and there are some age-specific phenomena (like sudden infant death or poverty in old age) which need highlighting. There are other arguably more important variables, though, notably ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status, which remain constant over the life cycle and, I suggest, take precedence over age as determining factors.

As it is, readers are forced to dig out facts about Maori/Pakeha, male/female etc discrepancies and piece

them together for themselves. I know it is unwise to change horses in mid-stream, and that since the previous works in this series were based on age categories it makes sense, for purposes of comparison, to stick to the same format. Yet with the benefit of hindsight, it was not the most useful way to structure the material.

Even within the given classificatory framework, there is some rather odd pigeon-holing. Employment, for instance, gets a heading of its own, but is also treated in the discussions of households. Furthermore, for some reason education (which takes up quite a lot of space) is slotted in under the employment heading. To my mind it is a distinct category – but perhaps I'm now just nit-picking.

My other reservation about the book revolves mainly around chapter 10, where the implications for social policy are discussed. This discussion is very low-powered – I am tempted to say 'wishy-washy'. It amounts to little more than, for instance, saying the youth suicide rate is alarming and something should be done about it, or that policy makers should put their minds to the problem of an aging population. I recognise that the author's main task was the compilation of facts, and that their implications for state policy was left for others to figure out. It might perhaps have been better to have stuck with this purely quantitative job, and not strayed at all into vague generalisations.

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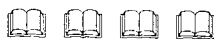
In the Public Good

I read *Tracking Social Change* out of duty. The next book on my list was a pure pleasure. In 1989, Paul Christoffel published an excellent survey of censorship in New Zealand entitled *Censored*. A decade on, Chris Watson and Roy Shuker have produced a new work on this endlessly fascinating and provoking subject, partly constructed on the foundations laid by Christoffel and others, but bringing the story up to date, introducing a wide range of local and overseas research findings, exploring the new range of technologies, art forms and substantive works that were not around ten years ago, and injecting their own laconic, conversational style into a subject often rendered otiose by the self-righteous rhetoric of fundamentalists and libertarians alike.

The book is organised around different media and/or art forms, focusing mainly on popular rather than high-brow culture. After an introductory chapter on the general significance of debates surrounding censorship (which really boil down to one lot of people craving libidinous kicks while another bunch wants to stop them), the authors work their way through film, videos, television, radio and pop music, print, video games and new technologies (satellites, cables, the internet and so on).

The text is rich in facts, from the personalities and views of various censors to survey results, but it wears its erudition lightly, entertaining the reader with colourful anecdotes, the authors' own encyclopaedic knowledge of pop culture and a host of visual illustrations. On the way, it presents and debates a number of key issues surrounding the vexed phenomenon of censorship,

coming back inevitably to the one core question – does spicy entertainment really do anybody (notably children) any harm?

The authors also expostulate engagingly from time to time at the sheer fatuity of those on both sides of the censorship debate. They take the mandatory swipe at the bureaucrat who decreed that the film *Ulysses* could be watched only by single-sex audiences, but they also mention the growing infantilism of pop culture consumers. Technology becomes ever more sophisticated – a triumph of human creative rationality – while the images it carries plumb new depths of banality. The troglodyte masses sit in slack-jawed rapture as the most brilliant technology devised in the history of the species parades the simulacra of their fellow humans bashing, bonking or piddling on one another (my words, not the authors).

The book is also right at the cutting edge of new social developments. For instance, it prophetically mentions the judicial headache threatening judges when they try to slap on a interdiction against name disclosure in their own country, while the name itself is being bandied around the internet. This review was written at the very time such an incident was being replicated in New Zealand (remember that overseas billionaire on a drugs charge who got his name suppressed, yet every cybernetically literate New Zealander had access to it?).

In short, the book is extremely informative, intellectually stimulating and fun to read. It is obviously a must for anybody with a specific interest in censorship or a more general enthusiasm for cultural studies. I have no

reservations about recommending it. Even so, there are two cautionary notes that perhaps should be sounded.

The first is probably a bit unfair. It relates to an organisational problem also mentioned in relation to Judith Davey's book. When faced with a mass of information and ideas, authors always have to wrestle at the outset with the logistic problem of constructing a set of thematic pigeon-holes, knowing well that by classifying their material one way, they risk obscuring patterns which would emerge more clearly with another system. There is also the danger of duplicating material.

Watson and Shuker had three rival structures on offer: they could have gone for themes (like 'freedom vs public good', 'how is "harm" measured?', etc), for a chronological presentation, or (their preferred option) for a medium by medium approach. The only problem with the latter is that as each new medium comes on stream in their book, they have to go back and re-visit historical eras already covered. social time keeps getting chopped up and recycled. So, too, do issues: that old perennial 'injurious to the public good' gets scotched in one chapter, only to leap back to life in the following ones. Thus, while their central structuring principle creates tidiness along one axis, it generates a certain amount of untidiness along others. You can't win!

My other quibble has to do with the authors' suspected partiality. They are writing about an age-old, almost Manichean struggle between the two rival principles that Nietzsche termed the Dionysian and the Apollonian. The one is rambunctious, pleasure-seeking and licentious; it is also potentially dangerous, cruel and destructive. The other is orderly, decent and puritanical;

it is also prudish, humourless, scared and life-denying. Although they attempt to be agnostic in this war between rival deities, one suspects Chris and Roy of secretly sympathising with the goatish gods of misrule. You don't have to burrow far below the surface to uncover an anti-censorship, libertarian streak.

To sustain this, they sometimes press their thumbs down on one side of the scales when research findings are presented, and they skirt around areas in which censorship may well be justifiable, as in time of war (when loose lips sink ships) or when specific social categories are denigrated. More generally, they might have engaged in greater depth with the vexed philosophical issues surrounding that endlessly contested term 'freedom', as classically espoused by John Stuart Mill. There are fish hooks in his *On Liberty* that Mill did not acknowledge, and these remain embedded in the text of the present book. As it happens, I agree entirely with the position the authors implicitly espouse, but I couldn't help feeling that the puritans got a bit of a raw deal!

The Challenge of Racism

When you pick up a book with a name like *The Challenge of Racism*, you expect to be plunged into a standard diatribe against white oppressors, and into an uncritical endorsement of radical Maori rhetoric, or else into a postmodern ethnic free-for-all where all cultural practices are accepted as equally valid and none, therefore, may be critically scrutinised. It was a relief to find that Richard Thompson's 'discussion paper' did not

fall prey to these reigning orthodoxies. The author has been challenging the repugnant phenomenon of racism for a half-century or more, so his credentials in this field are undeniable, yet this monograph demonstrates that you can be totally committed to principles such as social justice and mutual tolerance without having to abnegate your critical faculties, nor bow without protest to prevailing ideologies.

The book has nine chapters, which divide neatly into three broad themes. The first three chapters introduce readers to the phenomenon of racism in its historical, conceptual and human contexts. For instance, the distinction between 'race' and 'ethnicity' is explained. This in itself is fairly standard stuff (though necessary for beginners in the field), but Thompson from the outset signals his independence of currently 'correct' discourse by insisting on the biological component of ethnicity.

Most writers on the subject are so anxious to avoid the dangerously pseudo-scientific misuse of the term race that they insist on defining ethnicity in purely cultural and communal terms. This ignores something we all know in real life, that even when the ideologically safe term 'ethnicity' is employed, people usually have in mind some physical component, such as skin colour, facial features or at least shared biological ancestry. Though politically correct social scientists leave 'blood' out of their definitions of ethnicity, it is an essential ingredient for those who identify strongly with a specific ethnic family. Thompson acknowledges this, as he also recognises that racism is not the sole property of dominant ethnic groups: it may be practised just as noxiously amongst minority or colonised ones.

The next three chapters are devoted respectively to personal, institutional and cultural racism. The terms are explained, and the subjects are revolved in the author's hands to reveal their many facets. Once again, he is concerned to explore the workings of racism in all its aspects, not just as a monolithic adjunct of white power. He points out, for instance, that Maori cultural fundamentalism, linked with the myth of a pre-contact Golden age, is employed to bolster the privileged position of certain groups within Maoridom at the expense of others, while the ideal of biculturalism is sometimes used to promulgate and legitimise racist anti-immigrant attitudes. Thompson also critiques the notion that by definition Maori cannot be racist, since racism goes hand-in-hand with power. He points out that even if you accept this proposition, there are many situations in which Maori people do possess very real power, and are no more innocent of employing it to the disadvantage of other ethnic categories than are Pakeha.

By contrast, Thompson suggests that the (allegedly oppressive) monoculturalism of the Western tradition in fact embraces and encourages cultural pluralism and a spirit of eclectic intellectual enquiry. He also dares hint that the assimilationist policy said to have been spawned by the Hunn Report in the 1960s might well have been advantageous to Maori people, rather than (as is sometimes implied by the writings of Maori intellectuals) the agent of cultural genocide.

The final three chapters explore the notions of social pluralism and community. Particularly fruitful use is made of ideas drawn from the writings on communitarianism of Amitai Etzioni. Without going overboard for doctrinal postmodernism, Thompson stresses the potential

multiplicity of roles people are able to play in the contemporary world, and suggests that society is healthier when individuals and groups opt for 'differentiated' as opposed to 'undifferentiated' role identities. That is, while people accept their ethnic personae as one important defining dimension of their social existence, it is not the be-all and end-all. National solidarity is best generated by the overlapping and intersecting of a multiplicity of identities, which cannot happen when groups withdraw into segregated and mutually hostile camps, to which loyalty is sworn on the grounds of ethnicity alone.

My brief synopsis perhaps makes Richard Thompson sound more polemical than he actually is. What I would really like to stress is that he has the courage to pursue the sociological implications of his subject into every nook and cranny. This makes a refreshing change from much sociological writing about ethnicity by Pakeha liberals and Maori academics, who are prepared to be unremittingly analytical when it comes to white society, but demand that criticism be replaced by piety when one enters the world of the Maori or other ethnic groups.

Being myself a teacher, I see the main usefulness of this discussion paper as an adjunct to classroom debates about ethnicity and racism, although it will make stimulating, thought-provoking reading for anybody involved in the field of ethnic relations or social policy. It will undoubtedly ruffle a few feathers, though, particularly amongst those who regard their own cultural territory as too spiritual to be exposed to the clear gaze of Enlightenment reasoning.

The book is not aggressively abrasive, however. On the contrary, one of the pleasures of reading it is the tone of genial good sense which pervades the text. It is also illustrated enlivened by a host of pertinent snippets from newspapers down the years, which bring the author's points vividly to life, and put specific names and faces to his generalisations.

Now for a personal footnote to this review. Those newspapers I just mentioned take me back 40 years to when I was a first-year Sociology student at Canterbury University. One of the demi-gods around the place (i.e. university lecturers) was Richard Thompson, who had just recently set up the Sociology Department at Canterbury, and to whom the honour should go of being the Founding Father of the discipline in this country.

An annex attached to the Department was packed to the gunwales with newspapers he had been squirrelling away for future reference. We neophyte sociologists used to goggle at these mounting piles of newsprint, impressed beyond measure by the sheer quantity of the scholarly project they must represent, but harbouring secret doubts about whether Richard would ever be able to burrow through the material and put it to use. Four decades on, I greeted the numerous newspaper citations in *The Challenge of Racism* like old friends, dug up against the odds from an avalanche.

Richard Thompson is well into his retirement now, but I will take this opportunity of paying tribute to the academic pioneer who got the discipline of Sociology up and running in New Zealand. In particular, I would like to recall that it was he who, through his course on Race Relations, opened the eyes of the first generation of

student sociologists to the appalling iniquity of racial intolerance and persecution, against which he has fought throughout his life. what his present monograph shows is that you can be totally committed to a cause yet retain your sociological acumen. My reason for hammering this point will become apparent in the final review of this round-up.

Recalling Aotearoa

In this book we are still in the domain of ethnic relations, but if Richard Thompson's monograph offered a piquant appetiser, Fleras and Spoonley provide a massively replete banquet. This must be one of the most comprehensive (if not *the* most) comprehensive volumes in this field yet published in New Zealand. It is so wide-ranging and detailed, I cannot embark on a chapter-by-chapter synopsis, and will limit myself to an evocation of the breadth of issues covered and the way these are presented.

The book operates simultaneously at four levels. There is a bedrock of empirical facts and core terms. An impressive amount of basic scholarship is contained in the collation of demographic statistics, historical surveys and case histories, of which fluctuations in recent immigration figures, a summary of Chinese and Pacific Island settlement in New Zealand and analyses of the Ngai Tahu and Sealord deals are just a few amongst the plethora of facts provided by the book. If nothing else, the reader ends up prodigiously well informed.

That's only the start though. The authors weave illuminating analytical patterns out of their raw material. Just to take two instances, they not only explain what tino rangatiratanga and biculturalism involve, but also explore the alternative ways these much-contested concepts have been interpreted and practised. They mobilise an eclectically useful tool kit of models and theories from the literature on ethnic relations, along with relevant overseas comparisons, in order to illuminate both the surface details of ethnic politics in this country and the underlying philosophies and power struggles.

At a higher level again, the authors inject into the text their own preferred option for the future of inter-ethnic dynamics in this country. They encapsulate their vision in the term 'constructive engagement'. This is a dialectically creative alternative to fundamentalist confrontation on the one hand, and assimilation by the white monolith on the other. (The dangers of the latter option are summarised in a natty aphorism about a kahawai being 'assimilated' by a shark.) They reject some current versions of biculturalism espoused by the Pakeha establishment (which amount to little more than fashionable multiculturalism with a Maori tinge) in favour of a more vigorous political, economic and cultural assertion of Maori identity embodied in their preferred term 'bi-nationalism'.

Their book espouses a very different position from the one implicit in Thompson's discussion paper. The latter author, as I read him, is a partisan of multiculturalism, while the present book accepts and promotes the primacy of Maori national identity. Its central enquiry, therefore, is how this can be achieved, and how that most puissant political shibboleth

Sovereignty would have to be re-jigged to accommodate Maori aspirations for autonomy and self-rule. The authors' subversive but stimulating political premise is that the constitutional rules of our nation state are not engraved in tablets of stone, but are still in the process of being negotiated.

This brings me to the fourth level at which this book can be read. Although massively rooted in the substantive facts of New Zealand history and in contemporary debates specific to this country, by tackling big issues like sovereignty and the constitutional relationship between the state and groups in civil society, the authors are, in effect, making a significant local contribution to the classical tradition of political theory stretching back through Hobbes and Locke to Plato and Aristotle. I am not suggesting that Fleras and Spoonley are intellectual titans of that order, but their impressively well-documented survey of one little social microcosm does illustrate and illuminate timeless political debates. We sometimes become so habituated to our own familiar, domestic dust-ups that they may appear insignificant in the larger order of things. When placed under the aegis of that long tradition of political philosophy just invoked, however, *Recalling Aotearoa* obliges us to recall that what is going on here in our own back yard raises the same political challenges that have teased the minds of the world's greatest political philosophers.

There was one crucial challenge, though, that the authors did not pick up. Though nuanced and cautious in their treatment of the rhetoric surrounding ethnicity, they nevertheless operated from an unexamined premise. This is that ethnic identity – and Maori identity in

particular – is a self-evidently legitimate, even desirable cornerstone of social identity in general, and therefore unquestionable grounds for political activism. The strongest manifestation of this perspective is found in the notion of 'bi-nationalism'.

Yet surely it is such premising of identity upon ethnicity, and the subsequent politicisation of prejudice and xenophobia, that has been the taproot of just about everything most vile in human history, climaxing in a genocidal frenzy throughout the 20th century. Would the world not be a much more decent place if people could wear their ethnicity lightly, rather than mobilising obsessively around it?

I am not a One New Zealander, and I have a strong respect for ethnic diversity in general and the unique situation of the tangata whenua of Aotearoa in particular. That said, I would have liked Fleras and Spoonley to have made their own quasi-foundationalist assumptions explicit and, more importantly, attempted to justify them. Richard Thompson's book provides an alternative perspective on the future of ethnic relations within the orbit of the nation state, and I am not convinced that the world view provided by the authors of *Recalling Aotearoa* is more persuasive and appealing. That said, the book is most impressive in its range of scholarship and clarity of thought.

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Exploring Society

This is the latest in a series of first-year text books on New Zealand society emanating from the Sociology

Department at Massey University. Andrew Trlin edited the first back in the 1970s, followed by three produced by Paul Spoonley et al. To my mind, the present volume is considerably superior its predecessors, and comes close to being a thoroughly satisfying teaching tool for introducing students to the discipline of Sociology in a New Zealand context.

The book's superiority to previous introductory texts in this field lies in three factors. In the first place, it is much better integrated. It is written by only three authors, not an assorted rag-bag of a dozen or more, and they have carefully worked out an overall scheme, revolving around the consistent use of three key organising concepts – individual/society, localism/globalism and differences/divisions - which appear as leitmotifs in each chapter.

Second, the book has a much more 'with it' feel than its rather fusty predecessors. We have the sense of living in an exciting, puzzling, postmodern world, and one moreover where what happens on the rest of the globe is woven together seamlessly with events in our own country. The authors' local/global theme works well.

Finally, the prose is on the whole more accessible and user-friendly than that of previous texts. The authors find it in their hearts to converse with first-year students on equal terms, rather than smothering them in arcane prose.

The book's plot can be summarised quickly. Three preliminary chapters introduce the reader first to what a sociological perspective involves, then to the history of sociological thought, classical (19th century) and modern

(20th century). From there, we launch into the bulk of the book, comprising the standard chapters on a range of specific topics – gender, the family, education, work, stratification and so on. A final chapter returns to theory, taking readers 'from the past to the post', and launching them into the 21st century.

Each chapter starts with a clear introduction to the main issues, and contains good review questions. They are also focused and enlivened by brief, well-chosen reading passages from other New Zealand writers. The authors have thought out and executed a coherent and effective ground plan for the book as a whole, rather than just throwing material randomly at the reader. When working out the design, they clearly had the needs of teachers and students in mind.

I have handed this book some generous bouquets. Now for a few brickbats. Although it is good, I ended up feeling slightly dissatisfied. Like the parson's egg, it was only good in parts. It could have been the ideal teaching text, but fell short of its own potential. This was partly because the planning I mentioned did not penetrate deeply enough into the actual contents, and partly because the execution of the plan was uneven.

Before expanding those points, however, I will pick up a comment I made in my Thompson review concerning the abnegation of the intellect in the face of Maori ideology. Pakeha sociologists seem to lose their nerve the minute they walk onto the marae. Where Maoritanga begins, rational analysis frequently collapses.

Unfortunately, this sometimes happens in the present book. For instance, in the Health chapter the author plucks from the fire that well-roasted old chestnut about the holistic Maori approach, embodied in the image of the whare and its four walls – taha wairua, taha tinana, taha hinengaro and taha whanau. To mystify matters further, the other standard metaphor of Maori health being an eight-legged wheke is thrown in for good measure. What these have to do with, say, the high rates of glue ear and lung cancer amongst Maori is anybody's guess.

Or again, the usually eminently sane author of the concluding theoretical chapter suggests , apparently with a straight face, that Westerners could meet their spiritual needs by taking on board the respectful processes of negotiation and consensus in Maori society. Oh, author! Think of Sealord (to mention just one internecine fracas amongst a multitude) and blush. In such cases, the writers have simply stopped thinking and surrendered to fashionable platitudes. This is precisely what we do not want our students to do.

Now for some more general reservations I had about the book as a whole. For one thing, the introductory and concluding chapters on theories and theorists stood apart from the rest of the book. They were well presented in themselves, but not enough thought was given to how their ideas could permeate the chapters on substantive issues. Each of these picked up theorists and models appropriate to its own subject. This was a perfectly serviceable strategy of bricolage, but one was left wondering what those core theory chapters were actually supposed to be doing.

Second, although I concede this is something of a quibble, the substantive chapters were simply juxtaposed. We 'did' politics, for instance, then we 'did' the city, then meandered on through racism, health, deviance, social movements and sport. There was no logical sequencing. I understand the chapters were intended as stand-alone units, that could be picked out of the ensemble to meet the needs of different courses, but even so in this respect the new text had the same haphazard air as its predecessors.

My final reservation is more serious. The chapters are inconsistent in the quality of their thought, structure and presentation. It was a three-tier cake. The top layer of chapters are clearly and engagingly written, make good use of the core themes and, above all, really demonstrate how that much-vaunted but vague quality 'the sociological imagination' can actually be put into practice. The second tier is well-written and again makes sensible use of the key concepts, but lacks the flair of the first. Finally, there are a number of chapters which verge on the incoherent. They appear to have been written in haste, leap around disconcertingly from subject to subject and from one point in history to another, make only perfunctory use of the book's leitmotifs and talk past rather than with the student.

I praised the book at the start for its superior integration to others in the Massey series. From what I have just said, though, it is clear I do not think this integration went far enough. It would have been a totally satisfactory text if it had been written throughout by the author(s) of its best chapters. Even so, I would warmly recommend it as a teaching text for introductory courses on sociology.

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    Able, P. and Collins, S., 1961. 'Structuralism and the concept of class', **Journal of Social Class**, 24(3):138-159.

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