New Zealand Sociology

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New Zealand Sociology 2003

Special Issue: Graeme Fraser & New Zealand Sociology

Ian Watson
Graeme Fraser and the Influence of the Social Science Paradigm in New Zealand

Merv Hancock
Beyond the Walls of the University

Steve Maharey
Sociology: Reflections of a Politician.

Brennon Wood
Sociology Making a Difference

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Robyn Munford
And Then there was Social Work

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Island Imaginings: The Possibilities of Post-Colonial Sociology in Aotearoa

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Thinking Again About Truth

Book reviews
Reinventing the family – in search of new lifestyles.
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Reification, or the anxiety of late capitalism.
Work in the new economy.
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Instructions for Contributors

Editorial

Professor Graeme Fraser has now retired from Massey University, ending his most recent role in the institution as Acting Vice-Chancellor. But he continues to play an important role in the public life of New Zealand as Chair of the Health Research Council and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Excluding politicians, he has been New Zealand's highest profile sociologist, and one who has made a significant impact on the nature of sociology in this country and on what sociology can do in various domains of public policy. This edition of *New Zealand Sociology*, a journal that began with his support and advice, is devoted to Graeme and his various roles, as well as the broader issues raised for sociology during the period that he has been active.

Graeme Fraser has filled a large number of positions both inside the university that employed him, Massey University, and in the public domain, most notably within the state sector in organisations such as the National Research Advisory Council and the Medical Research Council, amongst many. In the Department of Sociology at Massey University, he appointed staff who he thought would demonstrate the insights and relevance of sociology, who would create and convey an enthusiasm for the teaching of the discipline, and who would ensure that sociology engaged with the realities of life in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the second half of the twentieth century. Through the 1980s, the Department was an exciting place to be as debates about the nature of the discipline and its connectedness to the communities, regions and nation in which it was located took place. It was not simply a conversation amongst sociologists. Some of the most interesting discussions took place with a range of academic and state sector individuals and groups, and the value of these was acknowledged by Bill Oliver in his recent autobiography.

This issue of *New Zealand Sociology* is therefore somewhat unusual in its focus on Graeme Fraser. It ought to be acknowledged that while he trailblazed the discipline's development in New Zealand, he was not the only one and our gratitude is also directed towards those early pioneers such as Jim Robb and Bill Willmott. The following contributions arose from

a seminar in Auckland to mark the retirement of Graeme Fraser along with one or two who had signalled an interest in participating but could not make the event. The contributions vary from personal insights and comments on Graeme through to broader issues facing the discipline. Two of Graeme's oldest friends, Merv Hancock and Ian Watson, provide details of Graeme and his career. Ian is another Mainlander who worked with Graeme for many years at Massey University, most recently in his role as the Principle of the Albany Campus. Merv first met Graeme when they both worked in a youth club in Dunedin in the 1960s, and that friendship and connection has endured for more than four decades. Merv himself has been an important individual in the shaping of sociology in this country. A third contribution in this section comes from Steve Maharey, a student, colleague and friend of Graeme who has taken his sociology into the exalted climes of national politics as a Cabinet Minister.

The next contributions broaden the focus and begin to discuss the issues that have confronted, and in many respects, continue to challenge sociology and sociologists in this country as they seek to develop an exciting and relevant discipline. Brennon Wood first encountered the Department of Sociology as a brand new university student who then went on to major in the discipline and complete a Masters before going to Harvard for his doctorate. His chapter, as always, is insightful and thought-provoking. Mike O'Brien, a PhD student of Graemes continues with a discussion of the intersection of social policy and sociology, a theme in Graeme's career. Robyn Munford, another Fraser student both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, discusses the connections between sociology and social work. I offer some comments on the local cultural imperatives and particularities of a New Zealand-based sociology, an interest that Graeme encouraged, again in his role as my PhD supervisor and Professor. Finally, Kerry Howe offers some trenchant observations about the lack of rigour in some debates and contributions, some academic, others from the public in various guises. As an historian, and one who has spent his academic career in Massey University, Kerry's contribution continues the tradition of conversations between disciplines and their practitioners that has been a defining feature of Graeme's academic career.

All of us offer these comments in honour of Professor Graeme Fraser

but also in respect of the values and practices which he encouraged, and which we would want to continue. As a sociological community, we do not do enough to recognise and record those things that have helped define us, and especially accord recognition to those individuals who have played a key role in this process.

Paul Spoonley

Ivan Illich (foreground), and Graeme Fraser (immediate right), 1979 NZASW Conference Palmerston North, the theme of which was 'disabling professions'.

Graeme Fraser and the Influence of the Social Science Paradigm in New Zealand

Ian Watson

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to document the rise in influence of the social science paradigm in New Zealand since the 1970s. It draws on some experiences as a staff member and university administrator at Massey University and as a member of a national funding body of research in New Zealand. As such, it is necessarily subjective, written as it is by a lapsed physical chemist, inculcated at an early age with a Popperian view of science by a Professor of Chemistry. His opinions of disciplines other than those associated with the physical sciences and history were not uniformly high! To some extent, therefore, it reflects an awakening, firstly to the existence, then the power, of the paradigm in regions of academic discovery hitherto thought the province of science, medicine, and engineering. Also revealing was the power of this paradigm to create research opportunities in such areas as business, social work, and nursing.

How would one define the paradigm of which we are speaking? It seems easy to do so by contrasting its approach with the physical sciences when dealing with complexity. There, the approach is to divide complex problems into less complex ones to the point where there is a classification or a logic system into which it can be put and operated on. The whole, it is then argued, can be understood in terms of its parts. By way of contrast, in the social sciences, one appears to retain the complexities intact and to see whether one can either detect patterns in the complexities, or relationships and interactions between them. At an applied level, its use led eventually to policies then to procedures then to practice, and it was this ability, particularly with respect to issues pertaining to university administration, that one began to have a sense of its power and utility.

It is probably fair to say that fifty years ago, in university circles at least, such utility would never have been believed, let alone seen. Academic

administrators of that era hailed from the more traditional disciplines where it was often held that one only needed a trained mind and common sense to operate. Interestingly, their views of the new Massey University were similarly coloured. It so happens that the rise in influence of the social sciences coincides with the rise in influence of Massey University and the rise in influence of the social sciences at Massey University. It is that theme, and the role of Graeme Fraser in it, that I would now like to explore.

The birth of social science at Massey University

The advent of the prominence of the social sciences owes much to the birth of Massey University which was created from the former Massey Agricultural College of the University of New Zealand, and the Palmerston North branch of the Faculty of Arts of Victoria University of Wellington College of the same university. The entity was one of six new universities created from the University of New Zealand, following the release in 1960 of a report of a Royal Commission on Tertiary Education in New Zealand headed by Sir David Hughes Parry. It was perceived by most of the others as being at a distinct disadvantage to the point where the new Massey University might be an inferior organisation because of its requirement to take national responsibility for tertiary distance education.

Much of that distance education was based within the former Victoria Arts Branch, giving it student numbers considerably in excess of the ones it possessed internally and it allowed that Branch to successfully argue for two faculties to partly offset the four science-based ones. One of those faculties, humanities, was made up of subjects many regard as the core of a university, certainly, english, history, philosophy and languages. The other was named social science, and it was headed by the former head of the Arts Branch, Professor Keith Thomson. It embraced geography, psychology, education, economics, sociology and social anthropology. History was also included in this faculty. In its first decade, the faculty recruited a number of young and energetic professors who were very entrepreneurial, and very applied in their focus. They included both Clem Hill and Ray Adams in education, Jim Rowe in economics, George Shouksmith in psychology, Hugh (later Sir Hugh) Kawharu in social anthropology, Graeme Fraser in sociology and, through the history connection, Bill Oliver. Though they

differed in academic discipline from their Agricultural colleagues, their orientation was very empathetic with the agricultural ethos: to be of service to the community and be of relevance to New Zealand society.

The group were also prepared to get involved with issues of importance of the fledgling university. Nearly all of those were aired at Professorial Board, dominated in those days by professors. The group from the social sciences were extremely good debaters and advocates (none more so than Graeme Fraser) and although discussion was robust, even torrid at times, respect and friendships outside of faculty boundaries started to emerge. There was a strong sense of service for the greater good of Massey University with a resulting acceptance of different paradigms. In contrast to more traditional universities, social science, probably because of these social scientists, was accepted, even embraced, especially where the disciplines were found or thought to be useful.

Two specific examples come to mind, both involving Graeme Fraser. Around 1980, the Dean of Science, Professor Dick Batt, a biochemist, developed an interest in alcohol metabolism, and saw a possible application to enable motorists to remain below the legal limit. He suggested that a "slide rule" be produced which would relate the number of drinks consumed to the level of alcohol in the blood and invited a nutritionist, Patsy Watson, to create it. This turned out to be a reasonably straight forward exercise, the rate of alcohol metabolism being known, and the dilution factor of water in the body being able to be reasonably well estimated. It soon became clear that this was not sufficient as people's estimation as to how much they had drunk was demonstrated to be varied and, in many cases, was wildly different from reality. It took a conversation with a young psychologist, Nigel Long, to straighten out that part. Later, when more in depth studies were required on nutritional aspects, it became clear that more social science was required. Patsy teamed up with Prakesh Cashmore and Roz Hines, both then students of Graeme Fraser, and some significant work resulted, aided, it needs to be said, by sage advice about questionnaire construction by Paul Spoonley.

This was not the first time these techniques had been used in such studies but it probably was one of the first times that life scientists took social science seriously. A number of medical practitioners, often without

the benefit of a social science training, had attempted similar studies. As a result, their results were often found to be inadequate or inconclusive.

The other example pertains to the National Research Advisory Committee which was the forerunner of MoRST and FRST. It was born out of the National Development Conference in 1961, and set out to relate research to New Zealand's needs. Mostly it was populated by natural scientists, often of an applied bent. One such member was Massey University's Professor of Agronomy, Branwell "Watty" Watkin. Watty felt that there were a number of problems being discuss that were not amenable to the methods of natural science, and based on his experiences of the Social Science Faculty at Massey University, believed that a social scientist would add value to the Committee. He was very impressed with the contribution Graeme Fraser was making at Massey and suggested he be appointed to that Committee. When that happened, Graeme was the first social scientist in the group.

Graeme Fraser and the increasing influence of the social sciences at Massey University

Graeme Fraser's contribution to the influence of the social sciences was as much about himself as his undoubted social science skills. He was born in Timaru on 14 August 1936. His parents bestowed upon him those Scottish virtues of independence of mind and spirit and hard work. As a young boy of 12, he was up at 5 a.m. each day to deliver papers. That continued during his education at Waitaki Boys' High School, nationally famous for its "healthy mind in healthy body" philosophy. There he stood out for his leadership and sporting prowess, finishing up head prefect, and a member of the first eleven and first fifteen. Both of these attributes stood him in good stead when he attended Dunedin Teachers' College and Otago University where he played rugby for University A and Otago. This led him to rub shoulders with a number of influential people on whom he made a deep impression His academic prowess attracted the attention of the aforementioned Clem Hill who was then, with Ray Adams, a senior lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Otago. Clem found himself acting head of that department when two assistant lectureships became available. To one of these he appointed Graeme Fraser

who held that position for about 18 months before heading off to the Sociology Department of the University of Missouri to pursue his doctorate. By the time he had completed his PhD, Clem was established in the Foundation Chair of Education at Massey University and Ray Adams had been appointed as a Research Professor in Clem's department. Graeme returned to Massey, firstly as a reader in the Department of Education. Following a brief stint of six months to complete a research project at Missouri, Graeme returned in December 1970 to take up the Foundation Chair of Sociology at the young age of 33. Almost immediately, he made his mark. Sir Alan Stewart, Vice-Chancellor, a tough, pragmatic man, immediately saw Graeme's leadership skills and offered him the Chair of the Creche Committee. Regarded by many as a "hospital-pass", Graeme made an outstanding contribution, winning the confidence of both Sir Alan and the Creche users. Under his leadership, a number of working bees and fund raising activities were held. As a result, Massey University had a well-resourced and well-run creche. This baptism of fire was rewarded when, in 1976, Sir Alan asked Graeme to chair the University's Doctoral Research Committee and its related School of Graduate Studies. This was a particularly sensitive committee because it effectively took doctoral students out of the control of the departments and faculties and made them wards of the Doctoral Research Committee. That Committee took responsibility for monitoring their progress and setting up their examination. Graeme Fraser played a key role in creating the policies, programmes and procedures that went around that exercise. Most are still in vogue today. Its impartiality and rigour have become by-words and other universities, seeing it as best practice, have sought to copy it. It was the first of many exercises in policy on procedure creation he was subsequently asked to perform.

On the academic front, his Department of Sociology made significant contributions through their graduate students. Graeme's doctoral students included Robyn Munford, Ian Shirley, Paul Spoonley, Mike O'Brien and Rajen Prasad, all of whom have gone on to make a significant contribution to Massey University and New Zealand Social Science.

His academic influence extended beyond the faculty. In 1972, through a series of events, which is a story in itself, the Department of Mathematics

and Statistics was transferred from the Sciences to the Social Sciences. There it remained until around 1991 when Graeme Wake, appointed to the Chair of Applied Mathematics in 1985, finally succeeded in severing the ties and a School of Mathematics and Information Systems was created. Graeme Fraser, then Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) as well as Head of Sociology, was asked by Sir Neil Waters to be its interim chair. He was so successful, the group asked him to stay on as Dean when it became a Faculty!

It is interesting to speculate as to why he was so successful in all of these endeavours. His academic training, presumably through the discipline of sociology, enabled him to identify the range of ideas on a given topic. Where the group's activities were directed to some administrative end, he had the skills to identify common themes, then their connectivity. This would enable clear policy to be enunciated, and this was always done so that procedures could later be crafted. Where doctoral supervision was involved, he was able to assist the candidate devise a shape or structure upon which a thesis could be hung. But his demeanor was such that he was able to encourage the best out of a group or individual, either through engendering self confidence, or teamwork, or both. No matter who worked with him or the topics tackled, all felt that something of significance had been achieved and that one had played a part in the exercise.

The increasing influence of social science in scientific and medical research in New Zealand

In 1974, at about the time Graeme Fraser was appointed to the NRAC, New Zealand experienced its first energy crisis. The two dominant figures were an engineer and an urban geographer, and as events unfolded, the strength and the complementarity of the sciences underlying their respective approaches became clearer. As New Zealand moved further into more uncertain economic times, we began to see further evidence of the importance of each of, what we might call, the competing paradigms. In the late 1980s, for instance, the economic viability of high-country farming came under the microscope and the then Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) did an in-depth study on pest management on high country farms in the South Island. Conventional wisdom had it that vermin such

as rabbits were the cause of poor farm production and its consequent impact on income and lifestyle. The M.A.F. study indicated that, notwithstanding their demonstrated adverse effect, there were limits to sufficient production to sustain expected lifestyles in an unsubsidised financial environment. Thus, a lifestyle change was required and it was to social scientists that M.A.F. looked firstly to convey the information then to find the required changes needed to put them in place.

This was the kind of situation Professor Watkin saw that Professor Fraser could address when, as we have already mentioned, he engineered his appointment to the NRAC. It so happened that around the same time, Graeme was appointed as the first non-medical academic to the Medical Research Council, then the dominant research funding body in New Zealand. Medical research at the time was dominated by bio-scientists, outstanding academically, but with an insatiable desire for expensive equipment. Appropriate assessment of such applications was a key factor in determining the composition of the Council, making Graeme's appointment even more puzzling.

The reality was, of course, that the more perceptive in the medical area could see that many issues, but especially those embracing public health, which were of national importance, were more amendable to a social, as opposed to a biological science, approach. In Graeme Fraser, the Council had someone who understood the first paradigm and, through his Massey connection, could relate to the second. Further, his personal qualities, facilitated by his rugby prowess, enabled him to socially relate to a male-dominated committee of medically qualified people. It is most appropriate that he now returns to that committee as its Chair.

Over the past two decades, the emphasis on public health research increased and with that have arisen opportunities for social science research. For instance, Professor Mason Durie, a qualified medical practitioner, when appointed to the Chair of Maori Studies at Massey University, made Maori Public Health one of the research foci of his department. Located in the Faculty of Social Sciences, as it was, the Department, over the years, has established a formidable reputation, well supported by the Health Research Council. Their comfort in a Social Science environment has, in very recent times, been echoed by two other major public health research units formerly

located in medical schools, but now relocated within Massey University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The leaders of each group are in no doubt that more exposure to practitioners of the social science paradigm is of benefit to their research and themselves.

Conclusion

In the introduction, I contrasted a view of complexity from the physical sciences with one that I suggested was held by social scientists. In more recent times, there has been some kind of philosophical convergence. Ilya Prigogine, who won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1977, for instance, has shown that the mathematics used to describe systems far from equilibrium is also applicable to biology and social sciences, including sociology. That, however, is the subject of another paper.

In conclusion, it has been something of an intellectual experience to have had to come to grips with some social science tenets, to have seen them in action, and to have been exposed to a number of its eminent practitioners at Massey University. Perhaps, it was not as surprising as it seemed that a group of mathematicians at Massey University were more than prepared to be led by a social scientist, especially one as open, as inclusive, as supportive, and as intellectually able as Graeme Stuart Fraser.

Professor Ian Watson is the Principal at Massey University's Albany Campus. He was a physical chemist in the Department of Chemistry, Biochemistry and Biophysics at Massey University, his research interests being in the field of Chemical Thermodynamics.

Beyond the Walls of the University

Merv Hancock

I am not a neutral observer. Graeme Fraser and I have had a long and enduring relationship that began in Dunedin in 1960. It was renewed in 1967 when he came to Massey University at Palmerston North and strengthened when he appointed me to the staff of the Department of Sociology in 1975 where I remained until I returned to the private sector in 1983. This article is an opportunity for me to reflect on my association with Graeme but also to comment more broadly on the practice of sociology in New Zealand. There is an historical focus in what I want to say with two periods which deserve some attention. The first of these concerns a sequence of events that occurred between 1937 and 1943, while the second period deals with the years 1972 to 1986.

Science and sociology in New Zealand

The broad scientific community within the university and within the community has long been well organised and institutionally strong. It provides many of the dominant images and arguments which are deemed to be the defining features of science. Sociologists, as part of the development of social sciences in these same institutions, have long debated whether sociology ought to be part of the scientific enterprise, institutionally, in terms of values and assumptions, and in terms of practice and training. One of the key sociologists in the development of the discipline in New Zealand, Graeme Fraser, brought a particular perspective and approach to these debates. Simply put, he chose to become closely involved with the scientific community early in his career with certain downstream consequences. In particular, this was best represented by his participation on key advisory and science development activities. From 1976 until 1983, Graeme Fraser was chairperson of Committee D – Social Science of the National Research Advisory Council (NRAC) and therefore a member of that Council from 1977 to 1982.

It is worth saying something about the National Research Advisory Council and its role in New Zealand. The Council was established in 1963 by the Government. It was composed of six to nine members, and these included the chairperson and three ex-officio members: the Director-General of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Director-General of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Secretary of the Treasury. The Council was assisted by four advisory committees, each chaired by a Council member. These committees encompassed the fields of primary production, manufacturing and processing, environment and energy, and the social sciences. By Government directive, all departmental proposals involving the establishment of new scientific activities or the major expansion, reduction or modification of existing activities were referred to the Council for evaluation, as were proposals that were likely to make substantial demands on scientific capability or other scientific resources.

The nature of the NRAC made it a place of conflict and competing scientific agendas. Battles were continuously fought over the allocation of resources, while research science policies were debated and decided. Graeme Fraser entered this terrain with vigour and energy. He represented the social sciences and brought his sociological training and insights to bear. He played an important role in what was the critical forum for science and research in New Zealand during this period. That Fraser achieved a lot is not in dispute, but the exact nature of those achievements has yet to be elaborated. He was also to bring his considerable skills to bear in another critically important research arena, that of health research and delivery.

Health organisations and research

From the mid-1960s, there was widespread public concern about the nature of the health services in New Zealand. In 1969, the National Government had published a review of hospital and related services in New Zealand and this was followed in 1974 with a reforming Labour Government's proposal, "A Health Service for New Zealand". This proposal caused widespread public controversy and became a major point of disagreement politically. With the election of a new National Government in 1975, the proposals contained in the previous Labour Government's paper were

dropped. A new series of discussions were begun. The National Government were concerned with the cost of health and said as much. Health service professionals had their views on such matters and articulated these in the context of the debate. The general public indicated their wish for a good, all round health service.

As with the NRAC, Graeme Fraser became an important sociological contributor to these developments. For ten years, he took an active part within quasi-government organisations, including membership of the Minister of Health's "Special Advanced Committee for the Organisation of Health Services" (1976-83), membership of the Medical Research Council of New Zealand (1976-82), including the Social Medicine Assessment Committee, the New Zealand Board of Health (1977-1982) and the Forward Planning Committee of the Medical Research Council (1983-86). In each of these roles, Graeme Fraser contributed important insights to the nature of health delivery and the contribution of health professionals from the standpoint of a sociologist. It is hard to think of any other social scientist who has played such an extensive and ground-breaking part in health in New Zealand, especially given that this was a time when public health issues or the contribution of non-biomedical scientists were given less credence. To these NRAC and health sector activities must be added his educational contribution.

Educational research and involvement

Graeme Fraser's early career was as a teacher. This interest in education, in its broadest sense, as well as educational sociology, continued through his early career as a university academic. One of his first research roles was as the senior staff sociologist for the American Sociological Association's "Curriculum Project" (1968-70). On his return to New Zealand, he became a member of the Department of Education's "National Social Studies Syllabus Committee (1972-75). As he rose through the ranks and became involved in university administration, he became involved in a range of activities, including membership of the Ministry of Education's "Committee on Charters and Treaty Obligations". Both within Massey University, as an appointee on various committees and as a key player in the Vice-Chancellors' Committee, Graeme maintained an interest in educational

matters and outcomes, and from the beginning of his academic career to the present, has been able to contribute to debates and developments in New Zealand education.

Piecemeal social engineering

I want to draw from the experiences and insights of another social scientist, Karl Popper in order to characterise Graeme Fraser's approach in these various roles. Popper arrived in Christchurch from Vienna in March 1937 as a 35 year old. He was appointed as a lecturer in the Education and Philosophy Department and remained in that position for eight years. His field was the philosophy of science and he had already published his book, *The logic of scientific discovery*. What is often overlooked is the fact that he had spent most of the 1920s as a social worker and community educator.

In Christchurch, records indicate something of his style and approach as he lectured to students, scientists and to those attending WEA courses. He articulated his fallibalist views of science and argued for the methodological unity of sciences, whether natural, biological or social. He accorded scientific methodology a central place. But the experiences of living in New Zealand in the midst of an emerging welfare state, coupled with the impact of World War II, encouraged him to shift his attention from the natural sciences to the social sciences, and to politics. His views on the logic of scientific discovery were applied with equal vigour to social issues. This engagement with the social and political led to Popper's two books, *The poverty of historicism* and *The open society and its enemies*.

During his writing, Karl Popper used the phrase "piecemeal social engineering" to refer to planned pieces of work that incrementally contributed to social development. These were based on careful analysis and a critical understanding of the problems being faced. As a shorthand description, "piecemeal social engineering" was used by Popper to differentiate his views from the grand utopian plans or master blueprints for a society that were based on so-called scientific laws. The same phrase was used in the Department of Sociology at Massey University in the late 1970s, sometimes by Graeme Fraser himself. It was used, in the same way that Popper meant it, to convey the sense that it was possible for sociologists, and others, to contribute to the solution of social problems through

knowledge and research (what would now be called evidence-based) and an incremental but systematic and highly pragmatic approach. In this sense, the social theory taught by Popper in Canterbury College in the years 1937 to 1945 provided an exemplar for what was to follow in relation to Graeme Fraser and the sociology that he practised.

Concluding comments

Graeme Fraser's contribution to the public sector and policy development and research were extensive and sustained, underlined by his appointment as Chair of the Health Research Council and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority in 2003. His interests and connections of the 1970s are echoed in these appointments, and close the circle. In these activities, certain themes are apparent. For Fraser, research was essential for the development of a critical understanding of social institutions and processes, and while he did not undertake a lot of research himself, he certainly encouraged others around him to conduct some important sociological research and he made it possible through his involvement in the NRAC and the Medical Research Council to provide the conditions for social science research to contribute to debates and understanding. He also encouraged dialogue between different research traditions and communities, and sought to provide common ground for the social, physical and natural sciences to work together. A second theme was his acknowledgement that the professions played a central role in contemporary society, and the extent and nature of professionalism needed to be better understood. The role of professionals in science, education and health all interested him, and he played an important role in developing new degrees which reflected the specialist training that was required. Thirdly, Graeme Fraser both supported and critiqued state bureaucracies. He had, and retains a confidence, that they can contribute to solving the problems faced by the modern state, and he worked with these bureaucracies, using his sociological knowledge to understand their imperatives and priorities. This did not mean that he was uncritical, and often made his disdain clear, both inside the bureaucracies and more widely in the public domain. Finally, Graeme Fraser always maintained an interest and enthusiasm for teaching. Even though his time was often in short supply given the requirements of university

administration and the demands of external appointments, he was always willing to lecture. It is important to remember that his early career was as a primary school teacher. He took his Masters degree in education and taught in that field at the University of Otago. His doctoral studies at the University of Missouri were also in education. Curriculum issues were at the forefront of his work for the American Sociological Association, and he brought a very clear philosophy about teaching and its importance for the discipline with him to Massey University.

Graeme Fraser played an important role in the establishment of sociology in Aotearoa/New Zealand, both within Massey University and beyond the walls of the University. He engaged with state institutions extensively through his career, and continues to do so. "Piecemeal social engineering" captures his approach to this public role, providing some links between Fraser's approach and that of Karl Popper. Both confronted the enduring issues of science and politics which continue to provide an important challenge to sociologists and social theorists alike.

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Sociology: Reflections of a Politician.

Steve Maharey

When Paul Spoonley wrote asking if I would contribute to a special issue of *New Zealand Sociology* marking the retirement of Professor Graeme Fraser from Massey University, I immediately agreed. As a former student and colleague of Professor Fraser's, I have great respect for his contribution to the discipline both of us believe can and should make a difference to the lives of New Zealanders.

I first met Professor Fraser in the early 1970s when I enrolled in his first year sociology class. He was without doubt one of the "big men" on campus. As a newly minted Professor leading a new department teaching a highly fashionable discipline, he inspired his students by showing them the potential of the ideas they were struggling to understand. He made them see that sociology mattered.

At least, that is the impact he had on me and I have remained hooked ever since. Today, I am a politician and a Minister in a reforming government who still believes that sociology, and social sciences in general, are important. I am keen to see more investment in social science, more social scientists working in the public service, more social research being done in tertiary institutions, more exploration and debate about our society, more evidence for social policy initiatives and a higher profile for social scientists. It is no doubt a reflection of my current occupation that I have these kinds of ambitions for sociology and social science. In modern politics, it is essential for politicians to have a sound basis of evidence for the decisions they make. The government of which I am a part is working hard to put social issues back on the agenda.

Our overall objective is to facilitate the building of a society in which every New Zealander can achieve their potential, regardless of their background or circumstances. We have identified the development of a knowledge society as being at the heart of our programme. A whole range of social issues as diverse as poverty, families, youth suicide and violence

in the media are the subject of policy initiatives. We need the advice of sociologists and other social scientists.

I am sure that Professor Fraser would argue firmly against sociologists taking a party political position. However, I have always understood him to be equally strongly in favour of sociology having a contribution to make to social policy. He would not go so far as to say sociologists should determine what should or should not happen in social life: he is too Weberian to take such a view. Rather, he would argue that sociology should assist in the definition of social problems, contribute to their explanation, offer evidence upon which to base social policy initiatives and then assess their impact.

Professor Fraser demonstrated what I believe to be his view of sociology by his actions throughout his career. He encouraged his students and colleagues to be interested first and foremost in sociological problems. The discipline came first. All social phenomena, whatever their nature, were to be studied and understood. Yet he clearly believed that sociologists ought, if I can put it crudely, to "pay their way" by producing practical returns that can be utilised for policy purposes.

Professor Fraser has certainly paid his way. During his career, he has tirelessly sought to advance sociology in particular and the wider social science community in general through his teaching, research, publications, membership of committees and policy advice. Over recent times, he has been the Acting Vice Chancellor at Massey University and in "retirement" has already found new challenges as Chair of the Health Research Council and as a member of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

In all of these activities, he has illustrated a view of sociology that, as I noted at the outset of these comments, I share. Sociology is an important discipline because it helps us to understand all aspects of social life. The knowledge we learn through sociology is really useful because it can be put to work as we try to understand and resolve social problems.

What sociologists have to say should be accessible not only to students but also to the wider interested public. The critic and conscience role of sociology is vital and this should lead to sociologists being involved in public debate and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions.

To be able to play their role, sociologists need to be very well educated

and trained. They need to know both the content of their discipline and how to generate new knowledge through research and scholarship and, also, to apply what they have learned to social issues. They need to be employed throughout the public, private and community sectors, working alongside other professions. Sociologists need to adopt a more systematic approach to the study of our society because an unrelated range of monographs and articles can only take us so far.

During my time as a Member of Parliament, and now as a Minister, I have thought a lot about how to encourage the application of sociology and social sciences. The formation of the Ministry of Social Development; work programmes on poverty, families, civil society; the setting up of the Social Policy Evaluation and Research (SPEAR) group within the public service; the tagging of research money (and the constant search for more); the demand by Ministers for evidence-based policy; the commitment to explore a Crown Research Institution or something similar for social science; the international conference on social policy research and many other policies are to an extent a tribute to Professor Fraser. Over four decades, he has kept the flag of sociology and social science flying. I have no doubt that he will continue to do so throughout the rest of his career.

The challenge he provides for today's generation of sociologists is to maintain a tradition of outstanding intellectual work combined with a commitment to assisting New Zealanders to create a society where individuals, families and communities flourish. It is a tall order, but then Professor Fraser has never been one to aim low, except on the rugby field.

Steve Maharey is Minister for Social Development and Employment, Minister of Housing, Minister of Broadcasting, Associate Minister of Education (Tertiary Education) and Minister responsible for the Tertiary Education Commission. He was a senior lecturer in sociology at Massey University before entering Parliament.

Sociology Making a Difference

Brennon Wood

If a life fulfilled its vocation directly, it would miss it.
Adorno (1978, p. 81)

We sociologists

Sociology making a difference? Surely not. Sociology has never made and will never make a difference to anyone anytime anywhere. That is if by sociology we mean an abstraction *vis-à-vis* the individual, for, of course, many sociologists and their sociologies have indeed made a difference. They have certainly made a difference to me. In a colonised country such as ours, posthumously modern with a truant bourgeoisie, most people live in towns that hardly exist at all. Given the prevalence of rural idiocy among townfolk, sociologists are hard to find and first encounters often a matter of chance. I first stumbled across them as a Massey undergraduate in the late 1970s; Graeme Fraser was a leading exponent. These thoughts are for you.

Picture these two encounters. Professor Fraser walking into SSLB2 in 1978, jacket off and sleeves rolled up, pacing to all four walls of the room, passionately composed, invoking our shared task by addressing each individually, extemporising his engagement with 76.201 *Classical Sociological Theory*. That's me in the third row, far left, writing furiously. And picture this. Twenty-five years later, downtown at Dispute Mediation Services, the negotiations for Massey University's employment collective are underway. To one side, Professor Fraser as acting Vice-Chancellor and Employer, sitting with his Registrar, his lawyer, his accountant. And there across the table, that's me again, an academic employee sitting with the other trade unionists. We fill the gaps with tense talk about honour and commitment.

A personal reflection then, upon our profession and employment, offered as a tribute to my Professor and Employer. For me, these encounters of ours provisionally map out an entire field of study. And how could it be otherwise? It is only when sociologists meet that sociology, however dimly,

takes shape. I want to consider the relationship between our sociologies in the lecture hall and at the negotiating table. We are called upon not only to teach and learn but also to rationally conclude and put into effect. We aspire both for more enlightened pedagogy and for more informed government. These are worthy values and much as they often come into conflict each depends on the other. Neither can be made good in isolation, either as you or me, but only through the cooperation of several individuals, only as you and me, my friend.

Making what difference?

The call on sociologists to make a difference is undoubtedly strong today. Witness, for example, the themes of the most recent Sociological Association conferences and the growing debate about our contribution to "evidence-based" social policy. These calls are in keeping with the ongoing tertiary reforms, driven in part (we hope) by exhaustion of the economic solipsism that has ruled the field for the past two decades. And driving these reforms is the Minister, the Honourable Steve Maharey, another sociologist I first met at Massey in the 1970s. These thoughts are also for you, my friend.

The difference that sociology makes is on the agenda and difference, of course, is not a simple concept. Here I concentrate in particular on two modalities that for convenience may be dubbed academic purity and policy information. According to the tenets of academic purism, sociologists make a difference by constituting a unique discipline within the epistemic manifold of the university. On the other hand, sociologists are called on to assist with effective policy development and bureaucratic administration. While the former is an academic autarchy, conceptually self-absorbed and methodically circumscribed, the latter defers to an external authority whose commanding interest is in practical application. As academic purity, sociology is disciplined from within, as policy information from without.

At the last two Association conferences, I often came across discussions where these divergent ways of making a difference were in conflict. And why not, for, on the face of it, they have markedly dissimilar ambitions. Sociologists find it impossible to ignore such conflict precisely because we cannot participate in it single-mindedly. Although the contending arguments seem to call on us to become either an academic purist or a

policy informant, we resist such personifications because they render the conflict unproductive for our field of study. Sociology is not to be found in the competition between these entrenched positions. Indeed, our arguments always unsettle the sorts of certainty produced by dividing between those in the know and those in power.

Back to the future

If the conflict between academic purity and policy information is much in the air these days, then from the outset we must acknowledge that this is a traditional division. Sociology, as it came about and as we find it today, is a mix of disparate intellectual trends that developed in separation from each other. Our field grows out of both the speculative tradition of grand philosophy and the empirical tradition of social statistics. Today's battles between academic purism and informed policy are thus continuous with our lack of a singular disciplinary origin, with what Theodor Adorno calls the "peculiar and somewhat disturbing inhomogeneity of sociology" (2002, p. 8). Conflict between philosophical speculation and empirical description is a context in which we feel quite at home. Or at least it is where we pitch our tents.

A small office, a sociologist, a computer and a shelf of books; alongside them another small office, another sociologist, another computer and shelf of books. Small wonder we are so often drawn to represent authorities that stand over us, that send us rain and sunshine from above. We might seek such authority by subjectively unifying either academic purity or policy information, by aspiring as sociologists to impersonate one or the other. Such representations, however, organise our discipline as a self-defeating polarisation.

Thinking about what makes sociological theory specific and thus about our continuity with philosophy is undeniably important. The purist, however, does not so much enjoin as retreat back behind such reflections. Sociologists begin by learning the lesson of philosophy – in short, that you must change your life (those who find this lesson simple have certainly not learnt it). This teaching is a moment from which sociological theory is in permanent departure. Academic purists, however, often appeal to philosophy to justify reflection upon concepts that not only can be known

independently of empirical observations but indeed make these observations possible in the first place. Sociological theory always draws back from such abstraction. The essence of sociology is not available to pure thought; social life is realised as worldly particulars and has no independence from them. Setting out to interpret the world, purists get lost in a realm of reified ideas. Instead of interpretations, they offer endlessly rehearsed "world views", mere cook-books to which society must conform.

The policy informant is by comparison quite obsessed with worldly particulars. Give up on the grand, abiding questions and instead flexibly concentrate on whatever short-term, answerable problems land on our desks from Wellington. We are compliant work-horses for tasks that have been administratively defined elsewhere. This technocratic drive for controlled change is the concern of tinkering experts, not sociologists. Sacrificing conceptual and hence political autonomy, the technocrat avoids confronting the sources of the great issues we face (ecological devastation, social inequality, genocide). Sociologically practical knowledge is not produced by abandoning grand questions about what makes the *status quo* the *status quo*. Witness the technocrat, who sets out to change the world but invariably preserves it.

Academic purists so withdraw from the world that they cannot return with interpretations and instead offer little more than clerical pieties. Policy informants, on the other hand, are so immersed within the world that they lack the purchase to change it. In isolation from each other, neither can make the differences to which they aspire.

A third way?

If conceptual purity and technocratic know-how are logics of self-defeat, then perhaps we should comprehensively undermine their duality and so deny there is a choice to be made, a tension to be abided. These days the possibilities of such a third way are usually associated with the familiar maxim of Michel Foucault which holds "that power and knowledge directly imply one another" (1979, p. 27). Rather than separate concept from worldly effect, collapse the distinction such that each presupposes and constitutes the other. Here there can be no question of either subordinating or emancipating the concept, "for truth is already power" (1980, p. 133).

This third way has failed to make good its promise. Consider the fate of cultural studies, which set forth to undermine traditional polarities but alas, as Greg McLennan wryly observes, has become both "descriptive and hortatory" (2002a, p. 328). The power-knowledge couplet has failed to hold. Post-Foucauldian work has devolved into a compliant positivism that flatly retraces the world as it is and a clerical rehearsal of ungrounded ethics with which the world must supposedly comply (Frankel, 1997; May, 1994). Seeking to go round the dilemma of conceptual purity versus technocratic know-how, the Foucauldians have instead exemplified its intractability.

The traditional humanist problematic is a matter of difference as well as *différance* and will not be deconstructed away. Power and knowledge do not *directly* imply each other but nor are they radically distinct; they are complexly mediated. The Foucauldian turn thus usefully emphasises the link between concept and worldly effect. If we refuse the reduction of each to the other, our truths are nevertheless of this world and not "the child of protracted solitude". And just as truth cannot be found safely closeted in "Cartesian rooms", nor are those who govern blind (Foucault, 1980, pp. 51, 131).

That the opposition between academic purity and policy information has proved so intractable is not surprising, for what sociologist can deny the value of each? Who can totally abandon the idea of independent scholars freely pursuing their own problems? In the face of pragmatic dissolution within the policy-maker's "collaborative research teams", are we not right to be preoccupied with our disciplinary peculiarities? And who these days has sufficient faith in historical progress to advocate a maximalist disdain for reform? It is of the utmost importance to develop the possibilities for improving our daily lives. Half-measures have their value.

Encore, classical sociological theory

The Foucauldians have sought to resolve sociological jeopardies by developing what Wendy Larner among others, describes as "post-social" theories that abandon "unitary conceptions of society" (1998, p. 5). Such calls for plurality are now pretty much orthodox and I for one can certainly agree with Greg McLennan (2002b) that they have failed to deliver the goods. In response to all these obdurate, "set-piece philosophical dualities", we

must redouble our efforts to "reconstruct understandings in some kind of totalizing way" (2002b, pp. 285 496).

If there is much talk these days claiming that the society concept is *passé*, then in this as in so many other respects, the postmodern adheres to the modern. As David Frisby and Derek Sayer argue, throughout the twentieth century the notion of society "proved too grand an abstraction by far for modern sociological tastes" (1986, p. 121). To reflect on the concept at all seemed inappropriately old-fashioned. It is in this context that the contrast between pure theory and technocratic engineering became a familiar and disempowering oscillation. Such was not the case, however, for those who built that location in the university occupied by twentieth century sociologists. Our classical texts productively sustain tensions between concept and worldly effect and they do so precisely by holding out for a more generic definition of our field of study.

In this country as in others, sociology emerges with a world in which the ties between people have widened and deepened to an historically unprecedented degree. Hence the weight of those classical notions - the division of labour, the world market, the bureaucratic order. Sociology is the science not of communal life in general but of modern times, of bourgeois society in particular. This society cannot be theorised with some kind of "unitary conception", the Foucauldians are right on that score, but it is a totality nevertheless. Society is not some inherently simple principle of togetherness, some immediate community that stands above us all. It is a vast web of regular interactions, a web that extends well beyond the consciousness of participating individuals. Society, as the Scottish Enlightenment has it, is a product of human action but not of human design (Ferguson, 1995).

Our classical texts tell us that modern life is anomic, alienated, disenchanted, *blasé*, neurotic. This society of our making and unmaking, this association of strangers, is the core concept and prime suspect of sociological thought. Twentieth century sociology and its postmodern shadow may well have found the concept embarrassingly grandiose. In the new millennium, however, we must attend once more to the siren call of those mad Pakeha in 76.201 *Classical Sociological Theory*.

Knowing society

Since the mid-1980s, a seemingly endless deluge of so-called neo-liberal reform has sapped the supports for intellectual life. According to the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (n.d.), however, the tide is turning – "these days everyone is talking about the 'knowledge society'". Of late, the Government has been promoting this notion as the central plank of a new "national vision" (Office of The Associate Minister of Education, 2002, p. 21). Unsurprisingly, this vision has occasioned debate among sociologists. Given the lack of intellectual generosity that so evidently characterised our late twentieth century "repositioning", the choice between either disdainful withdrawal or enthusiastic participation may seem to have become increasingly necessary and stark. Surely, however, our local memories bring home anything but such a polarity of concept and worldly effect.

Neo-liberalism is as it was, a zealous union of pure erudition with banal government. Recall too, then, that the power in knowledge and the knowledge in power need not necessarily be sociological. Our neo-liberalism expressly defined itself as the absence of any notion of a "wider society" that empowers individuals "even though none of the people may comprehend the gain". The Treasury confessed to having "some difficulty in deriving policy from an imaginary construct of that type" (1987, p. 448). Moves towards a "knowledge society" promise to improve upon such an evident lack of sociological imagination and we should put our shoulders to this task. After all, the Minister is himself a sociologist!

But what of the grounds for a more sceptical response? This new regime of truth is often obsessed with specialised techniques and downplays the "generic skills" of a happy democracy (Office of the Associate Minister of Education, 2002, p. 67). As a matter of "adding value" to commodities, knowledge is not so much combined with as subordinated to an "entrepreneurship that enables us to both find and exploit" (Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, 1999). Such passages recall the arguments advanced by that neo-liberal paragon, Freidrich Hayek. Both move very quickly indeed from a distrust of central planning to an acceptance of "the indispensability of the price system" (Hayek, 1945, p. 528).

There is always an alternative. We should not forget Hayek's (1945, p.

520) critique of rational individualism's supposedly "perfect information". The "central theoretical problem of all social science", he rightly argues, is to account for a "civilization" that runs "beyond the span of the control of any one mind" (p. 528). When he highlights "habits and institutions" that "individually we do not possess", Hayek opens up the terrain of sociology. But he leaves that space empty. Rightly arguing that knowledge of the social is "not given to anyone in its totality", Hayek goes astray by equating the idea of society with an animistic belief in collective minds. On these grounds, even the term social is to be denounced as a "weasel word" (1988, pp.112-19). Society becomes a concept that Hayek, like Margaret Thatcher and the Treasury, can do without. Instead, he invests an evolutionary optimism in the "spontaneous order" of competing individuals and so begets the "games" played by contemporary neo-liberals (Schmidtchen, 2000).

The lack of a concept of society is the void upon which liberalism continues to founder. And it was the promise of liberty that prompted sociological thought about modern society. This society is not some sort of superior Subject possessed of a consciousness that stands outside and orders the affairs of individuals. To risk an antique terminology, our "individual and species life are not *different*" (Marx, 1977, p. 99). To say that society neither stands above nor is reducible to the individual means that social relations are constituted by both abstraction and everyday interaction. Such a way of life inevitably generates often profound tensions between power and knowledge. As Adorno warns, "the better one understands society, the more difficult it is to make oneself useful within it" (2002, p. 3). But then what is sociology if not a search for this understanding, an embracing of this difficulty?

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Social Policy and Sociology: A Diverging Convergence?

Mike O'Brien

Theoretical or practical – which is it to be? The relationship and connection between these two dimensions of knowledge forms one of the ongoing features of the academic project. They are issues with which Graeme Fraser worked in an active manner throughout his academic career, in his teaching, his writing and his own academic and professional practice. They are questions that are at the forefront of many dimensions of current academic life, questions which students (at all levels) struggle with constantly. They are questions that are central to current emphases in both social science research and the thrust of the directions in tertiary education policy and resourcing. They are issues that were fundamental in many dimensions of my doctoral thesis, a thesis that I was privileged to have Graeme Fraser supervising. I want to explore some of the issues about theory and application through a discussion of aspects of the disciplines of sociology and social policy, a discussion that is necessarily incomplete given the parameters within which this article is written. It is an exploratory walk into a small sample of the literature rather than an exhaustive examination. But then, as Graeme has reminded me on different occasions, this is a beginning project, not a life's work! Certainly, I want to suggest that any argument which defines sociology as focused on theory and social policy as focused on application is an inaccurate caricature of the nature of the two disciplines.

In his comparatively short exploration of the relationship between social policy and sociology, Outram (1989) notes that there has long been a strong connection between sociology and social policy. Indeed some of what are described as the "founding fathers" of sociology, such as Weber, are seen by some social policy writers as being very much concerned with issues of social policy. He draws on earlier work by Room (1979) who notes the ways in which Weber saw a positive social policy role for the state in which the state could act to both improve life chances and advance social change

and social integration. (This emphasis on the role of the state is very familiar in the social policy literature, both in the Fabian socialist tradition and in the commentaries on, and critiques of, that literature.) The distinction that Outram makes between sociology and social policy is to argue that sociology is primarily concerned with explaining the nature of social life and social change, while social policy on the other hand is particularly concerned with specific policy measures. Outram (1989) goes on to argue that there has been a broadening of scope in relation to social policy, a broadening which has extended to "analysis of the relationship between social policy and social structure, and the ways in which social policy affects all our lives" (p. 17). It is here that the divergence converges in that this "broadening of scope" draws actively on theoretical traditions which, in many instances, are the same traditions as are drawn on in sociology. Thus, the scope of social policy study is widened to ensure a more explicit theoretical link between social policy and society in the discipline's literature. Outram's distinction between social policy and sociology does not hold up well given the implications of the rest of his discussion.

What then is the focus of the study of social policy? Certainly there is no argument in that literature about issues of application. Indeed, one of the recurring themes is that social policy has a strong normative and prescriptive component to it. The attention to application and practice is fundamental to the discipline. Different authors have strongly asserted this theme, clearly articulated in a more specific context by Jonathan Bradshaw (2000) in some of his work on poverty when he comments that the purpose of studying poverty is to change it. The idea of detached observation as the sole purpose of study has no place in the social policy endeavour. Alcock (1996) reflects this clearly in his recent text when he argues that one of the particular features that distinguishes social policy from other disciplines is "its specific, and driving, concern not merely to understand the world, but also to change it" (p4.)

He goes on to identify three areas of focus for social policy, namely:

> ...a knowledge of the role and structure of the different sectors of welfare; an analysis of the ideological, economic and international context within which they are situated, and an understanding of important issues affecting users of services such as social divisions

> and inequalities, the costs of providing services and the means of ensuring access to them. (Alcock, 1996, p. 17)

Some of these three elements are also demonstrated in recent work by Erskine (1998) in which he argues that social policy is held together by four themes (rather than the three identified by Alcock). These are: an interest in the welfare of individuals and social groups, welfare being an essentially contested term; an interest in the philosophy and theory of welfare and its policies and their impact; the institutional organisation and implementation of policies in all sectors; the components which make up welfare:

> Social policy explores the social, political, ideological and institutional context within which welfare is produced, distributed and consumed. It seeks to provide an account of the processes which contribute to or detract from welfare and, does this within a normative framework which involves debating moral and political issues about the nature of the desired outcomes. This definition of social policy has two important components: the concern with welfare and a recognition of the normative and contested nature of social policy. It is the latter which distinguishes social policy from other social science subjects. (Erskine, 1998, pp. 18-19)

Some authors reject the very idea that there is a theoretical dimension to the study of social policy at all. For them, the study of social policy is the study of social institutions, particularly institutions of "the welfare state" and the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of these institutions in meeting "social need". Some of this is captured, for example, in the works of Robert Pinker (1971) when he argues that social policy "has developed an impressive empirical tradition while lacking any substantial body of explanatory theory" (p. xii). Here it is the application that is emphasised, with theory explicitly rejected

This approach to social policy is neatly described by Mishra (1977), somewhat caustically, as: "dustbowl empiricism". Readers will have noted that I have used the term "study of social policy", rather than some other more general phrase such as "social policy". The more specific focus here arises because it is important, for current purposes, to keep separate the *practice* of social policy and *academic* work in social policy. "The practice of social policy" will clearly have an applied and practical focus in that it will

necessarily be concerned with specific policy measures and policy responses to the policy questions currently being addressed. It will need to traverse quite specific and concrete measures, legislative and operational activities, in order to provide the requisite response. This does not mean that these measures and activities cannot be understood and explained theoretically or that they are not informed by some theoretical ideas and propositions. Of course they are. However, they are measures and activities which are, by definition, applied, concrete and specific.

However, it is this focus on the concrete and specific which Mishra and others have criticised in their attack on the inadequate attention to questions of theory within the discipline of social policy. That criticism was certainly justified and well founded in the 1970s and early 1980s, but it is certainly not a criticism which could be made of the discipline over the last two decades. Indeed, it is not going too far to argue that in the last twenty years, social policy has been characterised by an extensive and sustained focus on the development and application of theoretical material, both in thinking about specific social policy fields such as income support, health, housing and social services (to use four examples) and in building theoretical knowledge and propositions about the nature and form of social policy. It is certainly no longer true to argue that social policy is atheoretical. Certainly, the tensions between theory and application remain integral to social policy and its academic activity. But they are tensions which are tussled with constantly, as distinct from the earlier period when the emphasis on application meant that the relationship between theory and application was virtually non-existent. Theory and application converge. What then of sociology? Is there a comparable convergence between theory and application?

In brief, I want to suggest that the debate about theory and application is also apparent within the discipline of sociology. My comments are the result of reflections and conversations, with the reflections based on a limited and somewhat cursory scan of the recent literature. There is no doubt in scanning that literature and listening to and participating in the conversations that the development of theoretical work has continued apace in sociology. Theory remains alive and well in sociology. At the same time, however, there seems to have been a renewed interest in the question of

application. Thus, I hear work described as being "far too theoretical and lacking application". Journals and texts mix together theoretical and applied discussions completely unquestioningly, as if the two belonged together in a very comfortable and acceptable relationship. Alongside, and perhaps reflecting interest in the "applied" dimensions of sociology, there is a significant body of sociological literature which focuses on questions of welfare and social policy. There are, for example, journals called *Sociology and Social Welfare* and *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*.

While there are extensive debates within the literature about the nature of sociology, there is substantial agreement that the study of society, in all its manifestations and dimensions, is the central purpose and mission for sociology. In this respect, it is clearly different from social policy. Nevertheless, sociology and social policy share a common interest in a range of social questions. For social policy, the interest in those questions is both about understanding and explaining them (theoretical work) *and* in exploring responses to those questions. Sociological interest in the questions emphasises the understanding and explanation without necessarily identifying appropriate responses, although it may do so and some sociologists see this as an integral part of their sociological imagination. It is, in many respects, a difference in emphasis and focus and orientation. It was this tension between theory and application that characterised much of the Fraser contribution. Good theory was critical. So also was theoretically informed application.

Anthony Giddens (1989), arguably one of the outstanding sociological authors of recent times, describes sociology as "the study of human social life, group and societies " (p. 7). He goes on to argue that there are four important implications arising from the sociological analysis. These are identified as a clearer understanding of social situations, greater cultural awareness, assessment of the effects of policies, and increased self enlightenment. He then goes on, interestingly enough for our present purposes, to comment:

> ...there is bound to be a connection between studying sociology *and* the prompting of the social conscience. No sociologically sophisticated person can be unaware of the inequalities that exist in the world today, the lack of social justice in many social situations

> or the deprivations suffered by millions of people. It would be strange if sociologists did not take sides on practical issues. (Giddens, 1989, p. 24. Emphasis added)

Is the "taking of sides" any different from the normative focus of social policy referred to above?

This is in contrast to the position adopted in their introductory text by Bilton et al. (1987). In their discussion of the relationship between sociology and social policy, located interestingly enough under a heading called: "The practice of sociology" they argue that "sociology has an important role to play in exploding myths and misconceptions about social phenomena and institutions, and in providing a context in which controversial issues can be examined critically and analytically" (p. 30). They reject the notion that there is a role for sociology in identifying particular social policy directions. It is a position that is rejected because inevitably, they argue, it leads sociologists into political acts in dealing with political questions, a position that is outside the domain of the sociologist.

In his inaugural lecture in 1992, Papadakis (who has written on a number of social policy issues over the years) argues for a somewhat similar view about the relationship between sociology and what he calls "public policy". "I am here interested in the role of the sociologist as the observer who attempts, systematically, and in a scientific manner, following the rules of evidence, to provide information and to interpret social relations" (Papadakis, 1992, p. 13). He goes on to argue that:

> Policy makers need sociologists, or people who think and act sociologically, to observe and to interpret social relationships. To this extent, there is a connection between sociology and public policy....Sociology is only likely to influence social change indirectly, through identifying problems and developing our understanding of them. (p. 14)

The relationship between sociology and what he calls "public policy" has to be "mediated by politics and by political interests" (p. 15). Of course, he argues, the insights from sociology may create some discomfort for governments and policymakers. Interestingly, in a discussion which Graeme Fraser would have approved of, he quotes here from Weber and the important distinction made by Weber between manifest and latent functions,

a distinction that is as critical in social policy study as it is in sociology.

In a much earlier American publication, entitled "Social Policy and Sociology" the emphasis is not on these as separate disciplines but on the way in which sociological knowledge and analysis might be applied and utilised in questions of public policy (Demerath et al., 1975). This is, of course, an approach that is akin to that adopted by Papadakis and quoted above. I would venture to suggest that it is a view of the sociology/social policy relationship that is far from an historical anachronism. Indeed, some of the contemporary arguments about social research and the claim that knowledge that is not available to policy makers seems to be premised on a similar connection between knowledge and policy. That is, we frequently hear from government and government departments that there is not the research material and information required for policy decisions. (See for example the Innovative New Zealand Framework, 1999). The argument from these departments is based around the idea that social policy research, and presumably sociological research, should be involved in the enterprise of generating knowledge *for policy purposes*. The purpose of research, it is claimed, is to generate socially useful knowledge.

The positions adopted by Demerath et al. (1975), by Bilton et al. (1987), and by Papadakis (1992) are rather different from those articulated in a recent Australian sociological text. In that text, Sargent (1994) draws a distinction between study which focuses on *what is* in contrast to study which focuses on *what ought to be done*. The latter, she argues, is often seen as the preserve of social policy while a positivist view of sociology reflects the former emphasis. Throughout her text, she argues energetically against the positivist view of the sociological endeavour. Indeed, she is very clear that "not only are we inevitably influenced by our personal values, but....we should study our values and live by them" (Sargent, 1994, p. 321). Both social policy and sociology are, she argues, clearly focused on issues of power. Sociology and social policy converge.

One of the earliest (and more ambiguous) discussions of the relationship between sociology and social policy is found in Townsend's 1973 article when he argues that both sociology and social policy incorporate assumptions about both social policy and about social structure. The ambiguity arises because of the ways in which Townsend conflates the

academic study of sociology and the work of the sociologist as policy analyst. The two are not necessarily linked. What is interesting about his argument is his strong rejection of the idea that sociology (or any other discipline for that matter) can be value free. His argument is an interesting one in the light of the acceptance of the normative nature of social policy study reflected in the material quoted above.

Significantly, the increasing convergence between social policy and sociology is again clearly reflected in Samson and South's publication in 1996 which gathers together some of the papers from the British Sociological Association Conference three years earlier where the focus had been on "The social construction of social policy, the title of the book. The focus in their book is a critique of current policies around three themes of citizenship, exclusion and difference, themes that are as central to social policy as they clearly were to sociology at that time. I would suggest that they are still central to sociology and to social policy. Certainly, many contemporary social policy debates pursue all or some of these themes, reflecting reasonably clearly the extent to which the interests of sociology and social policy run at least in parallel lines if not on the same playing field.

Sociology and social policy contain a substantial number of common fields of interest, although, interestingly enough, many of the sociological texts do not refer to "social policy" as a term in its own right. Yet, sociology texts traverse a wide range of material which is also part of the focus for social policy texts. I refer in particular to such issues as equality and inequality, poverty, power, the state (in some instances the welfare state), theoretical discussions on traditions as diverse as Marxism, feminism, liberalism and functionalism, all of which feature in the social policy literature, albeit sometimes with a difference in emphasis. Social policy literature utilises these traditions as theoretical tools to facilitate the discussion of social policy and welfare questions. Historically, there has been less emphasis in the social policy literature on the theoretical debates per se, although those debates have become much more frequent and substantial in the last two decades. Sociology uses many of the same traditions to examine and explore society and social relationships.

Turning to the New Zealand context, some elements of the relationship between social policy, public policy and sociology were taken up in a series

of essays published in 1998 in honour of Bill Wilmot who had retired at that time after a long and distinguished career as Professor of Sociology at the University of Canterbury (Du Plessis and Fougere, 1998). The first section of the publication is entitled: "Sociologists at Work: Policy, Justice and Professional Identities". Many of the questions which I have touched on here are taken up in that collection of essays, particularly, but not exclusively, in the first section. In that section, the relationship between sociology, government policy and wider political debate is drawn out in four quite different essays. In the course of those essays, the tension between sociology as external commentary and, to use Saville-Smith's (1998) term "sociology as dirty work", is evident with all of the authors arguing for a vigorous engagement between sociology and the wider society. Interestingly, Saville-Smith in her clear articulation of the importance of that engagement, draws in part on the work of Townsend, bringing us once more towards convergence. Whatever he might think of the positions taken in these four essays, there can be no doubt that the idea of "engagement" is equally central to Graeme Fraser's approach to the work of sociology. Not for him should it be totally detached observation. The tension between theory and application is nicely captured in a comment in this collection of essays when Richard Thompson notes that:

> the relation between advocacy and objectivity is not one of antagonism so much as one of mutual dependency.... Neither advocacy nor insight necessarily lead to any improvement in society. Social policy is not determined either by purely rational considerations or by some consensus of opinion about what is necessary for the "public good". (Thompson, 1998, pp. 19, 21)

I want to argue quite unequivocally, that this relationship between sociology and social policy forms an integral part of Graeme Fraser's work and intellectual contribution over his academic life. It is perhaps most clearly manifest in his keen interest in health issues, the development of health services, the politics of health, the organisation and delivery of health services and issues of management and professions in health services delivery. Any review of Graeme's academic work will need to give extensive and detailed attention to his keen interest in health. There are a number of important questions about the relationship between sociology and social

policy and the theoretical and applied dimensions of that relationship that Graeme has highlighted. I want to pick up two themes. First, I want to take up the question of professions and professionalism. Second, I want to turn attention to the issues of health service management and delivery. I have chosen these two themes both because of their importance and because they reflect a number of interesting questions, both within sociology and social policy and within that tension between theory and application which forms the basis for this discussion. I certainly would not suggest that they constitute the totality of Graeme's contribution to sociology, to social policy or to the study of health services.

The health services are strongly dominated by the power of professional expertise. (Some commentators would go so far as to argue that the words "strongly dominated" are too weak and should be replaced by words such as "controlled". Nevertheless, I will stick with "strongly dominated" because that conveys a suggestion that the power of the professional is not absolute and can be challenged, even if it is difficult to do so.) In much of Graeme's work this question of the power of the professional and "managing" (or perhaps more precisely controlling) that power is a very important consideration. It is a consideration that has substantial theoretical and applied dimensions. The theoretical dimensions revolve around the nature of power, the meaning of "professional" and "professionalism", the basis for the exercise of expertise and professional authority, the nature of the relationships between "the professional" and "the patient", the nature of "scientific medicine" and the basis of its claims for expertise. These are very important theoretical questions which cannot be lightly or easily explored and debated. They lie deeply embedded in the history and development of medicine and health care and health service delivery. They are also deeply embedded in a range of philosophical and epistemological questions. Graeme's work on professions, particularly the medical profession, focused around these questions and what the nature of medical relationships reflected about the exercise of professional power.

In line with my overall theme, however, the interest in these questions was not just a matter of "academic exploration". These were and are important matters which required careful academic attention and debate. But, they also had significant applied relevance in that the way in which

professional power was exercised affected both the nature and shape of health services and the nature of the relationship between the doctor and "the patient". A former health service colleague of mine in the days when I worked at the then North Canterbury Hospital Board used to describe some of his medical colleagues as "the medical mafia". He was clearly implying a particular exercise of professional power in relation to the delivery of health services and the allocation of resources and prioritising within the Board. It represented a specific, albeit somewhat inflammatory, commentary on how that power was exercised.

The applied dimensions of the questions that interested Graeme Fraser around the exercise of professional power were very much focused on how that professional power impacted on the delivery of health services, on the development of more effective health services, and acted, at times, as an impediment to the more effective utilisation of resources and better service provision. In other words, his interest in the sociology of health professions was both about developing a better understanding of the nature of professions in health care *and* applying that analysis to the provision of better services and about developing more effective strategies to allow health reforms to proceed in ways which improved services and gave better use of resources. These are clearly very concrete and applied dimensions of important theoretical questions, dimensions which are of considerable interest to people in social policy as are the issues of professions and professionalism in social policy and the welfare state generally. The questions that Graeme has asked and explored in relation to doctors and medical services have also been of considerable interest in such areas as social work and social services and education, to name but two examples.

It is not a monumental leap from an interest in professions and professional power to a more general interest in the organisation, management and delivery of health services and in the range of reform attempts that have been part of the health services agenda at least since the White Paper on Health (Department of Health, 1974). That White Paper on Health proposed the integration of Hospital Boards and of the service dimensions of the Department of Health and can be clearly seen as the first formal forerunner to the District Health Board structure which now shapes and determines health service delivery and priorities. (The steps between

1974 and the current DHBs are, of course, considerably more tortuous and complex than my simple statement here suggests. That complicated path need not concern us here.) Graeme's examination and exploration of the nature of those changes, and of their historical, political, medical and organisational dimensions represents the bringing together of sociologically informed insights into the nature of change and the politics of change. Sociological insights from the study of management and organisations and organisational behaviour (understood in systemic and in personal terms) represent further illustrations of the use of the discipline of sociology theoretically and of its application. Here too, as with the work on professions, the links between sociology and social policy are clear. There is a wide range of social policy literature which has also attended to health services organisation and delivery, and changes within those services. Moreover, that social policy literature draws on a wide range of disciplines including sociology, political science, management and history – Graeme Fraser's work draws on a similarly wide range.

The distinction between the contribution of the two disciplines to theory and application seems even less meaningful and clearcut now than it did as I began to draw these reflections together. While the starting points diverge, there are many aspects where there is significant convergence, although not complete identity. It is trite, but nevertheless critical, for each of the disciplines to acknowledge the distinctive and the complementary contribution of the other and to strengthen both. For both contribute to a better world, better both academically and in application.

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And Then There Was Social Work

Robyn Munford

> For me social work is a profession, a community of people who share a common goal of always seeking new ways to assist people. A part of this is that social work takes seriously the social context in which it finds itself. At certain times the profession has to attend very closely to the needs of the individual, and at other times to the social order. (A Conversation with Merv Hancock in Munford and Nash, 1994, p. 9)

And in the beginning...

In the formative years of my university career, Professor Graeme Fraser was clearly recognised as a lecturer who embodied those attributes that make learning challenging and rewarding. Without the aid of fancy Power Point presentations and not a whiteboard pen in sight, Graeme Fraser made sociology and its often disturbing insights come alive. At the time, all I knew of this man was his passion for classical sociology. The thought of another 76:201 Classical Sociological Theory class was tinged with excitement but nervous anticipation as I hoped I would not be singled out to demonstrate how well I had read the text and how well I had understood the writings of those great "men" in history. But then the joy and quiet satisfaction that would emerge if I were unlucky (or fortunate) enough to be singled out and could for at least two minutes engage in a meaningful dialogue that showed I had explored and gained some understanding about what it was the text was telling me. The study of sociological theory alongside social work encouraged us to situate ourselves in other perspectives and interpretations and to develop a curiosity about the significance of what was going on in the world around us. The discussions in that classroom have had a profound influence on my subsequent choices and the way I view the world and the problems to be explored. That class was one of the highlights of my week and to this day, the sights, sounds and feelings surrounding those discussions remain strong in my memory.

As a naive and tentative undergraduate student, all I knew of Graeme Fraser was that he taught sociology. Little did I know that he was also a key player in the development of the social work degree at Massey University. I was part of the first group of students to enroll in this programme and given my desire to continue to study sociology, our paths would cross many times. This paper is one perspective on that history. I know that my colleagues and peers will join with me in acknowledging and giving public recognition to the contribution Graeme Fraser has made to the development of social work education at Massey University and in wider environs. This includes the commitment to advocating for the establishment and maintenance of a degree that embraced scholarship and reflected the particularities of Aotearoa/New Zealand society. It could also stand comparison in the international arena.

Social Work at Massey University

The beginnings of the social work programme at Massey University signals the importance of a number of key players. Among them, of course, is Merv Hancock, the first director of the programme and a member of the working party charged with the development and establishment of the degree. Others, such as Ephra Garrett, also deserve mention as having a key role in constructing the core elements of the social work programme. Those involved in the early days had a clear vision, based on experience in the social services field and in education. From reading a history of social work education in this country (Nash, 1998), their vision of how social work education could develop into a strong discipline is clearly evident and provides some insight into why Massey University would come to have a central position in social work education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The study of sociology was to be a core subject in the social work programme, especially as those teaching it were located within the Department of Sociology. Strong links were developed between the staff in the social work unit and their colleagues in the sociology programme.

The challenge for those early pioneers was to develop a social work degree that would have professional recognition from the field and high academic standards (Nash, 1998). A key focus was to develop "social work as an academic discipline in its own right, but one which draws on a range

of social science subjects best taught each within their own discipline" (Nash, 1998, p. 130). The capacity to develop an extramural component of the degree, once the internal degree had been established, was an important consideration in choosing Massey University as the location for the first four-year undergraduate social work degree in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Graeme Fraser played a key role in curriculum development and in guiding the degree application through the required academic approval channels, both within and outside the University.

The Bachelor of Social Work degree (BSW) is now twenty-seven years old and is currently situated in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work. Students can now also enrol for postgraduate qualifications in social work, including a doctoral programme. Sociology remains as an important subject within the social work programmes. The desire to have students understand the important links between theory and practice continues as a central focus of the BSW degree and the knowledge provided by sociologists informs a significant part of this work. The need to understand the person in context, the groups and communities to which they belong and the society in which they live remains of central concern to educators and students of social work.

"Keeping the fire in the belly"

The research students of Graeme Fraser often heard the words "keep the fire in the belly" in their research meetings. These words encapsulated for many students the passion for the topic that had brought them to this place and encouraged them to remain focused on completing the research. For social work education, "keeping the fire in the belly" embodies how those in social work education, and the profession, struggle to maintain professional and academic standards in the face of competing demands from the profession, government, industry and students. It is useful to occasionally reminisce about what it is that ensures that the integrity of the discipline remains sharply in focus (Nash & Munford, 2001). This requires critical reflection on the roles social workers can play in assisting individuals to more fully participate in their communities. No less significant is the role of critic and conscience, a role informed by an understanding of how individuals not only participate in their communities but also can contribute

to determining how these communities are constructed (Munford & Walsh-Tapiata, 2001).

The challenges for social work have been complex and have required thoughtful analysis. One of the most significant has been the foregrounding of the local context and working with Maori self-determination and the practices of biculturalism. This has required rigorous analysis of the place of social work in this country and beyond and has involved important debates about what should constitute the core knowledge of a social work curriculum (Benton & Benton, 1991; Connolly, 2001; Nash, 2001; Ruwhiu, 2001). These debates mirror what has happened in the wider society as relationships under the Treaty of Waitangi are examined and interpreted in a range of policy and practice domains (Durie, 1998). There have been significant developments in social work in terms of a commitment to bicultural practice. The relationship between tangata whenua and their Treaty partners has been viewed as a priority and frameworks have been developed so that these relationships can be used to understand and construct relationships between other cultural groups (Ruwhiu, 2001). These other cultural groups, such as Pacific Islands communities, have a strong presence in social work and have reinforced the existence of a range of world-views that strengthen our understanding of the social work context (Autagavaia, 2001; Mafile'o, 2001). The terrain has been difficult to traverse as the debates around biculturalism and multiculturalism have at times been intense. For social work educators and practitioners, their struggle has been to understand these debates and find ways to bring them into the classroom so that students can critically review what they mean for social work practice and how they influence their relationships with clients.

While social work has worked to incorporate new discoveries about human behaviour and the nature of society into its practice and education, it has remained strongly connected to the theories emerging out of sociology and an understanding of the social. As sociology has worked through its contribution to society and what it means in terms of making a difference, so too has social work (Dominelli, 1997). Social work has had a strong connection with the study of social policy and community development and routinely makes the connection between analysis and action (Munford & Walsh Tapiata, 2001). But as Jones (1998) argues, social work lives a

paradox where, on the one hand, it acts as an agent for the state, charged with maintaining social control and on the other, it passionately becomes involved in social justice, fighting alongside the marginalised and the dispossessed. This tension is played out in agencies and in social work classrooms and calls for insight into the relationships between individuals and society as well as the role of the state and civil society. Add to this debates about which theory fits best and is most relevant to contemporary concerns (such as, critical social science, the postmodern turn, indigenous epistemology) and it makes for interesting discussion (Healy, 2000; Ruwhiu, 1998; Nash & Munford, 2002). But always to the forefront for social work is the relationship with the client and the association between individual and social change. Do our theories of society help us understand how the lived experiences of our clients are to be transformed? Which knowledge will enable us to know how we can and have made a difference?

Debates about which knowledge is relevant and what counts as knowledge are prevalent in current discussions about the nature of social work education (Nash, 2001). Striving for a social work that remains critical and self-reflective, and engaged with many bodies of knowledge, is often in conflict with a view that remains focused on the pragmatic and technocratic. Nash (2001), in her analysis of the history of social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand, identifies the tensions between groups as they seek to define the social work profession and in turn social work education. The needs of the industry and the requirement for the social worker to be competent to operate in a specific occupational context may come into conflict with the needs of the profession, where the notion of ethical practice and competence generally is more broadly defined and incorporates the social justice ideals of social work (Nash & Munford, 2001, 2002). Social work, as with other disciplines such as sociology, has been subjected to the effects of "the restructuring of the intellectual workforce and the growing prominence of market-led principles in teaching and research activities [which give] employers increasing influence in setting agendas for what [is] taught and how" (Dominelli & Hoogvelt, 1996, p. 75). Given these debates, and the challenges emerging from the effects of other significant developments (such as globalisation and internationalisation), this is surely a time in social work when complex analyses that provide insights into the

diverse experiences of the populations with which we work is much needed. And, given this history, positive or otherwise, one could argue that there is still a place for meandering through the writings of those who have attempted to make sense of the social and of society, both historically as well as more recently. It may be the meandering that just might keep alight the "fire in the belly". This then is one challenge for social work practice and education.

Keeping the legacy alive: Current challenges and future possibilities

Sociology has a key role to perform for social workers for not only does it enable us to examine the complexities of society but it also enables us to explore how the collective is present in the interactions of organisations, communities, neighourboods and households. Our participation in the social work profession and our involvement in social work education challenge us to remain engaged with issues in our local communities and to have more than a fleeting interest in what happens to our fellow human beings. Social workers cannot help but be interested in those systems and structures that have a key role in determining the opportunities that exist for those with whom we work alongside. Our understanding about organisational and community contexts and the possibilities for agency within these contexts forms an essential component of most social work education programmes. As the industry will have a key role in determining the nature of social work practice, so too will the education policy environment in determining the nature of social work education. The current risks and opportunities emerging from the redefinition of aspects of the tertiary sector could open up new opportunities (Office of The Associate Minister of Education, 2002). We should, however, remain alert to what it is that the new rules may bring. Social work educators will need to be fully engaged in critically reflecting upon whether these rules do indeed enable social work education to retain its focus on critique and on educating students to engage with the wider debates about the nature of society. Or, will the pressures on funding in the tertiary sector, require educators to design programmes that deliver highly prescribed outputs in the shortest time possible and with maximum efficiency.

Current policy documents such as the one disseminated by the

Department of Internal Affairs (2002) outlining a framework for developing sustainable communities, should also be carefully examined in order to identify what is constituted as having the potential to make a positive difference in communities and households. Social work practitioners and educators have long known that the vagaries of the state will be central in determining the quality of experiences of individuals. They have also known that despite all the well-intentioned policies of the state in its broadest sense, being able to participate and actualize one's citizenship is dependent upon many things, a key aspect being the capacity and willingness to participate. This involves knowledge, resources and a past history of being successful in effecting change (Munford & Sanders, 1999). It also involves questions about who will be able to participate and who will be involved in shaping society. The current policy documents that underline how communities can be strengthened and how social cohesion and wellbeing can be achieved will need to take account of the nature of the context in which they will be developed and implemented. While the achievement of self-reliant communities and families/whanau is praiseworthy, we must remember that for many, recent history has been characterised by dependency and exclusion. The social and the cultural are important components of wellbeing, but one cannot deny the significance of the economic, both in terms of wealth within families and the material resources that contribute to the building of strong and sustainable infrastrucure within our communities and the wider society (Munford & Sanders, 1999). However, in Aotearoa/New Zealand further research is still required to determine the combination of factors that best promote the positive development of children and resilience among New Zealand families.

Merv Hancock (Munford & Nash, 1994), another of those pioneers, reminds us to locate ourselves within our personal and social histories. In social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand, this means remembering the welfare state and its origins. The material encapsulated in current documents, while not always enshrined in legislation, is closely aligned to the aspirations of those who constructed the welfare state. While subsequent legislation (for example, Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, 1989) has extended early ideas about child welfare to incorporate cultural frameworks

and to acknowledge the role of families/whanau in having a key role in decisions about their members, the original vision of the welfare state needs to be reformulated for the twenty first century. And, as Merv Hancock points out, the last few years has seen social work in this country attempt to define its own legacy and to identify what is unique about doing social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand. There is a coming of age with a strong recognition of the local nature of social work practice and education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, extending and supplementing the understanding of the international context of social work.

In returning to Professor Fraser, a lasting memory will be of his passion for sociology and its significance for understanding our world in all its complexities. In his subsequent positions in the University, he has shown us how the discipline of sociology has relevance for interpreting the interactions within large complex organisations. This includes knowing how to have influence upon policy development and implementation in the wider social environment. And what of the links between social work and sociology? The desire to understand the individual in context, to critically reflect on one's interventions with clients as a social worker and to make links to other events and institutions, remain central concerns and derive from those early awakenings in the social science lecture theatres and classrooms at Massey University. These are about being prepared to critique, and to be critiqued, about how we use our knowledge and put our theories to good effect, about how we understand the notion of the social and about how we analyse and act. Sociology in all its manifestations has, and will continue to have, a central role in informing social work practice and education.

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Island Imaginings: The Possibilities of Post-Colonial Sociology in Aotearoa

Paul Spoonley

Introduction

> ...the main service the art of thinking sociologically may render to each and everyone of us is to make us more sensitive; it may sharpen up our senses, open our eyes wider so that we can explore human conditions which thus far had remained all but invisible... It renders flexible again the world hitherto oppressive in its apparent fixity; it shows it as a world which could be different from what it is now .(Bauman, 1992, pp. 11-12)

The growth and contribution of sociology in post-war North America and Europe is well-documented (see Hall, Held and McGrew, 1992; Scott, 1995), and as a society that was on the colonial periphery, and which had been historically dependent, it was inevitable that sociology in New Zealand would echo broader economic and cultural relations of dependence. Its establishment in the late 1960s and 1970s was largely reliant on those New Zealanders trained elsewhere (Jim Robb) or appointments from the northern hemisphere. The early texts and teaching reflected these origins until sociology began to generate sufficient local numbers in the late 1970s in terms of students, and more New Zealanders were appointed to teach what was still a derived and dependent sociology. In this context, Graeme Fraser helped sponsor and support a sociology that began to have a sense of its localness, especially at Massey University, in the 1980s. Coincidently, this was also a period of major societal change which encouraged both a new sense of identity grounded in an historical process of colonisation and indigeneity, and an openness to globalisation in various forms. The question of what was an appropriate sociology in this society, which was simultaneously both more inward looking and globally engaged, is an intriguing and still unanswered question. What follows is a review of

elements of a local post-colonialism, and sociology's engagement, or lack of it, with these debates and developments.

Destabilising national discourses and nation-building

The process of nation-building and imagining nationality was incomplete when the events of the 1970s began the process of cutting the cultural and economic umbilical cord which attached New Zealand to the UK. On reflection, the early part of the decade exposed New Zealand's economic fragility, underlined by the entry of the UK into what was then called the European Economic Community and the oil crises. Both emphasised a process that was ongoing but which did receive political recognition, and then a particular policy response, until after the election of the 1984 Labour Government. It represents one important strand in New Zealand's post-industrial development, the increasing engagement, and exposure, to globalism in various manifestations, including a re-orientation away from Europe towards the Asia-Pacific region. This will receive only passing mention here, although it deserves more in the context of a globally-based informational capitalism, and what that does to nation-state and regional geo-political interests (see Cohen & Kennedy, 2000). What will receive more attention are the forces which destabilised nationality and nation-building from below.

The signs of a new set of identity politics were apparent in the early 1970s. New social movements in the form of feminism, and civil rights-inspired protest and disobediance, especially on matters such as New Zealand's involvement in regional conflicts and rugby tours to South Africa, were part of the changing public domain. What was then called "race relations" was changing, with the growing confidence of post-migration urban Maori, and the racialisation of Pacific migrants from the early 1970s. The first provided a trigger for a significant cultural shift in domestic politics, while the latter represents a growing cultural diversity derived from non-European immigration which remains problematic in New Zealand.

The activities of urban Maori protest groups such as Nga Tamatoa were both derivative – they were influenced by feminism and the US civil rights movement, as well as by authors such as Franz Fanon – and locally-grounded. The strategies of confrontation and protest might have been

globally inspired, but the focus reflected the concerns of a displaced, dispossessed indigenous community. As Greenland (1984) made clear, Maori politics were focussed on creating a common sense of purpose amongst Maori from the process of colonial dispossession and encouraging pan-tribal notions of "being tangata whenua". If Maori were, or are, disadvantaged, then colonialism was perceived to be a major contributing factor, if not the over-riding issue. Maori went from being irrelevant to the process of nation-building to being one of the *partners* in a process of settlement and development. Te reo and tikanga Maori were to be restored to their rightful place as central to the uniqueness of Aotearoa.

In this process, certain events marked important change points. The 1981 tour by the Springboks threw up some important contradictions for local social movements. At the core was the anomaly of major civil protests directed at a system of discrimination that was in another country, South Africa. At the meeting to organise the protests for the final test in Auckland, Maori repeatedly challenged others, largely Pakeha representing a range of liberal organisations, to let Maori, as tangata whenua, provide the leadership role in the protests and to extend the protests to a local "apartheid". This proved extremely difficult for many of those present to deal with. A fragile unity was preserved for the protests to take place, but it represented a signal that Maori and sympathetic Pakeha were going to find little common ground for some years.

What followed underlined this emerging Maori assertiveness and a greater common sense of purpose. In 1984, the hikoi to Waitangi signalled the agreement between Maori protest movements and traditional iwi organisations on the need to articulate concerns at colonial dispossession and marginalisation in the process of nation construction (Macdonald (1989) remains one of the most powerful commentaries on both the hikoi and the complex Maori politics of the period). Even more radical was the publication of *Maori sovereignty* (Awatere, 1984). The title was sufficient provocation in its own right. The notion that sovereignty was not the preserve of a nation-state, and that it could be sub-dividable was radical. The fact that it could be detached from the nation and state and attached to Maori was heretical. It was a defining moment that signalled a rejection of the idea that the nation-state was a single unity that reflected the national identities and

aspirations of a common people. The "nation" was de-hyphenated from the state. The fact that Maori had never been full citizens much less included in the narratives of the nation was made pointedly and repeatedly. Equally, the state came under attack as providing inappropriate and inadequate services to Maori, best represented in the *Puao-te-atatu* (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986) publication. Here was a rejection of the belief that the state provided services equally and without favour. In a number of areas, the legitimacy of the state in relation to Maori was under attack. Why not re-organise services so that they reflected Maori concerns (biculturalism) or devolve state power to Maori (tino rangatiratanga)? These debates and policy developments all represented a sociology which, in both radical and more orthodox incarnations, was embedded in the dynamics and politics of a classical industrial capitalism.

Sociology and the reconstruction of the nation-state

A classical sociology, or many of its more contemporary variants, was not an appropriate source of wisdom on a resurgent indigeneity, especially of the sort that appeared to have been marginalised by the state, whether colonial or welfare. As a product of the need to explain industrial capitalism, the significance of non-economic politics and identities had historically been seen as irrelevant or the epiphenomenon of material relations of production. The ethnic revival of the 1970s onwards and the significance of indigenous movements ambushed sociologists and sociologists. Moreover, the traditional frame of reference was the nation and/or the state.

> ...sociology has consistently taken for granted the geography of the nation-state as a basic organising principle for its understanding of social institutions, social structures and social processes...The discipline has tended to conflate the state with society (Albrow ...) in an attempt to delineate the social, effectively producing 'national' sociologies. (Westwood, 2000, pp.185-186)

The latter is hardly true of New Zealand. The focus of study has increasingly been the society in which it is located, but a national sociology has not necessarily been the outcome. Much of the sociology that is taught and practised in New Zealand is still highly derivative and while sociology is

"national" in its frame of reference – in deference to where it is located there is little that could be said to represent a national sociology conceptually or in a set of practices that sets the sociology of New Zealand apart from that of other settler or metropolitan societies. Perhaps this stage might be bypassed, and a sociology which is sensitive to a differentiated citizenship and identity politics, and to new forms of globalism and transnationalism will emerge. That said, some of the most exciting sociology that emerged in the 1980s came from the discipline's deployment by Maori.

This is somewhat unfair, especially as sociologists such as David Thorns and David Pearson (see *Eclipse of equality*, 1983; or *A dream deferred*, 1990) and Cluny Macpherson provided nuanced and impressive sociological analyses of intergroup relations. But in many cases, there was still a reliance on classical sociological frameworks. Alongside what might be labelled the orthodox sociological community, a new group of contributors emerged. They challenged the orthodoxy of academics in general by querying not simply the traditions that they had brought with them but also their personal politics and commitment in the face of the turbulence associated with tangata whenua concerns. The challenge was two-fold : what sort of sociology made sense in an environment which gave considerably more weight to the claims and culture of the tangata whenua, and where did sociologists as individuals, and as a community, sit in terms of the public politics of the period. They also provided a very public face to the academic and public understanding of these new politics. This group included the authors of the *Maori sovereignty* articles and then book, Donna Awatere and Ripeka Evans, along with Ranginui Walker and later the Smiths, Graham and Linda. There were also a number who emerged as students such as Hauraki Greenland and Evan Te Ahu Poata Smith. All were interested in writing Maori into academic discourses, and to explore the issues of colonialism and indigeneity. The influence of Franz Fanon and Gramsci can be seen in a lot of the work, especially in relation to the hegemonic projects of colonialism and what might be done to reverse these processes. What did decolonisation mean for both Maori and Pakeha in late twentieth century New Zealand, and what might a post-colonial Aotearoa look like? While only a few of them would have labelled themselves as sociologists, they used sociological arguments and authors,

and combined these with a critical analysis of the state and Pakeha.

Since the 1980s, when this tradition of Maori sociologising emerged, others have taken some of the concepts further, although again, there are many who are not sociologists. Some have been part of Maori organisations (James Ritchie, *Becoming bicultural*, 1992) and have reflected on Pakeha involvement in Maori cultural and economic development. Others (Andrew Sharp, *Justice and the Maori*, 1990; Paul Havemann, *Indigenous people's rights in Australia, Canada and New Zealand*, 1999; Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa*, 1999) have explored what the institutional and legislative structure might look like if effect was to be given to tino rangatiratanga. Jane Kelsey (*Rolling back the state*, 1993) has examined the economic consequences of neo-liberal policies for Maori, amongst others, and offered arguments about the subversion of the Treaty of Waitangi by the state and elites. Michael King (*Being Pakeha*, 1985; *Pakeha. A quest for identity*, 1991) has contributed to an understanding of both how Pakeha might engage with Maori and the naming and content of majority group ethnicity. All have contributed to a debate about the nature of indigeneity in contemporary New Zealand, and the implications for how communities are imagined. While these contributions have provided topics for sociological focus, and required the practice of sociology to be much more sensitive in its practices to tangata whenua, it has yet to provide a sustained and credible conceptual framework that might be said to be part of a New Zealand sociology. But it gives what we do as sociologists operating in New Zealand a particular focus and emphasis, which is often at odds with our colleagues elsewhere. In this sense at least, we have the elements of a national sociology.

A journey begun

These changes to the nature of New Zealand society, and the opportunities to explore what it means to be post-colonial in a dehyphenated nation-state, is only part of the transformation of this society and its sociology. In an internationally comparative sense, the emphasis that is now given to bicultural social services and policies, the acknowledgement of the Treaty of Waitangi and tino rangatiratanga, a revisioning of a colonial history and new understandings of majority group ethnicity all give sociology local

dimensions which are not shared with other national sociological communities, even in general terms. In the twenty-first century, these factors will need to be accompanied by a sociology which provides analytical frameworks for a globalised world which reflect the influence of new technologies on social institutions and values. The fact that 800,000 New Zealand citizens and their children live in other countries requires a sociology that deals with diasporic processes and virtual communities in cyberspace (cyber New Zealanders). The local story is still unfolding, especially in relation to a dramatically increased cultural diversity and further shifts in national imagery (cf Westwood, 2000).

The first post-war significant non-European migration came from the Pacific, and coincided with the labour needs of the New Zealand economy and then with the growing economic uncertainty of the 1970s. The effect is well-documented and began a period of state-sponsored racism, endorsed by the widespread racialisation of Pacific peoples. Three decades later, those communities have matured, with extensive networks and institutions in New Zealand (see Macpherson, 2001). Furthermore, they are beginning to impact on public institutions and imagery, in areas from national sports teams to music and literature (Mallon & Pereira, 2002). This first wave has been supplemented by another in the wake of changes to the immigration policy from 1986. Through the early 1990s, immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea dramatically altered the cultural make-up of new New Zealanders. The politics of rejection was seen in the mid-1990s, and continued, so that by the 2002 general election, three of the major political parties expressed positions which were hostile to either the increased attention to indigenous issues, notably the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process, or continued non-European immigration. By the late 1990s, the source and numbers of immigrants had altered yet again, with net flows being dominated by mainland Chinese and Indians. New Zealand had not only caught up with the cultural diversity of immigrants going to countries such as Canada, the USA and Australia, but had, in some ways, surpassed them. By 2002, the number of foreign-born living in New Zealand was almost double that, proportionately, of the USA, with a third of the working age population in Auckland and one-fifth nationally, having been born overseas. And these communities, especially but not exclusively Pacific

and Asian, engaged in various forms of transnationalism which tied New Zealand in very new ways to the geo-political regions of its neighbourhood, as well as to Australia. The late twentieth century changes to the demography of New Zealand adds yet another layer to the developments concerning tangata whenua.

If citizenship, and the entitlements and obligations which are part of citizenship, are to be differentiated according to membership of indigenous nations, then what is to be done in relation to the membership of cultural groups which are the product of immigration, either recent or more distant? Together, indigenous and ethnic rights, in the context of a liberal, democratic state provide societies such as New Zealand, and sociologists as a constituent group, with some responsibility for understanding these issues.

> This diversity [cultural] gives rise to a series of important and potentially divisive questions. Minorities and majorities increasingly clash over such issues as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, educational curriculum, land claims, immigration and naturalization policy, even national symbols, such as the choice of national anthem or public holidays. Finding morally defensible and politically viable answers to these issues is the greatest challenge facing democracies today. (Kymlicka, 1995, p.1)

Will Kymlicka is one of a number of political theorists who is reworking liberal theory to encompass culturally diverse societies. Others include Rainer Bauböck, Iris Marion Young, John Grey and James Tully. As they, in different ways, point out, classical theories of political and human rights, and notions of citizenship, are increasingly unworkable.

> The problem is not that traditional human rights doctrines give us the wrong answer to these questions [relating to cultural minorities]. It is rather that they often give no answer at all. The right to free speech does not tell us what an appropriate language policy is; the right to vote does not tell us how political boundaries should be drawn, or how powers should be distributed between levels of government; the right to mobility does not tell what an appropriate immigration and naturalization policy is. These questions have been left to the usual process of majoritarian decision-making within each state. The result...has been to render cultural minorities vulnerable to significant injustice at the hands of the majority... (Kymlicka, 1995, p.5)

He goes on to suggest that there are two distinct sets of rights that need to be addressed : the self-government rights of national minorities and the polyethnic rights of immigrant groups and their descendants. Ironically, the literature is primarily concerned with the latter, as a consequence of the political significance of immigration for societies in North America and Europe in the latter half of the twentieth century. New Zealand has addressed the former more extensively, and the latter almost not at all, except in terms of immigrant selection. The post-arrival issues, for both migrant and resident communities, exist in a policy vacuum, with some minor exceptions. In this regard, sociology has a critical role to play because of the analytical and policy skills of sociologists. What institutional and policy framework is most appropriate for a society that has both significant indigenous populations and issues, along with immigrant communities with a different (largely but not exclusively) set of issues? How do biculturalism/Treaty issues sit alongside a yet to be explored multiculturalism?

All this suggests that the analytical and policy terrain has shifted significantly from the mid-twentieth century. Turner (2001), argues that the social citizenship of an era dominated by contributors such as Marshall was concerned with those who participated in the labour market (typically men), the soldier-citizen and entitlements relating to "the formation of households and families" (pp.192-193). In the twenty-first century, he argues, these have been supplemented or replaced by notions of environmental or ecological citizenship, the citizenship associated with aboriginal communities and cultural rights as part of post-national forms of citizenship (Turner, 2001, pp.204-206). Sociology can, and should, have a role to play in these debates, but to do so, it must continue to develop credible analytical frameworks and policy options given the changed circumstances of Aotearoa/New Zealand in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

Settler societies such as New Zealand are characterised by the "foundational claims made by European migrant groups intent on settlement and on the building of self-sustaining states..." (Stasiulis & Yuval-Davis, 1995, p.1). This colonially inspired process has been challenged, and in some ways,

displaced by the activities of Maori and others since the 1970s. The congruence of the state with the dominant cultural group, Pakeha, has been disrupted, although not ruptured. The imagining of the nation in 2003 is quite different to what it was some decades ago with major elements now acknowledging Maori, albeit not always adequately. The assumption of a unified nation-state is contested, and citizenship is now differentially allocated, with Maori having different citizenship rights to other New Zealanders. The state, for both domestic reasons, and because of the penetration and significance of new forms of globalism, has come under pressure, although it would be premature to announce its death. But if the journey has begun with regard to indigenous issues, there is still some way to go. In terms of the pluralism associated with immigration, there has been little offered by way of a set of political and policy arguments that would ease the anxieties of some, answer the anti-immigrant politics of others, and provide a complementary framework to the emergent biculturalism that already exists. This provides one of the most important challenges for New Zealand society and sociologists alike.

A postscript

If this is a journey of a society, in one particular area, over recent decades, it has also prompted a more locally-oriented sociology despite comments to the contrary above about the lack of a national sociology. I had begun that journey by conducting research with the Niuean community in the mid-1970s. I was fortunate to have Cluny Macpherson as a supervisor, and his approach continues to provide a model on how sociology ought to be conducted in New Zealand. But in a professional sense, it was being appointed to Massey University's Department of Sociology in 1979 which hastened my involvement with these issues. The Department of Sociology through the 1980s, under Graeme Fraser's leadership, moved significantly from being focussed on the sociology of North America and Europe, to one that took its key reference points from New Zealand, and which was prepared to explore what a post-colonial Aotearoa might entail (although it was not labelled as such then). The publications and research which emerged from the Department were testimony to that. Graeme played a key role in sponsoring and supporting a new generation of sociologists:

Steve Maharey, Bev James, Brennon Wood, Allanah Ryan, Nicola Armstrong, Peter Beatson. He was my PhD supervisor. Despite precious little time, and little acquaintance with the topic of my PhD (political extremism), I could not have asked for better. He is one of a number of pioneering sociologists in this country who helped establish a local presence and focus for the discipline, and who made it a respected part of a university. This was no easy task in a university which had been, less than a decade earlier, an agricultural college based in a provincial town. Graeme overcame whatever suspicions might have prevailed, and provided Massey University and New Zealand with an enduring legacy.

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Thinking Again About Truth

Kerry Howe

We inhabit an increasingly complex world. We live in times of amazing contradiction. Never has humanity been wealthier, or poorer; never has it been healthier or sicker; never has it been wiser or more ignorant; never has it been more democratically organised or politically repressed; never has there been such globalisation or tribalism. Never has there been such certainty and uncertainty. No wonder we are all confused.

But there are explanations. Historians, for example, might talk about the complexities of decolonisation and postcolonial reorderings, noting the demise of empires, the ending of the Cold War, the ascendancy of liberal capitalism, the financial and cultural globalisation of the planet, the growing disillusionment with science and technology. They note welfare states being rolled back, and indeed note that the nation-state, itself an historically specific construction, is in decline. Post-World War II international power structures are now in a major state of flux. Historians might also point to basic changes in values. In New Zealand, for example, we have had an economic revolution since 1984. More significantly, but less well understood, is the fact that we have also had a consequent philosophical revolution. The ways in which we individually and collectively relate to each other, to our community, and to our state have all changed dramatically. The notions of competitive private good and sector interest have replaced the former ideals of public good and shared collective values.

Our own little society itself is also much more complex and diverse - socially, economically and ethnically. Mono-culturalism is being replaced by the competing concepts of biculturalism and multiculturalism. Who are we as a nation, as a culture, as communities, as individuals? Are we a nation? Are we a culture? There are no longer ready and simple answers about our country's national characteristics, about gender roles, and about ethnic and generational identities. I would be the last to argue that this is all somehow "bad". We must be very careful not to idealise a past life that may never

have existed. But there is no denying that our current world is a more complex, different and, I think, difficult environment in which to operate, both as scholars and as citizens.

It is also unmistakably a more liberal environment in the sense that many people are no longer subject to a prescriptive learning (or indeed any other sort of prescriptive environment). Anything goes. What they learn, how they chose to learn, whether they learn at all, what they do with their learning is now a much more individualised experience. This parallels legal developments which now privilege individual human rights in unprecedented ways. People can do or say or believe what they like, and feel sanctioned to do so. There are no consequences. The art of spelling and making grammatical sense, not to mention the wonderful art of the apostrophe, are all long dead. Go into Whitcoulls and the mind swirls with all the possibilities of personal expression and experience, from how to make a million dollars by the age of 25, to explaining male menopause, to understanding why women can't read maps, to the New Age world of crystal harmonics and contacting ancient wisdom. We live in a digital world of virtual reality and instant personal communication. The old lineal parameters of time and distance have been replaced by the continuous global instant. Emotion and desire easily replace logic.

I actually believe that at this very moment, when we are rapidly realising many of the dreams of our Enlightenment forebears, and finding out about the history and structure of the universe, and the secrets of our own biology, we are also seeing the parallel development of a new intellectual dark ages, where what was once called superstition and irrationality and the fantastic are all ostensibly being normalised. Feeling, intuition, wishful thinking - all these are now apparently acceptable bases for "knowledge". I wish, therefore I am. I would like, therefore it is. Even management theorists are now racing to embrace "emotional intelligence". History and identity in the wider community is also often what I call politico-pop, and reduced to the sound byte - thus in New Zealand history, there has been a "holocaust", and "genocide", and "Taleban" behaviour , and there is "postcolonial traumatic stress" everywhere. These words make marvellous headlines. But do they convey the complexity of the past?

We, in more sober academic life, have experienced our own self-made

version of the Whitcoulls' experience. For those concerned with the life of the mind over the past generation, there has been a dramatic shift from the intellectual certainties of modernity to the relativities and reflexivities of postmodernity. For historians, we have moved from wondering about what happened and why, and what is history? We now ask who is history for? And who has constructed it? We say that there is no history, only historians. We reveal the power/knowledge relationships, the evils of racism, and sexism, and authoritarianism in modernist thought. We have become obsessed with the analytical intricacies of discursive practice. Some have ended up saying that we can't know anything, we can only have an opinion. We debate what is a chair to us, presumably to put our butts on? But, we note, it might be used as an umbrella, or as a source of firewood by someone from another culture. A chair is also of course a university post, and a controller of a meeting.... So we play word games about chains of meaning. Is the glass half empty of half full? And, at the other extreme, there is the common postcolonial moral certainty about everything, particularly hegemonic imperial evil, but also absolute certainty about uncertainty itself. One of the problems with the more extreme forms of postmodernity and postcolonialism is that their respective deconstructionist strategies can devastatingly reveal the prejudices of others, but they are incapable of being used to interrogate the deconstructionists themselves.

The debate about objectivity in history has raged for decades. It is a dead end debate in my view, and always has been. Of course there is no objectivity. Do we need to agonise over that. The real issue should be about actuality. Is there a chair (by whatever name) or a glass of water (by whatever name) there in the first place?

The point can readily be illustrated with some examples from New Zealand history.[1] There is, of course, a large New Age literature and associated widespread belief in ancient, advanced, pre-Maori societies in New Zealand. As an actuality, that is simply not true. There were no Egyptians, or Phoenicians, or Druids, or Celts here thousands of years ago.

There is a widespread belief that the 1835 Declaration of Independence was a first blow by Maori at establishing a sovereign nation. Not true. In

1. Some of the material that follows is examined at greater length in Howe (2003).

actuality, it was a Pakeha jack-up. In some of the Pacific islands, like Tonga and Tahiti and Hawaii, there were large centralised structures of indigenous government, with kings and high chiefs through whom traders and missionaries and western administrators effectively operated. In New Zealand, Maori society was very differently organised, with numerous highly localised and "flat" structures. Some Pakeha thus naively wanted to establish a centralised, hierarchical system for Maori so as to more readily advance Pakeha interests.

The Treaty of Waitangi is currently being interpreted in the most complex and convoluted ways. One extreme though increasingly common claim is that it was a document designed to validate Maori sovereignty. Whatever current political interpretations of the Treaty might be, and for whatever perfectly valid reasons in the here and now, it is simply not true that in 1840 this was the case. The document in 1840 was designed to give some supposed legal justification to British annexation. It was a specific negation of any concept of Maori sovereignty.

Some recent and rather silly claims have been made about a supposed "secret" article 4 of the Treaty. Fortunately, some historians, including my colleague Peter Lineham, who actually know something of "what happened", have been able to inject some sanity into the discussion (Watkin, 2003). The sad point is that for all the massive Treaty/Tribunal interest in New Zealand history, it has not really been much concerned with historical actualities. Since about 1975, Maori opposition to Pakeha writing about aspects of Maori history and, from the mid-1980s, the preponderance of Treaty/Tribunal priorities which are about establishing Maori as victims and the Crown as the guilty party, has effectively leg-roped open research on culture contact history for a generation.

Most of our "what happened" culture contact knowledge still derives from the flourishing research of the pre-1970 period. Thus there are vast areas and basic topics that have not adequately been studied. For example, we have relatively little information on Maori population in the nineteenth century. There is not even a basic study which traces a history of nineteenth century epidemics amongst Maori.

The so-called musket wars of the 1820s and 1830s were probably the most traumatic event ever in Maori history. No one was unaffected either

by the military campaigns or by subsequent socio-political realignments and migration. We know virtually nothing about them. It is surprising, for example, that until the recent work of Paul Monin (2001) on Hauraki, the main source of information on the very extensive nineteenth century local/ regional Maori agricultural and economic development was more than forty year old research.

Christianity has been perhaps the most powerful of all western influences used by Maori, and has had profound consequences for all aspects of Maori society. Yet the study of Maori/missionary interaction petered out in the 1970s and has never really been resumed, mainly, I suspect, because missionaries are now too readily seen as agents of wicked colonial practice, at least in historical if not theological communities. Literacy was a key component of these developments, but likewise not since the 1960s has there been a serious consideration of Maori attainment of literacy, which was a major feature of their response to modernity.

The study of Pakeha themselves in frontier contexts is virtually non-existent. It is almost as if the Pakeha frontier has historiographically become a location of avoidance, except to illustrate negative consequences for Maori. Another glaring nineteenth century silence has to do with the majority of the Maori population who did not participate in the wars of the 1860s. It is currently fashionable to focus on the achievements of so-called nationalist heroes or resistance movements, but they hardly typify Maori society as a whole as it variously and disparately struggled to cope with colonisation and modernisation. That some Maori may have wished to cooperate in a range of matters with colonial authorities rather than oppose them, or adopt and adapt a range of Western practices and values rather than reject them, has become a matter of disapproval. The current political discourse about Maori sovereignty and tino rangatiratanga has the capacity simplistically to lock all nineteenth century Maori into the categories of either brave nationalists or shady collaborators. This is not good historical analysis and it perpetrates, in different words, the common nineteenth century colonialist division of Maori into rebels or loyalists.

I acknowledge that vast amounts of historical information lie embedded in Tribunal and related submissions and reports, but it is still largely unprocessed for other than Tribunal and related purposes. Within the

Treaty/Tribunal paradigm there has, of course, been a major history publishing industry. But many of the books have been about process and moral positioning. Depending on your point of view, such literature can be called either grievance history or sovereignty history.

Relatively very few academic historians in New Zealand have contributed to the Treaty books or articles. Many of these historians have long expressed private concerns at the uses to which the Tribunal and governments and other agencies of the state have used history, particularly its projection of today's moralities onto unsuspecting peoples of the past. I also have a sneaking suspicion that it is convenient for governments to blame something abstract like "history", which cannot answer back, to try to turn the heat from their own difficulties in grappling with social issues. Reconciling historical grievances, however important that might be, will not *in itself* sort out socio-economic difficulties. Rectifying the inequalities of the present will also require major and difficult structural shifts, such as bringing back full employment. It has always bothered me, for example, that providing good health (or housing, or education, or employment) for Maori is often seen as a Treaty obligation. I would have thought that in a modern liberal democratic nation-state, Maori and everyone else have a right to good health and other care, without some of us having to have recourse to some historical document. Part of the problem, I believe, is the abandonment of the universalism that philosophically underpinned the pre-1984 welfare state. The post-1984 direction of "targeting" makes it almost imperative that any interest/identity groups have to seek new and specific means of justifying their claims for state support. For Maori, recourse to the "Treaty", in this context, is one ready option.

But historians have not generally gone public with these sorts of concerns for two reasons. Coming from a liberal tradition most have not wanted to be seen to be criticising or possibly challenging the major social policy of redress that they basically support. Nor have they wanted to give support to the ever receptive red-neck element in society. They question the justification of current Treaty policy by a-historical "history", not the policy aim itself. Writing about the Treaty and race relations has generally been left to lawyers, political scientists, journalists and amateur historians and, dare I say, a few sociologists. *The New Zealand Journal of History* has

published 400 articles on New Zealand history in the last 35 years. Bill Oliver has noted that it has only ever published eight articles on the Treaty. And it has taken an old man like Bill, one who now has nothing to lose, to publish a major critique of the way in which the Tribunal sometimes uses history in ways which to many historians are simply intellectually dishonest (Oliver, 2001).

I believe that historians in New Zealand have not done terribly well in recent times in their supposed role as critic and conscience. We are scared to offend, and particularly scared to offend indigenous communities, because we have become uncertain. For example, in the wider community at present, there is often a patronising indulgence of every "indigenous" statement. As if, for example, Pacific people or Maori people do not, like everyone else, sometimes say stupid things or devious things. If we accept that every statement about everything has equal validity, or even better than equal validity in the case of some ethnic groups, then we are all intellectually defeated.

History, the past and the truth are complex creatures - they deserve better consideration in the society at large than they currently receive. Gordon McLauchlan (1999, p. A20) put it very well when he wrote: 'Without sincerely and, as accurately as possible, respecting the past, we remain rootless in the present and flounder towards the future.'

It is my naive hope that as a supposed community of scholars, we might one day reinvent ourselves as fearless and curiosity driven. Not one that will forever argue the toss about objectivity, or get lost in hopeless relativities, or bang on about perceived historical injustice, or remain locked in positions of fashionable political correctness, but one that every now and then might look at some actualities, past and present, and try to find out what happened and why. We need, sometimes, to try to understand and explain the human past, and, in so doing, accept the complexities and contradictions of our humanity, and perhaps leave the simplistic, binary moralising to others. And whatever emperor is not wearing any clothes, we should not be afraid to say so.

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Reviews

Reinventing the family – in search of new lifestyles
Beck-Gernsheim, E. (trans. P. Camiller) (2002). Cambridge: Polity.

Reviewed by Lesley Patterson

The meanings and significance of the family in contemporary "Western" societies is contested: moral conservatives lament the decline of the family and the rise of selfish individualism; policy researchers point to persistent social inequalities strongly graded by family type; and feminists argue that the family remains a site of gendered power relations. In New Zealand, perhaps unexpectedly, the political import of ideas about the family was sufficiently potent to shape the outcome of the last general election.

In *Reinventing the family*, Beck-Gernsheim examines the effects of individualization on the old institution of the traditional (nuclear) family of "the first modernity", arguing that a new family form is emerging – the "post-familial family".

Beck-Gernsheim has previously written on individualization and women, and with Ulrich Beck, on individualization and intimacy in the context of risk society (for example see Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Beck-Gernsheim, 2002a). In *Reinventing the family*, Beck-Gernsheim again explores individualization and family life, and the impact of individualization on adult intimacy, parenthood, gender relations, the socialisation of nature (here using Giddens' notion of "life politics"), and identity.

For Beck-Gernsheim, individualization is the outcome of two inevitable modernizing processes. On the one hand, contemporary social life has become more precarious and contingent *for individuals*, as the traditional social relations, bonds, values and beliefs characteristic of industrial society that previously shaped people's lives have lost their meaning. On the other, some of the institutions of modernity (the labour market, the welfare system, the miscellaneous bureaucracies of state) persist, albeit in different forms, and increasingly produce demands, regulations and entitlements that press upon people *as individuals*. Combined, these processes compel individuals

to "lead a life of one's own"- to "seek biographical solutions to systemic contradictions" of risk society. In this context, Beck-Gernsheim asks "what happens then to the family" (p. x).

As Beck-Gernsheim notes, patterns of family formation changed spectacularly in the latter decades of the twentieth century. In Britain, "in the space of one generation the numbers marrying have halved, the numbers divorcing have trebled and the proportion of children born outside marriage has trebled" (p.x). Similarly, in New Zealand, the marriage rate is one third of what it was at its peak in 1971, the divorce rate trebled between 1960 and 1990, and the number of children born outside "legal" marriage quadrupled over the same period. According to Beck-Gernsheim, statistics like these indicate that family life has been transformed from being produced by tradition to being the outcome of a structural demand for an "individual biography". In the "second modernity", the demands of "a life of one's own" are enacted through "elective affinities". The traditional (nuclear, stable, enduring) family as a "community of need" characteristic of industrial society is supplanted.

Reinventing the family is organised around six chapters, each with intriguing titles such as "Life as a planning project" and "We want a special child". In each chapter the effects of individualization in relation to post familial families are discussed in more detail. For example, in "Life as a planning project" (chapter 3), Beck-Gernsheim argues that individualization produces a new striving for individual security. This need for security is in part "translated into demands on the state or various public institutions, in the expectation that they should protect the individual through a network of services and provisions, rules and regulations" (p. 42). Individualization involves a breaking away from earlier forms of communally and institutionally organised lives. For women and men, living with the new risky freedoms of modernity requires individuals to actively plan their lives. "More and more, the advance of modernity requires an active, self-driven conduct of life which skilfully takes up and deploys, and if necessary also fends off, the institutional givens" (p. 45). According to Beck-Gernsheim, such a "planned life" has transformed adult relationships and parenthood. For example, in chapter four – "The generational contract and gender relations", Beck-Gernsheim examines individualization as a gendered

phenomenon, and in particular, "the far reaching changes in what counts as a normal female biography" (p. 72). Here she argues that the release from traditional family ties has been much more partial for women. For example, women continue to do most of the unpaid work of everyday family life, and women's working lives are much more likely to be interrupted by unpaid caring work than men's. Thus, this partial individualization, this "bit of a life of one's own" (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002a) produces new gendered risks for women, especially women as mothers and informal care-givers.

There are problems with Beck-Gernsheim's individualization thesis. In particular, the similarities between "the individual" constituted through individualization, and the individual constituted in neo-liberalism are insufficiently addressed. I suspect this is partly because the meanings and significance of the family in Beck-Gernsheim's Germany were historically shaped by a conservative welfare regime. In liberal welfare states like New Zealand, Australia and Britain, the neo-liberal rhetoric around individualism has had some very material effects on different experiences of family life. Similarly, I think Beck-Gernsheim is very optimistic about the impact of individualization on gender relations in post-familial families. Her confidence that individualization will *eventually* become coterminous with gender equality is belied by a raft of recent research highlighting continuing inequalities within and between families, between women and men, and between children and adults. Nevertheless, the book remains extremely readable. Beck-Gernsheim covers a lot of interesting ground and expands the horizon of the sociology of the family to something well beyond counting people and inferring the consequences. As such she presents the sort of grand sociological narrative that remains deeply pleasurable for those of us burdened with "the imagination". Students and academics with an interest in theorising the contours of contemporary family life should definitely read this book.

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Welcome to the desert of the real
Zizek, S. (2002). Verso: London and New York.

Reviewed by Warwick Tie

Newcomers to the work of Slavoj Zizek are liable to come away traumatized. There's no way round it. His proclivity for jokes, wild assertions, personal anecdotes, staunch Leninist politics, and esoteric psychoanalytic socio-cultural criticism has the potential to lacerate settled expectations about the form and purposes of intellectual writing. Such is the case with *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. Infuriatingly obscure at times, arrestingly insightful at others, alarming in its unrepentant satiation of authorial pleasure, Zizek 's latest offering cannot help but provoke response. Indeed, the prevailing sub-text of this work might be that the authority of intellectual writing is not to be found in the reasoned power of its argument - because all attempts at reasoning are ultimately foiled by the ahistorical void around which whirls the human desire "to know" - rather, their power derives principally from their performance.

Zizek's style of argument subverts the traditionalist academic assumption that writing rides solely upon pre-established auspices such as objectivity, fidelity to theoretical orthodoxy, and methodological rigour. It is not that Zizek fully rejects these auspices but within his work they become akin to fantasmatic shields, shields which academics raise to protect themselves from the possibility of truth piercing the methodological barriers erected in its name; they help elide "the fright of real tears" which surge when truth interrupts (to borrow a title from another of Zizek's more recent works). With this in mind, the enigmatic nature of Zizek's presentations are perhaps best approached as *performances in the name of truth* rather than as *denotations of truth*, as instances of a radical *act* intended to burst asunder the psychically containing effect of the fantasies through which academia repeats its ritualistic dance with the banality of the known and knowable.

The banality of the known is nowhere more apparent, for Zizek, than in the post-political administrative environment to which the left-wing academic community now routinely contributes (Third Way democracy, civil society, policy-relevant research), the academic community having

missed the opportunities once presented to it by the rise of social movements as a resistive phenomenon. To this end, Zizek's anxieties resonate with post-Foucauldian concerns about the bio-political administration of neo-liberal rule and with Adorno's apprehension about the "repressive desublimation" through which late-capitalism manages its subjects (via commodified renderings of subjects' deepest psychical urges). Moreover, Zizek argues, the left has been neutered by its infatuation with *resistance* to the point that the normalization (and consequential stripping) of the term now sees the left scurrying about in marginal places seeking its scenes of subversion: spoiled sheets, unsettled identities, and the texts of tattoos.

Welcome to the desert of the real seeks to undermine the current triteness of leftist subversion by displaying the manner in which a range of responses to September 11 – including apparently radical responses – display a similar urge to protect western subjects both from their complicity in that event and from the ethical ardour to act in ways that prevent such inhumanity from happening again, "anywhere" (p. 49).

The overarching argument of *Welcome to the desert of the real* is that the rubric through which the liberal democratic war is being fought on "terror" – of "freedom, democracy, human rights, etc" – impedes the very *actioning* of freedom and democracy. Moreover, it has enabled Anglo-American liberalism to attain apotheosised proportions. Only radically ethical *acts* have the potential to unhinge this hegemony, acts whose legitimisation may only lie in the future circumstances which they themselves inaugurate.

The desire for this type of radical opening, Zizek asserts, has been prefaced by a twentieth century "passion for the Real" (p. 5), for the experience of *that* (in Lacanian terms, *the Real*) which is other than the parade of slick commercialised representations that currently saturate public space. When the Real *has* unexpectedly intruded, however – such as with the destruction of the Twin Towers – the horror of the moment has been tamed by an assertion that it can all be explained, that it is, for example, the work of a clandestine network of terror or an understandable response to aggressive imperialism. Significantly, for Zizek, this particular fantasy (of easy explanation) impedes inquiries into the true range of social antagonisms that gave rise to the event. Moreover, it elides ethical questions about our collective complicity in the catastrophe.

The temptation, simplistically, has been to interpret September 11 as a clash of cultures. This has led to the polarised beliefs that American liberal democracy is either under unfair attack or that America is reaping the consequences of its own rapacious foreign policy. Alternatively, for fii≥ek, the clash is a clash *within* a culture, that is, globalised capitalism. Both American liberalism and contemporary Islamic religious fundamentalism are presented as products of that capitalism. Moreover, Islamic fundamentalism (in the guise of the mujahaddein) has played an intrinsic role within that universe as a *superego double* to American liberalism during the 1980s, supplementing the American administration in its fight against Soviet communism. The "war on terror" is now simply liberal capitalism dealing with the unruly forces which it had previously mobilised for its own ends. Viewed in this way, the "war on terror" is not a universal struggle but a fight that is "internal to the capitalist universe" (p. 55). To this end, it is not "our" war.

The "war on terror" demonstrates all too clearly for fii≥ek, moreover, what the post-Foucauldians have long informed, that human rights are merely a tool for the administration of populations. Liberal democratic governments, for example, have been all too ready of late to enact rights-depleting legislation in the name of anti-terrorist measures. This illustrates the tenuous nature of political community and the ease with which subjects can be marginalised or excluded. The tenuous nature of political identity is made even more apparent in the cases of those accused of "terror". In the process of being interned without trial or killed, such accused are positioned as "unlawful combatants" at the same time as being denied the status of either "combatant", in the traditional warfare sense of the term, or "criminal" in the orthodox legal sense. "What is emerging in the guise of the Terrorist on whom war is declared is precisely the figure of the political Enemy, foreclosed from the political sphere proper" (p. 93). Isolated within a political no-one's-land, the accused become sub-human beings - *Homo sacer* - that are merely to be administered. Semblances here with the political status of Jews in the Third Reich are not illusionary.

For fii≥ek it is the radically undetermined ethical Act that will subvert the hegemony of post-political liberal democracy and the "war against terror" it wages. Emblematic here are the bold actions of the Israeli

refuseniks, soldiers in the Israel Defence Forces who have refused to participate in the suppression of Palestinians. They exhibit for Zizek *the Act*, the ethical recognition of the other as neighbour, the other whose otherness we refuse to negate for the sake of our own identity. Only such acts have the potential to alter the terms of engagement between deadlocked positions. They are typically the products of "emergencies" where "one has to take the risk and act without legitimization, engaging oneself into a kind of Pascalean wage that the Act itself will create the conditions of its retroactive "democratic" legitimization" (p. 153). The Act has particular potency as a political strategy, Zizek avers, where conflicts become deadlocked, where there seems no possibility of mutual understanding emerging between parties. Its authorising auspices do not pre-exist itself, themselves seemingly belonging to the realm of the Real. Indeed, for Zizek, it is the audacity of the Act that marks its ethicality, which in turn becomes its own measure of validity.

As political strategy, however, this might seem a precarious route, even an irresponsible one, liable as it is to produce tyranny as easily as progressively radical rupture. As Judith Butler cautions in connection with the Lacanian notion of *the Real* upon which Zizek's position pivots, such unverifiable concepts "are offered as the condition of verifiability itself" and the consequence is a choice between "uncritical theological affirmation" and "critical social inquiry" (Butler, 2000, p. 145). Couched in these terms, Zizek's commitments might seem seriously misplaced. Uncritical theological affirmation could never be countenanced as a sufficient basis for serious social criticism. That said, the laudable image of Butler's "critical social inquiry" is predicated upon its own religious-like faith in the possibility of purely rational inquiry. To be sure, in contrast, Zizek's various propositions and assertions at times appear highly contestable. Perhaps, however, the value of his work lies elsewhere, in its rare courage to inhabit the unnerving but fertile vortex that exists between the domains of intellectual knowledge, political commitment, and human desire.

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Reification, or the anxiety of late capitalism
Bewes, T. (2002). London: Verso.

Reviewed by Simon Hay

Reification means, basically, "thingification", the moment that a process or relation gets generalized into an abstraction, and thereby turned into a "thing". In Marxist theories of labour, it is what happens when workers are installed within the capitalist mode of production, and thus reduced to the status of machine parts. Further reifications that dominate our late capitalist society are the branding of goods and services (it's not a shoe produced by labourers in Korea from products manufactured in China, but a "Nike"), racial or sexual stereotypes ("Tom" is a gay white male, definable strictly in terms of his "identity" tropes, and we can treat him according to those preconceived ideas of what sort of "thing" that makes him), religious faiths, nationalisms, globalization, and so forth. All these are reified in that they take something that is really a complex process or set of relations, and treat it as a "thing", free-standing and (often), therefore, something that *causes* things and that *can't be helped.*

Drawing on the theories of Hegel and Marx, as well as (most centrally) Adorno, Lukács and Jameson, and then Kierkegaard, Benjamin, Fanon, Zizek, and Hardt and Negri to boot, Timothy Bewes leads his readers through a fascinating investigation of the concept of reification, making an argument structured around the Christian syllogism of "Fall, Inversion, Redemption" (the titles of the three parts of his book). He is at his best when teasing out the implications of an Adornian aphorism or a Jamesonian paragraph, but also adept with texts that range from *The Truman Show* to Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and from Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* to Naomi Klein's *No Logo.*

The claims that Bewes's makes are easy to summarize; he states them clearly in his preface and again in his conclusion. They are: (a) anxiety about reification is virtually universal in advanced capitalist societies, and is, in fact, central to "the constitution of the modern capitalist subject" (p. 261); (b) this anxiety towards reification is constitutive of the experience of

reification – "the anxiety towards reification is *itself reifying*" (p. xiv); and (c) "reification is a reversible concept, as potentially liberating as it is potentially oppressive" (p. xvi) and in a "reified and reifying society, the sphere of consumption can, indeed must, perform a liberating "spiritual" function" (p. 262). That these are bold and significant claims for a society as reified – and obsessed with reification – as our own is, should be clear.

What is more difficult is to summarize the arguments Bewes makes for these claims, because dialectical arguments resist that kind of summary. There is a sense in which a book about reification is necessarily a book about the dialectic, and Bewes's book is definitely that. In particular, the book stresses the important role that *faith* plays in a properly dialectical understanding of *anything*, and especially in academic work that wants to see itself as an intervention in the world; work, that is, that is diagnostic rather than descriptive. And it is at this point that *Reification* makes what are its most interesting arguments for its two main audiences. First of all, the book can be seen as an intervention in the debate between dialectical thinkers and positivists, which dates back at least to the positivism dispute in German sociology. For an audience of positivist sociologists, then, Bewes's book is a challenging one because it argues that to study the world as it is without engaging in important ways with the world *as it otherwise could be*, i.e., without a kind of faith-based utopian dialectical thinking – which is to say, to do the kind of work that such positivists *do* – is to discard the possibility of intervening in the world.

What does this mean? Well, to think dialectically – whether that means a Christian dialectic, like Kierkegaard, or a Hegelian or a Marxist one – means to include, as part of our methodology, an idea of "a future society that is unintelligible from the point of view of the present" (p. 43) that allows for a "fundamentally redemptive" (p. 48) view of the present through the realization that "in this world", *but not in all possible worlds*, "subject and object are in a state of alienation" (p. 54). Dialectical thinking, thinking that "refuses the world *while remaining in it*" (p. 54), through its refusal of dualisms, allows us a proper understanding of, and allows us to make interventions in, the world.

The second audience the book imagines for itself is one already versed in the thinking of its key figures; an audience of Verso-reading, Jamesonian

dialecticians. And to this audience he offers a startling redemptive understanding of religion: he goes so far as to say, even, that Marx's understanding of religion is that "in a reified world, no subjective response is more understandable and more rewarding – even, perhaps, more logically and politically defensible – than religion" (pp. 136-37). This redemptive reading offers a new, sophisticated account of religion that far transcends the standard Marxist dismissal of religion as a form of "false consciousness".

In the end, Bewes sees his book as having a radical importance, in that only a revolutionary thought that acknowledges its own immanence within what it is rejecting can possibly succeed in imagining anything genuinely alternative: "New forms of radical critique may – indeed must – emerge from a consciousness that is as "reified" as the reality it is attempting to displace" (p. 267). As he says in a reading of the film *The Matrix*, the utopia spoken of at the end of the film is as much a rejection of the revolutionaries who brought that utopia into being as it is a rejection of the machines they fought against. But further, he sees his dialectical critique as "an attempt to forestall the very much more bloody and physically exacting "total critique" which is otherwise, and perhaps in any case, on its way" (p. 268). There is a certain attraction in the belief that the revolution is already on its way, and there is something appealing about an argument which puts, once again, critical thought at the centre of the revolutionary project, in ways that transcend the praxis/theory divide, even as there is something self-serving in my willingness to be compelled by such an argument, given the always-already postponed nature of the revolutionary moment.

But Bewes would take me to task for failing to think dialectically here; for reifying time, failing to recognize that "'never' is reversible into 'always'", such that they are in fact identical," and that "[r]edemption works forwards as well as backwards" (p. 214). And in so far as one thinks dialectically, Bewes's arguments will be entirely convincing. His redemptive understanding of religion – through a properly dialectical understanding of reification – is surely crucial now, given the fundamentally religious terms in which our global political leaders present themselves and their confrontations.

Work in the New Economy

Benner, C. (2002). Oxford: Blackwell.

Reviewed by Paul Harris

With the bursting of the "dot com" boom, the idea that there was a new economy went a bit out of fashion. But there is a prevalent view shared by politicians, economists and some sociologists alike that we, in the developed countries, do inhabit a knowledge economy.

Information technology is argued to be one of the key elements of the knowledge economy and California's Silicon Valley is one of the heartlands of the information technology industry. Any book that deals with work in the information technology industry in Silicon Valley has therefore got to be of some present day pertinence.

Chris Benner's contribution is somewhat misleadingly entitled however. Late in the text, he points out that the information economy results in significant changes in job content. But job content is one of the issues that he also totally ignores in the text. There is not even a reference to the term "job content" to be found in the index. Those interested in the day-to-day realities of work in Silicon Valley will have to look to other books, for Benner's overwhelming focus is on the labour market and labour market training in Silicon Valley.

In dealing with that topic, he provides us with a lot of very informative material about the information technology sector, the main firms that operate within it, their employment record and the use of "atypical work" in the industry. It soon becomes clear though that his main interest is labour market policy as it applies in Silicon Valley, as it might be developed in the United States as a whole. In pursuit of that interest, he devotes a considerable amount of space to what he calls "labour market intermediaries". Basically these can be defined as private and public sector organisations that help people find employment and pursue careers in the industry.

The United States is known to have labour market segmentation between white and non-white workers, male and female, and other categories. The material on these issues is rather sparse. The section of the

book on labour market inequalities in Silicon Valley comprises only 15 pages of the book. Within those pages Benner produces some quite interesting statistics, for example a table that links wage level to education levels and race. Another table on annual income, gender and ethnicity throws out some interesting facts and figures. I was mildly surprised that Japanese American men are the highest per capita earners in Silicon Valley, though less surprised to see that "other Asian women" were the lowest earners. Unfortunately the data from this table are from 1989, which rather limits its usefulness in our contemporary understanding of the Silicon Valley labour market.

It is Benner's contention that we need "new concepts" for understanding and for developing policies on labour markets in the information economy. He has four principal suggestions to make. The first is that as competitive success in the information economy "is rooted in innovation" that comes from industry clusters, then it is at that level that labour policies should be directed as opposed to the level of the firm. The problem with this approach from a New Zealand perspective is that our current industry training policy is aimed at industries - not individual firms - and secondly, that we hardly have any industrial clusters at all at which we could direct policy.

His next recommendation is that workforce development should focus on learning rather than skills training. Again there is an irony here from the New Zealand perspective in that current policy stresses the need for us to re-create occupational skills following the devastation of skilled labour that occurred in the 1990s. Benner's case here is also somewhat undermined by his previous description of the role of the Plumbers' Union as a labour market intermediary. This union runs a good old-fashioned apprenticeship programme in the pipe trades, which has been in existence since 1961. In the tradition of the skilled trade sector of the labour movement, the Union exercises a lot of control over the numbers of skilled trades workers available in the local labour market. This enables it to win for its members average hourly compensation of over NZ$100 i.e. NZ$200,000 per year for a 40 hour week.

To what extent non-whites and women are able to access these wage levels is an issue that the author simply fails to mention. Unions of skilled workers in the US do not have a very good record in the fields of racism

and sexism and this is surely something the author should have addressed. If Benner had spent more time on examining work rather than labour market structures, he might well have been able to thrown some light on the actual practice of discrimination within the new technology sector.

The third point that Benner makes is that labour market policies should focus on communities rather than individuals. His argument here concerns a concept of "communities of practice" with which I am not familiar. However, all arguments based on the idea of a community are open to criticism unless it can be established that the community concerned is a viable entity rather than a hopeful ideal.

The fourth recommendation is that labour markets should focus on careers rather than jobs. This is premised on the assumption that permanent stable jobs are a dying breed. But to take the position that the author does seems to me to be a capitulation to the whims of the electronics industry capitalists.

The preceding points typify what the main weakness of the book is for someone from outside of the United States. That it, it is about particular labour market conditions, institutions, and employment relationships. Its greatest value is in the information it provides on the structure of employment in Silicon Valley, but similar material can be found in any number of books. It does, however, raise more general issues about flexibility, labour markets and the role of trade unions in contemporary society.

Max Weber's methodologies: Interpretation and critique
Eliaeson, S. (2002). Cambridge: Polity Press

Reviewed by Catherine Brennan

Many studies delving into Max Weber's methodological thought have been published over the years. Eliaeson's *Max Weber's methodologies* represents the latest offering in this genre. Eliaeson (p.139) states that his interpretation of Weber has been profoundly influenced by one of the classic interpretations of Weber's methodology, namely, Bruun's (1972) *Science, values and politics in Max Weber's methodology.*

Eliaeson declares that the principal objective of his own study of Weber is to give an account of Weber's historical and intellectual context so that a more reliable and less biased interpretation of his methodology can be given. He is highly critical of the many scholars who have read their own interests into Weber's *oeuvre.* Eliaeson pursues his contextual reconstruction by undertaking a textual analysis of hitherto little noticed essays and neglected parts of Weber's correspondence. He attempts to interpret Weber's methodology as a coherent whole in that the historical significance of Weber's methodology relates to the fact that he dealt with the unresolved problem of values and objectivity in the social sciences. Put another way, Eliaeson sees Weber as exemplifying a fundamental theme in the history of ideas, that is, "the long trend of secularisation in which instrumental means-end analysis is the core" (p. 54).

The book consists of five chapters, one appendix focusing on Gunnar Myrdal and another one dealing primarily with methodological issues pertaining to the study of classical texts. A further thirty pages of meticulous notes at the end of the book attest to Eliaeson's fine-grained scholarship. Finally, short biographies of the many thinkers mentioned in the book and a glossary of concepts are included, both of which will be extremely useful to students and scholars.

In line with Eliaeson's intention to undertake a more contextual reading of Weber's methodology, he teases out in the first chapter three broad intellectual influences: the famous *methodenstreit* of the nineteenth century in which the major issue was whether a historical or theoretical approach

to the study of the economy should be advocated; the post-Enlightenment dilemma of the polytheism of values which ushered in a crisis of the meaning of life in the West; and neo-Kantian nominalism.

In chapter two Eliaeson considers the more immediate historical background against which Weber wrestled with the challenge of how to cast the mantle of objectivity over the social sciences, given the thorny problem of value-intrusion. Eliaeson, like Burger (1976), underlines the influence of Rickert on Weber's methodological innovations here. Weber in his ideal-typical mode of concept formation adopts from Rickert the notion of value-relation (value-relevance). Value-relation is the logical principle by means of which specific aspects of social reality are selected for subsequent social scientific investigation. This logical principle has to do with that arbitrary pre-scientific moment which precedes the causal (value-free) explanation of social phenomena.

In chapter three Eliaeson builds on the previous chapter in the course of engaging in a discussion of Weber's scientific tool, the ideal-type. He suggests that the ideal-type be seen as the "unifying key concept" (p. 54) of Weber's methodology. Weber's construction of the ideal-type enables him, according to Eliaeson, to deal with the value-incommensurability characteristic of modernity on a methodological level. In other words, values rather than being an impediment to objectivity in the social sciences, become for Weber the very criteria for intersubjectively valid empirical truth (rational proof). Only those social phenomena to which the social scientist attributes a general cultural significance on the basis of value-choices are, in Weber's (1949, p. 90) view, removed from the inexhaustibility and complexity of the concrete social world, and logically combined into analytical constructs like the ideal-type of modern bureaucracy. Once the object of social scientific investigation has been selected by reference to cultural values, values are no longer relevant. For it is Weber's contention that objective validity (intersubjectively valid empirical truth) in the sphere of social science pertains to the causal explanation of the selected social phenomena. In short, objective validity is a property of method.

In the fourth chapter of his study Eliaeson considers what he deems to be the flaws in three major creative appropriations of Weber's methodology: Parsons, Schutz, and Lazarsfeld and Oberschall. Parsons' structural-

functionalism distorts his reading of Weber because Weber's value-relativism is built into a system of value-integration. The anguish of the polytheism of values haunting Weber's methodology is lost in Parsons' writings. The trouble with Schutz's reading of Weber, according to Eliaeson, is that he understands Weber as being more "aligned with a psychological, "hermeneutical", empathetic, interpretative understanding ... than is in fact the case" (p. 80). And Lazarsfeld and Oberschall interpret Weber as principally an innovator in empirical social research. In the final chapter of his book Eliaeson reflects on the nature of Weberology in recent decades.

Eliaeson's study of Weber's methodological thought is influenced by the nihilist doctrine of Scandinavian legal realism which denies the objective validity of values. This being the case, it is not surprising that Eliaeson accepts without further ado what he calls "the traumatic dilemma of post-Enlightenment modernity" (p.26). He writes that: "Although competing value-hierarchies are subject to increasing rationalisation and secularisation, ultimate choices take place in the irrational existentialist sphere. The growth of instrumental reason goes together with a limitation on its proper application" (p.135). For both Eliaeson (and Weber), instrumental (scientific) reason cannot guarantee objectivity in the realm of values. Values are not a matter of rational belief but of subjective and arbitrary choice. Value-choices boil down to the vicissitudes of personal preference beyond the reach of rational justification and intersubjective agreement.

In the remainder of this review I will focus on moral values to hammer home what I consider to be problematic about Eliaeson's thesis. Eliaeson's (and, indeed, Weber's) claim that the espousal of moral values cannot be based on a cognitive foundation, attests to what Habermas (1992, p. 45) aptly calls the "pathology of modern consciousness". The crux of the problem is that instrumental (scientific) reason only attributes intersubjective validity to value-free statements about facts and to logical inferences. Since reason in scientific-technological society is confined to establishing empirical truths and making logical deductions, ethical norms as prescriptive statements cannot be verified or falsified. In other words, Eliaeson's nihilist reading of Weber's methodological thought promotes dogmatism in the worst sense since an axiology which makes no truth-claims is impervious to criticism.

It could be further argued that being backed into a *cul-de-sac* of pre-rational value-decisions by nihilists like Eliaeson is an extremely serious matter in light of the fact that the increased global risks in our scientific-technological society have been brought about by the dominance of value-free instrumental reason, and provide compelling evidence for a rational foundation of intersubjectively valid moral values.

If it is not feasible to attribute intersubjective validity to moral values on the basis of empirical evidence or by means of deduction, the answer, *contra* Eliaeson, is not to become bogged down in value-nihilism. What is required is a communicative form of rationality which instead of emphasising empirical truths and logical inferences, relies on reasons teased out through participation in moral argumentation to justify moral claims. As Benhabib (1990) observes, engaging in discourse about moral values is grounded in the fundamental norms of rational speech: universal moral respect and the norm of reciprocity. Reaching a total consensus about ethical norms is not rendered as the *end-goal* of moral argumentation. Rather, moral argumentation is understood as a *process* for the continual co-operative generation of moral knowledge amongst embodied, emotive, historically embedded, finite, fragile human beings that is always subject to revision. In a word, moral knowledge is the contingent achievement of communicative reason.

Given the fragmentation of the different forms of value (science, morality, aesthetics etc.) within the horizon of modernity, sustaining those moral relationships within that reasoned argumentation so a way of life can flourish is the only possibility. To be sure, as Benhabib (1990, p. 340) notes, "our moral and political world is more characterised by struggles unto death among moral opponents than by a conversation among them". However, without the utopian projection of a form of life in which ethical norms can be subject to reasoned argumentation, the value-nihilism advocated by Eliaeson in his reading of Weber would, indeed, be our fate in modernity.

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Multiculturalism in a global society
Kivisto, P. (2002). Oxford: Blackwell.

Reviewed by David Pearson

Multiculturalism and globalisation are words that have captured public imagination and often feature as magnets for attracting intending sociology students. Yet widespread use is as much to do with their conceptual opacity as their utility in aiding our understanding of the relationship between the increasing interconnectedness of states and growing ethnic diversity. This welcome text provides a comprehensive and accessible comparative introduction for introductory and more advanced students alike.

Peter Kivisto recognises the importance of examining the interface between migration and ethnonationalism in the study of ethnic politics and change. There is clearly a place for area studies and in-depth analysis of particular times and places, but the author is wedded to the central premise that looking inwards is only of limited value when the interrelated ties of "race", ethnicity and nationalism are inextricably enmeshed within a world of increasingly intertwined economic, political and socio-cultural processes. The key problem is how to embrace this multi-stranded approach with clarity and rigour. The author succeeds on both counts by having a clearly argued initial theoretical framework and then applying a consistent set of conceptual questions to a range of case studies that illustrate generalities as well as time and space specifics.

In his opening chapters Kivisto offers a succinct appraisal of recent theories of "race", ethnicity and nationality. He shows how, particularly in American sociology, an inheritance of Parsonian inspired modernization theories and neo-Marxist development and dependency approaches has been superseded by more recent fashions. The latter have tended to eschew grand thoughts of acculturation and convergence in moving, contextually and relativistically, to concerns with diversity and difference. Instead of assuming that amidst global variation there was a discernible international trend towards cultural inclusion, or believing that ultimately economic imperatives would override ethnic and national influences in structuring

the world, much contemporary emphasis is on the contingent and complex workings of discursive and practical local agency. Pluralism and hybridity are now *de rigueur*, with the indigenous and diasporic in dynamic tension.

What is illuminating in Kivisto's discussion is his refusal to discard some of the central precepts of, particularly middle-range, theories of "assimilation". Arguing, persuasively, that whilst the current predilection for multiplicity and effervescence is an advance on old-style views of linear inclusion/exclusion, much of the socio-demographic evidence on wide-ranging ethnic trends of "coming together" has been obscured by a political emphasis on "staying apart". In a strong section on the rise, fall and resuscitation of what might be better termed acculturation or incorporation theory, the author suggests we should be just as much concerned with continuities as change.

The proof of the theoretical pudding rests on how the author's analytic recipes are translated into an analysis of varying cross-national case studies. In subsequent stand alone but linked chapters, the book offers detailed examination of the United States, Canada and Australia, Britain, and France and Germany. The chapter on the USA traverses the history of immigration and slavery and explains the roots of a post-Second World war melting pot image that rapidly faded in the light of the persistence of African and American Indian exclusion, and the growth of what has been called "the ethnic pentagon" of racial and ethnic political categories, notably with the increase in "Asian" and " Hispanic" Americans. This scenario, Kivisto argues, heightens the prospect of "transnational America", wherein some "ethnics" choose to retain or recreate a symbolic ethnicity, while other groups are still forced to wear the badge of racial opprobrium.

The author demonstrates how American multicultural discourses have arisen from ever expanding rights claimants rather than the polity itself. In contrast, turning to Australia and Canada, he shows how these states have used multicultural imagery and policies as devices for nation building and platforms for the state management of waves of new, diverse sets of immigrants, with both trends set against the increasing assertion of indigenous rights; with the added complexity of Quebecois ethnonationalism in Canada. This chapter clearly outlines the distinctions between ex-dominion societies deeply enmeshed within their British Empire

histories and the US settler experience of republican independence, although stressing that all settler societies (with New Zealand coming briefly into the picture here) are using "culturalist" models to frame the unique tensions between migrant and indigenous politics.

Moving to Europe, the book uses Britain, Germany and France, all now influenced by changing migrant flows and European Union human rights bureaucracies, to illustrate other themes on the now well-rehearsed inclusion/exclusion refrain. If Canada has Quebec, Britain (or should that be England?) has Scots, Irish and Welsh ethnonational movements within a disunited Kingdom. The arrival of increasing numbers of the children of Empire also led to racially exclusionary immigration polices, but these were combined with innovative state-sanctioned multicultural polices partially acceding to the idea of inclusionary communal minority rights. In contrast, neither Germany nor France adopted multiculturalism, the former because of a history of ethnocultural exclusion, the latter because of the persistence of strongly assimilationist republican traditions. Nonetheless, the impact of transnational migration and EU membership has softened both traditions, despite strong populist racism movements in both countries. So the oft-noted ethnic/civic citizenship cross-national comparison, Kivisto argues, is over simplified.

Where to from here? This book reaffirms that ethnic, racial and national distinctions are likely to increase, despite evidence that many migrants and indigenes continue to merge with the majority populations they moved into or were encapsulated by. Multiculturalism, if linked to flexible citizenship regimes, might successfully embrace diversity but, as this book reveals, it comes in many guises depending on historical and contemporary contingencies. And ethnonational ambitions are hardly addressed by "culturalist" imagery and practice. Understandably, the author doesn't have easy answers to these weighty and emotive conundrums, but his final chapter does pose some clearly formulated questions. Students should find them accessible and provocative, so this wide-ranging book ought to be on the reading lists of anyone teaching and learning about ethnic, racial and national diversity in the contemporary world.

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