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NEW ZEALAND SOCIOLOGY
Research Monograph Series

New Zealand Sociology is about to launch a research monograph series. There is a great deal of social science research carried out in New Zealand each year which is not widely known as the market for such findings is not 'commercial' with the small population base that exists in New Zealand. The purpose of the monograph series is to make important research-based studies on aspects of New Zealand society and culture more readily available to the social science community, and to the wider public.

Consequently, we are seeking suitable manuscripts which report on the results of research-based studies that satisfy the above purpose.

Manuscripts should:

1. be between 20,000 and 25,000 words in length;

2. should conform to the editorial guidelines set out inside the back cover of the Journal;

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Cultural capital, education and power in New Zealand: an agenda for research

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Introduction

Current reforms in New Zealand education have been driven by an ideological view which sees education as a market commodity in which individuals invest with a view to economic returns in the job market. I am going to argue that this view flies in the face of research on equality of access to knowledge and can (at least in part) be explained by the educational trajectories of those in power.

A group at Massey[1] are currently embarked on a project which seeks to tease out 'school effect' - i.e., where data on individuals are aggregated to the level of the school, so that background and abilities of pupils can be partialled out in order to see if schools have an independent effect on outcomes. The results of this project are still two years away, yet the type of data involved is crucial to any discussion of policies that 'hand over' such things as teacher salaries, and enrolment schemes and practices to individual schools. Fears have been expressed from many quarters that such practices will lead to élitism and the solidifying of a two-track system of schooling - one for the well-to-do, the other for the rest.

Similar situations exist in other countries, which in some instances have the advantage of being able to draw on extensive research of the kind just described. France is such a country and the research on which present policy in that country is being based is contained in Bourdieu's latest book on education **La nobless d'état** (Bourdieu 1989). This book itself is based on the fruits of 30 years of continuous work on French education by Bourdieu's 'Centre de sociologie européenne'. The theoretical aspects of this work have been discussed elsewhere (Harker, Mahar and Wilkes 1990, esp. chapter 4) and will not be repeated here. Rather, I will look at his work in the field of education from the perspective of

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[1] Roy Nash is project director; the 'team' includes myself, Don McAlpine, Rory Butler and Jenny Poskitt.

Bourdieu's major publications, at the way the work has evolved, and what it might have to tell us about the direction of New Zealand education.

Bourdieu on access in France

The best overview of the scope of his project in this area is to be found in the 1972 report (*Current Research*) of the Centre for European Sociology, of which Bourdieu was (and is) Director. His work over the last two decades has departed little from the plan set out in that document, in which the theoretical structure was already apparent and well developed. Bourdieu's writing on education always needs to be read bearing in mind that he is primarily interested in education because he sees it as a key contributor to the reproduction of the structure of power relationships and symbolic relationships between classes, due to the way schools intervene in and control the distribution of cultural and social capital between these classes. (Centre de sociologie europenne, 1972:11) Early statistical work on the probabilities of the children of various class fractions attending the various kinds of educational institutions was reported in a series of works, only one of which has been completely translated - **The Inheritors** (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964a; 1979)[2]. From the survey work undertaken, what came to be called 'cultural capital' was seen to be the product of a privileged family background which 'naturally' imbues children with just the 'knowledge and practical and verbal know-how'(Centre de sociologie europenne, 1972:12) that they need to succeed at school, gain entry to a prestigious tertiary institution and, consequently, gain the kind of employment which keeps them in the privileged social group into which they were born.

First published in French in 1964, **The Inheritors** provided a resource of "origins and destinations" data for the upper levels of the French educational system, and helped fuel the intellectual ferment that led up to the 'revolutionary' events of May 1968. Despite the delay of its publication in English, this book still presents a powerful message on the structures of inequality. Vogt (1980:386) concluded

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[2]   Where two dates appear in a reference, the first refers to the publication date in French, the second date to its release in English. The other works referred to are Bourdieu and Passeron (1964b) and Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint Martin (1965).

that serious students of social inequality and the role of education cannot afford to ignore Bourdieu's work, and that **The Inheritors** is a good place to begin studying it[3]. This book is one of the earliest formulations of Bourdieu's argument that scholastic 'gifts' are a social inheritance rather than a 'natural' (genetic) one, and that the 'reproductive' role of education (through its pedagogical practices) is achieved ideologically by transforming students' social inheritance into natural 'talent', and hiding the fact that it does so through ideologies of 'giftedness' and 'meritocracy'. The empirical basis of the work lies in extensive surveys of students by Bourdieu and his colleagues in a variety of French tertiary institutions and faculties, seeking to relate their social background and cultural 'style' to their success and to their trajectory through the whole school system.

The attempt to reflect on and theorise this empirical work resulted in the general theory of symbolic violence to be found in **Reproduction in Education Society and Culture** (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; 1977). This book, published in English 2 years before **The Inheritors**, was originally published in French 6 years *after* it. **Reproduction** is a summary of a great deal of empirical work carried out during the 1960s, and presupposes for its proper understanding a reasonable familiarity with Bourdieu's theoretical and methodological apparatus. The book itself delineates a set of self-supporting structural co-ordinates which are defined and operationalised in some detail - Pedagogic Action, Pedagogic Authority, Pedagogic Work, School Authority, Education System, and Work of Schooling. The central thesis of the book is that education systems legitimate (through Pedagogic Action) the 'cultural arbitrary' of dominant élites. Power is exercised through the structural co-ordinates which allow the imposition of

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[3] In English, **The Inheritors** stands isolated from what may be seen as the other half of the empirical work on which it is based and which has not been translated - **Les étudiants et leurs études** (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964b). The latter work is much more a descriptive study of students, their backgrounds and 'dispositions', whereas **The Inheritors** looks at the interaction with the educational institutions themselves. A further work, **Rapport pédagogique et communication** (Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint Martin, 1965), focusses in detail on the language of education and its role in the reproduction of inequality. The first two chapters of this work have been translated and appear in McCallum and Ozolins (1980). A more detailed overview of these works can be found in Robbins (1991:37-66).

'cultural meanings while concealing the relationships which are the basis of these meanings' (Erben, 1979:257).

Bourdieu's earlier view, that a 'rational pedagogy' is all that is required to correct the inequities of the system, is abandoned and inequality is now seen as an integral (though misrecognised) part of the system itself, irrespective of the contents of the curriculum or the methods of teaching. To understand how this works, the central explanatory concepts of *habitus, cultural capital* and *misrecognition* are assumed to be in the reader's mind. As I have pointed out elsewhere (Harker, 1984; Harker, Mahar and Wilkes, 1990:86), much of the misinterpretation of Bourdieu's work on education can be traced to an isolated reading of this book. Bourdieu himself makes this point in the new Preface provided for the second edition of the English translation (Bourdieu, 1990). **Reproduction** also shows that 'the relative autonomy of the educational system goes hand in hand with a deep seated dependence on the dominant social structure' (Centre de sociologie européenne, 1972:13). This dependence, of course, renders the autonomy more apparent that real, though its apparentness is the condition which allows the educational system to fulfil its reproductive function with an air of objectivity and fairness.

A further array of (largely untranslated) studies carried out by Bourdieu and his colleagues (Bourdieu, 1989:336) treat the French higher education system as a 'field', homologous with the social field. Within this field the *grandes écoles* occupy a dominant position which links them to the holders of power in the social field. With these studies the emphasis came on the teachers, the pedagogy and the evaluation systems, to complement the earlier work on students. Treating the *grandes écoles* themselves as a field, Bourdieu is able to show that not only are there distinctions between the *grandes écoles* and other tertiary institutions (which reflect the power relationships between the social fractions from which they characteristically draw their students), there are also distinctions *within* the field between the 'academic' colleges such as the *Ecole normale supérieure* and the 'colleges of power' such as the *Ecole polytechnique* and the *Ecole nationale d'administration* (Bourdieu and Saint Martin 1987). A window into this work is provided for English-only readers with the translation of **Homo Academicus** (Bourdieu 1984; 1988).

At the core of the book is a survey carried out in 1967, just before the May

student revolts in France. The purpose was to 'discover and divulge the basic organizational principles of the French academic field' (Calhoun, 1990:502). The survey was of the backgrounds and characteristics (social, cultural, political) of Parisian academics. In addition, a vaste array of other sources was scoured for data on the subjects of the study: interviews, publication records, records of overseas visits, university records, citation indexes and so on. The method of 'correspondence analysis'[4] employed by Bourdieu allows him to plot the location of various types and individuals in a multidimensional social space. Bourdieu argues that there is an homology between social capital in the wider world and power within the universities. A polarised model emerges (with the social sciences falling somewhere between the two poles):

1.   *le pôle mondain*, typified by law and medicine, with professorial power coming from control of access to qualifications and appointments;

2.   *le pôle scientifique*, typified by the natural sciences, with power based on prestige through research.

Those at the *pôle mondain* are 'dedicated to teaching and the reproduction of the existing cultural order', while those at the *pôle scientifique* are 'dedicated to research and cultural production' (Delaruelle, 1989:23). Academic capital (hence power and influence within the universities) has more to do with *le pôle mondain* than with *le pôle scientifique*. Those with intellectual renown and prestige (both within France and outside) are marginalised and relatively powerless within the universities. The various mechanisms whereby this is achieved are examined in some detail.

The polarised structure helps shape the analysis of the events encompassing and

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4   Correspondence analysis is a method of describing and analysing data developed by the French statistician J.P.Benzecri, utilising the methods of cluster analysis and pattern recognition. For the only paper of his available in English, see Benzecri (1969). For a comprehensive treatment of the method in English, see Greenacre (1984).

flowing out of the 1968 student revolt, which constitutes an important part of the book. It also forms the basis of his analysis of contemporary French university structures and hierarchies. Work on other tertiary institutions remains largely untranslated, including the accumulation and synthesis of the work on the *grandes écoles*, **La noblesse d'état** (Bourdieu, 1989). Having shown how the dominant classes make it easy for their offspring to succeed in the academic arena, this book illustrates the mechanisms whereby those who succeed academically come to dominate the state as officials, consultants and politicians. The 'laying on of hands' aspect which is an inevitable part of scholarly institutions, has the effect of producing a self-renewing élite (or aristocracy) whose inheritance is the state apparatus itself, for it is they who come to fill all the crucial positions. Here again we have an example of Bourdieu's arguments about the masking of social reproduction behind the ideological screens of meritocracy, giftedness and equality of access. It is also clear that the power of consecration moves with the times, sometimes favouring one type of the *grandes écoles*, sometimes others. During the 1980s significant shifts have been occurring as the various institutions 'jockey' for power and influence. For example, the new monetarist philosophy which has invaded France (in common with most other developed societies) has led to a marked increase in the power and position of graduates of the *Ecole nationale d'administration* at the expense of the *Ecole polytechnique* and the *Ecole normale supérieure*. In addition there has developed a range of new educational institutions of a highly specialised kind (such as in marketing, journalism, design, advertising) which on the surface are responding to market demands. Bourdieu argues that these new institutions owe their success to their patronage by the *grande bourgeoisie* seeking tertiary qualifications for their less able offspring, in the face of the increased rigour of academic selection into the traditional colleges. The struggle is for a tertiary qualification to legitimate the handing on of social capital and the inter-generational maintenance of position (Bourdieu, 1987; Bourdieu and Saint Martin, 1987).

Political Intervention

The depth of Bourdieu's work in this area has meant that he has been called on by government to advise on educational matters. In the mid-80s he chaired a Collège de France committee (formed at the invitation of President Mitterrand) to report on the future of French education (Bourdieu, 1985). This report formed

the basis of the President's education platform for the 1988 election.

Putting into practice the fifth principle ennunciated in the Presidential Report, Bourdieu was invited to chair a Ministerial committee (set up by the socialist government of M. Rocard) on curriculum reform (see Bourdieu and Gros, 1989). The reports represent a significant political intervention by Bourdieu in an attempt to ameliorate the rigid structures of the French educational system and the iron grip that graduates of particular educational trajectories have on high status jobs in both the government and the private sector. His intervention is in the direction of:

1   greater diversity in terms of institutions, curriculum, pedagogy and the criteria for evaluation, within the constraints of an agreement as to what constitutes scientific thought;

2   the necessity for the State to maintain a role in education in   order to protect the disadvantaged;

3   the continuous review of the knowledge to be included in the curricula of schools, and of the means of its transmission (Britain's Open University is cited as an example);

4   the integration of school knowledge and the need to avoid being 'blinkered' by traditional subject boundaries.

Whether the *Principles* underlying the French reports constitute an argument against the economistic view of education as a market commodity (in which the

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'Matthew Effect'[5] seems to be the only principle at work) is debatable. Nowhere in the statements from France is there any direct mention of the obligation that the schools "owe" to the economy - reform is to do with the changing nature of knowledge and the changes taking place in French society, both of which, of course, have economic and political implications. It is probably something that 'goes without saying' in France, but is thought to need 'spelling out' in New Zealand.

However, the two French reports link together in a way which is not matched by the equivalent reports on New Zealand. For reasons that remain unclear, the New Zealand Government has chosen to separate the consideration of the *form* that the school system will take from the *contents* of what it will teach. Immediately after the 1987 election, and taking its terms from the Treasury Brief to the Incoming Government, the (Picot) *Taskforce to Review Education Administration* was set up

> (with) an agenda in which two concepts were to be central: devolution and efficiency. All matters relating to curriculum or the nature of teaching and learning were excluded (Codd, 1991:178).

It is this economistic view which is seen to be the driving force behind the current reforms sweeping through the education system in New Zealand. Snook (1989:15) analyses four dominant themes in the government reform philosophy which has flowed out of the Picot Report (which Codd shows has its roots in the Treasury Briefs):

> 1   The education system is to be part of the market where
>   'choice' determines quality...

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5   In the Matthew text of The New Testament (Ch.XXV:29) the author writes 'For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that have not shall be taken away even that which he hath'. A typical example of this is reported in Gary McCulloch's (1991) excellent account of 'zoning' in New Zealand, particularly Auckland, where high status schools in high status areas are rigidly zoned, while low status schools serving low status areas 'are left to compete for pupils in the open market place' (p. 160), without the protection of a home zone.

2	Accountability or responsibility is located at the local or "face to face" level. While continuing to control and monitor, the state is washing its hands of responsibility for outcomes...

3	Education is a privilege not a right. Education benefits the individual and therefore should be paid for, at least in part, by the individual...

4	Schools must be accountable for learning...Control and responsibility are to be more cogent than freedom and self-evaluation.

This dominant government line has been opposed by the educational community and the political left (one suspects that these are seen as synonymous by many in government). Unfortunately, as Capper (1991:275) points out, both sides have used the same rhetoric: 'parental empowerment, devolution, and the democratization of schooling'. The difference is that those in power have linked these to 'issues of choice, managerialism, efficiency, and financial accountability' *(Ibid)*. Those on the left never imagined that devolution meant the complete withdrawal of the state from the provision of services to schools, nor the marginalisation of educational professionals from policy and programme development (because of "vested interest", "provider capture", etc.). As Capper reports *(ibid:277)*:

> what teachers actually wanted was for the services that the system provided to be retained, but for their unwieldy administration to be streamlined. What they got was the complete dismemberment of curriculum development processes.

Not only was curriculum development dismantled, but all vestiges of support and advisory functions for teachers and schools were also eliminated from the Ministry[6]. What had taken over 100 years to develop in response to the extreme inequalities of the nineteenth century - the provision of basic services available to all pupils, teachers and schools, irrespective of locality, remoteness, or wealth - is now deemed to serve no useful function in preserving equity. Everything must be purchased by individual schools from the marketplace. The damaging feature

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6	Some advisory functions were devolved to the Colleges of Education, while curriculum development was put up for tender.

of the New Zealand scene is that educationalists know that the communities "out there" that are supposed to engender, support and direct the processes of education are manifestly unequally equipped for the task. Phillip Capper sums it up succinctly:

> the reality is that a universal public school system will always require a degree of central mediation between enormously diverse community views, to ensure that minority or special-need groups are protected, to maintain some semblance of continuity, and for practical administrative and planning reasons (*Ibid*:280).

The separation of structure from function, or form from content, as is achieved with the separate reports by different teams on the curriculum and the administrative structure, has disastrous consequences for those aspects of the curriculum that cannot be easily 'nailed down' to dollars and cents. It is the rather more liberal aspects of the principles in the National Curriculum Review that will fall by the way-side in the face of the iron-logic of 'the market place'. It is ironic that one of the main barriers to the fulfillment of their potential for all students (as espoused in the National Curriculum Review) is the administrative structure set up by *Tomorrow's Schools*, which assumes that there is only one community 'out there', and that they all share the same view of education as those in power. It is to the shaping of the views of those in power that will be turned to now.

A State Aristocracy in New Zealand?

Bourdieu's analysis of French education has some pertinent things to offer us here in New Zealand. For example, the question can be asked "Is power in New Zealand (particularly the power to say what counts as education) concentrated in the hands of people with a particular experience of education?" An initial step is to look at the secondary schools attended by Cabinet Ministers, other MPs and Chief Executive Officers. The details are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Type of secondary school attended by status in government.

Category	state co-ed	state s-sex	private s-sex	private co-ed	overseas	not known
Cabinet *(20)*	5	6	8	1-	-	-
percentage	25	30	40	5		-
National MPs *(47)*	17	14	8	4	3	1
percentage	36	29	17	8.5	6.3	2
Labour MPs *(28)*	9	11	7	-	1	-
percentage	32.1	39.3	25		3.5	-
New Labour MP *(1)*	1	-	-	-	-	-
percentage	100					
CEO, Ministries *(42)*	6	19	9		3	5
percentage	14.3	45.0	21.4		4.7	11.9
New Zealand secondary enrolments, 1987.						
percentage	66.80	19.23	10.60	3.36	-	-

These data are very interesting in that they show that none of the categories of parliamentarian or chief executive can be seen as representative of the general population with regard to the type of school attended by today's pupils. The most representative group (apart from Jim Anderton - and you can't make much of a sample of one) turns out to be National Party back-benchers, followed by the Labour Party, then the National Cabinet Ministers, and finally, the least representative of all, the chief executives of the Civil Service. To these data can be added the findings of Murray (1989) from her sample of the corporate élite of New Zealand. Of the 97 top business people she surveyed, 22 per cent attended a 'public' school (by which she seems to mean a state co-ed school), 40 per cent attended a 'public élite' school (single-sex), and 38 per cent attended private schools (Murray, 1989:130-2; 156). These data from Murray are supported by the material reported in the October cover story of *Metro* (Roger, 1991), which surveyed the main 'players' in a number of social and cultural areas. The

distribution reported by Murray and in *Metro* is very similar to the distributions reported here from the top echelons of government and would seem to indicate that the top layers of both government and the private corporate sector are drawn from the same segment of the population. The historical data analysed by Murray also show the increasing centralisation of economic power into ever smaller numbers of large corporations, and the strengthening of links to government through the development of powerful pressure groups such as the Business Round Table. However they view each other's economic policies, they certainly seem to share a commonality of school backgrounds. Of course, having established a relationship between the variables 'type of school attended' and 'status' is one thing - drawing inferences from the relationship is another. Anyone who might feel tempted to use these data as a sword for some political or ideological cut and thrust should be warned that the handle is as sharp as the blade! Three possible explanations of Table 1 seem possible:

1   single sex schools (whether state or private)
         really do deliver a superior education and the
         data show that the best people are getting to
         the 'top';

2   there is no difference between the quality of
         education at co-ed and single sex schools
         and the data reflect the accumulation of
         social capital at single sex institutions and
         some kind of old- boys (there are few women
         at this level of government or business)
         network to ensure that only 'sound' people
         (to use Sir Humphrey Appleby's immortal
         language), that is, those with the
         'appropriate' habitus, make it to the top;

3   it doesn't matter whether there is or is not a difference
         between the quality of education at co-ed and single
         sex schools, the data merely reflect the geographical
         and social distribution of the different types of school:
         co-ed schools in rural areas, small towns, and working
         class suburbs of cities; single sex schools in the

centres of cities, requiring travel, often boarding away from home, and in the case of the private sector, expensive fees. In other words, the variables in Table 1 are not in a cause-effect relationship at all, but simply the outcomes of the habitus of the dominant social and cultural fraction who 'naturally' send their children to single sex schools, who 'naturally' see themselves as best fitted to run things, and hence who end up in politics or senior administrative and managerial ranks.

Bourdieu's 'aristocracy of the state' argument requires option three, particularly if it can also be shown that single sex schools (or at least a small, influential core of them) do deliver a 'better' education of the kind looked upon favourably by selection agents and promotion boards. Table 2 shows the individual schools involved most frequently in the data shown in Table 1. It is interesting to note that there is only one co-educational school in this "bakers' dozen", and no girls schools - what chance a school based 'old girls' network. Of the 16 schools that occur twice, ten are single sex (of which 2 are for girls), and of the 38 schools that are mentioned once, 17 are single-sex (of which 6 are for girls).

TABLE 2: Secondary schools with 3 or more ex-pupils in Table 1 categories

School	N (total=138)
Christ's College	7
Auckland Grammar	7
Mt Albert Grammar	5
Wanganui Collegiate	4
St Bede's	4
Hamilton B.H.S.	4
Wellington College	3
Christchurch B.H.S.	3
Takapuna Grammar	3
Nelson College	3
Wesley College	3
St Patrick's (Wellington)	3
Palmerston North B.H.S.	3

It could be argued that the strong influence of single-sex schools in the background of this country's decision-makers has had a formative and pervasive influence on their beliefs about education, predisposing them to a traditional view of what constitutes a sound education. In his review of Bourdieu's work, Robbins (1991:175) states:

> The transmission of arbitrary culture and knowledge within the education system does not help people to reconcile their group identity with a national identity but, instead, throughout, it distinguishes people on supposed merit or ability. The equalization of opportunity provided by state education and by the recognition of "innate" intelligence is a sham. The system simply provides a series of awards or qualifications which, as much as hairstyles, are reinforcements of our previous group identity. The content of courses is such that only those who have already been initiated into the language of school discourses by their earlier socialisation are able to demonstrate their "ability". Schools which, in response, alter their curricula in order to be able to recognise the merit of students who have been differently socialized, will tend to find that they become marginalized as institutions because they have "poor standards".

From Phase 2 of the *Access and Opportunity* project (Nash, Harker and Durie, 1992), which involved interviews with 80 families about their own schooling and that of their children, we feel justified in concluding (although social reality is always "messier" than such generalisations really allow) that, when compared to working-class families, professional families have higher expectations for their children and are more likely to take some positive remedial action when their levels of dissatisfaction are triggered. Their class resources of income, cultural capital and social capital are all utilised deliberately and with strategic intention in the interests of their children's future.

When looking at the situation for 'professional' families we were able to discem a quite distinct set of views and beliefs about education which are consistent with the conclusions drawn by Bourdieu from his studies of France.

> The most formal and coherent ideology of class position we will call the ideology of service. Articulated by the professional elite, particularly the second or third generation professional elite, those who adopted this position recognised the social and material privilege they enjoyed and were able to confer on their children and held that these benefits gave them a responsibility to give back to the community their knowledge and time in recognition of that privilege. They thus commonly occupied positions of leadership in community organisations, on school boards, for example. It was their duty, they insisted, to ensure that their children were able to benefit from the best education they could provide, which often meant private schooling, but they did not see that as in any sense detrimental to the interests of other social groups. Their children grow up with a sense of position which is rarely admitted as one of superiority but which is nevertheless powerfully effective. The professional elite who hold this position are shy, at least when talking to us, about their aspirations for their children and their commitment to their future. No one likes to give hostages to fortune. They typically say that they want to give their children the option of following in their own footsteps. If the children choose that path, well and good, if not, then that too is their choice, but at least they will have been given the option. This means, of course, that throughout the long process of education nothing is left to chance and the most careful monitoring of the child and the school is practiced as a matter of routine. As professionals these parents formally respect the professional authority of the teacher, but in any difference of opinion affecting their own children they would not for one moment consider it beyond challenge. They assume ultimate responsibility for their children's educational progress and do their best to ensure that its path is smooth. At the least sign that their children are slipping below the class expected level of performance they will intervene. And it will not do for the teachers to protest that their child is performing at the average

> level because they know very well that "average" performance will not keep their children's options open but close off the very possibility of being able to make a choice. Private schools, of course, and certain state schools able to maintain a form of *de facto* selection share the same conception of relative standards of performance as the professional parents who are their clients. This is what parents mean when they say that a school has "high standards" (*ibid*:30)

The *habitus*, (1990:54-5) Bourdieu tells us, is a product of history and produces individual and collective practices in accordance with the schemes or dispositions generated by that history:

> It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the "correctness" of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms....the *habitus* makes possible the free production of all the thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production - and only those.

Bourdieu's argument is that schooling plays a decisive role in the creation of the habitus in individuals, and this habitus sets the limits or boundaries around what is thinkable. Change, innovation and invention are only possible within these limits. Through the habitus existing structures govern practice, 'not along the paths of a mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions.'[7] It seems to me that a fairly good case can be argued for the existence of such a conjunction existing in New Zealand with regard to educational background and policy-making power. Traditionally, New Zealand's education system has been thought to be much more open than its European counterparts, and educational practices have been based around such beliefs. However, if current practices are based on particular views of education, then those practices will tend to reinforce (and hence reproduce) the structures that

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7   'Because the habitus is an infinite capacity for generating products - thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions - whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning' (Bourdieu, 1990:55).

structured the practices in the first place and make other sorts of alternatives 'unthinkable'.

These are important questions in my view, questions that impinge on social and cultural developments as well as educational ones. Hence, to circle back to where we started, being able to provide some sort of answer to some of the issues raised (however briefly) here, lies behind the 'school effects' research that we are currently in the middle of. We want to know whether different types of school do the same (or better or worse) job with the same types of students. Is there any academic or social advantage in attending a school of a particular type, or do some schools only appear to be doing well because they have a highly selected clientele? Until we have some empirical data on these matters, the interpretation of Tables 1 and 2 is highly problematical. Until then there-can be no basis for adjudication between the diverse political or ideological interpretations that can be made of them, aside from what overseas' experience and research can tell us. Overseas' work, however, shows that social capital, in the form of a dominant habitus, has (at least) as much to do with access to power and priviledge as academic qualifications.

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What Did the Shark Say to the Kahawai?

Metaphors of Culture Within Ethnic Relations Discourse in New Zealand

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Introduction

Some years ago, a colleague suggested that it might be useful to think of culture as a fruit cake - an edible 'gestalt', greater, when baked, than the sum of its parts (or ingredients). Cultural rules could be likened, it was suggested, to a recipe that was carefully followed or partially improvised. Most sociologists and anthropologists would probably find this metaphor somewhat idiosyncratic, yet it is hardly more colourful than many of the more conventional images routinely employed in academic and more popular discussions of Maori-Pakeha relations in New Zealand. The process of cultural assimilation, for example, is often described in terms of a digestive metaphor:

> When Pakehas tell us we ought to assimilate...it is like a shark saying 'lets assimilate' to a kahawai and then opening his mouth and swallowing him for breakfast (Metge, 1976:305).

Many writers in the field of ethnic relations write, and presumably 'think', about culture as if it had objective properties, even when they explicitly acknowledge that 'culture' is an abstract analytical concept. In other words, they reify culture in culturally conventional ways.

The inspiration for this paper arose while I was reviewing the reports and minutes of a governmental Maori advisory group. This group was officially designated a 'cultural' advisory body and it's name reflected it's primary emphasis upon combating the lack of understanding of, and sensitivity towards, Maori culture in one corner of the state bureaucracy. While reading through the official documents, I noticed that on a number of occasions, culture was likened to a spiritual essence or 'wairua'. As recorded in the minutes of one meeting, held

in 1988, a central objective was to ensure that Maori culture should 'flow' through the staff of the institution. At a later meeting, it was agreed that there was an urgent need to 'instil wairua into the system'. Since the work of Sapir and Crocker (1977), Ortney (1979), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Salmond (1982) and Parkin (1984), the political significance of metaphor in directing our thought and action has become widely acknowledged. Because metaphors predispose us to understand problems in certain conventional (and unconventional) ways, they also encourage us to favour certain 'solutions'. If culture is assumed to be a spiritual essence or force which, like the Holy Spirit (Wairua Tapu in Maori), might flow through a collectivity, then the solution to the problem of institutional discrimination and monoculturalism takes on a religious or missionary aspect. People need to be encouraged to open their 'hearts and minds' to Maori culture by those who can show them the way. Cultural 'missionaries' are required to teach the cultural message and so break down the prejudice which blocks the 'flow' of culture throughout the system.

Alerted to the fact that these idealist reifications of culture were influencing efforts to counter ethnic inequality and negative discrimination within one state-bureaucratic arena, I began to wonder what other reifications might be active within the wider field of ethnic politics in New Zealand. In this article, I propose to identify and discuss some of these more conventional metaphors. I begin with a review of some recent critiques of the 'ethnicity as culture' approach to ethnic relations in New Zealand and seek to clarify its ideological grounding. I then go on to identify some of the key reifications of culture within New Zealand's ethnic relations discourse over the last fifteen years or so, and show how these naturalise and 'fix' idealist understandings of Maori-Pakeha relations, thus reproducing the ideological grounding of the 'ethnicity as culture' approach. I conclude by suggesting that this analysis might be extended into a critique of biculturalism and multiculturalism as ideology.

The Ethnicisation of Culture

Over the past few years, the value of culturalist understandings of ethnicity and ethnic politics in New Zealand has been increasingly questioned by sociologists, anthropologists and educationalists. In general, two main criticisms have been directed at this 'ethnicity as culture' approach: firstly, it is excessively idealist,

and secondly, it mistakenly equates ethnic boundaries with cultural ones. In what follows, I briefly review each of these criticisms.

One of the earliest critiques of idealist analyses of ethnicity in New Zealand was Miles and Spoonley's (1985) article in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*. Directing their Althusserian-inspired attack specifically at Pearson (1983) and Pitt and Macpherson (1974), they argued against privileging the 'consciousness of cultural origins' over 'the differential distribution of agents to various sites in class relations' (Miles and Spoonley, 1985:21-22). These authors proposed instead that ethnicity be approached through a study of the political economy of labour migration. More recently, Spoonley has reiterated his claim that to analyse ethnic relations in terms of cultural difference is to remain at an ideological level:

> One of the problems with an analysis of 'ethnicity as culture' is that it abstracts the practise of ethnicity from its economic and political context and leaves any analysis open to charges of being idealist. Ethnicity as a form of economic and political mobilisation assumes that...ideological relations and effects (i.e. those associated with ethnicity)...intersect with class and gender relations as part of the complex relations of capitalism (Spoonley, 1991:156).

Pearson, while not accepting that Miles and Spoonley's Marxist approach is *a priori* any less ideological than his own Weberian position (Pearson, 1985: 272-273), agrees with Spoonley on the need to go beyond culture and examine the material foundations of ethnicity:

> One does not have to be a Marxist to acknowledge that much recent debate about ethnicity in New Zealand is so enraptured by ideas and identities that it forgets to examine the material conditions which influence their formation (Pearson, 1990:239).

If one assumes that culture is primarily an ideological system or a 'system of symbols and meanings in terms of which a particular group of people make sense of their world' (Metge, 1976:45), then the above criticisms by Spoonley and Pearson are undoubtedly well-directed. If, on the other hand, culture is conceived of as a total 'way of life' (James and Saville-Smith, 1989:13), 'the total lifestyle of a people...all of the ideas, knowledge, behaviour and material objects they share' (Sullivan and Thompson, 1984:35), or an anthropological equivalent to the sociological concept of 'society' (Nash, 1990:99), then the critical edge of these

authors comments is blunted. They leave open the possibility for advocates of the 'ethnicity as culture' approach to stretch their essentially idealist concept of culture to accommodate materialist critiques.

A more powerful line of attack is to observe that the 'ethnicity as culture' approach mistakenly equates ethnic boundaries with cultural ones. This second line of argument has also been advanced by Pearson and Spoonley, and it has been less directly pursued by Nash. Pearson has noted that the discussion of biculturalism and multiculturalism in New Zealand has been 'bedeviled' by misconceptions concerning the terms 'race', 'culture', 'ethnicity', 'state' and 'nation'. With reference to the 'culture-ethnicity' distinction, he points out that:

> Ethnicity is not culture *per se*. The notion of 'two [main] cultures' in New Zealand is just as meaningless as 'two races'. However we define 'culture', and the word is as contested or taken for granted among anthropologists as 'society' is within sociology, it has much wider boundaries than ethnicity (Pearson, 1991:196).

Spoonley agrees:

> ...ethnicity is not the same as culture. All of us 'have culture' [or live culture] but ethnicity concerns social networks which rely on an explicit consciousness of difference...[Ethnicity] can exist as an alternative to other forms of political consciousness and political activity, such as class, or it can reinforce them (Spoonley, 1991:156).

For Nash, also, New Zealand cannot be said to comprise two distinct ethnic cultures, Maori and Pakeha (Nash 1990: 99-100). Rather, New Zealand is a highly integrated society within which a 'Maori cultural system' is 'embedded'. While this Maori 'socio-system' constitutes a 'partial society', he argues that there is no equivalent 'Pakeha society' at the systemic level. Nash is critical of the way biculturalist discourse directs attention 'towards the analysis of Maori culture and Pakeha culture and, what is more, to culture conceived as a reified idealist abstraction' (Nash, 1990:99).

In concurring with these writers on the need to radically dis-articulate culture and ethnicity, I would like to go further and suggest that while it makes analytical sense to talk of culture in the singular, it does not make sense to then reify this concept and talk of cultures (plural) as if they were empirical phenomena whose

boundaries might be somehow empirically determined. While nations, regions, classes, age-groups, men and women, *and ethnic groups* differ culturally in some respects, they also share, to a greater or lesser extent, cultural conventions meanings and values. It makes no sense, therefore, to say that these groups *are* distinct cultures or *have* distinct cultures. At most, we can say that there are profound *cultural differences* between them. Leach, who has made this argument most forcefully in his introduction to social anthropology, warns:

> So beware. When you encounter an anthropologist who writes about cultures in the plural, or who writes as if the culture of a society were like a unique set of clothes in which each garment can be separately described independently of any of the others, watch out! In all probability the *decoupage*, the discontinuity that separates one culture from another or one cultural trait from another, exists only in the mind of the anthropologist observer (Leach, 1982:43).

In relation to the interpretation of ethnicity, the plural-culture approach identified and criticised by Leach participates in and reinforces an *ethnicisation of culture*. This term refers to an ideological process through which the ethnic dimension of cultural difference is privileged above all other dimensions. It usually entails an association of different cultures (plural) with different ethnic categories or groups, and an explanation of relations between these categories or groups primarily in terms of differences between cultures. The ethnicisation of culture is thus also an idealisation of ethnicity in the sense criticised by Miles, Spoonley and Pearson. In other words, taken to its logical limits, the second critique of the 'ethnicity as culture' approach (that it mistakenly equates ethnic boundaries with cultural ones) is more profound in that it is able to encompass the argument that the approach is excessively idealist.

It is clear that the ethnicisation of culture has significantly influenced debates about the future direction of ethnic relations policy in New Zealand. Perhaps less obvious is the fact that it has also strongly influenced the direction of ethnic relations research. Because the ethnicisation of culture effects an ideological backgrounding of non-ethnic cultural differences, the study of cultural diversity within Maori society remains a poorly developed area of inquiry. In particular, class, gender and generational differences within Maori society are rarely discussed in the 'ethnicity as culture' literature in New Zealand (Larner, 1991:63). Naive notions of a homogeneous Pakeha culture also abound. Finally, the extent of cultural sharing between Maori and Pakeha is under-researched and

little understood (Spoonley, 1988:127; 1991:165-166; Pearson, 1990:239-247; Nash, 1990:112-113; Webster, 1989:55).

Despite scholarly challenges, the 'ethnicity as culture' approach remains extremely influential in popular, official and academic discourse on Maori-Pakeha relations in New Zealand. Part of the reason for its resilience in the face of criticism is its firm ideological grounding in commonsense reifications of culture. These reifications, or metaphors of culture, assume and 'naturalise', in a largely unconscious way, an ethnicised understanding of culture. In the next section, I identify and discuss some of the more pervasive and influential of these metaphors. I do so in the hope that by highlighting the largely unconscious role that these reifications play in the ethnicisation of culture, it is possible to gain a better general understanding of the ideological nature of culturalist discourse.

Culture: Key Reifications in Ethnic Relations Discourse

A survey of the literature on ethnic relations produced in New Zealand over the last fifteen years[1] suggests that the reification of culture has clustered around five key metaphors. These are: M1-*Culture is food;* M2-*Culture is a stream;* M3-*Culture is an environment;* M4-*Culture is a living organism;* M5-*Culture is a group.* In what follows, I exemplify and briefly comment on each of the above, noting significant metaphoric entailments where relevant.

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[1] The following publications were surveyed:

Abbott and Durie (1986), Awatere (1984), Department of Justice (1986), Department of Maori Affairs (1980-84), Jackson (1988), Kawharu (1989), Levine and Vasil (1985), Metge (1976), Ministerial Advisory Committee (1988), Mulgan (1989), National Council of Churches (1986), New Zealand Planning Council (1979); (1988), New Zealand Nursing Journal (July 1988), Race Relations Conciliator (1982), Royal Commission on Social Policy (1987), Salmond, (1975), (1980), Sharp (1990), Spoonley (1988), Stokes (1985), Vasil (1988), Walker (1987), (1990), Yensen et. al. (1989).

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M1 - *Culture is food*

This metaphor is regularly employed in discussions of Maori education and problems experienced by young Maori. Thus, the Secretary of Maori Affairs, concerned about the future of urban Maori youth, insisted that:

> Economic doors must be unlocked and the cultural knowledge of Maoritanga passed on if hungry generations are to be fed (Maori Affairs, 1984:3).

Lack of cultural 'nourishment' is sometimes identified as leading to low self-esteem with a consequent lack of educational success. Hence, culture is a nourishing source of personal identity and self esteem.

> Maori youths raised in the positive strengths of their culture are able to largely escape the worst effects of this cycle of deprivation (Jackson, 1988:101).

M2 - *Culture is a stream*

This metaphor assumes and reinforces pluralist and relativist political positions; one society, many cultures, each, in principle, equal to all others.

> They merely wish to control their land, resources and cultural destiny. Surely that is an acceptable level of devolution in a society with two main cultural streams? (Walker, 1987:110).

Perhaps this reification is related to *culture is a spiritual essence* used in the cultural advisory group discussions referred to earlier. If different cultural streams flow through a single society, then Maori culture should flow through the bureaucratic institutions of that society.

M3 - *Culture is an environment*

Here is a reification of culture as it has been classically presented in anthropological writing; water is to fish as culture is to people. In both cases, the environment is taken-for-granted.

> As they have come out of cultural isolation into the mainstream of New Zealand life, the Maori people have become not less but more aware of their

> identity as a group. When we are totally immersed in our own culture we live
> in it like a fish in water (Metge, 1976:53).

This quotation suggests a figurative association between this metaphor and M2 in that it is implied that Maori people moved from a rural backwater into a 'mainstream' environment.

M4 - *Culture is a living organism*

Seeking to counter assimilationist models and assumptions that Maori culture is a relic of the past, commentators regularly point to the contemporary 'living' nature of Maori culture:

> I insisted that Maori culture was neither dead nor dying nor a mere aggregate
> of survivals but a living organism made up of functionally interrelated and
> dynamically interacting parts (Metge, 1976:318).
>
> Culture is a living force that adapts, with time, to both the physical and social
> environment. Some people may wish to freeze a culture... (Race Relations
> Conciliator, 1982:18).

The representation of culture as a life-form implies a number of entailments. As a species, culture may be *indigenous* to a locality:

> However indifferent Pakehas might be to Maori culture it cannot be avoided
> entirely because it is indigenous and much more pervasive than people realise
> (Walker, 1987:148).

Irrespective of whether or not it is indigenous, culture may *spread*:

> ...with rare exceptions all our leadership in the religious, intelligentsia and
> professional arena, married white people. This increased Maori women's
> inferiority complexes and further spread white culture through Maoridom
> (Awatere, 1984:85).

The spreading of one culture may *kill off* another:

> But kill off that culture and Maoris will have to re-invent Black Power (which
> some have done) (Walker, 1987:220).

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It is important, therefore, that efforts be made to *preserve* this endangered species:

> Furthermore, as the Maoris have strived to preserve their culture and language, their separate identity needs to be accepted and conditions created for its continued sustenance (Levine and Vasil, 1985:14).

M5 - *Culture is a group*

If culture is a group, then it is something to which we *belong*, something we are *born into* and are *part of.* However, not all of us identify strongly enough with our groups. Maori generally accept that they 'belong' to a culture but many Pakeha do not.

> There is still a distinct Maori culture...those who clearly belong to this culture are genuine Maori (Mulgan, 1989:7).
>
> By denying they are part of a culture, they can deny the destructive impact that culture has on others (Atareta Poananga, quoted by Spoonley, 1988:67).

This reification often underpins more radical rhetoric, assuming a wide range of entailments. If cultures are groups then, like groups, they may be *insulted.*

> This was a confrontation between engineering students practising what they saw as a harmless mock haka, and a group of young Maori and Pacific Island people, who objected to what they saw as a racist offence against Maori culture (Yensen et. al. eds. 1989:90).

Cultures may also have collective *opinions.* This is the central metaphor that informs Sharp's recent book, *Justice and the Maori.*

> And much discussion of the relations between Maori and Pakeha did in fact take the form of disagreements between cultures about justice (Sharp, 1990:32).

It follows that cultures may also have different collective *aspirations.*

> Cultural sensitivity must play a greater part in the education system - which has been slow, in the past, to recognise the aspirations of other cultures (Kawharu, 1989:283).

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Cultures may or may not *understand* each other.

> The dominant Pakeha culture has made too little attempt to understand minority Polynesian cultures (Race Relations Conciliator, 1982:12).

And, on the basis of misunderstandings, cultures may *interact*.

> In the Maori perspective of our history since 1840 the dominating theme is the interaction of our two cultures (*Puao-te-ata-tu*, 1988:5).

Cultures may become *aggressive*.

> Pakeha culture is less well defined than Maori culture yet, paradoxically, has a more aggressive thrust to it (Levine and Vasil, 1985:15-16).

So much so that they may *dominate and destroy* each other.

> ...it is these very key concepts which have allowed white culture to invade and dominate, eliminate languages, spirituality, to destroy with a never-ending, mind-boggling blindness. One of these key concepts is individualism (Awatere, 1984:60).

> Throughout his talk a feeling that white culture has harnessed the forces for evil hung unspoken in the air. Then last week in a television programme on the Rasta movement one man said it straight out. White Culture is a Force for Evil. Makes you think. No other culture has survived it (Awatere, 1984:53).

Cultures may *join or combine*.

> Although correct pronunciation of Maori is a step towards bi-culturalism, the ultimate conjunction of the two cultures occurs on marae, especially those built in urban areas. Increasingly Pakehas have been exposed to marae experiences... (Walker, 1987:148)

Or they may *borrow* from each other.

> Such borrowing is part of all cultural interaction, and does not make the 'borrowing' culture subordinate to the one it borrows from (Yensen et. al. 1989:60).

As ethnic groups, cultures are ideally of *equal status*.

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> Separate cultural identity need not be threatening, and should not be, if all cultures are acknowledged as having equal status and all ideas of cultural superiority over one another are disposed of (Stokes, 1985:6).

One final reification, a variation on one alluded to in the title of this article, entails a rare double metaphor: culture is a group which is in turn a species of fish.

> The dominant culture refers to this as assimilation. Like a shark swallowing a herring, it gobbles up the minority culture and although the cells from the herring are now part of the shark - none of the smaller fish is recognisable (Race Relations Conciliator, 1982: 13).

Culturalism and Biculturalism

Metaphor often directs our thinking about phenomena into conventionally accepted channels. In so doing, it can act as a conservative influence, reinforcing certain ideological modes of understanding at the expense of others less firmly grounded in conventional imagery. The key metaphors identified in the previous section help naturalise and conventionalise a culturalist understanding ethnic relations. By implicitly asserting a direct correspondence between ethnic and cultural boundaries, they effect an ethnicisation of cultural difference.

Key metaphor M1-*culture is food*, reifies culture as a form of ethnic nourishment, an ethnic essence necessary for the survival of the ethnic group. With key metaphors M2-*culture is a stream*, and M3-*culture is an environment*, cultural differences (between streams or environments) are assumed to correspond to ethnic differences. Key metaphor M4-*culture is a living organism*, represents culture as a localised 'species' that lives, adapts and dies. It's relationships with other living organisms is directly analogous to relations between ethnic groups. Finally, M5-*culture is a group*, most directly ethnicises cultural difference because it assumes an identity between a group (an ethnic group) and a particular culture.

While the prevalence of culturalist assumptions within popular discourse about ethnic relations in New Zealand is regrettable, their strong and continuing presence in official and academic writing is a more serious matter. The ethnicisation of culture in official reports (e.g. Jackson, 1988; Ministerial

Advisory Committee, 1988; Race Relations Conciliator, 1982; Royal Commission on Social Policy, 1987) and academic writings (e.g. Metge, 1976; Mulgan, 1989; Stokes, 1985; Sharp, 1990) provides a far too simplistic basis for policy decision and academic research. By not confronting class, gender and generational dimensions of cultural difference within Maori society and by idealising the logic and processes of capitalist expansion (a world-historical phenomenon), these and other culturalist accounts are unable to offer radical solutions to chronic ethnic inequality in New Zealand.

These weaknesses are particularly evident in the way many commentators and policy-makers understand the concepts of 'biculturalism' and 'multiculturalism'. To the extent that these concepts also assume a reification of culture (as cultures) and an ethnicisation of cultural difference, they must also be considered as ideological, obscuring or misrepresenting the way ethnicity is embedded within the class-based relations of capitalism. When New Zealand society is conceptualised as consisting of 'two main cultural streams', two distinct cultural 'environments' or 'worlds', an 'indigenous' and a 'non-indigenous' culture, or two cultures that 'interact' and 'misunderstand' each other, then a great deal more is obscured than is revealed about the nature of ethnic inequality in New Zealand.

It is true, as a number of commentators have pointed out, that biculturalism is an ambiguous concept which has taken on a wide range of meanings in New Zealand's ethnic relations discourse (Pearson, 1991:203; Nash, 1990:99). At one end of the spectrum is Schwimmer's definition of a bicultural society as one in which 'each culture makes creative use of the other', a society in which 'two conflicting value systems' are each accepted as valid (Schwimmer, 1960:13). The view that biculturalism means a 'more or less' equal distribution of resources and power between Maori and Pakeha belongs at the other, more radical, end of this spectrum (Pearson, 1990:234-236; Spoonley, 1989:99). In between are definitions which stress greater cultural autonomy and political influence for Maori as one of two peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Mulgan, 1989:9; Yensen et. al., 1989:15). Strictly speaking, therefore, only those definitions towards the conservative end of the spectrum strongly reify culture and fully participate in the ethnicisation of cultural difference. Nevertheless, the more radical proposals do take on a certain liberal respectability by adopting a biculturalist accent. Indeed, I would suggest that the ideological value of biculturalism derives in no small measure from this very ability to encompass and fudge differences between

widely divergent political viewpoints. In this sense, like multiculturalism in Australia, it has become a 'necessary ideology' (Castles et. al., 1988, quoted by Pearson, 1991:203).

Conclusion

In naturalising and conventionalising a culturalist understanding of ethnic relations in New Zealand, the key metaphors and their entailments identified in this article constitute a commonsense, and perhaps essential, grounding for biculturalism and multiculturalism as ideological discourses. Any materialist social analysis must, of course, seek a level of understanding beyond that of commonsense, and the critique of ideology will always be an integral part of such an endeavour. This article has sought to contribute to the development of such a critique by focusing on the language of culturalism and biculturalism. At one level, this has been an exercise in deconstruction, a questioning of the taken-for-granted metaphors that underpin culturalist language in order to undermine its authority. But by highlighting the subtle and largely unconscious influence of culturalist metaphors in ethnic relations discourse, this analysis also underscores the difficulties of popularising more materialist understandings of ethnic inequality in New Zealand. Indeed, it seems that in the ebb and flow of public debate, we will be forced to witness many more replays of the shark and the kahawai's brief but tragic encounter.

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Party Strategies and Class Composition:
the New Zealand Labour and National Parties in 1988
and Beyond

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Abstract

Data from surveys of National and Labour conference delegates in 1983 and 1988 indicates that the party conferences changed remarkably little in their social composition during the mid-1980s. Use of multidimensional model of class, including agency and socialisation variables, indicates that significant differences remain between the two parties. The Labour Party's continuing foundations in trade unionism may have the effect of shifting its political strategy back towards social democracy. Its narrower social base (compared to Labour) has made it considerably easier for the National Government to pursue the economic, social and labour market policies signalled by Roger Douglas but rejected by the Labour Government in 1988.

While the focus of recent literature on party strategy has centred on the construction of class coalitions of voters (Przeworski, 1985), the class composition of active party membership is also a variable to be considered in order to understand and assess the **long-term strategic options** facing political parties. Active membership is, in large part, a consequence of past strategic choices, particularly where parties have origins as class organisations. One can also hypothesise that the composition of party membership may **condition and constrain** the development of future strategy. This article explores the implications of this proposition, and seeks to test it, insofar as this is possible, within the framework of the international literature on this issue. It also explores the reverse possibility, that changing party strategy may influence and change the social foundations of activist recruitment into a party. It also addresses issues concerning the future of the National and Labour parties which have been debated among political observers and commentators in New Zealand.

Those who attend the conferences of political parties can be regarded as representative of the **active** membership; indeed, such participation is one of the key indices of activism. Conferences also provide a focus for the concerns of active members; they express the political will of a party, insofar as that can be

defined. In particular, they elect the organisational leadership. Organisational or membership influence on policy formation is normally limited, particularly when a party is in government, but conferences provide opportunities for communication between activists and politicians. More crucially, active members form a recruitment pool for political candidates and largely determine their selection.

Individual delegates to New Zealand's National and Labour Party conferences were systematically studied in 1983 when National was in government and Labour the opposition (Vowles, 1985). A year later, Labour became the government. In 1988, a further study was initiated. A longer questionnaire and a post-conference postal survey resulted in an improved response rate and a more extensive range of data.[1]

Since their establishment, party systems in the western democracies have become less and less rooted in the class cleavages in which, in most countries, they originated. This has been most apparent in the 'dealignment' of electoral support away from its former class foundations (for recent New Zealand data in comparative context, see Vowles, 1990: 182). The composition of party membership has also altered. While these tendencies have been long term, they might be expected to intensify during periods of more rapid social and political change. Since 1984, New Zealand politics provides an example of such a conjuncture.

Party Strategies: Theory and Context

Class and Party Support

As government since 1984, Labour has done much to shape the range of choices available for both parties in terms of identifying classes and class fractions

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[1] The 1988 Conference survey was carried out by Raymond Miller (University of Auckland) and Jack Vowles (University of Waikato). It was funded by the University of Auckland Research Committee. It was a postal survey, and the response rates were 67 percent for Labour Party delegates and 70 percent for National delegates. The researchers are grateful for the support and cooperation of the two parties, and also for the assistance of Bridget Mcphail in questionnaire preparation.

toward which they then target their electoral strategies and appeals. An example of such a specific choice is Labour's change of leadership from Geoffrey Palmer to Mike Moore only weeks before the 1990 election. This was a decision to shore up Labour's working class support at the expense of losing some middle class support, and thereby minimising the otherwise disastrous losses expected in the coming election.

The particular understanding of the structural basis of the 'working class' employed here is derived largely from Przeworski's (1985:55-57) interpretation of classical social democratic ideology. This identifies the productive working class as the group most prone to support social democratic parties and defines it as wage earners and their families where those wage earners are, or were, employed in manufacturing industry, mining, construction, transport, and agriculture (Przeworski, 1985:104). This concept of the 'narrow' working class is consistent with the 'productivist' language of Labour ideology in New Zealand well into the twentieth century (Vowles, 1987a:19; 1987b:234). Another component of the class structure identified here is a 'petit bourgeoisie', rather than a capitalist class, and refers specifically to employers and the self-employed. Persons in this category tend to be the strongest supporters of conservative or right-wing political parties in neo-Weberian studies (Heath, Jowell, and Curtice, 1985; Marshall, Rose, Newby, and Vogler, 1988), and a similar although slightly different group is identified in neo-Marxist models (Wright, 1985). The residual group, the 'middle class', is made up of wage and salary earners across a range of service, clerical, sales, professional and managerial occupations. In many areas of the middle class, particular positions are contradictory in terms of relations of employment, authority, income, job autonomy, and so on, giving those involved some interests in common with the working class, and other interests in common with employers (Wright, 1985). Both Wright and Goldthorpe (1980) models, which differentiate between various categories in the middle class, were applied to the data on conference delegates. However, there was little meaningful variation across the two sets of delegates among those categories when the data was subjected to preliminary bivariate and multivariate analysis, and it was therefore decided to employ the three simpler categories explained above (but see Vowles, 1990:186 for a Goldthorpe analysis of Labour and National delegates in 1988).

Historically, the Labour Party's strategic options have been shaped by its origins as a working class party with a social democratic programme. National's, meanwhile, lie in an historical role as an anti-Labour coalition based in, but not wholly encompassed by, business and rural interests. Thus, National's major imperative has been power rather than ideology, and its pragmatic conservatism and populist traditions led it by the 1950s to replace Labour as a long-term government by accommodating itself to the welfare-interventionist state created by the First Labour Government. By the 1970s, National was even moving in certain respects to the left of the boundaries set by Labour's earlier social democratic policies in social policy (Easton, 1981) and industrial relations, at least in terms of its willingness to directly intervene in wage determination (Boston, 1984).

Party Strategies
A major thrust in the literature on party strategy has taken a lead from the work of Downs (1957:114-141) who deduced from an economic model of party behaviour that party policies would tend to converge in order to attract voters in the middle of the left-right ideological spectrum. Stripped of most of the sophistication of Downs' argument, this notion of competition for the 'middle ground' of politics has subsequently become a cliche which many political analysts seem unable to transcend. For purposes of simplification, it may sometimes be useful to assume a one-dimensional ideological spectrum, but to apply the notion generally is often unhelpful. As Downs himself acknowledged, political parties who seek winning electoral coalitions may not always find new supporters in the centre, but rather to the left or right. And newly emerging segments of the political market, such as 'post-materialist' peace and environmental movements, may not necessarily fit neatly into a one-dimensional ideological continuum (Inglehart, 1977).

Rather than use ideological differences, it may be more useful to assume party competition to involve organisations and individuals with particular material and political interests to promote. At key points in their evolution, all social democratic parties face a trade-off between maximising working class support and seeking the votes of middle class 'allies'. A search for allies is necessary because having the most part of the working class vote is never enough to provide a path to power and a secure possession of government. But the more appeal to the middle class, the greater the risk of losing votes among traditional

working class supporters. At a certain point, a social democratic party may become indifferent to its class composition and thus runs the risk of eventually losing sight of its original mission to serve the interests of workers.

Such a trajectory has been followed by the New Zealand Labour Party in a slow evolution since at least the early 1950s (Vowles, 1987a). The trend is apparent not just in electoral support but also in the social composition of the party itself. Party membership declined, most particularly that of blue-collar workers and trade unionists, and most steeply during periods of Labour Government. Manual worker unions remained affiliated but they covered a declining share of the workforce. Even so, Labour's blue collar membership fell much more steeply than the overall decline of the traditional working class. When membership of the party began to rise again in the late 1970s, the new members were recruited more from the white collar than the blue collar workforce. Thus the lower representation of traditional workers persisted despite a membership recovery (Gustafson, 1976; Webber, 1978; Vowles, 1985).

By 1984, the voice of the traditional blue collar productive working class was rarely heard among the political leaders of the New Zealand Labour Party. Persons with a traditional manual worker or union background formed a small fraction of the Labour Parliamentary caucus (Gustafson, 1989:211). Unions affiliated to the party took only a nominal role within it. They tended to assume that a Labour Government would be broadly sympathetic with union goals, even if not prepared to accommodate them fully. The unions were quickly to learn that the Fourth Labour Government was to be like no other Labour Government before it. Monetarist economic policies, reform of state-owned enterprises, privatisation, reduction of industry protection, and a retreat from a progressive tax system made up only the most apparent of a host of policies, liberal rather than social democratic, which hit the working class hardest, most notably through increasing unemployment and economic recession. From 1984 until the end of 1988, Roger Douglas, Labour's Minister of Finance, was the government's major driving force.

Comparing the Backgrounds: 1983 and 1988

When the first party conference survey was conducted in 1983, the Labour Party was organisationally more healthy than perhaps at any time in its history. Its

individual membership was between 40-50,000, a high level compared to ten years earlier although not as high as was claimed by the party's leaders at the time. The 1983 conference was one of the largest ever held, with 753 delegates attending. The National Party, by contrast, was suffering the consequences of eight controversial years of government. Attendance at its 1983 annual conference was only 343.

Five years later, it was a Labour Government which was on the defensive. Liberalisation of the economy and the rigid application of principles of non-intervention, combined with burgeoning unemployment, was creating disillusionment among many Labour supporters, comparable to that felt by many National partisans in 1983. Membership was down to 20-30;000. Attendance at the 1988 conference was 537, a drop of 30 percent compared to 1983. The relatively respectable numbers remaining had been boosted by a close contest for the party presidency between Jim Anderton, supported by the party's left, and Ruth Dyson, promoted by an alliance of the centre and the right. The centre, based in the parliamentary caucus and the right, and organised in a 'Backbone Club' with the support of Finance Minister Roger Douglas, won the battle and narrowly elected Ruth Dyson. As the political leaders of both National and Labour are elected by the respective parliamentary party caucuses rather than by their conferences, it is presidential contests which provide the major opportunity to effectively express membership opinion. National, while well ahead in the polls, was also suffering from internal difficulties, and its membership remained somewhat below target. Delegates attending the 1988 conference numbered 478, an increase of 40 percent over 1983, but still below Labour's numbers despite a much larger National Party membership than that claimed by Labour. National Party membership in 1981 was 200,000, just under 29 percent of its vote at the 1981 election. By 1984, membership had dropped to 133,000 (Gustafson, 1986:192). National, increasingly out of favour with business by 1983, had still failed to clearly establish its future direction by 1988. To somewhat simplify a complex pattern, one faction of the party was seeking to follow Labour's lead into territory more consistent with National's traditional free enterprise liberal rhetoric. Another faction meanwhile, held to a populist and interventionist strategy appealing to the traditional moral values associated with National's conservative heritage.

While the economic difficulties facing New Zealand since 1974 provide the context, perhaps the central factor determining Labour's immediate strategic options during the late 1970s lay in the policies of the Muldoon National Government. National's failures in Keynesian economic policies, state-led investment, a new and generous public pension scheme, and increasing government expenditure and offshore public borrowing, created a climate of elite opinion whereby markets, rather than politics, were perceived as providing the solutions to economic problems. Only in its cautious promotion of a reduction of industrial protection and its hostility to the union movement did the Muldoon National Government act in economic and social policy as one would expect a government of the right. National's vote losses in the 1984 election to a new free-enterprise party indicated an unsatisfied section of voters on the right which Labour might attract. Meanwhile, there was no love lost between unions and the National Party. Thus, from 1984 to 1988, the unions' had no real choice between 'exit' *from* or 'voice' *within* the Labour Party. The options were either no political influence at all, or at least a chance of mobilising some bargaining power within the Labour Party. Labour could rely on union support given no other practical political alternative.

By 1987, the unions had significantly revived their activity inside the Labour Party. They took more interest in candidate selection in particular. Labour's constitution potentially allows considerable union involvement in local electorate committees but this requires a union commitment to ensure regular attendance by one delegate for at least half the meetings in any given year before a selection. Until about 1986, the low level of union interest in electorate-level Labour Party involvement meant that this influence was rarely brought to bear, except in a very small number of working class electorates with stronger union traditions. The unions have normally given a much higher priority to involvement in Labour's central organisation, particularly through' strong representation at conference. From about 1986, union representation at Labour Party conferences increased relatively, although more because of declining individual membership than through new affiliations. This influence can be substantial because union affiliation to the New Zealand Labour Party is national, and union opinion can be represented by a relatively small number of delegates with multiple votes. In 1983, unions controlled about a third of votes at conference, if a card vote were called. In 1988, the comparable proportion of union votes was 44 percent. This was significantly lower than the union share of the votes at Australian and British

Labour Party Conferences but this block of votes, cast by relatively few delegates, can be crucial to successful election to party positions at conference. Thus, throughout the 1980s, the unions secured a sympathetic organisational leadership for the party, and one which was able to defend union concerns against certain aspects of government policy, particularly with respect to labour legislation (Walsh, 1989).

Since 1984, the Labour Party has become increasingly divided as to future options. While the right of the party is indifferent to Labour's class composition, Labour's left and centre, allied to the unions which are now more active in the party, still see a working class base as necessary. Meanwhile, by the 1987 election, members of the traditional productive core working-class were no more likely to vote Labour than any others but they were still less likely to vote National and more likely not to vote at all (Vowles, 1990). Labour's working class losses to non-voting were offset by gains in the middle class. The movements in each direction were relatively small, but significant enough to bring about unexpected results in a handful of electorates. Good organisation in marginal electorates maintained a healthy Labour majority despite a swing to the opposition.

Both major parties therefore face important strategic dilemmas. To the extent that party strategies have changed over time, it might be that the resolution of these dilemmas could be determined to some degree by recent recruitment into their active memberships of persons whose origins, experiences and political aspirations will prove crucial for the future. Forty percent of 1988 Labour delegates attended their first conference in 1985 or later; for National delegates, the comparable figure was 42 percent. For example, if Labour has become more of a middle class and business party since 1984 due to recruits benefiting from the Labour Government's economic policies, then, other things being equal, a continued rightward course could be expected. If, on the other hand, renewed union interest had shifted the balance in the other direction, there would have been a greater chance of Labour's return toward social democracy. For National, a broadening of its base after 1975 towards a more broad and diffuse populist constituency would imply lower involvement from those in the business sector than might be expected on the basis of an earlier tradition. Conversely, a narrowing around National's core support among farmers would indicate the intensification of a conservative rural base, while a growth in political activity

within the National Party of the business community would indicate a greater probability of a move toward free enterprise liberalism. For each party, a changed membership composition might signal a new breed of political candidate to be selected for future elections, indicating the determination of social composition by strategy, or at least a complex interaction between the two.

Social Structure and Class Composition

The top section of Table I compares percentages across some occupations for those party delegates in the full-time labour force for both parties in 1983 and 1988. As explained in the appendix, the categories are modifications of the Department of Statistics census major groups and are used here for direct comparison with the 1983 data. Attention is drawn to particular groups such as teachers, union officials, and farmers which are aggregated into theoretically defined categories in later analysis, but are worthy of note here.

TABLE I: Occupations of Labour and National Party Delegates in the Full-time Labour Force, 1983 and 1988 Conferences

Percentages by column

	Labour		National		
	1983	1988	1983	1988	Census
Manager/Sales	12	9	25	26	15
Professional	26	18	24	15	12
Teachers	16	16	5	5	3
Clerical	8	11	7	11	18
Farmers	1	1	24	30	5
Manual/Service	19	14	4	4	47
Union Officials	14	20	0	0	-
MPs	4	11	11	9	-
Number	265	245	174	224	

Less change has taken place than might have been expected. The Labour figures must be interpreted with caution. Increases in the proportions of union officials

and MPs are largely due to the smaller size of the 1988 conference as compared to that in 1983, given that teachers and clerical workers seem to have held their representation at the expense of other professionals and managers. While the 'middle class' remains dominant, the higher categories of the middle class occupations have somewhat shrunk. According to conventional political wisdom in New Zealand, and consistent with rational assumptions, this declining middle class group in the party is said to be that most prone to support market liberalism.

While Labour's 1988 conference was smaller than that of 1983, National's 1988 conference was larger. The proportion of farmers had risen, that of professionals fallen. National's organisational and political recovery since 1983 had been more successful in the rural areas than in the larger urban areas where its parliamentary representation was low and where memories of the interventionist Muldoon Government still lingered. As in National's parliamentary caucus, farmers had increased their proportionate representation at the expense of urban professionals.

TABLE II: Employment Status and Sector of Economy of Labour and National Party Delegates in the Full-time Labour Force, 1983 and 1988

Percentages by column

	Labour		National		
	1983	1988	1983	1988	Census
Self-employed	16	9	49	49	16
Public Sector	55	53	21	26	22
Other employees	29	38	30	25	62
Number	225	227	170	223	

In terms of their social composition, and contrary to expectations, both parties appear to have moved in the direction of their traditional constituencies: Labour's union officials had a larger relative role in the Labour Party conference, National's farmers greater representation in the National Party conference. But a mixture of occupations and occupational categories gives no more than a blurred picture of class composition, particularly with categories derived from

census classifications which are notoriously atheoretical. Table II therefore breaks down the data for full-time labour force participants according to employment status and sector of the economy.

TABLE III: All Labour and National Party Delegates, 1983 and 1988 Conferences[1]

		Labour		National		
Percentage all delegates		1983	1988	1983	1988	All Adults Census
Class	Core working	-	11	-	3	25
	Petit bourgeois	-	11	-	49	15
Sector:	Public	-	52	-	23	-
Education:	Low	22	22	18	15	48
	University Degree	-	40	-	22	3
Income:	Below $14,000	-	4	-	4	21
	Above $57,000	-	32	-	34	10
Gender:	Women	33	45	29	39	51
Age:	18-34	28	15	22	12	41
	35-44	35	36	33	29	19
	45 up	36	48	46	60	41
Location:	Rural	-	7	-	35	16
	Big City	-	53	-	30	50
Father:	Farmer	-	10	-	41	-
	Blue Collar Worker	-	44	-	12	-
Subjective:	Upper Class	-	2	-	8	-
	Middle Class	-	51	-	70	
	Working Class	-	37	-	7	-
	No class or classes	-	10	-	15	-
Member:	Federated Farmers	1	2	23	24	1
	Employers	1	1	6	4	0.4
	Manufacturers	0	1	2	1	-
	Chambers Commerce	1	1	1	3	0.4
	Any Business	3	6	32	29	-
	Union	45	58	5	9	28
	Union Household	-	68	-	19	-
	Union or organization	62	65	27	23	-
Number		321	359	216	350	

Table III provides data for all respondents, classifying them by the occupation, employment status and economic sector of the male householder. Similar analysis was performed using individuals' occupations and status, and classifying respondents with missing values by their household partner but the results were very similar, slightly reducing the differences between the two conferences. This is consistent with other empirical findings in political sociology which indicate the preferability of the male householder approach (Rose and McAllister 1986: 46-47).

Expanding analysis beyond occupational class models into other aspects of social structure such as income, education, and sector of the economy is particularly important in indicating influences which may affect the political tendencies of middle class persons in contradictory class locations, and in particular, those prone to allying themselves either with a social democratic or a conservative party. Differences between National and Labour Party delegates in education were minimal in 1983. However, different classifications for 1988 indicate Labour delegates were twice as likely to have a university degree than National delegates. In 1983, household income differences were apparent but not great: Labour delegates were concentrated more in middle and upper middle ranges, National were at the highest levels (Vowles, 1985:6). In 1988, such differences were virtually nonexistent, evidence which points towards a limited support of the convergence theory otherwise refuted by the occupational data.

The distribution of the delegates across private and public sectors again supports findings of little or no change, despite government policies which had dramatic effects on public sector employees. As in 1983, focusing only on full-time labour force participants, Table II indicates that National delegates massively over represented the self-employed and Labour delegates, the public sector. In 1983, the self-employed were found among Labour delegates, the public sector. In 1983, the self-employed were found among Labour delegates in about the same proportion as in the labour force as a whole: their presence had perhaps diminished in 1988, while self-employment rose marginally overall. Both party conferences continue to under-represent private sector workers and other employees.

Table III provides occupational data more consistent with the class model outlined above. Labour under-represented the core manual productive working

class by under a half, while National spectacularly over-represented those from households headed by a person who was self-employed. Table III also provides some data on class consciousness through the medium of subjective social class. A modest but significant association is apparent particularly between working class identification and Labour Party membership. This tends to support theories which stress **agency** more than **structure** in the process of class formation (Przeworski, 1985: 47-98; Thompson, 1963: 9-10). As organisations for collective action will frequently require a strategic choice on the part of individuals, conference delegates' organisational memberships can further indicate the degree to which class interests are mobilised among the two sets of delegates. As well as a foundation for the collective action of classes in terms of **agency**, such organisational membership may create a potential for the promotion of class consciousness.

The lower rows of Table III provide the percentages of all delegates belonging to various organisations. As memberships of the business organisations frequently overlap, a combined figure is provided of all those belonging to one or more. As for union membership, many white collar unions have traditionally avoided the term 'union' in favour of 'association' and the like. Some members see them as unions, others do not. Thus, all wage and salary earners claiming membership of professional or other occupational associations have been included in an expanded alternative measure of union membership. Another construction of the union variables is also added for the 1988 conference: the percentage of respondents belonging to a household where one or both partners explicitly reported belonging to a union.

The figures indicate that membership of business organisations had risen marginally in the Labour Party conference and fallen marginally in the National conference. This would provide, at best, only weak evidence for convergence, but the same applies for union membership as well: it increases marginally among Labour delegates and falls among National delegates, even though the figure for union membership explicitly reported by National respondents rises.

There is an explanation for these apparently contradictory findings. Changes in the figure for union membership reported by respondents were almost certainly the result of increased union consciousness among white collar workers in New Zealand. This new consciousness was shaped by the Labour Relations Act of

1987 which standardised the legal position of all employee organisations. It was also fostered by the formation of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions which brings white collar and professional unions into a central organisation, including many of the traditional blue collar unions. While union membership appears to rise among National Party delegates, this reflects a perception of the legal and organisational changes of the years between. Reported union membership rises even more substantially among Labour delegates, but the figures for membership of all employee organisations are more reliable indicators of change. Thus, Labour unionists increase marginally, but National's fall.

The marginal changes described here still maintain the relatively sharp contrast between the organisational memberships of delegates first identified in 1983, indicating a polarisation with respect to key preconditions for class formation between the two sets of delegates. Despite low participation by the traditional manual working class, active Labour Party members are predominantly organised wage and salary earners. On the basis of the 1983 data, hypotheses involving the claimed 'embourgeoisement' of the active membership of the Labour Party were rejected as based too much on a productivist notion of labour (Vowles, 1985). Isolation of the productive or core working class is still required to gauge its declining political influence. But an acknowledgement of the possibility of an extension of working class and union consciousness into the middle class is necessary if the foundations of contemporary social democratic policies are to be adequately analysed.

By contrast with the Labour Party conference, members of business organisations outweigh union members at the National Party conference. The column on the extreme right of Table III places these in the context of a relatively small size of membership of business organisations in New Zealand compared to that of unions. It is abundantly clear that there are significant differences between the two sets of delegates which involve one of the key processes of class formation, membership of organisations for collective action. Further, some evidence of class consciousness is provided by the differing opinions on trade unions reported by delegates. Table IV indicates that only a little over a third of Labour Party delegates give an unabashedly pro-union response on the issue of union power. But just over three-quarters of National Party delegates ascribe the worst self-serving motives to trade union leaders. If this data is indicative of class

consciousness, the attribute is considerably stronger among National than among Labour Party delegates.[2]

TABLE IV: Labour and National Party Delegates' Opinions on the Power of Unions and its Use, 1988 Conferences

Percentages by column

Union Power	Degree			Use	
	Labour	National		Labour	National
Too Much	14	82	Leaders' Good	18	76
Not Too Much	30	11	Members' Good	70	24
Not Enough	36	-	Country's Good	12	-
Depends	20	7			
Number	351	347		347	342

Such attitudes, occupational differences and associational links are also associated with the spatial division of New Zealand politics. Table III indicates the residential distribution of the two sets of 1988 delegates across the urban to rural continuum. As Chapman put it in 1962, a 'basic social and sectional division in New Zealand separates city from country and this has revealed itself in our politics for as long as there have been parties' (Chapman, 1962: 235). As expected, the two sets of delegates differ in whether they live in urban or rural locations. More surprisingly, the profile of Labour delegates is significantly closer to that of the population as a whole, and only somewhat over-represents cities. National more heavily over-represents rural areas, and is under-represented in the cities which, incidentally, contain most of the electorates National required to win to regain government in 1990. There is also further evidence in Table III that delegates' fathers' occupations may be of a stronger influence than delegates' own structural location. This gives weight to a **socialisation** theory which would explain delegates' choice of party as more rooted in parental class than in their

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[2]   The questions were: 'Do you think unions in this country have too much power or not too much power? And how about big business? Do they have too much power or not enough power?' and 'And in your opinion, how do the leaders of trade unions use their powers? And how about leaders of big business?'.

own present class position. Age and gender are also of relevance in a multidimensional class analysis: age because a persons' class analysis must include attention to the disadvantages women experience in both formal and domestic economies, and their different interests from men. Table III indicates that by 1988, women had slightly improved their share of participation in both parties compared to 1983, but women were somewhat further ahead in the Labour Party. Younger age groups are normally under-represented in political party activity, but both parties aged between 1983 and 1988, National being the oldest in 1983, and remaining so in 1988.

TABLE V: **Explanation of Labour against National delegates: Logistic Regression (Mean Substitution of Missing Values)[a]**

		1	2
I:	**Socialisation**		(.83)
Father farmer		-.23	-.22
Father worker		.23	.23
University education		.20	.20
Low education		.08	.07*
Age		.00	.00*
Gender		.11	.11*
II:	**Structure**		(.39)
Household income		-.06	-.01*
Self-employed household		-.12	.11*
Core working class household		.22	.12*
Public sector household		.14	.15
III:	**Agency**		(1.09)
Union household		.42	.49
Business organisation member		-.28	-.24
Subjective working class		.37	.36
IV:	**Location**		(.21)
Urban		.17	.19
Rural		-.02	-.02*

r^2=.29 c=.89 D=.78
*not significant >.05

(a)   **Dependent variable: Labour delegate=1, National delegate=0**

   1.   First difference between 0 and 1 (b equivalent: see King 1989, p.107)
   2.   Standardized parameter estimate (beta equivalent)

Table V lists the variables which can be classified according to socialisation, structure, agency and location, and subjects them to multivariate analysis. The variables can be logically combined into a multidimensional theory of class by a series of simple assumptions. As part of a cumulative learning experience, individuals are influenced by their gender, education and by their class origins as determined by the parent most likely to be the principle income earner. Age can further measure the degree to which particular age cohorts may be influenced by events and experiences. One would also expect younger respondents, less removed from their childhoods, to be more influenced by their formative years. Income, self-employment, working class position and sector reflect the present structural location of respondents which help to condition their present commitments. Organisational memberships and subjective class reflect the probability that respondents may engage in class action and define themselves in class terms.

The analysis is based on a further assumption that individuals' choice to become political activists can be conceived as logically prior to their membership of a particular party. In commonsense terms, it would allow us to take individual delegates, whose party membership was for the time being undisclosed, and seek to identify them as either National or Labour through knowledge of their class positions. The model assesses how, and to what extent, the groups of variables explain why delegates belong to Labour or National on the basis of their class origins, present location in terms of class and sector, organisational affiliations and location. The statistical technique employed is logistic regression, which is appropriate where the dependent variable, Labour delegate or National delegate, is dichotomous.

Column 1 of the table reports the initial differences for the various independent variables. These are calculated from the unstandardised parameter estimates (King, 1989:107) and are comparable to b statistics in the more widely known ordinary least squares regression. All the variables are 1 or 0, with the exception of age and household income, which are continuous scales. Originally from 16

to 83, and \$3,000 to \$800,000 respectively, they have been transformed to range between 0 (lowest score) and 1 (highest score). More detail on the constitution of the variables may be found in the Appendix, including the residual categories where relevant. The dependent variable is Labour=1, National delegate=0. These scores could equally well be reversed: in that case, the signs of the coefficients reported would simply change from positive to negative and vice versa. Column 2 provides standardised parameter estimates for each independent variable, equivalent to the beta figures in ordinary least squares regression. The indication of statistical nonsignificance against column two obviously applies as well to the figures in column 1.

The first difference figures, in column 1, can be interpreted probabilistically in terms of a percentage. Thus, after holding the values of the other variables constant at their means, and therefore controlling for the effects of the other independent variables, a delegate whose father was a farmer is 23 percent less likely to be a Labour delegate than a delegate in the residual category. Similarly, respondants in union households were 42 percent more likely to be Labour delegates than National delegates, as compared to delegates in non-union households and not members of business organisations, after controlling for all other independent variables. Working class identifiers were also 37 percent more likely to be Labour delegates than respondents identifying with other classes or not identifying themselves in class terms, again controlling for the effects of all the other variables.

The figures in column two indicate the relative importance of the variables within the model and they are summed in brackets at the beginning of each section (disregarding their signs). The location variables together only account for about 10 percent of the explanatory power of the model, with current social structure location providing only about 15 percent. The socialisation variables contribute about a third, and the agency variables just over 40 percent. Overall, the model can correctly predict 89 percent of the party locations of the respondents, giving a fairly good association between the predicted probabilities (generated by the model) and observed responses (whether or not respondents actually were Labour or National delegates). However, not all the choice of delegates to belong to Labour or to National can be explained by the model, with the r^2 figure indicating that the model explains 29 percent of the variance between Labour or National choice. However, the r^2 can understate the explanatory power of a model such

as this (Achen, 1982: 59), and the Somers' D of .78 which is relatively high, is a better indicator, (Harrell, 1983: 273).

More specifically, delegate's current position in the class structure has small to minimal influence on whether they are Labour or National. A person in the core working class is 22 percent more likely to be a Labour delegate than a person in the residual middle class, all other variables considered. But because that group is a small one, this finding is not statistically significant; neither are household income or membership of a petit bourgeois household. While in a sense, these conference delegates are not a sample, they could be said to be represent all possible delegates that might have attended, thus making a significance test appropriate. University education makes a respondent more, not less, likely to be a Labour delegate; gender is statistically non-significant, although it only just falls outside the less than .05 cutoff point, with women being slightly more likely to be Labour delegates. Age has absolutely no effects indicating that the age differences between the two conferences can be explained by, or are associated, with other differences. This is clear evidence for the need to move beyond structural class theories which focus simply upon current occupation, and which exclude a consideration of the class location of the parental household or agency variables such as union and other associational memberships.

Party Strategies

This comparison of delegates from the 1983 and 1988 Labour and National Party conferences emphasise the resistance of such social formations to major short-term change. Somewhat unexpectedly, despite the policies of the Fourth Labour Government, and some increased middle class electoral support for Labour, the Labour Party in 1988 was no less a working class party than it was in 1983. And in a modern, if qualified sense, the Labour Party was still made up predominantly of organised employees and their dependants. Similarly, the National Party Conference of 1988 was very much like that of 1983. Neither did the composition of the National Party show much sign of being broad-based and therefore substantially influenced by the appeals and symbolism associated with National's populist tendencies which intensified after 1974. Without earlier data, we are unable to make the most appropriate historical comparisons although, it should be noted, the data on National activists predates the formation of the New Zealand Party which drew from National Party membership to some degree.

Unionists rather than groups prone to market liberalism had marginally increased their presence in the Labour Party, farmers rather than urban entrepreneurs in the National Party. There is a paradox in the variation of the two conferences from the electorate as a whole. Labour, a party originating in the interests of a particular class, has a profile of activists which differs less from that of the electorate than National's Yet, the National Party was set up as a coalition under a title implying a broad representation of all New Zealanders. Labour over-represents elites, higher paid workers, and those with higher education, at the expense of the larger mass of workers in less attractive jobs on lower incomes. National fails to be the broad-based popular party that it was during its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, and there is little to suggest that the party became more broad-based after 1975 when it began to appeal to a constituency more traditionally Labour in orientation. The strategic dilemmas now facing each party are to a large extent associated with these difficulties.

Multivariate assessment of the power of class composition to 'predict' whether respondents were Labour or National delegates provides only a partial explanation. Yet the findings do indicate that a form of the traditional class allegiances still anchor each party. In particular, whether delegates had fathers who were farmers or workers is a better predictor of their party allegiance than their own present occupation. Associational memberships and subjective class identification are by far the most powerful explanatory variables and occupation, the main focus of most class analysis, by far the weakest except for spatial location. This indicates the need for a more complex multidimensional class analysis which includes occupation, but goes beyond it.

Because the two parliamentary caucuses elect the party leaders in New Zealand, party members have little direct or short-term influence over party strategy. The initial hypothesis advanced above was that the social composition of political party activism **conditions** and **constrains** party strategy. To **condition** a party strategy, the composition of a party will influence it to move in certain directions; to **constrain** a strategy, the social composition of a party will exclude certain options. If social composition **determined** party strategy, and as it is still a party mainly of organised employees, one would not have expected Labour's dramatic shift to the right since 1984. Neither did the party's social composition immediately **constrain** such developments. Given the dominance of Labour's politicians over party members, it was Labour's parliamentary members who were

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almost entirely responsible for the policies of 'Rogernomics'. The failure of the union affiliates to fully participate in the party over previous years meant that they had little or no voice in the parliamentary caucus by 1984. This strategic failure was acknowledged and was beginning to be addressed by 1986, with a small number of union-backed successful candidates joining the caucus after the 1987 election.

Early in 1988, the Prime Minister, David Lange, called a halt to the Douglas steamroller although it was not until December that he was able to remove Douglas from the Finance portfolio. Lange remained isolated from the party left (concentrated in the party organisation) because of personal and political differences with Jim Anderton and his allies. Anderton resigned from the party in May 1989. Unable to muster sufficient backing in the parliamentary party, and despite the support of the centre-left organisational leadership, Lange resigned as Prime Minister in August. In the months leading up to the 1990 election, the government seemed poised in limbo between intensified 'more market' policies and a hesitant return to a social democratic strategy. Added incentives to move to the left were also provided by the formation of a centre-left rival, the NewLabour Party led by Anderton, thus introducing competition on the left as well as at the centre of the democratic marketplace. Mike Moores takeover of the party leadership just before the election, and the short-lived Growth Agreement with the CTU, signalled a possible leftward movement if Labour had remained in government. But until the 1990 election, Labour's parliamentary team was still dominated by those selected as candidates during the 1970s and 1980s when Labour's strategists appeared almost indifferent to its traditional class foundations.

The 1990 election reduced Labour's caucus from 57 to 29, of whom 7 were new members. Most of those strongly identified with Rogernomics had retired or were defeated but some remain, and with parliamentary experience to offer, others will return. The composition of the Labour caucus between 1984 and 1990 will still be reflected in its composition into the 1990s (particularly insofar as the surviving incumbents of 1990 are the more senior in the caucus). This will encourage continued attachment to many of the central policies of Rogernomics. With a period of opposition, and continued union strength and participation within the party, the class composition indicated by the data could encourage the Labour Party to move back toward the social democratic left.

The position of the National Party is also ambivalent. Its failure in 1988 as an organisation to capture a broader social base is consistent with the difficulties which led to the defeat of the incumbent party president at the 1989 Conference. While the scale of National's parliamentary victory in 1990 was massive, its electoral support was far less substantial and the nature of its mandate deeply ambiguous. There is circumstantial evidence that, since 1988, National had recovered organisationally in the major urban areas, and particularly in Auckland, the base of John Collinge, the new party president elected in 1989. National's major electoral successes in Auckland in 1990 have restored a healthy organisational base for the urban centre-right, even if this recovery was not already underway before the election. But there is evidence that National's post-1991 Budget slump in political support was associated with substantial resignations from the party, possibly more in urban than rural areas.

Meanwhile, the National strategy to extend the programme of Rogernomics into social policy and the labour market has been endorsed by Douglas himself. In broad outline, these were the policies to which Douglas was unable to commit the Labour Party, at least in part because of its social composition and historic traditions. The nature of the Labour Party could not prevent the onset of Rogernomics but augmented by conjunctural factors, it eventually constrained its further extension. By contrast, National's extensions of the Douglas strategy after 1990 are highly consistent with the social composition of the National Party as a coalition of National's farmers and urban liberals. Reducing the power of unions and rolling back the welfare state receive strong support within the National Party, support which is greatly conditioned by its class foundations. Nevertheless, National's populist wing remained resistant to the new government's economic and social policies, arguing that those policies were the very ones rejected by voters by the defeat of Labour. After the 1990 election, National's huge majority in the House gave it a command of politics which was deceptive. One should not underestimate the strength of the foundations of the National Party in rural and provincial New Zealand, and the extent of its probable recent urban recovery. But it remains to be seen whether those roots will provide enough nourishment to restore the party in the 1990s to the position of dominance it enjoyed between 1949 and 1984.

Appendix
Tables and Variable Definitions

TABLE I

With the exception of union officials and MPs, the categories are aggregations and disaggregations of census major groups, as defined by the New Zealand Census and Department of Statistics. The major group clerical is unaltered. The major groups managerial/administrative and sales are aggregated. Teachers are desegregated from the professional major group, and farmers from agriculture. The manual/service category includes major group production, major group service, and the remainder of major group agriculture. Census data is derived from the 1986 census.

TABLE II

Data on sector of the economy is, for self-employment, the 1986 census and for the public sector, a Department of Statistics estimate for March 1987. Further shrinkage of the public sector will have reduced this marginally by 1988 (Department of Statistics, 1988: 75). The estimate for other employees is calculated from the other two figures and the total labour force.

TABLE III

All general adult population figures are from the 1986 Census except where otherwise indicated.

Class: respondents are classified according to the occupation of the male occupant of the household, or in the absence of a male occupation, the occupation of the respondent herself.

'Core working class': based on manual wage-earners in production. The estimate for their proportion of the general population is derived from the New Zealand 1987 Election Survey (NZES).

'Self-employed household': includes both the self-employed and small employers. Population estimate again derived from the 1987 NZES.

Education: Low education includes those respondents who left secondary school without a school qualification.

Household Income: Population figures are derived from the 1986-87 Household Expenditure and Income Survey (Department of Statistics, 1988).

Location: 'Rural' includes those who live in communities under 1,000 in population; 'Big City', those who live in urban areas 100,000 and over.

Father's Occupation: Data here only covers specific occupations, and therefore does not take account of self-employment versus wage labour. In practice, farmers are nearly all self-employed but there is likely to have been a small minority of manual workers in production who may have been self-employed.

Federated Farmers, Employers, Chambers of Commerce: Adult population figures derived from data on organizational memberships in the late 1980s (Vowles, 1989: 278).

Union: those respondents who specifically identified as members of a union. Union membership figures used to calculate the proportion of the adult population are from 1987 (Vowles, 1989: 278).

Union Household: Respondents in a household where at least one of two partners was reported as with a union membership.

Union or organisation: Respondents reported as union members or members of other organisations which represented their interests as wage or salary earners. This definition is useful particularly in terms of identifying white-collar union members.

TABLE V

All variables included were entered as 1 or 0, with the exception of household income and age which were entered as scales. Respondents in all the other categories listed scored 1, and respondents not in those categories 0.

Residuals

Parental Occupation: those respondents whose fathers were neither farmers not manual productive workers.

Education: those with a school qualification but not a university degree.

Class: the middle class, that is, respondents in households classified by a wage or salary earner not in a manual productive occupation, such as service workers, clerical workers, professionals, and salaried managers.

Urban and rural: those respondents living in towns or cities above 1,000 and below 100,000 population.

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Issues in Research

The Politics of Policy Orientated Research: A Case Study

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Abstract

This paper reflects on some political and professional issues relevant for university-based sociologists who have become involved in state-funded policy-orientated research. It focuses on a particular example of such research, offering a critical narrative of the author's involvement in that project. The intention is to stimulate more debate among sociologists in Aotearoa/New Zealand about the politics of research.

Introduction

For better or for worse, many sociologists think that they should have some input into the policy-making process. This may involve state-funded research which provides information and arguments for the politicians and bureaucrats who formulate state policy. Such policy-orientated research provides sociologists with access to money, information and understandings about the policy-making process which, in turn are vital to a sociology which is engaged with its environment and challenged by the pragmatics of what Anna Yeatman has referred to as 'policy action' as opposed to distanced academic reflection (Yeatman, 1992:42).

Involvement in such research provides an opportunity to affect policy outcomes, but it may also entail constraints, or potential constraints, which are problematic for sociologists who assume that good research demands that researchers control the material they produce and provide analyses which are independent of political and bureaucratic agendas. We may often consider these issues in abstract, but it is useful to look at how they are played out with respect to a particular project. This paper focuses on my involvement in a piece of policy-orientated research - published in August 1990 as *Beyond the Barriers: The State, the Economy and Women's Employment 1984-1990*. It was produced by the Research Advisory Group (RAG) of the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women

(NACEW)[1] During the last year of work on this project, I chaired the NACEW Research Advisory Group.

This is my attempt to combine experience of 'policy action' with the critical reflection which is perhaps only possible when you are employed as an academic rather than as a public servant or contract researcher for a government department. This project may have relevance for other sociologists participating in state-funded policy-orientated research in a variety of different capacities. I hope that, together with Mike Lloyd's recent contribution to **Issues in Research** (Lloyd, 1992), it will stimulate local debate about the politics of research.

What I offer is my narrative of the political relations and social processes involved in this project.[2] The views I express are not representative of NACEW or the Research Advisory Group who were collectively responsible for the project. The narrative is organised around my responses to a series of critical questions which might be asked about this project.

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[1] NACEW is a quasi-governmental organization which was established 24 years ago to provide government with advice on women's employment. It's job is:

  *   to advise the Minister of Employment on the employment of women;
  *   to express views and make recommendations to the Minister of Employment relating to the employment of women;
  *   to make submissions to public bodies (such as select committees and commissions of inquiry) **subject to the approval of the Minister;**
  *   to promote the dissemination of information on the employment of women in New Zealand and overseas.

The council consists of seven women (including the chairwoman) appointed by the Minister of Employment, as well as representatives of the New Zealand Employers' Federation, the State Services Commission, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, the Department of Labour and the Ministry of Education. Representatives of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and the Office of Youth Affairs attend meetings.

[2] This article is based on a paper given at a workshop at the annual conference of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa/New Zealand held at Lincoln University in December 1990.

What were the aims of this project and how and why did it get funded?

The aim of the project was to engage in a detailed piece of research which would provide evidence and sustained argument to support the advice that NACEW might give to the Minister of Employment. Margaret Wilson, the chairwoman of NACEW, was concerned about the Council being just another lobby group, expressing to ministers the views of the majority of those on the council in a stream of letters. She thought there was a need for a piece of research that could inform the advice tendered by the Council. In 1988, she obtained a commitment from Phil Goff, then Minister of Employment, that NACEW would receive $100,000 over a three year period for a policy-orientated project on women's employment.

That NACEW should have the resources to research the situation of women in paid work between 1984 and 1990 and provide policy recommendations based on this research was not in any way inconsistent with the responsibilities of NACEW. Part of its brief was to 'promote the dissemination of information on the employment of women'. If it was to disseminate any information, it had to have the resources to collect and analyse that information. But it had never obtained $100,000 before to do such research. It was not defined as a research-orientated institution.

The political analysis informing this stage of the project was the liberal feminist view that evidence and rational argument have the potential to convince reasonable politicians that certain policies are inappropriate and others are necessary to advance women's interests. This analysis draws on assumptions about the capacity of social science to produce information which will lead to conclusions which will have a persuasive effect on politicians. It also prompts questions about whether women all have the same interests with respect to employment, or whether they have a diversity of interests. The research itself highlighted the need to recognise this diversity and differences between women associated with being Maori, Pakeha, Pacific Island Polynesian, younger, older, or those with disabilities.

Who was responsible for this research?

A Research Advisory Group (RAG) was constituted at the end of 1988. It consisted of Margaret Wilson, who was then a member of the Law Commission, three officials in the Department of Labour, the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (who was only involved during the first 5 months of the project), a Ministerial appointee on the Council, a member of the DSIR Social Science Unit and myself. The ministerial appointee was at that time on secondment to a government department. Therefore, I was the only person on RAG at the start who did not have any explicit links with the public service. It was not a 'representative' group - there were no trade unionists, employers, Maori or pacific Island women on RAG.

I had been asked whether I would be prepared to serve on the council and had indicated that I would if my nomination was accepted. At the beginning of 1989, I joined the council as a Ministerial appointee. In this way, I too became drawn into the 'femocrat' network involved in the research and obligated to the Research Advisory Group, not just as a sociologist, but as a member of NACEW interested in the project fulfilling the political goals of this quasi-governmental organisation. My role with respect to the project was ambiguous at the start. Its parameters became more explicit as the project developed.

When I agreed to join the group in an advisory role, I did not know that in less than two years, as a result of Margaret Wilson moving into the Office of the Prime Minister and taking leave from her position in NACEW, I would be editing and proof reading the text of the report over weekends and having a considerable responsibility for its final form. If I had known that it would absorb as much time and energy as it did, rather than engage me as an interesting project on which I might give some advice, I would certainly have asked many more critical questions about the autonomy of the research, who 'owned' it, who could determine its content, and who would decide whether it was published. These were to become crucial questions as the research progressed.

Who was contracted to work on the research?
What became the focus of the project?

RAG revised and expanded the research proposal. A free-lance economist and a social researcher (with a background in sociology and resource management) were contracted to work on the project. The plan was for them to analyse available statistical material relating to women and employment and construct some new tables. They were asked to consult a range of sources useful in reaching some conclusions about the impact on women of macro and micro-economic policy, state-sector reform, changes in industrial-relations legislation and trade union reorganisation, education and childcare policy, and employment equity legislation. The focus was on secondary analysis rather than original research.

What emerged as key issues for the research were the contradictions between some state policies directed at improving women's position in the paid workforce and other policies which undermined that position, generating a decline in the rates of women's labour force participation, high unemployment and the increasing casualisation of women's work. The intention was to provide an overview of the connections between a range of policies and women's employment - to break down the notion that you could embark on special 'women's employment initiatives' without considering the impact on women of a host of policies which seemed gender-neutral, but which could have gender-specific effects.

The money allocated to the project was used to pay the researchers for their work in 1989, to meet the costs of the airfares to monthly meetings in Wellington of those members of RAG who did not live in Wellington. It was also used to meet the costs of sending packs of documents rapidly all over the country so that RAG and NACEW could comment on drafts. These resources were also used to purchase some other work done on the project and to pay for the work of a technical editor.

The researchers employed on contract joined RAG and were active members of the group during 1989. In 1990, when editorial work was being done and decisions being made about the final format of the report, they were much less involved. This was partly because their contracts had expired, and there was no

more money to pay them for their time, and partly because what was being produced was a NACEW document, and NACEW and the Department of Labour, as funders of the research, had control of the final product. The researchers' status as contract researchers meant that they did not have total control over the final version of the report.

Most of those who had more control at this stage of the project gained that control at the expense of the hours of unpaid labour they put into the project. While the money assigned to the research was large for a social research project, the finished document depended on many people who provided unpaid work hours to the project because they were committed to its completion by August 1990. RAG members edited the work of the two researchers, who had different styles of writing and different disciplinary approaches, into a single document. They also pursued further information, wrote the introductory chapters and the conclusion, augmented footnotes, provided the summary and wrote the section on the research process.

What was the relationship between RAG and NACEW?

For most of 1989, NACEW members not on RAG had minimal input into the project. They were informed at quarterly meetings of work being done on the project and invited to supply information or meet with the group. It was not until the document was in its draft stages early in 1990 that most members had any major input into it. This entailed an interesting power relationship between RAG and NACEW. RAG needed NACEW's approval in principle for the document if it was to have any hope of publishing it as a NACEW document. However, the power of NACEW members was limited by the task they were set by RAG - basically to add, delete or modify the content of the report, rather than challenge its structure and purpose.

Work and community demands on the one Maori member of the council eventually led to her resignation. This meant that there was not an active Maori representative on the council who could give her opinion on the report at a crucial stage in its development. Te Ohu Whakatupu, the Maori policy unit in the Ministry of Women's Affairs, did provide critical comment. On their suggestion, the report included a section reflecting on the relevance of the Treaty of Waitangi for the consideration of women and employment. This work was

also done by a contract researcher. More extensive involvement by Maori women at all stages of the project would probably have led to quite a different document.

The one Pacific Island woman on the council met with RAG on a number of occasions and was responsible for ensuring that the report did address the specific situation of Pacific Island women. Work on the project revealed a paucity of information on Pacific Island women's involvement in paid work and prompted a set of recommendations for future research that focuses on these issues. This led some members of NACEW, and others not on the Council, to develop a research proposal directed at filling some of the gaps in information about Pacific Island women's employment. This proposal is currently being considered for funding.

There was also an attempt to draw together some of the available information on the situation of women with disabilities in paid work. Gaps in this information, and a sense of the need for NACEW to contribute to the documentation of what women with disabilities see as their needs in the paid workforce, led to a series of seminars attended by women with a range of disabilities which were facilitated by NACEW in 1991. A report on what women with disabilities had to say in these seminars is currently being prepared.

Two draft versions of the **Beyond the Barriers** report were circulated to members of NACEW in 1990 and revisions and additions were made in the light of their comments. There were critical responses from trade unionists on issues like enterprise bargaining and union amalgamation and also input from the Employers' Federation representative. At this stage, the document had been shaped by the work of some 20 women.

The recommendations arising out of the report and included in the published document were drawn up by NACEW, rather than RAG, after those on the council had read drafts of the report. RAG members who were on NACEW had input into this process. The process of generating neat, one sentence recommendations on the basis of the research report tended to take us back to the politics of NACEW as a lobby group. We were once again in the process of formulating a 'wish list,' hopeful that those with power would pay attention to

the detailed presentation of information and argument in the bulk of the report which supported the recommendations.

What was the relationship between RAG, NACEW and the Minister of Employment?

Early in 1990, it became clear that the Minister of Employment had the formal right to censor or veto the report. She was to be supplied with draft copies of the report and the Research Advisory Group were informed that publication of the report rested on her having a positive response to it. She might decide not to exercise that power, but nevertheless it existed, and had to be taken into account if we wanted to act effectively. Naively perhaps, I had believed that NACEW was supposed to provide 'independent' and contestable policy advice. How as it to do so if it's advice could not be made public or had to be formulated to fit the expectations of the Minister? What about the responsibility of NACEW to promote the dissemination of information it had acquired about women and employment in New Zealand and elsewhere? How could this be a responsibility of NACEW if it could only distribute information approved by the Minister? Meetings with public servants and the Minister convinced me that, despite my sense that her control over the final text seemed to violate the reasons for producing it, the power was nevertheless there.

My own position, if the Minister did decide not to publish the report, was unclear. I had not signed a contract giving the Department of Labour rights over the material I had written. I had not been paid for my work. Did I therefore have the right to publish independently what I had written? But how could I act as an individual sociologist and researcher when I was also a Ministerial Appointee on the Council, and I had obligations to the members of the Council with respect to this research? Given that the final draft of the report had been edited by so many different people, who could say exactly which pieces of the report could be attributed to what contributors?

Significantly, the Minister did not censor the report nor suggest that it should not be published, despite the fact that it looked critically at what had happened to women in paid work over the last 6 years under the Fourth Labour Government. Therefore, were my concerns about her power misplaced? I suspect that they were not, for knowledge that she did have this power provided the context in

which the final version of the report was developed. The possibility of censorship or veto was a source of power for the Minister of Employment without her having to directly exercise this power.

What is the present status of the report? What is its relevance in 1992?

In its rather dry, bland and bureaucratic way, the report makes available vital information about the implications for different sets of women of a range of policy initiatives pursued between 1984 and 1990. It explores the way women's experience varies in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the way statistics about the Tauiwi majority distort the experience of Maori women. It summarises some of the key changes which occurred over those 6 years with respect to industrial-relations, state-sector restructuring and monetary policy. In this respect, it has some historical value as a record of a particular time period which focuses on the implications for women of those changes.

However, **Beyond the Barriers** is not just a factual record. It argues for a holistic rather than a piecemeal approach to increasing women's full participation in paid work and the network of policy initiatives which have an impact on that participation. There is still a need to look at the way in which social welfare policy, industrial relations and monetary policy interact to produce certain outcomes for women's access to paid work and their wages and conditions of employment. It is also still important for feminists and others to consider the type of contradictions in state policy which **Beyond the Barriers** addressed. These contradictions are not specific to the Fourth Labour Government. I have attempted in my own writing to pursue both the theme of contradictions in state policy and the need to make connections between labour market and social welfare policy (Du Plessis, 1991; 1992). The process of participating in this project was a definite stimulus to this work.

Despite the fact that the major features of the policy advice tendered in the report have not been taken up by government, and the statistical material in it is now largely out of date, the report continues to have some value as an attempt to contextualise a specific policy field - women's employment - relative to other facets of social and economic policy. In that respect, it may be of more value as a model of policy analysis than as a source of pressure on politicians to enact or modify certain policies.

Beyond the Barriers argues for state intervention in the labour market, for the option of compulsory unionism, for individual entitlement to income maintenance rather than joint income testing. It states the case for economic policy which gives more priority to stimulating employment and less priority to lowering inflation. It does not assume that the operation of a 'free' market in labour without state regulation will be in the interests of most women. In these respects, it is out of step with the major thrust of the Employment Contracts Act, the April Benefit Cuts and the July 1991 Budget.

The conditions which made the particular policy recommendations developed in **Beyond the Barriers** even thinkable may well now be long past. In the current climate, support for the option of compulsory unionism seems unrealistic, and the need to ensure that employers have to negotiate with bargaining agents chosen by significant sections of the workforce seems more urgent. Similarly, the discussion in **Beyond the Barriers** of minimum conditions of work has become more relevant in the context of the Employment Contracts Act. But, whatever the context, consideration of women's employment has to take account of a range of policies embracing industrial relations, macro-economic policy, income maintenance and the provision of services like housing, health, childcare and education. Effective policy analysis will have to address the intersection between gender, ethnicity, disability and age and a range of policy directions which affect women's access to earnings and their conditions of employment. Doing that research involves political processes which extend from the relationships between analysts and politicians to the micro-politics of relations between those on the research team. We need more discussion of these processes so that those who choose to do this work can engage in it more knowledgeably and reflexively.

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Review Essay

Alison Jones, "At School I've Got A Chance".
Culture/Privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha girls at school,
Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1991.

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Introduction

I have waited a long time for this book. I read the PhD thesis on which it is based about six years ago and have picked up subsequent journal articles and now the book is out. We do not often see a full length empirical research study on education published in this country. It is a work that deserves the most serious consideration by the whole educational community. Any study of the causes of social differences in educational achievement by a sociologist of education would attract my attention and this one is particularly interesting. The focus is on classroom processes and Alison Jones is careful to point out that she does not attempt to offer a complete account of socially differentiated educational achievement, but it is entirely fair to conclude that she regards these processes as a central mechanism in the generation of educational inequality. This thesis is now conventional wisdom in the contemporary sociology of education and has some obvious attractions for radical and liberal thinkers. I used to hold a similar view, but I have come to think that the argument is fundamentally unsound and I intend to show why Alison's book has not altered my opinion.

Why Do Some Pupils Fail?

> Lisa: I won't pass.
> A.J. Why not?
> Lisa: Not brainy enough ... I can't do the work, it's too hard (p.148).

It seems that Lisa, one of the 19 Pacific Island fifth form girls who are the principal subjects of Jones' study, was right and after leaving school, she found a job behind the counter in MacDonalds. Why did she fail her School Certificate?

Not, according to her feminist ethnographer, because of any lack of ability (although we must take that on trust since no test scores or other empirical evidence are reported) but because of classroom processes which operate to ensure the 'inevitability of unequal patterns of educational outcomes in an inequitable society' (p. 7). In her engaging and up-to-date 'post-modernist' style, the author observes:

> I did once share the girls' commonsense view of schooling ... wasn't it my own ability and my mother's encouragement which led to my school success? ... but after intensively watching classrooms, and reading and reflecting on the issue, my perspective has quite changed. In the classroom I had 'found' evidence which gave support to the idea that schools provide credentials mainly on the basis of familiarity with the dominant culture, not 'ability' (p. 145 verbatim).

This dismissive assessment of her own ability will bring a wry smile to the lips of most people who have met Alison Jones... (Although, there is more to it than this, as I will suggest.) Not only did she find evidence in the classroom, but as a sociologist rather than a shopkeeper - whose minds, notwithstanding her unremarkable abilities, Jones is apparently able to read at a glance - she has studied the literature and concluded that ability is not an important cause of social differences in educational performance:

> The most comprehensive empirical study in New Zealand is one by Hugh Lauder and his research team in Christchurch who studied 2,500 school leavers in 1982. The students' social class, not their ability, nor their race or gender, was the most significant thing in determining whether or not the student did well at school and went on to tertiary study. There is a mass of other evidence that the 'opportunity for all' ideal is a myth in New Zealand schooling (p. 50).

The final sentence is a non-sequitur. Even if this were a fair account of Lauder and Hughes' findings (which it is not), the conclusion that social class rather than ability determines educational achievement would not suffice to demonstrate that 'opportunity for all' was not actually provided. The argument amounts to a declaration by fiat that if differences in educational achievement can be observed between identifiable groups in a society, then 'equal opportunity' does not exist. This particular circular argument is so common, however, that one might as well save one's breath. It is on the fundamental belief that ability is not significant to class differences in attainment that Jones constructs her thesis of inequalities in education - inevitably structured by an inegalitarian society and actually realised through the classroom interactions of teachers and pupils. I intend to demonstrate

that this fundamental belief will not bear serious examination and consequently, the general thesis lacks conviction. To that end, I will reconstruct her argument and proceed to tackle it point by point:

(i)   Assume no genetic differences between ethnic groups and social classes in New Zealand.

(ii)   Assume that the group of 19 Pacific Island working class girls from a 'low-to-middle-stream class' are a representative sample of that population in terms of their present ability to acquire the knowledge of the school.

(iii) Assume that social structures of class and ethnicity (or 'race') inevitably reproduce, in statistical actuality, the social and occupational position of the Pacific Island population in New Zealand.

(iv)   Maintain, therefore, that 'deficit' theories, which suggest that relatively poor rates of educational success among this group are due to socialisation in a class and ethnic culture which does not promote, to the same degree of intensity as certain other cultures, the development of the highly specialised cognitive skills demanded by school work, are false and serve ideological functions.

(v)   Conclude, therefore, that poor rates of educational success by Pacific Island pupils must be due to school practices determined fundamentally by economic and political structures.

(vi)   Conclude also that since these poor rates of educational success are actually an inevitable consequence of the social structure, there is little schools can do about the final outcome.

All but the first of these steps in the argument, which I will accept as reasonable, merit extended comment. In particular, the entire argument rests on certain assumptions about 'ability' which must be discussed at length.

The Problem of Ability

Since it is from Lauder and Hughes (1990) that Jones derives her view that ability is not an important cause of socially differentiated educational achievement in New Zealand, their research and her interpretation of it merit close attention. For there is error here compounded upon error - some contributed by Lauder and Hughes themselves and some by Jones. In the report of the former 'only about half of the difference in school success between the different SES groups can be attributed to differences in measured ability' (p. 53). This estimate is based on regression analysis and their argument may briefly be summarised. The actual levels of examination achievement of SES 1 (professional) and SES 6 (unskilled) pupils are 13.27 and 4.95 respectively and these levels may be compared with 11.31 and 7.11 predicted by a regression equation using ability test scores. As the difference between the actual scores (13.27 - 4.95 = 8.32) is twice that between the predicted scores (11.31 - 7.11 = 4.2), the authors conclude that about half of the difference between classes (4.2/8.32 = .5) seems to be due to ability. It is necessary to say at once that this argument, notwithstanding its superficial plausibility, cannot be accepted. Lauder and Hughes have provided Massey with a copy of their raw data, and re-analysis produces the following attainment means (and difference) for SES 1 and SES 6 respectively: actual, 13.18 and 4.98 (8.2); predicted by regression on ability, 11.26 and 7.21 (4.05); predicted by regression on SES, 10.92 and 5.67 (5.25); and predicted by regression on both ability and SES, 12.46 and 5.54 (6.92). It follows by Lauder and Hughes' argument, therefore, that we must suppose all of the following conclusions to be correct: (a) 49 per cent of the 'difference' is due to ability (and hence 51 per cent to SES), (b) 64 per cent is due to SES (and so 36 per cent to ability), and (c) 84 percent is due to both ability and SES (and 16 per cent to unknown causes). Lauder and Hughes' preference for conclusion (a) is in accordance with their hypothesis - but there is nothing more to be said for it.

Acute readers will have noted that the actual and predicted figures reported by the authors and those obtained on re-analysis are extremely close, and this gives reason to be confident in the additional analyses reported here. Since they lead to plainly incompatible conclusions, little more need be said on this matter. However, a path analysis examining the relationships between SES, ability, attainment, and destination shows the standardised regression co-efficient from SES to attainment to be .217 and that from ability to attainment to be .603, and

there is thus every reason to believe that the latter has a more powerful effect on attainment than the former. This is even more strikingly demonstrated when the effect on destination is examined. The direct effect of SES on destination is only .095 compared with .136 from ability. It is, as one might expect, the path from attainment that carries most of the weight, .514.

Jones, obviously unaware of these difficulties with Lauder and Hughes' research, even prefers to ignore the large proportion of the attainment difference between SES groups they do attribute to ability and reaches the conclusion that social class, rather than ability, is responsible for differences in examination attainment associated with social class. An exactly contrary conclusion would be nearer the truth. It is obvious, to be conceptually precise, that all the difference between social groups is caused by some set of factors associated with social class. That proportion of the variance shown to be associated with test scores once social class is statistically controlled is very probably caused by differences in the higher mental functions (or 'metacognitive skills') largely developed as a result of socialisation in family environments which are strongly associated with class position. And the remaining proportion, not associated with test scores, is likely to be accounted for partly by school differences (which Lauder and Hughes have demonstrated elsewhere) and partly by financial and motivational resources which are also associated with social class.

Diagram 1. Path Analysis Between Four Variables

SES ———————— .095
.217   .514
.3   Attainment ———— Destination
.603   .136
Ability
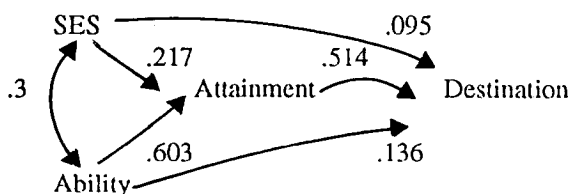
Note: The figures are standardised regression co-efficients. The paths between each variable indicate the degree of association between them once other variables have been statistically controlled. Thus the path between ability and attainment shows that, once the effect of SES has been taken into account, a change of one standard deviation in ability is associated with a change of 60 per cent of a standard deviation in attainment. Similarly, the path between SES and

destination indicates that SES has only a very small effect on destination when ability and attainment are controlled.

Ability differences are important. That being so, it is clearly unsound to regard Jones' rather small group of students from a class streamed by its demonstrated (poor) ability for school work as a representative sample of the Pacific Island population in that respect. It follows, therefore, that simply to regard their generally negative reflections on their academic ability as false is at least question-begging. Nor should it be assumed that the girls understand, as Jones suggests they do, 'academic ability' as an inherent domain specific cognitive faculty for performing scholastic work developed largely in accordance with the genetic code. No doubt they have not learned the concepts necessary to engage in such a discussion (nor have many sociologists for that matter), but it seems hasty to conclude that in their discourse 'ability' means 'brains' means 'genetically determined'. Jones notes that the girls 'did not have the political words to name their location in the school' (p. 161) and this surely applies with no less force to their understanding of other complicated and abstract issues. But even if we accept Jones' account of their views, then, unless her own apparent belief that all individuals (and not only social groups) are born with functionally identical genotypes for the development of the higher cognitive functions is correct, this academically streamed group of girls may have some justification for regarding themselves, collectively, as possessing a non-random set of such genotypes.

It is one thing to accept the hypothesis of no genetic differences affecting the development of the higher cognitive functions between social classes in the same society and quite another to suppose that such cognitive differences do not develop in early childhood and do not continue to develop thereafter. McGee and Silva (1982) report substantial differences in the mean Binet scores of middle class and working class children at the age of 5 (indeed, there are significant and theoretically interesting differences between children from SES 1 and SES 2). Ability test scores predict the examination success of students reasonably well, however, in principle it must be acknowledged that because a group had - two or more years ago - test scores which indicated a certain level of examination success that does not necessarily mean that they would achieve those test scores at the point when they come to sit the examination. To hold the school responsible for any 'gap' which might be observed, and which to a certain extent

could reflect a relative decline in this domain of cognitive skill on the part of some social groups, is purely arbitrary.

Ambiguous concepts like 'ability' are really dangerous. Sociologists have generally been willing to employ test data to demonstrate, whenever they can, a 'wastage of ability' and Boudon's secondary effect analyses are entirely concerned with the phenomenon of differential destinations by middle class and working class students with identical levels of educational attainment. But Lauder and Hughes are obliged to use scores from tests administered at least two and sometimes four years earlier and it cannot be assumed that real changes in the cognitive skills assessed have not occurred in the tested population. Indeed, unless one supposes (and Lauder and Hughes explicitly deny adherence to such a doctrine) that tests of intelligence and 'scholastic ability' are measures of an innate capacity for intellectual work rather than crude indices of acquired skills in a rather narrow domain of cognition, there is no reason to be surprised that pupils from homes where school learning is carefully monitored and supported and who attend schools where examination success is given a high priority become significantly more able in the intellectual skills that matter to schools.

This has been a lengthy analysis to make a straightforward point: according to the available evidence tested ability is the most important single cause of the difference between the examination performance of pupils from different social classes. Why, then, does Alison Jones reject the 'common sense' of the girls, that demonstrated ability largely determines school success - when there is considerable research evidence to support it - and prefer her own 'sociological sense' when there is almost no evidence to support it? This is a most intriguing question and well worth pursuing.

Structural Determinism

Jones is an uneasy and ambivalent structural determinist, forever seeking a way out of what necessarily follows from the logic of her theoretical assumptions, but she is, for all that a determinist - and largely an economic determinist. She declares:

> Ultimately, however, how Pacific Islands students fare educationally depends on where the Pacific Islands communities fit within our economy. The persisting and world-wide correlations between economic class/status and

> educational achievement are too consistent to argue anything else. In other words, teachers cannot simply change themselves and their students and ... New Zealand's social and political economy (p. 178 verbatim).

And, again:

> Overall, it seemed that the inequitable social order which disproportionately relegates young Pacific Islanders to low status, dead-end jobs and unemployment was not very 'visible' to the 5 Mason and the 5 Simmonds girls and their friends (p. 157).

The force of the introductory words - 'ultimately' and 'overall' - announce a form of structural economic determinism, demonstrated by persistent world-wide correlations between social class and educational achievement, in which the 'social order' 'relegates' people to their fate. And since this is a determinist discourse it is only consistent to draw the conclusion that teachers can do little to transform school processes set in train by the inexorable mechanisms of the economy. Like Althusser before her, Jones allows a certain autonomy - just a little room for dedicated teachers to make a difference (so as not to dishearten them one supposes) - but her determinist structuralism (although it fits ill with the post-modernist tone evident in the text) is fundamental to her theoretical account of socially differentiated educational achievement.

Deficit Theory

This theory of economic determinism mediated by school processes is essential for a deeply important political reason. It silences theories which draw attention to family practices. Such theories are, for Jones and many like her, 'deficit' theories which 'blame the victim' and cannot be countenanced. There is every reason, however, to believe that the practices of literacy vary between social classes and (perhaps as a consequence of that) between ethnic groups also. We are fortunate in having a recent survey of reading that provides evidence to substantiate this statement.

A survey of reading among 2200 Form 4 and Form 6 pupils by Diane Bardesley, (1991) shows clear differences in the reading practices of Pacific Island and non-Polynesian fourth form girls. More than a fifth of the Pacific Island girls report the number of books they read in a month as 'none' whereas only 6 per cent of non-Polynesian girls say this. On the other hand, close to a quarter of the

non-Polynesian girls say they read more than four books a month compared with only one in twenty of the Pacific Island girls. A similar pattern may be observed among the mothers. According to their fourth form daughters, 30 per cent of Pacific Island mothers read 'hardly ever' in the course of a week, which is twice the proportion reported for non-Polynesian mothers.

Table 3 Indices of Reading Practices of Pacific Island and Non-Polynesian Fourth Form Girls and their Mothers

	Books Read in a Month					Mother Reads in a Week			
	None	1-2	3-4	5+		daily once or twice	once or ever	hardly	
	Percentages				N.	Percentages			N.
Pacific Island	22	62	11	5	92 32	38	30	91	
Non-Polynesian	6	46	25	23	423 64	22	14	414	

There is no reason to believe that these data do not reflect real differences in the degree to which reading - one of the most basic of literate practices - is supported within Pacific Island and non-Polynesian homes. It seems only reasonable to suppose that the more extensively reading is practised by fourth formers, the more likely they are - other things being equal - to perform their school work adequately. And it seems no less reasonable to suppose that the more experience children have of their own parents reading, the more likely they are to acquire the habit and gain from it enjoyment and success. To some extent, these differences are attributable to class, but even when working class (SES 4-7) girls only are examined, the differences remain large. For example, just 15 per cent of the Pacific Islanders read 3 or more books a month compared with 40 per cent of the Europeans. Moreover, in the class category made up of semi-skilled, unskilled and non-working families, 21 per cent of Pacific Island fourth form pupils report that their homes possess a dictionary, an atlas and an encyclopedia, whereas the corresponding figure for European (Pakeha) pupils is 54 per cent. There is a tendency for 'bicultural' radicals to assume that where SES (the Elley-Irving scale) fails to 'explain' (correlate with) academic achievement to the same extent in different ethnic groups the difference must be due to ethnicity (or 'race') rather than 'class'. But this is an improper conclusion since it has not been demonstrated that the necessary resources and effective practices responsible for

the production of literate competency within the family are associated with SES (occupation) in a like manner in each ethnic group. They are almost certainly not. It is important that sociologists of education, no matter what their political and cultural preferences might be, have the courage to confront such data and learn to apprehend it within a theoretical framework competent to transcend conventional deficit theory. Such a theory, which sees differentially resourced class-located families engaged in long-term strategies of social and cultural reproduction is being developed (see Harker, 1991).

Classroom Practices

It follows from Jones' political assumptions that school and classroom processes are the only site at which economic determinism can be mediated and her comment that she 'found' evidence in the classroom to support this thesis must be interpreted in that light. Such evidence is presented in chapter after chapter and it is necessary to consider what it is worth. I have a lot of time for classroom observation - I've done it myself - and Jones' extensive reports are what make this book worth reading. There is, however, a fundamental flaw which renders the statement that, 'schools - and classroom practice - are deeply implicated in the maintenance of the 'relations of ruling' in any society' (p. 62-3) still open to doubt. Look at Jones' description of how the girls from 5 Mason (Pacific Island, low-to-middle-stream) and 5 Simmonds (European, high stream) approach their school work:

> Unlike the copying and heavy reliance on the teachers' answers which were common in the 5 Mason classrooms, in the 5 Simmonds classrooms the students independently completed worksheets and exercises. They discussed syllabus topics with interest and, even outside of lessons, the 5 Simmonds girls talked about aspects of their schoolwork. (The 5 Mason girls rarely talked about their school work with each other.) Lunchtime discussions for the 5 Simmonds girls, as well as ranging over such topics as boyfriends, television stars and family relationships, also sometimes included talk about an interesting chemical reaction, details of a current English project, some disputed or unclear point from a History lesson, and so on. Occasionally they would even speak to each other in French, or write slogans on their school bags in German.

> In these ways, these girls seemed to integrate the syllabus into their daily lives, expressing a close and confident relationship with the school curriculum. This sort of casual work and talk, I thought, provided excellent practice in skills

such as interpreting, abstracting and using one's words which are necessary for
acquiring school knowledge. (p. 136)

Now this does have the stamp of reality. And is it surprising, therefore, that the
processes of teaching - the presentation of knowledge, questioning, responding,
and so on - are characteristically different in the classrooms of 5 Simmonds and
5 Mason? It is not surprising to me and I do not believe that the differences in
pedagogic practice that Jones reports and analyses are actually an important cause
of the differences in the girls' approach to learning or their relative lack of
success at school. Rather, I suspect that the distinctive classroom practices are
actually caused by differences in the girls' approach to school learning - which
has its fundamental origin elsewhere. It is difficult to see how this disputed
interpretation could be resolved but it poses a difficulty that Jones leaves
unmentioned. I find it hard to credit that teaching style, as such, is of any real
significance in the generation of social differences in educational achievement.
The pedagogic aims of the New Zealand curriculum (which Jones seems to
accept rather uncritically) are relatively new and for decades in this country, and
elsewhere, middle class children succeeded and working class children failed in
proportions greater than chance while experiencing teaching regimes exactly like
those the Pacific Island girls collaborate with their teachers in obtaining for
themselves. It has not been long since this 'traditional' teacher-directed pedagogy
with its emphasis on rote learning and the passive acquisition of information as
'facts' was normal educational practice in this country - as, obviously, its reputed
post-colonial survival in Island schools may demonstrate. What is more, the
displacement of this style by newer methods designed to encourage a self-directed
involvement in learning was to a considerable extent promoted by a desire to
overcome the alienation from school learning so often noticeable among working
class pupils. Jones' observations do not persuade me that those who took this
view were misguided.

The overwhelming impression I get from this text is that most of the 5 Mason
girls fail at school because they are not very acute when it comes to performing
abstract cognitive operations. Jones reports that one girl knew that 'Anti-A serum
clots A blood, and anti-B serum clots B blood' but 'could not use this knowledge
to answer my question, 'If I have some blood, and I don't know if it's A or B,
how could I find out, using serum?'' This is a particularly interesting observation
because in order to answer this question, it is not necessary to know anything at
all about serums or blood or biology in general. If the intention is to ascertain

how much the pupils have learned about blood and serums, the question is a poor one, but it might not be a bad item for a test of scholastic abilities. 'Ability' tests are full of de-contextualised questions of this kind and the very fact that Jones poses hers with such spontaneous competence (and in the bustle of a crowded corridor) gives a small indication of just why it is that the children of the professional middle class are so good at recognising their importance and dealing with them. This author, who has even less respect than me for IQ type tests, nevertheless adopts precisely that approach to testing comprehension - unconscious, it seems, of quite what she is doing. What she does, of course, is concede the point that such cognitive abilities (actual competencies) have a necessary and not an arbitrary relationship to the mastery of school knowledge. It is then only a small step to concede also that school knowledge sometimes does have a necessary and not an arbitrary relationship to the nature of the world. Jones can speak for herself, but I should prefer to be in the care of a nurse who knew the difference between A and B serum and even - if the demand is not too excessive - one able to work out the answer to a simple question. This tendency of middle class radicals to deny the real intellectual basis of their social power - thereby further contributing to the neglect of research into the sociology of cognitive development and the relationship between their own specialised (literacy-derived) cognitive skills, scientific knowledge, and the actual nature of the world - deserves to be registered. It is a perverse irony (although one entirely consistent with his general thesis) that Bourdieu's theory of class domination through the cultural arbitrary should be applied to deny recognition to differences of an entirely different character. Jones mis-recognises the necessary for the arbitrary and inverts the girls' real insights against the test of her own 'knowledge' - a nice 'heads I win, tails you lose' move.

I think the 'low-to-middle stream' girls in Jones' study protect themselves by various strategies from the sheer difficulty of abstract cognitive thought for which they are relatively inadequately prepared in an intellectual and affective sense. Moreover, the contemporary New Zealand school - de-streamed, emphasising sport, attempting to ensure that the school is comfortable to different ethnic groups - has gone a long way to indulge such strategies, within limits (and sometimes perhaps beyond them), and so help to keep more young people at school. At the very least, this does them less harm than any likely alternative - but there are certain costs to be paid.

The Limits of Pedagogy

A few sentences must suffice to illustrate the problem Jones' determinism raises for teaching practice. Charmaine Pountney, Principal and Dean of the School of Education at the University of Waikato, expresses her belief in a foreword that the book will help teachers and students to free themselves from the 'unconscious assumptions and expectations which they bring from their own social background' (p.6). Jones herself writes, she says, in 'solidarity with the huge numbers of school teachers who are currently attempting to work in their students' interests in extremely stressful political and material conditions' (p.7). Let's hope none of them mind that the only teacher who gets a real pat on the back is one whose poor expectations for her pupils seem to make no difference to her practice as she gets them chanting 'hip-bone, thigh-bone' with appropriate gestures. I would like to know the theoretical grounds on which certain views are constructed as 'attitudes' which, while indicating 'expectations', are regarded as having no effect on practice while others are considered to be 'ideologies' with inevitable, and invariably unfortunate, effects on practice. As an educator Jones says she has to believe that 'there are possibilities through teaching for collective gains in educational achievement for such groups as working class Pacific Island girls' (p.178). But this is merely the triumph of an educator's professional faith over a sociologist's professional economic determinism. Teachers, are 'swept up within wider social and cultural and political processes over which they have little control' (p.92). So what escape can there be from the effects of this 'inevitable' structural whirlwind? It is not that I think Jones' cautious opinions about the limits of classroom action as a means of improving the educational performance of working class pupils are wrong. On the contrary, I think they are correct (but that is because I do not believe the problem is created by classroom practices to any significant degree), rather I am concerned to point out that any autonomy given to teachers by Jones is 'stolen' without theoretical legitimation from her fundamental determinism.

An Alternative (Counter-Ideological!) Reading

The girls Alison Jones introduces us to plainly do their best, and more than half want to succeed at school - they want the credentials at least (and some get them) - but most are struggling in a quiet and almost desperate frame of mind at a task they barely comprehend. Yet the evidence of the text actually suggests to me that

for all this, they hold a view about their position which is rather closer to mine than that ascribed to them by their ethnographer. I suggest that the girls actually think something like this:

(i)   The economic division of labour leads to differentially resourced social classes which, in New Zealand and elsewhere, intersects with ethnic differences for well-understood historical reasons.

(ii)   As a consequence of the different concrete and symbolic resources available to social classes, children from those classes develop with different cognitive skills, especially those higher mental functions derived from literate practices.

(iii)   A great deal of school work necessarily involves, given that the fundamental aim of education is accurate knowledge of the nature of the social and material world, a high level of development of those cognitive skills.

(iv)   Occupational aspirations largely follow actual ability to succeed in mastering this fundamental knowledge of the school.

(v)   Credentials are awarded largely to those who have mastered such knowledge.

(vi)   Labour market competition largely favours those who possess educational credentials but offers no guarantee of employment. On the whole, educational institutions and employers are rational in their preference for credentialed labour which is based on the acceptance of the previous statement.

(vii)   Educational statistics have no explanatory value (as 'structures' or 'chances') in a theory of differential attainment and access to education. Pacific Island pupils do have the formal opportunity to succeed but, given the resources of their communities and families, they stand little chance of success in

the educational system in competition with better resourced groups.

I do not suppose, of course, that the girls could put their views in quite this form or that they have the intellectual training to defend the case with empirical research, but I do suggest that there is rather more evidence in what Jones allows them to tell us to support this interpretation rather than that preferred by their editor herself. (This convention - that we write of 'the girls' thinking this or that as if there were some essential body of discourse to which they all have access and as individuals merely voice in response to some appropriate stimulus - is not one that I adopt uncritically. I am quite sure that they hold-different views, some more complex and more fully considered than others, and if they were interviewed systematically, using a mieutic technique, that would doubtless soon become clear. However, if we suppose that these individual girls represent more or less coherent positions common in their respective groups their voices may be heard.)

Linda, for example, seems to have a fair idea of the sort of skills middle class children acquire through socialisation into a high level of literate culture:

AJ: Why is it that they [Pakeha girls] know things?
Linda: I know it's nothing to do with prejudice and all that. It's got nothing to do with it. Maybe its the way they've been brought up. I don't know, reading books since they were little, being bright all the time, knowing what this is and what that is, going to kindergarten, going to primary school and asking the teacher what all these complicated words mean, that they already know how to say (p. 160).

In another discussion, Mona remarks of 'upper class' people:

They really want their daughters to do well like them so they sort of plan it for their kids, so if their kids like it, well sure; or else they'll pick up something that's in their parents class sort of ... But with us parents like they just want us to enjoy ourselves and have fun and ... (p. 168)

Middle class parents want and do exactly these things and as Mona doubtless understands they have the resources to ensure that their aspirations and plans are more often than not realised. Naomi, in a further conversation, thinks that some people get jobs because they are luckier than others (there must be something to

that), others she thinks are more intelligent (there must be something to that, too), and finally she says that others do not try - although they may be intelligent in their own way - (and that seems likely). Sina adds that how people present themselves is important (there is widespread belief in that theory) and Noeline believes that people do not all want the same thing, some want money straight away and others are willing to study and wait (and that sounds plausible). So the girls are well able to understand that getting a job is (i) dependent on the number of jobs, (ii) the number of people trying to get them, and (iii) the preferences of employers for credentials. As to credentials they are equally well able to understand that they are (i) available in limited quantities, (ii) most likely to be obtained by those who have successfully mastered the knowledge of the school.

But Jones - who as a sociologist 'knows' that social, political and economic structures relegate children from subordinate classes and ethnic groups to their inevitable fate - regards all this as ideology. She asks Louise and Clara why girls like them (of European descent) tend to be in the top streams and the Pacific Island girls in the lower streams. Louise does her best to explain:

Louise:	They [Pakeha] are quite well-off, compared to what they've [Polynesian] got ... just opportunities ... it's probably whites ...
AJ:	The Pakeha girls here are from richer families and the Polynesians are from poorer families?
Louise:	I'm not saying that, I ... yes ... but it sounds as if you're into yourself [laugh] ... how can you say [laugh] ... I don't know. I'm not meaning to say that whites are more brighter, that sort of thing. That's not true at all.
Clara:	I don't think the school is segregated by race.
Louise:	It's just an academic way [that it is segregated] but everyone gets involved in sports and all that ... I think our school is good in that respect.
AJ:	And yet you've still got this separation...
Louise:	... in the classes.
Clara:	I think it is because of academic ability.
Louise:	Yes ... [unsure]

Jones comments that this conversation shows how well the dominant ideas/ideology about individual motivation and ability are entrenched in the girls' thinking. She will no doubt think them well entrenched in mine, too. But what does Louise say? To begin with, she points to differences in wealth, and such differences certainly are responsible for some of differential performance observed between social groups. She is somewhat hesitant about this perhaps because such comparisons are uncomfortable to a girl who may be aware that the

origins of the difference in wealth between the two communities are hard to defend and have much to do with colonial relationships. Alison Jones' crisp response then alerts her to other, and even more uncomfortable, implications of what she is saying and causes her some embarrassment. So she denies that Europeans are brighter (although there is plenty of evidence before her very eyes to show that they are, in fact, better at school work than Pacific Island pupils) least she be thought to be arguing for the innate intellectual superiority of her race. Clara then decides to stand up for her school and denies that it is segregated by race. Louise considers this and says that although there is academic segregation, there is none in sports and she supports Clara in defending their school. Jones still wants to focus on segregation and Louise repeats her concession that this is a feature of class composition, but Clara, a strong-minded girl, will not have this and points out, entirely correctly, that the principle of this segregation is not race but academic ability. Louise, probably still musing on the racist, genetic, implications of this, a little uncertainly gives her assent. Discussions of 'ability' in this text are always problematic simply because the participants are never allowed to articulate a distinction between learned cognitive skills ('interpreting, abstracting and using one's words', to quote the text) and the influence of genetic endowment on their development. But all the conversations Jones reports will stand re-interpretation in this way and, of course, that is one of the strengths of her work.

As I think I have made clear, Alison's book is actually totally unconvincing in its fundamental thesis. But it is an important book. As a particularly good example of the anti-scientific tendencies that now dominate the sociology of education in this country (the author never misses a trick even quoting her own 'field notes' - as if that conferred on her theoretical opinions an additional authority - on social class) it deserves the closest attention. It is a work I expect to return to again and again - even though, no doubt, my positioning leaves me beyond hope.

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REJOINDER TO ROY NASH

Alison Jones

A difficulty with arguments about patterns of school achievement is that they can only contribute some of the picture, because the causes are not only extraordinarily complex in their links to social, political, economic and cultural factors, but also open to multiple interpretation.

Roy Nash's review criticises 'At school I've got a chance' as an exemplar of an unsound though dominant strand in 'radical' sociology of education. In his critique he attempts to grapple with some of the intricacies of contemporary arguments about unequal school achievement. Unfortunately, Nash's review is limited by his failure to discern where and how our views (despite his rhetoric of opposition) are similar - and where we disagree. As a result, I do not think the points of debate are adequately clarified to be of much use to educators (as opposed to academics). I will attempt a brief clarification.

Dis/agreements
In the book, through my construction of some Pacific Island girls' schooling I attempt to illustrate a few of the complexities of the interaction between class/ and ethnic/cultural patterns of students and the cultural demands of the school. I argue that the cultural/symbolic resources of working class students and the demands of the school seem often to be incompatible. From my reading of his argument, it appears that Nash agrees.

Nevertheless, there obviously are important points of disagreement. These are worth pursuing, I think, because the arguments are important to how educators not only conceptualise the problems of achievement in schools, but also the implications for how to attack those problems.

According to Nash, **my** thesis (and that of most 'radical' sociologists of education) is that 'ability is not significant to class differences in attainment' - that one's membership of a subordinate social class means inevitable failure in a class- and ethnically-biased system. And **his** thesis is that 'tested ability is the most important single cause of [class] difference[s in educational attainment]'. My position, he contends, is an ideological (even anti-scientific) structural determinist one which maintains (against all evidence to the contrary) that one's social class ensures particular outcomes, via the processes of classroom teaching.

There is, of course, much to be said in response.

First, the issue of being scientific and getting the facts right. Nash seems to think that the facts of the matter (like the percentage of failure that can be attributed to ability) can be ascertained through statistical analysis, and such information will (somehow) lead to positive change. This was the dream of a positivist social science - once we knew the facts about human life, just as we know the facts of the natural world, we could work out exactly how to improve our societies. I wish I shared his optimism. The 'facts', needless to say, are always constructed out of a set of meanings, so that from within different discourses (sets of meanings) we construct different facts, within different accounts. Therein lie many of the problems with debate in this field.

Discursive turf

Despite the seeming incompatibility of the ways in which he has drawn our differences, Nash and I often seem to be saying very similar things. For example, according to Nash, the book incorrectly contends it is false that 'the relatively poor rates of educational success among [Pacific Island children] are due to socialisation in a class and ethnic culture which does not promote, to the same degree...as other cultures, the development of the highly specialised cognitive skills demanded by school work'. I fail to see how he could make this assessment when I spend much of the book detailing the ways in which the Pacific Island girls in my study come to school with particular views of learning which are not congruent with those rewarded by the school.

Maybe the reason for our apparent 'talking past each other' is that we are located on different territory - that is, we employ different sets of meanings to frame our

understandings. It could be a useful contribution to the debate on school achievement to attempt to get to grips with how our respective positions mean that our views, and their implications, might be different.

Ability

Nash maintains that the Pacific Island girls in my study failed because they were in fact, not very bright. Presumably, if I had picked a brighter bunch, my story would have been different. It is true, as I pointed out, these were not girls in the top stream, and on school tests they were judged of average ability. (I **could** have researched the Pacific Island girls in the top streams. But there were very few of them, and most had one Pakeha parent. Nevertheless there is some interesting research to be done here). If we look at national school examination statistics, and the achievement and streaming patterns of the school (which I document on p.16-17) it is clear that, according to the schooling system, most Pacific Island students are 'not very bright'. My research was about what this might mean - how it comes to fruition in the classroom. Inevitably, I think, it demands a political analysis.

My comparisons with middle class Pakeha girls are, perhaps, a little unfair. But the stark contrast between these two groups serves the purpose of showing just how different schooling is for groups of young people in New Zealand, and some of the possible reasons a disproportionately high number of Pacific Island students are not 'able'.

This term 'ability' is a key player in discussions about school achievement. Nash says it is 'an ambiguous and dangerous concept' and I can only agree. But despite what he says, Nash uses the term quite unambiguously. It is a cognitive quality, quantifiable by tests which measure 'higher mental functions'. (This is a complete about-face for Nash, who argued vociferously in 1983 that intelligent tests measure **nothing** other than the number of questions answered correctly and that 'ability' has nothing to do with it (Nash 1983:191). So far so good.

On Nash's current definition, it would be absurd to hold that ability is insignificant to school achievement patterns - a position of which Nash accuses me. Statistical research is clear that measured ability has a lot to do with school achievement.

Ability as objective (Discourse One)

But...there is a lot more to it than that. This definition of ability forms 'everyday' commonsense, including that of the girls in my study. I will call the set of meanings with this interpretation of ability, Discourse One. Within this discourse, ability is sometimes seen as innate - and working class, women and non-whites don't have it (this is the old conservative meaning which has fuelled colonial and patriarchal thought for centuries). Or, on a liberal version, ability is a trait which is randomly distributed regardless of gender, class and race, and it can be developed (or stunted) by schools and families. It is often stunted in working class and non-white families. Within this latter framework, schooling is 'fair' and offers 'equal opportunity' when all have access to educational processes which help them develop this cognitive trait (potential) which they have.

Nash's argument within this discourse appears to be that there are some higher order cognitive skills (ability) which are necessary to getting credentialed; some groups do not have the 'concrete and symbolic resources' to develop these through their family environment, therefore they lack ability, and miss out at school achievement.

One strand of my text in **'At school'** is superficially similar to Nash's. But my argument is placed within a different discursive context which shifts its meaning somewhat - and which means that Nash and I part company - not on 'the scientific facts', but on their basis, and their implications.

Ability as constructed (Discourse Two)

Discourse Two (which forms the mysterious 'commonsense' of some sociologists such as myself) sees ability as inevitably socially constructed; it is defined within particular cultural contexts such as the school, IQ tests, and so on. Its meaning is therefore various. Contemporary schools define 'ability' in certain ways (i.e. as in liberal Discourse One) and reward students on this basis. Now there is nothing 'wrong' with this - as Nash points out, these so-called higher order cognitive skills of predicting and generalising and interpreting really are important skills in the real economic world, and employers reward the resulting educational credentials in choosing employees.

Within this discourse, many working class Pacific Island students are not 'able' because, through the 'concrete and symbolic resources' (yes, Nash and I agree on this) available to their families, they do not get the cultural resources which have been **made** important in the school (and the economic) context - i.e., they do not have the access to the resources, and therefore the 'ability', typically available to middle class girls. This is quite a different understanding of 'ability'.

It is this strand of my argument which Nash appears to ignore, or downplay: my emphasis on the ways in which the Pacific Island girls themselves bring various cultural resources to the classroom which affect their forms of learning, and which are not those **the school defines** as 'ability'.

Implications

The implication of Discourse One - including Nash's argument - is that if Pacific Island children do not have the requisite resources from their families to succeed at school, their families will have to gain the correct material and symbolic resources to do so. Well, there are only the small matters of the economy and history to alter... My argument is that if teachers and Pacific Island parents recognise the **constructed** and **cultural** nature of the schooling enterprise, they are in a position to make decisions about the extent to which they might be able to / wish to encourage their children to be bicultural, to identify, and maybe gain the requisite symbolic/cultural resources defined as ability in the Pakeha New Zealand school. And the opportunity is opened up to more participants in the debate about how schools might alter their cultural assumptions about the ways in which they teach and reward students, in order to enable more Pacific Island children to succeed - and not just as sports people or cultural performers, but as critical thinkers. At the moment, as far as examination achievement is concerned, the Pacific Island girls have the 'choice' of either being 'brainy' (not very often, according to the statistics) or 'dumb'. There are few genuinely open points of 'cross cultural' debate about what counts as valuable school knowledge, how it is made important in the school, and how it might be more accessible.

As I point out in the book, I have doubts about this/my belief that exposure of the cultural nature of school learning will make it more accessible to currently subordinate groups. Insofar as educational attainment is linked to social status (however complex the link), real change in achievement patterns can probably

only occur within an altered social and economic order. I have no real problems with the school defining ability as it does - my concern is the general lack of awareness of ability as a construction, and the resulting uncertainty about processes which might be useful in helping those working class girls without the prior cultural capital to gain some of the necessary tools to become 'able'. There seems to be a real confusion in mainstream schools about how best to cater for Pacific Island and Maori children - the relative educational achievement statistics show little improvement, which should be cause for immense public concern.

Obviously, (aside from an economic revolution) the Pacific Island girls need some sort of appropriate intervention to affect their poor showing in school achievement patterns. Maori are suggesting different forms of education (through the kohanga reo and kura kaupapa maori) as appropriate to improving the educational attainment of Maori children. Maori students in the kura are taught to develop Nash's so-called 'higher mental functions' i.e. to think critically, to evaluate, interpret and so on - using educational forms and language different from those engaged in the mainstream system.

Whatever solution is taken (and it is a political question) to crisis-level Maori and Pacific Island educational under-achievement, significant Maori and Pacific Island input is crucial. Hence my point about a general understanding of schooling (and 'ability') as cultural constructions, not 'neutral' processes which develop and sort children according to 'objectively' selected 'higher order' skills. This framework can provide an umbrella for debate. Nash's apparent framework, which seems to focus on the inadequacy of Pacific Island kids and their families, does not seem to me to be a good starting point.

Irritations

There are niggling points in Nash's review which I can't help but take this opportunity to niggle back at. There are the misleading ways in which he constructs my position; for example, he implies that I disagree that 'practices of literacy vary between social classes... and ethnic groups', yet a lot of At School is all about the different approaches to knowledge and learning between two class/ethnic groups (see Lankshear and Lawler 1987:158-165 who discuss my research in relation to practices of literacy). By ignoring this Nash is able to make the erroneous assertion that I assume that 'school and classroom processes

are the only site at which economic determinism can be mediated'. The 'economic determinism' - the correlation between social class and school achievement - (which Nash gives me no reason to reject) is obviously lived out in a range of sites, the family being a crucial one. But I wasn't observing in families, I was in classrooms. Nash goes on to say what he thinks is the situation: 'Rather [than pedagogic practice being the cause of the girls' approach to schoolwork] I suspect that the distinctive classroom practices are actually caused in the girls' approach to school learning - which has its fundamental origin elsewhere'. This is precisely what I discuss on pages 93-106!

Less substantially, there is the throwaway comment that I tested the girls' school knowledge in a 'crowded corridor', as though this implausibility somehow discredits the data. I tested the girls during the 'swot' times and during intervals and lunchtimes in classrooms when we all tried to help each other before examinations. And the teacher who taught her subject (Human Biology) very successfully by rote did not have 'poor expectations' for her students at all. She simply taught her subject, the only one which rewarded rote learning, effectively. Recently the Human Biology syllabus and examination have moved towards rewarding more substantive thinking. Fewer of the Pacific Island girls are successful; and the teacher has had to alter her style. And I don't know where Nash gets the idea that 'more than half' of the girls in my study 'want to succeed'. I cannot remember one who did not want to do well at school.

Local differences

Unlike the outraged fans who have contacted me after hearing his arguments, I thoroughly welcome Roy's critique of At School. I relish public debate amongst colleagues in New Zealand. We do far too little of it. The local universities themselves are to blame for this to some extent. We are encouraged through such things as criteria for promotion not to take each other's work seriously and to focus instead on the works of the Great Overseas Academics. Criticising each other within such a small community does have its inevitable risks, but without debate and disagreement we can become complacent, unexciting and lacking in rigor.

Nash offers an alternative reading of the research (and some of the interview data), and in doing so illustrates very well the constructedness of research

accounts. The book is read by hundreds of Pakeha, Pacific Island and Maori students studying education in New Zealand, and his review will provide an excellent critical commentary to sharpen the 'higher order' thinking skills which he - and I - and any critical thinker, value so much.

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Inter-generational income redistribution is a difficult area, and it is a brave social scientist who would set out to offer a comprehensive account, given our current state of knowledge. David Thomson appears to have no such qualms.

The policy problem is simple enough. What is there to stop the oldest generation from exploiting younger generations by seizing its income? There is an obvious restraint on a younger generation doing it to their elders, because they then set an example to those younger to repeat the exercise. But the restraint does not exist for the oldest of all, since they will be dead when the younger generations get their turn. When economists explored such issues the model equilibria prove to be technically unstable, and usually some ad hoc restraint has to be added to prevent this inter-generational exploitation. These models are not specifically welfare state ones for they can involve pure capitalist economies. But driving all of them is the assumption that individuals behave selfishly.

Do they though? And even if they do, are there social and political restraints which impede the inter-generational exploitation? Does the empirical evidence about income transfers over time support the account of selfish generations?

The transfers occur in at least three ways. First, individuals invest their savings and, at a later time, they realise a return on the investment. Second, there are family transfers. Parents (and more generally, older generations - grandparents, among others - chip in) invest in their children without - as a rule - getting much financial return (except perhaps support in old age). Additionally, the children may inherit family wealth. The details of these two general processes are complicated, but are central to the modern economy. They are largely ignored in this book (but not in this review).

The third major means is that there may be an active government transfer of resources between generations. Most evidently, the young receive education and health services, and family support (and benefit) from the state, while the old receive national superannuation and health services. It follows that those in the middle must be carrying the burden of these additions to the welfare of the young and old (although since the young tend to live with those in the middle, the first transfer is less clear).

It is this third state-generated inter-generational transfer which Thomson's book focuses on, and even then, it looks only at the transfer to the old. Indeed, Thomson is obsessive about this transfer to the exclusion of all others. He says: 'the core of all modern welfare states is what I shall call the implicit welfare contract between generations'. He never defends the statement and thus has little to say about vertical transfers between the rich and poor, and horizontal transfers within generations including health services, unemployment, sickness, accident, and domestic purposes benefits. Neither does he write much about the transfer to children.

Let me make it clear that I am not arguing about whether there are welfare state transfers to the elderly. Despite Thomson being described on the book cover as 'a leading writer on social history...in New Zealand', he is surprisingly ignorant of the work that has been done in New Zealand on inter-generational issues. If he had, he would have extensively quoted the work of Suzanne Snively (e.g. 1988), and the more recent fiscal incidence study by the Department of Statistics (1990), which demonstrate clearly that the biggest net inter-household transfer in a specific year between the identified social groups is to the elderly (but note that parents and children are in the same household). Quoting this work would have saved the book many pages, improved the level of analysis and made it that much more readable.

That the transfers to the elderly are large is hardly to be contested. But Thomson has a stronger thesis for he argues that the older generations are benefiting more from the welfare state than younger generations.

> '...the big winners...have been ...those born between about 1920
> and 1945. Throughout their lives they will make contributions

> which cover only a fraction of the benefits. For their
> successors the reverse is true' (p.3).

Much of the book is a rambling attempt to justify this accusation, based on anecdotal rather than systematic argument. Virtually any thesis about income distribution can be supported by taking a couple of special cases and comparing them. The problem is to provide a comprehensive account. I shall resist the temptation to review anecdote by anecdote, and instead concentrate on the book's one attempt to argue the thesis coherently. The points made usually apply to the anecdotes as well.

Chapter 5 contrasts the experience of "the Earlys, a 'typical (sic) couple' born around 1930, and the Lates, a 'typical couple' born 25 years later". Note first that the Earlys are about 60 at the time the book was written, with another 20 odd years of life expectation, and the Lates are 35 with another 40 odd years left. Thomson's analysis requires forecasting into a distant future. I would not trust an economist to do that with the required precision the analysis requires.

In fact, Thomson does not appear to be any great shakes at forecasting. Referring to the Labour proposal to lift, by steps, the age of entitlement for the pension to 65, he writes: 'the choice of the year 2006 came as no surprise - it means that those born before 1945 are to be protected, those born after are not'. I take it that the writer was surprised by the decision announced in the 1991 budget (even before the book was out) to scale the year back to 1992. (The term 'protected' is insidious - presumably he means 'supported between 60 and 65').

The next problem the analyst faces is to offer a systematic measure of the phenomenon he is considering. Thomson rightly wants to discount the effects of inflation, but did he really mean to eliminate economic growth? In doing so, he ignores that the Lates are typically on a standard of living about 40 percent higher than the Earlys at the same stage in the life cycle. Could not the phenomenon that Thomson claims to exist be merely the Earlys sharing some of this growth?

In terms of the inflation and growth adjusted measure used in the book, Thomson is probably postulating that the Earlys obtain a greater share of GDP (or some such aggregate) than the Lates. However, the indicator used is the median gross

earnings for men aged 35-45. Unfortunately, this unit of account is contaminated by the changing income levels of women. Women's earnings are rising, which means that the Lates are going to have a higher income (in these standards units) compared to the Earlys, which distorts the book's argument in favour of the Earlys having more resources relative to the Lates.

The study uses a quaint notion of a 'standard family', which assumes the couple get married, have children and live together until death do them part. Perhaps the analysis is intended to imply this is as likely for the Earlys as for the Lates. In any case, the assumption is not only unrealistic, but it ignores the fact that taxes are being used from the Earlys and, even more so, from the Lates to support solo parents. (The unemployed also do not appear in this book's scheme of things.)

The choice of a median income is another difficulty, since it does not allow changes in the distribution within cohorts. Vertical changes could have been neutralised by using the mean income. A further complication is that the figures used are median male incomes. As well as exacerbating the problem of women re-entering the workforce (Thomson may well exaggerate the financial contribution of the Early women), it obscures important changes going on in youth (the Lates are likely to stay in education longer), and at retirement (where market participation has been reducing probably for the Earlys, although we can be less sure of the pattern for the Lates in 2020).

Unfortunately Thomson does not give his calculations, so I cannot check or adjust them. (A not unimportant consideration given the changes in Census definitions over time, especially following the adding in of social security payments in recent years).

But there is a summary table (p.166), which I reproduce here in a slightly condensed form. Note that the income data for each couple is not given. The units are those of the median income for 35 to 44 year males. Suppose that in one year, the median is $10,000, and the spending (or tax or whatever) is $4,000 in that year. That comes to .4 in the standard units.

Table: Thomsons' Estimates of
'Life Time Balance Sheets (sic) for the Earlys and Lates.'

		Earlys	Lates
Contributions			
I.	Total lifetime income tax contributions:		
	'more realistic estimate'	6-7	15
II.	Total lifetime 'other taxes':	14	14
	Total possible lifetime contributions:	20-21	29
Benefits			
III.	Social security cash allowances		
	Family benefit	1.5	0.5
	Old age pension	12.6	8.7
IV.	Education	3.8	2.5
V.	Housing	1.1	0.5
VI.	Health	3	3
VII.	General Government Services	15	12
	Total Benefits	37	27

Source: Table 5.1, p.166

The table postulates that the Earlys pay less tax than the Lates. That is probably correct, because the Late's relative income is higher (the woman works more), and because income tax rates have been rising. Whether the table's overall figures are relatively correct, I cannot say, but almost certainly the Lates paid more 'other taxes' than the Earlys because their total relative income was higher, and indirect tax levels have also been rising (and are unlikely to fall through the next 40 years).

The benefit side is more problematic. First, it claims that the Earlys received more family benefit than the Lates, which is surprising since the family benefit

was not introduced in 1946 after the Earlys turned 16 and became ineligible for it. (There was a minuscule family allowance from 1927). What the figures appear to be saying is that the Earlys received more family benefit for their children than the Lates did. The family benefit was relatively more valuable in the earlier years, and the Earlys would have had more children than the Lates.

This raises (yet another fatal) problem for the analysis. The Lates are (within a year or so) the children of the Earlys. I shall come back to the wider issue of how children should be incorporated in the analysis, but at this stage, note that a benefit provided by the state for the Lates is attributed to the Earlys. The same thing happens with education. The state expenditure on the Lates appears in the Early column. Probably, the same thing happens for part of health spending. An added complication is that education and health have been rising proportions of GDP spending, so the Lates would have received more per capita than the Earlys. (The Earlys would have been lucky to have a tertiary education, the Lates would have been unlucky not to.)

The 'old age pension', introduced in 1898 and superseded in 1939, is a rather strange name for the current retirement provision. Thomson has had to make a series of assumptions about what the Earlys and Lates will receive. He thinks that the former will receive about a third more than the latter. He may be right. As I have said economists have no great claims to be reliable forecasters. But there are some problems. The median income assumption is especially dangerous, because there has been (and is likely to be) considerable income redistribution within the age cohort. (Consider the universal entitlement from 60 in 1976, replaced by a super surcharge in 1984, to be raised further in 1992). Thomson also assumes similar longevity of the two generations. Underpinning this is a question of retirement policy with which I deal below.

The social security benefits exclude unemployment, sickness and domestic purposes, all of which would be more beneficial to the Lates than the Earlys. (Note that there is now an early retirement benefit, which while not as generous as national superannuation, mitigates the raising of the difference between Earlys and Lates by the retirement age from 60 to 65.)

Where Thomson gets his general government services figures from is unclear. I suspect he is projecting a relative reduction in government services over the next two decades, but wonder whether he adjusted the tax side as well.

Housing is a muddle in this book. Again it is dealt with below.

Overall, Thomson argues that the Earlys put less into society than they take out, and the Lates put in more. Unfortunately, the data is built upon many peculiar and unreliable assumptions while the forecasts crucial to the analysis are not convincing. A footnote to the table says: 'the procedure has been conservative, seeking to play down the contrasts between the experiences of the two couples'. In virtually every case - children, benefits, government spending, women working, longevity, capacity to work - the 'conservative play down' favours Thomson's hypothesis of the Earlys doing better than the Lates.

The conclusion may be true, within the narrow frame which Thomson uses, although that is unproven. However, there are some wider issues which also need addressing, even if the thesis were true.

First, can we ignore the inter-generational (but intra-household) transfer between parents and children? The Earlys might reasonably argue that they raised more children than the Lates, so the study overestimates their relative standard of living. Moreover, the investment they put into the kids is returned in part in a better retirement provision. They could not get to university, but they paid for the next generation to do so, and their retirement provision partly reflects the additional economic capacity of the economy as a result of their sacrifice.

A study purporting to cover the inter-generational transfers of the welfare state would contribute little if it ignores the parent-child transfer, and the opposite - and hence the offset - of the transfer from the worker to the retired.

Second, there is the problem of what exactly the state retirement provision is for. Thomson argues the welfare state is primarily a cohort social insurance scheme. That is not obvious.

Consider my neighbour, George, who is about a decade older than the Earlys, with myself, a decade older than the Lates. The Very Early left school at 14 and

worked to 59 before being made redundant. (He lived on the redundancy pay until he turned 60). George is a good bloke but, frankly, his occupational skills had become redundant before he did. I did not finish university until I was 23, so I shall be 68 before I have done my 45 years. Moreover, it looks as if my occupational skills (which appear to be predicting doom from incompetent economic management) will still be valuable at retirement. Should I automatically be entitled to a state provided retirement benefit from 60 or even 65? Raising the age of universal entitlement may reflect changing patterns of occupational preparation, skills, ability to work and longevity.

This anecdote shows the retirement age is not set in stone. Nor is it obvious that if George gets more retirement benefits than me, he is better off. It is possible that from the perspective of the university academic, where it is said that retirement begins on the day you get tenure, retirement is an attractive occupation. In my view, one should be able to contribute to society as long as one is capable, and so early retirement need not be beneficial. What we are unsure about is how many Earlys are being forced into an early retirement, which is merely a euphemism for 'unemployment'.

That leads to the third point of the role of inflation and unemployment. They are more closely linked than may be apparent at first, for each destroys savings. Inflation does this by diminishing the value of fixed interest wealth. It has been especially cruel because income tax is levied on the nominal, rather than the real, return on investment. But unemployment also destroys savings as they are consumed to sustain life when earnings are insufficient. Historically, much of our state provision for retirement has been a response to the destruction of private provision by depression and speculation.

What the Earlys have experienced is the considerable destruction of their savings by inflation from about 1970 to the late 1980s. Now they are being destroyed by the forced unemployment of early retirement. Neither of these processes are addressed in any detail in the book.

The housing inflation nexus is a complex one which the book fails to understand. The estate duty evidence is that wealth plateaus in the early 30s, which seems inconsistent with the known observation that personal savings increase with age (Easton, 1983; NZPC, 1990). What seems to be happening is that the major form

of savings is housing, which give significant returns to young adults from the capital gains (including from the fixed value of the mortgage). However, you can only own one owner-occupier housing, so that investment returns are lower later in life, and may well be negative in after tax real terms. Additional savings thus offset the loss of the easy return from housing.

The book simplifies this complexity to the single aspect of trying to assess the cost of a house purchase (although it is unaware of affordability index studies). The calculations ignore the contribution of women to the purchase, and overlook the way that inflation impacts on the down payment, but wipes out the mortgage costs.

One investment area which the book does not touch upon is government debt. There is some truth in the view that one generation's public borrowing is the next generation's tax. The high borrowing in recent decades might well be argued to be pushing liabilities onto future generations. However, much of those liabilities have been reduced in real terms by inflation, once more illustrating the central role it plays in inter-generational transfers. The result of the inflation was that despite heavy public borrowing, the public debt to GDP ratio was relatively constant throughout the 1970s and only really took off (ie. became less favourable to future generations) in 1984 (e.g. Dalziel and Lattimore, 1991:28).

Fourth, suppose the hypothesis is true (if unproven). If the Earlys can exploit the Lates, then in due time, the Lates can exploit the Very Lates, who in turn can exploit the Very Very Lates, and so on. This could have been built into the tabulation but was not. Moreover, if it were true, then perhaps it is no more than each generation reducing the inter-generational 40 percent inequality from economic growth. We would need a more subtle exposition than that offered in this book to argue that it was wrong or an injustice. (One could equally argue that it parallels the effect of private investment and retirement provision.)

This is a review, not a book, and space is at a premium. The one further point which needs to be impressed upon the reader is how little Thomson knows about New Zealand if his citation record is any indication. There is a chapter entitled 'A New Poor' which does not cite a single piece of work on poverty in New Zealand. If it had, the study would not have had to 'raise doubts about the relative poverty of the elderly'. That they tend to be better off than families has

been known since the mid-1970s, and was a major driver of social policy in the 1970s (Easton, 1981). His statement that in New Zealand, 'there is no ready answer to questions such as 'how did old age pensioners fare compare with younger families?'' (p.41) is true, if one denies the vast literature which exists on such topics.

Thomson might defend himself by saying: 'this interpretation is not bolstered by voluminous references at every turn: it must stand or fall as readers judge it to 'ring true'' (p.7). Perhaps, although the references seem assiduous enough of overseas sources, giving the ringing a pseudo-scientific plausibility. It is the New Zealand material that is omitted. To be fair to Thomson, as far as I can judge, he is quite indiscriminate, omitting both material which supports or contradicts his thesis and material which would have developed and added rigor to the chatty presentation.

This methodology of testing by 'ringing true' seems to me to be a dangerous one. A good number of books promoting racial prejudice and conspiracy theories rest on such insecure foundations. Not surprisingly, the response to this book has been strong public reactions from those who find it confirms or denies their prejudices. The underlying message of the world which has changed little - in terms of demography, women working, family patterns and general social change - but in which one group is now robbing another is likely to ring true to those who wish it were true. Many of those who would hotly deny the underlying thesis would nonetheless be sympathetic to the social assumptions on which it rests. Given its limited description of the role of the welfare state, it is not surprising to see the book being quoted favourably by the New Right (Gibbs, 1991).

This book by, we are told, a leading social historian thus sits uneasily in the category of the pseudo-academic which justifies unthinking prejudice. In doing so, it demeans the sterling work of those who have tried to look at these complex issues systematically, and adds heat to a public debate while pretending to shed light.

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J. Glamuzina and A. Laurie
Parker & Hulme: A Lesbian View.
Auckland: New Women's Press, 1991.

Reviewed by Janet Soler,
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Attitudes towards youth in New Zealand during the 1950s, particularly public reactions to issues of adolescent sexuality and perceptions of 'juvenile delinquency', is a subject which is both intriguing and revealing. Juliet Glamuzina and Alison Laurie's book is an attempt to provide comment on these issues and the social concerns of the 1950s in a manner which is provocative and readable, and accessible to the general public. Until recently, there has been a lack of published material attempting to examine the concerns and social context of this period. Yet, as in the 1950s, public concern over juvenile behaviour and 'moral disintegration' is once again claiming media attention.

Glamuzina and Laurie's book examines the events and public reactions to a particularly violent juvenile crime which exploded into the public domain in June 1954. Juliet Hulme and Pauline Parker, aged 15 and 16 respectively, were accused of murdering Pauline's mother with a brick concealed in a stocking. The subsequent court case revealed a number of 'sensational' elements including matricide, lesbianism and matrimonial infidelity. Public interest in the case was further heightened by the involvement of a family from Christchurch's social elite.

The authors openly acknowledge that they hold a 'lesbian view' of this case, highlighting societal attitudes towards the apparent lesbian relationship between Parker and Hulme as the critical factor in understanding the crime. According to the authors' perspective, contemporary coverage of the Parker-Hulme case was 'simplistic', treating the obviously close relationship between Juliet Hulme and Pauline Parker as a mere 'sexual perversion'. This 'simplistic' contemporary analysis is evident in the court case where the girls were portrayed as either 'mad' or 'bad'. Glamuzina and Laurie claim that their analysis focuses on the wider social context and events surrounding the murder, and thus provides a sensitive and revealing examination of the crime.

The authors argue that the murder can be understood by examining the frustrations and dynamics of both the Hulme and Parker/Rieper households. They attribute the motive for the murder to the stress created by repressive postwar expectations of 'normality' in gender roles rather than to the nature of the girls themselves or their particular relationship. For Glamuzina and Laurie, the murder was triggered by the web of complex relationships and 'hidden secrets' within the two households, creating a climate of instability and pressure on the girls' relationship. Ironically, the girls' relationship came to be viewed with suspicion by their parents whose own relationships were far from 'normal'.

The first six chapters of the book provide biographical details of the girls, their families and the events which surrounded the murder. The sources of these accounts are the diaries, court and Justice Department records, and contemporary media reports. The second half of the book uses feminist theory, Maori perspectives and various other social theories to provide an analysis of the crime and its wider implications for the lesbian community of New Zealand. The final chapters provide transcripts of interviews with New Zealand lesbians who

comment on the way in which the Parker-Hulme case affected them as they passed through adolescence and 'came out' as lesbians.

As an historical account of the Parker-Hulme case, the book and its analysis of the social context has both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, primary sources are used to provide a detailed and well documented account of the girl's personal life and family concerns. These chapters also use a breadth of sources and accompanying footnotes give depth and substance to these aspects of the case. The oral interviews and accounts of the impact of the case on other lesbians are revealing and provide interesting and original material on the trial's social impact. There is also a conscious attempt to relate a variety of viewpoints and theoretical perspectives to the historical events which surrounded the case, although I found these references too eclectic a collection of theoretical frameworks and would have preferred a more integrated and coherent approach.

The authors do not appear to provide such depth, accuracy or originality in considering the broader social context of the period. Their historical accounts of the social situation in Christchurch and in New Zealand generally rely heavily on very selective sources and superficial analysis, and sources are often used and referred to in a haphazard and disjointed manner. There is, however, a recognition of the important social agents which linked the girls personal experience to the wider social context, such as the role of the media, justice institutions and censorship law. But the links between these social agents are often tenuous, lack a depth of analysis and show that the authors are not fully conversant with the wider social context of the period. For example, they do not appear to consider the role that the church played in orchestrating the reaction to the murder, particularly in the media comments and subsequent public reaction. The authors also fail to note that there was a 'homosexual' murder, referred to in the press during August 1954 as the 'Verbiesen' murder. In this instance, there were homosexual overtones in a case where a young boy was murdered by an older boy. It would have been interesting to speculate why there was an apparent lack of public comment over this 'homosexual' murder as opposed to the furore that arose over the Parker-Hulme murder.

The inability to fully account for the broader social context surrounding the case may stem from the confining nature of the authors' lesbian perspective. For example, when considering the public reaction to sexual morality in the 1950s,

the authors note that the Mazengarb Report into Juvenile Delinquency made a generalisation concerning lesbians. However, when reading the entire document, it becomes clear that this was only a relatively minor comment in a document which regarded any evidence of adolescent sexual activity as a threat to society.

The positive aspect of the adoption of a 'lesbian perspective' is that it provides insights into the historical development of sexual stereotyping and its subsequent effects on lesbians as a particular social group. This book is a major step towards realising the authors' aim of developing an understanding of the historical experience of lesbians. It is also a most welcome contribution to the development of an understanding of the experiences of non-heterosexual groups in New Zealand's recent past.

Glamuzina and Laurie's study is a book which challenges New Zealand historians and sociologists to examine the 1950s in greater depth, and from a variety of viewpoints. For the general public, it raises issues which many would still rather ignore, but which have surfaced again in the 1990s and will undoubtedly continue to do so in the future.

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Anne Else, **A Question of Adoption: Closed Stranger Adoption in New Zealand 1944-1974**, Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 1991.

Reviewed by Bronwyn Labrum, History Department, Victoria University, Wellington.

A Question of Adoption is an intelligent and thoughtful contribution to the current debates on adoption which have been renewed by the recent publicity about the plight of institutionalised Romanian children. The comments of many have been characterised by appeals to emotion, prejudice and traditional ideas about 'the family' and the deprivationof non-western countries. By way of contrast, this book takes a long, hard look at what adoption means for all those

involved, both now and in the future. It's publication is also to be welcomed as a clearly feminist analysis which exposes the extent to which the social and legal processes surrounding adoption are constructed on notions of gender, particularly the meanings of 'woman' and 'man' and 'mother' and 'father'.

Although Anne Else charts the rasons for the rise and decline of closed stranger adoption in the post-war period, she is principally concerned to explain the way it was practised. She argues that it was a 'social experiment with unknown and uninvestigated outcomes, conducted on a massive scale'. She also claims that despite the rationale that it was in the interests of the children, 'adoption is really about adult beliefs, desires and dilemmas. It is a socially constructed means of providing particular kinds of care for particular kinds of children at particular times'.

In order to make this case, Else goes beyond the usual sources that have been used in accounts up tuntil now. Rahter than just focusing on the birth mothers and the adopted children, she brings all the parties involved into the process. She makes a\effective use of interviews with adopters, state officials (including child welfare workers), nurses in maternity wards, and prominent individuals involved in private organisations such as Bethany (a private hospital and home for unmarried mothers) and the wonderfully titled Motherhood of Man Movement. Broader conclusions are drawn from contemporary and retrospective commentaries, from here and overseas. In this way, Else is able to bring together the results of many New Zealand surveys, especially those for post-graduate social work degrees.

There are real strengths in her approach. In the best women's studies tradition, she focuses on allowing the people whose options and choices are under scrutiny to speak for themselves. Adopted herself, Else argues that: 'Adoption is an extraordinary experience which, like other experiences of 'difference', can best be studied from the inside'. The extracts from interviews, which are one of the best things about the book, give an unparalleled insight into the adoption process, from all points of view.

This understanding is reinforced by the book's structure. The chapters follow the adoption process chronologically, from 'becoming an unmarried mother' and 'leaving home', to 'a suitable couple', 'placing the child', 'I hereby consent' and

'happily ever after?' The role of fathers and husbands is not ignored, as the appropriately titled second chapter ('the invisible unmarried father') shows. While the story is largely a Pakeha one, issues of race and ethnicity are confronted head on in a moving and original chapter, 'Aureretanga - The Outcry of the People'. Else examines how 'the Pakeha system impacted on customary beliefs, values and practices with regard to children being reared by people other than their birth parents', thereby adding another level of 'difference' to her largely Pakeha account. The chapter reveals a shift from initial support for the status of tamariki whangai, to allowing it in particular cases, then finally doing away with it under the 1955 Adoption Act, so thatat there was one law for all people. The 1955 Act involved much greater changes for Maori than for Pakeha, and the attendant secrecy came to be fully enforced. Because of the lack of statistics on Maori adoption, this chapter relies mostly on personal accounts, and in the process, touches on many interrelated issues such as land claims, urbanisation, contemporary assimilationist policies and the overriding importance of knowing one's own whakapapa, something which of course Pakeha adoption annihilates.

As well as following the process at an individual level, the book traces the wider changes in the state's impact, both in legal terms and through the intervention of the Child Welfare department; the role that homes for unmarried mothers played; and the way the' supply and demand of babies also structured the overall experience.

Throughout the book, Else successfully employs a number of concepts from the overseas literature. She shows how placement practices promoted a 'rejection of difference', by imitating the normal arrival of a child. Adopters took the baby home when it was about a fortnight old, as did birth parents, and it was individually 'mothered' first by its adoptive parents. The secrecy of the process and the involvement of state or private go-betweens meant that the birth family was nover a reality to the adoptive family. As a result, the difference of adoption was pushed underground, 'and so made it harder for its complex implications to be faced'.

Adoption encouraged 'matching for marginality'. Both the social worker and the couple 'regress from their ideal standard in order to meet their own needs; the applicants, in their need for a child, will compromise their desire for a normal,

healthy infant, and the social workers in their need to 'place' 'different' children will lower their selection standards'.

If the adoption took place, throughout the process there were assumptions from all concerned that the situation of both the birth mother and adoptive parents was 'frozen in time'; that is, that the mother would be forever single, forever struggling financially, and forever 'husbandless'. Likewise, the adoptive parents would always be married, secure and able to provide for their new child.

Else concludes with a caution against inter-country adoptions, and examines the implications of the closed stranger adoption model for the new reproductive technologies. There is no legal requirement to keep records of artificial insemination by donor and in New Zealand there are no laws on commercial surrogacy. Again, it is as if 'only the one-generation nuclear family matters or exists, and has no links to past or future generations'. She believes that the experiments are continuing with past lessons ignored. 'As in the days of slavery, children are becoming a commodity like any other, for sale to the highest bidder. Unlike those involved in traditional adoptions, many will have no hope of ever piecing their origins together'. This is strong stuff indeed.

A Question of Adoption should be read by all social workers, social policy analysts and those interested in the family, adoption and the state. Yet despite the contribution this book makes to uncovering the practice of adoption and the surrounding issues, I found it less successful in a number of other respects. Perhaps the fact that it raised so many other questions for me indicates how stimulating it is.

While understanding the rationale for the book's structure, I found it confusing trying to keep both the threads from the individual story and the larger picture together. It was as if two structures were laid rather awkwardly on top of each other. The momentum of the adoption process was broken up by the chapters which described broader legal and state changes. Moreover, information on those larger changes did not come until some way through the book although the whole experience was obviously structured by them. Continual references in the text to later chapters became increasingly irritating. It would have been more useful to bring all that material together at the beginning to provide a stronger framework of interpretation for the subsequent individual perspectives.

As a social historian, I wanted more historiographical context and more consideration of why things happened when they did. In terms of the book's historical component, narrative tends to take precedence over analysis and ther eis a lack of reference to existing histories. Else argues eloquently and forcefully, but the evidence is not always there for the reader to see as well.

The reasons for the increase in adoption in the 1940s are tentatively accounted for by involuntary childlessness after the war, the popularity of marriage and childbirth after the Second World War, later concerns with zero-population growth, and the fact that institutional care was distinctly out of favour. The decline in the acceptance of adoption as the preferred solution is convincingly demonstrated to relate only partially to the introduction of the DPB in 1973. The system itself carried the seeds of its own destruction 'Softening attitudes toward illegitimate children and their mothers had been a necessary factor in its growth; now they helped to undermine it'. Else also claims, with less evidence, that changes in women's economic and social circumstances promoted women's autonomy and 'loosen[ed] the hold of conventional, judgemental morality...Slowly both virginity and marriage lost much of their wider significance'. She contends that the dramatic increase in the numbers of women in the 1960s most likely to have an ex-nuptial conception, because of the post-war 'baby boom', also gave growing numbers of women the opportunity to resist the harsh terms of stranger adoption and keep their babies.

Else deals well with changing psychological theories and their effects on ideas about families and parenting, but other points could have been usefully extended to consider what they reflected of wider changes in New Zealand society. For example, the assimilationist policies of the government after the 1960 Hunn Report should have been featured more strongly in the chapter on Maori experiences of adoption.

Furthermore, there are a few references to overseas practice and some indications that New Zealand's adoption practice may have been unique, yet there was little direct consideration of this issue.

Some important theoretical issues are assumed rather than worked through. Because so much of Else's argument hinges on issues of gender, biology, and social construction, they need to be teased out carefully. (Although I realise this

book is aimed at a general, rather than a specialist audience - a difficult task at the best of time.) She correctly points out at the beginning that it is wrong to claim that 'all mothers are naturally and immediately bonded to their children at birth, and are therefore the only people who can (and must) care for them...'. Yet much of the focus of the book is on the birth mother as victim only, and as far as Pakeha are concerned, in much the same way among all women. The implication of unrelieved 'social control' does not allow for a more ambiguous or complex interpretation. I found myself wondering if there might not have been alternative views to the ones presented here. Although the book shows that women played all the roles in the adoption process (which is a fascinating phenomenon in itself), in regard to the birth mothers, it is important to remember, as Barbara Brookes has written recently, that 'seeing women purely as victims denies their agency and culpability in their own history'.

Linked to this is the assumed opposition between biological families and socially-constructed families. In an extremely pertinent set of questions Else sets up in her introduction, the birth family is seen as the norm and the questions centre on the rights of the birth mother and children: 'What forms of care outside the birth family should be socially recognised and supported?' Further on, she writes: 'the parent-child relationship had come about solely as the result of a social and legal process, rather than originating in birth...'. Yet as feminists have found with the debate over the sex/gender distinction, where sex was equated with biology and gender with culture, it is not that simple. Just as some began to argue that both sex and sex differences were not something pre-given and non-social - according to Elizabeth Grosz 'human biology must be **always already cultural**, in order for culture to have any effect on it' - the arrangement of family life where children stay with their birth parents must be seen equally as a social construction. While Else's stress on birth mothers and children is understandable given the often horrendous and continuing consequences, the debate should not rest there.

Finally, and this would men another entire study, the book raised the issue of why women want children so much. The questions in the introduction begin with 'What does family mean?' I became increasingly interested in an earlier step: why is family important? - particularly the form that was socially sanctioned in the period under study.

A Question of Adoption is aptly titled and raises crucial and provocative issues that I hope will be taken further.

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Alison Gray, **Springs in my Heels** - Stories about Women and Change. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1991.

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The past decade has seen the publication of many books which contain or discuss people's personal life-histories. There are new academic texts which emphasise the methodological value of personal narratives to researchers in various disciplines (Goodson, ed, 1991; Phillips, ed, 1985). There are publications which explore the use of various kinds of life-history methods as teaching techniques in university courses (Middleton, in press; Snow, 1991; Witherell and Noddings, eds, 1991). An increasing number of post-graduate students have employed life-history methods in their theses. Some of these, as well as other empirical studies which rely on life-history methods, have been published for a more popular market (Barrington and Gray, 1981; Park, ed, 1991; May, 1992). Several important biographies and autobiographies have been written and, in some cases, made into films (Frame, 1983; Hood, 1989). In 1940 and 1990 the compilation

of dictionaries of biography was officially sanctioned and funded as an appropriate way of commemorating important national anniversaries.

As 'sociological data', personal narratives - autobiographies, biographies, taped oral histories, etc - can provide examples of how individuals live through their historical and material, cultural, geographical, etc situations. People appear, not as passive victims of their socialisation or regulation within various institutional apparatuses, but as creative strategists who may struggle to resist or circumvent oppressive power-relations and to resolve contradictions. As C. Wright Mills expressed it over forty years ago, "Biography, history, and social structure" become the focus of analysis. Much of this sociological life-history work has been fuelled by the feminist movement.

Within academic (as in 'grassroots') feminism, 'personal knowledge' has been accorded a higher value than it has been within the dominant social science discourses. Indeed, the apparent 'subjectivity' of some feminist courses and publications has sometimes been used as a basis for their exclusion or marginalisation within what counts as 'high status' academic work. Scholars have offered various explanations for so many feminists' emphasis on personal biographies. For example, psychoanalytic rationales ground women's preference for such methodologies in an 'essential femininity' constructed within the mother-child dynamics of early infancy in western cultures (Belenky et al, 1986). Others have grounded it in a political imperative - argued that the sharing of personal stories will reveal 'truths about' the historical and material circumstances which structure women's lives (Mitchell, 1973). As academic methods, life-histories have been described as dialectical, and as changing the lives of those who participate in their construction (Novitz, 1982).

There have been a number of books which consist of detailed case studies of fifteen or so New Zealand women who have 'distinguished themselves' in some field and/or share interests or projects in common - successful writers (Kedgley, ed, 1989), business or professional women (Clark, ed, 1986), or, as is the case with **Springs in My Heels**, women who are at an interesting 'stage of life' (Fyfe, ed, 1990). Alison Gray has interviewed fifteen women who "have taken on a new challenge at mid-life" (p.1). She describes their collective stories as:

> a lively reminder that there is no time limit on adventure or risk taking. With
> determination, courage, tolerance, and good humour we can turn our lives

> around and set off in whatever direction we choose. Neither age nor gender
> need be a barrier (p.198).

Gray selected her fifteen women as being representative of "a range of activities - the arts, outdoor adventures, politics, travel, farming, horticulture - and to include both paid and voluntary work." (p.3) I would have liked to see more exploration of these themes in the text. Travel, farming, and outdoor adventure do not appear as salient, or even relevant, categories in the international literature of academic feminism. Yet, as the following examples illustrate, they are crucial in understanding the lives of many New Zealand women. Many young New Zealand girls grew up with dreams of travel and adventure and oriented their lives towards this, rather than to careers in a more conventional sense:

> When I was ten I used to look across Wellington Harbour every day at the
> shipping. I decided I was going to England on one of those ships as soon as
> I grew up. I was very determined, and when I was nineteen and had enough
> money I sailed out of Wellington Harbour to Europe on my own (p.38).

There are several accounts of middle-class white women's experiences of travel in third world countries. These reveal much about the multiple power-relations of race, class, culture, and gender. For example, the following concerns different expectations about women's bodies.

> ...the first time I went to a village. We arrived with a medical team and were
> staying overnight. I could see them thinking, 'What are we going to do with
> memsahib?' They put a little toilet up for me but I felt more constrained going
> with them watching than going with the women in the field. In the end I said,
> 'Tell them I'll just go with the women when they do their ablutions'. - the
> women go one way and the men go the other. I was the only woman on the
> team. I was memsahib (p.123).

As a teacher of courses in the sociology of women's education, I found some useful material in the case studies. For example, one women spoke of her schooling during the Great Depression:

> I had wanted to be a teacher, but because of the cutting down on teacher
> training, I took a commercial course at a girls' secondary school... because of
> the values of the headmistress, the commercial girls had the same broad
> education as the professional girls (p.75).

Although Gray does not historically contextualize her life-histories, students in sociology, history, and education courses could explore further the ways each makes visible the wider political and cultural configurations - the historical and material constraints and possibilities - of each woman's time and place.

We gain fascinating glimpses into the everyday worlds of women who restore old bicycles, take up deep-sea diving or tramping, start business ventures, go back to school. There is the business woman who married and 'gave up work' in mid-life to fulfil the role of an 'executive wife'.

Gray describes her purpose in **Springs in My Heels** as "to document women's achievements as a source of inspiration and encouragement for others.". (p.1) In her introduction, and her conclusion, Gray identifies a common structure to the fifteen biographical narratives. Each woman took a "first tentative step" followed by a "hard climb up a steep learning curve". Some women struggled alone - without the support of family and friends, and sometimes in a climate of resentment or opposition from intimates and associates. The women resisted such discouragement and argued that they were "entitled to some time for themselves". However, their efforts as individuals were equally motivated by their "ongoing concern for others". Gray writes: "while NZ women are practical, capable, and adaptable, they can also be self-deprecating to the point of stoicism... I hope that reading their stories is enough to convince the uncertain to take that first small step. Vicarious pleasure can be satisfying, but it is no substitute for the real thing" (p.199)... I hear the refrain of "Climb every mountain" or one of these "Go for it kiwi" commercials...

So, although the case studies are interesting, the analysis is disappointing. It rests on a naive faith in the beneficence of change. The sociologist in me wants more emphasis on the economic, political, historical and social/cultural circumstances which place constraints on, as well as open up possibilities in, our lives. What of those who started a business in mid-life and lost all their money in the process? What of those who made 'wrong' decisions when making major changes in their jobs? What of the impact of unemployment on the range of possibilities for personal choice?

There is a kind of 'new right puritanism' implied by the emphasis on 'undiluted success' by individuals - that all obstacles can be overcome if one puts in

sufficient effort. I was left with a slightly sour aftertaste - a read through the whole book at one sitting left me with the impression that both interviewees and editor shared the assumption that, as one interviewee expressed it, "people should be taught to take responsibility for themselves, rather than expecting other people, or the government, to do it for them." However, I enjoyed the book and will recommend that students with an interest in life-span development (Drewery, 1991) or life-history methods refer to it for case study data.

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The Book of New Zealand Women/Ko Kui Ma Te Kaupapa.
Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams, (Eds) Bridget Williams Books, 1991.

Reviewed by Jenny Carryer,
Department of Nursing and Health Sciences,
Manawatu Polytechnic

The Book of New Zealand Women is an excellent bicultural compilation of the lives of a significant number of New Zealand women who are now dead. Accessibility of information is achieved by the presence of three indexes: to names, to subjects and to the authors.

As a reference, this book documents the contribution of over 300 New Zealand women to the public and private worlds in their broadest sense. The need for such a book is in itself a social commentary but its publication does much to ameliorate the invisibility of women's lives.

The method of collecting and examining biographies is, as the authors say, "a practice that underlies the current women's movement". Furthermore, "it allows for the study of the complex interplay between the elements in women's lives where the common distinction between life and work rarely fits".

The documentation of these lives weaves Maori and Pakeha together and even includes a largely unheard voice - that of Chinese women in New Zealand. The women's stories often show that one of the notable aspects of these women's

lives is that their emphasis is frequently on the collective contribution to social wellbeing rather than the personal acquisition of individual success or reward. The extensive inclusion of previously undocumented lives increases this book's value as a resource. Decisions on inclusion and exclusion must inevitably have been difficult.

The choice of varied biographers lends valuable intimacy to each inclusion but also creates some variation in the quality of writing. The women portrayed, however, really do come alive, far more than is ever possible in a normal encyclopedic insert, thus making this an immensely readable and worthy resource which effectively spans and illuminates New Zealand history.

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David McLoughlin, **Undeveloping Nation.**
New Zealand's Twenty-Year Fall Towards the Third World.
Auckland: Penguin, 1992.

Reviewed by Paul Spoonley,
Sociology Department, Massey University

David McLoughlin's thesis is clear: 'New Zealand is so close to falling into the Third World we many not be able to prevent it from happening' (p.43). The fault, he argues, lies with excessive borrowing and a resulting high debt burden, government spending which is unproductive, politicians who have lost the trust of the public and the unrepresentative nature of the political system, and a welfare culture. The book has been criticized in reviews for it's selective use of material and an overstated case. It certainly has the feel of a magazine feature article expanded to book length, and it's lack of sources or detail will not find favour with academics. And what are we to make of such throwaway lines as the following: 'It's so disarming, so caring, it could be written by someone from Massey University's sociology department' (p.76).

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Michael King (ed), **Te Ao Hurihuri. Aspects of Maoritanga.**
Auckland: Reed Books, 1992.

Reviewed by Paul Spoonley,
Sociology Department, Massey University

Te Ao Hurihuri was first published in 1975 and went through several reprints before being discontinued in the mid-1980s. It is testimony to those who originally contributed to the book and it's editor that it should find a new life in the 1990s. One chapter, by Te Kapunga Dewes, does not appear here while

others have been altered (a number of the authors from the original book have died) and there are four new chapters : Wi Tarei on Ringatu, Moana Raureti on the Ratana Movement, Robert Mahuta on Kingitanga and Ranginui Walker on the relevance of Maori myth. A still relevant and powerful book with Maori authors, and a Pakeha editor, of considerable standing.

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Scott McVarish, **The Greening of New Zealand.**
New Zealander's Visions of Green Alternatives.
Auckland: Random Century, 1992.

Reviewed by Paul Spoonley
Sociology Department, Massey University

The format of this book is somewhat unusual. It comprises three major sections: the first concerns the issues which characterise green politics; the second deals with 'green groups and projects'; and the final section outlines a green future(s). But the eleven chapters which detail these areas centre on interviews with either individuals or organisations and this interview material makes up the bulk of the book. The effect is to give the book a disjointed feel with (at times) insufficient space for some of the more interesting issues or perspectives to be fully elaborated.

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Mark Francis, **Governors and Settlers: Images of Authority in the British Colonies, 1820-60**. Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1992.

Reviewed by Brennon Wood
Sociology Department, Massey University

Governors and Settlers investigates the political culture of British settler societies in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Dealing with a comparatively under-researched area, it provides historical background to current constitutional debates in this country. The book argues that political authority in settler societies did not operate as a discourse. It was not vested in 'the people', nor in a written constitution. Rather, the body politic centred on an appointed individual, on the person of the Governor. Political culture was characterised by an insistence on absolute sovereignty, vested in the British Crown and represented by its Governors, and by extensive ceremonial displays seeking to express a shared community uniting ruler and subject. The book's primary concern is with a series of case studies showing how an appointed official was elevated into a public symbol. The comparative approach situates New Zealand within a broader pattern of colonial politics. The New Zealand research focuses on the governorships of Fitzroy, Grey and Browne. The context of British and colonial thinking about the Treaty of Waitangi is described. It is argued that the issue of sovereignty was posed starkly in New Zealand. Moreover, though sovereignty was claimed absolutely, the participation of Maori in the authority of Governorship was recognised by their central role in public rituals.

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NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL RESEARCH DATA ARCHIVES

The New Zealand Social Research Data Archives has been established at Massey University. Its brief is to collect, clean, document and preserve computer-readable data relating to social, political and economic affairs and to make that data available for further analysis.

The NZSRDA invites researchers from any discipline in the social sciences to deposit data sets with the Archives. Such data represent a valuable resource which, if not deposited and archived, could disappear. Depositors can stipulate the conditions under which the data sets can be made more widely available.

Both those wishing to deposit or acquire data sets should write to:

> Director
> New Zealand Social Research Data Archives
> Faculty of Social Sciences
> Massey University
> Palmerston North
> New Zealand
>
> or Telephone: (06) 3569099 ext 8008
> fax: (06) 3505627
> Email: NZSRDA@massey.ac.nz

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS:

1. Two copies of manuscripts for consideration should be sent to the editors. Authors should retain a third copy for their own reference during proofreading.Copies submitted will not normally be returned. To facilitate "blind" reviewing, the **title and name(s) of its authors** should be given on a separate sheet, and the **title only** should appear on the **first page** of the article.

2. While articles should not normally exceed 4500-5000 words, longer articles may be accepted in special circumstances.

3. Manuscripts should be accompanied by a short abstract (about 100 words) typed on a separate sheet of paper.

4. Manuscripts should be typed double spaced throughout on one side of A4 paper with reasonable margins all round (2 cms. approx.).

5. Authors should consult articles in current issues of this Journal for general indications of style - conventions on: capitalizing titles, headings, sub-headings; paragraphing; quotations, and so on.

6. Do not underline any words in the text unless they are to be printed in _italics_.

7. Type each table on a separate sheet with as few lines as possible, and indicate the placing of the table in the text with a pencil note. Use wide spacing in tables and rule all lines in pencil. Tables should be numbered in arabic figures with a clear legend to identify the table.

8. Drawings (graphs, figures, etc.) should be on good quality white paper in indian ink and on separate sheets.

9. References should normally be indicated by citing in parentheses the author's surname and the year of publication (together with page numbers where relevant), as given in the list of references or the bibliography at the end of the article. For example: 'it has been argued (Baker, 1948:26) that...' etc. The full list of references at the end of the article should be arranged alphabetically by author's surname. The following examples should be used as a guide, paying particular attention to the sequence of the items in the reference and to punctuation.

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

   Baker, R.S. 1948. **Sociology and Social Change**. London, Charles Publishing Co.

   Note that in the first example the words in the title are not capitalized (as they are for the title of a book, as in the second example).

10. Footnotes are to be reserved for substantive commentary. Number them from 1 upwards. The location of each footnote in the text must be indicated by the appropriate superscript numeral. Type the complete, numbered set of footnotes on a separate sheet and attach to the end of the manuscript. Footnotes will appear at the foot of the page where they are located.

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12. The editors reserve the right to make minor editorial alterations or deletions to articles without consulting the author(s), so long as such changes do not affect the substance of the article.

13. Authors will receive 2 copies of the issue in which their article appears.