

The logo for New Zealand Sociology is a horizontal bar with a green-to-yellow gradient. The text 'New Zealand' is in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, and 'Sociology' is in a larger, white, serif font, both centered within the bar.

# New Zealand Sociology

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## ***Editorial: International Year of Statistics 2013***

*Charles Crothers*

Although the International Year of Statistics has not had high visibility in New Zealand it is useful to consider the relationship of New Zealand statistics to New Zealand sociology. Given that many outsiders still (rather erroneously?) consider Sociology as a discipline founded on the methodology of surveys, a close relationship might be expected. This editorial will consider:

- the architecture of NZ's official social statistics system (structures and goals)
- the foundation of data-collections
- further processing capabilities
- non-Government statistics
- use of statistics by the New Zealand Sociological community.

Statistics are often in the public eye: they provide excellent and cheap fodder for the media. For example, in the week when I began to write this editorial the *New Zealand Herald* ran:

- StatsNZ material comparing household costs over time drawn from HES – which goes back to about 1970;
- Review of the NCEA drawing on studies of a few schools;
- Results of an NZCER survey of teachers, principals and parents concerning their views on the NZCEA standards; and
- The (dismal for New Zealand) international results from the PISA survey.

Perhaps the most interesting development is that the *NZ Herald* has joined the *Evening Post* in recently hiring a data journalist.<sup>1</sup> This upgrades newspapers' capacities to handle data and goes hand in hand with another development of data visualisation which advances presentation of statistical material.

Early New Zealand interest in social statistics, from the 1920s on, came from economists, historians and economic historians. But it could be readily

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<sup>1</sup> For more general background on data journalism see <http://datajournalismhandbook.org/1.0/en/introduction.html>.

argued that interest in social statistics emerged in 1970s with a compilation on social trends (Statistics, 1977) a UNESCO-commission-sponsored social indicators development conference (Cant, Hill and Watson, 1979) and the subsequently set-up social indicators unit which produced a *Social Indicators Survey* (1985). Alongside these developments were extensive survey work carried out in the health sector and on housing (through the National Housing Commission). Also a more sophisticated approach to social demography emerged (e.g. Pool, 1986). While most sociologists tended at best to flirt with statistics, Thorns and Sedgwick put together a major compilation of historical statistics (1997).

### **The architecture of NZ's official social statistics system (Structures and goals)**

The opportunity-structure for the sociological utilisation of statistics is largely set by the government's Official Statistics System (OSS) which covers (under part 1 of the Statistics Act) all agencies that produce official statistics. StatsNZ is the main agency and leads in coordinating activity across the OSS. Within StatsNZ there is a Cultural and Social Statistics Division headed by one of a group of Deputy Statisticians. It is important to remember that the Government Statistician is accorded statutory independence from the Government of the day in respect to the formulation of statistics. The Statistics Advisory Council which includes representatives (currently Prof. Natalie Jackson from Waikato University) can funnel advice from academics. The OSS includes information on statistical activities of other government units although this is presently not available on their website.

An important function of OSS is to develop domain plans for directions of statistical developments, which take the particular form of Tier 1 statistics which are those prioritized as central in the overall statistical system.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Foundation of Data-Collections**

Official statistics include the operational statistical procedures and records of many Government departments, particularly those that the public comes into contact with (e.g. Police, Inland Revenue, Ministries of Education and Social Welfare etc) one general source for locating appropriate data series.<sup>3</sup> While such

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.statisphere.govt.nz/tier1-statistics.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.justice.govt.nz/publications/global-publications/o/official-information-your-right-to-know>

data tell much about operations sociologists have always had a difficulty in establishing the extent to which such information also tells about the wider social reality beyond the records kept of those in contact. There are ongoing efforts to ensure that the data kept is of high quality and that common protocols are used across different government units, but the extent to which internal government information can be pressed into social science service still needs constant attention and debate.

In addition, the state collects information from the wider community. Although sociologists might well be interested in data collected on firms (e.g. the 'Business Operations Survey) it is more likely that individual and household surveys will have more sociologically pertinent information. The surveys currently being deployed by StatsNZ (or that are still fairly contemporary) include:

- Census of population and dwellings
- Disability survey
- General social survey (GSS)
- Household economic survey (HES)
- Household labour force survey (HLFS)
- Household use of information and communications technology
- Longitudinal immigration survey New Zealand
- New Zealand income survey (NZIS)
- Post-enumeration survey
- Survey of family, income, and employment (SoFIE)
- Te kupenga: survey of Māori Wellbeing
- Time use survey
- Working Life Survey (HLFS)

To these need to be added surveys regularly carried out by other government departments. Which include:

- Health Surveys (MOH)
- Crime Victimization Survey (MOJ)
- Living Standards Survey (MSD)
- Big City Quality of Life (coalition of Big City Councils).

In addition, many government departments commission customer service satisfaction (or similar) surveys.

#### **Further processing capabilities**

In addition to collecting and being a repository of social data, StatsNZ provides further 'value-added' services. In presenting available sources and services

several ‘packages’ have been developed, although these seem to complexly interpenetrate. ‘Packages’ include definitions, methods, results, commentaries, downloadable tables etc. and are organized into sections. They interface with other packaging which is more closely tied to the vehicles of data-collection.

Frameworks, relevant to sociologists within which statistics are packaged include:

- Social indicators
- People & Communities
- Sustainability indicators.

### *Social Indicators(SI)*

The most centrally-located is the recently developed SI page. This is organized by some domains which are derived from those used by the OECD and also in the MSD Social Report.

Under each of these headings there is material – and downloadable tables (e.g. including breakdowns by sex, age group, Māori and non-Māori, and by OECD country to allow international comparisons – also some regional breakdowns). The pages also provide useful further webpages and sources to go on to. It might be argued that these pages take over from the previous MSD Social Report framework.

### *People and communities*

Information about people, the communities people live in, and social themes are packaged around a People and Communities theme.

### *Sustainability indicators*

Measuring sustainable development allows a broad view to be taken of New Zealand’s long-term environmental, economic, and social progress. *Measuring New Zealand's Progress Using a Sustainable Development Approach: 2008* (SNZ, 2009) used 85 indicators to measure New Zealand’s environmental, economic, and social progress and assess whether that progress is consistent with sustainable development, while *Key Findings on New Zealand's Progress Using a Sustainable Development Approach: 2010* (SNZ, 2011) updates 13 of the 16 key indicators. Social indicators are included.

Behind the more operational ‘packaging’ of information stand longer-term frameworks which guide thinking about developments and how these link up with goals of statistical collections. “Domain plans” document the expressed needs of economic, environmental, and social areas and then indicate the statistical activities required to achieve these. “Stocktakes” list and describe existing data sources (both within StatisticsNZ and across the Official Statistics

System). Other efforts review particular data collection operations from time to time.

Data-linkage projects are now important. One has been the Census-Mortality data project (NZCMS)<sup>4</sup> which has produced some excellent work in this epidemiological area. The general methodological point about the linking-up of different bodies of official information is discussed by Davis (2004). This database links administrative and survey data sources and is being used in policy evaluation research. An important project is the Integrated Data IDI. While the IDI is primarily based on administrative data it also contains a number of surveys undertaken by Statistics NZ and other agencies. The Government has recently established an *Analysis for Outcomes* programme that uses this resource.<sup>5</sup>

Although a range of downloadable excel data tables are provided (some multivariate) especially through the “NZ Stat” website, researchers can also be provided with access to ‘unit record’ (i.e. individual) data (despite the strict confidentiality provisions regarding privacy). Some CURFs are available and other data-sets are available through the DataLab service (where both data and analysis are carried out (under controlled conditions) on SNZ premises.<sup>6</sup> In addition, StatsNZ produces its own analyses and reports which are scattered around its website although some series have been developed. Given the high powered statisticians employed by StatsNZ some methodological developments have emerged. Some sites both within StatsNZ and in other departments are dedicated to presentation of data in user-friendly formats (e.g. MYA Youth Indicators, the University of Otago Children’s service) and others.

### **Non-Government Statistics**

There are a series of regular surveys which have been carried out in New Zealand over a considerable period although given the fragility of funding none have guaranteed futures, unlike many other jurisdictions where support for critical survey operations – and also the necessary support infrastructure - is given long-term funding. One example is the ‘General Social Surveys’ (or

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/research/hirp/otago020541.html>

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/snapshots-of-nz/integrated-data-infrastructure.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/snapshots-of-nz/integrated-data-infrastructure.aspx)

<sup>6</sup>Some research underway is listed on [http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools\\_and\\_services/microdata-access/research.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/microdata-access/research.aspx).

equivalent) which tap attitudes which are deployed in US, UK, Australia, Canada and the European Union.

Several academic-based surveys have provided a wealth of data and several have made their datasets publically available. In addition to these series, other one-off studies have been carried out:

<i>Abbreviated Name</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Periodicity</i>
NZES	NZ Election Survey	1987-	3-yearly
NZVS	NZ Values Survey	1985-	every 5 years
ISSP	International Social Science Programme	1993-2012	annual
WIPNZ	World Internet Project NZ	2007-	every 2 years
NZ Values & Attitudes Study		2009-	annual

A small array of longitudinal surveys are particularly valuable as they allow tracing trends over time and these have produced a vast array of findings: Dunedin, Christchurch, AUT's PIFS, Massey University's *Māori Families* study and Auckland University's *Growing Up in New Zealand*; also the NZCER had a panel (for a review see Poland and Legge, 2005).

Other series of surveys include Lincoln University series on environmental attitudes and, Canterbury University series on attitudes to relations with Europe. Of private enterprise market research only UMR's *Mood of the Nation* has thus far proven to be long-lasting.

In an era of 'big data' (statistical) sociological attention should not merely be confined to orthodox data sources. Savage and Borrows (2007) argue that in an age of "knowing capitalism", sociologists need to consider the challenges posed to their expertise (and the opportunities offered by) the proliferation of 'social' transactional data which are now routinely collected, processed and analysed by a wide variety of private and public institutions. The most obvious manifestation of this are spatially-orientated data services such as *Mosaic* or NZ

Posts' *Genius*<sup>7</sup> which provide profiling of small areas based on a range of data (including the census).

### **Use of Statistics by the New Zealand Sociological community**

Sociological usage of official data has been led by COMPASS which is avowedly pro-quantitative in its approach. Compass hosts a network which provides statistics coursework and houses a data archive (temporarily under reconstruction). Compass's *NZ Data Archive Service* has a small collection, but has hardly eaten into the large store of surveys which are produced and which should be preserved. Many surveys into health sociology issues have been mounted and in addition the centre has been active in exploiting census data for policy-related uses.

To provide a portrait of the interconnection between sociology and statistics in New Zealand I use articles appearing in pages of *New Zealand Sociology* that either report statistical data or offer a view of where it is being used. The material found is stronger on reporting studies published elsewhere than studies based on statistics themselves. Several short articles report on organizations or programmes which commission surveys (or otherwise utilise statistical material):

- Butcher (2009) describes The Asia New Zealand Foundation's research programme which includes commission of surveys to regularly monitor attitudes and behaviour (mainly) of New Zealanders to Asia,
- Callister (2011) describes the features of a major study into gender which draws on various statistical sources.
- Cotterell (2009) describes 'The 'Family, Whanau and Wellbeing Project': 2003-2008 which repackages census data on families to investigate trends over time in well-being.
- Crothers & Billot (2010) describe the surveys (the local component of an international project) developed for The New Zealand Internet Project.
- Davis (2011) Reviews one of several volumes in which historical sociologists have investigated class and community in Caversham, Dunedin and more generally.
- Fairweather (2011) describes the TUI research programme into the agricultural innovations of farmers

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nzpost.co.nz/business/direct-marketing/direct-marketing-products-services/profiling-analytics-insight/genius>

- Humpage (2011) overviews her research project into New Zealand attitudes to social citizenship in the context of neoliberalism which draws in particular on NZES data.
- Meares et al. (2009) describe a research programme on The Economic Integration of Immigrants
- Perry (2011) describes the several waves of the New Zealand Study of Values Survey
- Smith (2009) reviews the collection edited by Kevin Dew and Anna Matheson on health inequalities in which considerable quantitative data is mobilised.

Election surveys are regularly collected before and after each general election (and to a more limited extent around local government and other elections). Crothers (2004) describes the two main New Zealand research studies while Vowles (2010) reviews a follow-up volume. Educational research has produced many quantitative studies and the Health sector includes large volumes of data collection and analysis.

In terms of more substantive studies which have appeared in NZS since 2000:

- Crothers (2000) utilizes data from the NZES to investigate Social effects of the New Zealand neo-liberal experiment and in particular changes over time of the subjective financial situations of households
- Crothers (2009) uses a range of data to bring to bear public and other relevant views to bear on the important policy topic of closing the income gap with Australia.
- Dupuis (1999) investigates 'What it means to be a 'New Zealander using data from an educational survey's question on ethnicity.
- Fairburn, Miles & Haslett, S J (2005) The New Zealand social structure, 1911-1951: did it become more middle class? *New Zealand Sociology*, 2005; v.20 n.1:p.20-45
- Gale & Crothers (2011) investigate Māori social wellbeing drawing on data from the 2008 General Social Survey. *New Zealand sociology (Online)*, 2011; v.26 special issue:p.76-90
- Hayes (2005) uses census data to investigate the changing composition of New Zealand's class structure, 1896-2001.
- Hoverd & Sibley (2009) use survey data to investigate Religious and denominational diversity in New Zealand
- Hoverd (2008) uses census data to investigate Religious demographic change in New Zealand between 1966 and 2006.
- Humpage (2012) uses NZES data to investigate Māori and Pasifika attitudes towards employment and the unemployed

- Kiro, Von Randow & Sporle (2011) investigate Trends in Māori wellbeing over the 1981-2006 period using census data

Although this appears to be a quite considerable collection the journal carried few substantive analyses and most accounts are more focused on the research program than its results. It also must be noted that the journal has probably published more quantitative material than appears on SAANZ Conference programmes and that many quantitative contributors are from outside sociology.

Little is known about the sociology of statistics in New Zealand. The contributors in Crothers (ed., 1986) describe the *Uses and limitations of census data: recent censuses to 1981*. Lowe (1984) provides guidelines for Comparing 1981 and earlier census data. Crothers (2007) provides a Finding List of Surveys in New Zealand 1995–2007. Crothers, Woodley & Davies (2007) investigate the utilisation of official statistics in the Auckland region.

The OSS can provide important classificatory schema for key social variables used in any survey (this includes material for computer-assisted coding). StatsNZ has resources to ensure detailed validity of codes and also international linkages. However, there can be a loss of sociological veracity given the different concerns of official statisticians – and occasionally their need to pay attention to political directions.

Social statisticians are often critical of official statisticians and there is need for scholarly scrutiny of statistical work. A large debate has swirled around questions of ethnic (and to some extent national) identity with a variety of datasets being developed and/or pressed into service: one example is Kukutai & Callister (2009). (See also McClean, Patterson and Swain (eds.) reviewed by Pearson, 2013.) Methodological research into this issue has advanced substantive understanding of ethnicity in New Zealand. Some methodological work has developed better social measures; e.g. Milne (2012) describes how he produced the most recent update in a series to produce a New Zealand Socio-economic Index (NZSEI-06).

Again, UK work on the sociology of statistics – public understanding – has not been systematically carried out in NZ- although some unpublished data is available. In the UK survey research has revealed a perception gap between the public's view of the state of society and some of the objective evidence. This is because people draw on their personal experiences and anecdotal evidence to shape their understandings, which then affects broader perceptions of society. As a result people are often wrong about social facts but also place

little trust and value in statistics. The Statistics New Zealand (2003) Public Attitudes Survey examines concerns with privacy etc.

One emerging user is the Royal Society of New Zealand which is currently undertaking a major interdisciplinary social science review, based on the 2013 census, of the changing New Zealand population, and the implications of this for the economy, social cohesion, education, and health. A large network of scholars will be contributing to produce an interdisciplinary review of the evidence and current state of knowledge, integrating the 2013 Census results. The resulting report, to be released midway through 2014, will be an overview of the changing New Zealand population and the impact this will have on a broad range of areas:

- the composition of our main cities and provincial regions
- the economy and labour market
- health and education
- indigeneity
- our sense of 'NZ identity'
- our place in the world.

## **Conclusions**

Some of the large questions of sociology require to be addressed through (at least in part) statistical means. The New Zealand sociological community surely needs to be aware of the data available, to critique and contextualise but above all the available material and to just as assiduously pursue its own separate statistical investigations where warranted. This editorial is not intended to valorise statistical information over other forms of data collection and other approaches to data analysis, although perhaps some redress and balance is in order. Statistical work is more likely carried out in the province of other disciplines – economics, geography, psychology, political science, educational research. Sociology seems to have abandoned earlier practises of teaching compulsory social statistics papers at undergraduate level and so both staff and students are under-equipped. This has been coupled with a lessened concern with macro-sociological issues. However, other disciplines retain a statistical concern (especially economics and psychology) and the more applied disciplines (education, health etc.) have close working relationships with schools, hospitals etc in their area of expertise which generated data and calls for statistical explanations. But, insufficient attention from sociologists means that social data is not always used to best advantage, such as sociology's

concern with differentiation and inequalities and with how the micro is connected up with the macro levels of society.

It is not just the contribution of official statistics to New Zealand sociology which we should be pondering but also the bigger concerns around application of sociological perspectives and knowledge to official (and other) statistics to assist public debate and public policy. In this task sociologists may need to engaged in debate those with other statistical agendas.

How can improvements be made? In other jurisdictions call for better statistics training, this also seems to be an issue in NZ although we have no body which can readily encourage more statistical training and development of this side of the social research enterprise. Until sociologists join the statistics game, social data will be left in the hands of other (less sociologically-astute) disciplines.

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## **Egalitarian Myths in New Zealand: a review of public opinion data on inequality and redistribution**

*Peter Skilling*

### **Abstract**

Economic inequality in developed western countries, including New Zealand, is a pressing social issue. Besides concerns of fairness, current high levels of inequality are associated with a range of socially damaging consequences. Drawing on new and existing data, this article presents a summary and an analysis of New Zealanders' beliefs about economic inequality and political redistribution. It explicates and explores some apparent puzzles and paradoxes within the data, including the divergence found between respondents' (declining, but still substantial) level of concern about economic inequality and their (much more limited) support for specific measures that would reduce that inequality. The article discusses some key factors that appear to influence opinion on inequality and redistribution, and it concludes with suggestions for future research to further explore some of the puzzles within the existing data.

### **Introduction**

Inequalities of wealth and income in western countries, including New Zealand, have increased significantly over the last thirty years (OECD, 2008, 2011a; B. Perry, 2012). An important aspect of this trend has been the 'hyperconcentration of wealth and income' (Hacker & Pierson, 2010: 15-18): the increasing share going to those at the very top of the distribution (Atkinson & Leigh, 2005; Saez, 2012). This hyperconcentration has received greater public attention recently through high-profile public protests – most notably those of the worldwide 'Occupy' movement – and through increased media scrutiny (Collins, 2011; Ramesh, 2011)<sup>1</sup>. Neither has this renewed focus on inequality been restricted to voices from the political left. David Cameron, *The Economist*, the OECD and *The Financial Times* have all raised concerns about some of the consequences of rampant inequality. Public and political disquiet often refers to recent scholarly work that has shown the connections between high levels of inequality and a wide range of destructive social consequences (Hacker & Pierson, 2010;

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<sup>1</sup> See also many articles in the *Financial Times*' 'Capitalism in Crisis?' and the *New Zealand Herald*'s 'Divided Auckland' series, both from 2012.

Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009), including a decrease in social mobility (Corak, 2009: 7; Hacker & Pierson, 2010: 28-29; OECD, 2011a: 40; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009: 157-160), an erosion of social trust (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005) and an undermining of democratic responsiveness (Bartels, 2008) and (thus, perhaps) political legitimacy (OECD, 2011b).

New Zealand public opinion (see the summaries presented in Edwards, 2010 and Humpage, 2008) appears to reflect the observations of Peter Taylor-Gooby in the United Kingdom. Taylor-Gooby (2013: 31, my emphasis) notes that ‘during the past thirty years, incomes have grown more unequal, a small group at the top has captured a much greater share of resources, and poverty has increased’ *and yet ‘most people have become ... markedly less likely to want government to redistribute income or tackle poverty’* (see also Orton & Rowlingson, 2007b: 19-23). Why, despite the apparent harms associated with current high levels of economic inequality, do existing empirical studies indicate opposition to measures (higher levels of tax and redistributive welfare, or greater control of pre-tax incomes, for example) that might ameliorate these levels of inequality? This opposition seems particularly puzzling, given a plausible expectation in a democratic setting that ‘the decisive swing voter ... [who] almost invariably has an income lower than the average income in society’ would hold a rational self-interest in redistributive policies and greater equality (Hacker & Pierson, 2010: 77. On this ‘median voter hypothesis’ see also Stiglitz, 2012: 118 and, for a critical discussion, Lind, 2005.)

Questions of justice in distribution are some of the central questions of politics, if we accept Laswell’s (1936) influential definition of politics as the question of who gets what, when and how. And while a wide range of data on public beliefs about the legitimacy of economic inequality exists – large-N surveys including the three-yearly New Zealand Election Study (NZES, from 1990-2011), the New Zealand Study of Values (NZSV, 1998, 2004 and 2008), relevant modules of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP, 1992, 1999, 2006 and 2009) and the one-off New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey (NZAVS, 1986) all contribute to an understanding of public opinion – the data are patchy, with the wording of some questions changing over time, and some key questions not repeated at all. Further, despite the important contributions discussed below, these data have remained under-analysed and under-reported. Given that inequality – which affects the life chances of individuals and groups, and which is correlated with significant social harms - is

a supremely important social issue, this gap in the local knowledge base represents a serious democratic deficit.

This article summarises and synthesises existing data on New Zealanders' opinions about the legitimacy of economic inequality and of political redistribution, supplementing this existing data with new data from the 2011 New Zealand Justice and Equality Study (N=363).<sup>2</sup> It analyses the available data to fill important gaps in our understanding of (1) how New Zealanders' beliefs and opinions have changed over time and of (2) the major factors that might explain variations in opinions about inequality and redistribution. In doing so, the article identifies and explores some important puzzles and paradoxes within public opinion on these issues. It focuses on questions on which the data is unclear or contradictory and notes moments of uncertainty relating to the wording of questions. The analysis also finds varying levels of support for four well-established hypotheses that purport to explain variations in beliefs about inequality and redistribution and notes. The article argues that the ambiguities and contradictions evident in the data are important and valuable, in that they highlight areas in which further research – and careful theorising - is needed.

While the analysis is chiefly empirical, the article's concerns are also methodological and normative. Having contributed to a fuller presentation of what (we think) we know about public opinion about inequality and redistribution in New Zealand, it notes the inherently limited capacity of large-N surveys to explore the reasoning and values that lie behind people's stated opinions. The article concludes, therefore, by considering the methodological question of how we can best ascertain what – to put it provocatively - people *really* think about these complex issues. These questions of practical epistemology are related to a more explicitly normative question: if cogent arguments can be built to the effect that existing levels of inequality are (a) socially destructive and/or (b) at least partially undeserved, then why do these arguments seem to be so under-represented in public opinion about potential redistributive mechanisms? Drawing on examples of innovative studies overseas, the article concludes by pointing towards a research agenda better able

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<sup>2</sup> The NZJES drew on a semi-randomised sample of the New Zealand population based on the electoral roll. Compared to the larger-N surveys listed above, the NZJES had a narrower focus on respondents' attitudes towards economic inequality and redistribution. The survey was conducted online with a hard-copy option and was conducted with the financial support of the research grant AUT-RP2011-8. The data-set is available on request from the author.

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to explore how people construct and justify their beliefs about the legitimacy of economic inequality and political redistribution.

### **Context and Method**

The basic and well-known story of economic inequality in New Zealand since the 1980s (see Figures 1a and 1b<sup>3</sup>) is of a rapid increase in inequality between the mid-1980s and the mid-90s, followed by a levelling off after the mid 1990s and then a slight decrease since the early-mid 2000s. The rapid increase in inequality from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s was noteworthy in international terms (Humpage, 2008; OECD, 2011a), and it was associated with a range of negative social outcomes (James, 1997). The changes illustrated in Figures 1a and 1b were the logical and predictable result of changes in domestic policy settings as well as changes in the global political economy. The increase in inequality after 1986 was associated with radical policy reforms that included a reduction in tax and benefit rates, reduced public spending and the privatization of state assets (Kelsey, 1995; Easton, 1997); the levelling off after 2000 with policy changes in the taxation and state housing areas, and the Working For Families programme.

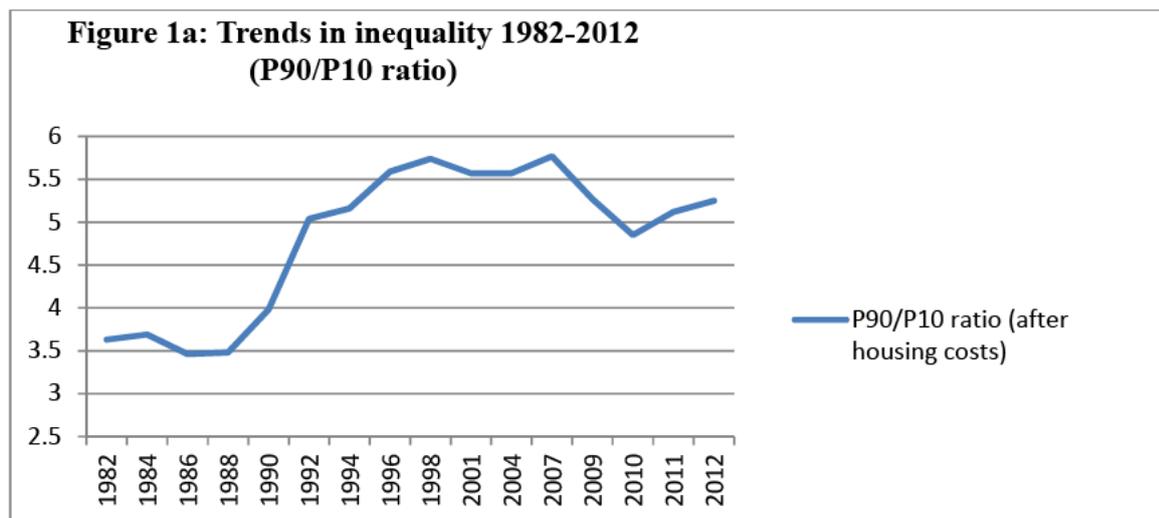
Changes in policy settings in the 1980s and '90s (and the associated increases in inequality) were justified as being necessary if New Zealand was to compete in an increasingly globalised economy (see NZ Treasury, 1984: 110, 317). They were also supported, at the level of political language, by an insistence on the necessity and desirability of individual responsibility and reward. The National-led governments from 1990-99 adopted a strong 'discursive focus on individual culpability' (Humpage, 2011: 83), while the Labour-led governments from 1999-2008 were more ambiguous. These latter administrations argued for a more active role for government, with Helen Clark (2000) stating that '[p]ure market forces ... haven't delivered the goods. The gaps just get bigger.' Their focus, however, was on reducing 'disadvantage' and

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<sup>3</sup> Two measures are used. P90/P10 gives the ratio between the values at the top of the 90<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, a ratio that 'provides a good indication of the full spread of the distribution, going as far as possible to the extremes without running the risk of being overly influenced by unrepresentative very high incomes or by the difficulties with bottom decile incomes' (B. Perry, 2012: 84). The Gini co-efficient is a measure widely used internationally that 'gives a summary of the income differences between each person in the population and every other person in the population' (B. Perry, 2012: 86). In both cases that values are calculated after deducting housing costs, which results in a wider dispersion of incomes

promoting ‘equality of opportunity for all New Zealanders’ (Ministry of Social Development, 2000) rather than reducing inequality *per se*.

This emphasis on equality of opportunity was in keeping with the broad precepts of “Third Way” politics. In 2000, Anthony Giddens described ‘equal opportunity’ and ‘personal responsibility’ as two cornerstones of this ‘new framework’, and proposed a shift in focus from the ‘redistribution of wealth’ (which – he claimed – repressed creativity, innovation and responsibility) to the ‘creation of wealth’ (Giddens, 2000: 6). Equality of opportunity can be seen as a sort of equality quite consistent with individual responsibility and reward; a sort of equality able to provide a justification for inequalities of outcome. This tension between equalities of opportunity and of outcome was no secret to Third Way theorists. Giddens himself (2001: 179) argued the need for the contemporary left to develop a ‘dynamic, life-chances approach to inequality, placing the prime stress upon equality of opportunity’ and noted frankly that such a stress would lead to greater inequalities of outcome.



(Source: B. Perry, 2013: 85)

This article’s investigation of public opinion towards inequality is based on an analysis of the data sets listed above, supplemented where appropriate by extant analyses conducted by others. As well as this longitudinal exploration of changes in opinion over time, the article also tests prominent theories that claim to explain why some people accept inequality, while others do not; why some



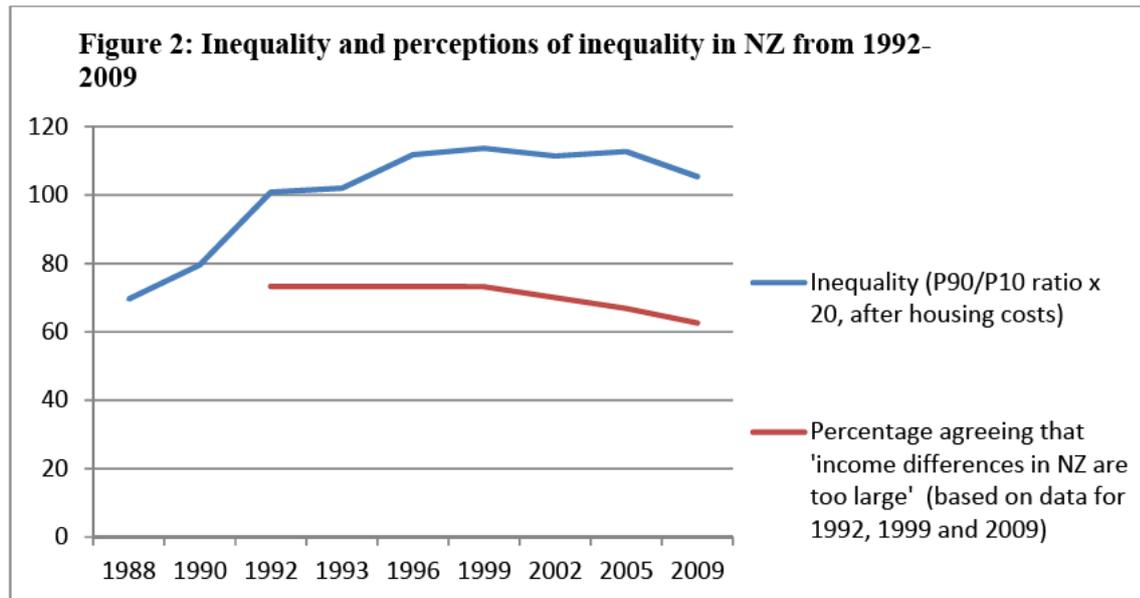
(Source: B. Perry, 2013: 87)

people oppose redistributive welfare, while others endorse it. It asks, more specifically, to what extent beliefs about inequality and redistribution are correlated with (1) one’s household income, (2) beliefs about the character of the poor and of welfare recipients, (3) levels of generalised social trust of others and (4) levels of trust in the state and its agencies. Correlations are tested by conducting cross-tabulations using SPSS software and the strength of the correlation indicated, where appropriate, by stating the relevant Phi or Gamma value. In order to cover a range of questions, this empirical testing remains at a relatively simple level: the article indicates instances that invite a more detailed and sophisticated treatment. The empirical analysis presented below contributes to a better understanding of New Zealanders’ beliefs about inequality and redistribution by filling a number of important gaps in our existing knowledge and by highlighting points on which the data is puzzling, ambiguous or ambivalent.

**Changes in belief over time: What do people (now) think?**

Some important longitudinal analyses of relevant data have already been conducted (Carroll, Casswell, Huakau, Howden-Chapman, & P. Perry, 2011; Edwards, 2010; Humpage, 2008, 2011) and insightful commentary on specific survey results (Collins, 2006; Gendall & Murray, 2010; New Zealand Listener, 2010) has already been offered. These sources highlight some striking changes in public opinion over time. Figure 2 shows how, even as actual levels of

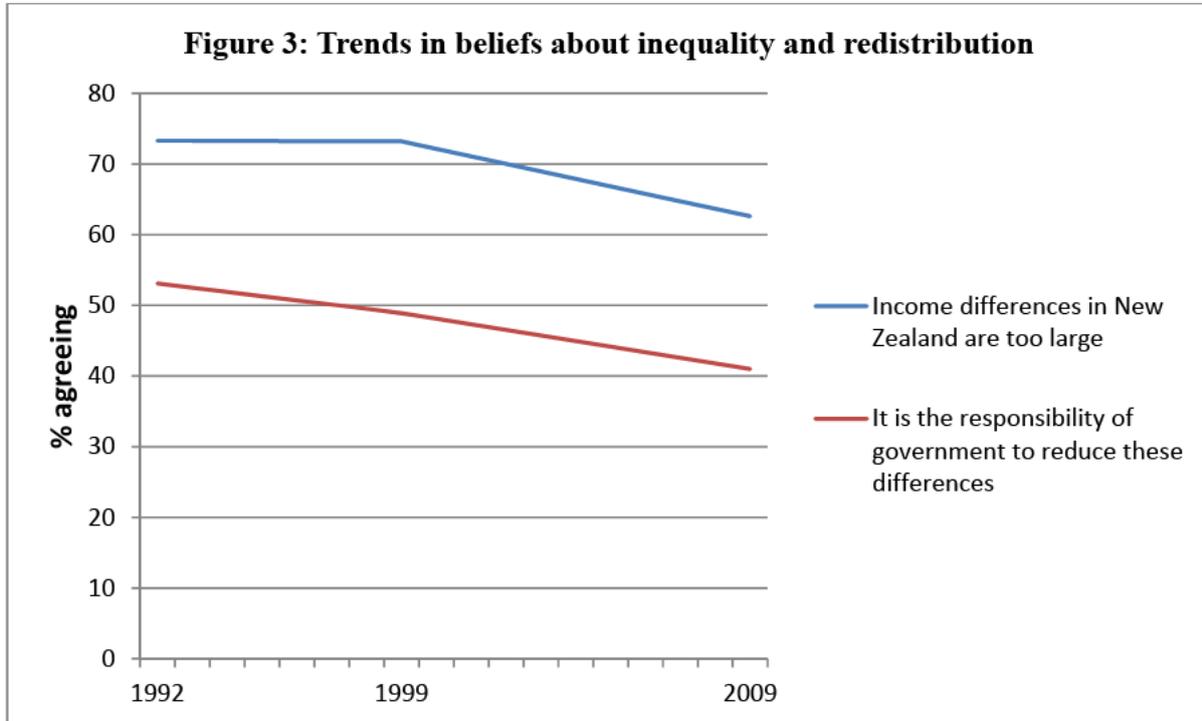
inequality increased from the late 1980s, fewer people perceived the gap between rich and poor to be too great (from 73% in 1992 down to 63% by 2009). It is worth emphasising, however, the obvious point that a clear majority still believed the gap to be too large, with a mere 16% disagreeing with that proposition in 2009 (ISSP 2009 data set). This continued discomfort with levels of inequality makes it significant that support for concrete redistributive measures declined sharply over the same time period.



Sources: P. Perry, 2010: 81; ISSP 1992, 1999, 2009.

Figure 3 illustrates the gap between endorsement of the propositions that (a) 'income differences in New Zealand are too large' and that (b) 'it is the responsibility of the government to reduce ... [these] differences in income'. In New Zealand, the proportion of people endorsing this latter proposition dropped from 53% to 41% between 1992 and 2009 (ISSP data sets). Even more strikingly, NZES data finds that support for the idea that 'the government should redistribute income and wealth from the rich to ordinary people' dropped from 48% to 26% between 1990 and 2005. Further, as Edwards (2010) and Humpage (2008) note, also drawing on NZES data, support for reducing taxes rose from 36% to 69% over the same period. Such findings are entirely consistent with international research, which finds broad-based agreement that inequalities are too great (Norton & Ariely, 2011; Lelkes, 2009:18) and significantly lower levels of support for government-led redistribution (Chapple, Forster & Martin, 2009: 5; Orton & Rowlingson, 2007b: 19). Bamfield and Horton (2009) suggest that this apparent disconnect can be explained in part by most people's subjective placement 'of themselves in the

“middle” of the income distribution’ (p. 5). They thus tend to see too much inequality (too large a gap between themselves and those “at the top”) while remaining wary of redistributive policy proposals, which they fear might represent an extra burden on the “hard-working middle” (pp. 28, 39).



Sources: ISSP 1992, 1999, 2009

Other data also demonstrate a divergence between, on the one hand, public concern about income inequality and, on the other, support for concrete redistributive measures. ISSP surveys routinely find that respondents think that high-income earners are paid more than they deserve (and that respondents’ *ideas* of what these high-income earners earn is significantly lower than what they in fact *do* earn) (Gendall & Murray, 2010; NZPA, 2010; see also Hills, 2004: 34 for similar findings in the UK). Using a different set of occupations and a different framing of the question, the 2011 NZJES derived similar findings. The public appears, however, to have little appetite for equalising pre-tax and transfer incomes through a legislated *maximum* wage. The 2011 NZJES found only 17.6% support for the proposition that ‘there should be an upper limit on the amount of money that one person can earn’ (with 73.8% of respondents opposed).

Norton and Ariely’s (2011) exploration of American’s attitudes to wealth inequality, and Neal, Govan, Norton and Ariely’s (2011) replication of the study in Australia, both found that respondents (1) radically underestimated the

amount of wealth inequality in their country and (2) preferred a situation even more equal than their erroneous estimate.<sup>4</sup> Given a choice between the distribution of wealth in the United States and in Sweden (the distributions were not labelled as such) 92% of American respondents preferred the (relatively equal) Swedish distribution. Tellingly, 77% of respondents preferred a system of absolute equality to the (highly unequal) US distribution. Strictly comparable data is not available for New Zealand, but ISSP questions in 2009 on the preferred 'shape of New Zealand society' (see Gendall & Murray, 2010: 3) suggest a similar picture. Given a choice of six shapes, most respondents preferred a society with most people in the middle, but believed society to be more like a pyramid, with a small elite at the top. This belief, in turn, appears to underestimate the actual extent of wealth inequality and concentration in New Zealand (Cheung, 2007: 6-8; B. Perry, 2012: 46).

Taken together, these figures present something of a puzzle. Between 1986 and 2004, income inequality increased sharply, as did levels of poverty (Perry, 2012) and the share of national income accruing to those at the very top of the income distribution (Atkinson & Leigh, 2005. See also The World Top Incomes Database, 2013). In this context, one might expect to see increased discomfort with inequality *and* increased support for ameliorating inequality, since the benefits of increasing inequality are clearly not widely shared. But the available data, as we have seen, refute these expectations. Further, the possibility that people grudgingly accept inequality as an evil that is necessary to 'ensure national economic prosperity' is not supported by the data. The 2008 NZES found only 17.6% support for this proposition, with 42.9% disagreeing.<sup>5</sup> Presumably, there are many who either (a) do not see themselves as benefiting from redistributive policies or (b) have been persuaded that inequality, while unfortunate for some (and perhaps even unfortunate for themselves) is morally justified as the result of differential individual effort, ability or contribution.

Certainly, the data show a growing acceptance of the doctrine of individual responsibility. NZSV data from 1998 and 2004 (Collins, 2006) show

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<sup>4</sup> Norton and Ariely's findings in the United States formed the basis for a widely-viewed video animation, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnijnsM>

<sup>5</sup> Note, however, figures presented in *NZ Listener* (2010: 15), where disagreement with the proposition that 'large income differences are necessary for New Zealand's economic prosperity' appears to have halved from 60% in 1992 to 32% in 2010. The 2010 figure, however, comes from a UMR Research survey and it is not possible to tell if the questions asked were directly comparable.

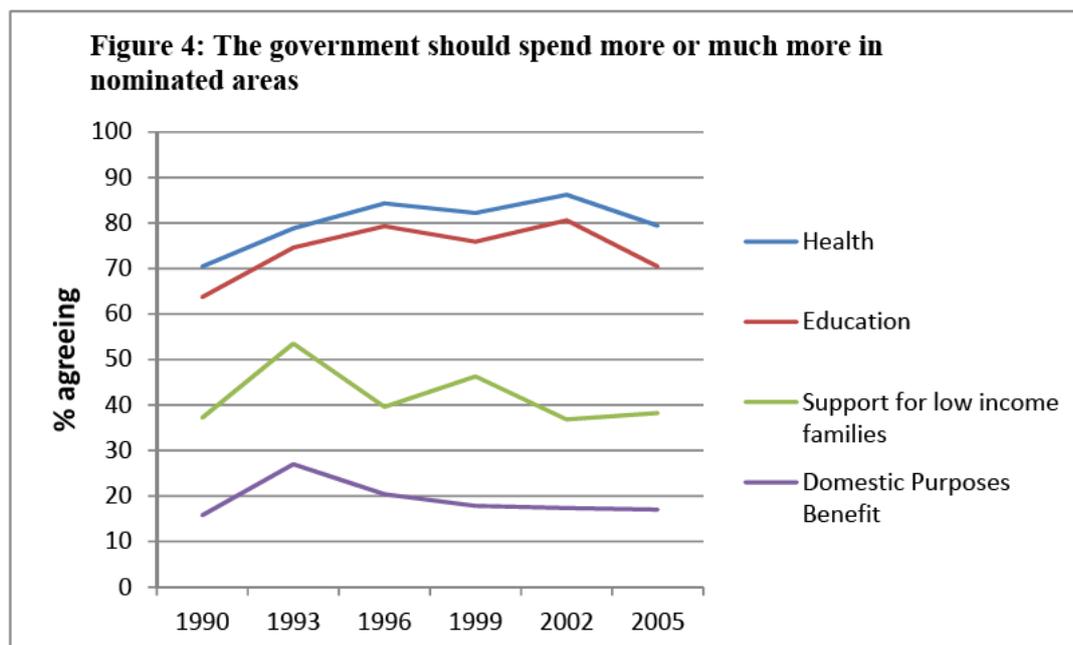
a marked increase (from 50% to 73%) in those agreeing that the needy in New Zealand are poor due to their individual and rectifiable failings: specifically, due to their ‘laziness and lack of willpower’.<sup>6</sup> These findings are broadly supported by the 2011 NZJES data, which find 64% of respondents believing that the poorest 10% of New Zealanders were often or very often in that position because of their own ‘lack of effort’, and 55% believing that an individual lack of talent was often or very often a factor. Much lower proportions believed that the position of the poor was often or very often due to undeserved social factors, such as a lack of equal opportunity (35%), discrimination (32%) or bad luck (19%). At the other end of the distribution, slightly higher numbers accepted the deservingness of the richest 10% of New Zealanders, with 72% agreeing that their wealth was often or very often due to their individual talent or ability. Far fewer people believed that luck (35%) or being born into a wealthy family (26%) were factors often or very often.

Again, it is important to stress that the data do not support the conclusion that New Zealanders have become unconcerned with inequality, or implacably hostile towards redistribution. As we have already seen, there remains a clear (though diminished) majority who feel that income differences are too large. The 2011 NZJES found 81% support for the proposition that the government should ‘reduce levels of poverty’. And while the data show declining support for assistance for the unemployed (see Edwards, 2010: 4) the NZES 2011 continued to show a majority (53%) agreeing that it was the government’s responsibility to ensure ‘decent living standards for the unemployed’, with 39% disagreeing. As Paul Perry notes (in Collins, 2006: A3), while support has grown for the *principle* of individual responsibility, most New Zealanders still support increased government spending on areas strongly correlated with inequality, such as health, education and housing. Indeed, Humpage’s (2008: 222-223) synthesis of the existing data sources show that increased state spending on health (not just stable, but *increased* public spending) has consistently been supported by strong majorities (typically 80% and above) with similarly robust (albeit slightly lower) numbers endorsing increased spending on education (see Figure 4, below). In both cases, a *decrease* in government spending was *never* advocated by more than two per cent of respondents.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The only other alternative offered in this question was that ‘they are poor because society treats them unfairly’.

<sup>7</sup> Except in the 2011 NZES where support for a decrease in spending had jumped to 2.3% (for health) and 2.5% (education)



Sources: NZES 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005; Humpage, 2008: 224, citing NZSV data.<sup>8</sup>

These findings introduce another puzzle. Given the widespread acceptance of the principle of individual responsibility, why does support remain so strong for the collective provision of (some) public services? The available data confirm, firstly, the well-established contention that redistributive policies are more likely to be politically acceptable to the extent that they can demonstrate a universal benefit (Carroll et al., 2011: 188-189; Goodin & Le Grand, 1987)<sup>9</sup>. Figure 4 also shows how, compared to the very high number supporting increased spending on health and education, there is very little support for increased spending on support for low income families and – especially - the Domestic Purposes Benefit.

These data might further be interpreted as demonstrating that New Zealanders, while still committed to an idea of equality, have increasingly come to endorse the provision of equal *opportunity* rather than the pursuit of equal *outcomes*. This interpretation would explain the lack of support for concrete moments of “outcome-based” spending on direct redistribution and specific welfare benefits, and the simultaneous strong support for “opportunity-based”

<sup>8</sup> The question testing support for more spending on low income families was omitted in both the 2008 and 2011 NZES surveys; the questions relating to health and education were omitted in 2008. They returned in 2011, finding 70% support (for both health and education.)

<sup>9</sup> Larsen (2008) provides an account that discusses public support for various welfare policy settings through an institutional account of welfare regime type.

spending in certain areas, such as health and education. If, as the data suggest (see Figure 3), many New Zealanders are uneasy with existing high levels of inequality but simultaneously opposed to policies of direct redistribution, it may be that a belief in equality of opportunity can help resolve this apparent tension. Those holding this sort of a view might reason that there is indeed too much inequality, but that inequality - seen as the result of differential effort and ability - ought to be rectified not by government action but by greater individual effort on the part of the poor. Inequality in New Zealand is seen here as best addressed not through direct redistribution but through the creation of conditions in which individuals - from whatever background - can rise or fall on the basis of their own abilities and effort.

The intuitively appealing notion of equality of opportunity has been popular in political discourse in recent decades. I would argue that its resonance is long-standing, and that the ideal of equality of opportunity is an accurate summation of New Zealand's historical "egalitarian myth". Andrew Sharp (1997: 195) puts the point bluntly: 'Equality of opportunity and unequal rewards based on past performance: these, in the Pākehā ideology, constituted justice.' A large component of the egalitarian strand in the national imagination has always been the insistence that New Zealand really *is* a class-less society, and that a beneficent centralised state really *does* work to the benefit of all, such that no-one is truly disadvantaged in New Zealand (see Sharp, 1997: 194-226 for a development of this point). The egalitarian myth (Nolan, 2007; Olssen, 1995) and a certain settler pride in the absence of an overt class structure (Willmott, 1989) have found ongoing expression in 'complacent and reassuring' national narratives that offered the 'warm, comforting assurance of the benevolent state' (McHugh, 1999: 103).

Critics, of course, have long seen the trope of equal opportunity as a rhetorical move that elides the significance of actual inequalities in wealth and power (see Stiglitz, 2012: 116 and Taylor-Gooby, 2011:466). John Schaar (1967: 233, 237) argues that equality of opportunity offers no more than the freedom to become unequal and that, in its profound individualisation, it 'breaks up solidaristic opposition to existing conditions of inequality by holding out to the ablest and most ambitious members of the disadvantaged groups the prospect of individual success and advancement' (Schaar, 1967: 237). Sharp (1997: 220), noting that people do not have 'abstract "opportunity" or "freedom" but concrete things like houses and incomes and capital and cars and

school buildings and teachers and computers’ argues that the distinction between opportunity and outcome is tenuous at best. It is a great strength of Max Rashbrooke’s (2013) edited collection to develop these points and – especially in the chapters dealing with inequalities in terms of housing, education and imprisonment – to demonstrate the ways in which unequal opportunities are entrenching unequal outcomes. While the trope of the New Zealand “egalitarian myth” is typically used to allude to inequalities of outcome, these chapters show how visions of New Zealand as a land of equal opportunities can also be classified as myth.

Despite these critiques, the support illustrated in Figure 4 for increased public spending on health and education shows that New Zealanders endorse the ideal of providing equal opportunities. The puzzle here is that the public are increasingly willing to hold people individually responsible for their own outcomes,<sup>10</sup> while simultaneously believing that more needs to be done (that is, that public spending in key areas needs to be *increased*) to make the ideal of equal opportunity a meaningful reality.

### **Relationships between variables: Why do people think as they do?**

The data we have surveyed thus far has thrown up a series of puzzles. Why, when most people would appear to benefit from greater redistribution, is there so little support for such policies? Why are there 20% of respondents who are uncomfortable with existing levels of inequality but simultaneously opposed to political redistribution? Why are there respondents who are committed to individual responsibility but simultaneously supportive of increased state spending in certain areas? Why, given cogent critiques of the notion of “equality of opportunity” has it become such a widely-endorsed principle? Referring to a range of authors, Humpage (2008: 227) notes that ‘contradictions in public opinion are not necessary the result of “illogical” thinking but rather demonstrate how “the public” draw upon conflicting sets of traditions and moral repertoires when thinking about political issues’ (see also Orton & Rowlingson, 2007b: 26-27). It is not necessary, in other words, to conclude that respondents are confused or mistaken when they hold what appear to be two contradictory views.

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<sup>10</sup> Recall that in 2004, 73% of New Zealanders believed that the poor were needy due to their own laziness and lack of willpower (Collins, 2006, p. A3)

A great deal appears to turn on how questions are framed and – more broadly – on how respondents draw connections between competing considerations. Lelkes (2009: 21-22), for example, observes that the apparent broad consensus in Europe in favour of inequality reduction weakens when preference for such redistribution is explicitly set in opposition to the role of inequality in offering incentives for individual effort. Bartels (2005: 15), meanwhile, notes that Americans, while concerned about economic inequality, ‘largely failed to connect inequality and public policy.’ Consequently, while the American public viewed increasing inequality as a “bad thing”, opinion polls found ‘high levels of public support’ for tax cuts that Bartels (16) describes as a ‘massive additional government-engineered transfer of wealth from the lower and middle classes to the rich.’

In the following section, I explore this question of why people think as they do about inequality and redistribution. To do so, I approach the data in a slightly different way, exploring the correlations between selected variables to test four well-established hypotheses that purport to explain variations in beliefs about inequality and redistribution. As part of this analysis, I note where further empirical analysis is required, before returning, in a more normative and methodological vein, to a consideration of the limitations inherent in the existing data, and an argument for supplementary ways of generating data on people’s beliefs and opinions.

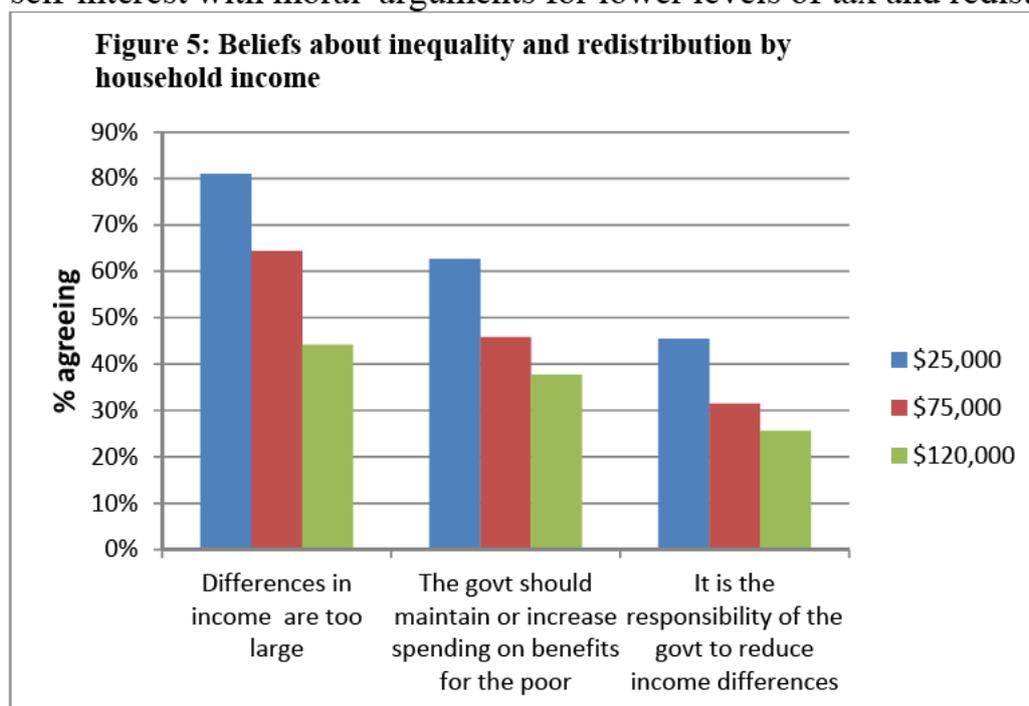
**Hypothesis 1 (the self-interest hypothesis): support for redistributive policies is (negatively) related to one’s income**

It is a basic assumption of neo-classical economics (and certain strands of political philosophy) that people are fundamentally rational utility maximisers: that they develop preferences and strategies based on a calculation of their own self-interest (but see Jasso, 1989; Lelkes, 2009: 20; Orton & Rowlingson, 2007b: 29-39). Certainly, this is the basic assumption underpinning the “median voter” hypothesis discussed above. From this starting point, we might expect that wealthy individuals would support lower rates of taxation and welfare, while poorer individuals would support a more generous system of redistribution. The analysis below tests the correlation between income and attitudes towards inequality using household income. Bryan Perry (2012: 26) sets out the case for using ‘equivalised disposable household income’, defined as ‘disposable household income ... adjusted for household size and composition’ as the best ‘proxy measure of a household’s material wellbeing or living standards.’ It is acknowledged that there are limitations in respect of the

data used here, in which household income is self-reported and no allowance is made for household composition.

Data from various sources (including ISSP 2009, NZES 2005 and 2008, NZJES 2011, NZSV 2004 and NZASV 1986) provide consistent results that support this hypothesis. (For international findings, see Alesina & Giuliano, 2009). Drawing on the ISSP 2009, Figure 5 below shows the relationship between self-reported household gross income and redistributive sentiments. The data show that those respondents from low-income households are almost twice as likely as those in high-income households to believe that economic inequality is too great, and that the government ought to address it. While questions in other surveys were worded and framed in slightly different ways, a similar ratio is evident in many of their comparable findings.

The data, then, offer support for this hypothesis, although only to a moderate level (the gamma values for the relationships in Figure 5 are all around the 0.25 level). Further, the survey data offer no way of actually testing the assumption of self-interest. They offer no way of exploring, more specifically, how high-income individuals balance considerations of immediate self-interest with moral arguments for lower levels of tax and redistribution, or



(Source: ISSP 2009)

arguments that a certain level of equality is desirable (even at the expense of

greater tax payments) for reasons of (a) fairness, (b) long-term economic growth (Stiglitz, 2012: 85-104) and/or (c) social cohesion (OECD, 2011b), where the later two reasons might be seen as working to the self-interest of all, including the wealthy. Similarly, the survey results are of little use in understanding how low-income individuals balance considerations of their own self-interest, given the competing claims of immediate self-interest (that might support higher levels of tax and redistribution) and arguments for the desirability of existing levels of inequality couched in the language of long-term self-interest (arguments based on, for example, incentive effects, economic necessity or the assumption (Alesina & Ferrara, 2005) that one might oneself be a high-income individual at a later stage.) Further analysis of the data might profitably take on the task of investigating the ways in which people make sense of competing arguments to arrive at and justify their opinions.

**Hypothesis 2 (individual responsibility): support for redistributive policies is related to judgments about the deservingness of welfare recipients**

This hypothesis is, perhaps, the most intuitively compelling of the four considered here. It seems highly likely that opinion on redistributive policies will be closely correlated with one's belief about the deservingness of those who will receive the direct benefit of such policies. In his work on deservingness criteria, Wim van Oorschot (2007: 36) argues that judgments regarding the deservingness of welfare recipients are largely based on perceptions of (1) their responsibility for, or their *control* over their neediness, (2) their objective level of *need*, (3) the extent to which they are seen as sharing a common *identity* with "us", (4) their docility, gratefulness or *attitude* towards the support they receive, and (5) their proven or potential capacity for *reciprocity* vis-à-vis that support. In line with earlier findings in the U.S., van Oorschot's (2007, 38) work with Dutch respondents found control to be the most important criterion, followed by identity and reciprocity.

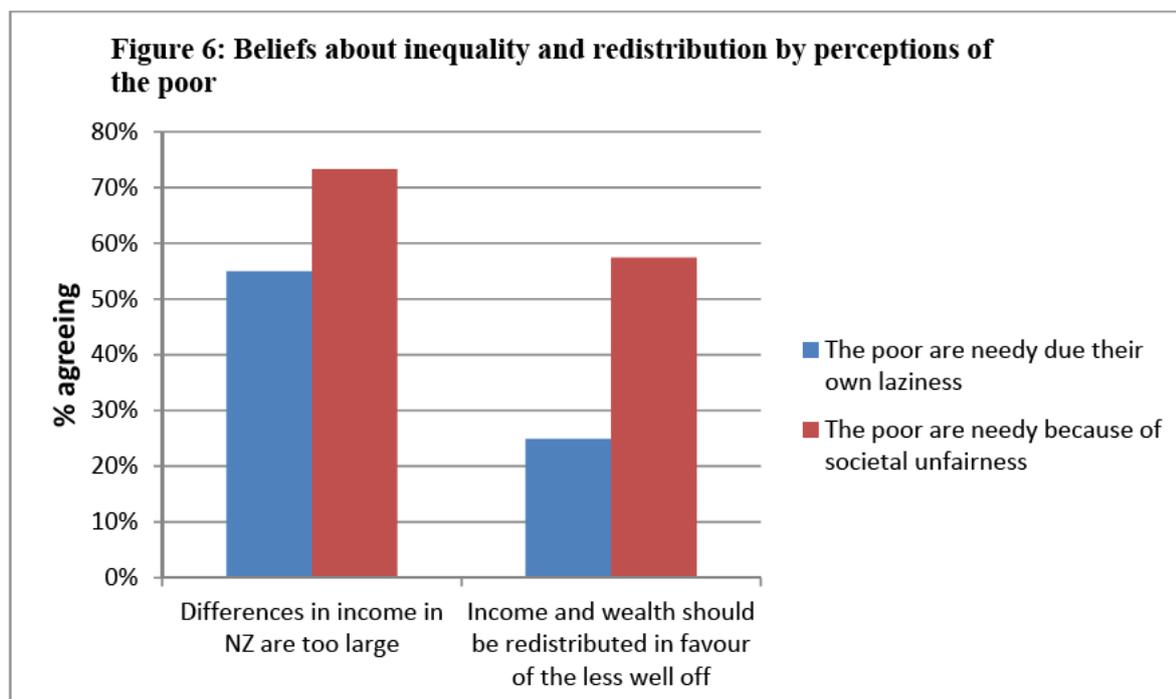
As an initial proxy for deservingness, I used the NZES 2008 question 'why, do you think, there are people in New Zealand who live in need?' (possible answers: 'because of laziness and lack of willpower' and 'because of an unfair society'<sup>11</sup>) and a similarly worded question in the 2004 NZSV, because they relate directly what van Oorschot (2007: 38) calls the core question of the criterion of control, *viz.* 'why are you needy?'

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<sup>11</sup> In both cases, the stark and rather limiting nature of the choices generated a high response in the third, residual category (neither or don't know).

Perceptions of the deservingness/culpability of the poor are associated predictably with perceptions of income inequality (see Figure 6, below.) In 2008, 73% of those who believed that the poor are needy because of societal unfairness agreed that ‘income differences are too large’ with only 6% disagreeing. A substantially lower proportion (55%) of those who believed that the poor are needy due to their individual failings agreed that income differences are too large, with 15% disagreeing ( $\phi = 0.226$ ). Similar patterns emerged on the more confronting question of whether something should be done about it. Over half (57%) of those who believed that the poor are needy because of societal unfairness supported the redistribution of ‘income and wealth in favour of the less well off’, with only 13% disagreeing. In contrast, only 25% of those who believed that the poor are needy due to their individual failings endorsed such redistribution, with 47% disagreeing.

Clearly, one’s beliefs about the individual culpability of the poor are an important factor in shaping one’s beliefs about inequality and redistribution (see Kymlicka, 2002: 156). This is, moreover, an important issue to understand more fully, given recent rapid changes in public opinion towards the poor. As Paul Perry (in Collins, 2006: A3) notes, the proportion of New Zealanders believing that the poor were needy due to individual laziness and lack of willpower rose sharply (from 50% to 73%) between 1998 and 2004. Further research might



Sources: NZES 2008; NZSV 2004

profitably explore why people increasingly consider the poor to be individually responsible for their situation, when cogent arguments can be made for structural causes of need (Taylor-Gooby, 2013), and when many negative opinions about welfare recipients and the welfare system in general are not well supported by available data (Centre for Labour and Social Studies, 2013).

Given that redistributive policies inevitably effect the rich as well as the poor (Rowlingson & Connor, 2010: 2), given Bamfield and Horton's (2009: 39) finding of strong support – post the Global Financial Crisis – for both higher top tax rates and curbs on executive compensation, and given Kuziemko et al.'s (2013) finding that provision of information had a large positive effect on support for the estate tax, further research might profitably explore public attitudes to the deservingness of the rich (see Orton & Rowlingson, 2007a; Rowlingson & Connor, 2010). As Robert Wade (2013: 51) notes, recent trends in the concentration of wealth and income 'should have prompted a large body of social science research and public debate about the question: "When are the rich too rich?"'

**Hypothesis 3 (generalised social trust): support for redistributive policies is based on trust in other people in society.**

Many authors (Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1994; Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Uslaner, 2002) have noted the vital role of social trust in the functioning of societies and markets. Eric Uslaner (2008: 290) argues more specifically that what is really important is 'generalised social trust', which relates to people 'you do not know' and represents 'a belief that other people, especially people unlike yourself, are part of your moral community' (see also Uslaner, 2002). Robert Putnam (2001, cited in Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009: 55) discusses the relationship between social trust and economic inequalities, arguing that 'the causal arrows are likely to run in both directions, with citizens in high social capital states likely to do more to reduce inequalities, and inequalities themselves likely to be socially divisive.'

Bo Rothstein and Uslaner (2005: 43) accept the mutually reinforcing relationship between inequality and low levels of social trust (there, is they say, 'little reason to believe that countries with low social trust will establish universal social programs precisely because such programs must be based on a general political understanding that the various groups in society share a common fate'). They argue however, that the causal 'direction goes from inequality to trust but not [directly] the other way around' (Rothstein & Uslaner,

2005: 48). Inequality, they write, ‘is the strongest determinant of generalized trust over time in the United States and across the American states.’<sup>12</sup> The basic argument is that inequality undermines both generalised trust and support for collective action, as different parts of society come to feel they have little to do with each other (Arts & Gelissen, 2001; Larsen, 2008; Stiglitz, 2012: 82).

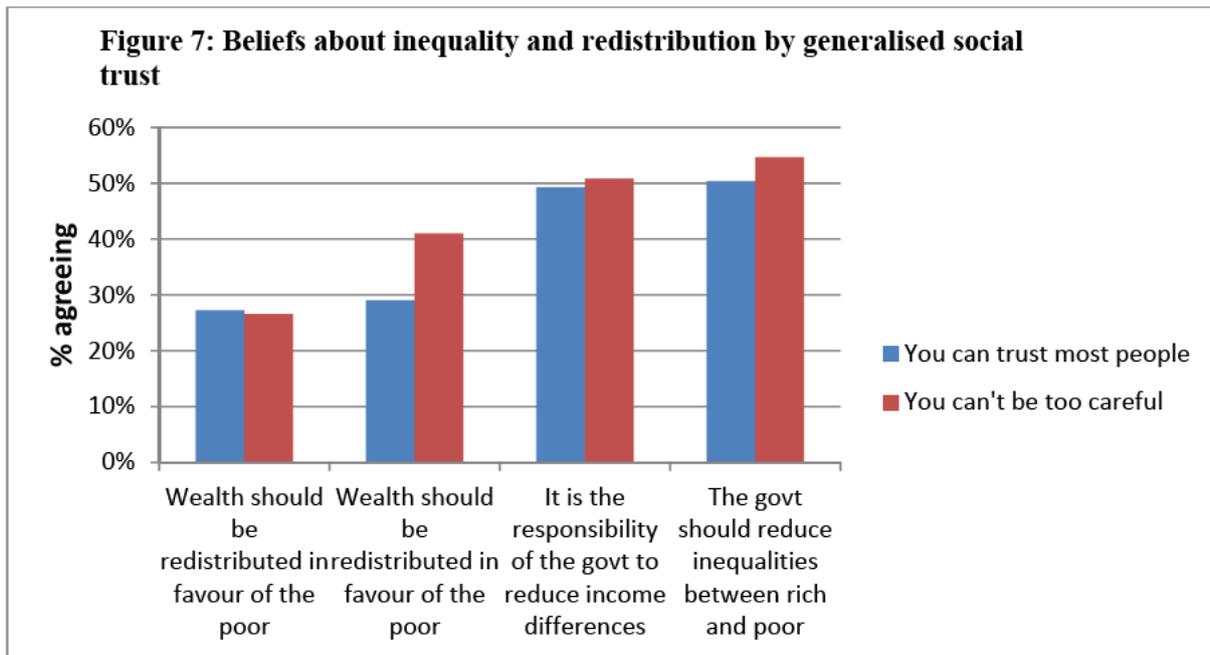
It is surprising, therefore, that the relationship between generalised trust and support for economic redistribution (as illustrated in Figure 7, below) is weak. As proxies for generalised social trust, I took responses from four different surveys to the question of whether people were seen as trustworthy. I then checked the relationship between these responses and support for the proposition (worded in slightly different ways) that ‘we should tax rich people more and redistribute income and wealth to ordinary people’ (NZES, 2005).

While the numbers vary across the four surveys (a function, perhaps, of different question wordings<sup>13</sup> - among other differences, the NZES and NZSV surveys offered ‘most people can be trusted’ as the first option, the ISSP and NZJES surveys offered ‘most people will take advantage’ first) it is striking that they all suggest that generalised social trust has no significant positive impact on support for redistribution. The lack of support for this hypothesis may appear surprising. Intuitively, support for redistribution would appear to imply a belief that others can be trusted with this redistributed wealth. However, a lack of social trust might also imply less trust in the wealthy, who might not be seen as deserving, or as able to be trusted with the powers and freedoms associated with wealth. In that sort of impasse, a lack of generalised social trust might potentially lead some respondents to want the government to “sort it out”. This, in turn, might be traced in cultural-historical terms back to Bruce Jesson’s (1999) notion of New Zealand as a hollow society, lacking the institutions of civil society that mediate between the state and the individual, and to McHugh’s (1999: 103) notion of complacent national narratives of the ‘benevolent state’.

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<sup>12</sup> They note (p. 52) with some puzzlement that ‘of [Putnam’s] seven policy prescriptions for increasing social capital in the U.S., none touches upon increasing any form of equality.’

<sup>13</sup> It is on the issue of social trust, incidentally, that the effects of question wording are most noticeable. In the 1993 NZES, for example, 57% of respondents (presented with a 5-point Likert scale) agreed that ‘most people would try to take advantage of others’. At the same time (i.e. *in the same survey*, 3 questions later), 64% agreed that ‘most people can be trusted’. On this latter question, only 19% disagreed that most can be trusted. This figure of 19% still held in 1999 (still using a 5-point scale), but it jumped to 50% in 2002 (and 54% in 2005) when (in both years) respondents were presented with a binary option.



(Sources: NZES 2008; NZSV 2004, ISSP 2006, NZJES 2011)

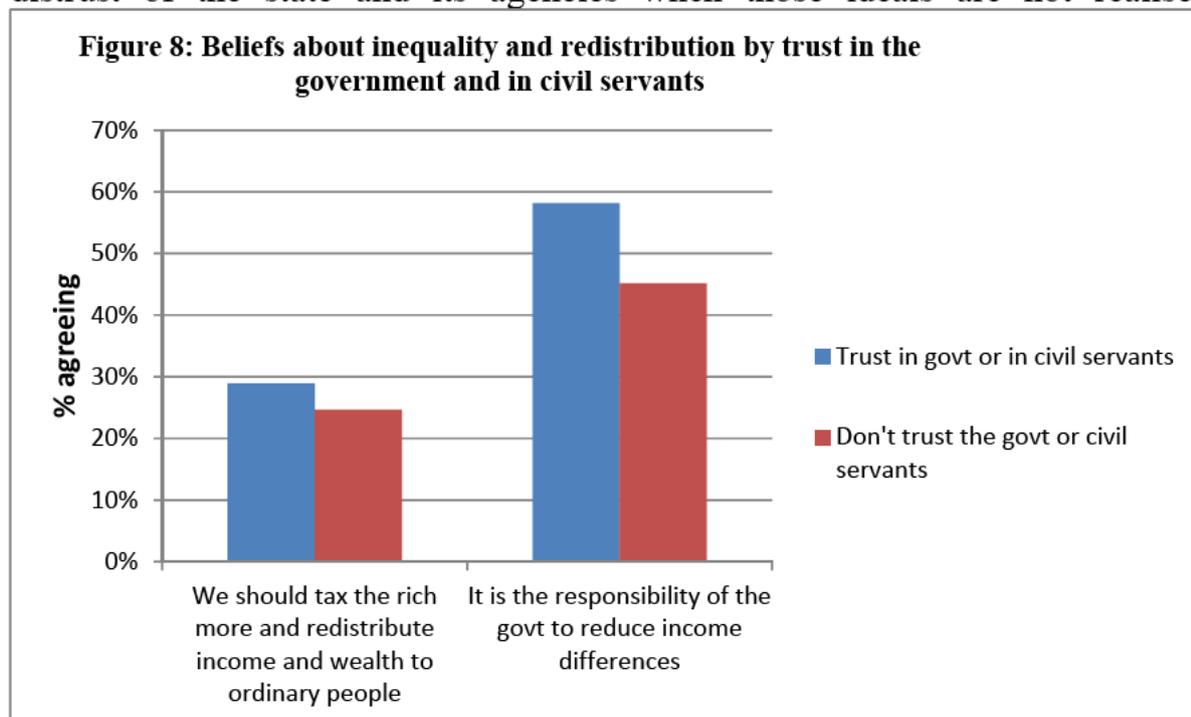
**Hypothesis 4 (trust in the government): support for redistributive policies is based on trust in the state and its agencies**

Intuitively, we might expect that trust in the integrity and competence of the state is a necessary prerequisite for supporting its redistributive actions. Indeed, Will Kymlicka (2002:157) argues that the nature of public debates about the welfare system suggest that ‘people who currently support right-wing parties would endorse redistributive policies if they were confident these policies would work to remedy involuntary disadvantages without subsidizing the indolent’ (see also Gilens, 1999). One is unlikely to support the redistribution of wealth through administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms in the absence of trust in the responsible agencies.

And yet the data offers only moderate support for this hypothesis (see Figure 8, below). Using responses to questions about trust in the government and in civil servants as proxies for trust in the state and its agencies, their relationships with support for redistribution (the same questions as in Hypothesis 3, above) generate gamma values of approximately 0.10. In 2006, 58% of those who expressed trust in civil servants agreed that the government should reduce income differences, while only 45% of those who held no trust in civil servants agreed that this was the government’s responsibility. While, once again, the numbers vary between the two surveys (in a similar fashion to the variation discussed in Hypothesis 3 above) the direction of the relationship is consistent between them.

The findings of the NZJES 2011 (in which the relationship was reversed, with trust in the government and trust in government agencies *negatively* associated with support for redistribution) have been discarded from this analysis. This survey drew on a smaller sample, which was reduced again in these questions due to the high number of respondents who expressed a neutral opinion with respect to the trust questions. Nevertheless, the possibility that a negative relationship exists for some people, taken together with the weak relationships found in the other two surveys, is suggestive. In her focus-group based research, Humpage found that participants who expressed ‘high levels of distrust of government were usually *more* likely to’ agree that ‘the government should take responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for. For Humpage, this finding suggests that a disenchantment with changes to government services under neoliberalism had ‘increased, rather than diminished, the expectations that New Zealanders have’ of the state and its agencies (Humpage, 2010: 5-6).

If we reverse the logic of Hypothesis 4, we might ask whether it is not just that trust (or lack of trust) in the state and its agencies influences redistributive sentiments. We might also ask if a strong commitment to the ideal of equality (of outcome and/or of opportunity) might actively engender a distrust of the state and its agencies when those ideals are not realised.



(Sources: NZES 2005; ISSP 2006)

Perhaps one reason why some people lack trust in the government is because they believe that it is not doing enough to discharge its perceived responsibility to reduce inequalities and poverty. This hypothetical might well be another profitable starting point for further analysis.

**A methodological question: How do we know what people (really) think?**

There is much, then, to be learned by analysing and reflecting on public opinion data regarding attitudes to inequality and redistribution. The data show us important changes in opinion over time, and offer suggestive insights into why some people think as they do. As we have noted, however, the data also leave us with a set of puzzles and paradoxes. Why did discomfort with inequality decline as actual inequality increased? Why do people who might benefit from greater equality oppose redistributive measures? Why has empathy for the poor decreased even as the level of poverty has risen? It is not my intention here to label these responses as irrational. These are complex issues, and responses appeal to multiple considerations of fact and value. There are many plausible ways in which one might reconcile, for example, a belief that there is too much inequality with a simultaneous opposition to concrete redistributive measures. One might invoke an over-riding moral belief that inequalities – while unfortunate for others, for society and (perhaps) even for oneself - are ultimately the fair result of differential effort and contribution (Deutsch, 1975; Miller, 1992). Or, one might hold that the values of individual liberty and economic efficiency preclude the value of social equality.

Nevertheless, these puzzles in the data suggest the utility of two complementary paths for future research. Firstly, they suggest the need for more – and more sophisticated – quantitative analysis. Further research might explore – as discussed above – the relationships between income, education and redistributive preferences. Or, in exploring the self-interest hypothesis, it might focus not on existing income but on assumptions of future income (see Alesina & Giuliano, 2009: 15-16). Alternatively, it might follow international research and focus on the role of information in the forming of beliefs by investigating the impact of the holding of factually incorrect beliefs (Gilens, 2001) about welfare spending (Centre for Labour and Social Studies, 2013) or the impact of redistributive measures on one's own outcomes (Bartels, 2005; Kuziemko, Norton, Saez & Stantcheva, 2013). Or it might follow recent experimental psychological work in exploring the influence of the psychological motivation

to believe in the basic fairness of one's own society (Jost & Major, 2001; Napier & Jost, 2008).

Regardless of the sophistication of quantitative analysis, however, survey data, is inherently limited in its capacity to understand how people arrive at and justify their opinions. While large-N surveys are indispensable for 'revealing [public] attitudes', they are poorly suited for 'exploring what motivates them' (Bamfield & Horton, 2009: 5. See also Dryzek, Goodin, Tucker, & Reber, 2009; Lepianka, Van Oorschot, & Gelissen, 2009; Swift, Marshall, Burgoyne, & Routh, 1995). And so a second important avenue for future research lies in developing a research programme that responds to Adam Swift's (1999: 360) call for attention to 'the mechanisms by which [people's justice beliefs] are formed.' Future research might profitably employ a research design that (1) actively engages research participants in a process of informed and reflective deliberation and that (2) attends to the constitutive influence of elite discourse in the formation of public opinion. This sort of approach informs my own current three-year Marsden-funded research project which is aligned with Bamfield and Horton's (2009: 5) aim of investigating 'some of the underlying drivers of [public] attitudes'. This project works intensively with a relatively small number of participants, allowing them to define key issues on their own terms, and to explore the reasons by which they link their beliefs and their policy preferences.

Focussing on processes of interpretation and argumentation, the project works to identify and analyse the discourses that people deploy to make sense of the complex issues of inequality, fairness and redistribution. The contention here is that most existing analyses of the public's attitudes towards the redistribution of wealth have paid insufficient attention to the constitutive influence of elite discourse, including the representations of political, business and media elites and power relations within society (see Schneider & Jacob, 2005; Schmidt, 2010). There is a need to supplement the insights generated by existing research with an exploration of the potentially distorting influence on public opinion of the self-interested perspectives of powerful social actors (see, among others Edelman, 1977; Fairclough, 1992; Fischer, 2003; Olson & Hafer, 2001; Zaller, 1992) and the capacity of informed and engaged deliberation to alleviate such distortions (Fischer, 2009).

Existing survey data stands as a record of public opinion on the legitimacy of economic inequality and of various redistributive measures. In

forming their opinions, respondents have, presumably, drawn on their understanding of relevant facts and values. They have been persuaded, perhaps, by certain arguments, and influenced – knowingly or not – by certain framings of the issues present in the public sphere. But holding one opinion, and being persuaded by one set of arguments implies rejecting other alternative opinions and arguments. While it is vital to understand public opinion as it is, research might also – for both academic and practical reasons - explore why other facts, other values and cogent counter arguments were not found persuasive or compelling. Why, for example, are the poor increasingly held to be individually responsible for their own outcomes, when alternative, structural explanations might appear salient in the context of economic downturns and the exigencies of the globalised ‘competition state’? (Cerny, 1997). Why does the individualistic trope of ‘hard-working New Zealanders ... [getting] ahead from their own effort’ (see Brash, 2005: A12) appear so much more widely-resonant than collectivist accounts of the ‘unearned, socially created aspects’ of wealth creation (Rowlingson & Connor, 2011: 11)?

Some existing work has articulated a more explicitly normative or practical dimension. In his exploration of the link between public opinion and political philosophy, Adam Swift (1999: 360) writes of the need to understand how people’s justice beliefs are formed and, therefore, *how they might be changed*. And against the backdrop of increasing inequality in the UK, one of the key objectives of Bamfield and Horton’s (2009: 5) study was to ‘investigate how a public consensus can be built around tackling inequality.’ Further research, of course, must remain committed to respecting people’s opinions. The risk of privileging the perspective and the position of the researcher must be acknowledged and addressed. Still, given the criticism that opinion surveys tend to measure ‘passive, individualistic and reactive’ opinion (Dryzek, 1990: 172), an argument remains for exploring the influence that informed, reasoned and reflective deliberation have on the political opinions that people espouse.

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## **‘A Profession of Faith’ or a Profession: Social Work, Knowledge and Professional Capital**

*Liz Beddoe*

### **Abstract**

Social work in New Zealand is currently in the midst of a major professionalization project with moves towards greater occupational closure, higher entry standards and greater oversight of education. Contradictions between the stated social justice focus of social work, its space in the intersection of personal lives and public institutions and the search for greater recognition emerge. There are complex links between perceived status of social work within complex institutional settings and the aspirations of practitioners. Bourdieu's (1984) concept of a 'distinctive space' proves useful in exploring the construct of professional capital in social work in New Zealand.

### **Introduction**

This article develops an understanding of professional capital in social work following a qualitative study of New Zealand social workers' involvement in continuing education in which raising the status of their profession emerged as a motivation for career development (reported in Beddoe, 2010; 2011; 2013). The findings of that study revealed social workers conceptualising scholarship and research as in part seeking the means to increase the professional capital of their profession. The journey starts with a conceptualization of social work as uniquely placed in the fabric of social policy; in an intermediary zone between service users of health and welfare services and the large bureaucracies that maintain them. Social workers and other stakeholders negotiate role and status within this zone.

Social work shares with other helping professions, (for example, health workers and teachers) a location on the margin between the everyday lives of citizens and the major social systems. Where social work differs perhaps, is that it is a social practice born in modernity, its development propelled forward by the shift in focus within social policy from human improvement and social need, to the current obsession with risk (Webb, 2006). Caught up in this shift, social work has become more embedded in the state apparatus in some countries and in commercial health services in others, and while this expansion has

bought some gains, it has led to increasing ambiguity about its core mission as a profession concerned with human rights and social justice (Olson, 2007).

Contemporary social theory assists us to investigate and analyse the nature of social work in order to better understand practitioners' understandings of the status of their profession and the nature of its journey to date. Contemporary social work scholars have drawn on the work of Bourdieu to assist in this interrogation (Garrett, 2007a, 2007b; Houston, 2002). Jenkins asserts that Bourdieu regarded social work as a solution for those whose access to higher education in the 1960s had "created a disjuncture between their subjective expectations and their objective probabilities". Educated people unable to find middle-class employment who saw "themselves as an 'ethical vanguard', [where] a range of 'cultural reconversion' strategies result in a 'profession of faith' ending up as a profession (Jenkins, 1992: 144 -145). Bourdieu (in Bourdieu et al., 1999) was not unsympathetic to social work and recognized the contradictions inherent in the profession very clearly. This passage was written following his interview with a municipal social worker in the north of France:

Social workers must fight unceasingly on two fronts: on the one hand, against those they want to help and who are often too demoralized to take in hand their own interest, let alone the interest of the collective; on the other hand, against the administrations and bureaucrats divided and enclosed in separate universes (Bourdieu, 1999: 190).

In this passage Bourdieu captures a strong element of the day-to-day discourse of social workers as they talk about their experience. Their sense of being in authentic communication with clients within complex health and social care systems while having to establish a distinctive and contested territory within those systems resonates with Bourdieu's 'fight on two fronts' (Beddoe, 2013). The profession's emancipatory goal is problematised, as in Bourdieu's analysis social work is an agent of the state "shot through with the contradictions of the State" (Bourdieu, 1999: 184). The attachment of social work to the modern welfare state, and its normative inclinations to manage citizens' messy problems, has intertwined its loftier aims with the drive of the state to intervene in the domestic sphere, of citizens. It is an essential player in the 'policing of families' (Donzelot, 1980). In this current era social work is increasingly involved in a broad range of activities beyond child protection (for example, in

health education and promotion, parenting ‘training’, sexuality education) that further intensifies its normative functions.

Bourdieu’s conceptual framework of fields, habitus and capital proved helpful in understanding contemporary social work. Social work may be viewed as a group of ‘agents’ occupying a *field*, in Bourdieu’s terms a “structured social space, a field of forces” (Bourdieu, 1998: 40). In his discussion of the usefulness of Bourdieu’s work for analysis of social work, Garrett (2007a, p.230) writes that fields:

are crucial in terms of the evolution of the habitus of those located or positioned there. Second, a field seeks to maintain its autonomy. So, for Bourdieu ...maintaining the autonomy of the fields of cultural and scientific production was to become increasingly important, indeed urgent, as the forces of neo-liberalism attempt to penetrate them, undermining this (relative) autonomy.

A further feature of fields is the competition between players which takes place within them for the accumulation of different kinds of capital (Garrett, 2007a: 230). Within the broad territories of health and social welfare, a profession can be seen to be defined by its position relative to other agents and by its ability to be competitive in acquiring various kinds of capital, especially social and cultural capital. Professions legitimated by the state are in a complex position when prevailing ideologies propose leaving many aspects of social and economic life to the logic of the market (Bourdieu, 1999).

### **The problem of being ‘professional’**

A review of the literature finds much discussion of the social workers’ engagement with occupational closure in order to control, define and manage expertise. A focus on a ‘process’ approach to professional journeys is useful at this point, primarily because it suggests a less elitist stance than earlier work such as the traits perspectives where professions were defined as an “enumerated series of attributes” (Roach Anleu, 1992: 24-25). What a profession *is*, is not a fixed, objective matter: a profession is constructed and given meaning by the stakeholders who are part of it or interact with it. At its core a profession is an exchange, it needs at least two parties to function. Modernity, even in the so-called ‘oldest profession’ has brought new stakeholders into the relationship: there are risks to be managed, costs to be determined and boundaries to be stated and policed. In modernity everyone is a professional (Wilensky, 1964). A process approach has proved helpful; as it allows for the ‘social mobility’ of occupational groups, while recognizing that

such activity is not entirely independent and autonomous. Statutory regulation of professions, for example, can't happen without approval of the government. Political patronage is usually required for groups to achieve greater control: for example, legislation is required for 'protection of title' of professions requiring regulation. Functionalist and traits accounts would assume that some tacit agreement amongst powerful forces would ensure a balance between professional self-interest and the public good, once certain attributes had been noted. Such traditional accounts rely on an expectation of trust and:

professionalism requires professionals to be worthy of that trust, to put clients first, to maintain confidentiality and not use their knowledge for fraudulent purposes. In return for professionalism in client relations, some professionals are rewarded with authority, privileged rewards and high status (Evetts, 2006: 134).

Evetts notes however, that further analysis revealed that high rewards are more the result of power and that the earlier interpretation was a consequence of "the rather peculiar focus on medicine and law as the archetypal professions in Anglo-American analysis, rather than a more realistic assessment of the large differences in power resources of most occupational groups"(2006: 134).

Witz, citing Wilensky (1964), favoured a 'less static' approach to the examination of "what an occupation had to do to turn itself into a profession" (Witz, 1992, p.40) and noted that "professionalisation is not simply a process of occupational closure, but is locked into broader sets of structural and historical systems"(p.56). Witz examines the gendering of professional projects: "indeed, gender was integral to the very definition of a 'semi-profession' which according to Etzioni (1969) has two defining features. It is an occupation located within a bureaucratic organization and one in which women predominate" (Witz, 1992: 57). In Witz's feminist analysis, gendered activities of caring and support, developed last century into paid roles in health and social services underpin the nature of the helping professions. Witz's case study of midwifery (1992: 104), for example, demonstrates the processes in which midwives battled for autonomy in childbirth as the medical specialization of obstetrics emerged. This remains a potent example of 'turf-conflict' many years later (Abbott & Meerabeau, 1998).

## **The Professional Project of Social Work**

Social work has attracted the attention of the sociology of the professions for many years (Flexner, 1915). Etzioni (1969) coined the term 'semi-profession' to explain a distinct difference in the nature of teaching, nursing and social work. His inference was that they were semi-professions because they had not developed the degree of monopoly power and public esteem associated with medicine, and law. The semi-professions were occupations that drew on theory and knowledge, promoted membership and participation, and adopted codes of ethics, but they did not seek to position themselves above the communities they worked for. Freidson (2001: 29) suggested that the professions represent the organization of knowledge into 'disciplines' in the Foucauldian sense; the constructed notion of:

Institutions set apart from everyday life. Special groups of intellectual workers embody the authority of those disciplines, their work being to create, preserve, transmit, debate and revise disciplinary content. The formal knowledge of particular disciplines is taught to those aspiring to enter specialized occupations with professional standing.

Instead the semi-professions preferred to keep close to service users along with the families and care givers who may also have an interest in the person's welfare. Witz (1992: 88-93) challenges this suggestion of 'preference' in relation to nursing and midwifery, suggesting that the history of medicine includes deliberate attempts to exclude women from medical school. She cites as evidence of a continuing androcentric approach to the study of professions, Rueschemeyer's remark (1986: 137) that the "high devotion/low power syndrome" of the social service professions "articulates well with women's traditional roles" (Witz, 1992: 58). The professional project essentially challenges this linking of social work with domestic roles.

The professional project needs to be seen not as a conscious, articulated project in the everyday sense of the word, but as a sequence of activities linked to an underlying purpose, which in the field of professions in society, is directed at the improvement of the standing and power of an occupational group, often over decades with many different actors. Part of this process is creating a distance between the practices that are constituted as 'professional' by members of a group, and those tasks that may be the business of volunteers or practitioners of lesser training or different focus. Oerton (2004) reporting research undertaken with therapeutic massage practitioners notes the need for

such workers to create distance between themselves by boundary setting, especially because of the widespread elisions between massage and sex work. There is a similar tension for social work (Hamilton, 1974). While social work struggles to maintain an egalitarian spirit, if it is to be successful in its journey towards greater public legitimacy, it is compelled to distance itself from the practitioners of similar work, for which higher education and credentialing is not required.

In the modernizing states in which social work first emerged it was drawn into the system of social policy and the political agenda for greater social integration. Lorenz (2004: 147) asserts that “social work was allocated its place and function in relation to the system’s need for setting firm boundaries and limits to destabilizing forces”. Thus social work developed a mediating focus between radical forces of social justice and the more normative, conservative approaches to social reform; the nature of care and control, the call for social action and the link to ‘social engineering’ that characterize much of the writing about the profession during its 100 year history. Social work is a phenomenon both created and captured by this intermediary function. This location creates a seemingly inevitable marginalization for social work in contemporary society, a place further weakened by neo-liberalist approaches to welfare. Social work can be conceptualized as a profession hovering in uncomfortable places, caught between aspirations to contribute to social justice and bureaucratic constraints.

While other professions were regulated much earlier, social work struggled with both the internal and external conditions that would facilitate professional registration, in New Zealand as elsewhere (Nash, 2009). Several possible explanations for social work’s position can be offered: gender and power constraints on social workers’ ability to influence lawmakers; social workers’ qualms about the politics of professionalizing further discussed below; the lack of a clearly articulated body of knowledge; the associated low levels of autonomy and lastly, the lack of a clearly demarcated social space or field (Bourdieu, 1984). This set of circumstances may have lasted for many more decades but for the changes in the public sector brought about through the ‘audit culture’ (Power, 1997 ) in which governments faced a crisis of trust in the professions, discussed further below (O’Neill, 2002). In spite of the marginalized nature of social work, by the turn of the century the importance to governments to at least be seen to be ‘doing something’ about ensuring high standards for public services outweighed any concerns about adding to the

number of occupations able to professionalize. Evetts (2003) notes that for service and knowledge based occupations professionalisation is imposed from above by managers of the organisations in which these practitioners work. For social workers in New Zealand the professional project was inextricably enmeshed with aspirations to greater power and control, while ironically achieved via political patronage within a climate of public criticism (Beddoe, 2013). Even with the advent of limited statutory regulation, the lack of protection of title, so important to occupational closure means that being a social worker can be claimed by anyone (Harington & Crothers, 2005).

### **The Crisis of Trust: Social Work, Public Image and an Anxious Society**

Earlier accounts of professions assumed considerable degree of autonomy in professional life. A practitioner's expertise and clearly delineated territory ensured their ability to act independently secured by a code of ethics and the commitment to the public good. In contemporary western societies, few professionals could truly claim to be fully able to control their own work, or even their own knowledge, particularly where their profession exists under the control of government systems of delivery of services (Coburn, 2006; Willis, 2006). This is clearly true of social work, given that much of its legitimization is as part of the apparatus of the state. Roach Anleu (1992) has suggested that, rather than conceptualizing strong professionalism and employment in bureaucracies as intrinsically incompatible, it is more helpful to examine how they work together within different organizational contexts. In the age of managerialism, diminished professional autonomy is not uncommon. With the advent of new models of public management, technologies of control such as evidence-based practice and clinical governance, bureaucracies assert greater control of professions—even medical dominance is weakened (Coburn, 2006; Willis, 2006).

For social work the search for improved status came at a time when the power of professionals had been challenged on all sides. In general this challenge stemmed from two major standpoints. The first challenge was critique of the widespread social acceptance of the knowledge claims and expertise of the professions (Illich, Zola, McKnight, Caplan & Shaiken, 1977; Foucault, 1979, 1980; Donzelot, 1980; Duyvendak, Knijn & Kremer, 2006). Habermas (1987) argued that the development of expert bureaucracies that intervene in the private lives of citizens was problematic because of the separation of experts

from contexts of communicative action in daily life. Such critique leads to changing roles of patients and clients and their reconceptualisation as citizens and consumers (Kuhlmann, 2006 and Kremer and Tonkens, 2006) note that social workers have been active in challenging the mantle of ‘expert’ and the development of less paternalistic approaches to working with people (Harington & Beddoe, 2013). In the new arrangements citizen consumers have increasing power and voice in services and are seen as partners in the development and governance of health and welfare services, although there is room to challenge some of these changes as features of new public management (Heffernan, 2006).

These forces have led to an increased consumerist aspect to the relationships between professionals and their clients as consumer movements have challenged professional monopolies (Freidson, 2001). ‘Clients’ have the potential to rebel against their “systemically defined ...client role” (Welton, 1995: 145). O’Neill’s Reith lectures in 2001 focused on the so called ‘crisis of trust’ and brought the challenges of the new arrangements for managing professional power neatly into the issue of trust in a risk society, the second theme in this review of professions. O’Neill found significant evidence of “a culture of suspicion” and suggested that the crisis of trust may represent “an unrealistic hankering for a world in which safety and compliance are total, and breaches of trust are eliminated” (O’Neill, Reith Lectures, 2001). In Beck’s (1992) ‘risk society’ professional autonomy is mediated by the heightened awareness of the need to identify and reduce risk to others. Evetts (2006) suggests that risk and uncertainty are significant features in categorizing modern professions and citing Olgiati et al. (1998): notes that many professions are involved in “birth, survival, physical and emotional health, dispute resolution and law-based social order, finance and credit information, educational attainment and socialization...and our negotiations with the next world” (Evetts, 2006: 135). Social workers deal with birth, death, assault, homicide, rape, mental illness, crime and every other challenging aspect of human life. The spectre of risk is ever-present and haunts the profession (Webb, 2006). A consequence of prevailing governmental responses to the riskiness of social work endeavour is to embed regulation as a tool of managerialism. It is within this climate that social work in New Zealand achieved limited registration (Social Workers Registration Act, 2003).

The literature abounds with examples of social work suffering the impact of the risk-averse culture; paradoxically this occurs at a time when governments and profession alike promote strengths-based and ‘empowering’ approaches to human services practice. Contemporary social policy and related managerial practices have addressed risk via myriad technologies for identifying, assessing severity and managing risk (Garrett, 2005). For social workers there is a particular set of anxieties as fields such as child protection and mental health are caught between the ambivalent public discourses of care and control resulting in defensive practice, particularly observable in child protection (Parton, 1998; Stanley, 2007). Professional practice is perceived as plagued by technicist approaches where risk assessment systems and check lists are put in place to minimize practitioner risk of missing something important. A current daily reality for those working in human service organizations is the extent to which services which aim to empower are at the mercy of contradictory forces that are frustrating and limiting for service users. Knowledge and reflexivity under these conditions become key elements in maintaining professional trustworthiness in a frightening and uncertain world.

### **Profession, power and knowledge: Building professional capital**

Olgiati argues that professionalism in contemporary society is now entering a new phase characterized by the coupling of “two contradictory epochal frameworks: the one epitomized by the notion of ‘risk society’, the other epitomized by the notion of ‘knowledge society’” (2006: 543). In the risk society, professionalism has to confront the “outcomes of the vanishing guarantees of modernity” (Olgiati: 543) while in the knowledge society, professionalism has to respond to the challenges of global and local informational systems. Olgiati suggests that due to the increasing competition about organizational domain and rising uncertainty about knowledge:

Western professions... will undergo ...a diffuse existential and moral insecurity about the contours of their professional jurisdictions, mandates and values. In general, to the extent that their entire setting and their habitus will be basically devoted to the imperatives of an all-embracing risk–knowledge management, they will also have to act as risk managers of their own sociotechnical competence (Olgiati, 2006: 543).

The conceptual tools of Bourdieu to assist in an analysis of the relationships between power, the professions in society, and the role of education in establishing and maintaining social privilege. Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital conceptualize these worlds as sites of struggle—for power and the domination of knowledge and expertise. Bourdieu (1999) identified the frequent disposition of social work to challenge oppressive practices from the inside of bureaucratic organizations. There is a political and moral imperative within social work's stated mission to take this role. In the current environment, social work negotiates this moral activity against a political backdrop of modernization of the welfare state itself and the neoliberal project of 'knowledge management'.

In many developed countries, including New Zealand, one crucial aspect of this modernization is the development of 'evidence-based' policy and practice. This has its origins in positivist, rationalist means of decision making (Sheldon, 2001; Webb, 2001) and in has had considerable impact on thinking in social work. The Evidence-based Practice (EBP) movement in social services has endorsed the notion that social work practice should be informed and developed from the results of scientifically conducted research (Sheldon, 2001): thus allying it more closely with medicine. This project has not been adopted uncritically and it is charged that EBP privileges positivist research based on a flawed understanding of social sciences research and fails to adequately account for the ambiguities and complexities of social work practice (Webb, 2001). Furthermore, it can be argued that the voice of social work clients can be lessened in EBP: the interpretation of their world is dominated by external disciplinary knowledge (Scheyett, 2006).

Thus in the current climate, social work is at the juncture of debates about the virtues of practice grounded in disciplinary knowledge and positivist science versus traditional relational approaches to practice, for example: strengths-based collaborative approaches versus medical models of diagnosis of problems and treatment; professionalization and bureaucratization versus the retention of grass-roots activism, casework intervention or social development. Debates about these choices can be construed as shaping the strategies for building the professional capital of the social work profession.

Professional capital is conceptualized as a form of symbolic capital; where prestige, status and influence in both institutional life and the wider public discourse are important to social workers, because they perceive

themselves as somehow lacking. It is useful at this point to discuss the significance of Bourdieu's work on capital, as some definitional issues are important when extending Bourdieu's concepts:

According to my empirical investigations [there is] economic capital (in its different forms): cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital . . . Thus agents are distributed in the overall social space, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the structure of their capital, that is the relative weight of the different species of capital, economic and cultural, in the total volume of their assets. (Bourdieu, 2002: 233-234)

Bourdieu defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources" linked to 'durable networks' of relationships and group memberships:

which [provide] each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. They may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, etc.) and by a whole set of instituting acts designed simultaneously to form and inform those who undergo them; in this case, they are more or less really enacted and so maintained and reinforced, in exchanges. (Bourdieu, 1986: 246)

Symbolic capital can be any of the three forms of capital, as expressed by Bourdieu (1991: 230): "symbolic capital, commonly called prestige, reputation, fame, ...is the form assumed by these different kinds of capital when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate". Swartz notes that "Bourdieu did not offer a theory of cultural capital per se. Cultural capital ...was always just one – albeit a very important one – among a variety of types of power resources – capitals – that individuals and groups accumulate and exchange in order to enhance their positions in modern stratified societies" (Swartz, 2008: 48).

Some brief discussion of the extensions to Bourdieu's concept of social capital is useful here to aid clarity. Portes (1998: 3) describes the various uses of the term as '*a conceptual stretch*' and is critical of the use of the term in an "unmitigated celebration of community" (p.22). A decade later Fulkerson and Thompson (2008) undertook a meta-analysis of definitions and extensions of

‘*social capital*’ and delineate two ‘camps’ in the usage of the construct. One camp is defined as composed of ‘*normative social capitalists*’; those social scientists

within the Durkheimian tradition... view [social capital] as a set of features in a social structure that lead to collective action in order to bring about mutual benefit for some aggregate of people. (Fulkerson and Thompson, 2008: 540)

This perspective assumes a universal explanation of social development incorporating norms of trust, reciprocity and social cohesion (for example, the work of Putnam, 2002). Fulkerson and Thompson’s second camp are called the ‘*resource social capitalists*’ draw on interactionist and conflict traditions and employ social capital as:

an explanation for uneven patterns in the accumulation of power, prestige, and other forms of inequality, in addition to recognizing the importance of context (Bourdieu, 1980, 1983, 1984; Schulman and Anderson, 1999). For this group, social capital refers to investments that individuals make in their networks. (Fulkerson & Thompson, 2008: 540)

In developing the concept of professional capital within the profession of social work the Bourdieuan approach is intended. The concept is *stretched* to examine the professional project of social work, in this usage there is a debt to Garrett and Houston (Houston, 2002; Garrett, 2007a, 2007b). Professional capital is not particularly well developed as a construct beyond the education discipline and appeared rarely in the sociological literature until recently (Noordegraaf & Schinkel, 2011) although there is considerable attention paid to the application of the Bourdieuan constructs of social and cultural capital to professional practices and the identity of professions (Houston, 2002; Garrett, 2007a, 2007b) and cultural capital in relation to education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). References to ‘professional capital’ are found mainly in discussion of changes and challenges in modern professions, for example Sergiovanni (1998) in education; Brodie (2003) in midwifery; Chau (2005) in nursing; Goldenberg (2005) in bioethics; and Lingard et al., (2007) in interdisciplinary research teams. Social historian Harold Perkin (1990) employed the phrase in his discussion of the rise of professional society in the United Kingdom, linking the increasing social power of professions to a form of property (economic assets) in the manner of social and cultural capital:

Since the essence of property is a right to (some portion of) the flow of income from the resource owned, professional capital –which is manifestly more tangible than corporate shareholdings, less destructible than building...and capable of self-renewal and improvement – is thus a species of property in the strictest sense. (Perkin, 1990: 379)

It is interesting that Perkin regards professional capital as a renewable resource and capable of improvement and this is relevant to use of the construct here. The concept of renewal is often applied to professional development and implies a continuing exposure to new knowledge. Given that the production of knowledge – scientific endeavour – is highly valued, then contributions to research and scholarship might be perceived to enhance professional capital further. Sergiovanni, for example, proposed building professional capital amongst teachers by suggesting pedagogical leadership as an alternative to bureaucratic visionary and entrepreneurial forms of leadership in schools (Sergiovanni, 1998). Sergiovanni defines capital in this context as “the value of something that when properly invested produces more of that thing which then increases overall value” (p.37). In midwifery Brodie employed professional capital as “a construct that describes the potential enhanced capacity that midwives could experience if their work was understood, visible and recognised in the provision of maternity services in Australia” (2003: 203). Brodie suggests that “professional capital may be the result of efforts to increase trust, self-esteem and self-confidence in individual midwives, which in turn creates opportunities for new learning, fresh challenges and change to practice, leadership in organizational systems and the culture of the workplace” (2003: 204). Chau uses the term professional capital similarly in the summary of an unpublished conference paper on knowledge in nursing, stating that she uses it “to inscribe a profession’s value, as being recognised and appreciated, by other professions” (2005: 671). Chau offers “a preliminary definition of ‘professional capital’ as the value of recognition and understanding of the contributions of a profession to include trust, appreciation, reciprocation, and the allowance of growth through change within the context of related professions” (p.671). Goldenberg (2005: 6) specifically highlights the links between the evidence-based practice discourse, neoliberal assumptions about ‘best practice’ and the building of professional capital: “ the political and professional capital of evidence-based medicine cannot be overstated ...this evidence-based practice is supposed to increase professional responsibility and accountability” . Proximity

to knowledge, science and 'evidence' for practice then are significant features for professional advancement.

If social capital has two elements (Bourdieu cited in Portes, 1998: 3-4): the first being the social relationships that allow claim to resources and the second being the amount and value of such resources, how then does this construct work when applied to a profession? Use of the term 'capital' implies a thing of value that can be invested in some kind of exchange or set of relationships that are reciprocal. For Sergiovanni (1998) this is created in schools through the notion of communities of practice, where leadership creates inquiry rather than rules.

We can thus distil from this discussion some the key attributes of the professional capital of any given profession within its social milieu. These desirable elements include but are not limited to the following:

- 1 The profession is trusted by others including users of professional services as well as other key stakeholders and other professions;
- 2 Mutually rewarding relationships exist within the profession with some cohesion between members and congruent values;
- 3 Mutually rewarding relationships exist or can be developed with other professional groups;
- 4 Members of the profession are able to occupy and perform well, roles of leadership, being invited or empowered to provide such leadership
- Reciprocal relationships exist, with some form of exchange;
- 5 Members hold some sense of collective identity and 'self-esteem';
- 6 Members are able to make a clear and understood knowledge-claim for practice and this requires both the application and production of knowledge;
- 7 The profession and its members hold a clear and well differentiated territory of practice;
- 8 Opportunities are available for ongoing and fresh learning within a profession that adds to the benefit of the wider multidisciplinary team and the service environment;
- 9 The particular profession is visible in the public discourse of the contributions professions make to society and is particular and recognizable for its distinctive contribution to social well-being.

Bearing in mind these attributes professional capital can thus be defined as the aggregated value of mandated educational qualifications, the acquisition of social 'distinction' within a territory of social practice, and economic worth marked by those key artefacts of professional status- occupational closure and protection of title. The territory of social practice and social welfare can be

viewed as a contemporary field. Gartman (2007: 391) writes that “Bourdieu conceives of society not as one big unified struggle for a few common resources, but as a conglomeration of relatively independent struggles for a variety of resources”. Modern societies include such fields as economics, religion, science, academic institutions and bureaucracies, especially those of the state. Bourdieu has rejected a conceptualisation of the state as one large body manipulated by the ruling class and Garrett (2009: 7) points out:

The neoliberal state has, in fact, multiple identities and multiple boundaries. So, to extend and complicate Bourdieu’s metaphor, the state may be less a ‘battlefield’ site and more an expansive terrain on which occurs a series of seemingly discrete and unconnected skirmishes.

Many of the places where these skirmishes occur are composed of distinct sub-fields where those individuals who enter, according to Bourdieu, possess class-conditioned dispositions “that will determine to a large extent where they will be positioned” and these enduring “predispositions condition how actors perceive the field’s opportunities” (Gartman, 2007: 391). Shelley (2010) aptly suggests that “fields are best understood as fields of forces rather than the concept of a static farmer’s field where the boundaries are demarcated by fences” (p.44). The boundaries of the field (s) are etched by a complex system of individuals and organizations and the relationships within delineate and tend to reproduce the dominant social practices.

Healy (2009) notes that student social workers have been found to have “substantially weaker professional identities than other comparable professionals such as nurses and allied health” (pp. 405-406): thus practitioners start may commence their careers believing they have less professional capital than those in other profession, including those they work alongside. How do we then conceptualize how a weak profession might appear if the desirable attributes described above of professional capital are not all present? Beliefs about professional status and power may be transmitted through the system of social work education and the relative absence of positive models of social workers in media and popular culture (Zugazaga, Surette, Mendez & Otto, 2006). Weak professional capital can be described thus:

- 1 Invisibility in the public discourse of professionalism or being associated with negative outcomes;
- 2 A lack of recognition for its contributions to the public institutions in which the profession is practised;

- 3 A passive role in institutions rather than taking leadership;
- 4 A weak or disputed knowledge claim.

### Conclusions

The author's research with social workers following the advent of registration, found that the practitioners' sense of being valued within their site of organisational practice was found to be highly significant (Beddoe, 2011, 2013). In highly differentiated multidisciplinary environments such as the health sector, social workers saw gaining higher qualifications and the conduct of research as strategies to develop greater capital. Complex links between perceived status within complex institutional settings and the aspirations of individual practitioners reflected a search for status that is 'felt' and expressed as a collective struggle. For social work, the dominance gained by the capture of specialist knowledge has never been achieved and its programmes have almost always been mediated via third parties. Thus it can be argued the profession has a weak and potentially disputed knowledge claim. As a consequence social work finds itself often in a circular relationship with knowledge use and production, facing considerable organizational barriers and constraints in both aspects (Beddoe, 2011). Social workers argue that they can't compete for professional status because they lack the credentials of other professions and yet can't gain access to valuable credentials because they can't compete for resources against other professionals with higher status.

For social workers in New Zealand the professional project seems to offer some greater control, as they expected registration would mandate and legitimize their aspirations for further education (Beddoe, 2010). In order to achieve oft-stated aspirations to act as passionate advocates for clients and communities (O'Brien, 2011) social workers aim for greater voice in policy and decision making. It is clear that the profession need employ a more conscious, deliberate strategy of development to ensure access to and engagement in scholarship, research and professional development in order to further its stated aims.

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## **No longer more educated: Changes amongst those of no religion in New Zealand**

*Nigel V Smith*

### **Abstract**

This study used data collected in three rounds of the ISSP: Religion series of surveys (1991, 1998 and 2008) to explore differences between New Zealanders identifying themselves as having 'No religion' and those identifying as 'Christian', being the two largest categories of religious affiliation in the country. Factor analyses were used to identify composite measures of 'strength of religious beliefs' and 'religiosity'. Differences between those identifying as 'No religion' and 'Christian' on these measures as well as a range of demographic variables are compared and discussed. Strength of religious belief, religiosity and frequency of childhood church attendance emerged in regression analyses as the most significant predictors of religious affiliation. Level of education and gender appear to no longer contribute to the differences between those identifying as 'No religion' and 'Christian'. These trends signal a shift in the dynamics of religious affiliation in New Zealand.

### **Introduction**

The proportion of people professing no religion has increased markedly in western countries in recent years (Giddens, 1997; Zuckerman, 2007). This trend began in the early 1960s (Brown, 2011) and in New Zealand has been documented in a number of studies based on census data. Comparing the 1986 and 1991 census data, Wilson (1993) pointed out a large increase in 'No religion' responses. Capturing a larger time period (1991 – 2001), Crothers (2005) argued that secularism was increasing, also identifying the decline in affiliation with major denominations. Between 1991 and 2006, census data records a decrease in general Christian adherence from 71% to 54% (Nachowitz, 2007). This trend has been shown to run parallel with an increase in religious pluralism (W. J. Hoverd, 2008; Lynch, 2008). There remains some disagreement about the extent of such changes, with other research suggesting that the census data does not accurately capture the complexity of the changes (W. Hoverd & Sibley, 2010; Lynch, 2008), and that significant growth in

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religious adherence has occurred among some denominations (Kavan, Vaccarino, & Gendall, 2011).

However, what is clear across much of the literature is that an increasing group of New Zealanders profess no religion. Indeed, understanding this group has been identified as a pressing need, both internationally (Brown, 2011) and in New Zealand (Kavan et al., 2011). There has been significant exploration of the way that spirituality has become detached from organised religion (W. Hoverd & Sibley, 2010; Webster & Perry, 1989). This decoupling helps to explain the increase in spirituality reported by several commentators (Kavan et al., 2011; Lineham, 2003; Ward, n.d.), who note that this rise is separate to the decline in general religious adherence. Other work has explored gender differences in religious participation in New Zealand, noting that religiosity is higher among women than men (Adsera, 2006), and that religion is more strongly of interest to women than men (Stark, 2002; Walter & Davie, 1998). More tentatively, shifts in religiosity, religious adherence and reported spirituality have been attributed to the effects of feminism (Brown, 2011), levels of education (Kavan et al., 2011), family religiosity (Kelley & De Graaf, 1997) and age changes within populations (W. Hoverd & Sibley, 2010).

However, little research has examined the relationships between these potentially relevant constructs and religious belief and practice amongst those professing no religion. The present study seeks to partly address this gap, by comparing the characteristics of this newly emerging group with those identifying as 'Christian', still the largest religious affiliation in the country. Data from the ISSP: Religion survey in New Zealand is strongly positioned to provide some clarity, as New Zealand has one of the highest proportions of people professing no religion (Hoverd & Sibley, 2010; Kavan et al., 2011). The ISSP is an international survey programme which has focused on religion three times; in 1991, 1998 and 2008. New Zealand has been part of the programme in all three rounds.

On each occasion, the main findings of the survey have been published (Gendall, 1992; 1999; Kavan et al., 2011), with the most recent findings from the ISSP: Religion series being particularly striking. The increasingly secular nature of New Zealand society was confirmed, constituted in both a decline in adherence to religious institutions and a reduction in the numbers of those who have faith in a traditional God-concept (although the proportion of those believing in a 'higher power' remains similar) Those professing no religion

increased from 29% in 1991 to 40% in 2008. The authors explicitly call for more research to understand the non-religious stream of New Zealand society, in particular the potential role of education in contributing to it. They also identify the gendered nature of religious participation as a key area for further exploration.

The present study seeks to partly address these issues by exploring the following questions:

1. How are those professing 'No religion' different from 'Christians' (being the largest two religious groups in New Zealand society)
2. How have these differences changed between 1991 and 2008?
3. What are the key relationships between contributing (a) demographic, and (b) religious variables and religious affiliation in New Zealand?

## **Method**

### *Participants*

In all three rounds of the ISSP: Religion in New Zealand, a simple random sample was selected from persons over 18 years old listed on the election register. Also in all three rounds, a physical questionnaire was mailed out to respondents, and they mailed it back to the researcher. In 1991, a total of  $N=1070$  valid responses were received (response rate = 66%) In 1998,  $N=998$  valid responses were received (response rate = 65%) In 2008,  $N=1027$  valid responses were received (response rate = 53%) In 1991 and 1998, the obtained demographic proportions in the sample were sufficiently close to the population figures as established by the most recent national census that no weightings were required. In 2008, females and older people were slightly over-represented, and a weighting was applied to bring these demographics into line with the census proportions. The present study follows Kavan et al. (2011) in applying a weighting (the same as originally calculated) to the 2008 dataset, but not to the 1991 or 1998 datasets.

### *Measures*

#### *Measures of religious belief and practice*

This study sought to take an exploratory approach, and therefore variables were retained or excluded from each stage of the analysis on statistical, not theoretical grounds. Factor analysis was used to ascertain which items coalesced into constructs that were comparable across the three datasets as well as a

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dataset in which all three individual datasets were combined. The process by which these measures themselves were identified is as follows:

1. All items not identical across all three surveys were excluded from further analysis.
2. A Harman test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003) was used to identify constructs that exhibited clear unidimensionality (Eigenvalues  $> 1$  for primary extracted component only, no significant loading on secondary extracted components)
  - a. All items not contributing to constructs were excluded from further analysis.
  - b. The remaining items were combined into constructed variables (by being converted into z-scores, summed and then being divided by the number of items)
3. Reliability of the constructed variables was checked, and all constructed variables with Cronbach's alpha values of less than  $\alpha=.7$  were excluded from further analysis.

Two unidimensional constructs emerged as valid across the three datasets (construct component analyses are presented in Results) 'Strength of religious beliefs' was assessed by 6 items with a mixture of 4-point and 6-point Likert scales. These individual items have been checked for individual reliability and consistency by a number of researchers working with the ISSP and findings based on the resultant data published in a number of leading journals since 1984 (Kavan et al., 2011). 'Religiosity' was assessed by 4 items with a mixture of 11-point, 9-point, 7-point and Yes/No response scales. These individual items are common across many surveys of religiosity. As Voas (2007) has pointed out, when measuring religious concepts, including both religious beliefs and religiosity, there are many challenges to establishing the validity and clarity of constructs when measuring them quantitatively. The strength of the constructed variables in the present study rests on their face validity, the clarity of the factor analyses and the reliability observed across the three datasets.

#### *Measures of demographics*

A number of single questions asked respondents to provide demographic information including age, gender, marital status, education level, employment status, political affiliation, religious affiliation, personal and family income, frequency of church attendance at age 11-12, household size and community size<sup>1</sup>. Religious affiliation was recoded into three groups ('Christian', 'No

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<sup>1</sup> The wording and response options for these demographic variables are available via the GESIS data archive at <http://www.gesis.org/en/issp/>. In some cases coding categories were

religion’, and ‘Other’)<sup>2</sup>. All other measures except age and political affiliation were converted to z-scores where 0 represented the lowest level of the variable and 1 represented the highest level of the variable.

## Results

### *Assessing construct performance: component analysis*

#### *Strength of religious beliefs*

The analysis resulted in a unidimensional construct consistent across all three individual datasets, which in Table 1 I have labelled ‘strength of religious beliefs’. All items loaded on the first unrotated component.

**Table 1: Component structure of ‘strength of religious beliefs’**

Constructed variable	Item wording	Primary component loadings			
		1991	1998	2008	Combined
Strength of religious beliefs	Do you believe in God?*	.88	.90	.92	.90
	Have you always believed in God?***	.82	.84	.86	.84
	Do you believe in life after death?	.82	.83	.82	.83
	Do you believe in heaven?	.92	.92	.94	.93
	Do you believe in hell?	.79	.82	.88	.83
	Do you believe in religious miracles?	.85	.86	.91	.87
First Eigenvalue		4.33	4.48	4.74	4.51
% Variance		72.20%	74.75%	78.92%	75.15%
Cronbach’s $\alpha$		.92	.93	.94	.93
Mean		.68	.69	.65	.67
S.D.		.25	.25	.27	.26

Note: Because a Harman test was used to identify unidimensional constructs, items which did not load clearly on to the first extracted component were excluded from analysis. Component loadings for secondary components of remaining items (all non-significant) are omitted from this table.

\* This item was worded “Please indicate which statement below comes closest to expressing what you believe about God?” The response options ranged from “I don’t believe in God”, to “I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it”. The item is paraphrased here for clarity.

\*\* This item was worded “Which best describes your beliefs about God?” The response options ranged from “I don’t believe in God now, and I never have”, to “I believe in God now and I always have”. The item is paraphrased here for clarity.

#### *Religiosity*

The analysis resulted in a unidimensional construct consistent across all three datasets, which in Table 2 I have labelled ‘religiosity’. All items loaded on the first unrotated component.

collapsed where one dataset had more fine grained detail than another, in order to ensure comparability. In other cases, coding was reversed to ensure that a higher value equated with ‘more’ of the variable in question.

<sup>2</sup> Note that cases coded as ‘Other’ are included in subsequent whole sample analysis, but not in analyses comparing ‘No religion’, with ‘Christian’. These cases represented 9.1% (1991), 6.9% (1998) and 8.3% (2008) of the three respective whole samples.

**Table 2: Component structure of ‘religiosity’**

Constructed variable	Item wording	Primary component loadings			
		1991	1998	2008	Combined
Religiosity	About how often do you pray?	.88	.89	.89	.88
	How often do you take part in religious activities?	.82	.83	.83	.83
	How religious would you describe yourself to be?	.78	.81	.80	.79
	Have you had a “born again” experience?	.71	.70	.72	.71
First Eigenvalue		2.54	2.61	2.65	2.60
% Variance		63.42%	65.26%	66.36%	64.96%
Cronbach’s $\alpha$		.77	.79	.80	.79
Mean		.34	.37	.35	.36
S.D.		.21	.24	.24	.23

Note: Because a Harman test was used to identify unidimensional constructs, items which did not load clearly on to the first extracted component were excluded from analysis. Component loadings for secondary components of remaining items (all non-significant) are omitted from this table.

### *Describing the differences between those identifying as ‘No religion’ and ‘Christian’*

Using ANOVA analysis, those identifying as ‘No religion’ and ‘Christian’ were not significantly different on a number of demographic measures, including political affiliation, personal income, household size and community size. These variables were therefore omitted from Table 3. Variables remaining included gender, age, education level, frequency of church attendance at age 11-12, marital status, employment status, personal earnings, family income, strength of religious beliefs (composite), religiosity (composite).

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics by religious affiliation**

		1991			1998			2008			
		No religion	Christian	F	No religion	Christian	F	No religion	Christian	F	
Frequency	% of sample	28.61	62.29		28.31	64.81		39.35	52.38		
	% male (of sample)	15.10	24.86		14.46	28.11		20.52	23.69		
	% female (of sample)	13.51	37.43		13.85	36.70		18.84	28.69		
Demographic variables	Gender (1=male / 2=female)	Mean	1.47	1.6	14.25	1.49	1.57	4.67	1.48	1.55	4.42
		S.D.	0.50	0.49		0.50	0.50		0.50	0.50	
	Age	Mean	38.65	47.63	61.39	42.31	50.6	48.77	41.68	49.81	53.02
		S.D.	14.7	17.25		14.96	17.16		15.17	18.12	
	Education level	Mean	0.61	0.53	24.33	0.70	0.64	18.76	0.59	0.58	0.27 <sup>a</sup>
		S.D.	0.22	0.21		0.18	0.17		0.32	0.31	
	Frequency of church attendance at 11-12 yrs old	Mean	0.42	0.74	78.98	0.37	0.62	115.47	0.29	0.59	189.34
		S.D.	0.32	0.25		0.32	0.27		0.30	0.28	
	Marital status	Mean	0.78	0.84	5.3	0.66	0.79	21.04	0.65	0.73	8.18
		S.D.	0.31	0.26		0.36	0.29		0.36	0.32	
	Employment status	Mean	0.81	0.66	21.19	0.78	0.73	5.59	0.82	0.76	9.82
		S.D.	0.26	0.31		0.27	0.28		0.27	0.30	
Personal earnings	Mean	0.39	0.33	9.24	0.45	0.39	6.06	0.58	0.55	1.95 <sup>a</sup>	
	S.D.	0.16	0.17		0.21	0.18		0.22	0.22		
Family income	Mean	0.68	0.61	7.17	0.71	0.67	1.90 <sup>a</sup>	0.86	0.80	11.50	
	S.D.	0.25	0.27		0.27	0.29		0.21	0.23		
Composites	Strength of religious beliefs	Mean	0.43	0.78	432.29	0.44	0.78	347.98	0.42	0.81	589.27
		S.D.	0.20	0.19		0.19	0.21		0.18	0.20	
Religiosity	Mean	0.19	0.39	260.05	0.20	0.44	264.13	0.18	0.45	394.61	
	S.D.	0.10	0.21		0.11	0.24		0.11	0.24		

Note: All mean differences are significant at  $p < 0.05$ , unless indicated. <sup>a</sup>Mean difference not statistically significant.

From Table 3, the differences in age, marital status, employment status and family income between those identifying as 'No religion' and 'Christian' are generally stable over time. Those identifying as 'No religion' are younger, less likely to be married, more likely to be employed and earn slightly more, although the difference in personal earnings between the two groups diminishes to non-significance by 2008. There was no significant difference in levels of education in 2008, whereas in the earlier years, those identifying as 'No religion' had been more highly educated as a group ( $F$  decreases from 24.33 in 1991 to a non-significant 0.27 in 2008) The gender mix amongst Christians has become less skewed over time, with females becoming increasingly less over-represented, while it has remained consistently slightly skewed towards males amongst those identifying as 'No religion'. The disparity between the two groups on frequency of church attendance at age 11-12 yrs has become stronger, with those identifying as 'No religion' reporting increasingly lower rates of childhood attendance than those identifying as 'Christian' ( $F$  increases from 78.98 in 1991 to 189.34 in 2008), although rates in both groups decrease across the three datasets. As would be expected the differences on strength of religious beliefs and religiosity are extremely clear, with Christians holding religious beliefs and practicing religious activities (religiosity) much more strongly/frequently than those identifying themselves as having no religion. These differences are strongest in the 2008 dataset, likely due to the slight increases in both mean strength of belief and religiosity amongst those identifying as 'Christian'.

### **What contributes most significantly to religious affiliation?**

The descriptive statistics above provide an overview of the differences between the two largest religious affiliations in New Zealand. In order to answer the slightly different question of which factors contribute most to whether a person identifies as 'No religion' or 'Christian', a number of regression analyses were undertaken.

#### *Protocol for regression analyses*

Univariate correlations for all demographic variables (including the main dependent variable, religious affiliation) as well as the composite variables identified above were assessed<sup>3</sup>. Regression analyses were conducted for each

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<sup>3</sup> The univariate correlation tables that informed the regression analyses presented here are available from the author.

of the three individual datasets and for the combined dataset. Variables were entered simultaneously into the analysis if they were significantly correlated ( $p < .05$ ) with the target dependent variable (religious affiliation) in each respective dataset. Thus the specific variables entered differed across each analysis. Note also that those respondents identifying as ‘Other’ were excluded from this stage of the analysis.

**Table 4: Regression Analyses: What contributes most to religious affiliation?**

		1991	1998	2008	Combined
Overall model fit	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.45	0.56	0.44	0.46
	F	44.28	86.38	98.05	39.62
	df	[9,494]	[8,532]	[9,1122]	[11,497]
Predictor variable $\beta$	Strength of religious beliefs	0.47	0.52	0.5	0.51
	Religiosity	0.15	0.15	0.12	0.12
	Freq. church attend at 11-12 yrs		0.13	0.09	0.12
	Age	0.11	0.12	0.11	
	Employment	0.13			
	Family income	-0.11			
	Marital status	0.1			

Note: All F values were significant at  $p < .01$ . All predictor variable  $\beta$  values had t values significant at  $p < .05$ . All non-significant coefficients are omitted from this table.

The obtained models account for approximately half the variance in religious affiliation (adjusted R<sup>2</sup> ranging between 0.44 and 0.56) Strength of religious beliefs is consistently the largest predictor of religious affiliation, explaining approximately half of the variance accounted for by each model. Religiosity also consistently explained a significant proportion of the variance in religious affiliation in all datasets. A number of variables were only significantly associated with religious affiliation in the 1991 dataset (employment, family income and marital status) Conversely, the frequency of childhood church attendance only related significantly to religious affiliation in 1998 and 2008, although the t value for childhood church attendance approached statistical significance in 1991 ( $p < .07$ ), which partly explains why this was the only demographic variable to remain significantly related in the combined dataset, despite not being uniquely associated with religious affiliation in the 1991 dataset. Age was uniquely related to religious affiliation in all three individual datasets, but in the combined dataset was narrowly excluded on the basis of a t value significance of  $p < .07$ .

For a number of variables where significant univariate correlations with religious affiliation were observed, no significant relationship persisted in the regression analysis. For example, no unique relationships between religious affiliation and any of gender, education or personal earnings were observed, despite significant univariate relationships being observed (in all datasets for gender, in the 1991 dataset only for education)

## **Discussion**

### *How are those professing 'No religion' different?*

The comparison group for those identifying as 'No religion' in the present study is those identifying as 'Christian', who in 2008 still formed the largest religious affiliation grouping. It is worth stating that no differences were observed between these groups, in any dataset, on levels of general happiness, political affiliation or size of community. Those identifying as 'No religion' were observed to be consistently younger, have higher family income, less likely to be married and more likely to be employed than people in the Christian subgroup. These differences are consistent with those found by earlier researchers (Crothers, 2005; Kavan et al., 2011), but may also reflect the fact that the obtained samples are older than the general population as recorded in census data (mean age in New Zealand was just over 36 years old in 2008 (Statistics NZ, 2012)), and the Christian subgroup (with mean ages of 47.63 (1991), 50.6 (1998) and 49.81 (2008)) consequently includes more retired or semi-retired people than the 'No religion' group.

### *How have differences between those identifying as 'No religion' and 'Christian' changed?*

There are several discernible changes in the differences between those identifying as 'No religion' and 'Christian'. The disparity in levels of education observed in 1991 (Table 3) has faded by 2008; in that dataset Christians and those identifying as 'No religion' have mean levels of education that are not significantly different. Though tentative, given the limitations of the present study, this challenges the idea presented by (Kavan et al., 2011) that education continues to contribute to a lessening in religious adherence. While its historical impact is clearer, perhaps the levels of religious adherence recently observed are being sustained by and for reasons other than a low level of education.

Similarly, although not as strongly, the over-representation of females amongst Christians lessens across the three datasets. Speculatively, this may be

linked to gains made for women by feminist movements (Brown, 2011) and indicates that the higher involvement and interest by women in religion identified by several theorists (Adsera, 2006; Stark, 2002; Walter & Davie, 1998) may be waning. Differences in levels of personal earnings also wane; those identifying as 'No religion' no longer earned significantly more than Christians in 2008.

The differences between those identifying as 'No religion' and 'Christian' on both strength of beliefs and religiosity intensified mildly across the three datasets. This is consistent with a stronger distinction observed between the two groups on the frequency of childhood church attendance. Those identifying as 'No religion' were increasingly less likely to have attended church as a child across the three datasets. Given this question asked about attendance at age 11-12 yrs old, the mean age of the samples, and the continuing decrease in current reported church attendance (Crothers, 2005), it would seem likely that this distinction will continue to become stronger for at least another generation. The divergence in levels of religiosity may have been caused by a mean increase in religious practice amongst Christians, rather than a decrease amongst those identifying as 'No religion': Those who previously identified as Christian, but participated relatively little in religious activities may now be more likely to identify themselves as 'No religion'.

#### *Which demographics matter most?*

The changes noted above in the analysis of mean differences between those identifying as 'No religion' and 'Christian' give one set of insights into the changing character of religious affiliation in New Zealand. However, a multivariate approach asks the question more precisely: which demographics uniquely contribute most to religious affiliation, and how is this changing?

Perhaps the most striking outcome of the regression analyses on religious affiliation in the present study is the absence of any unique relationship between either of gender or education and religious affiliation. This is consistent with the waning relationships identified above, suggesting a potential contrast with the findings of those researchers who have noted significant gender differences in the practice of religion (Adsera, 2006; Stark, 2002; Walter & Davie, 1998), and those who have identified education as a significant contributor to shifts in religious adherence (Kavan et al., 2011). This is particularly distinctive in the case of education, where no relationship at all (either univariate or multivariate) was observed between education and religious affiliation in either 1998 or 2008.

Another key finding is the strong unique relationship observed between strength of religious beliefs and religious affiliation. Though this is intuitively to be expected, the relative magnitude of this relationship (more than three times larger than the next most important relationship) is an important reminder that the internal beliefs and attitudes of people have a great deal of influence on their identity, alongside aspects of their behaviour and demographic characteristics. Less strong, but equally consistent and predictable, is the relationship between the doing of religious activities (religiosity) and religious affiliation. The more strongly one believes, and participates in religion, the more likely one is to identify as religious.

The emergence of childhood church attendance as the only other variable to remain uniquely related to religious affiliation in the combined dataset is an intriguing finding. It is notable that its unique influence was negligible in the 1991 dataset compared with several other characteristics such as employment status or family income. Closer examination of the beta coefficients and associated *t* and *p* values revealed a pattern which may suggest increasing influence across the three datasets included in the present study. If so, this would align well with earlier research emphasising the importance of family religious contexts in childhood for explaining adult religious adherence (Kelley & De Graaf, 1997).

### **Limitations**

A post-hoc analysis such as the present study is limited in many ways. All self-report data may be inaccurate due to response biases. Given the large sample sizes, the consistent methodology employed across the three datasets being compared, and the exploratory nature of the present study, this weakness is not critical. Though the quality of the original data is of a high standard, exploring questions that the data collection instruments were not originally designed for may limit the validity of the conclusions reached. The use of factor analysis to verify the dependent constructs (strength of religious belief and religiosity) before proceeding to subsequent analysis helps to ensure that the findings are meaningful, although this approach is less strong than using a purpose designed instrument such as those reviewed by Voas (2007). Using statistical and not theoretical criteria to guide interpretive decisions may mean that the findings risk being ‘cherry picked’, although conservative significance levels and statistical thresholds have been used throughout to avoid Type I error. While the

focus of the present study was to explore changes between 1991 and 2008, the use of only three datasets means that trends and shifts observed may be less reliable than if they were based on more regular observations.

### **Areas for further research**

The persistence of childhood church attendance over other demographic influences warrants more attention. The diminishing impact of education on religious adherence and participation also needs further exploration. Perhaps these are shifts reflecting globalisation and postmodernity; the impact of rationally based education on religious faith may be becoming less significant than family background, particularly in a New Zealand society increasingly characterised as multiethnic and multireligious. Similarly, the waning of gender effects noted in this study require more attention, particularly as this contrasts with other research.

### **Conclusion**

This analysis of three historical large-scale surveys of New Zealanders both confirms and challenges prior research. Consistent with much of the literature, those who identify as having ‘No religion’ are found to be younger and wealthier than those identifying as ‘Christian’. However, being more highly educated or more likely to be male no longer clearly distinguishes the ‘No religion’ group from those identifying as ‘Christian’. Further, these factors clearly wane over the 17 year time span between the earliest and latest datasets analysed in this study. After the strong importance of strength of religious beliefs and levels of religious practice, the next most significant factor in determining the religious affiliation of New Zealanders is the frequency that they attended church as 11-12 yr olds. While the decline in church attendance over the second half of the twentieth century may have been justly attributed to increasing levels of education and gender parity, future trends in religious affiliation may be more significantly driven by the strength of family religious heritage and associated beliefs and practices.

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## **Socio-economic factors and suicide: The importance of inequality**

*Bruce Curtis, Cate Curtis and Robert W. Fleet*

### **Abstract**

In this article we argue that socio-economic factors, particularly income inequality, have greatly contributed to the increase in suicide in a particular cohort. Age specific suicide rates drawn from annual mortality statistics are analysed. This clearly shows a cohort effect; suicide rates among 15-24 year olds rose markedly during the 1980s, peaking ten years later, and were supplanted by 25-34 year olds by the late 1990s. The first decade of this century has seen the rise of suicide rates among 35-44 year olds. The timing and average age of the displacement of the most suicidal group is very suggestive: every ten years the next oldest 10 year age-specific group becomes the most suicidal. This appears linked to a dramatic downturn in the New Zealand economy as these individuals reached adulthood; relative poverty and social comparisons seem important corollaries. This cohort continues to engage in suicidal behaviour at a significantly higher rate than others.

Suicide is a major public health concern internationally. It is one of the leading causes of death and approximately one million people die by suicide each year (Nock et al., 2008). For a number of years New Zealand had very high rates of suicide when compared to other OECD countries, particularly among young people. Over the last two decades suicide has been a leading cause of death for young New Zealanders, accounting for approximately 25% of all youth deaths (Accident Compensation Corporation, 2003). The total social and economic cost of suicide and self-harm combined has been estimated at more than \$2 billion (Langley, 2010) and suicide is identified as a priority in several key health strategies (Accident Compensation Corporation, 2003; Ministry of Health, 2000).

A proliferation of media items, government reports, and resulting public concern has led to a number of initiatives aimed at decreasing the incidence of suicide in general, and especially youth suicide. The efforts underlying the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, in particular, are to be commended, and it seems likely that the reduction in the youth suicide rate from the mid-1990s owes something to these efforts. Broader suicide prevention work that is

planned and under way in New Zealand is guided by two key documents: *The New Zealand Suicide Prevention Strategy 2006–2016* (Associate Minister of Health, 2006) and *The New Zealand Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2008–2012*. The New Zealand Suicide Prevention Strategy contains seven goals that outline the key areas for action to prevent suicide. The Action Plan discusses how these goals will be operationalised.

However, the focus on the causes and prevention of youth suicide, in the first instance, and across ‘all ages’ more recently, has obscured two issues: (1) a cohort effect of which the 1990s spike in youth rates is a transitory expression (as will be discussed in detail below) and (2) social drivers for suicide rather than individual factors.

Broader social factors including socio-economic deprivation are identified in the academic literature as risk factors for suicide (for example, Beautrais, 2003; Langley, 2010; SPINZ, 2000). Socio-economic deprivation is often discussed as a link to a more stressful lifestyle, less access to resources including health care, fewer opportunities for educational achievement (in young people), poor housing facilities and lower self-esteem. However, it is rarely discussed in terms of intervention or prevention.

In short, while the social origins of depression and hopelessness may be acknowledged, individualistic notions of risk and psychopathology are frequently privileged, in terms of intervention and prevention (Curtis, 2003, 2006). As a corollary to this, key risk factors are conceptualized clinically: depression and hopelessness as mental illness rather than reactions to life circumstances, and while the correlation to economic deprivation has been acknowledged there has been little attempt to analyse it.

In this article we further introduce the topic by discussing rates and the recent trajectory of youth suicide, and compare these to other age groups and a particular cohort. We then discuss social determinants of mental illness, with a particular focus on economic and related factors.

### **The Youth Suicide Focus**

In the mid-1990s New Zealand had one of the highest rates of suicide across the OECD countries (Ministry of Health, 2005c: 7) Rates of youth suicide in New Zealand have decreased during recent years, with the most recent statistics indicating that they are very similar to 25 years ago (in 1985 the rate per 100,000 was 10.0, though the average for the period 1985-1989 was 12.64; in 2010 the rate was 11.5, also with an average of 11.5 for the years 2006-2012).

However, public concern remains high, perhaps inflamed by headlines such as “Horror over child suicide rate surge” (Shuttleworth & Theunissen, 2012), and youth suicide rates are high when compared internationally. The most recently available statistics show that the New Zealand male youth suicide rate was the fourth-highest in the OECD and the female youth suicide rate was second-highest (Ministry of Health, 2012). Though recent media reports (Shuttleworth & Theunissen, 2012) appear to suggest that this is due to the New Zealand rate rising, this is clearly not the case.

The age-specific youth suicide rate for 2010 was 17.7 per 100,000 of population; in 2000 it was 18.1 and in 1990 the rate was 22.5, while the mean for the period during which rates were highest, 1994 to 1998 inclusive, was 26.5, with a standard deviation of 1.5. These rates indicate a substantial decline between the mid-1990s and the current time. In contrast, in 2010 while the youth rate was 17.7, the rate for the 35-39 age group was very similar at 17.6, followed by the 45-49 age group with 17.4 (Ministry of Health, 2012).

Suicidal behaviour is a common clinical problem and appears to be increasing in the wider community (Jacobson & Gould, 2007). It is a leading cause of hospitalization in many countries, including New Zealand (Ministry of Health, 2006). Though the focus on youth suicide has been appropriate, we argue that the time has come to analyse the data on older age groups more thoroughly.

## **Methods**

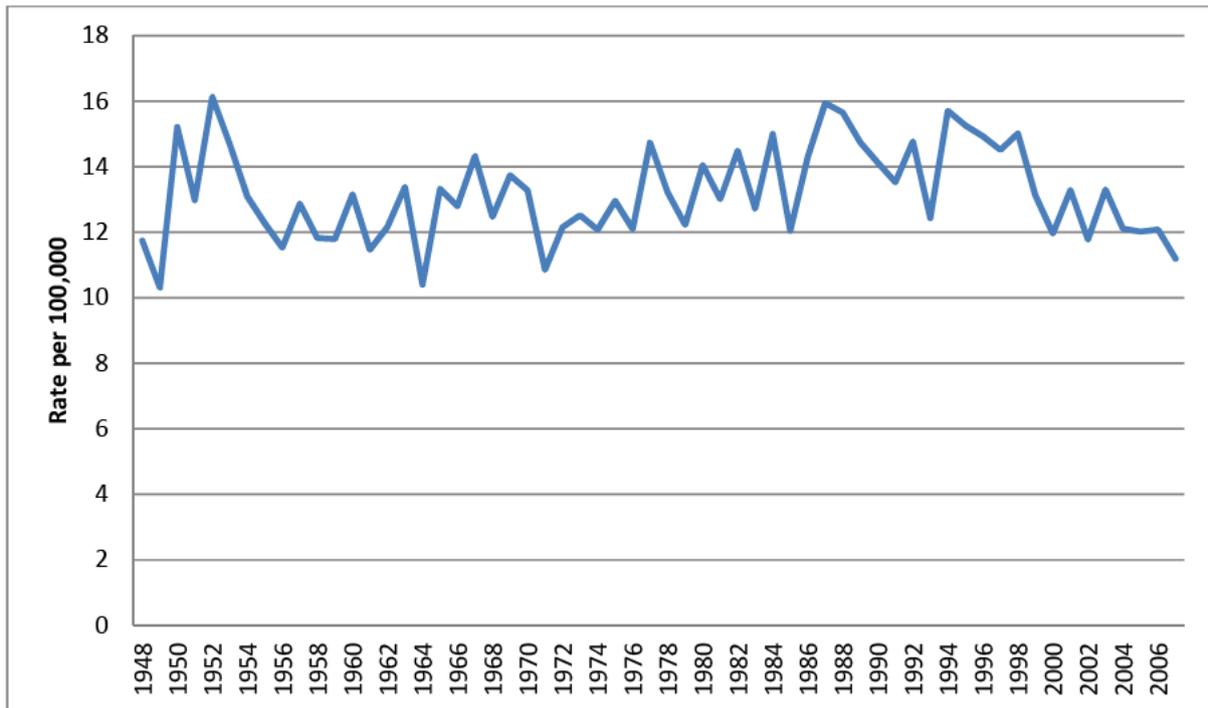
The method used in this article is simple: analysis of suicide rates, as collected by the New Zealand Ministry of Health from mortality data. We begin by analysing New Zealand age-specific (non-standardised) suicide rates in general, before narrowing our focus to youth suicide. We then discuss the evolution of a suicidal cohort and briefly discuss the economic drivers of suicide that may underlie the creation of this cohort. As the analysis consists of further analysis of pre-existing data, and there has been no interaction with persons who may be deemed research subjects, ethics approval is not necessary.

## **Results**

### *Rates of suicide*

The total rate of suicide in New Zealand for 1948-2007 (Figure 1) shows no immediate trend beyond an uneven cycling between rates of around 10 and 16 suicides per 100,000 people.

**Figure 1. Total rates of suicide: 1948-2007**



The reportage and classification of death by suicide in New Zealand (and elsewhere) includes the variable of age (Stockard & O'Brien, 2002). This allows for the following of a group (cohort) over time. Figure 2 shows the rates of suicide for 10-year age-specific groups over time (we have excluded the 0-4 age group, as suicide in this group is largely unknown). These data are derived from Ministry of Health statistics, sourced from annual mortality data.

Figure 2 demonstrates the variance between age groups that is obscured in the total rate shown in Figure 1. However, this complexity in turn obscures trends other than a spike in the rate of suicide among the very elderly in the decade after World War 2, and a trend toward a decrease in the variance – the difference between the age groups is far smaller in 2007 than at any other time. Nonetheless, clear distinctions remain. Broadening the focus beyond youth opens up possibilities for a better appreciation of the data in a dynamic manner, one that allows temporal effects. Figure 3 includes all working age groups, allowing for distinctions to be determined visually. We suggest that a cohort effect can be discerned in the rise and fall of rates of suicide, measured in 10 year age-specific groups (e.g., 15-24 years old, 25-34 years old, etc.).

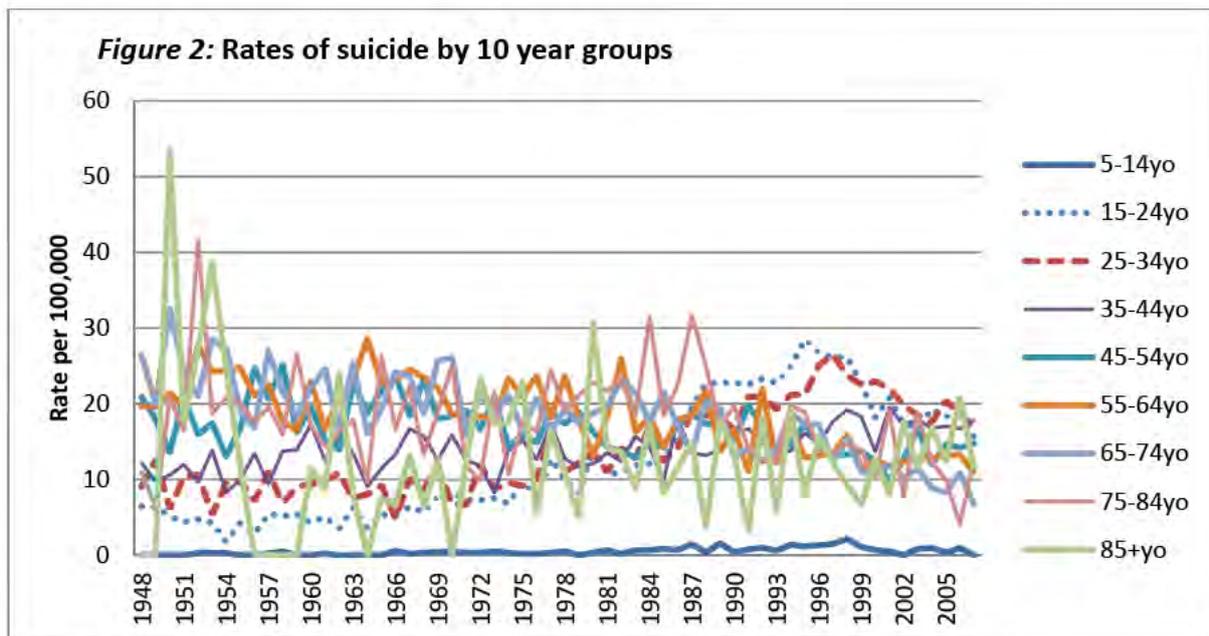
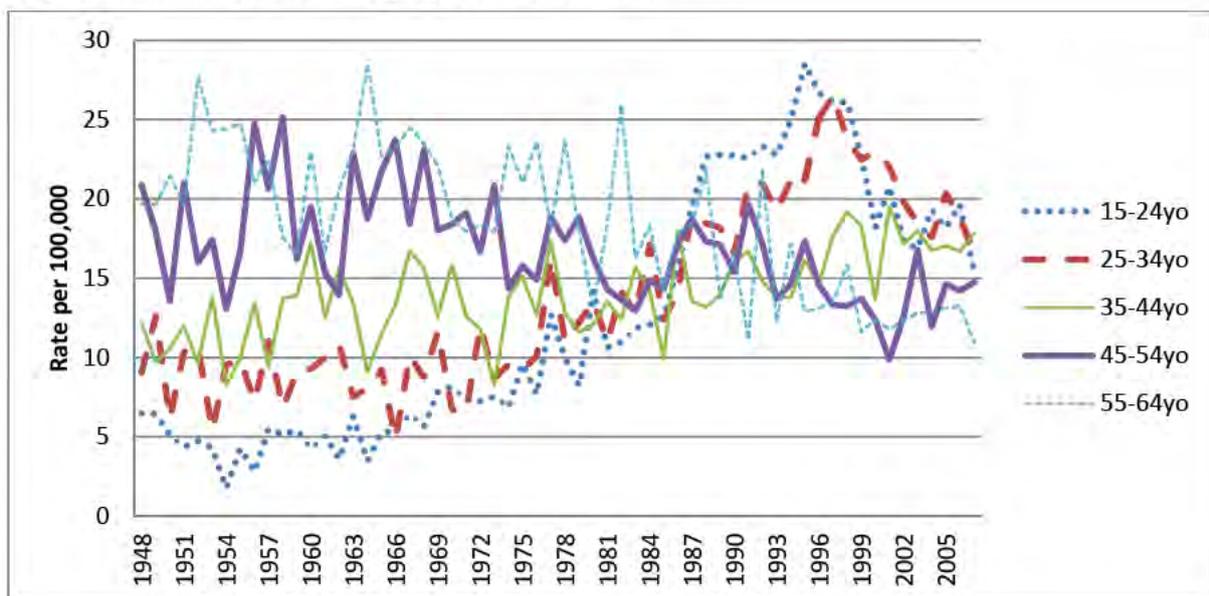


Figure 2: Rates of Suicide by 10 year age groups

**Figure 3: Total and working age rates of suicide**



### *Development of a cohort*

There is a clear convergence of groups in 1985, after which trends are reversed (the groups that had generally had the highest rates decrease to demonstrate the lowest, and vice versa). For approximately 40 years, the 15-24 cohort (average age of 20) had the lowest suicide rate (apart from three, one-year exceptions). In 1988 this cohort became the most suicidal. Following this dramatic rise, the focus on this group is logical. However, the suicide rate in this age group has fallen. In 1998 the 25-34 cohort (mid-point age 30) became the most suicidal. In

2007 the 35-44 age-specific group (mid-point age 40) became most suicidal and it seems that this rate is trending upward. Further, the 45-54 age-specific group seems also to be trending up. The timing and mid-point age of the displacement of the most suicidal cohort is highly suggestive: every ten years the next oldest 10 year cohort becomes the most suicidal. The mid-point ages of 20 in 1988, 30 in 1998 and 40 in 2007 begs the question ‘what happened to create this suicide-prone cohort?’

Before moving on to a discussion of economic and social factors it is useful to examine the graph in a little more detail. The identification of a cohort effect described in Figure 3 (above) relies on the graphic representation of rates of suicide by age-specific groups over time. Table 1 (see appendix 1) attempts to control for some elements that might impact the graph in Figure 3. The table shows yearly variance from the average rate of suicide for each of the 5 x 10-year age-specific groups (of working age). The variance is calculated simply by subtracting the reported rate of suicide (age specific) from the cumulative average. This calculation has two benefits. First, it controls for any trend across the age-specific groups over time. Second, it allows for some measure of significance.

The figures shown in Table 1 confirm the cohort effect. That is, people born in 1964-1973 (midpoint 1968-1969) appear to be more prone to suicide, insofar as the rates of suicide for the 10 year age-specific groups fluctuate as this cohort ages. Unfortunately the end date for the data series of 2007 only allows us to capture the effect in the two youngest groups (15-24 years old and 25-34 years old). These groups show the only significant variance on the average rate (an increase) for the entire data set. Significance is indicated where variance exceeds two standard deviation from the average rate. Thus, the group ‘15-24 years old’ has significant increases in 1987-1999, and the group ‘25-34 years old’ has significant increases 1996-1998.

#### *Risk factors for suicide*

The main risk factors for suicide are typically regarded as (1) depression, (2) hopelessness and (3) deprivation. However, these causes are treated primarily as proximate causes, tending to lead to individualistic or subjective understandings. We can see this in the suicide literature which overwhelmingly treats depression and other ‘mood disorders’ such as anxiety as pathologies – illnesses – rather than reactions to stressful events or social circumstances. As Lewinsohn and colleagues discussed (1993), suicidal behaviour in young people

is considered to be indicative of psychopathology. Barwick (1992) reported that between 90 and 98% of young New Zealanders who complete suicide had a diagnosable (although not necessarily diagnosed) mental illness; Beautrais and colleagues (Beautrais et al., 1996) reported rates of 90%, and 20% among controls. These findings were based on clinical studies using DSM-III-R criteria. The risk of a suicide attempt increased with increasing psychiatric morbidity. The most commonly diagnosed categories of disorders are affective disorders, such as depression; personality disorders; substance dependence; conduct disorders; adjustment disorders and psychotic disorders (Ministry of Health, 1996).

In a New Zealand study of people aged under 25 who made medically serious suicide attempts, Beautrais, Joyce and Mulder (1998) found strong associations between a range of mental illnesses and increased risk of a medically serious suicide attempt or attempts. In total, 90% of males and 89% of females were found to fit the diagnostic criteria for a mental disorder. Broader social factors including socio-economic deprivation are rarely discussed in terms of intervention or prevention.

#### *Socio-economic factors*

Stockard and O'Brien (2002) relate changing suicidal cohorts to disintegrative effects following the baby boom. However, an alternative explanation might be found in the end of the long economic boom. This transition from decades of post-war prosperity to decades of relative stagnation and decline seems to us to be a clear socio-economic marker and a plausible factor behind the cohort effect that is apparent in the suicide data (Curtis & Curtis, 2011).

The ending of the long boom threw prevailing political and economic rationalities into crisis. The end of the long boom heralded the rise of neoliberal economic and social policies worldwide (Peck & Tickell, 2002). New Zealand was one of the first movers in this transformation and arguably moved the furthest, at least of the OECD nations (Kelsey, 1995, 2002). After a snap election in 1984 Labour came to power with a mandate for change but no manifesto. This and the following government transformed policy. There is room here only to list some of the most pertinent: the introduction of user-pays in health services and tertiary education; the deregulation of the banking, finance, power, telecommunication, infrastructure supply and export agriculture sectors; cutting unemployment and disability benefits; and abolishing the legal

status of trade unions. This suite of policies was introduced over a ten year period, 1985-1995 and arguably impacted those entering adulthood more than other groups.

Comparison to other societies facing economic crises in the 1980s (notably Finland; Ministry of Health, 2005a) demonstrated that the impacts could be ameliorated through social and health policy. However, the policies adopted in New Zealand may have further embedded tendencies toward an expressive explanatory style, with long-term serious sequelae.

The transition to adulthood includes a number of stressors (Curtis, 2010). We argue that those young people who were born in the context of prosperity and perhaps most importantly, *expected* prosperity, were least able to deal with the realities of prolonged stagnation when they reached adulthood. Consequently they constructed a life narrative that emphasises the global depressive aspects and coupled this with a sense of hopelessness. This model of narrative has been described as the 'depressive explanatory style' (Abramson et al., 1989).

#### *The impact of deprivation*

In general, economic and social determinants of health have been clearly established internationally (for example, CSDH, 2008). Deprivation has been associated with various adverse health outcomes. From the social inequalities literature it is evident that those who are most deprived generally experience poorer health (Blakely & McLeod, 2009), including worse mental health. There has been some work done on the socio-economic origins of suicide in New Zealand, for example, Blakeley and McLeod (2009) and Blakeley, Collings and Atkinson (2003) and it must be acknowledged that the New Zealand Suicide Prevention Strategy does mention economic disadvantage as a risk factor (and, we should point out, this is an 'all ages' rather than youth-focused strategy). Ministry of Health reports on suicide also note that suicide rates among the most socio-economically deprived are significantly higher than for those who are the least deprived and some attempts have been made to review social and economic factors (Ministry of Health, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2012). These are broad claims based on comparisons of suicide rates among working age-groups and rates of unemployment, labour-force participation, income, and most commonly, decile rating of individual District Health Boards (as an indicator of relative deprivation). Recent New Zealand age-standardised data showed that

suicide rates increased with deprivation, though there is some year to year variation; in 2005 the suicide rate for the most deprived areas was almost 90 percent higher than it was for the least deprived areas (Ministry of Health, 2006), though the 2010 data shows the biggest difference between the second most deprived and the least deprived (Ministry of Health, 2012). Beautrais' (2003) review of risk factors includes an extremely brief discussion of social and demographic factors including unemployment, and Blakeley and McLeod (2009) consider the potential impacts of the global financial crisis as likely to stimulate mental illness, including depression.

Links are made in the international suicide literature and in other government reports between negative emotional states and/or suicide and economic deprivation. We also note that a link between suicide and social and economic expectations seems likely, with unemployment and unemployment-related stress being a particular focus of attention (though with somewhat mixed findings, perhaps due to confounding factors) (Meltzer et al., 2011; Ministry of Health, 2005a, 2005c; Stack & Wasserman, 2007) and the Coronial Services Unit (the media centre for the Coroners Court) has indicated that 28 percent of those who had committed suicide in the most recent annual figures were unemployed (cited by Shuttleworth & Theunissen, 2012). Blakeley and colleagues (2003) postulate an association between unemployment and suicide (alongside marital status) among New Zealand men who were aged 18 to 24 on census night in 1991 – young men who fit neatly into the cohort under discussion – an association not significant among other demographic groups.

Blakeley et al. suggest a link between suicide and social fragmentation (echoing Durkheim's seminal work (Durkheim, 1952 - originally published 1897)). Bartley (1994) discusses *relative* poverty, social isolation and the loss of self-esteem as precursors to poor mental health. Similarly, Lorant and colleagues (2003) found strong evidence for a link between socio-economic inequality and depression while Zimmerman and Bell (2006) suggest that the impact of income inequality on health may be the result of social comparison and reduced social capital. Lorant's later work (Lorant et al., 2007) found a clear relationship between worsening socio-economic circumstances and depression. In a related vein, Gjerustad and von Soest (2012) have found a relationship between depression and anxiety and the non-fulfilment of occupational aspirations. Therefore, links between suicide and socio-economic factors may be more complex than previously assumed.

Unemployment and /or poverty *per se* are not simple drivers of suicidal behaviour. Rather, relative poverty, self-esteem and social comparison involving both others and the imagined life course seem more pertinent. This comparative aspect can be no more evident than for those born at the end of the Long Boom, the beginning of a long stagnation. We argue that this produces the spectre of unfulfilled expectations on the part of individuals, their families and communities. These factors support our argument that a specific cohort has been significantly impacted by the ongoing and rapidly changed economic milieu facing them as they entered adulthood.

We suggest that further focus on economic determinants is warranted, particularly in the current economic context. While it is very clear that deprivation and /or income inequality impact on depression and suicide rates, the underlying mechanisms are not entirely clear. Most importantly prevention and intervention measures rarely, if ever, take these underlying factors into account.

Rea and Callister (2009) have also noted a significant number of negative indicators among the cohort of people born from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. This group experienced many of the long-term social changes experienced by the 10-year age groups before and after them, such as increased participation in education, and a decline in fertility and marriage. This particular cohort also had the lowest rate of employment (and highest rate of unemployment and benefit receipt) and left New Zealand in the largest numbers, as well as the highest rates of youth suicide. A number of other factors that impacted subsequent cohorts also came to the fore at this time, such as increased geographical mobility, use of alcohol and other drugs, and use of media. However, despite these potential influences, subsequent cohorts have not reached the same levels of suicidality. This suggests that this particular cohort is unusual. It is then a little problematic that the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study (the Dunedin Study) takes its cohort from approximately 1000 babies born in Dunedin in 1972-73. We suggest that cohort may indeed overlap the 'suicidal' one we have emphasized. This raises the possibility that the Dunedin Study may be dealing with an atypical cohort which might disbar it as a reference point for health policy.

The suicide rates for the atypical cohort as it has matured have not reproduced the high rates experienced when it was aged 15-24 years old. Yet this now middle-aged group does have rates of suicide comparable to, or

exceeding current youth rates. We suggest that this may be due to maturational processes (for example, the development of coping and problem-solving skills(Curtis, 2003)), and attrition by completed suicide amongst the most vulnerable.

Similarly, we agree that depression and hopelessness are frequently observable in suicidal individuals. However, we stress the complexity of underlying risk factors and contend that:

the focus on depression and hopelessness as individual factors obscures underlying social factors;

the stigma associated with psychiatric diagnosis reduces the likelihood of help-seeking among those that might benefit from it (Curtis, 2010);

the themes underlying depression and hopelessness discussed by Blau (1996) and others (lowered self-esteem, a negative view of the world, feelings of powerlessness and external locus of control) can equally well be attributed to relative economic deprivation and the associated factors discussed above, as individual factors.

Most importantly, we argue that while the shift in focus from youth to ‘all ages’ as heralded in the Suicide Prevention Strategy is an important step, consideration should be given to specifically targeting the cohort discussed above.

Finally, we raise the possibility that a new cohort of people at particular risk of suicide will shortly be seen, as a result of the current global financial crisis. Barr and colleagues (Barr, Taylor-Robinson, Scott-Samuel, McKee, & Stuckler, 2012) have found such a link with regard to the recent increase in suicides in England, suggesting that approximately two-fifths of the increase in male suicides during the period 2008-2010 (from 126 to 532) can be attributed to rising unemployment.

### *Limitations*

We acknowledge that the issues raised are not clear-cut. There are a number of social factors that came to prominence in the years prior to this cohort reaching maturity, and may act as confounding variables, such as increased substance misuse, changing population structures, survivability of suicide methods, increased social and economic inequity and delayed transition into the workforce. We have touched on these above and would welcome further multi-faceted research on this fascinating cohort. Undoubtedly, this cohort appears to have remained at particular risk for suicide. While later cohorts have been

subject to the same social factors - which for the most part have increased subsequently – the suicide rate within these later bands have not reached the same heights.

## Conclusion

We have highlighted the existence of a cohort effect in suicide among those born around 1964-1973 (midpoint 1968-1969), noted a correlation with the major transformation in socio-economic circumstances around this at this time, and suggested that the typical individualised focus on drivers of suicide might be enhanced with a better appreciation of this socio-economic transformation and the long-term impacts on a cohort who may have felt its affects most keenly.

In this article we have argued that the decrease in youth suicide seen this century is in large part due to this cohort moving into the next age brackets (25-34, then 35-44), which are markedly higher than previous cohorts. We suggest that young people born at the end of the Long Boom, when reaching maturity, faced an environment vastly different to that of the previous generation, in which social and economic stressors were prevalent. We argue for a suicide-prone cohort that is exceptional rather than typical - a group that, when reaching maturity, then also faced an environment vastly different to that of the previous age groups, in which social and economic stressors were prevalent. The marked variation in suicide trends indicates that social factors must come into play and factors related to social and economic deprivation appear to be correlated to increased suicide rates.

Comparison to other societies facing similar situations demonstrated that the impacts could be ameliorated through social and health policy. However, the policies adopted in New Zealand may have further embedded tendencies toward a depressive explanatory style, with long-term serious sequelae.

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**Appendix 1: Table 1: Variance in suicide rate from average cumulative suicide rate**

Year	15-24yo	25-34yo	35-44yo	45-54yo	55-64yo
1949	-0.03094	3.533025	-2.49071	-2.92236	-0.00087
1950	-1.34808	-4.69362	-0.39432	-5.83671	1.782755
1951	-1.63686	1.101484	1.167233	3.512788	-0.61572
1952	-0.86208	1.116971	-1.47774	-2.36582	7.594198
1953	-1.12262	-4.3783	3.031558	-0.4509	2.631601
1954	-3.45799	0.52485	-3.06537	-4.73146	2.361678
1955	-0.47898	0.708348	-0.91653	-0.40646	2.349187
1956	-1.8782	-1.9794	2.636985	7.696232	-1.61824
1957	1.022362	2.060383	-1.68803	2.713002	-0.02761
1958	0.588291	-2.35826	2.828932	6.964505	-4.93572
1959	0.784525	0.146509	2.757463	-2.63026	-5.57631
1960	-0.43641	0.295475	5.879027	0.902	1.389291
1961	0.412614	0.994	0.666079	-3.35451	-5.0314
1962	-1.09846	1.737968	3.728083	-4.50899	-0.77727
1963	1.667915	-1.69553	1.309138	4.721719	1.881548
1964	-1.24425	-1.00054	-3.12058	0.303672	7.122578
1965	0.631355	0.213684	-0.57275	3.304803	0.889668
1966	0.720731	-4.17946	1.327445	5.075896	1.309638
1967	1.696461	1.278137	4.635035	-0.47805	2.574599
1968	0.836481	-0.14103	3.358455	4.225997	1.401248
1969	2.991299	2.764069	0.137903	-1.0598	-0.07674
1970	3.184787	-2.30553	3.391831	-0.63237	-3.41342
1971	2.194922	-2.25437	-0.04736	0.138668	-4.04636
1972	2.046352	3.190159	-0.82377	-2.37906	-3.49083
1973	2.220712	-0.2025	-4.2973	1.929963	-3.70767
1974	1.468431	0.634506	1.393932	-4.67836	1.782213
1975	4.197491	0.230357	2.670472	-3.01409	-0.59628
1976	2.100786	1.143725	0.066733	-3.81788	2.039088
1977	7.047834	7.236736	4.807608	0.261503	-3.52001
1978	4.085667	1.778718	0.036357	-1.21539	2.103162
1979	2.218457	2.929961	-1.12603	0.325857	-3.68434
1980	8.132228	4.162701	-0.60089	-2.26185	-8.43099
1981	4.308872	1.496016	0.855986	-4.18632	-2.87279

1982	4.501926	4.602567	-0.28938	-4.70545	4.797363
1983	5.273962	3.099563	2.997327	-5.28208	-5.01135
1984	5.332917	7.322848	1.466967	-3.2362	-2.85379
1985	5.726478	2.42002	-2.89349	-3.6794	-6.88088
1986	8.641226	4.100976	5.231473	-0.70823	-3.0161
1987	12.36067	8.962781	0.671731	0.816875	-2.40901
1988	15.09196	8.112013	0.272543	-0.58614	1.010333
1989	14.85032	7.618172	1.084195	-0.7713	-7.03283
1990	14.48234	5.833034	3.068136	-2.51767	-3.98627
1991	13.95653	10.03544	3.72995	1.90653	-9.42534
1992	14.37696	9.839639	1.732092	-0.70818	1.635159
1993	13.49547	7.944016	0.678613	-4.11804	-8.12557
1994	15.40794	9.649623	0.634498	-3.13516	-2.98732
1995	18.64063	9.508242	2.970899	-0.35307	-7.2173
1996	16.40004	13.20035	1.459176	-3.10713	-6.84768
1997	15.5456	14.31275	4.429345	-4.29214	-6.27304
1998	15.19822	11.33573	5.851768	-4.28096	-3.84551
1999	11.48742	9.794246	4.872538	-3.72426	-8.00735
2000	6.769135	10.10961	0.13119	-5.01005	-7.06129
2001	9.226083	8.965466	5.995779	-7.42747	-7.5523
2002	5.584423	6.588477	3.539101	-4.53048	-6.85893
2003	5.048041	5.10743	4.2651	-0.29139	-6.23449
2004	7.391652	4.14202	2.966469	-5.08455	-6.16011
2005	6.164295	6.862259	3.201058	-2.31788	-5.70064
2006	7.487008	5.114979	2.803289	-2.72569	-5.49819
2007	3.110109	2.928285	3.905776	-2.1295	-7.705

(Note: the standard deviation for variance from the cumulative average is 5.081505. Two standard deviations = 10.16301. )

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## But Wait There's More: Why Pie Carts are Classic Items of Kiwiana

*Lindsay Neill*

### **Abstract**

This article proposes a conceptual framework outlining the elements identifying an object as “kiwiana” by examining four items of existing kiwiana; The Buzzy Bee, jandals, the Swannndri and the Wattie’s brand. Using the framework developed from this analysis this article then argues that New Zealand’s remaining “stinker” shaped pie carts should also be classified as kiwiana because of their congruence to existing kiwiana. To achieve a fuller understanding of kiwiana and its association to Pākehā (the group most associated to it within academic literature) this article questions the relationship between Pākehā and kiwiana. The article then recommends that in order to fully understand this relationship research is needed within the other descriptors of New Zealand’s early settler/colonizers, (*New Zealander*, *Kiwi* and *European*), that investigates their relationship, thoughts and feelings about kiwiana.

### **Introduction:**

Kiwiana reflects New Zealand's vernacular culture because it includes everyday items of cultural significance that are popularly assumed to be uniquely New Zealand (Bell, 1996; Wolfe and Barnett, 2001). Bell (2004: 175) defines kiwiana as positive ‘symbols of the nation’, while Wolfe and Barnett (2001) note that kiwiana not only provides an aesthetic, but also a vehicle for individuals to form and recognize an identity. Consequently, kiwiana enhances themes of nationhood that for many Pākehā New Zealanders provides a cultural text serving to differentiate them within an increasingly cosmopolitan/globalised world (Bell, 1996; 2004; 2012). Wolfe and Barnett (1989) note that kiwiana often evokes personal and social narratives reflecting the wider social changes that New Zealand and New Zealanders have experienced over time.

According to Wolfe and Barnett (2007), the classic list of kiwiana includes:

- five mass-manufactured items: the Buzzy Bee, iron roofing, jandals, New Zealand Railways cups, the Swanndri;
- ten commercial items: bungee-jumping, rugby, sheep (farming), stamps, number 8 wire, Footrot Flats, Four Square shops, the 'Taranaki gate', Black (All) and the bach/crib;
- six food-based items: Wattie's peas; cheese (Ches and Dale), ice cream, baking powder; Lemon & Paeroa and Weet-Bix; and
- seven items reflecting New Zealand's flora and fauna: grass, the godwit, the kiwi, paua, cabbage trees, the silver fern and the pohutukawa.

While these items promote themes of identity, community and nation, they are overlaid with a thick veneer of nostalgia. The nostalgia inherent to kiwiana is akin to that evoked by Mason's (1962) play *The End of the Golden Weather*; a reflection of times gone by that in retrospect appear to be more comforting than contemporary life. This reassurance was 'officially' represented in November 2012 when many items of classic kiwiana were featured as decorations on top of cakes made to celebrate Prince Charles's 64th birthday held at Government House in Wellington.

Many kiwiana items reflect New Zealand's primary industries: the land and agriculture. Items of kiwiana have emerged over time but, generally, have gained popularity since the 1940s. This timing is significant because, as Wolfe and Barnett (2001) remind us, kiwiana reflects characteristics of our nation's commercial growth and spirit of enterprise - the renowned ability for New Zealanders to "turn their hand to anything", the "number 8 wire mentality". These themes find their genesis with New Zealand's pioneer culture, one pragmatically based within the necessities of everyday life. However, the identity that kiwiana reflects is one that is firmly anchored in past achievement, not future prospect.

### **Kiwiana and Pākehā Identity: More Research is Needed**

Kiwiana is a key part of New Zealand's vernacular material culture. Lowenthal (1979; 1995) suggests that material culture provides a focus for shared values and narratives. This links to Bell's (2004, p. 175) notion that items of kiwiana are not only 'symbols of nation', but also identity touchstones. This recognition is especially evident within the Pākehā 'baby-boom' demographic because this cohort grew up with many of the items that have been later classified as kiwiana. However, exposure to items of kiwiana is not limited to this group. Subsequent generations are familiar with kiwiana because of their baby-boom generation parents and grandparents.

Since kiwiana symbolises and reinforces ways of being that are strongly linked with New Zealand's industry and history it evokes nostalgia. Tannock (1995: 454) suggests that nostalgia:

provokes a positively evaluated past world in response to a deficient present world ... the positively evaluated past is approached as a source for something now perceived to be missing ... invoking the past, the nostalgic subject may be involved in escaping or evading, in critiquing, or in mobilizing, to overcome the present experience of loss of identity, loss of agency or absence of community ... nostalgia approaches the past as a stable source of value and meaning.

Kiwiana spans the categories of mass-manufacturing, food and primary industry, as well as commercial items that were most popular between 1914 and the 1950s, including the Swannndri (1914); the Wattie's brand (1934); the Buzzy Bee (1940s), and jandals (1950s). Bell (1996; 2004; 2012) has written extensively on kiwiana, linking it to Pākehā identity. However, new research is needed that enhances and extends Bell's work. This new research needs to ask basic questions that include, *to which groups (class) of Pākehā and of what age and gender does Bell (1996; 2004; 2012) refer?* Further research will illuminate which age and gender groups of Pākehā are most interested in kiwiana and which groups are not. Not only that, but because the catalogue of kiwiana has had no recent additions, new research might reveal that Pākehā identity (in so far as it is symbolized by kiwiana) has not only stalled, because of the lack of new symbols, but further highlight that it has tended to focus on past achievement, rather than future prospect. New research should extend into the other domains of classification reflecting settler/colonist descendent identity, specifically *New Zealander, Kiwi, European New Zealander*. Until such research is conducted, we must assume that the potency of kiwiana's meaning is a pan-class Pākehā phenomenon.

### **Kiwiana: Appropriated Symbols, Invented Traditions**

Almost all kiwiana items have been appropriated from other cultural contexts. Excepting flora and fauna, none of the four items focused on this research are of true New Zealand origin, rather, each item has been adapted and then marketed within New Zealand. The jandal is derived from Japanese traditional footwear, the Swannndri from the German Loden jacket, the Buzzy Bee from an early American Fisher Price toy and Watties Industries were modelled on other, overseas cannery operations. Arguably, the adapted nature of these items

reflects New Zealanders' ability to "turn their hand to anything"; the "number 8 wire mentality" of innovation founded within earlier times.

Bell (2012b) proposes that Māoriana is a category of kiwiana. Māoriana refers to objects which draw their design or decoration from traditional Māori symbols and artefacts. However a keyword search of academic databases using Māoriana (as key word), only recovers articles relating to the ecology of an inshore mussel species; *Aulacomya Māoriana* and not items of popular or historic Māori culture. Māoriana, as material culture, lacks the catalogue of supporting academic literature that kiwiana enjoys. This lack suggests two things; that Māoriana needs research champions like Wolfe or Bell, and/or that many academics consider Māoriana to be an unimportant or un-recognised research area.

Māoriana is considered kiwiana's "poor country cousin". This is reinforced by Shand (2002) who reminds us that items of Māoriana like the koru, have undergone a dislocation within Māori culture, one that has subsumed the koru through its appropriation by Pākehā. The koru appears on stamps, currency and 'in the architecture of important institutions [like] the Auckland War Memorial Museum [and] the Napier [branch of the] Bank of New Zealand' (Shand, 2002: 50), not to mention the tail branding logo on Air New Zealand aircraft. Locating the koru within these contexts presents a unifying image of New Zealand, one enhancing the legitimacy of the colonial commercial institutions they adorn. Yet, Air New Zealand brands its emblematic koru "the Pacific wave" and not koru.

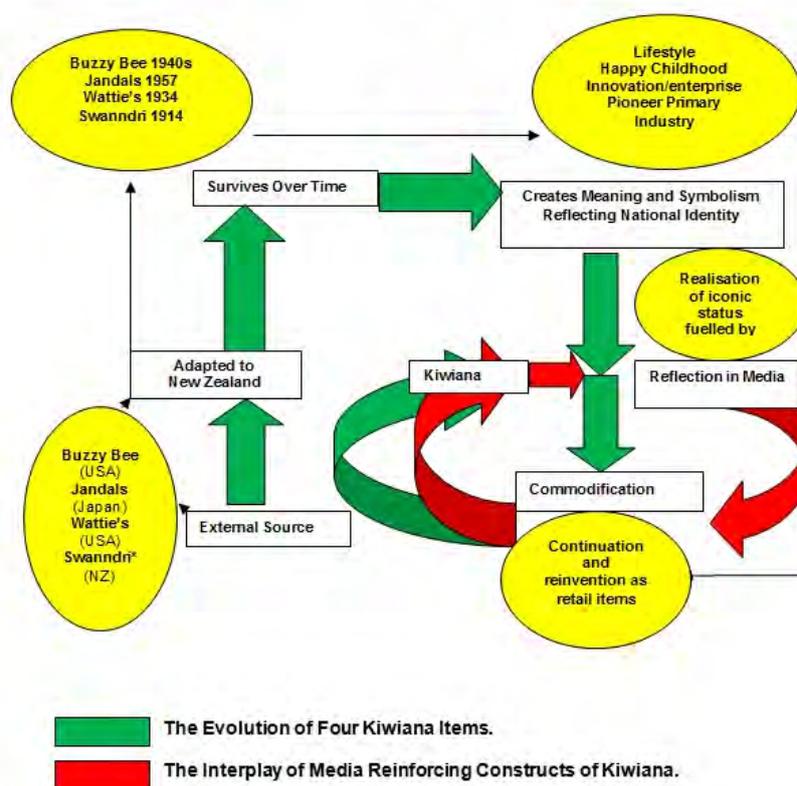
Shand (2002) notes that the koru is a primary Māori design this is often used in tattooing, whare rafter painting and waka paddle decoration. Shand (2002: 51) posits that Air New Zealand's (re)-branding maintains 'the goodwill of the airlines' consumer base' while avoiding the 'risk of engaging in any sort of conflict over asserted interests that different Māori tribal groups might claim with respect to this form of the koru.' While Māori symbols like the koru are appropriated and changed to suit a marketing need, their appropriation has conveniently, and in the case of the Air New Zealand koru, circumvented Māori involvement. The appropriation of the koru shows that constructs of Māoriana maybe more mobile than kiwiana. This claim is enhanced by the fact that proactive Māori have sought to register themes of authenticity and quality within Māori cultural symbols through the development of Toi Iho; 'a registered Māori trademark of quality and authenticity' (Toi Iho, 2012: n.p.). This move

contrasts with the static and retrospective view that kiwiana promotes because it indicates that Māori and Māoriana hold a forward and proactive views toward items of Māoriana.

## Kiwiana: A Conceptual Framework

Figure 1:

Conceptual Model: The Framework Identifying Kiwiana Constructs



Analysis of Wolfe and Barnett's (2001) research reveals that the Buzzy Bee, jandals, the Swannndri, and the Wattie's brand hold the following common characteristics:

- although popularly believed to be so, they are not unique to New Zealand
- these items have been adapted within (and by) New Zealand culture
- they hold across multi-generational life-spans
- they began by evoking personal meaning that developed wider and national significance
- they often hold icon status for their stakeholders
- their significance is fuelled by media.

These constructs are illustrated in Figure 1. This conceptual model defines the commonality and significance of the four items of kiwiana.

### **Pie Carts: Case for Kiwiana Inclusion**

Against this background, this article asks are New Zealand's remaining eight classic shaped pie carts contenders for kiwiana status? This is an important question because, as Neill, Bell and Bryant (2008: 11) remind us, pie carts were, during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s popular and prominent dining venues:

In the days of the six o'clock swill, and long before the advent of swanky café culture, where else could you be assured of a hot feed and a warm welcome, in any New Zealand town or city?

While Neill, Bell and Bryant (2008) note the abundance of pie carts during this period, today classical shaped pie carts are a rarity. The classic pie cart is identifiable through a combination of business longevity and their characteristic 'stinker' shape. This shape is an elongated caravan supporting an arched roof.

**Figure 2: The Classical Stinker Shape.**



**Source:** Eastern Southland Museum (2008)

Classification using both shape and longevity (pie carts that have traded for longer than 20 years) means that New Zealand has only eight authentically shaped pie carts. These carts are located in Kawakawa, Auckland (2), Tokoroa, Wellington, Greymouth and Stewart Island. (Alexandra's pie cart, while included in this list, was destroyed by fire in 2012 and its return to trading is pending an insurance claim.) While this is not a large number, they and their predecessors are, and have been, socio-temporal venues contributing to the life narratives of many of New Zealanders. Neill (2009) suggests that pie carts provide pan-class social spaces, especially for their staff and customers.

Consequently, pie carts have made significant contributions to New Zealand's culture and society, because they have provided venues where customers and staff can negotiate and reflect upon the wider socio/political and economic changes that have impacted upon them.

To appreciate why pie carts should be considered as kiwiana it is necessary to understand not only their importance and history, but also how they link to constructs of kiwiana. McGill (1989: 101) suggests that pie carts are 'caravan(s) with a [top-]hinged side door through which fast foods are dispensed, [most notably] pie, pea and pud; [a] mince pie with mashed potato and peas sloshed over with gravy'. Jim Geddes, Eastern Southland Museum curator, believes that the caravan form of the pie cart was influenced by that of the rural 'stinker' (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008: 143). 'Stinkers' were straight-sided horse-drawn wagons covered by an arched roof. They were used by farm and field workers as rest huts. 'Stinkers' gained their distinctive title because of the heady aroma of combined food and sweat from the bucolic field work that permeated them during worker rest periods.

Contemporarily, pie carts are commonplace in cities like Santiago, Chile, and in Los Angeles where 'Loncheras', serve taco-style foods and are operated by Latino families (Hermosillo, 2012, cited in Neill, Bell and Hemmington, 2012: 105). In New Zealand, however, pie carts are in decline — a stark contrast to their prolific presence in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Back then, most country towns had a pie cart, with many of them located 'in the heart of town, often outside the post office' (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008: 9). Pie carts not only served fast food, burgers and the like, but also provided a handy stop-off point for travellers lost and seeking direction. Pie carts are night-time traders, operating from around 7 pm until 6–7 am the following morning. They are towed on and off site, often by a small tractor, and use the same trading spot because of their electric and water/plumbing requirements. Enhanced hygiene regulations, amendments to street trading policy, and intense competition from increased 'mainstream' food retailers have combined to reduce pie cart numbers.

Part of the pie cart's appeal is its customer diversity. Peter Washer's family have operated Auckland city's White Lady pie cart since 1948. Peter recalled:

they'd come after the six o'clock swill. Then a surge of customers followed as the pictures got out, and then in more recent times, as nightclubs and bars have stayed open longer, we now have a surge

(of customers) at 2am. I remember in the 1970s when marijuana use was big, people would arrive at the cart with the ‘munchies’ and eat a couple of burgers each. We had great food sales, and because everyone was mellow, very little violence. Now amphetamine-based party drugs are popular and we have noticed a big increase in water and drink sales as takers stave off dehydration (cited in Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008: 46).

The ritual and diversity of pie cart customers was echoed by a pie cart worker: we had everybody [as customers], everybody from sort of street workers to management. Really the thing you saw while working at the White Lady is that there is not that much difference between those people. One might be a millionaire, and with another guy boozed to the eyeballs and a lady with a \$2000 dress and the \$500 haircut will (all) fill a spot in the gutter (cited in Neill, 2009: 128).

Liebling Hoeflich from Tokoroa recalled how their pie cart reflected ‘families’ and the local community:

our customers are like us, they come and they go. We have seen whole families grow up in Tokoroa [while the Hoeflich’s owned the cart]. Some leave town and never return. Others are away for a while, and then they come home. We have seen our customer’s family’s change, just as they have seen our family change over time. It’s exciting to think about the part our cart has played in the lives of so many people and how much the cart means to our community (cited in Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008: 62).

One pie cart owner succinctly observed:

my customers ignore the likes of Burger King and McDonald’s to eat what they feel is truly indigenous. I like to think that we are akin to Marilyn Monroe’s beauty spot-to some an indication of a malignant melanoma, to others a defining uniqueness (cited in Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008: 48).

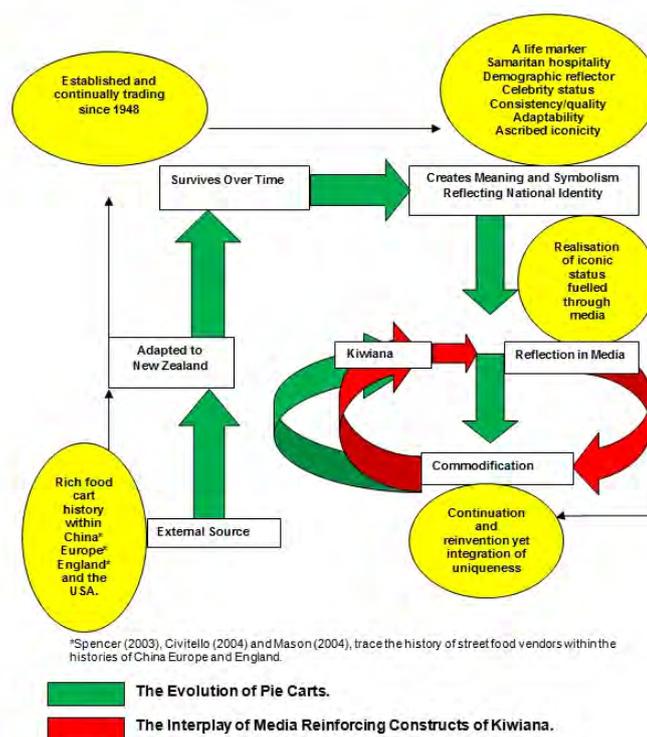
Specifically, and like kiwiana, pie carts have been adapted by New Zealanders for the New Zealand marketplace. Pie carts have endured over time and reflect the narratives and lifestyles of their stakeholders, thus generating meaning, symbolism and nostalgia. Like kiwiana, pie carts have benefited from media coverage. This has served to galvanise support for the carts, rather than detract from their public appeal. As well as these parallels pie carts also evoke other similarities to kiwiana:

- New Zealanders' propensity for innovation; the 'can do' / 'turn your hand to anything' self-sufficiency and adaptability; characteristic themes associated with industry and hard work.
- A dynamic cultural link between the cart and its customers. Pie carts signify this through more than monetary exchange for goods and services rather they represent ongoing and mutually beneficial relationships between owner/staff and customers. This promotes pie carts as being venues that help stakeholders mediate wider social change.
- A relaxed and informal hospitality, promoting relationships formed through the materiality of food. These relationships transcend and enhance wider feelings of community and identity.
- Lineage and continuance: families as customers, families as owners. Many pie cart stakeholder narratives note that visiting a pie cart brought about feelings of community as well as individual completeness (Neill, 2009; Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008).
- Constructs of the 'average New Zealander', consequent to their pan-class appeal within successive generational narrative.
- Icon status is attributed to pie carts by their stakeholders (Neill, 2009).

These themes are synonymous to the meaning inherent within items of kiwiana and are demonstrated in Figure 3.

**Figure 3:**

**Conceptual Model: Pie carts and the Kiwiana Framework.**



## **Conclusion:**

While this article has provided evidence that supports the importance of kiwiana within New Zealand, it has also revealed that an academic gap exists within the link between Pākehā identity and kiwiana. Consequently, this article recommends that more research be undertaken examining the relationship between kiwiana and Pākehā by not only researching this group but also self-identifying *New Zealanders, Kiwis, and European New Zealanders* within a mixed age, gender and socio-economic grouping to solicit their relationship with kiwiana.

However the aim of this article was to question if the existing eight “stinker” shaped pie carts should be considered items of kiwiana. To facilitate this, this article has compared the characteristics of four existing kiwiana items and then provided a conceptual model of their attributes. Subsequently, this model was used to compare the attributes of the eight remaining pie carts. Because pie carts parallel the identifiers within the conceptual model of kiwiana, this research suggests that “stinker” shaped pie carts should be added to the existing catalogue of kiwiana.

Within this comparison, the fluidity of Māoriana was noted. This contrasts the stultified nature of kiwiana as a symbol of Pākehā identity. If Pākehā identity has stalled, as signified by its symbols, then a revision of these symbols is necessary. Including pie carts as kiwiana would be a sound starting point. The fact that pie carts attract an ethnically and socio-economic diverse clientele reinforces their important symbolic contribution to a revised catalogue of kiwiana. The inclusion of pie carts challenges the current primacy that kiwiana holds and promotes a revision for Pākehā, Māori and self-identifying *New Zealanders, Kiwis, and Europeans* about the symbols that represent them.

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## **From Bad Women to Mad Women: A Genealogical Analysis of Abortion Discourses in Aotearoa New Zealand**

*Marita Leask*

Although abortion discourses are often polarised into ‘a woman’s right to choose’ versus a ‘foetus’s right to life’, mental health is emerging as a prevailing paradigm for conceiving of abortion in New Zealand. Abortion remains criminalised in New Zealand and a literal reading of the legislation governing abortion would suggest that it is only available in limited circumstances. However, due to a broad interpretation of the mental health ground, less than two percent of requests for abortions are refused (Abortion Supervisory Committee, 2003). As Myra Marx Ferree and others argue, the institutional context of abortion law affects which discourses become culturally resonant (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002). The harnessing of the mental health discourse in relation to abortion reshapes women’s status as subjects in reproductive decision making. Whereas in the 1930s and 1960s women were morally condemned for making a selfish decision or murdering an autonomous foetus respectively, the mental health discourse calls women’s very mental capacity to choose into question. Thus, women are painted as unfortunate victims of circumstance who require guidance through the law or psychological support. The argument for a woman’s right to choose conceives women as autonomous agents who are best placed to make reproductive decisions governing their bodies and their lives. However, in challenging women’s status as moral actors, the mental health paradigm insidiously challenges women’s very ability to choose abortion.

### **Bad Women: Natalist Condemnation of ‘Selfish Women’**

In the 1930s, abortion was depicted primarily as a selfish act. As Barbara Brookes (1981) has shown, women who ‘selfishly’ had abortions were condemned on nationalist, pro-natalist grounds for abrogating their sacred duty of motherhood and in doing so threatening the very future of New Zealand’s (white) population. The Dominion newspaper’s 1937 polemic that “the selfish refusal to bear or rear children is a crime against the nation” is emblematic of conceptions of abortion is selfish (Van der Krogt, 1997:16). In 1936 the problem of illegal abortions became so prominent that Parliament commissioned a Committee of Inquiry into the Various Aspects of the Problem

of Abortion in New Zealand, which is often termed the McMillan Report after one of its authors' (McMillan et al., 1939).

Barbara Brookes (1981: 116-134) argues that the discursive construction of women who have abortions as selfish was evident in the submissions to the 1936-7 Committee. In the submissions, doctors' groups and the "bastion of motherhood" the Mothers Union challenged abortion on natalist grounds that reified women's 'natural' destiny of motherhood (Brookes, 1981: 124). The Mothers Union blamed abortion on the selfishness of women, and their families, who did not want to be inconvenienced by bearing a child (Brookes, 1981; Krogt, 1998). Likewise, Dr Doris Gordon, founding member of the Obstetric and Gynaecological Society, called for a 'return' to the celebration of motherhood wherein "motherhood is their mission and barrenness their disgrace" (Brookes, 1981: 124).

Conceptions of motherhood were closely tied with nationalist, pro-natalist rhetoric. Thus, the condemnation of women who had abortions as selfish was also based on widespread concern about New Zealand's perceived (white) population decline and "race suicide" (Van der Krogt, 1998: 298). The government too was concerned about an aging population and a declining tax base and considered that it was women's duty to bear more than one child to "counteract race suicide and increased taxation" (Brookes, 1981: 128). Labour Minister W. E Perry argued that "self-indulgence and a widespread disregard of the moral law" threatened the New Zealand race and accordingly the capacity to defend the country in future wars (Van der Krogt, 1998: 326). Likewise, the *New Zealand Truth* criticised the "pure selfishness" of "white women" who violated "the laws of nature" thereby making New Zealand vulnerable to "colored races" (as cited in Krogt, 1998: 136).

Women's vanity, frivolity and selfishness were important threads in the submissions to the McMillan Commission and in the final report. One submission argued that women have abortions for "preservation of the female figure and youthful charm [and] social life without juvenile ties" (as cited in Brookes, 1981: 128). The idea that abortion is a selfish act saturated the McMillan Report which made an:

...appeal to the womanhood of New Zealand in so far as selfish and unworthy motives have entered into our family life, to consider the grave physical and moral dangers, not to speak of the dangers of race suicide which are involved (McMillan et al., 1939: 17).

These discursive constructions of abortion in the 1930s reified (white) motherhood as a national duty and condemned any ‘unnatural’ and ‘selfish’ deviation from women’s duties. This individualistic focus on ‘selfish’ women causing the abortion problem diverted focus on the socio-economic factor that made raising a large family difficult (Brookes, 1981). Abortion was seen as a moral danger because it countered central ideas about white women’s role as “mothers of the race” (Smith, 1989: 12) and thus reproducers of New Zealand’s national identity (Nagel, 1998).

### **Deserving, Unselfish Women**

Alongside the figure of the selfish woman, a conception of the desperate and deserving woman developed (Leslie, 2010). This is evident in the McMillan Report where women’s abortion decisions were divided between ‘worthy’ and ‘unworthy’ motives (McMillan et al., 1939). While the Committee condemned women’s “selfishness and thoughtlessness” in choosing abortion, they put forward certain “heterogeneous” circumstances where having another child would place too much of a burden on a mother and her family (McMillan et al., 1939: 11, 18). Accordingly, they detailed the difficulties of:

the mother with health undermined and reserve vitality reduced to a minimum by the strain of bearing and rearing a large family. She approaches the menopausal stresses with anxiety and apprehension, having done her duty to family and race, often having lived an exemplary self-sacrificing life, the intolerable contemplation of a late pregnancy drives her to desperate measures often for the first time in her life and the relatively young, tired, anaemic, debilitated mother, with a number of young children born at very close intervals...poor housing or domestic arrangements, and completely exhausted with the incessant round of cleaning, cooking and the strain of the inevitable fretfulness of a number of young children (McMillan et al., 1939: 18).

In these circumstances, the Committee argued that women should “obtain the respite that the health of themselves and their present and future families demand” (McMillan et al., 1939: 19). It is notable that the women who the Committee considers worthy of respite from successive pregnancies are selfless mothers who act in the best interests of their families. These women, having done their duty to race and country, seem exempt from the Committee’s exhortation to women who have abortions for “selfish and unworthy motives” (McMillan et al., 1939: 17).

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Charlotte Leslie (2010) argues the figure of the desperate woman became increasingly dominant in discourses on abortion in the 1930s. She contends that after the Great War and its ensuing economic upheavals, many were sympathetic to women falling pregnant with no social or economic ability to raise children. Thus, abortion activists such as Britain's Abortion Law Reform Association presented unwanted pregnancy as a threat to the woman's existing family which was seen as unable to cope with the added financial strain. Furthermore, Leslie (2010: 10) argues that the post-World War One climate gave rise to a new era of experiences being conceived in psychological concerns which allowed for abortion to be seen in psychiatric terms.

Opposition to abortion often remained focused on the figure of the selfish woman, who sought abortion for frivolous reasons. This Janus-faced view of women seeking abortion as alternatively selfish or desperate is epitomised by the trial of Dr Bourne in 1938 which held that it was legal to perform an abortion to prevent a girl from becoming a "mental wreck" (*R v Bourne* [1939] 1 KB 687). The facts of the *Bourne* case were unique and compelling - a fourteen year old girl who became pregnant as a result of gang rape threatened suicide if she was forced to give birth. Leslie (2010: 12) argues that the sympathetic facts of the case influenced the English High Court to hold that the abortion was legal using highly creative statutory interpretation. Through importing a section from another Act and applying a broad meaning to the term "life", Justice Macnaghten instructed the jury that carrying out an abortion to stop the woman becoming "a physical or mental wreck" was legal. The girl in the *Bourne* case epitomised the figure of the deserving woman: she was innocent, sexually chaste and extremely desperate.

The *Bourne* decision was adopted in New Zealand in *R v Anderson* (1951) and the test was clarified by *R v Woolnough* (1977: 519) as whether abortion was required to "preserve the mother from a real or substantial risk [to life] or of serious harm to her mental or physical health." The judicially recognised mental health exception became enshrined in legislation in 1977 with the passage of the Contraception, Sterilisation, and Abortion Act which remains the law today.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the mental health ground can be seen as a way for 'deserving' women to access abortion. However, this is not a neutral way to

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<sup>1</sup>Note that the 1977 legislation included the phrase "the danger [of continuing the pregnancy] cannot be averted by any other means") which proved unworkable. The legislation was altered in 1978 – see Contraception Sterilisation and Abortion Act 1977.

ensure abortion access. The mental health ground splits women seeking abortion into a deserving/undeserving dichotomy which discursively constructs women in a very limited way and polices their sexual and moral conduct. Discourses linking abortion and mental health can be seen as a strategic truth to limit the number of abortions to ‘deserving’ cases. This allows abortions to occur, while pathologising them (Baird, 2001). These discourses undercut the embodied, dyadic nature of pregnancy and women’s autonomy (Naffine, 1990). Women are not trusted to make decisions about their pregnancies and thus abortion decisions are subject to medical-judicial authority (Crimes Act 1961; Abortion, Sterilisation and Contraception Act 1977).

It is notable that, in the McMillan Report and newspaper articles, abortion is conceived in natalist, nationalist terms and not as a foetal issue. In the submissions to the McMillan Committee, the foetus is mentioned only in passing in relation to its potential with contentions that an aborted foetus might be a future All Black or defend New Zealand in a future war (Brookes, 1981: 128, 131; Van der Krogt, 1998: 324). While these examples mark the foetus as important, its importance is based on the extrinsic values of supporting New Zealand’s national sporting and military might. Likewise, *The Dominion’s* 1937 article entitled “New Zealand’s Unborn Citizens” emphasises foetal potential in nationalist terms (as cited in Brookes, 1981: 131).

Nonetheless, Brookes’ examination of church periodicals in the 1930s demonstrates that there was some foetal-based opposition to abortion. These church publications explicitly ground the foetus in their anti-abortion stance – terming abortion the “murder of the unborn” (Brookes, 1981: 131-132). Accordingly, these church publications are significant for viewing foetuses as having moral status. Thus, it is important to note that discourses are fluid, overlapping, complex and contradictory. While there are dominant discursive constructions in certain historical periods, this is not to say that these are the only discursive formations evident.

### **Women as Murderers: The Development of Foetal-based Discourses**

The figure of the foetus did not gain prominence in New Zealand until the mid-1960s. As Susan Erikson (2007) argues the rise of the personification of the foetus was the product of historical forces converging and gaining an unprecedented degree of public exposure. Whereas prior to foetal imagery technology, the foetus was largely limited to anatomists and the medical

profession, anti-abortion activists use of foetal imagery gained widespread cultural resonance in New Zealand in the 1960s and 1970s (McCulloch, 2013; Molloy, 1996). In 1963, Dr. William Liley, of the National Women's Hospital, brought the foetus into New Zealand's medical and public consciousness when he successfully pioneered pre-natal blood transfusion for fetuses with blood diseases (Liley, 1963). After the 1967 passage of the Abortion Act in England, New Zealand anti-abortion groups joined together in an effort to prevent such a liberalisation of abortion laws. Accordingly, Liley and fellow doctor P.J. Downey established the anti-abortion group Society for the Protection for the Unborn Child (SPUC) in 1970 (Stone, 1977: 141). They harnessed their medical authority in a popular travelling road-show, wherein they used foetal sonograms and foetal heartbeat recordings to convince attendees of the humanity of 'the unborn child.' Liley's foetal based arguments were hugely influential in the 1970s (McCulloch, 2013, Stone, 1977). He argued that developments in foetal technology transformed obstetrics and gynaecology - from being about one patient (the woman) to two (the woman and the foetus) (Le Jeune & Liley, 1977: 6). SPUC's influence became significant and they claimed to have 25,000 members by 1972 and 40,000 members by 1975 (McCulloch, 2013). While Alison McCulloch (2013: 56) notes that leaked SPUC papers reveal that SPUC's membership level was overstated, she contends that their perceived membership lead to actual influence in Parliament.

In response to political pressure, Parliament established a Royal Commission to investigate abortion (Sparrow, 2010: 140; Stone, 1977). The Commission's Final Report was highly influenced by SPUC and has been criticised repeatedly for its conservative, philosophically illogical conclusions. McCulloch (2013) highlights the Royal Commission's statement that abortion "for reasons of social convenience is morally wrong" occurs on the same page as allowing abortion in cases of foetal disability due to the burden on "the child and his parents" (McMullin et al., 1977: 17). The Royal Commission's 1977 Report viewed the question of when life begins as central to the abortion debate. In doing so, as Maureen Molloy (1996: 67) argues, the Commission relegated women's autonomy to a side issue. Molloy sees the Report as being a "classic case of power producing knowledge" (Molloy, 1996: 67). She argues that the Commission's focus on biological, 'scientific' truth obviated the value of other knowledges. Thus, Molloy argues that women's views on abortion were discredited. Consequently, Molloy sees the Royal Commission's Report as

humanising fetuses and de-humanising women. She contends that Liley had significant influence on the Commission. This is evident in the Royal Commission's representation of the fetus as "a new human being, a separate individual, a man in miniature," while women were portrayed as irrational and incapable of making decisions (Molloy, 1996: 76). Thus Molloy argues that "women stand in a double relation to the bourgeois foetal/man as nature to be modified and female to be governed" (Molloy, 1996: 79). Despite the unprecedented focus on the fetus, there are continuities between the foetal rights paradigm and earlier constructions of abortion in the 1930s. Women in both paradigms are depicted as selfish, immoral and making wrong decisions.

Ultimately, the Commission premised its Report on the status of the fetus. It concluded that "unborn life is entitled to a measure of protection and that it is wrong, except for good reasons to terminate it" (McMullin et al., 1977: 198). The Commission's view of the status of the fetus led to it seeking to limit abortion numbers. Thus, McCulloch argues that the Commission only recommended grounds for abortion that it believed would restrict abortion to highly limited circumstances. McCulloch (2013: 171) contends that the Commission recommended that rape should not be a ground for abortion because it believed that it would incentivise women to lie about being raped in order to procure abortions. In contrast, McCulloch (2013: 171) argues that incest was allowed as a ground because the Royal Commission did not think that it would open the floodgates for more abortions. This desire to limit abortions can be seen as a continuation of the discursive split between selfish, immoral abortions and deserving ones evident in the 1930s.

The Royal Commission's findings provided the basis for the Contraceptive Sterilisation and Abortion Bill. In the Parliamentary debates on the Bill many MPs made explicit foetal-rights based arguments. Robert Muldoon (1977: 3524) spoke of "the sanctity of human life" and Mick Connelly talked about the "responsibility to protect human life" (1977: 3566). T.J Young (1977: 3561) went even further and posed the question of abortion as a "question of two human lives of equal value." Dr Wall used highly emotive language, stating "this is not emotion; it is the hard cold facts of what we are discussing – whether that little boy or girl should be sucked out through a sucker" (Wall, 1977: 3546).

In the foetal-rights discourse, foetal images are used to claim that fetuses are "children" who have been "emotionally abandoned and brutally murdered

by their mothers” and that abortion is a sin (Cannold, 2002: 171). Foetal images are coded in the language of positivism and scientific objectivity, consequently the ontological claims associated with discourses on foetal images are often accepted as reality. However, as a strong body of critical literature on ultrasound argues, the rise of ultrasound is not simply a means to make the foetus more visible; it produces meaning. The dominance of foetal ultrasound is not a natural or inevitable phenomenon; rather it is the result of particular strategic truths and discursive constructions.

SPUC’s travelling roadshow and its anti-abortion materials used foetal imagery and played foetal heartbeats to ‘prove’ that foetuses are “unborn children” (Stone, 1977). However, the ‘proof’ that these materials present is not inherent and universal. This can be seen by Lynn Morgan’s (1998) examination of abortion discourses in Ecuador. When a United States anti-abortion group presented foetal-based anti-abortion material to a group of anti-abortion Ecuadorians, the Ecuadorian audience was unimpressed because they were unfamiliar with claims that foetuses are unborn children. Their anti-abortion views were based on Catholic ideas of motherhood and the foetal images had no resonance for them. Accordingly, the ‘proof’ that foetuses are unborn children is a product of contextual interpretation and not as universally true as their proponents assert they are. Likewise, Joanne Boucher (2004) argues that the authority of foetal imagery rests on the ontological value placed on science, ‘biological fact’ and the ocular in Western science.

As Ingrid Zechmeister (2001) contends, the visual holds a hallowed place in Western ontology because we are discursively constructed to believe that what we see is the best depiction of reality. Thus, in a lot of anti-abortion materials, the narration does not accurately describe the imagery shown (Boucher, 2004). An example of this is when MP Brian MacDonell (1977: 3538) brought a between eight and twelve week foetus to Parliament in a jar to demonstrate foetal personhood. At this gestational age, foetuses are still in the early stages of development and do not resemble a fully formed baby (Verbeek, 2008). The ‘truth’ of foetal personhood is not inherent in the foetus. In themselves, these images do not have any ‘objective’ meaning and are unable to substantiate the ontological claim of foetal personhood (Boucher, 2004). Accordingly, claims of foetal personhood can be seen as a performative utterance, rather than naming the ‘objective’ truth. Thus, feminists should

challenge the ideological authority of foetal images as well as “its visual distortions and verbal fraud” (Petchesky, 1987).

However, by far the most alarming aspect of foetal imagery is that women are erased and the foetus is depicted as autonomous and rights-bearing. MacDonell’s argument makes no mention that women’s bodies are necessary for the survival of these ‘autonomous unborn children.’ Petchesky (1987) notes from the beginning of this technology, women have become marginalised as the foetus is ascribed primary value and an autonomous status. While SPUC was successful in advocating a foetal-based opposition to abortion and influencing a conservative abortion law, the 1970s represented the zenith of SPUC’s influence (McCulloch, 2013). Voice for Life’s (2012) website and publications make no mention of a foetal-rights argument and its website nostalgically recalls the “distant memory” of “the heady days of the 70s, when thousands rallied to the new cause.” Nonetheless, the personification of foetuses was successful, with courts granting guardianship of foetuses to the High Court and newspaper articles depicting foetuses as babies (see *Re an Unborn Child*, 2003; see Ensor, 2013). Nonetheless, while anti-abortion groups have largely succeeded in convincing the general public that the foetus was a person worthy of rights and not simply a mass of unimportant cells, many people support liberal access to abortion on the basis of women’s autonomy (Cannold, 2002; Rose, 2011).

### **Mad Women: The Development of Post-Abortion Syndrome**

In the 1980s, claims that abortion was harmful to women’s mental health began to emerge. These ‘post-abortion syndrome’ discourses were first developed in the United States as a response to the “Achilles heel” of foetal-based anti-abortion arguments – that these discourses privilege the foetus over women (Cannold, 2002; Rose, 2011; Lee, 2003). Due to the institutional context of New Zealand, where mental health is the ground allowing 98 per cent of abortions, claims that abortion causes mental health problems have gained a unique foothold here (Abortion Supervisory Committee, 2011; Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002). Leslie Cannold (2002: 172) argues that many people opposed such a foetal-based “condemnation of nearly all aborting mothers as immoral, careless and or selfish murderers” and indeed felt protective of women in response to these attacks. Discourses of ‘post-abortion syndrome’ arose out of anti-abortion groups’ desire for political efficacy. The ‘post-abortion

syndrome' discourse, like unsubstantiated claims that abortion causes infertility and breast cancer, was constructed to prevent women from choosing to have abortions and restricting the availability of abortion (Lee, 2003).

Post-abortion syndrome activist David Reardon (1996) argues that this discourse is their most politically expedient because it mimics the rhetoric of pro-choice activists. Accordingly, women are the focus of this "pro-woman" rhetoric and the foetus is ascribed an ostensibly marginalised role (Cannold, 2002; Lee, 2003). Thus, Reardon cautions supporters of post-abortion syndrome to distance themselves from a foetal-focused framework in order to give their claims credence and 'objective' scientific legitimacy. However, New Zealand based anti-abortion groups seem to prefer a dual-pronged attack with claims that abortion harms women and kills babies. Anti-abortion group, *Right to Life* (2005), simultaneously claims that that abortion causes mental health problems and that foetuses have a right to life. Thus, there is significant overlap between the foetal-based opposition to abortion and "pro-woman" claims that abortion causes mental health problems.

'Post-abortion syndrome claims are modelled on definitions of post-traumatic stress disorder syndrome. Despite how common abortion is, proponents of 'post-abortion syndrome' contend that abortion is a significant life stressor that lies outside of the normal range of human experience. Alleged symptoms of 'post-abortion syndrome' disorder include: over-eating, under-eating, increased promiscuity, decreased sex drive, repeat abortions, having children and sadness. The 'post-abortion syndrome' discourse is universalising and homogenising. Indeed, absence of symptoms is constructed as a symptom of denial (Lee, 2003). 'Post-abortion syndrome' is presented as a latent trauma that will inevitably affect all women who have abortions. This is troubling because it ignores the variation in women's experiences of abortion and denies them agency (Baird, 2001).

Cannold (2002) observes that in the 'post-abortion syndrome' framework women are presented as pitiable 'victims' and are often analogised with rape 'victims'. She argues that in 'post-abortion' syndrome discourse, abortion is constructed as a catastrophic event which destroys women's mental health and requires post-abortive women to learn the 'truth' about abortion so that they can heal. Thus, "restrictions on legal abortion are necessary to stop weak and irrational women from making bad decisions that harm them" (Cannold, 2002: 174).

This ‘pro-woman’ restriction on abortion has been effectual in limiting the information and availability of services available in some states in Australia and the United States, such as mandated counselling about abortion causing physical and mental health problems and mandated wait periods (Richardson & Nash, 2006; Cannold, 2002: 174). These provisions deny women agency by depicting women who choose abortion as ignorant, not knowing their own minds and in need of guidance in order to make the ‘right’ decision. Accordingly, ‘post-abortion syndrome’ discourses can be seen as more insidious than foetal-based anti-abortion claims. The success of “post-abortion syndrome” claims elsewhere should be a warning to those concerned with ensuring access to abortion in New Zealand.

In New Zealand, “post-abortion syndrome” claims should be seen in the context of the prominence of the mental health ground in abortion law. The legal linking of abortion access with mental health gives these discourses institutional weight and renders them culturally resonant (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards & Rucht, 2002). Most women in New Zealand who seek an abortion have to claim that continuing the pregnancy would seriously damage their mental health (Crimes Act, 1961, s.187A(a), Abortion Supervisory Committee, 2012). Accordingly, women are framed as mentally troubled figures who would not be able to cope with the effects of continuing the pregnancy. This framing performatively undercuts women’s status as autonomous subjects.

Ellie Lee argues that the medicalisation of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood has led to abortion being seen as physically and mentally safer than continuing the pregnancy. In accordance with this view, the mental health ground for abortion is interpreted liberally by Certifying Consultants and less than two per cent of abortions are refused (Abortion Supervisory Committee, 2003). Consequently, claims that abortion causes mental health problems have been staunchly denied by the medical profession (Lee, 2003). This has prevented ‘post-abortion syndrome’ from becoming culturally resonant. Nonetheless, this medicalisation of pregnancy, abortion and motherhood is not a strong foundation for ensuring access to abortion. The mental health ground renders women’s ability to have abortions vulnerable to anti-abortion allegations that abortion damages women’s mental health. New Zealand anti-abortion groups have expended significant resources, in the form of television advertisements and pamphlets in an effort to convince people that abortion causes mental health problems (Young, 2013; Collins, 2012). Anti-abortion

groups, such as the Christchurch based Post Abortion Healing Service, often performatively name post-abortion syndrome and help women heal from their abortions with counselling (Gnad, 2008). Norman MacLean (2012), a former Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, made 'post-abortion syndrome' claims in the media in an effort to prevent an abortion service opening in Southland. In 2005, Right to Life took the body that oversees abortion to court alleging that the mental health ground was wrongly applied. Right to Life (2008) also sought to use the affidavits of women affected by 'post-abortion syndrome' and psychological evidence about 'post-abortion syndrome' in court to challenge the oversight of abortion counselling provisions. Ultimately, the *Right to Life* cases, which spanned six years and went all the way to Supreme Court, were largely unsuccessful. However, the ability of an anti-abortion group to challenge abortion access in New Zealand suggests that access to abortion in New Zealand may not be entirely secure.

There have also been a plethora of scientific studies about whether abortion causes mental health problems (see Fergusson et al., 2006). While these studies seek to be objective, they are premised on a view that abortion is inherently pathological and a largely homogenous experience. Thus, they tend to only ask whether abortion causes negative mental health effects rather than examining whether abortion may have positive effects too (Boyle, 2002). In addition, the question of whether abortion causes mental health problems continues to be re-researched despite strong evidence that abortion does not cause mental health problems (Romans-Clarkson, 1989; Russo, 2008; Charles et al., 2008). The effects of this research are iterative; they promote the idea that there is a link between abortion and mental health.

If the claim that abortion causes mental health problems gains resonance then women's legal access to abortion could be severely limited. Moreover, if these groups convince women that abortion will cause them mental health problems, it may have a constitutive effect in dissuading women from procuring abortions. Consequently, mental health, the ground that has enabled relatively liberal access to abortion, is also the ground that may challenge women's ability to have abortions.<sup>2</sup>

In the discursive construction of women who have abortions as bad moral agents in the pro-natalist and foetal based discourses, women are condemned for

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<sup>2</sup> This claim was influenced by Foucault's (1980) writings on the body and power – that which makes it strong, renders it vulnerable.

being moral actors who make bad decisions. In the discourses linking abortion and mental health, women's status as autonomous decision-makers is questioned. Women who have abortions are presented as victims rather than moral agents with the capacity to make decisions. Thus, the 'post-abortion syndrome' discourse can have a two-fold effect – in colonising women's minds by dissuading them not to 'choose' abortion and politically limiting access to abortion in 'women's interests.' Accordingly, it can constitutively and practically limit women's ability to choose abortion.

### **Conclusion**

A critical genealogical account of abortion is important because the history of abortion shapes understandings of abortion in the present. The shifting discursive constructions of women, as bad for 'selfishly' abrogating motherhood or 'murdering an unborn child' to 'mad' in the mental health discourse, have material implications for women's subjectivities. The historical constructions of abortion are of vital importance in shaping women's subjectivities. Ultimately, the historically contingent nature of constructions of abortion and the women who have them illustrate the potential for transforming understandings of abortion. Only rational, autonomous people are afforded the capacity to make decisions. The framework of New Zealand's abortion law requires most women to state that continuing their pregnancy will cause them mental health problems in order to procure an abortion. Thus, most women seeking abortions must name themselves as mentally fragile subjects. This naming performatively undercuts women's status as autonomous agents. Concurrently, anti-abortion groups and outlier positivist scientists claim that abortion causes mental health problems. If this claim becomes resonant, the legal basis for most abortions in New Zealand will be eliminated. Thus, in the mental health paradigm, women who have abortions are conceived as mentally troubled victims who are incapable of claiming a right to bodily autonomy.

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## **Social Movements and Contestation in Post-Crisis Capitalism: A Case Study of Syriza**

*Bartek Goldmann*

### **Abstract:**

This article explores the potential of radical social movements in Greece which have emerged post-2008 to address the perceived democratic deficit that characterizes institutional politics at both the national and regional (EU) levels. Various empirical and ethnographic approaches have examined protest cultures, foregrounding their self-organization, spontaneity, flexibility and absence of hierarchy as characteristics which have allowed them to mobilize such impressive amounts of people. This paper critically argues, however, that the organisational *form* of contemporary mass social movements and their reluctance to engage with state power has actually inhibited their potential and prevented them from realizing their political goals. The case of Syriza, a Greek radical leftist political party is examined, which intends to contest Troika-mandated austerity in Greece by mediating the transformative potential of the street and the square via electoral politics in order to effect durable socio-political change.

### **Introduction**

The global financial crisis has manifested itself in a variety of ways in different locations and around the world, producing a variety of protest and social movements on a massive scale not seen since the late 1960s. The contemporary politics of the street and the square are timely mobilizations against financial shocks, the commodification of public services, reckless consumerism, rising levels of public and private debt, and a widespread perception of malfunctioning democracy and elite-driven politics. In occupying squares and other public spaces, the multitudes engaged in these new politics contest the claim that ‘there is no alternative’ and in doing so, create a voice for themselves by refusing to engage with the fake conflicts constructed by neoliberal hegemony. Contestation and protest are necessary elements of democracy and civic participation, since the electoral process (institutional politics) has proven itself to be an insufficient vehicle for class struggle, and requires additional pressure

from below (non-institutional politics). The two are both necessary and interrelated. Resistance to economic orthodoxy in the post-crisis era is a pressing urgency since governments dogmatically pursuing structural adjustment are doing away with basic democratic rights and whittling away the welfare state—the hard-won products of a long series of struggles.

This essay argues that we must step back from particular theoretical frameworks and concepts of resistance since they have very real ramifications on politics and protest movements, in some cases inhibiting their potential. The contemporary left, infatuated with anarchist ideology, has developed an allergy to the idea of taking state power and is hesitant to consider the state as a site of political contestation. Furthermore, there appears to be an emerging tendency among today's activists to fetishise the processual aspects of democracy (self-organization and horizontal, open-networks, assemblies where all participants are free to voice their concerns) at the cost of enduring political gains. This trend shall be demonstrated through the case of the Occupy Wall Street movement (OWS) which refrained from directly engaging with the state apparatus, and instead opted to occupy space on its peripheries, a strategy which was ultimately ineffective in shaking the hegemony of neoliberal economics.

In response, this essay will conceptualise a more suitable theoretical perspective by analysing Syriza, a Greek radical leftist party. Syriza is the exception to the aforementioned trend because it demonstrates that if social movements are to fulfil their aims and induce political change that is not only meaningful but durable, they ought to make strategic associations with the state apparatus rather than neglect it as a site of struggle. Syriza is in that sense the counterpoint to OWS. This is not to say that egalitarian self-organisation at the street level is a bad thing, however it is a recognition of the fact that if social movements are to contest the social effects of the crisis and generate outcomes for large numbers of their populations, for example by means of public policy, they must develop from mere carnival and into enduring aspects of their respective societies.

### **Social Movements And Organizational Form: Occupy Wall Street**

The ongoing popular protests around Europe converge in a series of demands which, in their very spontaneity and obviousness, form a kind of “epistemological obstacle” to the proper confrontation with the ongoing crisis of our political system... What we need today, in this situation, is a Thatcher of the left: a leader who would repeat

Thatcher's gesture in the opposite direction, transforming the entire field of presuppositions shared by today's political elite of all main orientations (Slavoj Žižek, 2013).

Jeremy Roos, citing the first part of this passage, writes Žižek's comments off as "academese jargon" typical of armchair revolutionaries today (Roos, 2013). According to Roos, instead of using the occasion to lambast Thatcher's ideological mantra that 'there is no alternative,' Žižek chose to "criticize the leaderless anti-capitalist movements that have recently emerged... the only serious alternative to have emerged in response to her dogma in the past twenty years" (ibid.). While there may be some truth in arguing that neoliberalism has not been seriously contested in some places in the past 30 years, for example in Britain and Western Europe, the same cannot be said for the transformation of Latin America that has been spearheaded by the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. "Forget all that fancy stuff about consensus-based decision-making; what we really need is a healthy dose of authoritarian leadership" (ibid.). While Žižek's provocation seems to touch a nerve, Roos' comments go to the heart of crucial issues concerning politics after the crisis, resistance and the state. The disagreement seems to revolve around the question of whether it is the form of the movements that might be the biggest obstacle to their success.

It would seem that today, as we witness intensifying bouts of capitalism's destruction and the resurgence of mass movements, critical thinking is compelled to return to some of the oldest questions about social movements and revolution. One is the question of strategic orientation: what type of organisation is needed today in order to take the ideas enunciated by various mass movements and facilitate their coming to fruition? How should such a movement orient itself, what aims should it have, what demands should it make of the state? The second is the aforementioned problem of organisational form: how should the collective multitudes of protestors be coordinated in order to maximize their political force and capabilities? Can protest movements be treated as experiments in organisational form in what are perceived to be defunct political systems, as microcosms of direct participation which might indicate the broader transformations in social relations beyond the street and the square that the left should pursue in order to properly address the issues it has raised and aimed to resolve?

OWS is for Roos a case in point, a new form of collective politics that "shake[s] off the institutional deadweight of state-oriented and leader-dependent activism", the old party politics that inevitably becomes mired in bureaucratic

inertia, “corrupt union-based horse trading” and “the formulation of specific demands” (ibid.). His rejoinder to Žižek is that “it was precisely the horizontality and spontaneity of the 2011 uprisings that allowed them to spread so rapidly and mobilize such impressive amounts of people” and that “it is precisely their lack of dependence on centralized leadership that allows them to continue adapting to a changing reality in 2013.” There may be a degree of truth to this, however one should add that many of today’s uprisings have been “blind, naïve, scattered and lacking a powerful concept or durable organization” (Badiou, 2012: 5). The structuring framework which theoretically informs them is implicated in this lack of focus.

On the surface, there certainly appears to be a popular antipathy towards political parties and trade unions among contemporary mass movements, and more generally, scepticism that the state apparatus is capable of little more than reproducing the status quo. The context is a contemporary left which is no longer premised on resistance to economic issues and which tends not to organise on class terms—as was the case with traditional labour-based movements which played a significant role in the upheavals of the late 1960s—but to rather revolve around single, localised issues, or questions of identity. Strategically, it proposes to bypass the state completely in their goal of radical social transformation and in terms of structure, favouring modes of organisation premised on horizontality and direct participation rather than leadership and hierarchy, both of which appear to have become dirty words in both activist and academic circles. On this account, the state is autonomous from economic power and socio-economic relations and is not, as Marxists contend, a derivative of class power or simply a political instrument wielded by the bourgeoisie to ensure social domination. The oppressive and authoritarian functions of the state are the products of its own logic of self-perpetuation. It is the state’s form and structural position in capitalist social relations that cause it to be an inherently despotic entity. The seizure of the state is thus no more than a change of masters since the revolution’s conquest of state power just reproduces the tyranny that it seeks to abolish. The state apparatus captures revolutionary politics, disarming it and rendering it ineffective, and where revolutionary action does succeed, it merely replaces one form of authority with another.

From this perspective then, what is necessary is a type of resistance that is based on free forms of association, and whose teleological end-point is stateless

society. Since state-power is doomed, revolutionary social movements should withdraw from politics since it has become (or perhaps always was) a corrupt theatre of domination and pursue transformation through non-institutional avenues. As Thomas Frank points out, activists involved OWS as well as the Tea Party, have been sensitive to anything they perceived as elitism or ‘unnecessary’ hierarchy, adding that bureaucracy, routine and boredom are “no way to fire the imagination of the world” (Frank, 2012). Today’s activists seem to exhibit an aversion to state power and to authority in general; vanguardism and leadership are defined as the problem, and hierarchy is identified as the opposite of creativity. They prefer to occupy spaces at the peripheries of the state (parks and other public commons), and to directly transform the texture of social life in an organic manner. The reasoning is that it is these everyday practices of cohabitation and deliberation that sustain the entire social structure. Such were some of the foremost concerns of the Occupiers of Zuccotti Park. However in retreating to the peripheries outside of the administrative ambit of the state, and by levelling their critique primarily at a cultural-discursive level, the protestors fail to engage the state-capital nexus directly on the planes that really matter: ownership over the means of production, consumption, environment etc.

The left has a tendency to become impulsive and enamoured by the transformative potential of anything that promises radical social change, and risks falling into an “infantile radicalism” (Saad-Filho, 2013). With all the capacity for incisive and penetrating critique, it appears to be completely unable to put itself under the microscope and recognize the enchanting fantasies and ideological mystifications that structure its own field of vision. Witness the enthusiasm with which so many narrated OWS and the Arab Spring as unprecedented and ground-changing events, for example David Harvey’s speech at Occupy London (Harvey, 2011). No doubt, it is difficult to not be enthralled by the potential of such a mobilization after a prolonged period of economic recession and political inertia.

It would appear that the transformative potential of the movements, the Evental symbolism which has inspired people in distant locations, is at the same time hamstringing the prospects for actual political gains and change that is durable and entrenched in civil society. A buzz-kill like Žižek is sometimes completely necessary to burst the bubble: “We have a nice time. But remember, carnivals come cheap. What matters is the day after, when we will have to

return to normal lives. Will there be any changes then?" (Žižek, 2011). His remarks to the OWS campers are even more relevant now than before.

In the following section I will identify and demonstrate the tendencies in Greek society that might provide a realistic, politically attractive alternative to the current post-democratic inertia and the prospect of another decade of austerity, which certain politicians and economic 'pragmatists' claim to be the only viable solution. This will be done by overviewing Syriza's politics and noting its position on two key topics: its economic programme, and its role towards the European Monetary Union (EMU).

### **The Greek Crisis**

After five consecutive years of recession, the Greek economy is in a particularly dire situation. The costs of the crisis have been shouldered by a financially overextended working class which has been most seriously affected by the privatization campaigns which have dismantled social services. Those in the public sector in particular have lost their jobs as a result of cutbacks, and many have seen their working conditions worsen as the government has contemplated 6-day weeks and salary cuts in order to accommodate the Troika's demands for a more competitive 'Euro-compatible' labour market. As of July 2013, unemployment is at a record-breaking 26.8%, over half of which consists of workers aged 18-30, and the figure of those underemployed sits at over 50% (European Commission, 2013). In its annual report on the employment prospects, the OECD has predicted that unemployment in the Eurozone will begin fall by late 2014, however Greece's level is expected to rise to 28.2% (OECD 2013). We are again reminded that capitalism never conclusively resolves its contradictions but only postpones them indefinitely or moves them around geographically.

The ongoing Greek crisis presents an illuminating case study in how narratives are constructed by elites and are used as ideological justifications for structural adjustment. Austerity's organic intellectuals<sup>1</sup> with their divisive rhetoric incite a mood of ugliness; anxieties and sufferings are individualised, and guilt is burdened on working people. On the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012, Dimitris Christoulas, a 77-year old retired Greek pharmacist and pensioner committed

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term organic intellectuals in the Gramscian sense to describe actors which represent particular class interests, namely those of neoliberalism by means of ideological apparatuses such as the educational, political and legal systems.

suicide in Syntagma Square. He had been experiencing financial and health problems, and when austerity measures slashed his pension, he experienced an increasingly difficulty in paying for his medication. In his suicide note he declared: "I see no other solution than this dignified end to my life, so I don't find myself fishing through garbage cans for my sustenance." Greece at one point had one of the lowest rates of suicide in Europe, however this figure has doubled since the crisis began (Hardinghaus and Heyer, 2012). Christoulas's final words echoed the misery and alienation that the politics of austerity have brought on: "I am not committing suicide, they are killing me." It would appear that the inequalities sparked the Arab Spring (the symbolic self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi) and the images of deprivation and social breakdown that are customarily associated with capitalism's periphery are now creeping closer to its heartlands. I shall argue that the pressing need to address the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Greece through increased fiscal spending is not only a moral argument however, since it is also a precondition for kick-starting economic growth.

### **Resistance: Syriza and the Greek Left**

In recent years, a combination of protest movements, general strikes and a political party—namely Syriza—have coalesced around the idea of resisting structural adjustment and mounted a serious challenge to the hegemony of neoliberal economics. Strategically speaking, the most striking difference between the Greek left and its counterparts elsewhere is the former's willingness to engage with the state apparatus in order to fulfil its aims. Since its foundation as a political alliance in 2004, Syriza's electoral success has come in a context of the escalating Greek crisis and the Troika-mandated structural adjustment by successive Greek governments. The party is a political coalition composed of 13 parties on the Greek left and radical left, composed of 13 parties, though *Synaspismós*, the Coalition of the Left and the Ecology and Social Movements, led by Alexis Tsipras, makes up 85%. It has been active in the social struggles of Greece, the labour movement, both at the level of more conventional public and private sector trade unions, as well as in the grassroots level of radical new unions of precarious labour, civil rights and social right movements and at European and World Social Forums (Spourdakis, 2012). Its success in the May and June 2012 elections—16.8% and 26.9% respectively—up from 4.6% in 2009 reflects a significant popular shift in Greek politics, and a

many voters turning away from the historically dominant parties, the conservative New Democracy and the center-left PASOK. Much of Syriza's support came from the latter which enjoyed 43.9% of the vote in 2009 and has since fallen to 12.3%.

At the national level, Syriza's immediate concerns are Greece's ongoing economic recession and its various social calamities which are amplified by austerity. It intends to address these by restoring the welfare state and social protections to the working-class, unemployed and poor. That being said, this is no novelty in Greek politics where seemingly every party, including the fascistic Golden Dawn, appears to mobilize support by appropriating the crisis-austerity discourse for its own purposes. What sets Syriza apart is its class-based analysis which recognizes the systemic nature of capitalism's latest crisis, particularly with respect to how blame is attributed and how the costs of the crisis are disproportionately shifted onto the most vulnerable parts of the population. It is this disenfranchised demographic that constitutes the party's electoral base. Syriza's political platform is unequivocally premised on resisting austerity and the recognition that what is necessary at minimum are new democratic mechanisms and policies that break with the status quo—namely the decommodification of public services and a greater level of social redistribution, notions that have been disavowed even by PASOK, which, like most other socialist and labour parties in Europe have capitulated to damage-control neoliberalism.

One of Syriza's proposals is for the banks to be socialized and restructured in order to ensure that EU bailout money—which currently goes to Greek banks—could be channeled to fund pensions, unemployment and deposit insurance as well as core public institutions such as education and healthcare which have been marginalized and divested since the onset of the crisis. Another is the abolition of EU-mandated labour law reform justified under the rubric of a European 'competitiveness crisis' (Douzinas, 2013: 5). Prevailing neoliberal economic reasoning however sees this as an irrational squandering of funds on people who are in such a position because of failed life choices, laziness or a lack of personal responsibility. Such logic completely eschews the systemic nature of the crisis and neglects the Keynesian insight that if Greece's recovery is to be anything more than a short-lived upturn measured in GDP-to-debt or deficit ratios, the country's working population must be financially capable of internally generating consumer demand. Unemployment is thus the

pressing problem for Greek public policy. The idea of utilizing the various mechanisms of social redistribution in order to reintegrate the destitute into the labour market however is anathema to the “deficit scolders” (Krugman, 2012) which warn that Greece may have to tighten its belt for another decade. It is worthwhile to consider why governments do not pursue such seemingly rational and modest proposals and why, after a brief interlude they have returned to the same climate of financial deregulation that led to the crisis in the first place.

In addition to conventional public policy responses such as labour reform however, Syriza recognizes the necessity of a bottom-up strategy that establishes a vision of a new social contract that takes account of the multitude of social needs. Eric Hobsbawm writes that “the basic problem of the revolution is how to make a hitherto subaltern class capable of hegemony, believe in itself as a potential ruling class and be credible as such to other classes... the struggle to turn the working class into a potential ruling class, the struggle for hegemony, must be waged *before* the transition of power, as well as during and after it” (Hobsbawm, 2011: 324-327). The basic problem of hegemony and the success of a social movement, is not so much how it can come to power but rather how it garner support and come to be accepted, not only as “the politically existing or unavoidable rulers, but as guides and leaders” (ibid.: 328).

Syriza’s strategy with respect to the current crisis goes beyond tinkering with monetary policy and doctrinaire impositions of austerity which simply displace the economic crisis onto vulnerable populations, but inaugurate a new politics that is premised on mass social mobilization and enfranchisement. In doing so it historically breaks with recent governments which have largely ignored popular opinion, social concerns and working-class demands (Spourdalakis 2012). The conditions for the success of the Greek left are two-fold: a) the necessity of a strong party with significant clout in parliamentary politics which can act on behalf of b) a popular movement consisting of a multitude of groups and which is capable of critique and holding this party to account. The success of the Greek left thus depends on its ability to construct a counter-hegemonic project among the population that is premised on empowering the powerless, the in-existent that has no political voice. Some suggest that what Greece requires today is a genuinely universal form of politics, one that might unify the diverse multitude of groups and organizations under a common cause, the kind of purpose the National Patriotic Front served as a point of unity for the Greek resistance during the Nazi occupation

(Spannos, 2012).

At the regional level, the Greek case demonstrates the tension between multilateral unity and state sovereignty that is brought on through European integration. The Greek political deadlock (its eroding sense of sovereignty, the assault on citizens' rights) is also closely related to political decision making at the EU-level, especially to the Troika-mandated budget cuts. The monetary union does not permit small countries like Greece control over monetary policy such as devaluation. Many Keynesian economists such as Krugman (2012) argue that this kind of control is necessary for countries such as Spain and Greece, yet they are powerless to do so. This suggests that while public policy is a key political lever that can be effectively utilized, change must necessarily also come at the regional level.

The dream behind European integration was driven by the desire to combine the efficiency of capitalist market-based economies with social justice, to bring the continuous increases in material wealth and living standards while upholding environmental protection, in an apolitical, technocratic rule, which would also be democratically legitimate. It was designed to achieve integration and convergence among different EU capitalist states without a full European federal union (one government, one budget, one set of tax laws, and one banking system) through a monetary union. As the recent history of the crisis has demonstrated however, instead of reducing socio-economic discrepancies, the single currency has entrenched disadvantage for the nations on Europe's periphery and become an instrument of financial discipline (Offe, 2013).

While Syriza is not explicitly against the concept of a European monetary union, what it takes issue with is its neoliberal structure and its doctrinaire approach to the Euro and public debt, which some claim amounts to blackmail for bailout recipients (Douzinas, 2011). Its position on the question of European (dis-)integration is coloured in class terms, that the coordinated left in Europe, in a gesture of solidarity must break with austerity while remaining in the Eurozone. Its aim is instead to renegotiate the debt by sharply reducing the amounts owed, however without sacrificing a great deal of Greek rights in the process.

### **Becoming-Political: The Road to Syntagma**

“Giving a name is a hegemonic practice, by choosing a signifier that will unite the greatest number of people, causes and groups... The politics of resistance, like all politics, operates through the giving of

names. A demonstration, rally or strike is transient and effervescent. To survive and acquire permanence, it must be nominated” (Douzinas, 2013: 152-3).

Douzinas identifies three decisive instances of resistance in Greece’s recent history: the December 2008 riots, the Hepatia *sans-papiers* hunger strikes and the Syntagma Square protests during the summer of 2011. He traces a historical development where the December protestors, identified by the media as a ‘rabble’, by 2011 became a multitude. What emerges from the sequence of events from December 2008 to Syntagma Square 2011 are new political subjectivities. The initial explosion of December 2008 was spontaneous, timely response to the killing of 15-year old Alexis Grigoropoulos on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> of December next to the Polytechnic and Law School in Athens, universities with a militant history which were the sites of the 1973 uprising against the military junta. Like many other recent uprisings across the western world, it possessed a certain carnivalesque element characterized by vibrant street happenings, theatrical performances and imaginative forms of protests: the main evening news bulletin on state TV was interrupted during a message from the Prime Minister and was replaced by banners declaring “stop watching television and get out to the streets”, the Christmas tree in Syntagma Square was set on fire as protestors declared: “We are revolting. Christmas is postponed” and a large banner with the word ‘resistance’ in many languages was hung on the Acropolis.

More profoundly however, the December insurrection was also the first micro-event that “disarticulated identities from the circuit of desire-consumption-frustration and helped the gradual emergence of subjectivities committed to resistance, justice and equality”, the ‘political baptism’ of a disenfranchised, inexistent population that reclaimed public space and indeed politics itself from an order characterized by inertia and exclusion (Douzinas, 2013: 143). This latent political desire manifested itself in the form of self-organized neighbourhood assemblies, community events, the types of experiments in social organization and collaboration that characterized several of the recent protests in Europe and the Arab region. Urban space traditionally “given to leisure, commercial activities and mild erotic encounters” was re-appropriated and turned over to public use, creating a “space where multiple singularities lived in common, discussed, decided and acted together” (ibid.). The protestors honed their tactics and began to invent new forms of street action, improvising with new forms of communication, particularly regarding

how to resist police repression. December was the first of recent Greek uprisings, however in terms of its material consequences and political gains it was incomplete and had to be embedded and deepened through an inclusive process of collectivization if it was to transcend the particular and localized issue that was its catalyst and attain a universal and durable character.

The second major event was the hunger strike staged by *sans papiers* immigrants and refugees in the *Hepatia* building in Athens, many of whom saw Greece as a gateway into Western Europe. They are the social surplus, the part-of-no-part that is routinely subject to political exclusion and kept at arm's length despite its formal inclusion in the capital-labour nexus of exploitation. They were the "double victims of boom and bust", working and living Greece doing the jobs that the locals would not take for a fraction of the minimum wage and without social security or any of the labour protections offered to legal workers, and their lack work and residence permits made them liable to deportation (Douzinas, 2013: 144-145). The importance of the protest and its relevance to the greater series of events is the way it was identified by the left as part of the same common struggle, and how it was incorporated into the growing movement.

The wave of uprisings, beginning in Tunisia and Egypt in the 2011 Arab Spring, were by summer echoed in Spain by the *indignados* and in Greece by the *aganaktismenoi* on Syntagma Square. These events deepened the initial December-Event's project and eventually culminated in violent protests towards the end of June as the second Memorandum for further EU bailout funds was concluded. The majority of the massive events were spontaneous, grassroots gatherings. While the events of December 2008 were not planned or coordinated by political parties and leftist groups, they certainly embraced their manifestation. Likewise, at the 2011 mobilizations on Syntagma Square, political parties and banners were discouraged, though Syriza continues to play a fundamental role in communicating the struggles of protestors in a parliamentary context (Douzinas, 2013: 148).

## **Conclusion**

In examining Syriza's history and development, I demonstrated a case of political engagement with existing state and political structures that combines the potential of street movements with the authority of parliamentary politics. Social movements that are organised this way are able to mutually reinforce the

political agency of individual subjects as well as the institutionalised groups they form. Syriza is the counter-example to the trend of political disengagement from the state which has been present within recent protest movements such as OWS.

Many of the movements that emerged in the USA and around Western Europe in 2011 carried with them a hope that they would develop into something of a contemporary '68, a counter-hegemonic movement to be reckoned with that could eventually instigate a broader social transformation. Through the example of OWS, this essay argued that for the most part they have failed in this, and that a significant cause for this outcome has been the movement's anarchistic ideology, its organizational structure and consequent lack of focus. That being said, this essay does not intend to be dismissive of the new political culture that is emerging on the streets and squares around the world, but rather recognizes it as the ideological basis or precondition for a society which gives a voice to the excluded and in-existent, those who exist socially but not politically.

Writing in the context of the struggles of the late 1960s, Herbert Marcuse points out that it would be irresponsible to overrate the chances for transformation (Marcuse, 1969: ix). What he said still pertains today: critical theory should refrain from making utopian speculations about today's mass movements but instead analyse existing societies in light of their own capabilities, and to identify and demonstrate the tendencies (if any exist) which might lead beyond the current state of affairs. To write these movements off as hopeless, utopian or unrealistic leads to cynical resignation to the status quo and merely reinforces the ruling ideology. On the one hand the political desires for change that so many on the left have placed their hopes in are the multitudes' constitutive driving force, the creativity and enthusiasm which has given these movements their character and hopeful tone, in a context where pragmatic political leaders stress the reality principle of austerity. At the same time, for purely practical reasons, if these movements are to achieve any practical gains, the thinly-veiled class warfare of austerity politics demands that we continue to be engaged in the struggle, while maintaining a critical distance to the romantic spectacle of the square.

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## Top Market Incomes 1981-2011<sup>1</sup>

*Brian Easton*

### **Introduction**

One of the few useful sources of market income information is incomes declared for tax purposes. Even so it has limitations. It is administrative data and so is sensitive to changes in statute and administrative policy. Thus the definition of income is that set by the law. In the New Zealand case the law generally omits capital gains. Coverage is affected by administrative practice. Low income recipients may not need to report their incomes (the government relying on PAYE to tax them).<sup>2</sup> The available data excludes trusts and companies.

Even so it is the best data we have. Robert Solow famously justified some statistical work he was doing, by citing the addicted gambler who knew ‘the casino wheel is crooked but it is the only one in town’. In any case others have used the data.<sup>3</sup> This research note reports on and interprets their data in order to get a better understand what has been happening.

### **Data Sources**

All the data used here ultimately comes from the Department of Inland Revenue. It is based on a sample of IR3 and IR5 tax returns for each of the 31 years from 1981 to 2011.<sup>4</sup>

The data consists of a taxable income band, the number of taxpayers in the band and their total taxable income.<sup>5</sup> The bands vary from year to year, but

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful for comments on earlier drafts by Norman Gemmil, Bill Rosenberg and Sandra Watson.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, in the 1981 tabulation excludes taxpayers who earned less than \$11,500 per annum and were not required to file tax returns.

<sup>3</sup> *The World Top Incomes Database* <http://topincomes.g-mond.parisschoolofeconomics.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> The data for 2002 to 2011 is on their website. I asked the Department to supply me with the data file released in 2004 to Andrew Leith and Tony Atkinson from 1981 to 2003, which they did promptly. I am grateful for assistance from Sandra Watson, Manager, Forecasting and Analysis, Policy and Strategy, Inland Revenue.

[http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/users/atkinson/AtkinsonLEIGH\\_NewZealand08.pdf](http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/users/atkinson/AtkinsonLEIGH_NewZealand08.pdf), page 46.

The two sets of series overlap by two years, a comparison of which confirms they are the same series.

<sup>5</sup> The data covers natural persons and excludes trusts and corporations.

are narrow enough to enable the required calculations to be done with sufficient precision.

### **Defining the Top One Percent and Their Income Share**

It was soon evident that the coverage of those reported in the data base has varied, reflecting the administrative decisions of who is required to file a return, together with the ability to reconstruct a return for those who are not required to file.

Taxpayers numbered in 1981 were 70.9 percent of the adult population over 15; in 2011<sup>6</sup> they were 98.2 percent.<sup>7</sup> The most important reason for the rise has been the inclusion of the PAYE record for individuals who did not file. It would be misleading to compare the one percent of tax reporters in 1981 with the one percent in 2011.

Instead, the one percent is defined here as the top one percent of ‘adults’ (over the age of 15) irrespective of whether they appear in the IRD statistics.<sup>8</sup> That represents about 23,000 individuals in 1981 and 35,000 in 2011 with a corresponding (almost) linear growth between.

If taxpayer coverage varies over time, then so must the coverage of the aggregate incomes which they report. There is no uncontaminated benchmark series as for population. The best I could find comes from the Household Sector Account from the System of National Accounts of primary income receivable.<sup>9</sup> It does not match taxable income because ‘social security benefits in cash’ and ‘social assistance in cash’ are included in taxable income.<sup>10</sup>

Table 1 shows the resulting declared taxable income of the top 1 percent of adults, together with four other measures as a share of aggregate income.

### **The Top Ten Percent**

Exactly the same method was used to calculate the share of the top 10 percent. The difference between that share and the share of the one percent is the share of the next 9 percent which is also shown in Table 1.

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<sup>6</sup> Tax years. For most taxpayers these are years ending in March.

<sup>7</sup> The 98 percent includes children and those earning wages for part of a year then moving overseas.

<sup>8</sup> Under 15s may appear in the list, but there will be very few of them in the top one percent.

<sup>9</sup> It is based on Table 2.11 of national disposal income: the series was kindly supplied by Jeff Cope of SNZ.

<sup>10</sup> We are assuming that the top ten percent receive little of these transfers. Some the superannuitants do.

The top 10 percent amounted to 350,000 people in 2011. They reported more than \$71,000 of taxable income in a year when the annual wage was about \$51,000. The closeness of the two reflects that there is a large tail of adults who are not full-time wage earners, including part-time workers, superannuitants, beneficiaries and other non-earners. (Only 22 percent of the adult population declared more than the annualised average wage.)

### **The Pareto Coefficient**

Vilfredo Pareto famously proposed that upper incomes followed a power probability law which is today called the ‘Pareto distribution’. Its shape is characterised by a single parameter, the ‘Pareto Coefficient’, which he thought was universally near to 2. While practically top incomes roughly follow a Pareto distribution, the Pareto Coefficient itself is much more variable between countries and over time. In the case of early post-war New Zealand it was typically above 2.5, rising, and near 3.0 in the mid-1970s.<sup>11</sup>

The larger the Pareto Coefficient, the less unequal the distribution. (Thus the rising coefficient in the early part of the post-war era indicates that inequality was falling.)<sup>12</sup>

### **The Top 0.1 Percent<sup>13</sup>**

Overseas studies often report the share of the top 0.1 percent. Given the difficulties with the New Zealand data, any estimation can be treacherous. Those with very high incomes can avoid declaring their offshore income for taxable purposes by using the residential rules and spending sufficient time out of New Zealand.<sup>14</sup> The issue of under-reporting for tax avoidance poses even more problems.

As well as the reporting difficulties, the upper open interval is usually too big to enable a direct estimate. For instance in 2011 there were about the 3,500 in the top 0.1 percent of the population, but those in the upper open interval numbered 13,040.<sup>15</sup> Instead, the upper income tail is assumed to be Pareto

<sup>11</sup> B. H. Easton (1983) *Income Distribution in New Zealand*: 181.

<sup>12</sup> The coefficients were estimated by using the simple relationship between the mean and the bottom income of a Pareto distribution.

<sup>13</sup> The tabulations are derived by sampling. Estimates using them will be less satisfactory where the numbers are small and the distribution highly skewed, as applies for the very top of the income distribution.

<sup>14</sup> As can those on lower incomes.

<sup>15</sup> See *New Zealand tax residence. Who is a New Zealand resident for tax purposes?*

distributed and the share of the top 0.1 percent is estimated from the share of the top one percent using the Pareto coefficient.

### **What Does the Top of the New Zealand Market Income Distribution Look Like?<sup>16</sup>**

Table 1 provides statistics of the shares for the top income categories and the Pareto coefficients for each of the 31 (mainly March) years between 1981 and 2011 inclusive. Its interpretation is illustrated by consideration of the last (2011) year.

In 2011 the top one percent of individuals declared about 9.2 percent of the total market income of New Zealand. That means that their average market income was 9.2 times that of the average New Zealand adult.<sup>17</sup> The top 10 percent declared 35.4 percent share of the total income, so they averaged 3.5 that of the average New Zealander. The top 0.1 percent declared that they received (after avoidance) 22 times what the average New Zealander received.

How do these shares compare internationally? Such comparisons are very difficult because they may cover different populations (notably taxpayers rather than adults) and income aggregates (declared taxable income rather than the total). For the record, there is data for 18 OECD countries; their average for share of the top one percent comes to 9.8 percent, so the New Zealand share appears to be near the average of the reported OECD shares.<sup>18</sup> The following may be useful benchmarks for the 2011 tax year:

- 10 percent of adults had incomes above about \$70,000
- 1 percent of adults had incomes above about \$165,000
- 0.1 percent of adults had incomes above about \$420,000
- Annualised average Wages = \$51,000

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<http://www.ird.govt.nz/resources/a/3/a35bbb804bbe588fbc1efcbc87554a30/ir292.pdf>

The general rule is summarised by

‘You’re a New Zealand tax resident if:

- you’re in New Zealand for more than 183 days in any 12-month period, or
- you have an “enduring relationship” with New Zealand, or
- you’re away from New Zealand in the service of the New Zealand government.’

People who are not New Zealand tax residents (non-residents) are liable for New Zealand tax only on their New Zealand-sourced income.

<sup>16</sup> As declared for tax purposes.

<sup>17</sup> On the basis of the handful of countries for which there are estimates the inclusion of capital gains might add about 1 percentage point to the top 1 percent’s income share.

<sup>18</sup> <http://topincomes.g-mond.parisschoolofeconomics.eu/#Home>: The denominators may not be consistent.

The Pareto coefficient was 2.6; it cannot be readily interpreted for these purposes. However that the average of 17 OECD countries in 2005 came to 2.1 so New Zealand was probably less unequal on this measure, although it may be easier for rich New Zealanders to move offshore in order to escape the full impact of the New Zealand taxation regime.<sup>19</sup>

### **Inequality at the Top over Time**

The four indicators change over the 31 years (see Table 1). There is probably not a lot to be gained from a year-to-year analysis because of sampling variability. However there are distinctive trends. Most fundamentally, the share of the top groups is higher at the end of the 31 years than at the beginning, while the Pareto Coefficient is correspondingly lower.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the top one percent had a share of 6.0 percent in 1981 and 9.2 percent in 2011. (The share of the top 0.1 percent rose from 1.2 percent to 2.2 percent in the same period. The top 10 percent rose from 30.1 percent to 35.4 percent.)

The change over time is not smooth; for all measures most of the changes occur in the early 1990s. The share of the top 0.1 percent increases by about 1.5 percentage points between 1989 and 1993; the share of the top one percent leaps from roughly 6 percent to roughly 10 percent between 1989 and 1993 (Since this includes the 0.1 percent, it means that the remaining 0.9 percent get about an additional 2.5 percentage points between them). The share of the top 10 percent shows a leap of about 10 percentage points in the same period (so the next 9 percent have a lift of about 6 percentage points). Similarly the Pareto Coefficient hovers around 3 in the 1980s (a level similar to the late 1970s) and then falls to 2.3 in 1993.<sup>21</sup>

After 1993 there seems to a mildly rising trend peaking at the turn of the century, and then falling. The lessening of inequality seems to precede the

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<sup>19</sup> A B Atkinson, T. Piketty & E. Saez (2010) *Top Incomes in the Long Run of History* <http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/fichiers/public/AtkinsonPikettySaezOUP09summary.pdf>, Table 13.1.

<sup>20</sup> There is a marked blip in the March 2000 year. The Labour Government had been elected in 1999 on a promise to raise the top income tax rate from April 2000. Many of the rich arranged their income flows to pull income forward into the lower tax year. However the income shares fall in the following few years and a moving average over the period shows only the most marginal peaking in 2000. See I. Claus, J. Creedy & J. Teng (2012) *The Elasticity of Taxable Income in New Zealand* New Zealand Treasury Working Paper 12/03.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, there is no evidence of the impact of the 1987 sharemarket boom and bust in the data.

arrival of the Global Financial Crisis. Or it could be argued that the trends after 1993 are broadly flat.

### **Why the Increase?**

Before trying to answer the question as to why there has been an increase in inequality at the top, three points need to be cleared away:

- this is a personal income distribution, it is not the same as the household income distribution, which much of the New Zealand income distribution debate has focussed on, and does not map easily to it.<sup>22</sup>
- this is the market distribution and, subject to the discussion on dividend imputation below, does not take into account income tax changes which, generally favouring the rich, have increased their share of after-tax incomes even further. (Almost all the discussion on the household income distribution is after-tax and with cash social assistance.)
- the dramatic change occurs in a very short period – not earlier than 1989; not later than 1993. There is little evidence in the data of a long term trend (nor – perhaps more surprisingly – of a business cycle).

What might have been the causes of the widening of the income distribution at the top? The main reasons seem to be two fold.

### **1. The Impact of the Dividend Imputation System**

Until 1989 it was said that corporate dividends were ‘doubled taxed’. First corporate profits paid corporation tax and then, dividends paid from the tax-paid profits were treated as taxable income of the shareholder. Of course in practice things were much more complicated for there was considerable tax avoidance.

From 1989 there has been a dividend imputation system in which a shareholder receiving a dividend from a company is entitled to an ‘imputation credit’, which represents tax paid by the company, and is used to reduce or eliminate the shareholder's income tax liability.<sup>23</sup> In effect corporation tax becomes a withholding tax for shareholders’ dividends.

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<sup>22</sup> B. H. Easton (2013) *Economic Inequality in New Zealand: A User's Guide*, (forthcoming)

<sup>23</sup> Dividend imputation is a corporate tax system in which some or all of the tax paid by a company may be attributed, or imputed, to the shareholders by way of a tax credit to reduce the income tax payable on a distribution. In comparison to the classical system, it reduces or eliminates the tax disadvantages of distributing dividends to shareholders by only requiring them to pay the difference between the corporate rate and their marginal rate. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dividend\\_imputation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dividend_imputation)

The (intended) effect was to encourage the distribution of corporate earnings with the consequence that shareholders were less dependent on capital gains and other artifices (such as returning to shareholder their capital investment) to access their share of corporate profits. The alternatives are explicitly designed to avoid reporting personal income; a dividend imputation system does not have the same disincentive (while giving the shareholder easier access to corporate profits). In effect it puts some previously unreported income (including capital gains) on the IRD books.

This altered the way that dividends are recorded in the tabulation. Thus \$100 of corporate profits which were taxed at, say, 33 percent and fully paid out were recorded as \$67 before imputation but as \$100 after the new regime was introduced. This is in addition to the encouragement to corporations to pay more dividends which get reported for income tax purposes.<sup>24</sup>

In the 1988 year, (natural) persons declared \$152m of net dividends. By 1993, after the imputation was introduced and had settled in, they were declaring \$691m in net dividends which grossed up (i.e. with \$252m of the corporation tax paid on them added back) came to \$943m. That meant that reported dividends jump from about 0.4 percent of estimated market income to 2.1 percent.<sup>25</sup>

We are unable to attribute all this increase to those with incomes in the top 10 percent since some of the other 90 percent receive some dividends. However it would appear that as a result the top one percent declared an income boost of about 1 percentage point share of total income.

The share of declared dividends in total income continue to rise. By 2011 they probably amounted to 3.0 percent, up about another 1 percentage point on 1993.<sup>26</sup> However There was an increase after 2000 in income routed through trusts. It is possible that the turn down in the share of the top 1 percent in the following decade reflects this. In which case it is possible that, had there been no acceleration in amounts distributed through trusts in the decade, the share of

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<sup>24</sup> We could have a vigorous argument at this point as to what extent the declared increase reflected a genuine increase in market incomes and to what extent it was the result of closing a tax avoidance loophole and an accounting convention of reporting them grossed up, the effect of which was to have the effect of reducing their tax liability. The second interpretation would suggest the change belongs more to a change in after-tax incomes. We leave the debate to another venue. Our purpose is of measurement.

<sup>25</sup> The income indicator measures dividends grossed up.

<sup>26</sup> Additionally 2011 may have been a low year because of changes in tax treatment.

the top 1 percent would have been a percentage point (or even two) higher and there would have been no fall-off after 2000.

Strangely there is no evidence that this later increase in dividends increased the top share of incomes.<sup>27</sup> In any case it only explains a part of what was going on in the early 1990s.

## 2. Rewards for managers rose relative to rewards for labour

It would seem that the rewards for managers (and higher professionals) rose relative to the rewards for ordinary labour. This can be illustrated by considering the ratio between the salary of the Secretary of the Treasury and average earnings.<sup>28</sup> In 1981 it was about 5.6 times of the average wage but in 2011 it was almost double that at about 11.1 times. The Secretary's remuneration pattern is little different for many senior civil servants, and was justified by a similar shift in top management rates in the private sector.

Exactly why this happened is complicated, but how it happened is not. The 1988 State Sector Act abandoned the rigid relativities that existed in the public service, enabling higher relative remuneration to the top civil servants, while most civil servants were experiencing restricted increases (or declines). Probably the same thing was happening in the private sector. (An important factor may have been the globalisation of the market for management and higher professional.)

It will be noted this change just preceded the time when the share of the one percent increased markedly. Unfortunately however, we cannot estimate its total magnitude to assess to what degree that explains the rest of the upshift.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 1: Shares of Income and Pareto Coefficients**

Tax Year	PERCENT INCOME SHARE OF					Pareto Coefficient
	Top 0.1%	Next 0.9%	Top 1%	Next 9%	Top 10%	
1981	1.2	4.8	6.0	24.1	30.1	3.1
1982	1.3	4.6	5.9	24.1	30.0	3.0
1983	1.2	4.7	5.9	24.9	30.8	3.2
1984	1.3	4.8	6.1	24.7	30.8	3.0

<sup>27</sup> Of course some dividends are flowing through trusts.

<sup>28</sup> The Secretary of the Treasury was paid \$61,953 in 1981 and about \$565,000 in 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Tim Hunter of *The Dominion Post* kindly made available a data base he has been collecting of the pay of chief executives of 34 listed companies. It suggests that their remuneration rates increased by about 10.7 percent p.a. in the 2009 to 2012 period; the data base shows an increase of market income per adult of 1.3 percent p.a. over the same period.

1985	1.3	4.7	6.0	24.0	30.0	3.0
1986	1.3	4.7	6.0	23.7	29.7	2.9
1987	1.1	4.4	5.3	23.7	29.0	3.3
1988	1.4	4.7	6.1	24.5	29.6	2.7
1989	1.3	4.8	6.1	24.2	30.3	3.0
1990	1.9	5.8	7.7	25.7	33.4	2.7
1991	3.0	7.0	10.0	28.0	38.0	2.5
1992	2.6	6.9	9.5	28.3	37.8	2.1
1993	2.8	7.4	10.2	29.4	39.6	2.3
1994	2.9	7.6	10.5	29.4	39.9	2.3
1995	3.0	7.9	10.9	28.7	39.6	2.2
1996	3.0	7.7	10.7	28.4	39.1	2.2
1997	3.0	7.6	10.6	28.0	38.6	2.2
1998	3.2	7.7	10.9	28.1	39.0	2.2
1999	3.9	8.1	12.1	28.8	40.9	2.0
2000	6.2	10.0	16.2	29.3	45.5	1.7
2001	2.4	7.3	9.7	28.4	38.1	2.6
2002	2.9	7.3	10.2	28.1	38.3	2.2
2003	2.9	7.4	10.3	27.8	38.1	2.2
2004	3.3	7.4	10.7	27.2	37.9	2.0
2005	3.8	7.4	11.2	26.4	37.6	1.9
2006	2.9	7.3	10.2	26.3	36.5	2.2
2007	2.5	7.3	9.8	26.0	35.8	2.4
2008	2.4	6.9	9.3	25.0	34.3	2.5
2009	2.6	7.3	9.9	25.8	35.7	2.4
2010	2.5	7.2	9.7	26.4	36.1	2.5
2011	2.2	7.0	9.2	26.2	35.4	2.6

(Source: As reported in text; ultimately from Inland Revenue and Statistics New Zealand statistic)

## Conclusion

The purpose of this research note has been to use IRD data to track changes in top incomes. Although some calibration is necessary and there has to be caution over omissions it has been possible to track from the tax year 1981 to tax year 2011 (the latest for which IRD data is available).

The basic conclusion is that there has been an increase in inequality, in that top incomes have increased faster than incomes as a whole. However most of this increase occurred in the 1989 to 1991 period probably because of an

increase in remuneration margins for management and the introduction of a dividend imputation system.

There is some evidence that the share of top market incomes gradually rose after 1993 through to about 2000 (albeit interpretation of the data is complicated by some tax avoidance) and then as gradually fell away. The indicators suggest that on the measures of top incomes, inequality was lower in 2011 than in 1993 but higher than in 1988.<sup>30</sup>

Calibration difficulties make international comparisons difficult, so we must be cautious about ranking New Zealand's top income inequality with economies elsewhere. However there is no evidence of a surge in inequality in the New Zealand data in the first decade of the twenty first century, as has occurred in the UK and the US, probably because New Zealand does not have as sophisticated financial sectors as they have. If anything, the share of those with top incomes seems to have fallen slightly in that period.

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<sup>30</sup> However post 2000 is complicated by the 39c rate avoidance - the more fungible income moved into other entities, and was no longer declared by natural persons.

# **Distributions, dimensions and Determinants: The New Zealand Census 2013 and General Social Survey 2008- 2012 results relating to Inequality**

*Charles Crothers*

## **1 Introduction**

Adding the 2012 tranche of data to the earlier 2008 and 2010 rounds of the New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS) generates a large data-set of high quality which includes a wide array of measures relating to inequality, the distribution of resources and Standard of living (SOL) and which therefore provides the information for a usefully sophisticated (i.e. multivariate) description of inequality in contemporary New Zealand. Although the quality of measurement of some key items is rather thin (often restricted to a single fairly 'global' measure<sup>1</sup>) the advantages of the NZGSS are its up-to-datedness, the solid sample size (n=25,737: confidence intervals for fairly equal distributions are under 1%) and the ability (since unit record data is available) to carry out multivariate analyses. Access to the NZGSS Curf is provided under the conditions of the Statistics Act 1975: the results presented here are the work of the author.

The NZGSS is a multidimensional, biennial survey on social and economic outcomes of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over who are usual residents in private dwellings (excluding off-shore islands). General Social Surveys are included within the statistical programmes in countries including Australia (2002 on), the United Kingdom, Canada (1985 on), and more generally in the OECD which thus provides some international comparability. The NZGSS uses a three-stage sample selection method, similar to other Statistics New Zealand's household surveys<sup>2</sup>. Response-rates have declined

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<sup>1</sup> SNZ reports that many of the items in the new GSS include 11-point scales and measurement has been brought in line with international best practice. Moreover, while the primary content of the survey (the content that will be repeated at each iteration) will still largely consist of single item measures due to time restrictions, the survey will have supplements from 2014 onwards which will include more in-depth, multiple-item measurement of well-being in certain life domains - Social Networks and Support, Civic and Cultural Participation and Housing and Physical Environment.

<sup>2</sup> In each round:

slightly over time and are now below the target of 80% (see Table 1). One individual in the household completes the household questionnaire, on collective information (e.g. family relationships and household income), and one individual in the household aged 15 years or over is randomly selected to answer the personal questionnaire. Some questions in the personal questionnaire (such as the Economic Living Standard Index: ELSI) questions, including adequacy of income to meet everyday needs) are not asked of respondents who are under 18 years of age. Interviews are conducted using computer-assisted personal interviews and last an average of 45 minutes. The survey has two sets of weights attached, one for the household and one for the person<sup>3</sup>.

Table 1: GSS - Methodological details

	2008	2010	2012
<i>Reference period</i>	<i>April 2008 to March 2009</i>	<i>April 2010 to March 2011</i>	<i>April 2012 to March 2013.</i>
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>8,721</i>	<i>8,550</i>	<i>8,462</i>
<i>Response rate</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>78%</i>

In addition, early results from the 2013 census allow some updating of time-series in relation to labour force status, employment status, occupation, education, income and tenure. Attention is also drawn (where available) to disaggregations by Maori ethnicity (those people who specified ‘Māori’ as either their sole ethnic group, or as one of several ethnic groups) and gender. Where possible 2006 and 2001 comparisons are presented (limited in order avoid too many complications with backward compatibility of coding categories). The main approach to the data is to compare relative proportions at each census period, although it can also be interesting to examine other measures of changes over time (and an even more sophisticated analysis might provide per annum changes bearing in mind the 5 year gap between 2001 and 2006 censuses, whereas there was a 7-year gap between the 2006 and 2013 censuses.)

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- 1,200 PSUs are selected from the Household Survey Frame (HSF) which are divided into standard strata based on selected attributes;
  - eligible dwellings are randomly selected within the selected PSUs;
  - one eligible individual is randomly selected within each selected dwelling.

<sup>3</sup> Each of these weights is calculated over three stages. An initial selection weight is selected, then it is adjusted for non-response, and then for calibration. The population totals for the NZGSS are national annual resident population estimates.

This research note describes the results for the NZGSS measures for each of these aspects of inequality, including whether there has been substantively significant change since 2008, and the extent to which multiple measures ‘hang together’ or might form the basis for a summative scale. Commentary is necessary to point to limitations in the measurements and how the findings relate to other studies. Measures available (those also available from the census are marked with an asterisk) include:

- Personal and household (hh) incomes\*
- Sources of personal income
- Tenure \*
- Dwelling Size and crowding
- SOL index summing various nonmonetary advantages/lacks
- Neighbourhood Deprivation index
- Educational Qualifications\*
- Employment arrangements\*
- Occupation\*
- Subjective SOL.

This analysis zig-zags between personal and household levels of analysis. Household characteristics are important contexts for most respondents and will affect their life-chances. On the other hand, household aggregates are composed of their members’ characteristics and activities.

The following section examines the extent to which the measures on each of these aspects correlate as whole; and the next section attempts to validate the importance of the ensuing ‘factors’ in terms of its relationship to overall life satisfaction. The final major section plots the socio-economic correlates of the various inequality measures.

The analytical tools used in examining this data include standard percentages, chi-square tests of statistical significance, comparison of means (including the values of eta – the nonlinear correlation coefficient), factor analysis and Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA). Exact changes over three rounds are hard to detect correctly as statistical significance testing with such large samples picks up more sample variation than is substantively useful, so measures of association were also used. The factor analysis uses the standard Rotation Method of Varimax with Kaiser Normalization following PA factoring. Multiple classification analysis (MCA) provides a multi-variate account of the impact of a set of independent (at any level of measurement) variables on a (scaled) dependent variable. MCA can show the effect of each predictor on the dependent variable, both before and after taking into account

the effects of all other predictors. (Multiple Regression and Discriminant Analysis can also do this, but under certain restrictive conditions such as requiring that all predictor variables are measured on interval scales and the relationships are linear.) The format in which the results are presented are that all coefficients are expressed as deviations from the overall mean, not from unknown mean of the excluded class in each set. Since adjusted and unadjusted subgroup means are available in the same table, the amount of intercorrelations between the predictors can be detected<sup>4</sup>.

Theoretical models which might guide interpretation are not made explicit, but include the status attainment model (in which family context affects long-term outcomes such as income particularly through the effect of education, occupation and ‘family resources’), family life cycle (the various stages of family formation and deformation – cf. New Zealand study by Crothers and McCormack, 2006) and the family asset development cycle.

The intent of this research note is largely descriptive, while endeavouring to dig below the surface level of each of the measures to examine their interrelationships and the extent to which they are socially distributed. No particular theoretical models are tested and no particular research questions thoroughly focused on. However, this descriptive picture should be a sound platform for further analyses. In my view, analysis which attempts to be more sophisticated than the measurement and sampling limitations of data is in danger of providing ‘spurious accuracy’ and the broad relationships depicted here should prove robust.

## **2 Results: Aspects of Inequality:**

### *(2.1) Personal and household incomes*

As might be expected census data show that median personal income has steadily increased over the period as indicated by the medians, and the general tilt towards higher income brackets. (Controlling for inflation would give a better sense of how relative incomes have fared.) By 2013 (see Table 2) well over 12% were in the top 2 income brackets compared to under 5% in 2001. The distribution amongst the lower categories is smaller up to about an income of some \$15,000, with 2013 witnessing quite an increase in those reporting zero

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<sup>4</sup> These detailed tables are not presented but are available from author: [charles.crothers@aut.ac.nz](mailto:charles.crothers@aut.ac.nz). For further on MCA see [http://www.unesco.org/webworld/idams/advguide/Chapt5\\_3.htm](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/idams/advguide/Chapt5_3.htm)

income. Incomes for Maori remain lower with Maori median (see Table 3) as a ratio of Overall being 80% in 2001, 86% in 2006 and reverting badly to 79% in 2013. The comparable ratios for median women as a proportion of median men are 58% for 2001, 61% in 2006 and 63% in 2013, showing a steady progression.

Table 2: Personal Income ( %s)

	2001	2006	2013
Loss	.59	.55	.50
Zero Income	4.18	4.59	7.18
\$1-\$5,000	8.32	7.00	5.54
\$5,001-\$10,000	11.68	7.18	4.89
\$10,001-\$15,000	13.67	11.26	7.93
\$15,001-\$20,000	8.43	8.23	8.48
\$20,001-\$25,000	7.21	6.95	6.73
\$25,001-\$30,000	7.44	6.81	5.65
\$30,001-\$40,000	10.78	12.79	10.72
\$40,001-\$50,000	6.34	8.30	8.59
\$50,001-\$70,000	5.66	8.90	11.71
\$70,001-\$100,000	2.37	3.96	7.06
\$100,001 or more	2.16	3.34	5.37
Total people stated	88.85	89.85	90.35
Not Stated	11.15	10.15	9.65
Total people	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 3 Median Incomes (\$)	2001	2006	2013
All	18500	24400	28500
Maori	14800	20900	22500
Males	24900	31500	36500
Females	14500	19100	23100

In the GSS, both personal and household information were collected asking respondents about the previous 12 month period and with a 15-category response scale with the open-ended upper interval at \$150,000. Restriction to two questions has limitations, with respondent recall of income flows not being jogged by more specific questions as in the Household Income Survey. However, it is likely to provide a robust picture of both individual and household incomes. Mid-points of each category were assigned to generate a pseudo-interval variable, with the open-ended lower and upper categories being set somewhat arbitrarily. While this set of categories seems ample for measuring the range of personal incomes for Household incomes it results in a skewed heaping towards the higher categories. Another difficulty with the data is that it is not related to hours of work: although this is only pertinent for

personal income and even then to the unknown ‘market income’ portion of this. However, to gain some sense of the relationship of income to hours worked, a pseudo-hourly rate was calculated by dividing the midpoint of the personal income category by the midpoint of the hours worked categories. (In turn there are methodological difficulties here as the information on hours worked varies amongst the 3 rounds of data-collection. The 2008 data is capped at 50 hours plus and for 2012 categories rather than exact hours are reported. Of course, the assumption here that the data reported is sufficiently typical of the year.) The most important measurement issue is that household income must be related to household size and type, which is normally implemented by applying household relative income measure: in this case the Mercurio method was used. (Again, different measures might result in slightly different outcomes, although a high robustness is to be expected.)

It is important to adequately describe the relevant income measures in terms of their means, standard deviations and coefficients of variation (covs): see Table 4. Average personal income is \$37,500 and average household income \$87,750, reducing to \$69,350 when relativised. The measure of hourly rate is \$27.85. This latter varies the most within the sample, followed by personal incomes (where the standard deviation equals the mean) but is less for the two household measures (c65% each). None of these measures differed significantly across the three rounds of data-collection.

**Table 4: GSS Income Measures (2008-2012)**

	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	COV
Personal income	37.4887	.23360	37.47603	2.083	5.744	99.98%
Household income	87.7578	.35607	57.12272	.729	-.458	65.1%
HH Relative Income	69.3546	.27767	44.49525	1.362	2.826	64.2%
HH Relative Size	1.2977	.00296	.47509	.725	.702	36.53%
Personal \$ per hr gp	27.8542	.28757	37.44798	14.779	381.641	134.47%

*(2.2) Sources of Personal income*

Sources of personal income asked about cover market income (as either an employee, an employer or both), income from savings/investments and from government transfers. Most common sources of income are from (Table 5) wages etc. (60%), interest etc. (21%), and from self-employment or Accident

payment (c15% each). On average each respondent has 1.4 plus/minus 0.26 sources. There is a slight fall in number of sources across the period.

The factor analysis of these sources (not displayed here) does not produce clean results since many sources can be combined, although some are mutually exclusive. Presumably because it is so ubiquitous, employee income spreads across several factors – in varying combinations with other sources of income. The main grouping covers ACC etc. payments, NZ Superannuation and interest, negatively correlated with employee income.

**Table 5: Sources personal income:**

	No	Yes
	%	%
wages, salary, commissions, bonuses etc paid by an employer	40.2%	59.8%
self-employment or business	84.6%	15.4%
interest, dividends, rent, other investments	78.7%	21.3%
regular payments from ACC or a private work accident insurer	85.8%	14.2%
NZ Superannuation or veteran's pension	97.4%	2.6%
other superannuation pensions, annuities (other than NZ Superannuation, veteran's pension or war pension)	92.2%	7.8%
Unemployment benefit	91.1%	8.9%
sickness benefit	97.0%	3.0%
domestic purposes benefit	93.9%	6.1%
not stated	97.7%	2.3%

### (2.3) Tenure

As the main asset owned by families tenure is a proxy for wealth and asset holding more generally, with home ownership sometimes reducing costs, but setting up a stream of income or future income. This variable is complicated by the advent of family trust as a tenure form (and also by some not-specified responses). The census data (Table 6) show that renting (or more technically not owned) dwellings have steadily increased as a proportion over the last 12 years, as has proportion in family trusts.

<b>Table 6 Tenure</b>	2001	2006	2013
Dwelling owned or partly owned	67.80	54.50	49.90
Dwelling not owned	32.20	33.10	35.20
Dwelling held in a family trust	.	12.30	14.80
Percentage owned/in trust	67.80	66.90	64.80

For the GSS data (Table 7) the categories have been recoded into outright-owned, part-owned (i.e. still paying mortgage), renting and rent-free households to form what is assumed to be an ordinal scale. Some 15 % were in family trusts, but these were assumed to be similar in consequences to the more general tenure category and so were recoded into either owning or rent-paying categories. Renting is rising over the 2008-2012 period.

**Table 7: GSS Housing results (2008-2012)**

		%
Tenure	Dwelling Owned by Usual Resident(s)	30.2%
	Dwelling Part-Owned by Usual Resident(s)	38.8%
	Dwelling Not Owned by Usual Resident(s):rent	29.2%
	Dwelling Not Owned by Usual Resident(s):no rent	1.8%

#### *(2.4) Dwelling Size and crowding*

It is unclear whether dwelling size as measured by number of bedrooms is an indicator of the value of a building, but household crowding certainly is (Table 8). The measure used is the Canadian crowding index in which number of bedrooms needed is assigned by a formula that requires that there be adequate bedroom space for the family configuration in terms of adults and children and the genders involved<sup>5</sup>.

Most dwellings have 3 bedrooms (45%) with another one quarter (27%) having 4 with similar proportions of 2 and 5 bedroomed dwellings and a tiny proportion only 1 bedroom. In terms of household crowding only a small minority of dwellings are overcrowded (6%) while nearly 40% have two or more bedrooms to spare. (Mind you, bedrooms can be used for other purposes.) Finally, number of major housing problems seemed an important measure as it indicated where households might have restrictions on their asset: two-thirds have no reported major problems with one-fifth reporting one and another one-tenth two problems. There was no detectable change over the three rounds of data-collection.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/prod\\_serv.nsf/Response/Indicator+2a:+Equivalised+Crowding+Index](http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/web/prod_serv.nsf/Response/Indicator+2a:+Equivalised+Crowding+Index)

**Table 8: Further GSS Housing-related Indicators**

Housing		%
Number of bedrooms	1	2.8%
	2	14.8%
	3	44.7%
	4	27.2%
	5	10.4%
No. Housing Problems (major)	0	66.7%
	1	19.2%
	2	8.2%
	3	3.8%
	4	1.4%
	5	0.6%
	6	0.2%
7	0.0%	
Bedrooms Needed	One or More Bedrooms Needed	6.3%
	No Bedrooms Needed	21.4%
	One Bedroom Spare	33.7%
	Two or More Bedrooms Spare	38.5%

*(2.4) SOL index (Elsi scale)*

The Elsi scale<sup>6</sup> generates an average score of 23 +/- 6.2 items, which has increased just below the level of statistical significance over the time-period. Almost exactly one half of households are in a 'Very good' or 'Good' living situation with only 7% who are restricted or very restricted (Table 9).

**Table 9: SOL Index (GSS: 2008-2012)**

		%
ELSI grouped	Very restricted	3.1%
	Restricted	3.7%
	Somewhat restricted	6.4%
	Fairly comfortable	12.5%
	Comfortable	22.6%
	Good	36.5%
	Very good	15.2%

<sup>6</sup> Jensen, J.; Spittal, M. & Krishnan, V. (2005) ELSI Short Form: User manual for a direct measure of living standards. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

Several items are near-ubiquitous (Table 10): telephones, washing machines, shoes, giving presents while even luxurious items such as overseas holidays and nights-out are enjoyed by at least a bare majority of the population. Costs constraints are more likely to be cited in terms of home contents insurance, hairdressers, and the two ‘luxury’ items.

**Table 10: Household Availability of Assets (GSS: 2008-2012)**

	Have/Do	Don't want	Cost	Other
	%	%	%	%
a telephone	96.6%	0.7%	1.9%	0.8%
a washing machine	98.8%	0.1%	0.5%	0.6%
heating available in all main rooms	86.6%	3.1%	5.9%	4.4%
a good pair of shoes	97.9%	0.2%	1.3%	0.5%
a best outfit for special occasions	93.2%	1.5%	2.9%	2.5%
a personal computer	84.1%	6.9%	4.7%	4.3%
home contents insurance	81.8%	2.8%	9.5%	5.9%
give presents to family or friends on birthdays, Christmas, or other special occasions	95.1%	0.6%	1.9%	2.4%
don't visit the hairdresser once every three months	65.6%	7.2%	10.1%	17.1%
holidays away from home every year	66.8%	4.1%	19.0%	10.0%
a holiday overseas at least every 3 years	50.4%	6.4%	31.1%	12.1%
a night out at least once a fortnight	52.5%	14.1%	13.0%	20.4%
family or friends over for a meal at least once a month	71.0%	3.8%	3.2%	22.0%
family to stay the night	88.7%	0.6%	2.2%	8.4%

Another list (Table 11) probed for deprivations suffered over the previous 12 months. Higher deprivations are putting off buying clothing, cutting back however, staying in bed, picking up prescriptions and going without fresh fruit/vegetables are not options taken by many.

### (2.5) Deprivation index

Including the NZDep<sup>7</sup>, which is an index of the ‘quality’ of the immediate neighbourhood (i.e. meshblock) lived in is a particularly component of the NZGSS data-set as it allows building in contextual effects from where people live. Often meshblocks are heterogeneous which can reduce the effect of the

<sup>7</sup> For NZDep see <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/nzdep2006-index-deprivation>

living environment and hence the index. Since the measure is divided into decile the resulting table is not interesting and so is not included.

**Table 11: Deprivations over last 12 months (GSS: 2008-2012)**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
In the last 12 months, have you gone without fresh fruit and vegetables to help keep down costs?	1.19	.471
have you continued wearing clothing that was worn out because you couldn't afford a replacement?	1.31	.589
have you put off buying clothing for as long as possible to help keep down costs?	1.67	.753
have you stayed in bed longer to save on heating costs?	1.13	.407
have you postponed or put off visits to the doctor to help keep down costs?	1.27	.564
have you NOT picked up a prescription to help keep down costs?	1.10	.360
have you spent less time on hobbies than you would like to help keep down costs?	1.47	.701
have you done without or cut back on trips to the shops or other local places to help keep down costs?	1.60	.710

### (2.6) Educational Qualifications

The NZGSS includes not just highest educational qualification but other details concerning both secondary and post-secondary education – which are not dealt with here. The range of qualifications can be converted into a scale<sup>8</sup> which indicates number of years of schooling/education which averages 3.4 years (plus/minus 2.8) – which steadily increased across the time-period. Some 1-in-5 have degrees while two-thirds have school qualifications (Table 12).

**Table 12: Highest Educational Qualification (GSS: 2008-2012)**

	%
Level 1-4 certificate	67.8%
Level 5-6 diploma	12.6%
Highest Qual. Bachelor's degree & Level 7 qualification	11.1%
Postgraduate & honours degrees	8.5%

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Studying-in-NZ/New-Zealand-Qualification-Framework/requirements-nzqf.pdf>

(2.7) *Employment arrangements*

Labour force status has two key aspects: the participation rate of those in the paid workforce and those who are unemployed (whose definition requires active searching for work). It might be expected there would be some influence from rising retirements as the population ages. For the overall population (Table 13) these rates are rock-steady, without any noticeable aging effect although 2006 shows a slight kick-up in both fulltime and part-time paid work and a decline in unemployment rate. (The 2013 figures are slightly affected by an increased ‘not stated’ response.) About 45% are fulltime and another 14% part-time and 4.5% unemployed while some 30-32% of adults are not in the paid workforce. Maori do less well and their unemployment rate and overall labour force non-engagement rate have increased considerably between 2006 and 2013. The gender-related pattern is starkly different: men’s full-time participation is much larger but fairly steady whereas women’s slightly edged up. Men’s part-time paid employment has edged up slightly, whereas women’s part-time proportion is the same but is a much larger proportion. For 2006 and 2013 the women’s unemployment rate was slightly higher than for men, reversing the pattern for 2001.

**Table 13A: Labour force status**

	2001	2006	2013	Maori 13	Maori 06
Employed Full-time	45.96	48.44	45.64	43.43	48.04
Employed Part-time	13.81	14.39	13.62	13.07	13.63
Total people, employed	59.78	62.83	59.26	56.51	61.67
Unemployed	4.84	3.37	4.54	10.42	7.63
Total people, labour force	64.62	66.20	63.80	66.93	69.30
Not in the Labour Force	32.32	30.43	31.34	33.07	30.70
Total people stated	96.94	96.64	95.14	100.00	100.00
Not stated	3.06	3.36	4.86		

T13B: Labour force status by gender

	Male 01	Female 01	Male 06	Female 06	Male 13	Female 13
Employed Full-time	60.35	35.46	62.62	38.55	59.13	37.70
Employed Part-time	8.27	19.78	8.85	20.49	8.83	19.37
Total people, employed	68.62	55.24	71.47	59.04	67.96	57.07
Unemployed	5.18	4.82	3.33	3.64	4.58	4.94
Total people, labour force	73.80	60.06	74.80	62.68	72.55	62.01
Not in the Labour Force	26.20	39.94	25.20	37.32	27.45	37.99
Total people stated	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Work and Labour Force Status U	3.22	3.10	3.59	3.38	5.32	4.92

The NZGSS collects information about employment arrangements as well as the occupation: these include number of jobs, whether the main job is fulltime or part-time (actually number of hours is asked about and this is then

recoded); and whether the employment arrangement is permanent or not (Table 14). The population is divided into one half in fulltime paid work, one third not in workforce and some 15% who are part-time: in terms of all those in paid work this is a 80:20 split. Permanent or one of several other types of which contractors and casuals include some 7% each. Almost all (c90%) have only one job although another almost one-in-ten have two. There is a definite tilt towards more positions being permanent. There have been fewer multiple jobs across the period.

**Table 14: Paid Employment Characteristics (GSS: 2008-2012)**

		%
No. Jobs	0	1.4%
	1	88.4%
	2	8.4%
	3	1.9%
	Full-time	51.1%
FT/PT	Part-time	14.8%
	Not in work	34.1%
Employment arrangement	Permanent	75.9%
	Fixed term	3.6%
	Contractor	7.1%
	Seasonal	1.2%
	Temporary	1.1%
	Casual	6.8%
	Other	4.3%

In terms of employment status (approximating a Marxian definition of class) proportion of employees has steadily increased while the share of employers has declined and the proportion of self-employed is static (Table 15). The category of unpaid family workers has considerably fallen.

### *(2.8) Occupation*

A more Weberian-type class approach is partly captured from the occupation distribution change (Table 16). Proportion of professionals has risen fairly substantially along with community and personal service workers, but other main occupation groupings have declined. The pattern of change is echoed for the Maori grouping although their baseline in terms of the more prestigious

occupants was lower: the net effect is of little change compared to the overall workforce.

	2013	2001	2006	1996
Paid Employee	77.64	75.08	76.10	74.39
Employer	6.49	7.51	7.20	7.50
Self-Employed and Without Employees	11.79	12.34	11.83	11.37
Unpaid Family Worker	1.88	2.27	1.99	3.31

Main work is classified into 8 main divisions using the ANZSCO classification. This does not allow a fine-tuned analysis but at least the conceptualisation of the classification is soundly based. To help guide interpretation the scores of the NZSEI can be applied. (And for those not in the paid workforce the imputation suggested by the NZSEI-06 exercise: see Milne et al., 2013). Those not in the workforce increased across the period while the distribution of workers across occupations has remained steady (Table 17).

	2013	Maori 06	Maori 13
Managers	17.15	10.62	12.20
Professionals	18.85	12.86	15.27
Technicians and Trades Workers	12.18	11.37	10.46
Community and Personal Service	7.88	10.04	11.00
Clerical and Administrative	12.13	9.96	9.91
Sales Workers	9.37	7.81	7.78
Machinery Operators and Driver	5.76	9.60	8.30
Labourers	11.03	19.41	18.08
Total people stated	94.34	91.67	93.01
Not elsewhere included	5.66	8.32	6.99

	Male 06	Female 06	Male 13	Female 13
Managers	21.00	12.83	21.44	13.80
Professionals	15.80	22.27	17.53	25.48
Technicians and Trades Workers	18.70	4.86	17.42	4.76
Community and Personal Service	4.46	11.71	5.10	12.33
Clerical and Administrative	4.88	20.25	4.84	18.58
Sales Workers	7.10	11.92	6.73	11.14
Machinery Operators and Driver	9.13	1.97	8.56	1.46
Labourers	12.94	8.89	12.84	7.99
Total people stated	94.01	94.71	94.47	95.54
Not elsewhere included	5.99	5.29	5.53	4.46
Total people	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

**Table 17: GSS measures of Occupation (2008-2012)**

		All	Paid Workforce
Person's occupation in their main job	Not in WF	34.4%	
	Manager	11.9%	18.1%
	Professional	15.1%	23.0%
	Technicians	8.1%	12.3%
	Community	5.8%	8.8%
	Clerical	8.0%	12.2%
	Sales	6.3%	9.6%
	Machinery	3.4%	5.2%
	Labourer	6.4%	9.7%
	Residual	0.7%	1.0%

*Subjective SOL*

Subjective satisfaction with standard of living runs at about 5-7% in terms of those rating their SOL as low or fairly low and those dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their SOL, but the group claiming not enough money is higher – 15% (Table 18). However, a solid majority are satisfied or very satisfied with their SOL and a near majority rate it as high or fairly high. The three measures are tightly correlated ( $R=c0.5$ ) and are stable across the three time-periods, with a barely perceptible shift towards higher dissatisfaction more recently.

**Table 18: Subjective SOL (GSS: 2008-2012)**

	%	
Generally, how would you rate your standard of living?	High	13.7%
	fairly high	35.0%
	Medium	46.0%
	fairly low	4.3%
	Low	1.1%
Generally, how satisfied are you with your current standard of living?	very satisfied	24.9%
	Satisfied	56.0%
	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11.9%
	dissatisfied	6.3%
Would you say you have not enough money, just enough money, enough money, or more than enough money?	very dissatisfied	1.0%
	not enough	15.1%
	just enough	32.6%
	Enough	38.2%
	more than enough	14.1%

### 3 Patterns

In this section the extent to which the range of measures appear to reflect some underlying dimensions is assessed, using factor analysis. Some closely related variables were deliberately excluded as they might have dominated the results (Table 19). The first factor loaded on several income measures – the two household measures and also personal income and with weaker loadings for Elsi, Subjective satisfaction with SOL, education, number of bedrooms the NZDEP index, fulltime/part-time status and the hourly wage estimate. The second factor loads particularly on the Elsi index, subjective satisfaction, housing problems, tenure and crowding: clearly much more an asset dimension. The third factor loads on Education and Occupation (s.e.s.) and the fourth picks up dwelling size, NZDep score, employment arrangement and number of jobs. The last factor concerns those working part-time and receiving lower income per hour. So the three main factors seem quite interpretable: income, wealth, education/occupation and position in housing/employment markets. The key variables identified for each of these factors are important ‘makers’ in tracing the effects of socio-economic structure discussed in the next section: only some 5 main patterns might be expected.

**Table 19: Rotated Component Matrix of Class-related Measures (GSS: 2008-2012)**

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Household income	<b>.864</b>	.077	.053	.153	-.019
HH Relative Income	<b>.845</b>	.222	.149	.062	-.019
Personal income	<b>.775</b>	.100	.280	-.043	-.003
Economic living standard derived variable.	.238	<b>.812</b>	.158	-.030	-.042
Would you say you have not enough money, just enough money, enough money, or more than enough money?	.311	<b>.697</b>	.184	-.129	-.052
No. Housing Problems (major)	.005	<b>-.665</b>	.103	-.024	.035
Tenure	.061	<b>-.595</b>	-.026	-.287	-.216
Bedrooms Needed	.105	<b>.502</b>	-.029	.483	.091
Edscale	.235	.012	<b>.789</b>	.055	.020
NZSEI	.191	.118	<b>.775</b>	.049	.052
Number of bedrooms	.300	.100	-.214	<b>.691</b>	.115
NZ Deprivation Score	-.262	-.272	-.123	<b>-.479</b>	-.104
Employment arrangement	-.126	-.091	.116	<b>.382</b>	-.116
No. Jobs	-.129	-.035	.310	<b>.380</b>	-.178
FT/PT	<b>-.355</b>	-.002	-.068	.074	<b>.763</b>
Personal \$ per hr gp	<b>.424</b>	.039	.149	-.146	<b>.691</b>

### Relationship with Overall Life Satisfaction

Given the considerable array of different measures of resource distribution it might be useful to attempt to validate these against overall life satisfaction as a summative measure. This is an unrobust exercise since there are a range of experiences and attributes which affect feelings about life. Nevertheless, the results may be informative (Table 20). The strongest correlation was with subjective SOL with satisfaction with SOL correlating at  $R=.467$  and the next highest scoring was with the Elsi scale (at  $R=.38$ ). More material dimensions of inequality correlated at a much lower level of around  $R=0.15$  including household income, tenure, crowding with another set of measures relating at an even lower level – around  $R=0.1$  – including personal income, education, occupational score and dwelling size. It is interesting that subjective measures have such high predictability and that household measures have higher correlations than personal.

**Table 20: Correlations of Class-related measures with Overall Life Satisfaction**

Correlations	How do you feel about your life as a whole right now?
Personal income	-.108
Personal \$ per hr gp	-.067
HH Relative Income	-.156
Edscale	-.097
Tenure	.142
NZ Deprivation Score	.126
Bedrooms Needed	-.126
NZSEI	-.104
Employment arrangement	.017
Proxy NZSEI	-.100
Number of bedrooms	-.082
Economic living standard derived variable.	-.380
Generally, how satisfied are you with your current standard of living?	.467
Generally, how would you rate your standard of living?	.338
Would you say you have not enough money, just enough money, enough money, or more than enough money?	301

## **5 Relationships to Socio-Economic Characteristics**

Finally, the research note attempts to map variation amongst the various outcomes in relation to standard social background characteristics. This is carried out by relating each to a standard set consisting of:

- Gender
- Age-group (5 year age-groups up to 85+)
- Ethnicity (a combination classification)
- Region (6 major areas: from North North Island to South Island)
- Urban/rural location (Type of Urban Area)
- Country of Birth (New Zealand born v rest: this could also be disaggregated for more detailed country of birth groupings)
- Household Size
- Household type (a combination classification)
- Educational level (in displaying results a 4 category summary is used)
- Occupation (including not in the paid workforce as a category).

The last two variables are not included in the first table.

Differences in education levels are particularly associated with age (although its effect falls once controlled for the other variables), ethnicity, being born in New Zealand, but also urban location (Table 21). The NZSEI measure of occupation has a broadly similar pattern featuring age (which does not fall when controlled), ethnicity, both urban area and region but also gender. Being unemployed is strongly shaped by age, ethnicity and family type. All three equations are substantial, with education most 'explainable' and unemployment least.

The three top sources of income were reviewed (Table 22): each with strong equations, particularly wage-earners. Occupation influences the first two income sources, but also age, urban area, family characteristics and ethnicity. Interest etc as a source is shaped by age, educational qualification and ethnicity.

Personal, Household, Relativised household and relative wage income was examined, yielding several significant overall effects (Table 23). Occupation is most prominent in these, reinforced by highest educational qualification, age but also ethnicity and region.

**Table 21: Class-Related Measures by Social Characteristics**

Reduced Set of Independent variables	Edscale Eta	Edscale	NZSEI	NZSEI	Unemployed	Unemployed
		Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors Beta	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors
Sex	.005	.003	.101	.106	.033	.011
Age	.333	.101	.219	.205	.196	.172
Single and Combination Ethnicity	.227	.219	.140	.150	.118	.087
Were you born in New Zealand?	.210	.140	.067	.053	.003	.012
Household size	.105	.067	.082	.040	.061	.033
Family type by child dependency status	.108	.082	.067	.038	.175	.136
Region	.168	.067	.131	.110	.043	.020
Urban area	.165	.131	.101	.106	.045	.025
Overall (R/Rsq.)	.453	.123	.328	.147	.264	.070

**Table 22: Sources personal income by Social Characteristics**

Sources personal income:	wages, salary, commissions, bonuses etc paid by an employer	wages, salary etc paid by an employer	self- employment or business	self- employment or business	interest, dividends, rent, other investments	interest, dividends, rent, other investments
	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors
Sex	.032	.019	.123	.069	.020	.027
Age	.428	.201	.253	.170	.304	.272
Single and Combination Ethnicity	.042	.056	.116	.071	.200	.106
Were you born in New Zealand?	.017	.009	.024	.021	.058	.058
Household size	.176	.046	.069	.034	.202	.032
Family type by child dependency status	.131	.056	.125	.054	.201	.064
Region	.042	.031	.043	.022	.091	.068
Urban area	.072	.072	.173	.121	.014	.019
Highest Qual.	.145	.038	.088	.024	.148	.153
Person's occupation in their main job	.659	.594	.335	.262	.144	.074
Overall	.691	.478	.413	.171	.331	.110

**Table 23: Income measures by Social Characteristics**

	Personal income Eta	Personal income Beta Adjusted for Factors	HH Income Eta	HH Income Beta Adjusted for Factors	HH Relative Income Eta	HH Relative Income Beta Adjusted for Factors	Personal \$ per hr gp Eta	Personal \$ per hr gp Beta Adjusted for Factors
	Sex	.224	.196	.078	.021	.029	.029	.005
Age	.401	.242	.309	.133	.195	.195	.212	.186
Single and Combination Ethnicity	.139	.103	.079	.160	.148	.148	.082	.074
Were you born in New Zealand?	.022	.035	.000	.028	.028	.028	.009	.018
Household size	.086	.040	.391	.413	.164	.164	.050	.017
Family type by child dependency status	.129	.042	.369	.273	.213	.213	.057	.044
Region	.087	.074	.170	.129	.127	.127	.055	.060
Urban area	.073	.031	.127	.040	.041	.041	.051	.031
Highest Qual.	.324	.176	.244	.143	.152	.152	.159	.123
Person's occupation in their main job	.520	.374	.390	.246	.275	.275	.176	.091
Overall	.634	.402	.626	.392	.555	.307	.292	.085

Tenure and Dwelling size are related particularly to age, family type and ethnicity. Dwelling size and crowding relate to household size and family type with smaller influences from age and ethnicity (Table 24).

Both NZDep and Elsi (Table 25) yield similar overall prediction levels (with  $R^2=0.45$ ) and with similar patterns – NZDep is shaped by ethnicity (and urban area, region, occupation and age and Elsi by age, occupation, family type and then ethnicity).

**Table 24: Housing-related Measures by Social Characteristics**

	Tenure Eta	Tenure	No. Bedroom s	No. Bedroom s	Crowdin g	Crowdin g
		Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors
Sex	.021	.020	.015	.005	.004	.013
Age	.424	.398	.377	.115	.341	.124
Single and Combination Ethnicity	.208	.143	.324	.124	.275	.118
Were you born in New Zealand?	.073	.076	.099	.052	.109	.063
Household size	.112	.040	.533	.511	.509	.501
Family type by child dependency status	.239	.203	.444	.349	.414	.342
Region	.047	.021	.105	.040	.098	.045
Urban area	.049	.017	.107	.030	.108	.028
Highest Qual.	.055	.050	.070	.019	.058	.016
Person's occupation in their main job	.106	.047	.128	.078	.153	.082
Overall	.498	.248	657	432	.639	.409

Workforce characteristics show varying impacts (Table 26). Fulltime/part-time status is shaped by age, as is worked hours – also by gender and occupation. Unemployment is shaped by occupation and age.

Finally, Subjective SOL is moderately well explained by the overall set of predictor variables – multiple Rs of 0.3 through to 0.4 (Table 27). Major predictors include a set including Family type, occupation (which is the most important after controlling), ethnicity, qualification and age, with age picking up moiré variance in relation to the other variables while the effects of others (notably ethnicity) reduces. The three questions yield different key predictors – occupation is the most important after controlling for having enough money) whereas ethnicity is for rating SOL but these variations are not large.

**Table 25: NZDep and Elsi Scores by Social Characteristics**

	NZ Deprivation Score Eta	NZ Deprivation Score	Elsi	Elsi
		Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors
Sex	.021	.004	.068	.032
Age	.126	.108	.225	.271
Single and Combination Ethnicity	.316	.271	.248	.131
Were you born in New Zealand?	.003	.004	.014	.026
Household size	.159	.078	.188	.057
Family type by child dependency status	.193	.111	.302	.199
Region	.134	.138	.055	.026
Urban area	.180	.165	.038	.024
Highest Qual.	.143	.081	.149	.114
Person's occupation in their main job	.199	.115	.203	.215
Overall	454	206	461	212

## **Conclusion**

This research note has reported the some of the main information available from the NZGSS pertaining to the distribution of resources. It was found that on the whole change over the 5 year period was limited although trends were found in relation to educational qualifications, labour force and employment statuses, receipt of types of benefit and especially tenure while other class-related measures flat-lined. The measures fell into at least four interpretable patterns which makes the point that inequalities are not one bundle but have several dimensions.

The multivariate analysis also points to some variation in the pattern of causality. Occupation is central for many of the equations reported, with education adding in some further causal impact which reflects the importance of the status attainment model. Age is important, particularly in relation to household assets, and family type (and occasionally household size) complicate some social distributions. Ethnicity and gender are seldom important as factors, but in many outcomes continue to exert an effect. This portrait begins a

descriptive overview which foreshadows much further analysis which is needed and also points to areas of policy concern which should be addressed.

**Table 26: Work-related Measures by Social Characteristics**

	FTPT Eta	FTPT	Hours Worked	Hours Worked	Employment Arrangements	Employment Arrangements	Unemploye d	Unemploye d
		Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Eta	Beta Adjusted for Other Factors
Sex	.194	.077	.280	.247	.004	.008	.032	.013
Age	.519	.100	.293	.265	.051	.061	.195	.058
Single and Combination Ethnicity	.055	.015	.034	.034	.064	.085	.118	.024
Were you born in New Zealand?	.013	.004	.010	.031	.019	.019	.000	.020
Household size	.147	.020	.057	.041	.022	.037	.059	.019
Family type by child dependency status	.183	.039	.112	.098	.021	.034	.175	.039
Region	.037	.010	.024	.024	.010	.019	.042	.010
Urban area	.058	.006	.049	.025	.012	.009	.045	.024
Highest Qual.	.198	.008	.075	.037	.039	.046	.086	.015
Person's occupation in their main job	.924	.869	.276	.165	.059	.064	.837	.822
Overall	931	867	452	204	120	014	842	708

**Table 27: Subjective Measures by Social Characteristics**

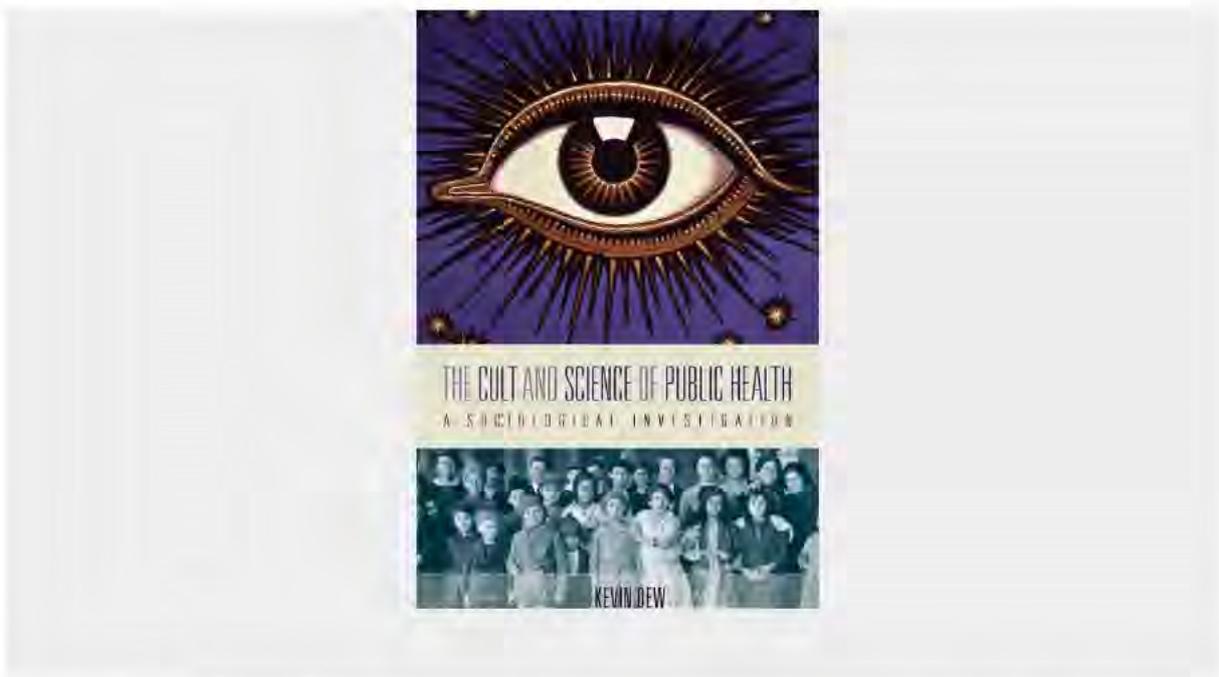
Subjective SOL	Would you say you have not enough money, just enough.... Eta	Would you say you have not enough money, just enough.. Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Generally, how satisfied are you with your current standard of living? Eta	Generally, how satisfied are you with your current standard of living? Beta Adjusted for Other Factors	Generally, how would you rate your standard of living? Eta	Generally, how would you rate your standard of living? Beta Adjusted for Other Factors
	Sex	.020	.015	.007	.031	.007
Age	.125	.148	.160	.210	.061	.132
Single and Combination Ethnicity	.193	.102	.130	.061	.215	.185
Were you born in New Zealand?	.049	.033	.031	.024	.051	.020
Household size	.162	.055	.109	.039	.120	.058
Family type by child dependency status	.240	.176	.199	.155	.176	.128
Region	.075	.046	.034	.019	.057	.043
Urban area	.035	.032	.033	.026	.036	.019
Highest Qual.	.178	.136	.093	.086	.193	.162
Person's occupation in their main job	.234	.216	.131	.142	.215	.152
Overall	.395	.156	.310	.096	.373	.139

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Geoff Fougere, Julie Park, David Craig and Kevin Dew



### **Publisher's Description**

In contemporary manifestations of public health rituals and events, people are being increasingly united around what they hold in common—their material being and humanity. As a cult of humanity, public health provides a moral force in society that replaces 'traditional' religions in times of great diversity or heterogeneity of peoples, activities and desires. This is in contrast to public health's foundation in science, particularly the science of epidemiology. The rigid rules of 'scientific evidence' used to determine the cause of illness and disease can work against the most vulnerable in society by putting sectors of the population, such as underrepresented workers, at a disadvantage. This study focuses on this tension between traditional science and the changing vision articulated within public health (and across many disciplines) that calls for a collective response to uncontrolled capitalism and unremitting globalization, and to the way in which health inequalities and their association with social inequalities provides a political rhetoric that calls for a new redistributive social

programme. Drawing on decades of research, the author argues that public health is both a cult and a science of contemporary society.

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**Chapter 1.** Public health theories and theorising public health

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**Chapter 8.** The cult of health and its rituals

### **Geoff Fougere**

This is a deeply interesting book – an appreciation but also a critical dissection of public health. It is written by someone who is pre-eminently a sociologist but who is also familiar with the practices of public health, both as a long term member of a university Department of Public Health and as a researcher exploring the effects of these practices across diverse settings.

The book opens up the complexity of public health as a ‘collective response to threats against peoples’ health’. That complexity includes the layering of the ‘old’ public health, with its focus on sanitation and the prevention of communicable disease, on the ‘new’ public health, with its focus on chronic disease and concerns with health promotion (with the social determinants of health running as a thread between the two), the array of academic disciplines drawn on by public health and its manifold and ambivalent links to the state and to market capitalism. If public health is, in the book’s framing, an ‘institution’, it can also be seen as a promiscuous assemblage, constantly combining and recombining different forms of knowledge production and social, economic and political linkages with interventions operating at every scale from the face to face to the global.

The approach the book takes is not to eschew this complexity but to run with it: to follow public health practices into many of the locales in which they have effects, across historical time as well as geographical space. The result is to check and constrain both public health’s self-understanding of its enterprise and the framing of public health by dominant theoretical currents within sociology. Public health is not simply about the, ‘discovery of scientific principles and commitment to individual wellbeing’ – a view that elides its complex and ambivalent ties with market capitalism and the state. And while

sometimes public health provides a handmaiden to exploitative forms of capitalism as in Marxist accounts or acts as a powerful disciplinary force, joining surveillance and control with the ‘responsibilisation’ of individual subjects as in Foucauldian approaches, the framing that the book develops is different. Public health, the book argues, operates as, ‘an important moral force [which] plays a significant role mediating between different institutions, including the state and the market. But like all institutions it needs to be tempered and mediated, lest it seek to shape society in its own image’.

How then to make sense of public health? Enter Durkheim. For a sociologist of my generation, exposed to Charles Tilly’s taunt of ‘useless Durkheim’, this is a surprise. But in Kevin’s hands the identification of public health as a, ‘cult of humanity’ turns out to be not only surprising but also illuminating. For Durkheim, religion is, ‘a system of ideas by which men represent to themselves the society of which they are members and the obscure yet intimate relations they have with it’, and it’s function is to, ‘make us act and help us live’. So far, so analogous. But perhaps the important point is not whether Durkheim was a prophet whose concept of the ‘cult of humanity’ anticipated the rise of public health or the theorist who provided the most useful conceptual resources for its analysis, but the way in which the analogy with religion highlights the moral force of public health. In Kevin’s words ‘public health not just as a site of power but as a moral force and means of resistance in itself’.

It’s hard to think of a more stark demonstration of this moral force than the core claim, quoted in the book, of the World Health Organization’s Organizing Committee on the Social Determinants of Health: ‘Social injustice is killing people on a grand scale’. This claim is based on the deployment of the powerful statistical tools of epidemiology. As Kevin argues, ‘the capacity of epidemiology to graphically represent patterns of morbidity across time, social classes, ethnicity and a host of other variables can forcefully highlight the levels of social justice within ... and between nations’.

In New Zealand these issues have been most powerfully played out now and over the last decade around children and the social determinants of their health – a debate in which my fellow critic David Craig and especially his epidemiologist partner, Liz Craig, have been key protagonists (so too the Department of Public Health at the University of Otago (Wellington) of which Kevin was previously a member). Public health painstakingly develops the

linkages among the incomes of households with children, the quality of housing in which they find themselves and health outcomes – including a meningitis epidemic and an outbreak, yet to peak of other infectious diseases among children - following the collapse of household income and the rise of overcrowding among poorer households in the second half of the 1980's and the early 1990's. The issue yesterday by the Children's Commissioner of the first annual report linking child poverty with child health and other outcomes will help sustain this issue on the public agenda. Of all the critiques of inequality in New Zealand, the one from public health is the one that I think has the most effect. It uses empirical means to directly undermine the claims to legitimacy of present social and economic arrangements. It has resulted not only in a rush of uncomfortable rationalisations by political elites but also some policy shifts, first under Labour and now under National-led governments.

Bringing back Durkheim, bringing into focus the moral force of the mundane practices of public health, centres attention more generally on society as a moral order and on issues of legitimacy and social justice. Through this lens, public health may be seen as 'cult' but, in my view and with a slightly different angle of vision, more powerfully as an engine of critique: 'the codification of what is not going well and the search for causes of this situation, with the aim of proceeding to solutions' (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005: 41). It's focus on our shared human vulnerability to disease, injury and death, its techniques for tracing causes, its emphasis on devising solutions makes it, at its best, a force for the reworking of the socio-material ecologies in which we are enmeshed so as to better realise claims of social justice.

The analysis of how, when, where and why this moral force translates into substantive social change is largely a lacuna within public health and falls outside the scope of this book. It presents itself as enormously fruitful topic for future sociological investigation.

### **Julie Park**

This is a good book. Kevin Dew takes his innovative, Durkheimian-inspired, insight that public health may create collectivities and help to temper inequalities, first developed in his 2007 article, and gives it the book-length treatment it deserves. It is quite a slim book and even in this longer format I found myself often wishing for more. I too am esurient – thanks Kevin, for introducing me to a new word – even if it is archaic or humorous according to

Oxford! And a further remark on words: I am very pleased to see him using the term public health rather than the apolitical ‘population health’. Hannah Arendt has argued that having or creating public space, a space for public conversation, is central to democracy and I take this to apply broadly to democracy in health. Those of us who work in the area have a responsibility to maintain the public in health and this book advances that cause.

As a medical anthropologist, I too count myself a descendant of Rudolf Virchow, who Kevin introduces early in the book. Virchow wrote in 1849 a piece we share with our medical anthropology students:

In reality, if medicine is the science of the healthy as well as of the ill human being (which is what it ought to be), what other science is better suited to propose laws as the basis of social structure, in order to make effective those which are inherent in man himself? Once medicine is established as anthropology, and once the interests of the privileged no longer determine the course of public events, the physiologists and the practitioners will be counted among the elder statesmen who support the social structure. Medicine is a social science in its very bone and marrow (Rudolf Virchow, 1849, quoted from Foster and Anderson 1978:3).

The juxtaposition of the Rudolf Virchow and John Snow origin stories as foundations of public health was very interesting to me, with the radical social reform espoused by Virchow and his research methods of participant experience contrasting with the more technical solutions and epidemiological enquiry of Snow. But both, Kevin points out, located the effort required to bring about health equality as collective, not individual only. Both are ancestral to public health and social science for public health.

Adding Emile Durkheim’s (also an anthropological ancestor) insights into religion in the modern world to well established Foucauldian perspectives on health, and adding to them a wider range of theorists drawn from diverse social sciences, from Mary Douglas, to James C Scott, to Ulrich Beck and Erving Goffman, makes this a very rewarding and continually interesting book, theoretically. This theoretical richness is enhanced by enlightening historical details (who knew that Dubrovnik in 1377 was the home of quarantine?), accounts of the development of statistical epidemiology, and overviews of more recent events, such as the unintended consequences of smallpox vaccinations.

The more that I wished to hear about was typically ethnographic: Kevin’s analysis of fun runs for example, detailed discussions of vaccination and so on were enlightening, and I wanted more of the same. And sometimes I thought

more was necessary to give a fuller picture of the role of public health. For example, with migrants from areas that have high TB rates keeping up the rates in otherwise low TB incidence countries like NZ, it's important to add that with very few exceptions, migrants do not have active TB when they enter New Zealand. They have latent infection as is common in high incidence countries or situations, like refugee camps. It is the conditions of life and other health challenges here that turn latent TB into active disease. Social scientists working in public health can explain this and help reduce inequalities and discrimination by doing so. So too, describing Beck's work on Chernobyl, I wished Kevin had also used Adrianna Petryna's work which shows how establishing the "Chernobyl tie" allows some Ukrainians access to public health services that that are denied to others.

The strong story for me was the ambiguous and dynamic positioning of public health and of public health practitioners and social scientists engaged in public health research in relation to states, globalising forces and institutions, class and other forms of inequality, between individual rights, and more communal orientations: the inescapable duality of public health. Reflexivity about this positioning is essential to critical public health. But reflexivity about personal positioning is important too, and needs to be recognised. I would have liked to see more of this in Kevin's book. As the daughter of a man severely affected by a polio epidemic in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, I recognise that I want people to make the 'right' choice about vaccination. As a researcher who visits quite a few Pacific islands, I want people to clean up the mosquito breeding grounds so I and they don't get dengue or filariasis – and where it exists – malaria. I need to recognise this too.

Vector control is interesting in other ways. For it to be effective, every family has to help out and on the island as a whole, not just on their family land. Collective action is necessary here, as it is in reducing air pollution. It is interesting, I think, to reflect on those public health issues which depend on bodily discipline, often in quite solitary contexts, and those which depend on collective action: presenting for a vaccination is not quite the same as joining in a working bee and having fun together, but there are similarities, including competitiveness, or friendly rivalry as was seen in some historical TB campaigns.

Some public health efforts can be seen as society celebrating itself, such as the quarterly *Tutaka*, a household and village health inspection, on the island

of Atiu, Cook Islands. The health team and other members of the inspection group donned matching shirts, creating a festive air, and visited each home in turn, checking the physical and social wellbeing of families and their environs. This is experienced as care rather than surveillance. This raises the question of ethics: what should be the basis for ethics in public health? As Kevin points out, an ethics which privileges individual choice is not terribly suitable for public health – in NZ since 1948, people with infectious TB can be isolated, whether they like it or not, for example. Perhaps instead of the individualistic bioethics mantra we should be thinking more seriously about virtue ethics, or ethics of care, or at least debating an ethics more in tune with a cult of humanity.

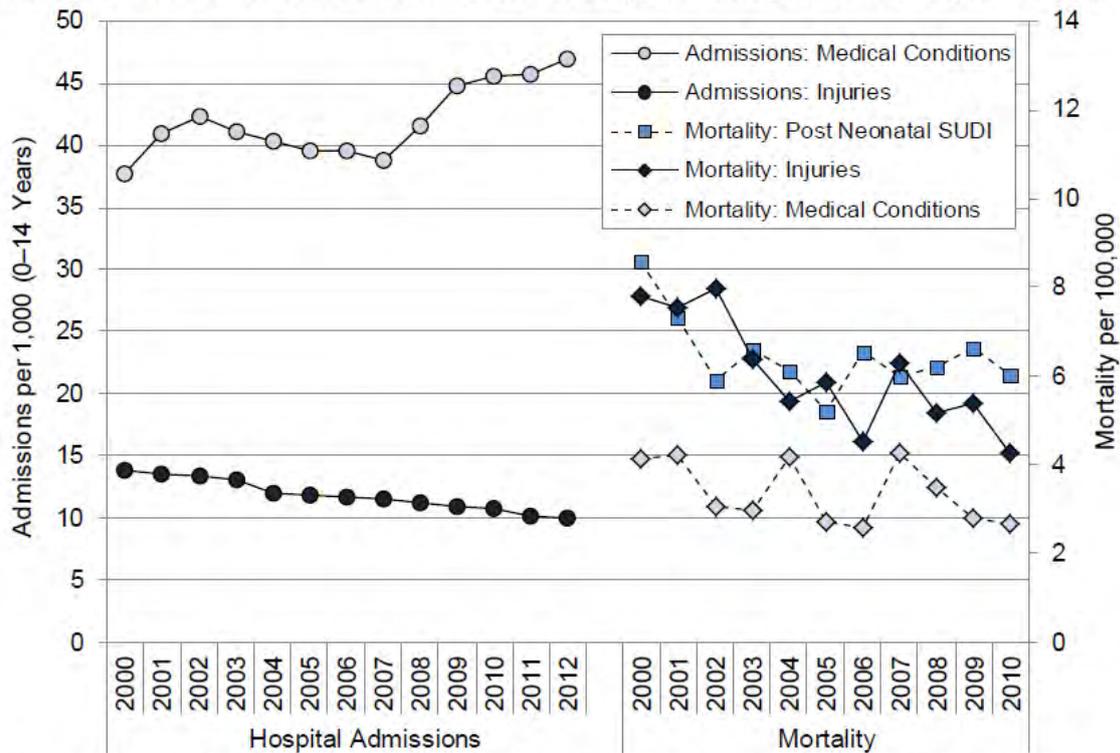
The concept of a cult of humanity in a society marked by organic solidarity is a useful framework but public health not the only contender, although I accept that Kevin was not arguing for public health as the sole contender. The environmental movement can be analysed as another and the intersection between both movements is powerful. What is health? Research across cultures tells us that it can include preparedness, peacefulness, correct relations, happiness, enough good food, a long life, a safe environment -- in addition to bodily wellbeing.

### **David Craig**

I've come to the book very much in terms it recognises and describes very well indeed: the public health activist, involved in university teaching which in itself is a form of public health activism, seeking to motivate students to engage in the policy, politics and practice.

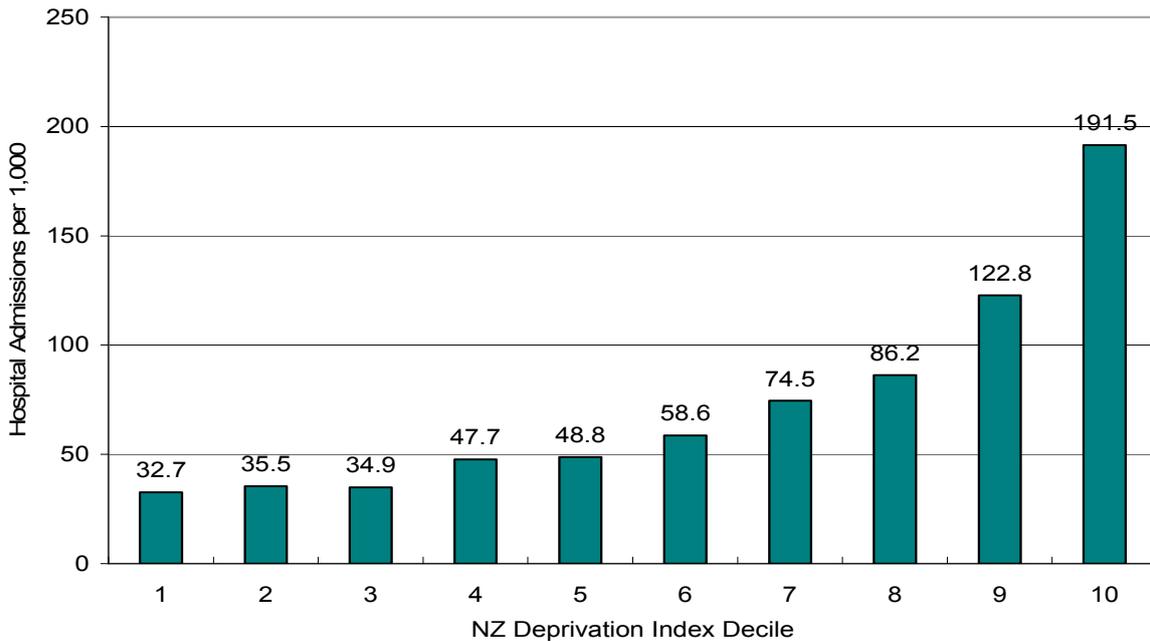
In my teaching and other advocacy around health outcomes for different parts of society, I've always used some of what I have found to be some of the more compelling graphic representations of social difference in health outcomes: graphs regularly generated by my partner Liz Craig, a social epidemiologist working in health and poverty monitoring and policy advocacy. This graph, for example, from the 2013 Children's Poverty Monitor, shows the ongoing rise of mainly respiratory and infectious diseases among New Zealand children (measured by hospital admissions) over the years following the global financial crisis (GFC).

Figure 26. Hospital Admissions (2000–2012) and Mortality (2000–2010) from Conditions with a Social Gradient in New Zealand Children Aged 0–14 Years (Excluding Neonates)



Source: Numerator Admissions: National Minimum Dataset; Numerator Mortality: National Mortality Collection  
 Denominator: Statistics NZ Estimated Resident Population (projected from 2007) Note: Medical Conditions Admissions: Acute and arranged admissions only; Injury Admissions: Emergency Department Cases Excluded

The graph below, generated in the program for monitoring child health outcomes which preceded the Children’s Poverty Monitor, depicts the ‘social gradient’ for a common respiratory disease among young children, Bronchiolitis, showing hospital admissions per 1000 children in 2005, differentiated according to their socioeconomic status as calculated by the New Zealand Deprivation Index (Salmond, Crampton and Atkinson 2007) .



I've always found these graphs compelling: present in a visual 'show don't tell' way, presenting something Durkheim might recognise as 'material social facts'. The graphs present social facts (social, social difference, inequality), in telling terms. They present change over time, affecting different groups differently. They register social patterns, trends, social causes: like the difference for Durkheim between suicide rates for Catholics and Protestants, they demand a social, structural explanation. They suggest, demand social, structural explanations too about links between rising inequalities, low wage and benefit levels, stress levels, housing market failure, household crowding and health.

Both myself, and students I taught were of course very much energised by this: to the point where some have gone on to be involved in this crusade on regional and national scale. The social determinants view of health and poverty taken up by colleges of physicians, children's commissioners, battlers against inequality in all its neoliberal guises, but also to some extent by both sides of politics, and watch this space going into the 2014 election. All of them have wielded the social gradient as hard and compelling evidence of something being wrong.

This kind of civic religious enthusiasm in areas around public health is, as Kevin's finely written book makes very clear, nothing new. Public health has been characterised, even sometimes plagued by this kind of values meet statistics- driven activity, as a kind of low church evangelical version of its wider cult of humanity. The wider cult is beautifully and richly described in

Kevin's book: so many of its permutations and priestly (and lay) endeavours are sketched and set alongside each other, and weighed for both their 'esurience', and sometimes raised as warnings against their susceptibility for being caught up in what Foucauldians might describe as public health's absolutist tendencies.

The book in various ways tells us a reasonable amount about public health enterprise about health inequality. In my frame of mind it underplays a little the significance of the current movement and its core terminology and advocacy repertoire: the 'social determinants' (a few references, but not in the index or featuring as a chapter or section); social gradients (I found two mentions, but again not in the index) and health inequalities (a few more references, but again nothing in the index or organising machinery of the book, and not quite the organising conceit and powerhouse it has become in recent years). And, I think perhaps most tellingly, no graphs to 'show' rather than 'tell' the health inequalities/ social gradient story.

Where the story is told, it is told within the book's overarching Durkheim meets Foucault framing, as a 'position' taken in relation to other 'positions': not as something like a social fact, or something really demanding (and taxing of) a social explanation. Where, for example, Politics and Public health are considered together p34, the discussion is of public health as providing different kinds/ forms of representations, rather than whether they are talking about real social outcomes driven by real social processes.

I certainly did enjoy the rich narrative development of the book. It contains an economically yet closely described library of historical, theoretical and practical accounts of Public Health, laced with examples and cases. Overall, and in highly readable and inviting prose, gives a generous sense of the scope of public health enterprise and activism. It contains a surprising amount in not a lot of pages. I did appreciate too how the book was held together too by the wider Durkheimian narrative of public health as cult, with its high priests and saintly crusaders, its foundation narratives of campaigning for the good; its sense of moral agency and fighting evils.

The book itself sometimes strains at the edges of this, and you get a sense of the author's own crusading commitments in public health when, as for example on pg. 70, it is itself calling for Public health to fulfil its historical mission, or where it is seeking to position itself in relation to Foucault and his nuanced yet totalising accounts of power relations in human organisation. On the other hand, it sometimes seems to succumb just a little to the temptation

common in Durkheimian approaches to comparative belief structures, which is to ‘happy narrative analogy’. Durkheim’s smart analogous analysis lends itself rather easily, of course, to the analogous parody/ cartooning/ lampooning of practices of religion or other public endeavour which want to see themselves as serious scientific, truth-seeking or political exercise. Kevin is extremely gentle on that: though it’s not hard often to imagine a wry smile creeping across his face as, yet again, Durkheim’s analysis by analogy throws up a plausible parallel between clerisy and public health, and redefines activists’ activities via the rather more grotesque shadow they cast on the walls of their fiery workshops and high altars.

In the book’s conclusions, what emerges is a focus on Public health in terms of ritual and restraint: broadly, exercised with discretion and understanding, Public health can restrain the effects of other regulatory framings. The conclusion develops as a kind of debate, in the last pages, between Durkheim, who considers the ritual aspects, and Foucault, who warns us about the absolutist aspects of campaigning. Here the book’s misgivings about the ‘esurient’ and absolutist nature of public health are given the final word, with tacit calls for more reflection on rituals, and more valuing of restraint. As the book finally concludes, public health might “restrict the negative impact of other institutions, and restrain egotistic and anomic tendencies in society” (p. 146). It might indeed: but it might also achieve a good deal more than that.

And I think in fact it has. I know they might have been a little less conciliatory interlocutors and reflecters, but I would have enjoyed seeing a third actor sitting around the fire, maybe an Engels (whose 1855 work on working class poverty contains a lovely table showing a social gradient around housing and health), or perhaps George Davey Smith and Richard Wilkinson, being a little more pressing and, if necessary, ‘coruscating’ in the conclusions.

I’m leaning and biased here, certainly. I do think though, that if ever there was a social fact in need of understanding and engagement in Aotearoa/NZ and beyond, it lies somewhere in the relationship between health and socioeconomic forces, health and housing, health and post-colonial political economies of marginalisation (and, emerging, of redefining self-determination). Given current conservative governments’ record of crippling public health capability within government, and undermining it in the third sector, perhaps too the book might have been able to shed some more light on the kinds of dragons the St. Georges

of public health currently find themselves up against. A chapter, then, on conservative reaction, even denial, of public health's core findings, might have helped provide a sense of the context the discipline operates in, and the provocations to esurient campaigning it experiences day to day. If there's absolutism and a need for restraint, as Kevin Dew's book makes clear there is, to me it's at least as significant outside of progressive public health circles as inside them. The need to pushback against and restrain reaction exists most palpably, I'd suggest, around the right's dealings with public health science and practice, its denialism and obfuscation, and its support for medical-clinical over public health measures, day in and day out.

### **Kevin Dew: response to the critics**

Having one's book the subject of a symposium feels something like defending one's thesis in an oral examination – particularly when you have no idea of what the 'critics' are going to say. Having now had the privilege of reading the comments from the critics I am delighted with the responses they have had to my 'sociological investigation'. I particularly like the way the critics have identified possibilities for enhancements and further research possibilities. This fits very much with what I see as an important aspect of the scholarly process – a process of dialogue and development of ideas – and for many of us this is to promote positive social change.

I am particularly taken with Geoff's reference to public health as a promiscuous assemblage, a phrase I would like to have used. This phrase alerts us to the tremendous range of approaches and practices that can be related to public health and the potentially unrestrained character of public health activities. It suggests the great power of public health and also why we should remain critical.

Geoff has picked up on the idea of public health as a moral force providing powerful critiques of social injustice enabled, in part, by its grounding in epidemiology. Using the concept of 'engines of critique' nicely illuminates this aspect of public health, and this is certainly one of the conclusions I came to through my attempt to understand the place of public health in contemporary society. Public health can provide this powerful critique and be a source of social change because its methodologies can be represented as neutrally scientific and its focus, on health, is a universal concern. The understanding I came to of public health also led me to temper this view by noting the sorts of situations where the goal of social justice could be

undermined and public health and its methodologies could be used to perpetrate injustices.

Julie would like to have seen more detail, particularly ethnographic detail, to further elucidate the complex issues in public health. The close examination of everyday life can bring into focus the powerful forces at play that shape our lives, and I agree that there are plenty of opportunities that could be taken to do this. Julie has offered some excellent examples of this in her commentary.

Julie also notes that there was no explicit positioning of the author in my book. I have been somewhat wary of the way ‘reflexivity’ can be presented. I am interested in where a sociological investigation leads someone who has an attitude that is inquiring. The starting point is not particularly important, except perhaps to give a sense of the journey taken. In reality the book is the product of very many years of work and of very many research projects, so to even identify what my original position was in relation to public health is no easy task. Julie mentions the issue of vaccination, an area that I have been interested in for some time. But my position is not a stable and unchanging one. Before I undertook any research on vaccinations I accepted the standard medical story of vaccines and passively submitted myself to the technology. After some initial research I started to shift to the opposite pole – being surprised by distortions and misinformation that, at times, accompanied the standard medical story. I am still dismayed at some of the tactics of pro-vaccinators (see Martin, 2013) but would now say I want to promote debate, expose the suppression of dissenting voices, make values explicit, and ask whether we should leave decisions about something as important as vaccination policy in the hands of a few immunologists. So my position has changed as a result of my investigations, and may well change again.

But I can confidently identify the moment when I decided to explore what a Durkheimian focus on public health might do and the sort of issues that were troubling me that such a focus helped to resolve. The impetus to my ‘investigation’ was a conversation I had with a PhD student, Vivienne Ivory, when I was a lecturer in the Department of Public Health at the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Vivienne was using the work of Emile Durkheim to consider the role of neighbourhoods in relation to health. We were throwing around ideas about what sort of social factors foster solidarity or cohesion at a neighbourhood level, and we mentioned religion but moved on quickly as religion does not generally operate at a neighbourhood level. But the

conversation made me wonder what would happen if we considered public health as Durkheim's predicted 'cult of humanity'. Durkheim had argued that there would be a new form of religion in contemporary society that would act as a moral force enhancing social solidarity. There were a few important aspects of this new religion according to Durkheim, including the idea that it would have as its point of worship that which we all hold in common, our humanity. Another aspect was that this religion would be based on science but go beyond science. The more I thought about it the more I thought that this could be a very fruitful way of looking at public health. In the department where I was working I was surrounded by people committed to improving human health, and arguably concerns about health is something we all hold in common. In doing so they were in battle with health-deleterious capitalist industries, such as tobacco, food and alcohol companies. In addition, health promotion activities were aimed at tempering the population's consumption of fatty foods and tendencies to idleness.

The moral dimensions of public health were apparent. Some things that had puzzled me started to make sense. For example, that public health positioned itself as a science with all its critical and sceptical faculties, but went beyond science in its advocacy activities when those critical faculties could be suspended in the pursuit of bringing about social change. I could now see this as the new religion being based in science – but moving beyond science. The book was an attempt to develop this insight in a systematic and thorough way. Through this analysis I could also position myself better as a sociologist working in public health. I had struggled to find a comfortable place in public health. As a sociologist I could easily be critical of some of the limitations in public health and some of its practices, but I felt that this undermined the efforts of my colleagues. This discomfort was apparent from my very first days at the medical school. On one occasion, when I was off to find some food, I passed a gurney being wheeled through a hospital corridor. On the gurney was a body with a sheet pulled over it. My immediate response was something like – 'how can I take on a critical role, sniping away at the work of my colleagues and the medical profession, when they are confronting and dealing with death'. In this space it was very difficult to see what sociology could contribute, beyond being a 'handmaiden' to the work of public health and medicine, a role I was also uncomfortable with. Using the concepts articulated by Durkheim, I started to find a place for the sociologist in this environment, as an important critical

voice not to undermine public health, but to challenge it to reflect on its own practices.

Another puzzle for me was how to understand some of my colleague's adherence to particular positions. This was most clearly demonstrated as an issue for me when our department had a debate about a proposal by the university to deem it unethical for any staff member to undertake research funded by tobacco companies. In this formal debate I argued that although we should consider any tool available to undermine the activities of tobacco companies, we should not do this at any cost. Academic freedom is not something we should throw away in pursuit of public health objectives. Following this debate two of my public health colleagues, whom I have great respect for and who have done amazing work, said that although they found my argument very persuasive it was not going to change their views. In other words – there was a certain dogma that was hard to shift.

Seeing public health as a cult of humanity meant that I could better understand the dogmatic side of public health, but position myself as a critic. The dogma and the scepticism both had a place.

David suggests that the book underplays the inequalities story in public health. His point about the importance and power of this story is well made – and one that I tried to convey in the book. But the aim of the book was not simply to tell this particular story but to consider the kind of impacts that this story, and other health stories, have when they are told from a public health perspective. Elsewhere I have been involved in publications that have focused strongly on the inequalities story (Dew and Matheson, 2008). But the opportunity David has taken to illustrate the power of public health representations of social injustice demonstrates very well the argument I was trying to make in the book about the capacity that public health has to do this. David uses the example of child health and poverty, and if the focus is kept on poverty then public health can play a part in positive social change. But there are other policy 'solutions' that we should be more wary of. If the policy is to withhold benefits from parents who do not have their children vaccinated, which may be quite acceptable to some public health advocates, then we have something else happening. Among other things, we have here public health goals enrolled to discipline beneficiaries and, for some, increase their impoverishment. Policy responses to public health goals are variable, and as with the tobacco example above, I would argue that we should raise questions

when institutions are charged with supporting public health goals with whatever tools available and at whatever cost.

Geoff's final comment on possible future sociological investigations is apposite. My reading of this is that Geoff is asking for specific analyses of where and when public health makes a difference at a policy level – something that would not only be enlightening for public health advocates but also provide further insight into broader social processes that shape public health and that public health responds to. Julie raises the issue of a public health ethics which I think has been little explored and is important to pursue. David's suggestion that the book could have been enhanced with a chapter on 'conservative reaction' is well made. There are fleeting references to this throughout the book but I have not had the opportunity to explore this in more depth. As David notes, conservative reactions to public health policy are an important provocations that shape the practices of public health advocacy.

All three critics identify ways in which the book could have been improved or where some future sociological investigation could be developed to further our understanding of public health. This sort of response to the book is extremely pleasing. I can envisage excellent research projects on when and where public health influences broader social formations, on ethnographies of collective public health practices, on public health ethics and on provocations that shape public health advocacy. There is much work to be done to further develop a sociologically informed understanding of contemporary public health.

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Towards a theory of depopulation (Marsden Fund)**

*Natalie Jackson*

Population growth is theorised to cease globally around 2100, resulting in irreversible population shrinkage in most countries. Yet this defining event, which is already the experience of Japan and much of Europe, still receives less policy attention than its underlying drivers: low fertility and population ageing. Currently recognised only when it occurs at national level, the ending of growth has not yet been theorised to assist policy responses. The archetype is Japan, where national population decline began only recently, but the majority of prefectures have been experiencing depopulation for many decades. Empirical evidence shows that the onset of decline begins sub-nationally, at different times, in different ways. Subnational decline is also increasingly driven by a new set of dynamics: negative natural increase (deaths exceeding births) combining with the old form of decline – net migration loss. Indeed the defining feature of these trends is that subnational decline is now likely to be permanent, because of a *new form of decline* caused by the interaction of net migration loss (the ‘old’ form) and hyper-ageing arising out of the demographic transition. This interaction magnifies the speed and severity of local depopulation, setting in motion feedbacks that generate unprecedented demographic and economic dynamics. ...threshold into seemingly irreversible decline over the past 15 years. In this process, the age structure of migrants becomes an increasingly critical factor. This is because the end of growth/onset of decline is primarily driven by *interactions* between the demographic and mobility (migration) transitions. In non-metropolitan areas (in NZ, populations less than 100,000), these otherwise discrete processes are generating deep-waisted, inverted age pyramids. In such populations, mortality declines are resulting in increased numbers at older ages (numerical ageing), while fertility declines are reducing the proportions at younger ages (structural ageing). Simultaneously, the mobility transition is generating net outflows of young adults that accelerate structural ageing, plus net inflows of retirees, which accelerate both numerical and structural ageing. This pattern eventually results in (i) deficits at key parenting ages that produce further decreases in births, (ii) more elderly than children, and (iii) more deaths than births, severely limiting the potential for further population growth. In

contrast, agglomerations such as Auckland City increasingly account for most national growth, due to the in-migration of young adults from both internal and international sources. Inflows of young adults generate diamond-shaped age structures, which dramatically slow the rate of ageing and sustain growth for a longer period, even though metropolitan fertility rates are relatively low.

This project will integrate demographic and mobility transition theories to develop a first-order theory of depopulation, proposing that the end of growth unfolds sequentially from rural to urban locales, the speed and severity of the trends magnified by unprecedented demographic-economic interactions. Our multi-disciplinary team will generate a substantive account of these mechanisms for New Zealand, a country still growing strongly at national level, but where decline is already the case in one-third of the 67 Territorial Authority Areas. Central to the analysis will be a nation-wide study of industrial labour market change, which we posit precedes the new form of decline, and determination of the counterfactual conditions under which growth could continue, locally and nationally.

## **Researching Ourselves: Social Surveys in Twentieth-Century New Zealand (Australian Research Council)**

*Charlotte Greenhalgh<sup>1</sup>*

In 1940 one of New Zealand's earliest social surveys made calculations about its subjects' standards of living that were controversial enough to close down a governmental social research unit. After reading proofs of the study 'with its information on children working, farmers working 100 hours a week and houses in North Auckland with dirt floors', Deputy Prime Minister Peter Fraser arrived on the doorstep of his responsible Minister demanding, 'the printing is to stop' (Robb, 1987). An act of 'academic blackmail' secured publication, but the urban survey that would have been its sequel was abandoned. The Social Science Bureau disbanded. Yet by the 1970s social scientific facts and theories were common currency in the public life of the nation. Research projects routinely focused on the hidden problems that surveying and statistics could reveal. Between 1965 and 1980 local populations requested surveys of their hometowns of Hamilton, Porirua, Aranui, Tokoroa, Petone, Kawerau, and Kelburn (Chapple, 1976; Christchurch Public Health Department & Moody, 1973; Gray, 1978; Gray & McCreary, 1980; James Harding Robb, Carr, Cloud, & Victoria University of Wellington Department of Social Administration and Sociology, 1969; VandenBerg, McCreary, Chapman, & Victoria University of Wellington School of Social Science, 1965). The authors of this research—the residents, their local councils, and academics—agreed that social problems would be 'overcome' when their 'accurate data' were known (VandenBerg et al., 1965: i).

Today the New Zealand government appoints a scientific advisor to foster evidenced-based policymaking. The revamped National Library's inaugural programme of exhibitions, seminars, and workshops celebrates our use of 'Big Data'. Yet the events of 1940 remind us that current attitudes to social scientific knowledge have a history of resistance, scandal, and negotiation. This project

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<sup>1</sup> In 2014 Charlotte Greenhalgh will take up an Australian Research Council 'Discovery Early Career Researcher Award' at Monash University in order to complete this project in Australian and New Zealand history.

uses the archival records of twentieth-century social surveys to follow the story of social research beyond its published pages. It aims to discover how New Zealanders responded to social scientific research on the ground and what social scientific encounters taught them about their communities, their nation, and their own lives.

Twentieth-century social research opened a new way of looking at the world and its structures of power. At the beginning of the century, surveys of poverty in London and York quantified and mapped out a ‘social problem’ for the first time (Booth, 1902; Rowntree, 1901). In the decades that followed, British economists, political scientists, and sociologists built a social survey tradition that recorded and analysed everyday life and class relations. From the 1920s onwards, sociologists at the University of Chicago advocated theoretically grounded community studies that emphasised race and ethnic identity instead. These studies informed an international audience that social problems were quantifiable, that governments could intervene, that first-person evidence was valuable, and that everyday life was complex and worthy of academic study. Across the Western world, governments and the academy paid increasing attention to social scientific methods, data, and claims to intellectual authority (Igo, 2007). European governments were particularly eager to harness these techniques after 1939, when they worried about civilian morale during the first ‘total war’ in Europe. By the middle of the century, social scientific findings and practices were replicated in national institutions of education, health, childcare, and welfare as well as in newly established professions ranging from marriage counselling to occupational therapy (Thomson, 2006; Vernon, 2007; Wills, 2005). New Zealand was part of this international exchange of ideas, methods, and personnel, most often employing scholars from elsewhere in a ‘distinctly British academic world’ (Pietsch, 2010).

While Western understandings of class, governance, welfare, and citizenship were remade by twentieth-century social scientists, their precise influence is not well understood. Historians have tended to see social researchers as observers of modern life, and have paid scant attention to their contribution to—as well as recording of—twentieth-century social and cultural change. The methods and concerns that directed social science towards particular populations, social problems, and theories, and away from others, remain under-examined. This project addresses this gap through close readings of social scientific research notes (Corti & Thompson, 2004; Fielding, 2004). In

doing so, it helps to explain the relationship between experts and individuals—an interaction that was at the heart of twentieth-century social science and welfare politics.

This project will be the first to present original readings of historic or ‘raw’ social scientific data in New Zealand. It spans over forty years from 1938 to 1980 in order to transform our understanding of the emergence, rise, and ultimately the eclipse of social surveying as a tool of policy. The study examines the research notes that underpinned surveys carried out for New Zealand government departments in the 1930s and 1940s such as those authored by Crawford Somerset (1938) and William Torrance Doig (1940). It considers the community studies that were completed by postgraduate students in departments of medicine, sociology, education, psychology and agriculture in the 1950s and 1960s. It analyses the interviews and questionnaires that were designed and implemented by volunteers under the auspices of the Society for Research on Women from the late-1960s. The project’s research design foregrounds the interactions of social researchers with their subjects, highlighting their joint creation of social scientific knowledge through correspondence, field notes, interviews, and unpublished book drafts. Instead of collating and streamlining research data, in the manner of social scientists at the time and historians ever since, I tease out the personal interactions that generated interviews and statistics. How did New Zealanders receive social researchers during the twentieth century? What methods were employed to elicit and record personal information? Why did research subjects sometimes refuse to comply? How did the meaning of their participation change, as social research practices became an expected part of life? I will draw on the rich vein of literature that addresses oral history, memory, storytelling, and life history to consider what it has meant to give a social scientific interview.

My research offers fresh perspectives on New Zealand’s place in the world, tracing the migration of New Zealand research methods and findings for the first time. New Zealand surveys were part of an export of ideas and personnel from Britain and America in particular, but they nonetheless relied on face-to-face interaction with resident populations on arrival. The unprecedented participatory component of twentieth-century social research—epitomized by the social scientific interview—gave New Zealand populations a voice within social science during its spread around the globe. In particular, the distinctive claims about egalitarianism and social class that circulated in New Zealand

during the period provide fertile ground for a consideration of how local understandings of the analytical categories of this research—including class identity, charity and welfare—altered its form, findings, and international reception. To explore this, I will undertake comparative analysis of the projects of selected researchers who moved between New Zealand, Australia, America, and Britain. While some New Zealand historians have found the nation's academies to be slow moving and derivative, the directions that were taken by social researchers on the ground, in response to New Zealand's particular environment and populations, may reposition the country as a unique and influential site for social surveying.

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## **The Crown: Perspectives on a Contested Symbol and its Constitutional Significance in New Zealand and the Commonwealth (Marsden Fund)**

*Cris Shore and David Williamson*

Since 1840 the Crown has stood at the heart of New Zealand's constitutional order as the signatory of the Treaty of Waitangi and the embodiment of state authority. Yet the Crown itself remains an enigmatic and poorly understood concept. Legal scholars acknowledge that it is a 'contested concept' and 'useful fiction' whose meanings 'differ according to context'.

The implications of this contradiction are profound yet have rarely been explored: how can the Crown be both a core Treaty signatory and a 'useful fiction'? Legal scholars recognise that the Crown, as a metonym for government and the state, is a 'shapeshifting symbol', an abstract entity that historically embodied the British Empire but today serves as a 'compendious cloak' for aligning archaic rules, ceremonies and meanings with the trappings of contemporary governmental authority. But if the Crown 'has different meanings according to context', what are those meanings, how does this ambiguity affect those who deal with the Crown in its different guises, and what remains of the doctrine of the Crown's 'indivisibility'? Despite major legal interest in the Crown, particularly Crown-Māori relations, no comprehensive account of the Crown as a socio-political institution and cultural entity has yet been written. This is an important omission for while the Crown is a familiar icon, it is also a constitutional enigma. My hypothesis is that the Crown, as proxy for state authority, provides a critical lens for examining the transformation of the modern state in post-colonial settler societies.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel's first report due in December 2013 makes this study both timely and of significant public interest. That Panel Report will advise the Government on the views received from New Zealanders on a range of constitutional change issues. It then falls to the Government to decide on the parameters for reform proposals. This project will therefore have the benefit of immediacy and contemporary relevance as it proceeds.

However, to date, there has been no comprehensive account of how it is contested or understood, or the implications of its shifting and contradictory meanings. This study will combine comparative and ethnographic research methods with anthropological and legal approaches and post-colonial theories of governance and statehood to address the following questions: For whom for is the Crown a useful fiction and how? How does the Crown represent itself in New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries? How do policy-makers and other actors use the Crown as a strategic and symbolic resource? And what can a critical genealogy of the Crown tell us about the evolution of the state in New Zealand and other settler societies?

This project seeks to combine methodologies of socio-cultural anthropology with political science and legal studies to probe questions of a symbolic, political and legal nature. Using comparative, ethnographic and case-study approaches, I aim to generate new insight into the transformation of the state in New Zealand and other post-colonial societies. A particular focus for this study will be current debates over constitutional reform in New Zealand and an analysis of the composition and views of the various pressure groups that have formed to campaign around this issue. The results should lead to new understandings of the Crown as a socio-political institution and cultural entity at a time when constitutional re-ordering is imminent.

## **Social Scientists in New Year Honours**

Bob Buckle became pro vice-chancellor and dean of commerce at Victoria University's Business School in 2008 was appointed an officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to business and education. He had previously held previous academic positions mainly at VUW and also with Treasury where he was principal adviser from 2000 until 2008. He has published extensively on macroeconomics, business cycles, growth and fiscal policy. Public positions have included being chair of the economic committee of APEC, and chairman of the Tax Working Group, which reviewed the country's tax system and contributed to taxation reform.

See: <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/about/staff/bob-buckle>

Cathy Wylie is a Chief Researcher at NZCER (where she has worked since 1987) also became an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit. She has lectured in social anthropology at Victoria and Auckland universities, carried out contract research with a range of government departments, evaluated of social welfare programmes and policy at the then Department of Social Welfare and then played a very significant role in education research assessing various reforms and developing longitudinal panels while at NZCER.

Review Essay: Jon Johansson and Stephen Levine (*eds.*) (2012)  
*Kicking the Tyres: The New Zealand General Election and Electoral  
Referendum of 2011*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

*Leon Iusitini*

This book is the ninth in a series which began in 1987 and has continued unbroken to the 2011 General Election, the subject of the current book. Throughout, it has documented New Zealand's electoral outcomes and recorded its political history, including referenda. In fitting with its primary purpose as a documentary record of the 2011 election and referendum intended for a wide audience of both lay and specialist readers, the book, for the most part, uses a 'non-academic' prose across its 25 chapters, although many chapters take a more scholarly style, particularly where original research is presented. Contributors are mostly academics or political insiders (MPs and party representatives), plus a couple of journalists.

Section one of the book provides an overview of the 2011 election. Chapter 1 by Jon Johansson and Stephen Levine and chapter 2 by journalist Colin James together provide a background to the election and a summary of the campaign and results. They argue that the election was the government's to lose rather than the opposition's to win: the public was not exceedingly dissatisfied with National; voters had a choice between the status quo or the risk of change during uncertain economic times; and there was a widely-held perception that the election outcome was a foregone conclusion. These chapters contrast National's 'presidential-style' Key-fronted campaign with Labour's downplaying of Phil Goff's leadership in preference to a focus on policy - both their own and, especially, on National's second-term intentions to partially privatise state assets. It is argued that while Labour ran a bold, future-focused campaign based on a comprehensive policy platform (key planks were a capital gains tax, raising superannuation eligibility, and reducing child poverty), they staked too much on a negative campaign mode based on opposition to asset sales.

These chapters also usefully place the results in historical perspective: National achieved the best result of any party under MMP to date (47.3%) and was re-elected with an increased vote share, a relatively rare event in New

Zealand's electoral history (being only the fourth occasion). The 'normal pattern' has been for incumbent governments to win a second term but with reduced support as voter fatigue and electoral attrition start to kick in. The Green Party achieved 11.1%, its best result to date, which Colin James attributes to their adoption of a less fringe, more moderate image and an emphasis on their economic credibility. This shift in political positioning, combined with the party's successful leadership transition and caucus rejuvenation, helped to mainstream the party (see also Edwards & Lomax, 2012). The Conservative Party also pulled off quite an achievement, winning 2.7% of the party vote in their inaugural campaign, which failed to bring them into parliament but was well ahead of that achieved by ACT, the Māori Party, Mana, and United Future. In contrast, Labour's result (27.5%) was its worst since 1928.

Johansson contributes a chapter analysing Key's leadership (provisionally to date) in a number of contexts: in terms of New Zealand prime ministerial history (measured largely by ability to win elections); in terms of Key's own policy goals; and in terms of the particular political context of his time. By any of these measures, Key is found to have some way yet to go to be regarded as a historically successful leader. However, his leadership has been circumscribed by the need to respond to the massive upheavals of the global financial crisis, the collapse of finance companies, the Pike River mine and *Rena* disasters, and the Canterbury earthquakes, the latter having 'forever redefined the purpose and central preoccupation of Key's prime ministership, which is to lead a reconstruction government.' In this respect, Johansson believes Key's genuine empathy, common touch, and affable personality have hit the right notes. Johansson then turns to Goff's performance on the hustings, agreeing with most informed observers that it was competent and that he held his own in leaders' debates with Key, with the exception of the 'show me the money' stumble at the *Christchurch Press* debate.

Stephen Church's informative chapter, a highlight of the book, outlines the process of government formation that took place after the election. He comments on this process from a comparative perspective (New Zealand's preference for 'symbolic gestures' over more formal European-style pre-election pacts) and from an historical perspective (its evolution since the introduction of MMP). In one of the book's more 'academic' chapters, Church sketches some of the theoretical background to government formation and

provides an insightful analysis as to why National chose to form an ‘oversized coalition’ based on enhanced confidence and supply agreements, rather than settle for a ‘minimum winning’ coalition.

Continuing a series tradition, the second section contains perspectives on the campaign from each of the eight parties that secured parliamentary representation. Steven Joyce outlines some of the risks National faced during its campaign, including the possibility that they may not have had enough allies to form a government after the election because ‘many people were taking a first-past-the-post view’ that National had the election wrapped up before it had even begun. Grant Robertson begins his humour-injected rationalisation of why Labour lost by pointing out that they were always going to be on the back-foot because ‘New Zealanders don’t vote out first-term governments very often’ and ‘never vote out first-term National governments.’ Voter insecurity about a change of government in the midst of a series of crises, and giving National ‘a fair go’, are also postulated as explanations. He is critical of Labour’s internal disunity and their inability to form a coherent campaign narrative around what the party stood *for* rather than *against*.

The importance of polls to electoral outcomes is alleged by both Chris Simmons (former ACT party president and list candidate) and Peter Dunne. Simmons candidly dissects ACT’s worst-ever election result by reference to a disastrous three years in government (Rodney Hide’s misuse of perks, David Garrett’s passport fraud, Don Brash’s leadership coup, etc.) and a campaign beset by internal wrangling and resignations. The final blow was a poll which claimed - misleadingly according to Simmons - that Banks was on the cusp of losing Epsom, which led many would-be ACT voters to change their party vote to a safer option. The same occurred to United Future, according to Dunne, who ascribes their worst result since 1999 largely to the unsubstantiated and persistent ‘lie’ that he would lose his Ōhariau seat to Labour (he retained it), which likewise repelled voters who felt their party vote would be wasted. Green Party perspectives are offered by Metiria Turei and (in the following section) by Mojo Mathers, New Zealand’s first deaf MP. True to form, Winston Peters (with Joshua Van Veen) attributes National’s success largely to an uncritical media who granted National an extended honeymoon period. He puts his own party’s late resurgence down to an old-fashioned campaign largely ignored by the mainstream media; however he does concede that the Epsom ‘cup of tea’ did assist in garnering him increased media coverage.

The media's coverage of the election is the focus of the third section of the book, which is largely critical of it. The claim that the *New Zealand Herald* (and *Dominion Post*) was biased in its visual image treatment of John Key vis-à-vis Phil Goff is investigated by Claire Robinson. Key received more favourable coverage than Goff in terms of number, size, location, and tone of images, particularly in the *Herald* and seemingly over-and-above the normal advantage conferred upon incumbents; and there was some evidence of a National bias in the *Herald's* coverage and a Labour bias in the *Dom Post's*. However, assessing bias from visual images alone - detached from the written context in which they appear - is appreciably knotty. Robinson concedes this when she points to critical written coverage of Key during 'Cuppagate' which was accompanied by positive (or neutral) visuals. Perhaps there simply were no negative images taken at this very public photo opportunity? And while evidence is cited that visual images can influence voter judgments, none is presented for the current research and one wonders whether an investigation of bias in editorial stance (as in previous books in the series) would have been more instructive.

With her usual flair, Jane Clifton laments the media's coverage of the campaign as inane and inauthentic, citing the use in televised leaders' debates of the meaningless, ambiguous distraction that is 'the worm'; the pre-stacked audiences at these debates whose on-cue partisan reactions forsake any chance of rational discussion; and media complicity and hypocrisy in the cup of tea stunt that crowded out coverage of real policy issues. Corin Higgs examines television's use of political pundits as anointed 'experts' whose privileged positions enable them to construct dominant narratives and shape opinion of political events through their 'authoritative' commentary and interpretation. He presents a revealing empirical analysis of the use of punditry by the major New Zealand television networks, finding that a majority of pundits were current or former journalists and tended to be male, Pākehā, and aged over 40 years; very few were young, female, Asian, or Pasifika.

Rob Salmond examines polling support for parties over the 2008-11 term. He illustrates National's consistent dominance in the polls with some staggering statistics: of 130 polls over the term, 106 showed National with 50% or more support, and 128 showed they could govern alone. He notes that this dominance is unprecedented in New Zealand and unusual in proportional representation systems. The accuracy of the pollsters in predicting the actual election results is

compared, with iPredict found to be the most accurate and HorizonPoll the least. Jennifer Lees-Marshment evaluates the National and Labour campaigns from a political marketing perspective, focusing on their leadership, branding, and delivery, while parties' use of Facebook during the campaign is investigated by Anthony Deos and Ashley Murchison via a content analysis of their Facebook pages.

Māori politics receives good coverage and illuminating analysis throughout much of the book. Māori Party list candidate Kaapua Smith explains how, in an attempt to show new talent coming through, they placed younger lesser-known candidates at the top of their list and incumbent MPs further down (including the party's leaders at seventh and eighth). Having placed a distant third behind Hone Harawira and Labour's Kelvin Davis in the Te Tai Tokerau by-election in June 2011, it appears the Māori Party attempted to mollify that electorate by ranking their candidate in that seat at number one on their list. The election result for the Māori Party was alarming: a virtual halving of their party vote to 1.4% and the loss of Te Tai Tonga in addition to Te Tai Tokerau earlier in the year.

Having resigned from the Māori Party following internal disagreement with his caucus colleagues, Harawira achieved his aim of winning a mandate from Te Tai Tokerau for his new Mana movement. As outlined by John Minto, Helen Potter, and Annette Sykes, Mana was quickly formed, managing to set itself up as a party organisation and field 21 electorate candidates and a 20-strong list all within a matter of months. While they targeted voters on both the Māori and general rolls, they describe their general electorate campaign as 'disappointing' given that 70% of their 24,000 party votes came from the Māori electorates. The authors identify the biggest challenge facing Mana as 'voter confusion' about whether they represent Māori interests first and foremost or whether they are a straight left-wing party representing 'the 99%' (they are the latter).

The fragmentation of Māori politics is picked up further by Morgan Godfery. He explains why the tino rangatiratanga movement finally splintered in 2011 into two class-based factions – the existing Māori Party (relatively conservative and responsive mainly to the interests of iwi leaders) and the new Mana movement (radical and [state] socialist, responsive to the working class base). While the split had been brought to a head by internal conflict within the Māori Party over difficult policy decisions it faced in government (a recurring

refrain in the book is that small parties in government almost inevitably lose votes – what Chris Simmons calls ‘the death zone of New Zealand politics’), Godfery locates the origins of the split in the treaty settlements process that has created a Māori managerial elite appointed to manage iwi assets along private sector lines.

Maria Bargh contributes a chapter on political engagement among Māori living in Australia, based on data from an online survey. Most of her respondents did not keep abreast of New Zealand politics, didn’t know how to vote from Australia, and were not aware of the referendum on the electoral system. As many were not Australian citizens, they were effectively doubly disenfranchised. In New Zealand, Bargh finds turnout was lower (and informal voting higher) in the Māori electorates than in the general electorates.

The fourth section of the book examines the referendum from various perspectives. Sandra Grey and Matthew Fitzsimons (leaders of the Campaign for MMP) provide the pro-MMP perspective. They set the 2011 referendum in historical context, pointing out that while the 1992 referendum had its origins in citizens’ dissatisfaction and lack of trust in the electoral system in the 1970s and 1980s, there was no such impetus for change in 2011 (though reservations about aspects of MMP had long been rife). Their success in the referendum was aided by a generally supportive media and the lack of an effective anti-MMP opposition, represented in the book by Jordan Williams (spokesperson for the Vote for Change campaign). Williams attributes their defeat to the inclusion of a review of MMP in the referendum legislation (an insertion which favoured the status quo); the timing of the referendum concurrently with the election (the latter overshadowing the former and precluding National from criticising the instability of MMP when they wished to promote their record of stable government); and National’s lack of engagement (while some of their MPs wanted to dump MMP, the party as a whole chose not to take a position for fear that doing so would be viewed by voters as meddling).

Therese Arseneau and Nigel Roberts spell out exactly what the Electoral Act 1993 and the Electoral Referendum Act 2010 legislated for and how the Electoral Commission informed the public through its comprehensive education campaign and innovative ‘referendum toolkit’ website. Such a campaign was important because previous research has found that while a majority of New Zealanders support the principle of proportionality, there is a low level of understanding of the connection between electoral systems and proportionality

(Vowles, Karp, Banducci, & Aimer, 2002). The referendum results are broken down by electorate, revealing that the 14 electorates which ‘voted for change’ were all held by National MPs and that the Māori electorates showed higher support for MMP than the general electorates. The authors also find that the high rate of informal voting in Part B of the referendum was partly attributable to suggestions by both the pro- and anti-MMP lobbies that voters should abstain in Part B or that it was only applicable to those who wanted change. Of those wanting change, first-past-the-post was the most popular choice, followed by supplementary member despite receiving late endorsement by Vote for Change and the prime minister.

Since the book was published, the Electoral Commission has completed its independent review of MMP. Its recommendations, which included lowering the party vote threshold to 4% and abolishing the ‘coat-tails rule’ and overhang seats, were submitted to the Minister of Justice in November 2012. In May 2013, the Minister announced that the proposed changes could not be adopted because of a lack of political consensus. Critics claimed the government’s disregard of the review was undemocratic, that they made little attempt to seek a consensus, and that they were acting largely out of self-interest given that the recommendations were likely to limit their coalition options in 2014 had they been implemented (Shuttleworth, 2013).

The book concludes with a chapter by Johansson and Levine which returns to the topic of leadership with a look ahead to a new generation of party leaders and some of the critical political issues they are likely to face in 2014 such as rising levels of social inequality. In a post-election column, Jane Clifton declared that ‘the punch-line to this election is that National has probably already lost the 2014 election’, citing the bleak prospects for National’s coalition partners with whom its parliamentary majority is already slender (Clifton, 2011). Yet, at the time of writing, Pundit’s poll-of-polls shows National retains their commanding lead over Labour and is making overtures to the rising Conservative Party. However, they have not polled over 50% since prior to the 2011 election and Labour’s support has shown a steady upward trend since then (Pundit, 2013). The stage is set for a very close 2014 election.

Five appendices contain the confidence and supply agreements with ACT, United Future, and the Māori Party, as well as a list of MPs in the fiftieth Parliament and the composition of the Government. As with preceding books since 2002, the 2011 book comes with a DVD containing recordings of leaders’

opening television addresses, party and referendum advertisements, leaders' debates, campaign footage and election night coverage, and photos of party billboards. It also contains party manifestos and written material prepared by the Electoral Commission for parties and the media. This amounts to a wealth of useful information for the interested reader and has been conveniently compiled on one easy-to-navigate DVD, providing a good feel for the tone of the campaign and a chronicle of its more theatrical moments.

The empirical analysis featured in the book is mostly fit-for-purpose small-scale content and textual analysis. Missing from the book is any robust individual-level survey data. Previous books in the series have contained chapters by Levine and Roberts examining voting behaviour based on the results of their nationwide pre-election surveys, which have provided data on party identification, voting choices, gender differences in voting, and voters' most salient political issues. Presumably this survey could not be conducted for the 2011 election. Individual-level data with large sample sizes can uncover the gross vote movements that lie beneath the net swings between parties presented in aggregate data, and can take into account a range of variables such as socio-demographics and political opinions which are known to affect turnout and voting choice in New Zealand. The absence of this methodology makes it difficult for the book's contributors to make any reliable generalisations or firm casual or explanatory statements about why electors voted the way they did. For example, it is claimed that Key 'had won, for himself and his party, a second term, once again being, through his own personality, the 'key to victory'...' (p. 51). But it is not clear what evidence there is that a plurality of voters supported National *because of* Key's leadership. What role did policy differences play in voters' preferences? To what extent did National voters support the party's mixed-ownership programme? Was the 2011 election a repeat of the 2008 election at which National had 'little or no positional advantage' over Labour but managed to prevail 'predominantly on valence issues'? (Vowles, 2010a, p. 379). Without multidimensional post-election survey data, it is near impossible to test hypotheses related to these questions and to unpick the independent contribution made by policies, personalities, performances, partisanship, and social structural effects to voters' idiosyncratic decisions.

One of the key features of the 2011 election was the record-low turnout (under universal suffrage). Official turnout was 74%, the lowest since 1887, and voting-age population turnout was estimated at 68%, which continued a long-

standing and fairly consistent downward trend (Vowles, 2012). One might therefore have expected a separate chapter devoted solely to this imperative issue. It is briefly touched upon in chapter 1 and the epilogue, and by Grant Robertson who bemoans the level of non-voting as ‘a fundamental problem with our political system,’ which hurt Labour in particular because ‘where the turnout was the worst, Labour was affected more than other parties.’ Only Robertson’s comments express the level of trepidation befitting its import, but even his comments are necessarily concise. Post-election survey data collected by Colmar Brunton on behalf of the Electoral Commission provides information on the reasons why non-voters didn’t vote in 2011 (and in 2008, 2005, and 2002). The most common reasons were that they had work or other commitments, they couldn’t be bothered, or they couldn’t work out who to vote for. A lack of trust in politicians, a feeling the election was a foregone conclusion, and having little interest in politics generally, were the main factors influencing decisions to abstain (Electoral Commission, 2012). These findings highlight significant informational and motivational barriers to voting. For example, the perception of a predictable win for National reveals ‘a lack of understanding of MMP, since polling indicated a combination of the centre-left parties would make it a closer contest than the old National vs Labour first-past-the-post mindset indicated’ (*The New Zealand Listener*, 2011). Had the election been more widely recognised as a competitive contest between potential centre-left and centre-right coalitions, there is good reason to believe turnout would have increased because evidence shows close elections in New Zealand are associated with higher turnout, especially among younger people (Vowles, 2002, 2006, 2010b). However, many New Zealanders lack knowledge and understanding of MMP and have low levels of political literacy, which is associated with non-voting (Vowles, 2012). Declining political participation has significant implications for the legitimacy of New Zealand’s democracy and should be widely discussed in the public arena, but doesn’t receive the prominence it deserves in *Kicking the Tyres*. Nevertheless, as a documentary record of New Zealand’s 2011 election and referendum, the book is a valuable historical resource packed with insights and ideas for future research.

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Gershon, Ilana (2012) *No Family is an Island. Cultural Expertise among Samoans in Diaspora Ithaca: Cornell University Press*

*Reviewed by Cluny Macpherson*

Ilana Gershon is a social anthropologist who carried out fieldwork in Samoan enclaves in Auckland and in California between 1996 and 1998. Her objective was to establish how migrant Samoans, define, distinguish between and relate to two 'social orders' in which they find themselves inextricably connected: the 'cultural', and its classificatory opposite the 'acultural'. She concludes, from her fieldwork, that Samoans are clear, and could be quite explicit, about what is 'cultural' while they were much less explicit about what is 'acultural' which means that the latter remains, in effect, a residual category containing everything that is not 'cultural'. The challenge for Samoans in the diaspora comes, she contends, from needing to interact simultaneously in the two social orders and to make sense of the systems' contradictions in order to manage them effectively. In any given context she argues, 'people's own reflexive engagement with their contexts is a crucial component for how and why interact in the ways they do' (p.7).

This leads, in turn, to the central argument in the book which is that, 'The relationship between reflexivity and social orders is a dialogic one. People can have different reflexive, or analytical engagements, with social orders while social orders also require that people have particular reflexivities. As a corollary, not all reflexivities are the same: the kind of reflexive social engagement required by a government bureaucracy is different from the kind of reflexive social engagement required by Samoan social order...' (pp.7-8) The ways in which these social orders confront each other in life in the diaspora, and the ways in which Samoans engage with them, are explored in three chapters which focus on different contexts: the Samoan ritual exchanges or *fa'alavelave*; conversions between different religious denominations and interactions between Samoan migrants and government officials. (p.14) She notes that 'culture' is invoked in different ways in each of these contexts and that Samoans are constantly negotiating and redefining what is 'cultural' and 'acultural' respectively, which captures accurately the fluidity of Samoan migrant world. This framework also recognises Samoans ability to recognise non-Samoans'

definitions and perceptions of ‘Samoan culture’ and to present ‘Samoan culture’ to these audiences in forms which are calculated to obtain successful outcomes.

The book has three principal sections which explore different dimensions of this ‘cultural’ ‘acultural’ divide. The first deals with relationships between Samoans and within the Samoan social world. It argues amongst other things that participation in the ‘cultural’ which is underpinned by a kin-based, communitarian ideology requires people to ignore the parallel ‘acultural’ which is underpinned by an individualistic, capitalist ideology. This conflict between the two leads to strategies which allow people to manage the contradictions while participating in both simultaneously. The argument hinges on a strategy which is that, during *fa’alavelave*, people demand resources from others without, apparently, any knowledge or awareness of their income and ability to contribute. This for me is highly problematical because it misunderstands the logic which operates in these circumstances and over-emphasises the gap between levels of support sought from individuals and their personal income and presents this gap as a source of tension. It is a peculiarly western way of thinking about and presenting the issue.

The contributions sought of family members in these situations is based not solely on personal income, which is a private good, but on their ability to leverage their reputation and relationships to secure additional resources from friends, workmates and micro-credit clubs. It also commits those who secure this ‘credit’ from friends and workmates to register this debt and the obligation to ‘repay’ it at some future time. This means that at any given time people may have a personal income with which they are required to meet the expenses of the ‘acultural’ and ‘cultural’ and another set of ‘latent’ assets and liabilities which arise from the ‘cultural’ sphere. Many Samoans, use and are very comfortable with a set of undocumented and highly flexible arrangements which give them instant access to ‘credit’ for as long as they continue to recognise and discharge their obligations to others. It may be that some young New Zealand-raised Samoans to whom the author spoke may aspire to a more privatised relationship found this problematical, but this may have more to do with the ways they prioritise the ‘cultural’ and the ‘acultural’ spheres rather than the nature of the ‘cultural’.

The discussion of the ways in which Samoan migrants may change religious denominations to replace the high resource demands of ‘traditional’ mainline Samoan churches with lower demands of ‘modern’ churches is

accurate as far as it goes and captures part of the motivation for moves. It does indeed reflect the availability of a larger range of available denominational options, but this is not confined to the migrant enclave and is occurring in the same way in Samoa albeit between a smaller range of options. This trend is reflected in the movement of Samoans in New Zealand to tithing denominations such as the SDA, LDS and evangelical fellowships which effectively limit demands on members, but it is more than relative resource demands which drive this movement. The 'modern' churches are also organised in different ways which offer younger people more influence over governance, leadership, and religious form roles earlier than the more gerontocratic traditional churches which marginalise younger members.

The final section, on the ways in which Samoans confront bureaucracy over matters of 'culture', is very good and points to the value of comparative sociology. It discusses the ways in which Samoans in New Zealand and California respectively present 'cultural' issues to non-Samoan or 'acultural' bureaucracies from which they require various forms of support and service. This section makes the important point that bureaucracies differ in the ways they define Samoan 'culture' which reflect national histories and discourses about ethnic minorities and their rights. It then makes another important point which is that Samoans in these circumstances recognise the need to distil, condense and present 'Samoan culture' in ways which are consonant with expectations and definitions of non-Samoans or the 'acultural' bureaucracy. The cases discussed reflect the ways in which the dialogic relationship between 'acultural' and the 'cultural' and the ways in which the acultural 'environment' defines the 'content' of the cultural in certain circumstances. It also points to the fact that these encounters lead only to temporary, instrumental, accommodations in the content of 'culture' which are applied only in these circumstances.

The book contains some interesting ethnography, data and some insights into Samoan culture in migrant enclaves. It has certain problems as a book which is that much of the material has been published elsewhere as articles with different emphases for different audiences. The author has made a serious attempt to integrate these by providing some linking themes but this does not always work and the reader is required to make some of the linkages. The 'acultural', for instance, is glossed in different ways and has different meanings in the various sections which poses challenges for the reader who has to

reconcile these. While the argument and the conclusions deserve a close read, the data on which these are based are now some 15-17 years old and, given the speed of cultural change in migrant enclaves, this may limit the contemporary relevance of some, though not all, of its conclusions.

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John Pratt and Anna Eriksson (2013) *Contrasts in punishment: An explanation of Anglophone excess and Nordic exceptionalism*.

London: Routledge

*Reviewed by Ronald Kramer*

In *Contrasts in Punishment*, Pratt and Eriksson seek to explain how different modes of responding to those who engage in criminalised behaviours emerge and vary over time. The book pursues the problem of divergent punishment regimes through an historical-comparative analysis between three Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden and Finland) and three Anglophone countries (England, Australia and New Zealand) throughout modernity.

The first chapter utilises fieldwork and extant statistics to explicate the different punishment regimes in place. The fieldwork aspect is especially noteworthy for its ethnographic dimensions, which see Pratt and Eriksson visit over 40 prisons, during which time they talk to various public officials and create an interesting photographic account of the prisons visited. Nordic countries reveal significantly lower rates of imprisonment, better prison conditions, professional and courteous prison staff, better prison diets and rules, a retention of educational and work programs, and less of a polarity between prison and outside life.

Pratt and Eriksson continue to draw from rich fieldwork and extensive document analysis to support the notion that “constellations of social forces” produce important “cultural differences” that then shape state policies and practices, levels of social cohesion, and penal regimes. To be sure, social forces, cultural values, social relations and the state are understood as mutually reinforcing elements, thereby complicating any simple causal logic. However, it remains the case that these macro social forces work in complicated ways to shape the types of punishment regimes that emerge in the different regions under scrutiny.

Under the rubric of “constellation of social forces,” Pratt and Eriksson locate class relations, the degree of homogeneity within a society, understanding of education, and the function of the state. In the Nordic countries, it is suggested that independent farming was predominant in the early modern period, which promoted solidarity. The Nordic countries are also characterised by a high degree of homogeneity in terms of ethnicity and religious beliefs.

Much like economic independence, the dominance of Lutheranism is held to promote strong social bonds. Moreover, Lutheranism promoted the valuing of education, rational decision-making, and the notion that the role of the state was to support society's members through active participation in economic and social affairs.

All of this stands in stark contrast to the Anglophone countries. Here, free labour and industrialisation quickly came to dominate the economy and generate their accompanying social schisms. There were religious tensions between Protestants and Catholics, leading to further social divides. Education was more often than not geared towards reproducing distinction and instilling discipline, or governed by pragmatic concerns that fostered the well-known anti-intellectual streak of the Anglophone world. The state was to play a minimal role and abstain from intervening in the lives of individuals, who were construed as responsible for their own affairs. The notion of individual responsibility had as its corollary the belief that state welfare fostered dependency.

These different social forces produced two cultural value orientations: In the Nordic countries, priority was given to egalitarianism, moderation, and social inclusion; in the Anglophone countries, individualism, personal advancement, division and exclusion were understood as desirable maxims to guide social life.

In many important respects, these competing value orientations undergird the formation of states. Pratt and Eriksson rely on four criteria to demonstrate different modes of state crafting. They focus on less eligibility, issues of security, images of the state, and population policies. Not surprisingly, the argument here largely follows from the differences identified in relation to social forces and cultural values. In the Nordic countries, the principle of less eligibility is rejected and the presence of poverty is understood as a failure of the state. Further, the state is understood as a "saviour," entrusted to ensure the security and wellbeing of its members. This image of the state is so entrenched that political parties cannot stray too far from it and remain in power. Finally, welfare is understood as necessary to improve the basic living conditions of all of society's members and ensure the nation's reproduction.

In contrast, the Anglophone countries accept less eligibility, construing poverty as a failure of one's private morality that deserves punishment. There is opposition to "state planning" and the state is understood as an "enemy"; the

success of any given political party depends on its ability to portray itself as promoting free-markets, individualism and circumscribed state activity.

With these fundamental divergences illustrated, Pratt and Eriksson can turn to the problem of punishment regimes. They start with the notion that modes of punishment possess a moral function, but also recognise that this function will vary according to the level of social stability and cohesion. In the Nordic regions, there are high levels of social cohesion and so punishment seeks to reintegrate individuals who have strayed from the flock by violating the law. By way of contrast, weak levels of cohesion and solidarity mark the Anglophone countries. In such contexts, the state attempts to utilise punishment as a strategy to create group cohesion by further excluding law-breakers, thereby attempting to reassure anxious and insecure communities.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 unpack the ways in which different cultural orientations and significant moments in penal history have shaped modes of punishment. The chapters follow a rough chronological order: The fourth chapter explores the 1850-1900 period; chapter 5 looks at the 1890-1970 period; and chapter 6 considers trends since the late 1960s.

In the fourth chapter, Pratt and Eriksson focus on the relationship between cultural orientations, degrees of social stability, and the introduction of modern penal arrangements by considering the plight of the death penalty, crowd behaviour, and imprisonment. The findings here are consistent with the differences identified in cultural values and the proposed functions of punishment. Under the influence of the enlightenment philosophers, the death penalty was abandoned much earlier in the Nordic countries and prison was regarded as a place to reform prisoners. When public executions did occur, Nordic crowds were silent and sorrowful as they understood the ceremony as one in which a fellow citizen was being lost. The Anglophone countries were much slower in eradicating the death penalty and, consistent with the principle of less eligibility, prisons were often construed as places in which suffering should transpire. The moderate and restrained nature of punishment in the Nordic regions is held to be consistent with a society that is cohesive and therefore not in need of punishments that intimidate and threaten those deemed to be “outsiders.”

Chapter 5 focuses on the 1890 through to 1970 time period to demonstrate how the emergence of “human science discourses,” or the “welfare sanction,” interacted with different cultural orientations. The basic story here is

that the “human science discourses,” overwhelmingly concerned with normalising rather than punishing deviance, were much more consistent with basic Nordic values and therefore effectively embraced and put into practice. In the Anglophone countries, the ideas of reform and normalisation did appear on the scene, and they did meet with some success, which is evident in the relatively low rates of imprisonment during the 1950s. However, within the broader Anglophone cultural worldview, which emphasised individual responsibility, mistrust of the state, and so on, discourses of reform and normalization were ultimately a “counter-culture” of sorts. While they gained some traction, this was short lived as they quickly came to be regarded as ineffectual and, more importantly, too lenient or “soft” on criminals.

The book closes with an exploration of the period since the late 1960s. As is well known, this period is marked by profound economic and social restructuring throughout much of the globe. While neoliberalism was certainly a force in the Nordic and Anglophone countries, Pratt and Eriksson demonstrate that although it did alter penal policy in the former, it was not powerful enough to undermine the cultural emphasis on inclusion and social relations marked by high levels of cohesion and solidarity. On the other hand, the Anglophone world, already divided, saw its pronounced social inequalities exacerbated under neoliberalism. In such a context, punishment became harsher and more exclusionary, a notion confirmed by the steady increase in imprisonment rates in England, Australia, and New Zealand.

While much of this analysis is commendable, there are some themes within the text that seem to require further exploration. To be sure, that the text suggests avenues for further research should be understood as another sign of its richness.

While the comparisons across countries are detailed and intricate, some of these may be a little misleading, and generate a rather romantic view of Nordic punishment regimes. While the significance of racial homogeneity is often acknowledged in the Nordic countries, it does not structure the comparisons between regions. This leads to comparisons in which relatively homogenous ethnic regions are compared to multicultural regions. From this perspective, future research could focus on how privileged and middle class whites that become entangled in Anglophone criminal justice systems are treated. If the treatment of such social groups more closely approximates Nordic exceptionalism, then the theoretical explanation offered for contrasting modes

of punishment may need to give more emphasis to racial discrimination and how it shapes punishment regimes.

Even if the idea of Nordic exceptionalism is accepted, and there are good reasons for doing so, it seems that when pushed to its logical limits the notion suggests one can expect to find a Durkheimian state of fatalism. Although only noted as a possibility to round out his theoretical understanding of problems that societies confront, Durkheim understood fatalism as a condition in which the social norms that regulate society's members are found to be too constraining and overbearing. It seems somewhat remarkable that the Nordic countries do not appear to experience this problem given the account given of them. Not only would the approach offered by Pratt and Eriksson be strengthened if it were to explore and demonstrate how Nordic countries successfully guard against devolving into fatalistic conditions, but this would also be of great interest to sociologists and criminologists interested in the problems that surround punishment.

One final possibility concerning future research: Much of this particular work is grounded in documents that come from literary figures, critics, and government reports. While this is certainly an important source for reconstructing the history of divergent punishment regimes, it seems that the perspective of prisoners is relatively minimalised. This is an understandable omission given the difficulty of gaining access to prisoners in six different countries. Nevertheless, future research would benefit by seeking out the perspective of prisoners to see if their accounts corroborate the notion that some punishment regimes are more inclusionary than exclusionary.

Despite these possible gaps, *Contrasts in Punishment* is a great book. It is concise, yet dense. The authors do a terrific job of weaving a large amount of empirical material into the overarching theoretical frame in a way that generates a fresh and interesting perspective. Its nuanced and non-reductionist framework strikes a delicate balance between economic forces, social cohesion, the role of the state, cultural forces, and major trends in punishment. All this makes it a worthy addition to any academic library. It will certainly be important reading for those interested in understanding punishment regimes in our contemporary world, how they vary, and ultimately how they can be organised in different ways. It is also a book that should be read closely by anyone who is concerned with the operation of criminal justice systems more broadly conceived.

Peter Robinson (2013) *Gay Men's Relationships Across the Life Course*, Foreword by The Hon. Michael Kirby, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK. 202 + xvi pages

*Reviewed by Timothy Marjoribanks*

In the twenty-first century, and continuing long standing trends, understandings of human experience, behaviour, relationships and action are increasingly framed and shaped by medical and health science discourses, whether that be from medicine itself, or from other disciplines such as psychology, genetics and neuroscience. Similarly, disciplines such as economics also lay claim to providing significant insights into human motivations. While such disciplines provide important insights into human behaviour, and dominate much public debate in these areas, they can also be limited by downplaying or ignoring the significance of social structures and societal contexts, and by also downplaying the ways in which the actions of individuals and of groups are both enabled and constrained by such structures and contexts. In this regard, with its central engagement with the social, sociology has a vital role to play in contributing to our understandings of the intersection of human action and social contexts. One way in which it can do this is through providing theoretically informed and empirically grounded insights into human action, relationships and experience. In his book, *Gay Men's Relationships Across the Life Course*, Peter Robinson, Lecturer in Sociology at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia, has done just that, providing a valuable sociological contribution to a crucial set of debates around the life experiences and relationships of gay men.

The book is organised around nine chapters, including an introduction and conclusion. In addition to a chapter setting out the research approach, six results focused chapters are organised around different aspects of the life course, including by name, single men, long-lasting relationships, fatherhood, marriage, co-habitation, and living in the midst of HIV-AIDS.

In setting the foundations for the empirical heart of the book, the author engages critically with four theoretically informed assumptions that provide an overall framework for his analysis (page 4). These are, first, that there is a connection between sexual preference and sexual identity that underpins the existence of a 'gay world'; second, generation is a contested but important sociological concept; third, the self is narratively constituted; and fourth, age and ageing are socially constructed. Bringing these four dimensions together,

Robinson is making an argument for the importance of considering experiences and relationships over the life course as being actively negotiated and contested by individuals inhabiting particular worlds, and for a social constructivist approach both to understanding people's relationships and to the creation of knowledge about their lives.

Having established an analytic foundation for his research, the empirical data for the book is constituted by 97 life story interviews that the author conducted in 2009-2011 with gay men in nine major cities, namely Auckland, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, Manchester, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, and Sydney. In addition, the author also revisits data that he collected in Australia in 2001-2003 for his PhD, namely interviews with 80 gay men. This data, and Robinson's analysis of it, are a real highlight of the book.

Among the many important contributions of Robinson's book, here I focus on three. First, the book makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by giving voice to gay men from a range of different social locations and contexts, and at different stages of the life course. Through his analysis of his data, Robinson is able to provide many important insights into the lives of gay men, often challenging dominant understandings of those lives. For example, his participants reveal that a single life is not a lonely life, and also that, contrary to dominant myths, gay men develop and maintain strong and mutually beneficial friendships (chapter 2; and page 166). Importantly, Robinson is also able to show how gay men have developed a range of strategies to develop such relationships in a world that is frequently hostile to them. As another example, Robinson's analysis of fatherhood settings and stories reveals both that gay fatherhood is connected to heteronormativity because of the settings in which many gay men become fathers, but also that within this context there are a wide variety of fatherhood experiences, including very close relations, regular contact, distant relations, and no contact. As Robinson shows, while there are still very powerful societal practices and norms that associate parenthood with heterosexual relations, 'the growing number of successful non-heterosexual fatherhood experiences are opening up all sorts of gay fatherhood possibilities that were not available to previous generations of gay men' (page 99). These are just two examples of the insights that the reader is rewarded with in reading the rich data presented and analysed in Robinson's book.

Second, Robinson's book shows the value of sustained in-depth qualitative engagement as a means of providing important insights into people's lives, and also of providing insights into how they negotiate the different stages of their life course. One of the highlights of the book is Robinson's reflections on his research process (chapter one), identifying both the contributions of his work and also some of the challenges. As he candidly notes, some aspects of the qualitative research process are difficult to engage with, including being able to frequent clubs and bars late at night and into the early morning. Robinson also provides well informed insights into a range of qualitative research challenges that will reward the reader considering undertaking similar fieldwork, including the challenges of organising interviews across national borders, navigating the landscape of unfamiliar cities, and working with electronic media. He also stresses the importance where possible of gaining the assistance of a local contact person, and the critical significance of pre-planning. The rich data that Robinson has collected, often on very sensitive personal issues, shows the relevance and success of his approach.

Third, the book reveals the significant contribution that sociology as a discipline can make to understanding the variety of relationships that people build over their life course. A key point that the author makes through the book is to show 'how alike gay men are to the rest of the population-how alike we are in how we manage our friendships and relationships, and yet how distinctive and unique the experimental relationships and families we create can be' (page 169). At the same time, Robinson's book also shows how it is important to understand those lives as being essentially social, in particular 'in emphasising how their lives have been and are socially constructed in response to varying degrees of social tolerance, and how gay men have shaped their relationships either by conforming to dominant, heterosexual patterns or by shaping them through experimentation to suit their own needs' (page 169). Through making such points grounded in data, Robinson also reveals the need for further critical engagement with some of the key sociological theoretical issues of the current period, including debates around individualisation and its consequences. Such insights show the contribution that sociology can make to understanding human behaviour and relationships, in a period in which such understandings are frequently dominated by other academic disciplines.

While the book has many strengths, there are two areas where I would like to have seen the author develop his analysis further. First, while the book

contributes to a range of theoretical issues and debates, these could have been brought together more fully in the conclusion to emphasise the theoretical implications of the research. In particular, Robinson's research has important contributions to make to debates both around generations and age, and around the intersections of sexual identity and gay worlds. The theoretical implications of these factors could have been more fully developed. Second, while the author is clear that location and place are not central to his analysis (page 35), more could have been done in producing a more fully developed comparative analysis, in particular given the excellence of the data collected from nine different cities. These are two areas that the analysis begins to develop, that could perhaps be sites for further research.

This is an important book, that will be of interest to sociologists and other researchers interested in understanding gay men's relationships across the life course in particular, but also in understanding relationship formation and maintenance processes over the life course more generally. The book is written in a clear, thoughtful and accessible style, meaning that it will be of interest to students at all levels as well as to academic readers. The timely nature of the topic of the book means that it will also be of interest and relevance to a broader audience than a purely academic readership. When combined with his earlier book, *The Changing World of Gay Men* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York, 2008), which won The Australian Sociological Association's Inaugural Raewyn Connell Prize in 2010, awarded biennially to the best authored first monograph by an author within the discipline of sociology, it is clear that Peter Robinson is making an important and sustained contribution to sociological understandings of the worlds of gay men.

Cris Shore and Susanna Trnka (eds.) (2013) *Up Close and Personal: on peripheral perspectives and the production of anthropological knowledge*. NY & Oxford: Berghahn

*Reviewed by Charles Crothers*

As the editors proclaim (p. ix) “..the volume offers ..12 highly personal yet structured accounts of anthropologists as authors and practitioners, their key discoveries, what attracted them to anthropology, how they have helped to shape the discipline and in turn how the discipline has shaped their works and lives”. The criteria for the selection of these 12 is unclear but definitely represent an antipodean emphasis within the broader context of British social anthropology (cf. the US version more usually referred to as cultural anthropology). There seems to be a research design ... “Our aim was to explore the extent to which the discipline of social anthropology in two post-colonial settler societies (Australia and New Zealand) differs from its counterparts in Britain’s mainstream metro centres” (p.4).

The volume’s main contribution to the history of New Zealand social science is extensive biographical treatment of two of our leading and very highly honoured contemporary social scientists: Anne Salmond and Joan Metge, with 2 other cases (Jackson and Cowlshaw) being NZ-born although mainly pursuing their anthropology elsewhere (Africa and Australia respectively).

Some interviews were in Auckland although the text is vague re their timing. The participants were interviewed in a semi-structured manner (with interesting questions being posed including ‘aha moments’, memorable experiences etc. Although a ‘warts and all’ frame is asked for at best the accounts (as with almost all published biographies) provide a cleaned up version of personal histories and only embarrassments and minor indiscretions are mentioned, while the cut and thrust of academic politics or wider constraints are suppressed.

The accomplishments of the two New Zealand anthropologists are portrayed as, “Metge has focused particularly on cross-cultural communication and the difficulties that arise when cultures ‘talk past each other’, Salmond’s originality has been to look at history from an ethnographic perspective” (p. 20) - for instance her rereading of texts concerning Captain Cook. These two constitute a slightly odd pair in relation to more orthodox anthropological

intellectual trajectories: Salmond is not a fieldwork anthropologist while Metge is an excellent example of Anglo-Saxon empiricism. Both, though could be seen as ‘Public intellectuals’, contributing to Māori/Pākehā relations through their work, which is highly accessible to wider audiences. Moreover, Metge’s post-retirement career includes an applied aspect in relation to Treaty claims. Because they have been so focused on Māori subject-matter neither Salmond nor Metge provide much interaction with the broader discipline, although the former engaged in some cross-national debates (not dealt with here).

Some of these two contributor’s accounts thicken the portrait of changing New Zealand anthropology. Salmond (p. 59) points out that in the mid-1960s Anthropology at the University of Auckland was a very exciting field, hosting several Pacific experts. Metge points out that understandable resistance by many Māori to anthropological work means that regrettably “.. there are so few Pākehā anthropologists working in the Māori field today” (p.89) although a few well-entrenched anthropological elders such as herself were able to continue their work. She sees tensions as lessening although lingering and she welcomes Māori anthropologists.

Beyond the provision of useful biographical offerings the volume includes a wider effort by the editors to frame these biographies within wider contexts. Several different attempts at stating their aims are made...perhaps best represented in the four questions:

- what is it that distinguishes anthropology as a professional practise and as a way of seeing and knowing the world?
- how has the discipline changed in the past 40 years, and does the geographical location of its practitioners affect the ways anthropology is practised?
- what are the most exciting innovations and directions that are reshaping anthrop to date and where have these ideas come from?
- how do anthropologists engage with the urgent problems facing societies around the world and how do they understand that engagement?

The perspective adopted is first sketch as “anthropologists are experts at studying cultural ‘others’ and, in the process elucidating aspects of their own society” (p.1). Some pages later learning about the wider human condition is added (p.14). Contributions to anthropology are seen as being shaped partly by changing approaches in the discipline and partly as a result of fieldwork (and other) interactions with changing social circumstances.

Some grounded comparisons are built on the case subjects (albeit limited by such a small selection, and to such elite practitioners). Several routes into anthropology are uncovered all suffuse with accident - early cultural experiences with cultural others allowing escape, curiosity etc. were common. For New Zealand anthropologists several were raised in small town settings which perhaps allowed better access to the exotic others living in Māori enclaves. Those from metropolitan centres were particularly embedded in very cosmopolitan contexts. Charismatic or at least inspirational teachers also could also be important in providing turning-points. Social concerns or more broadly Christian ethics were also important in impelling an anthropological interest for several. Both contributors and editors are silent on social class but it is interesting that most seemed to come from reasonably well-off and/or well-educated backgrounds so that the apparent 'luxury' of an anthropological interest was less class-inappropriate.

Generational patterns of influences are fairly standard but usefully summarised (p.14). "For those trained in the 1950s (such as Metge...) the legacy of functionalism still hung heavily around the neck of the discipline; those trained in the 1960s (including Salmond) found intellectual excitement in a number of new theoretical directions from cultural ecology to structuralism. The 1970s generation .. was particularly influenced by debates around Marxism, feminism and the critique of colonialism, whereas the post-1980 generation .. contended with Orientalism, Gramscian and Foucauldian perspectives, post-modernism, cultural studies and the rise of indigenous activism".

But more of the commentary soars beyond any empirical grounding in the cases. A portrait of the antipodean context is provided:

"..New Zealand and Australia also provide specific contexts in which anthropology has developed and they have given rise to several distinctive domestic concerns, from debates over postcolonial identities and subjectivities and the politics of indigeneity to applied anthropology and questions of ownership, appropriation and land rights" (p.5).

"As well as producing leading scholars, the Pacific region has given rise to many key concepts and distinctive disciplinary themes, including those of political leadership, chiefs and big men; gift exchange and reciprocity; the politics of apology and post-colonial reconciliation; indigenous identity and rights, cultural genocide and the politics of forced assimilation; and theories of adolescence and childhood" (p.4) with Australian anthropologists contributing

substantially and especially to application, although extending this applied concern New Zealand (p. 24) is stretching things as here historians have been claimed almost all the intellectual running in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi historical processes.

“Anthropology in New Zealand had also been the scholarly training ground for a number of leading Māori public figures, political and social activists, and intellectuals, including Robert Mahuta, Pita Sharples, Sir Hugh Kawharu, Ranginui Walker and Pat Hohepa.” Their activity led to various indigenous developments. However, the substantial contribution of Māori scholars to anthropology itself is completely elided – a lost opportunity - and there is no even a reference to the recently published intellectual biography on Ranginui Walker.

This portrait is then placed with a broader core/periphery frame. This is not well conceptualised with the core apparently being differentiated from the periphery in relation to the latter’s non-financially well-endowed universities. In Wallerstein’s framework Australia and New Zealand would be included in the core or at least semi-periphery. The relations between core and periphery are seen as changing over time: today there is more cross-fertilisation because increased movement of academic in the ever-more globalised world of academia: with the non-New Zealander component in New Zealand university anthropology departments being explicitly noted.

The role of anthropologists in the periphery is to critique the core. The conclusion reflects on “..the wider question of what perspectives from the periphery have to offer the discipline” (p. 248). This perspective, it is argued, offers insights into:

- The nature of the core countries
- Neoliberal forms of governance
- Postcolonial redress/compensation for historical injustices
- Ownership and repatriation of cultural artefacts.

The conclusion is rounded out by delineating some crucial challenges for the discipline.

The conclusion draws on June Nash’s essay on ‘peripheral vision’ which advances the metaphor of looking partially past to grasp the local to better ascertain the overall pattern: and how core and periphery are interconnected.

This highly-discipline-centred argument is undermined by the rather obvious point that a variety of other disciplines are also addressing these issues and that ignoring wider literatures may condemn anthropologists to repetition of

what is well-known. (Presumably this disciplinary myopia follows from the lack of substantial disciplinary competition in the study of small-scale societies.) Ironically, the silence on neighbouring disciplines is despite the volume appearing in a book series dedicated to encouraging debate between disciplines. Sociology not mentioned except a couple of times as a caricature of its supposedly quantitative nature. However, the term ‘sociological’ is incorrectly deployed instead of social (or societal) contextual factors. Indigenous studies are barely noted.

The editors note the Comaroffs’ argument that the South is in fact leading the North in terms of developments, but remain firmly embedded in a core-centric perspective. The role of the periphery is certainly accorded a more active role than in some models but is still firmly placed in a subordinate position. As with many other ‘others’ it exists only in relation to the core: as a platform for critical reflection or in hosting studies which examine processes which the core forcefully imposed on the periphery in the past (e.g. appropriation of intellectual capital & materials). Had the editors attended more carefully to intellectual enterprises in the periphery they might have noted the upsurge in indigenous studies – both theoretically and across an array of disciplines – which is currently providing an upwelling of new thinking and social movement engagement.

Neoliberalism has a powerful effect of allowing (corporate) capitalists to detach their profit-making enterprise from local contexts for which they are no longer held to have responsibilities. Neoliberalism extended to knowledge production in universities also abdicates local responsibilities, emphasising instead ANY knowledge production (especially in forms and perhaps on topics which can appeal to the core) produced by any scholars. So, the formerly strong New Zealand and Pacific orientated anthropology hosted by New Zealand universities is a victim of this process, which in my view at least needs debate and probably is to be deplored. The editors fail to see the connection and are thereby less reflexive than they claim for their disciplinary perspective.