

# Social Capital and Education

PETER FITZSIMONS

*Education & Management Services (NZ) Ltd.*

## Abstract

*Social capital is characterised in terms of patterns of cooperation and trust among social networks, concepts that fit squarely within the traditional scope of education. Curiously vague and meaning different things to different commentators, the concept of social capital is now being harnessed to the OECD definition of human capital, the latter having assumed dominance as the overarching rationale for educational policy in western economies. This paper explores the impact on social and creative aspects of education, as human capital is measured in terms of 'the quality of the workforce' (OECD, 2007b, p.30). Exploring the relationship between the two forms of capital, the paper argues that economic productivity is insufficient as the main driver for education.*

## Introduction

Describing human activity in terms of 'capital' imbues human life with particular attributes, flavoured to a large extent by various formulations of capitalism that have held sway over the last few centuries. Among such constructions as Weber's links between wealth and Protestantism, Adam Smith's invisible hand as a metaphor for enlightened self interest, Friedman's emphasis on free markets, and Marx's focus on the means of production, the relationship between capital and human activity is not simple. Although definitions of capital differ and evolve over time, a number of common features emerge.

Across the various formulations of capital is the development of private property, its commodification, acquisition and accumulation, and its facility/imperative for exchange. For the purposes of this paper, it is the commodification aspect that is central, as it changes the nature and interpretation of social life and human relationships – the very mechanisms involved in the development of 'self'. Commodification operates across the board: the socialisation of women's labour; the privatisation of government services (including the provision of education); the commercialisation of scientific and cultural activities, the corporatisation of public organisations; fee-paying services replacing voluntary organisations; and intellectual property, copyright and patents burgeoning throughout all branches of knowledge, industry and art. According to the *Encyclopedia of Marxism*, such commodification is supported by the development of funding mechanisms to "orient activity towards serving commercial rather than human interests."<sup>1</sup> This orientation is clearly a concern for education, not only because of the impact on the structural mechanisms of educational delivery, but also on human subjectivity as the process by which we become who we are.

The paper argues that as our characteristics and interactions are increasingly construed as forms of capital, we risk being enframed within an instrumental view of human life, in which we become mere commodities for the purpose of exchange. The phrase 'human capital' has been around for a while now, especially in the OECD literature, and we may have become somewhat comfortable with it as, perhaps, a recognition of the worth of personal effort and abilities in the development of resources or the provision of social services. However, the elision between *human* and *social* capital causes extra concern here. Social life has traditionally provided a sense of collegiality, shared interest and purpose that preserve us through the worst challenges we face earning a living in the modern commercial world. Thus it has served as an antidote to working life and some respite from the perpetual training necessary to develop useful 'skill sets' for today's entrepreneurial marketplace. The old language of social interaction and human relationships sufficed for a long time to describe our sense of affiliation and nurturing for each other. Reformulating social

engagement in the language of capital harnesses the social realm inexorably to the economic engine, where there is no respite. Education is intensifying as an instrument of capital. All becomes capitalised – commodified, accumulated and ready for exchange. This, it is argued, is not a satisfactory state of affairs for the world of creativity and sociality that we have learned to associate with enlightened social existence.

## **Human capital**

Education is not a free-floating set of abstract principles arising from a neutral politics. It is a complex and multi-level political tug-of-war in the lives of individuals, in the shape of communities, and in the global future. Various levels of community (local, national and global) compete for control over what is to count as education, and so education is deeply embedded in community, while at the same time implicated in definitions and constructions of the very community in which it is embedded. In itself, this contestation is not a problem. However, a significant feature of our current policy environment is a close alignment with OECD recommendations for economic growth, with government priorities for education increasingly oriented towards achieving a competitive place in the international economy. This operates at all levels of education, from early childhood through to tertiary education. For the previous New Zealand Minister of Education, this meant focussing on ‘explicit outcomes’, implementing a ‘planning and reporting regime’ in the schooling sector, geared towards ‘more students achieving in the top 25% of students in the OECD’ (Mallard, 2003).

Redefining social life in human capital terms (OECD, 2007b) is clearly the ongoing direction for New Zealand education. Harnessing education firmly to the economy, the current Education Minister late last year released the new *Tertiary Education Strategy* that outlines education priorities through to 2012. It reveals, he says, ‘government’s determination to equip the country with skills needed to drive *economic transformation*’, promoting ‘a better bridge between the world of learning and the world of work’ (Cullen, 2006). The message is reinforced in the Prime Minister’s statement to Parliament earlier this year: ‘A highly educated and skilled workforce is critical to realising the opportunities for New Zealand in international markets and to developing a high value economy’ (Clark, 2007). This direction builds on tertiary education reforms over the last decade, that included the overhaul of university councils to more closely resemble corporate governance structures (Peters & Roberts, 1999). The new councils ‘are held accountable for their performance and have the autonomy to govern effectively within the broad direction and parameters set by the Government’ (Ministry of Education, 2005).

A major review of New Zealand tertiary education, released this year by the OECD,<sup>2</sup> observes links between education and the labour market operating at three levels. First, is an explicit policy objective of ensuring that tertiary educational offerings are relevant to the labour market in terms of skills needed at national, regional and local levels. Second, is the encouragement of partnerships between institutions and employers. Third, is the provision of ample information about tertiary education offerings and labour market outcomes for students, employers, institutions and policy makers (OECD, 2007a, p. 23).

The same OECD review notes a continuation of ‘the general thrust of competition and markets’, along with ‘governmental steering in an attempt to closer align tertiary education with New Zealand’s socio-economic development’ (OECD, 2007a, p. 10). This observation is supported by an earlier review of tertiary education, in which the Labour government’s policies were seen to ‘maintain many of the competitive aspects of the previous approach to tertiary policy but do so within a more centrally steered and regulated framework’ (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 27).

The OECD recommends involving employers and the business community in the development of tertiary education policy, and engaging ‘the business community in the daily running of institutions, through their participation in institutions’ governing bodies as a mechanism to improve the responsiveness of institutions to labour market needs’ (OECD, 2007a, p. 53). Institutional responsiveness is already evident in initiatives

such as that taken by Manukau City Council in establishing a charitable trust to support ‘the connection between schools and business community’, with ‘curriculum delivery ... shaped to develop skills for innovation and entrepreneurship’ (New Zealand Herald, 2007). In Manukau City, businesses also participate in the learning and mentoring process.

OECD steering is not limited to tertiary education. A recent project entitled ‘Building Partnerships for Progress’ produced a series of reports designed to promote parental engagement in paid work while bringing up young children. The direction was presented as a ‘better reconciliation of work and family commitments’ since ‘parental care plays a crucial role in child development and parental employment promotes economic prosperity’ (OECD, 2004a). Although published under the rather cute title ‘Babies and Bosses’, the focus is on increasing workforce motivation and improving productivity and profitability to compensate for declining fertility rates. OECD promotion of ‘family-friendly’ policies entails ‘putting more women to work’ (OECD, 2004b), with language like the ‘underuse of human capital’ and ‘inefficient use of labour market resources’ (OECD, 2004a) used to describe the situation where parents care for or educate their children rather than go to work – a situation seen by the OECD as ‘limiting economic growth relative to potential’ (ibid.). The OECD recommendations undermine the value of parents as first teachers, intruding directly into long-established traditions of parental care in the home, limiting the value of part-day kindergarten sessions, and undermining parental involvement in various community playcentre groups and other informal educational initiatives. Nevertheless, these recommendations inform, justify and steer much of the current direction of New Zealand’s early childhood education policy.

The most recent report in this series, comparing New Zealand with Portugal and Switzerland, was taken as a vote of confidence by the Minister responsible for the New Zealand government’s ‘Working for Families’ package of reforms (Maharey, 2004). Responding to the report, the Minister noted that some of its recommendations were already being carried out, such as better incentives to work, increased childcare assistance, and monitoring of domestic purposes benefit reform. He also praised his government’s performance in doubling the number of sole parents leaving a benefit to go out to work<sup>3</sup> as a result of closer scrutiny – marketed under such euphemisms as ‘tailored advice’, ‘mutual obligations’ and ‘enhanced case management’. The idea of better financial incentives for families to move off benefits might be more ‘stick’ than ‘carrot’, however, since the OECD recommends a lowering of basic benefit rates as an incentive for sole parents to get a job.

Government focus on social support relies on redefining the social in terms of ‘thin community’ (Olssen, 2001), where communal obligation is limited. Individual benefits and subsidies are heavily tailored towards the promotion of economic and social capital (OECD, 2007b), and working families are targeted as the desirable model of participation in work and community activity.<sup>4</sup> Although portrayed as social support from a caring government, financial subsidies are mostly conditional on increased economic productivity through commitment to work, and where necessary, a re-moralising through individual training and social integration. Last year, for example, our (then) Social Development Minister announced the explicit insertion of government into family life in a ‘vulnerable families initiative’ (Benson-Pope, 2006). The Minister warned that expectations about the welfare and behaviour of family members can be ‘reinforced’, and that if there were concerns, the Ministry might bring in the Police or Child Youth and Family. ‘We want to make sure’, he said, that ‘the family is connected to all the services and support they need’. The nature of the ‘connection’ is not specified, although the word ‘coercion’ springs readily to mind.

## **Social capital**

In 2001, New Zealand Treasury published a statement exploring the relationship between a productive economy and a society that enjoys high levels of participation, connection and cohesion, and their combined impact on people’s well-being. Drawing on human capital theory, the paper advocated an ‘inclusive economy’, the basic framework of which involves a three-way interaction between ‘social capability’ as

networks of trust; 'productive capability' as increased productivity through the effective use of labour, capital and technology; and 'well-being' as achievable through economic participation against a backdrop of family, health, security, community, freedoms and opportunities (New Zealand Treasury, 2001). The term 'social capital' has been used to describe these kinds of networks that allow individuals, groups and organisations to operate effectively together. The OECD defines social capital as 'the links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together' (2007b, p. 102). Including *social* capital in their analysis of *human* capital, the OECD is keen to link the two as mutually productive; so that what is good for economic production is good for social development, and vice versa.

Despite its current popularity, the term 'social capital' can be seen as nothing new. The idea that involvement and participation in groups may have positive consequences for the individual and the community can be seen as dating back to Durkheim and Marx and the origins of modern sociology (Portes, 1998). Bourdieu had earlier defined the concept of social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 248). For Bourdieu, all forms of capital are ultimately reducible to economic capital, so the development of good social networks has economic implications. Conversely, the acquisition of social capital requires investment of both economic and cultural resources.

Similarly, James Coleman emphasised the role of social capital in the creation of human capital, noting the importance of group closure in the fostering of sufficient ties among a group of people to guarantee the observance of particular norms in a form of social control. For Coleman, the notion of social capital was a useful tool in reconciling two disparate streams of intellectual theory: on the one hand, sociological theory, in which the actor is socialized and action constrained by social norms, rules, and obligations; and on the other hand, economic theory, in which the actor is independent, wholly self-interested and maximizing utility.

I have argued for and engaged in the development of a theoretical orientation in sociology that includes components from both these intellectual streams. It accepts the principle of rational or purposive action and attempts to show how that principle, in conjunction with particular social contexts, can account not only for the actions of individuals in particular contexts but also for the development of social organization. In the present paper, I introduce a conceptual tool for use in this theoretical enterprise: social capital (Coleman, 1988, p. S96).

For Coleman then, social capital parallels the concepts of financial capital, physical capital, and human capital, but is embodied in relations among persons. The reconciliation is between the paradigm of private rational action, and public social structure, resulting in benefit not only to the instigating actor, but to "all those who are part of such a structure" (Coleman, p. S116).

Worth mentioning in the popularising of the notion of social capital is the influence of Robert Putnam. His definition of social capital as "features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, pp. 35-36) was followed a couple of years later by a celebrated article *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (Putnam, 1995). This article emphasises the connection between a strong and active civil society and the consolidation of democracy, arguing that Americans are disengaging from politics and government, from religions and from voluntary organisations. Appealing to American sentiment and tradition, Putnam notes a strong correlation between the fall off in civic activity and the number of American adults bowling alone – the latter considered a problem since at one level, bowling alley proprietors are selling less beer and pizza and so their livelihoods (and therefore the tradition) are threatened; but at a more significant level, a problem because of diminishing social interaction and civic conversation over beer and pizza. The fall off in social interaction is not compensated for by other forms of association, which, the author claims, are often through membership of

groups that never meet and so fail to build the communal bonds, good neighbourliness and social trust that typify social capital. Americans, says Putnam, are becoming less trusting, less socially connected, and less civically engaged – changes which are regressive and corrosive in terms of social capital. This erosion of social capital is driven by a number of factors: the movement of women into the labour force; greater residential mobility of the population; changes in demographic patterns (marriage, divorce, fewer children, replacement of community-based enterprises by distant multinational firms); and the technologisation of leisure activity (in particular, the domination of leisure activity by television).

Reviewing the origins and application of social capital in modern sociology, Alejandro Portes (1998) acknowledges the earlier work of Bourdieu and Coleman in theorising and popularising the notion of social capital, although he takes issue with both Coleman's and Putnam's assumption that social capital is associated with positive consequences. The mechanisms adopted by individuals and groups as social capital can, Portes points out, have other, less desirable consequences: the exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward levelling norms – any or all of which could be argued as inimical to any normative view of education. Portes takes further issue with Putnam's analysis, on a number of grounds: first, its intended application as a general solution to widespread problems (ranging from violence and poverty in Los Angeles to nurturing the fledgling democracies of the former Soviet empire); second, its unacknowledged elitist stance and class bias (where responsibility for the alleged decline of social capital is blamed on the leisure behaviour of the masses rather than on economic and political changes at corporate and government level); and third, its logical circularity, (where social capital is simultaneously both cause and effect).

Labels such as social capital do little to address the problems which they highlight. Social ties *can* bring positive effects, but as already argued, that is not necessarily the case. Without proper analysis of all its features, argues Portes, social capital runs the risk of becoming just a form of communitarian advocacy rather than a meaningful concept useful outside of political manoeuvring. From the earlier literature, he derives a general, more cautious and less normative consensus that social capital stands for “the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures” (Portes, 1998, p. 6).

Favouring the positive outcomes scenario and within an organising concept of trust, Francis Fukuyama defines social capital as “an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals” (1999, p. 1), the norms ranging from reciprocity between two friends, all the way up to complex and elaborately articulated doctrines like religion. In this definition, trust, networks, civil society, and the like, which have been associated with social capital, arise as a *result* of social capital but do not *constitute* social capital itself. To constitute social capital, such norms must lead to cooperation in groups and therefore are related to traditional virtues like honesty, the keeping of commitments, reciprocity or the reliable performance of duties. A self-centred approach, in which individuals trust members of their immediate nuclear family but take advantage of everyone else outside the family, is not, for Fukuyama, the basis of social capital.

### **Social capital in action**

Social capital is seen as important in the functioning of modern economies, even as the “*sine qua non* of stable liberal democracy” (Fukuyama, 1999, p. 1). Given that its development is frequently a by-product of religion, tradition or shared historical experience, social capital does not fit squarely within the purview of government, although public policy can capitalise on its existence. The area where governments have possibly the greatest direct ability to generate social capital is within educational institutions which “do not simply transmit human capital, they also pass on social capital in the form of social rules and norms” (ibid, p.10). This is true not just in primary and secondary education, but in higher and professional education as well, where doctors, for example, learn not just medicine but the Hippocratic oath. Additionally, Fukuyama

contends, social capital is facilitated by governments in other ways: through the rule of law, in providing safe environments for trusting relationships to develop; and by limiting government interference in activities that are better left to the private sector and civil society to develop their 'spontaneous ability to work with another'. Beyond the role of the state, religion is seen as an important source of social capital and cultural development. In the same analysis, globalisation is the bearer not just of capital but of ideas and culture as well, allowing the possibility of breaking apart dysfunctional traditional communities and allowing for the insertion of modernist values, i.e. the container and arbiter of social capital.

Through the promotion of social capital, voluntarism, and depoliticised 'partnership' with community groups and commercial businesses, government devolves responsibility for achieving social outcomes to its willing partners while reinforcing its own role as facilitative and supportive. This shift in policy direction, away from market liberalism while still avoiding the worst aspects of old left socialism has found expression in 'third way' discourse – theorised by sociologist Anthony Giddens (1998) and championed by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair (1998) as the new social democracy.<sup>5</sup> The 'third way' epithet has been promoted at various times in New Zealand politics, notably Steve Maharey in his role as Minister of Social Development<sup>6</sup> and Associate Minister of Education, although the generally preferred term now seems to be the tried and true 'social democracy'.

Historically, a healthy democracy reflects shared values with the agenda set by collective reflection and debate about the kind of society people want to live in (Leys, 2001). Such collective debate was seen as missing from neoliberal society, and in spite of the rhetoric, is still missing from current constructions of *community* in recent social policy. Individuals are being asked to take on the governing metaphor of a non-political *community*, based on 'mutual respect and responsibility, and a willingness to shoulder burdens for the common good' (Green, 1996, p. 198). The idea of community is thus a rhetorical banner under which we are transformed into 'community subjects', building the strong social ties necessary for social capital.

Community, like most normative ideas, is an essentially contested concept,<sup>7</sup> both philosophically and politically, so attempts to enrol citizens into a unified or already reconciled 'community' suggest an ulterior motive – a mechanism, perhaps, for securing agreement with, and commitment to, government policy. Community is driven by a sense of belonging, with identity derived from the networks and associations to which one belongs. It is through these networks and associations that citizens are to be governed under the new social democracy:

By acting upon these associations, networks, cultures of belongingness and identity, by *building* networks, *enhancing* trust relations, *developing* mutuality and cooperation – through a new relation between ethical citizenship and responsible community fostered by, but not administered by, the state – citizens can now be 'governed through community' (Rose, 1999, p. 475).

The harnessing of voluntarism has been a feature of economic reforms of the past two decades, and is amplified in New Zealand's Charities Act (2005), new legislation that gives rise to the formation of a 'Charities Commission' to monitor and control the operation of charities as an unashamedly explicit instrument of government economic policy, rather than allowing them to retain their historical function as an expression of community good will and a social *alternative* to government. Significant in this direction is a decreasing reliance on government provision of welfare, an intensification of the notion of human and social capital, an increased focus on partnership between government agencies and the community, and an increased role for voluntary organisations – albeit under tighter government surveillance. As the new discourse of 'community' is normalised as an essential feature of healthy society, participation becomes an individual moral responsibility, not just an elective choice. Within the metaphor of capital, government insistence on social participation and its monitoring through legislation might be thought of as a form of taxation, involving redistribution of the *social* benefits that accrue from individual effort.

It has, of late, become fashionable (imperative for survival perhaps) for governments to distance themselves from a market paradigm in the provision of social services.<sup>8</sup> However, recent government rhetoric about social democracy, dressed up in endearing terms like ‘social capital’, does little to address earlier critiques of neoliberalism (e.g., Jesson, 1999; Haworth, 1994; Wilkinson, 1995; Kelsey, 1995; Marginson, 1997; Peters & Roberts, 1999; Peters & Marshall, 1996), and in terms of its engagement with economic imperatives and its promotion of individual responsibility, might even be interpreted as a more deeply embedded form of neoliberalism. Such conjecture is supported by the wholesale embrace of OECD recommendations about social and economic direction, the concomitant naturalising of globalisation and free trade, the gradual closing down of space for critical debate,<sup>9</sup> and the increasing reliance on responsible individuals and government control of voluntary groups<sup>10</sup> for much of what used to be the realm of sociality, concern for others, and a shared sense of wellbeing. In recognition of the value of social capital as an instrument of government, New Zealand now even has a ‘government policy on volunteering’.<sup>11</sup>

Although Thrupp (2001) argues that the New Zealand Labour government is more social democratic in orientation than New Labour in the United Kingdom, another study (Strathdee, 2003) finds the basic thrust of New Zealand’s vocational education and training policies unchanged from the previous administration, and the new policies geared to *increase competition* within the sector. Intensification of neo-liberal values is seen in the rejection of state ownership of the economy, in the declaration that all able-bodied people ought to be in work, in the reform of welfare systems to increase labour market participation, in the acceptance of the inevitability of globalisation and free trade, and in the instrumental view of education as work-related skills training. Strathdee argues that the system remains firmly market-led in that it is employer-driven, with most of the training provided through competitive tendering by private providers. In spite of the Labour government view that a greater level of state intervention is required to lift incomes, reduce unemployment and improve the quality of training, the study notes that the approach is remarkably similar to that adopted by the previous neo-liberal administration.

Employers determine the standards trainees require, the participation by employers in training remains voluntary, and private and public providers still compete with one another for the right to deliver training purchased [by government bodies] (Strathdee, 2003, p. 45).

An increased focus on work-related skills training<sup>12</sup> has arguably reduced the engagement of universities with political and social critique and intensified technicist approaches to education. Teachers and teacher educators focus on pedagogy and assessment as a means to measure individual achievement, and have correspondingly diminished their concern with the politics of education through acquiescence to capital-oriented way definitions of education, of community, and of the kind of society we should want.

## Conclusion

The current Labour government is to be congratulated for its efforts in situating education in a wider social context and on its successes in the social domain: ‘Many more people are in work, incomes are higher, educational achievement is up, and crime rates are lower’ (Clark, 2007). However, although the promotion of social capital might offer some constraints on the worst excesses of competitive individualism, it leaves little space for serious reflection on the distribution and appropriation of human resources established under neoliberal economic regimes. Teachers and educational policy-makers are not encouraging young people to reflect on the meaning and purpose of their lives; nor are they doing it themselves. Instead, there is an unquestioning emphasis on personal diligence, employment opportunities and the virtue of technology. Globalisation is accepted as inevitable, with educational institutions across the board shaping their subjects to fit the global economic engine within the metaphor of capital accumulation and exchange, a metaphor that applies equally to both human and social capital.

Moves to redefine the notion of community as a form of capital and to harness the community so defined is, then, a concern for education, since it constructs the milieu in which educational dialogue might emerge. What is important is to problematise the nature of the relationship between the self and the social in which it is embedded, and to interrogate the economic engine behind the political structures that promote the myth of a reconciled community with its consensual goal of social capital accumulation.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/c/o.htm>.
- <sup>2</sup> Released in January 2007, the report was based on a visit to New Zealand a year earlier and reliant upon contributions from over 35 people in New Zealand, including Ministry of Education officials and various consultants. In other words, the report is not just an external international observation, but reflects the views from significant stakeholders in NZ education. Noticeably absent from the lineup is any representative input from a large variety of experienced academics in New Zealand who are critical of trends towards managerialism and business involvement in education. Such omission may in itself be telling of the zeal with which Ministry officials embrace an 'OECD outlook' on educational performance.
- <sup>3</sup> Although the OECD still notes the comparatively high number of jobless sole-parents in New Zealand.
- <sup>4</sup> Details of the Government's 'working for families' package are available on a dedicated website (<http://www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz/>), that sports the corporate logos of Inland Revenue, Work and Income, and the NZ Government.
- <sup>5</sup> For explanation and critique of 'third way' in relation to education, see Fitzsimons (2006).
- <sup>6</sup> The idea of 'development' has now disappeared from the position title. His role is now Minister of Social Services and Employment.
- <sup>7</sup> Peters & Marshall (1996), for example, provide a range of interpretations of how communities function: the face to face group; pockets of kinship or proximity; a 'just' distribution of resources; the antithesis of 'the market'; a collection of social work agencies; a set of altruistic relationships; a cost saving mechanism for rationing scarce resources; and a way of overcoming the crisis of the welfare state.
- <sup>8</sup> In the latter part of the twentieth century, economic and social policy reforms in Western societies, under such banners as *Thatcherism*, *Reagonomics*, or the New Zealand equivalent, *Rogernomics*, were underpinned by neoliberal ideology, a form of market liberalism that promoted competitive individualism with a corresponding de-emphasis on social cohesiveness and a scaling down of public welfare provision (Gordon, 1991). At that time, government policy advocated a minimal level of state service provision, corporatisation and privatisation of state businesses and other services, and a trend towards privatisation of services traditionally managed in the public sector.
- <sup>9</sup> Crothers (2005) notes 'only slight evidence of critical research and writing which might challenge institutional processes or indeed the very direction of New Zealand education' (p. 159).
- <sup>10</sup> Control is being formalized through the Charities Act (2005) and the current registration regime for Charities.
- <sup>11</sup> The policy is under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development: (<http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/documents/policies/government-policy-on-volunteering.doc>).
- <sup>12</sup> Introducing the 2005 *Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities*, the (then) NZ Minister of Education, Hon Trevor Mallard, focuses tertiary education providers on 'supporting learners' access to excellent education and training that is relevant to the needs and goals of employers, communities and New Zealand' (<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=10296&data=1>). Further, the Ministry of Education's strategic report notes 'The building of a skilled and adaptable workforce to meet the demands of a high wage, knowledge-based economy has been a central feature of the government's programme' (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 1).

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