

A New Patriotism? Neoliberalism, Citizenship and Tertiary Education in New Zealand

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Abstract

This paper argues that a new patriotism has emerged in New Zealand over recent years. This has been promoted in tandem with the notion of advancing New Zealand as a knowledge economy and society. The new patriotism encourages New Zealanders to accept, indeed embrace, a single, shared vision of the future: one structured by a neoliberal ontology and the demands of global capitalism. This constructs a narrow view of citizenship and reduces the possibility of economic and social alternatives being considered seriously. The paper makes this case in relation to tertiary education in particular. The first section outlines the New Zealand government's vision for tertiary education, as set out in the Tertiary Education Strategy, 2007-12 (Ministry of Education, 2006). This is followed by a critique of the Strategy and an analysis of the model of citizenship implied by it. The paper concludes with brief comments on the role tertiary education might play in contesting the new patriotism.

Patriotism is often defined as 'love of one's country'. With globalisation and the development of new information and communication technologies, some of the older boundaries between countries have become more permeable. In some parts of the world, tariffs and subsidies have been removed or reduced, and there has been a strong commitment – in theory, if not always in practice – to the idea of 'free' trade between nations. At the same time, following the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, new divisions have emerged. US President George Bush has, in alliance with the leaders of countries such as Britain and Australia, created a 'coalition of the willing' in his 'war against terror'. This has, in the hands of politicians such as Bush, become a rhetorical battle for 'freedom' and 'democracy' over other values and systems of government. Patriotism has reasserted itself more strongly than ever in the US context. The patriotic fervour following the events of 11 September 2001 was sufficient to support US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the re-election of George Bush in 2004. As the number of US deaths in Iraq has continued to rise, this support has diminished, but appeals to the supremacy of the American way of life continue unabated in statements and speeches from Bush and other senior members of the Republican administration.

New Zealand has occupied a somewhat ambivalent position in relation to these world events. New Zealand's Labour-led government did not support Bush's 'coalition of the willing', but was willing to commit troops for peace-keeping purposes following the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. New Zealand is a minor player on the world economic stage and seldom rates a mention in news and current affairs elsewhere in the world. There is little evidence to suggest that patriotism of the kind exhibited by millions in the US in recent years has prevailed in the New Zealand context. Yet, there is arguably a new form of patriotism at work in New Zealand: one grounded not so much in love of one's country *per se* as love of a certain orientation to economic and social life. Neoliberal ideas have exerted a dominant influence over policy agendas in New Zealand for more than two decades (Peters and Marshall, 1996; Peters and Roberts, 1999; Olssen, 2002). The election of the fourth Labour government in 1984 marked the beginning of process of rapid and dramatic reform, with the sale of state assets, the removal of trade barriers, and the implementation of corporate management practices in public institutions, among other changes. With the National Party's victory in the 1990 general election and the re-election of National-led governments in 1993

and 1996, the reform programme was pushed even further. The 1990s witnessed cuts in welfare benefits, the reconstituting of hospitals as 'Crown Health Enterprises', and the promotion of choice and competition in education. The marketisation of education saw principles such as collegiality and trust replaced by contractualism and performance indicators. Education became a commodity and was expected to be traded in the same way as other commodities, with buyers (consumers), sellers (providers), and aggressive marketing and 'branding' programmes. From the formation of the Labour-Alliance coalition government in 1999 to the present day, a 'Third Way' approach to economic and social reform has prevailed. In education, the emphasis on student choice so dominant in the 1990s has been reduced, more attention has been paid to the aspirations of Māori and Pasifika peoples, and a number of new opportunities for specialisation and collaboration have emerged. At the same time, much has *not* changed. Economic imperatives continue to dominate. The key motif in post-1999 education policy has been to advance New Zealand as a knowledge economy and society. In some respects, competition has *increased* under the Labour-led governments of recent years. The introduction of performance based research funding has sharpened the competitive ethos within and between tertiary education institutions (Roberts, 2006; Codd, 2006). The culture of 'branding' continues apace, with more money devoted to advertising and marketing than ever before. The government remains firmly committed to globalisation and to the improvement of New Zealand's standing on international tables of economic performance. The Third Way, in practice, has turned out to be still very much a *neoliberal* way (Codd, 2001; Roberts, 2005).

This paper argues that with the dominance of neoliberal ideas, a 'new patriotism' has emerged in the New Zealand context. This new patriotism implies a commitment not just to New Zealand as a nation but to a particular way of *being* a New Zealander. Neoliberalism, I shall argue, whether in its current 'Third Way' form or the more extreme form exemplified by the policies of the 1990s, constructs a narrow view of citizenship and reduces the possibility of economic and social alternatives being considered seriously. The paper will make this case in relation to tertiary education in particular. The first section outlines the New Zealand government's vision for tertiary education, as set out in the *Tertiary Education Strategy, 2007-12* (Ministry of Education, 2006). This is followed by a critique of the *Strategy* and an analysis of the model of citizenship implied by it. The paper concludes with brief comments on the need for alternatives to New Zealand's 'new patriotism' and the role of tertiary education in providing other possibilities for citizenship¹.

A Vision for Tertiary Education in New Zealand

The New Zealand government released its *Tertiary Education Strategy, 2007-12* in late 2006 (Ministry of Education, 2006). This was the second document of its kind in recent years, the first *Tertiary Education Strategy* having appeared in 2002 (Ministry of Education, 2002). The two documents are similar in purpose, scope and style. Both set out government priorities for the tertiary education sector for a five year period. Both are strong on presentation, with glossy colour pictures throughout, but light on theory, argument and research. Both include a Ministerial Foreword, a brief discussion of the context for the implementation of the new strategy, comments on expectations of the tertiary education sector, the specification of key goals and the means for achieving them, and a section on the monitoring of new developments. The first *Strategy* followed the work of the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC), a body established shortly after the formation of the Labour-Alliance government with the task of reviewing the whole tertiary education sector. The TEAC process produced four reports: *Shaping a Shared Vision*, *Shaping the System*, *Shaping the Strategy*, and *Shaping the Funding Framework* (TEAC, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c respectively). In the TEAC reports the role of tertiary education in the development of a knowledge society and economy was considered at some length. This notion has remained a key theme in subsequent documents, not just in tertiary education generally but in more specific, related policy areas such as industry training (Ministry of Education, 2001a) and 'export education' (Ministry of Education, 2001b).

The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-12* (Ministry of Education, 2006) begins with the claim that the tertiary education system is ‘a significant national asset’; tertiary education and research ‘underpin the realisation of New Zealanders’ goals and aspirations and the sustainable development of New Zealand’s economy and society’ (p. 4). The new *Strategy*, it is noted, continues the inclusive focus of the first *Tertiary Education Strategy* (Ministry of Education, 2002), but with a sharper focus. A broad approach was necessary in the first *Strategy* to address the diversity of the tertiary education sector. The focus now, however, is ‘much more explicitly on what the government expects the tertiary education system to contribute and the priority outcomes for action in the immediate future’ (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 4). The government wishes to provide ‘quality, relevant tertiary education for all’, while also recognising that different parts of the sector make distinctive contributions. The new *Strategy* recognises the need for tertiary education to enhance Māori educational achievement and respond to the aspirations of Pasifika peoples. The new approach to tertiary education signalled in the document can be seen as ‘investing in a plan’, the success of which will be governed by ‘the quality of investment decisions made by students, tertiary education organisations, and the Tertiary Education Commission’ (p. 4).

Tertiary education, as conceived in the new *Strategy*, refers to all post-school education. The tertiary education sector thus includes adult and community education, ‘foundation’ education (basic literacy, numeracy, computing and interpersonal skills), certificates and diplomas, undergraduate degree programmes, postgraduate programmes, and industry training (p. 5). To assist the process of providing ‘quality teaching and learning ... relevant to the needs of students, the economy and society’ (p. 5), the government plans, over the next five to ten years, to:

- increase the number of New Zealanders achieving qualifications at higher levels (e.g. trades training, diploma, degree and postgraduate education)
- ensure more young New Zealanders complete their tertiary education qualifications before the age of 25
- improve the literacy, numeracy and language skills of New Zealanders
- reduce skills shortages through improving the relevance of tertiary education to the needs of the labour market
- continue to build the excellence of tertiary research
- increase the application of tertiary research to economic, social and cultural development. (p. 5)

The government’s aim is to create a high income, knowledge-based, innovative and creative economy (p. 8). Three themes shape the government’s priorities in setting out to achieve this goal, and tertiary education is expected to contribute in each of these areas: ‘Economic Transformation – accelerating the pace of change in our economy’, ‘Families Young and Old – providing families with the support to maximise potential’ and ‘National Identity – pride in who and what we are’ (p. 8). Under the first heading, tertiary education is expected to ‘attract and encourage high-value businesses and well-paid jobs with a highly-skilled workforce’ (p. 8). It will do this by, among other things, meeting the needs of business and up-skilling workers, helping New Zealand firms to compete globally, assisting Māori to maximise their ‘collective assets’ and ‘grow Māori innovation’, providing the knowledge and research necessary to create commercial opportunities, promoting New Zealand internationally while maintaining high-value export education, and furnishing New Zealanders with the knowledge and skills necessary to balance economic progress with environmental sustainability (pp. 8-9). Under the ‘Families Young and Old’ heading, tertiary education will promote ‘greater personal wellbeing and security for individuals, families and whanau, and improved outcomes for children’. Tertiary education is expected to provide ‘quality teaching and research to support and develop New Zealand’s health, education, justice and social services systems’ (p. 9). Under the ‘National Identity’ heading, tertiary education will contribute to ‘[o]ur arts, culture, sports and music; our natural environment;

our history and our stance on international issues' (p. 9). If New Zealanders are to meet these challenges they will need to build global awareness, improve productivity and innovation, recognise the distinctive needs of diverse groups, facilitate the positive development of Māori knowledge and enterprise, and assist in understanding and protecting the natural environment (pp. 9-10).

From 2008, the government will implement a new approach to the funding, planning, and monitoring of the New Zealand tertiary education system. The new system will 'promote a much stronger focus on quality and relevance of education and research outcomes' (p. 13). The new emphasis will be on 'wise investment decisions, supported by capability building and collaborative working relationships' (p. 13). There will be a three-year funding path, with investment based on a negotiated Plan. The new approach will 'expect and reward high performance' (p. 13). There will be a stronger focus on outcomes, and with better quality performance information transparency in the performance of the tertiary education system will increase. It is recognised that different tertiary education institutions and organisations – e.g., universities, institutes of technology, Wānanga, industry training organisations, adult and community education providers, and private training establishments – will make distinctive contributions to the achievement of the government's goals. The emphasis will be on educational success. Educational success, the document informs readers, is achieved 'when engaged, effective students receive quality teaching in quality learning environments' (p. 18). The document claims further:

When New Zealanders succeed in tertiary education, they can contribute fully to our economy and society. The kinds of knowledge, skills and competencies that enable people to succeed in a knowledge-based economy are increasingly similar to those that enable people to enjoy and contribute positively to their families and communities. (p. 21)

The different tertiary education institutions and organisations are expected, collectively, to contribute in three key ways. First, they should allow success for all New Zealanders through lifelong learning. To do this, they will need to ensure maximum educational opportunities for all, provide strong foundations skills, ensure the 'baby blip' generation (the large group who will be leaving secondary schooling over the next ten years) achieves its potential, and build relevant skills and competencies for productivity and social/cultural development. The second form of contribution is the creation and application of knowledge to drive innovation. This will come from supporting links between research, scholarship and teaching, from focusing resources for greatest effect, and from improving research connections and linkages. Finally, there is an expectation that tertiary education organisations will forge strong connections with the communities they serve. The connections here will be those that improve the quality and relevance of education and knowledge, support economic transformation, and support social, cultural and environmental outcomes (pp. 20-27).

Citizenship, Knowledge and Patriotism in a Neoliberal World

The new *Tertiary Education Strategy* has a number of weaknesses, only some of which can be discussed in this paper. First, however, it is important to acknowledge some positive changes signalled by the *Strategy*. The move away from the demand-driven approach of the 1990s will allow for better planning and proper recognition of the distinctive roles played by different institutions and organisations in the sector. This could reduce the proliferation of courses and programmes designed to compete with those already well established in other institutions. The distinctive contribution universities make to research and postgraduate study can also now be better recognised. Adult and community education receive more attention in the new *Strategy* than they have in the past. The government has, moreover, continued to express a strong commitment to Māori and Pasifika communities in its goals and priorities for tertiary education. Changing demographic patterns in New Zealand, and their possible implications for tertiary education, have been considered.

Finally, the 1990s obsession with promoting greater ‘choice’ has passed, and the government is now willing to provide stronger ‘steering’ for the tertiary education system.

Yet, it will be argued here, the ‘steering’ being provided by government is along a narrow path. At a surface level, the new *Strategy* is distinguished more by its banality than anything else. No theme receives in-depth discussion. There is little reference to research in tertiary education or related areas. Arguments are, for the most part, poorly developed. The *Strategy* does employ graphs to good effect in demonstrating demographic patterns, participation rates, and qualification completions, but these are not analysed in detail. The mantra of ‘quality, relevant’ education is repeated, in various forms, throughout the document. As the dominant theme for what is portrayed as a significant new direction in tertiary education policy this seems stunningly underwhelming. The notions of ‘quality’ and ‘relevance’ are hardly new elements of educational rhetoric and have, over the past few decades, become among the most vacuous of terms. For the most part, the *Strategy* does not address the question ‘Relevant for what?’ in a direct or systematic way. The glossary at the end of the document is perhaps the most explicit. There, relevance is defined as ‘[f]itness for purpose and in particular meeting the needs of students, employers, regional and national development’ (p. 41). Elsewhere, it is noted that relevance refers to ‘learning that contributes to national and local economic and social goals’ (p. 21). The term ‘needs’ is itself highly problematic (so-called ‘needs’ are, for example, often simply wants or expressed preferences), and is not defined or discussed in the *Strategy*. It is not clear what the ‘needs’ of students and employers are. The idea of specifying ‘needs’ for the ‘development’ of a whole country raises even more questions. This assumes a homogeneity in ‘needs’ across the population and a shared view of what constitutes ‘development’. It can also be taken to mean there is wide, if not universal, agreement over the problems faced by a country and the solutions necessary to address those problems. This is the position conveyed, implicitly, by the new *Strategy*. The references to ‘quality’ in the *Strategy* are largely empty of any substantial content (i.e., explanation and/or justification). The term is employed in a variety of ways and its meaning in the document remains ambiguous. The definition provided by the glossary is ‘[t]he achievement of a high standard’ (p. 41). A statement earlier in the *Strategy* is a little more specific. The emphasis on quality, it is said, will mean ‘more New Zealanders achieving at higher levels of tertiary education, and ensuring high standards in the quality of tertiary education provision’ (p. 21). But this does not function as a definition of ‘quality’ itself. The notion of ‘achieving at higher levels’ is not explored critically, and the meaning of ‘high standards in the quality of tertiary education provision’ remains unclear.

Questions of citizenship receive little overt consideration in the *Strategy*. It is possible, nonetheless, to extract an *implied* view of ‘the good citizen’ and ‘the good society’ from the document. The references to ‘quality’ and ‘relevance’ are unhelpful but the wider rhetorical discourses within which they are embedded in the *Strategy* are revealing. A ‘quality, relevant’ tertiary education system, it appears, is one that will prepare people to become enthusiastic participants in the global economy. The ideal citizen will be creative, innovative, competitive, and entrepreneurial². He or she will also be expected to contribute to social and cultural development, but it is not clear what this will involve. The good society, it seems, is a prosperous, ‘confident’ one. This view is made explicit in the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002/07* (see Ministry of Education, 2002, section 2) and reinforced indirectly in the second *Strategy*. It is taken as given that all New Zealanders will embrace the goal of creating an internationally competitive knowledge-based economy. This overarching goal has been in place as a cornerstone of Labour-led government policy for several years now. During the 1999-2002 and 2002-2005 electoral cycles, environmental concerns did not figure prominently in Labour’s policy agenda. Now, the term ‘environment’ appears frequently in speeches and policy documents, and a commitment to environmental sustainability has emerged as part of Labour’s vision for New Zealand’s development as a good society. Finally, acknowledgement of Māori and Pasifika ‘needs’ and aspirations remains an important theme.

The emphasis in the *Tertiary Education Strategy, 2007-12*, as was the case with the earlier *Strategy*, is very much on *economic* goals. It is the economic element of the ‘knowledge society and economy’ policy

motif that has dominated. A key aim in the new *Strategy* is to support ‘all New Zealanders to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life’ (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 21). Yet, very little is said about social life. The document refers, directly and indirectly, to social development goals in various places, but such references lack substantive detail and explanation. Indeed, it is not clear what ‘social development’ means. There is no well developed notion, let alone a theory, of ‘social life’ in the *Strategy*. Nor is there any account of ‘cultural life’, unless it is assumed that reference to Māori and Pasifika aspirations counts as an adequate exploration of the cultural realm. The goal of ‘economic transformation’ is placed first among the three key government goals, and economic matters are discussed in greater detail throughout the document than other areas. There is not a single critical question posed about globalisation. New Zealanders are simply encouraged to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to succeed in world markets. The push for a commitment to environmental sustainability appears to be driven by economic imperatives as well, with the (belated) recognition that destruction of the environment will ultimately prove disadvantageous for business. The arts and humanities are rendered virtually invisible in the document and their role, along with other subject areas, in building a richer cultural life for New Zealanders appears to have been largely ignored.

The term ‘knowledge’ is used repeatedly throughout the *Strategy*, but it is never explained or analysed. There is now little to distinguish ‘knowledge’ from ‘information’ or ‘skills’. The *Strategy* has nothing to say about what it means to know. There is no comment on the ways in which knowing might differ from believing or opining. Basic philosophical distinctions between, for example, ‘knowing how’ and ‘knowing that’ also find no place in the document. It is not as if these matters had already been addressed in earlier policy documents, making it unnecessary to go over the same territory this time, for fundamental epistemological questions were also neglected in the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-07* (Ministry of Education, 2002). Given the centrality of the ‘knowledge society and economy’ theme in tertiary education policy post-1999, this neglect is all the more surprising. The role of knowledge in the development of citizenship remains unclear, but the implication of both the first and the second *Strategy* documents is that people will be able to employ what *passes* as knowledge to pursue extrinsic – and predominantly *economic* – goals. The TEAC reports (particularly TEAC, 2000) paid brief attention to the idea of knowledge having intrinsic as well as extrinsic value, but in the *Strategy* documents this notion is neither supported strongly nor explored.

The *Tertiary Education Strategy 2007-12* reinforces the ‘new patriotism’ promoted in New Zealand over recent years. The *Strategy* implies that New Zealand has only one future. This future is structured by the rules of global capitalism and centres on the advancement of New Zealand as a (so-called) knowledge economy. New Zealand citizens are expected not merely to accept this future, but to *embrace* it. Doing so, the *Strategy* suggests, will involve a harnessing of creative energies for product innovation, the development of a competitive economic ethos, and the promotion of a culture of entrepreneurialism. The underlying ontology here is still neoliberal in its orientation. The *Strategy* does refer to the need for a kind of ‘collective action’ if the government’s goals for New Zealand are to be met (see p. 20). It is also expected that connections will be made between tertiary education institutions and the communities they serve. This is, however, by no means an endorsement for a form of communitarianism. The rules of the market – now very much the *international* market – continue to dominate, and the mode of being promoted in the *Strategy* is more individualistic than communitarian in spirit. The communities to be served are predominantly those connected with economic advancement. Foremost among these groups are employers, and what they need, according to the *Strategy*, is people who can be ‘productive, adaptable workers in a knowledge economy’ (p. 26). Apart from comments specifically devoted to Māori and Pasifika communities (and these remarks do not provide a model of in-depth, critical analysis), little reference is made to other communities. Very brief mention is made of ‘professional communities of educators and researchers’ and the need for ‘effective partnerships with schools’ (p. 26), but there is no elaboration on the nature and importance of connections

with these groups. Similarly, while it is noted that barriers for ‘disadvantaged groups’ should be addressed (p. 27), nothing is said about the meaning of ‘disadvantage’ in this context, or its educational significance, or the ways in which it might be ‘addressed’.

The patriotic element of the government’s vision for tertiary education is particularly prominent in the first *Tertiary Education Strategy* (Ministry of Education, 2002). There, following an introductory section, the following statement is made:

The world’s economy is undergoing significant change, with an increasing emphasis on the creation and application of knowledge as the foundation of prosperity and social inclusion. For New Zealand, the development of a prosperous and confident knowledge society must build on this nation’s uniqueness and its strengths. To create, market and sell high-value products and services will require a strong focus on the global marketplace, and sophisticated new skills and knowledge. It will also require a culture of continuous inquiry, innovation and improvement – and of risk-taking and entrepreneurship. (p. 10)

This statement is preceded by a quotation from Peter Biggs, Chair of Creative New Zealand, who outlines a vision for New Zealand as a ‘the most creative, daring and innovative country on this planet’. Others, Biggs hopes, will look on at New Zealand ‘in awe and wonder – not simply because of the beauty of our landscape, not simply because of our legendary efficiency and practicality, and not simply because of our warm and compassionate humanity – but also because of our creativity and courage, and openness to risk, to experiment, to innovate and to transform’ (p. 9). This section of the first *Strategy* goes on to discuss New Zealand’s advantages relative to the rest of the world, mentioning the country’s geological and biological diversity, low population density, and excellent growing conditions. These factors make New Zealand ‘a wonderful place in which to live’ and allow New Zealanders to ‘enjoy a lifestyle that is the envy of many countries’ (p. 10). New Zealand may be somewhat isolated from the rest of the world, but this has contributed to the development of ‘a nation of people with an outward focus, international linkages and a willingness to learn from other cultures’ (p. 10). It is noted that the world is becoming a smaller place, and that globalisation and technological change demand new skills and knowledge. Maintaining first-world living standards will, it is suggested, require an active response to these trends. For New Zealand, ‘there are new opportunities for achieving prosperity by applying our skills and knowledge on the increasingly accessible global stage’ (p. 11).

These ideas are taken as already established and accepted in the second *Strategy*. The version of patriotism conveyed, explicitly or implicitly, by both documents is one in which New Zealanders are expected to love their country for its natural beauty, its lack of overcrowding, its distinctive location relative to the rest of the world, its tradition of innovativeness and creativity, and its culture of risk-taking and entrepreneurialism. This combination of physical and attitudinal characteristics serves several functions. At one level, this form of patriotism serves as a reminder of the need to appreciate and protect New Zealand’s natural resources. The *Strategy* documents also tap into a vein of nostalgic thought that idealises New Zealand’s past and resuscitates some of the enduring myths associated with the Kiwi ‘can do’ attitude. There is an appeal to aspects of an older communitarian spirit in New Zealand, with reference to social development and an ‘inclusive economy’ (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 12). This is meant to be a *shared* vision, and there is, consistent with most attempts to generate patriotic support, a strong emphasis on cohesiveness in the pursuit of national goals (see Roberts, 2004). Accepting this patriotic challenge demands, however, that certain key tensions be ignored. There is, for example, a fundamental tension between a commitment to communitarian values on the one hand and competition on the other. The imperative to compete clearly wins out here, and the appeal to a spirit of community and inclusion becomes *harnessed* to the wider drive to position New Zealand as an effective player in world economic markets. Similarly, the distinctive traditions and cultural attributes of New Zealanders warrant consideration not in

their own right but for their value in improving economic performance. Hence, ‘a nation that has a unique, complex and enduring identity’ is one in which ‘creative knowledge industries and businesses can focus’ (p. 12). This form of patriotism is thus based on a narrow conception of possibilities for New Zealanders. This is a ‘shared vision’ only if it is accepted that prosperity through economic competitiveness should be the primary goal for all New Zealanders.

Final Remarks: The need for critique and alternatives

Given such a restricted range of possibilities, what can be said about the role of tertiary education in New Zealand society? With the new *Strategy*, the government has made much of the fact that different tertiary education institutions and organisations are expected to contribute in distinctive ways to meeting key goals for the country. On the face of it, this might seem to provide an ideal opportunity to discuss the different forms of knowledge and understanding emphasised in the various institutions. This opportunity has been taken up to only a limited degree in the document. It is noted that private training establishments and adult and community education providers will play key roles in improving foundation skills and learning (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 17). Similarly, reference is made to the need for industry training organisations to provide ‘skills leadership’ (p. 16). Institutes of technology and polytechnics will provide ‘applied professional and vocational education’ and help prepare individuals for employment by equipping them with the ‘adaptable skills’ necessary for enhancing New Zealand’s productivity and capability for innovation (p. 14). Universities will:

1. provide a wide range of research-led degree and postgraduate education that is of international quality
2. undertake excellent research in a broad range of fields
3. engage with external stakeholders (communities, business, industry, iwi, and the research community) in the dissemination and application of knowledge and in promoting learning. (p. 14)

Among the key shifts expected of universities if they are to continue advancing these roles is ‘enhancing the contribution that university teaching and research make to economic growth, and exploring what more can be done to further understand that contribution’ (p. 14). This, to be fair, is only one among several shifts specified, but when it is read in relation to the rest of the document, it appears to be (from the government’s perspective) the most important. A striking omission from the comments in this section is any detailed reference to the role of universities – or other institutions – in promoting *critical* investigation or understanding. The role of critique was largely ignored in the earlier *Strategy* (see Roberts, 2005), and here it appears, if anything, to be an even lower priority. In New Zealand, universities have a statutory requirement to serve as the ‘critic and conscience of society’. There is only fleeting reference to this legal obligation in the new *Strategy*. Under the heading ‘The Government’s Goals for New Zealand’, at the end of the section on national identity, there is a one-line note about the critic and conscience role – but this is tagged on to the end of a similarly brief statement about developing cultural and sporting achievement (p. 9). Such a limited consideration of one of the distinguishing features of the university is extraordinary in a document ostensibly concerned with ‘quality’ tertiary education and the development of a knowledge society.

The *Strategy* does not *rule out* contestation of the underlying neoliberal ‘new patriotism’, but by saying virtually nothing about the importance of critique and debate in tertiary education there is tacit disapproval of such contestation. Indeed, the *Strategy* makes it clear that if tertiary education institutions and organisations are to receive continued support from the government, they will need to fall into line with the goals and expectations set out in the document. Given the considerable sums of public money devoted to the tertiary education sector, this is perhaps hardly surprising. It is possible, however, to interpret the government’s

goals in a manner that takes them seriously and yet also undermines them (but constructively so). A knowledge society need not be conceived in the narrow terms implied by the two *Strategy* documents. This ideal can be 'reclaimed', contextualised, problematised, and theorised afresh. There is a rich body of scholarly work on the 'knowledge society', the 'information society', 'post-industrial society', the 'learning society', and other related themes. This dates back decades (see Peters, 1996) and, in the light of the current obsession with advancing New Zealand as a knowledge society and economy, warrants revisiting. A knowledge society *can* be more than a knowledge economy. Finding out why and how this might be so, by placing the ideals in their appropriate historical and theoretical contexts, can itself play a part in creating a genuine knowledge society – a society in which critical investigation has a central place.

The notion of citizenship, similarly, invites further reflection. There is, as Keogh (2003) points out, a dizzying array of different notions of citizenship, and the narrow concept conveyed by the *Tertiary Education Strategy* documents (both the 2002 and 2007 versions) stands in opposition to many of the alternatives. Allowing students the opportunity to explore a range other conceptions of citizenship – e.g., democratic citizenship (Codd, 2005; Burch, 2007), grateful citizenship (White, 1999), citizenship-as-practice (Lawy and Biesta, 2006), and learning citizenship (Seddon, 2004) – is one way of providing some substance to the government's goal of 'quality, relevant' tertiary education. The careful, balanced, rigorous investigation of alternatives is consistent with the idea of 'high quality' teaching, learning and research. In addition, these alternative approaches to the question of citizenship might all be said to have 'relevance' to our current age and the economic and social problems we face. Moreover, in undertaking this scholarly work, students become citizens of a particular kind. If such work proceeds optimally, they become critical, questioning, thoughtful, open-minded, well informed members of New Zealand society. They will, nonetheless, through this very process, also be able to appreciate that not everyone values this form of citizenship.

There is little evidence of this kind of critical reflexivity in the *Strategy* documents and this narrowness of vision has the potential to undermine some of the very ideals the government wishes to promote. The new patriotism places a premium on innovation and creativity as defining features of New Zealand life. There is a lack, however, of a longer term historical perspective in considering how these attributes might be developed and applied. How, for example, will New Zealanders prepare for the reality that sooner or later the world's oil supplies will disappear? Little thought seems to have been given to the kind of creativity and innovation that will be necessary to deal with the economic and social implications of such a dramatic change in the balance of the world's resources. No consideration has been given to the possibility of a world dominated by an economic and political system *other* than global capitalism. Yet, an understanding of history would suggest that capitalism, like other modes of production before it, will eventually be superseded by new forms of social and economic organisation. The new patriotism is, despite the rhetoric of creativity and innovation, essentially *reactive*; it assumes a certain state of world affairs, does not question this, and encourages all New Zealanders to fall in behind a shared vision dominated by an ethos of international economic competitiveness. Success in these narrow terms may, in the longer run, lead to monumental failure. What will be needed, perhaps rather sooner than many anticipate, will be a form of creativity that can see beyond the current demands of the global economy.

There is no discussion of academic freedom in the *Tertiary Education Strategy, 2007-12*. Given, however, that this notion continues to enjoy a degree of statutory protection in New Zealand, there is scope for universities and other tertiary education institutions to play a leadership role in questioning some of the key assumptions, beliefs and values underpinning the new patriotism. This may be through teaching, supervision, the publication of articles and books, conference presentations, or seminars with community and professional groups. Some may wish to become more directly involved with the policy making process (e.g., by standing for parliament or serving on government advisory bodies). There is no one best way to contribute to a more critical national conversation on issues of patriotism, citizenship, economic

advancement, and social development. It seems likely, however, that neoliberal ideas will continue to exert a significant influence on policy making agendas for some years to come, and all who are willing to contest prevailing views will need to settle in for a prolonged battle.

Notes

1. This paper does not address the role of patriotism in schooling. Nor does it consider, directly, the question of whether patriotism can or should be taught. For a helpful discussion of the first of these areas, see Ben-Porath (2007); on the latter, see Archard (1999).
2. Similar constructions of the ideal citizen have emerged in other policy contexts. See, for example, Seddon's (2004) and Graham's (2007) excellent critiques of neoliberal citizenship in Australia.

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