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Chapter One

Coming to the thesis

The imagination in its loyalty to possibility often takes the curved path rather than the linear way.¹

I began this project in the context of increasingly strident public anxiety about the emergence of an apparent problem of boys' educational underachievement in New Zealand. A sense of crisis was pervasive. Boys here, it appeared, were in serious trouble. They were deemed to be failing at school compared to girls, and that 'failure' was perceived as both a reflection of and a contributing factor to a wider social crisis for them. Dominant accounts attributed boys' underachievement at school, and by implication their social problems, to the 'feminisation' of education and often of the society as well. In this moment boys were constituted as the 'new disadvantaged', educationally and socially.

My original concern was to map the emergence of key discourses about boys and education in three central domains, the media, educational and state discourses. This process was to have included a small case study in one or two schools that had developed strategies to address the 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement. As well, I attended a conference which focused on boys and education in July 2000 to gain a preliminary sense of how educationalists were talking about issues for boys. My intention was to critically analyse 'texts' from these various sites utilising a genealogical lens. And - because a genealogy presupposes the historicity of discourse - I intended to contextualise them in terms of their antecedents. I also wanted to include a comparative element in the project, since anxiety about boys had been the focus of intense educational and public debate internationally for some time before it emerged in New Zealand. This comparison would serve to point up what was specific about the discursive constructions of the 'problem' here. Given the constraints of time and distance, I looked to critical feminist and pro-feminist literature to give me a sense of how discourses about boys' educational underachievement were framed in Australia and the United Kingdom.

The early research process placed me simultaneously in the present and in the past; delving through contemporary and critical accounts of boys' educational underachievement, while I

¹ O'Donohue, J. (1999) *Anam Cara: a Book of Celtic Wisdom*. New York: HarperCollins: 193.

explored some historical and secondary material about earlier moral panics which had boys at their centre. I was struck, at the outset, by elements of continuity that were evident despite the significant social, economic and political shifts that marked the passage from colony to the 'knowledge society'. It was clear that in each moment of intense focus on 'problem' boys - the late nineteenth century, the 1950s and the late 20th to early 21st century - the society itself was in flux. Each of these periods of "anomie"² were characterised by perceptions that the norms and moral values that underpinned the society either had yet to be established, or had been lost or abandoned. This sense of a moral vacuum appeared to generate enormous anxiety amongst the middle classes in particular. What united these moments was that this anxiety appeared to coalesce in a generalised concern about particular groups of boys, though this was invariably underpinned by multiple issues. Where the discourses of the 19th century and those of the late twentieth diverged most notably was in the discursive construction of problem boys that dominated. Over time a significant shift had occurred, away from prevailing characterisations of them as 'villains' in the society to their constitution as 'victims' of it.

The conceptualisation of boys as victims was a powerful and persistent element of the contemporary New Zealand discourses about boys' educational underachievement which were characterised by a stubborn tendency to elide differences between boys, as I show in Chapter Eight. Despite strong evidence that educational achievement was impacted more substantively by social class and ethnicity for both sexes, these accounts remained rigidly focused upon the gender gap in education. And they simultaneously privileged, and reinscribed, stereotypical biologically deterministic accounts of masculinity that enabled the discursive construction of boys as an homogenous group. While this narrow understanding of masculinity could be traced back to Victorian - and earlier - conceptualisations of sex differences, it seemed to me their proponents maintained an obstinately ahistorical position. This was reflected most clearly in the way they framed social and educational problems with and for boys as something new, which helped promulgate an aura of urgency and crisis. Yet while they denied the past, the more closely I analysed them the more it seemed to me discourses about 'poor boys' - and poor (impoverished) boys - were heavily inflected by entrenched, though not necessarily always conscious, ideas about gender, ethnicity, social class and education that were rooted in it.

My growing sense was that discursive constructions of the problem of boys' educational disadvantage were mediated by and filtered through historically produced socially embedded

² See Durkheim, E. (1984) *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York: New York Free Press.

scripts which bracketed out differentiation by social class, and conceptualised ethnic difference in terms of enduring notions of cultural deficit. This feeling was reinforced by my graduate teaching experiences at the time. I was disconcerted not only by the resistance among many undergraduate students to the idea that social class might have a negative impact on educational achievement, which I felt reflected a very strong investment in the idea of an educational meritocracy, but by what seemed in some cases to be almost a 'psychic block' when it came to thinking class per se. Rather than being confronted with the "unease and evasion"³ Andrew Sayer (2002) notes is characteristic of British students introduced to academic explanations of social class, the reaction amongst some of my students more closely resembled blank incomprehension. I felt as if I were speaking through a sheet of thick glass: they could see my lips moving but could not hear what I was saying.

The mainly white, middle class young women who responded in this way seemed utterly unaware of their own class privilege; to a degree that reminded me of a line from Australian feminist writer Drusilla Modjeska (1994) about authorship and the masculine normativity that underpins it. She writes, "Because the masculine assumes the universal, men wear their certainties, their agency so lightly that very often no one notices: it is like the air we breathe".⁴ I felt I was facing a similarly deeply embedded and equally unconscious assumption, in this case of middle class experience as the 'norm'. I also felt this extended beyond the ahistoricism and apoliticism attributed to the generation who matured in the context of economic and educational restructuring these women belonged to, the "children of Rogernomics" as they have been described in New Zealand.⁵ Informed by my reading secondary accounts of state and social formation during the colonial period and Corrigan and Sayer's (1985) work on British state formation, I understood this response to be as much cultural as it was generational.⁶

This apparent difficulty recognising, let alone speaking, class difference did not apply in discussions about ethnic disparities in education however. Much more obvious here were elements of discomfort, ambivalence, and resentment. My impression was that there was

³ Sayer, A. (2002) 'What are you Worth: Why Class is an Embarrassing Subject', in Sociological Research Online available at www.socresonline.org.uk.

⁴ Modjeska, D. (1994) *The Orchard*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan: 140-141.

⁵ Peters, M. and Marshall, J. (1996) *Individualism and Community: Education and Social Policy in the Postmodern Condition*. London; Washington D.C.: Falmer Press.

⁶ Belich, J. (1996) *Making Peoples: a History of the New Zealanders: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*. London; Auckland: Allen Lane; Penguin Press; Fairburn, M. (1989) *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850-1900*. Auckland: Auckland University Press; Orwin, D. (1999) 'Conservatism in New Zealand'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland; Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) *The Great Arch: English State Formation As Cultural Revolution*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell.

less a sense of “liberal guilt”⁷ among these young women, than a feeling of active resistance to the idea that educational and other disparities experienced by Maori and Pacific Island people might have structural causes. At one level I think these kinds of responses *were* generational and they were the by-product of two decades or more of Maori and feminist politics of identity, together with the neoliberal vilification of the welfare state. In the first instance a “politics of recognition”,⁸ shaped primarily by claims for tino rangatiratanga⁹ and institutional biculturalism, threatened some elements of Pakeha society as I explain in Chapter Seven. It has over time also contributed to ‘Treaty fatigue’,¹⁰ even amongst some of the more liberal middle class members of the society, as well as increasing resentment of affirmative action policies and the ‘privileges’ accorded to Maori because of their status as (wronged) tangata whenua¹¹ amongst others.

At the same time, these students have grown up in a context within which liberal feminist discourses of gender equality have become institutionalised to some extent. As I point out in Chapter Seven, not only does liberal feminism lack a substantive, or indeed any, structural critique it is underpinned by a conception of equality that pivots on the inclusion of women in the liberal/capitalist politico-economic system. Education has been a strategic arena for liberal feminists and middle class girls in particular have been the beneficiaries of their educational initiatives, as I show in Chapters Seven and Eight. These discourses have tended to obscure differences of ethnicity and class amongst girls and emphasise individual potential instead. It may be that the internalisation of the liberal feminist mantra that ‘girls can do anything’ has reinforced individualism amongst these young women, resonating as well as with already embedded culturally produced assumptions about educational meritocracy here. If girls can do anything, and middle class girls’ climbing rates of educational achievement is interpreted as evidence that *all* girls can, why not other ‘disadvantaged’ groups?

⁷ Rata, E. (1999) *Political Economy of Neotribal Capitalism*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books. Rata refers here to an emergent postcolonial politics, what she sees as a politics of guilt amongst liberal Pakeha in response to the Maori ‘renaissance’ of the 70s. It was expressed most clearly perhaps in protests over the 1981 Springbok Tour. I discuss postcolonial politics in Chapter Seven.

⁸ Fraser, N. (1997) *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*. New York: Routledge.

⁹ Tino rangatiratanga means absolute sovereignty, which, because of its centrality to the Maori language version of The Treaty of Waitangi, underscores Maori claims to partnership in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

¹⁰ This might be understood as a negative public reaction to ongoing political and ownership claims by Maori that emerged with the ascendance of bicultural politics in the late 80s.

¹¹ Tangata whenua are the ‘people of the land’, that is, the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In turn, this sense that educational achievement and the socio-economic advantages it brings really *is* the outcome of innate intelligence and individual effort has been strengthened by a neoliberal (re)turn to and extension of possessive individualism. This has involved neoliberal co-optation of feminist arguments for women's full inclusion in the economic sphere, and enabled the discursive construction of a gender neutral, entrepreneurial subject for whom self-responsibility, self-actualisation, work and consumption are apparently inseparable.¹²

More generally, Nancy Fraser (1997) and Wendy Brown (1995) have both argued that feminist identity politics have helped to displace class politics in the West.¹³ That is feminism has, along with race-based identity politics, contributed to a decline in critiques of capitalism and to the displacement of a politics of redistribution with "the politics of recognition".¹⁴ This is not to mobilise nostalgia for the Keynesian moment, which I suggest in the thesis was not necessarily the apotheosis of class politics in New Zealand that it has been held up to be. Rather it is to suggest that feminism and biculturalism have not seriously challenged the multi-faceted and historically informed nature of social inequality in capitalist societies and, therefore, they cannot help but reproduce "the silences constituted in discourses of subordination".¹⁵ Wendy Brown argues that

On the one hand, various marked subjects are created through very different *kinds* of powers-not just different powers. That is, subjects of gender, class, nationality, race, sexuality, and so forth are created through different histories, different mechanisms and sites of power, different discursive formations and different regulatory schemes. On the other hand, we are not fabricated as subjects in discrete units by these various powers: they do not operate on and through us independently, or linearly, or cumulatively. Insofar as subject formation does not take place along discrete lines of nationality, race, sexuality, gender, caste, class, and so forth, these powers of subject formation are not separable in the subject itself.¹⁶

¹² Du Gay, P. (1996) *Consumption and Identity at Work*. London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage; Rose, N. (1999a) *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Port Chester, New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹³ Fraser, N. (1997) op.cit; Brown, W. (1995) *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton, N.Y: Princeton University Press.

¹⁴ Fraser, N. (1997) op.cit.

¹⁵ Brown, W. (2005) *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press: 84.

¹⁶ Brown, W. (2005) op.cit: 123.

The shift to a politics of recognition coincided with potent neoliberal critiques of welfarism through the 1990s. These criticisms engendered an environment within which the benefits of Keynesian socio-economic management to the middle classes, that is the parents of these 'children of Rogernomics', were (conveniently) forgotten. They have grown up, instead, in the context of intensive and varying forms of 'beneficiary bashing', and hegemonic discourses of welfare 'dependency' which have become institutionalised in policy and as social 'truth'. While, as I suggest in Chapter Four the vilification of the 'undeserving' poor is nothing new here, the problematic subjects of these contemporary campaigns and discourses have been racialised and their 'dependency' - that is their poverty - individualised.

The racialisation of 'problem' populations is not simply the product of economic, political and social neoliberalisation. This has occurred over time in a shift away from institutionalised discourses about class deficit characteristic of the 19th century to notions of cultural deficit in the mid 20th century. Although these ideas have since been discredited, the tendency to problematise ethnic groups on the basis of their difference from a white middle class norm remains very deeply embedded in New Zealand. This is the case I suggest because ideas about cultural deficit are not separable from the historical conditions of possibility that have mediated a cultural predisposition to class 'blindness'. Instead they are mutual and entwined products of the social, economic and political processes involved in the development of a colonial "social imaginary".¹⁷ Within this imaginary, as I illustrate in Chapters Two and Three, it was 'respectability' rather than social class that operated as the key signifier of collective identification. It demarcated the boundary between those who 'belonged' in the nascent society and the others at its margins.

Conceptualising 'respectability'

Respectability and class are inevitably entangled, however. Regardless of the form it takes respectability is always bound up with ideas about morality and value, and "[c]lass is made through cultural values premised on morality ...".¹⁸ For the working classes the desire for respectability was underpinned by the need for validation; the longing, that is, to be a

¹⁷ Poovey, M. (2002) 'The Liberal Civil Subject and the Social in Eighteenth Century Moral Philosophy'. *Public Culture* 14 (1) :125-145; Taylor, C. (2002) 'Modern Social Imaginaries'. *Public Culture* 14 (No.1): 91-124.

¹⁸ Skeggs, B. (2005) 'The Making of Class and Gender Through Visualising the Moral Subject Formation'. *Sociology* 39 (No. 5): 969.

‘subject of value’. The middle classes embodied that value, thus respectability was, and continues to be, tied up with class.¹⁹

The relationship between respectability and social class is not incidental. It is the product, in the English context, of a long process of socio-cultural and economic transformation which began with the Reformation and consolidated in the period from the late 18th to mid 19th century.²⁰ The ontological and epistemological shifts that occurred during this period produced a conception of ‘society’ understood in terms of “mutual service” and underpinned by the twin principals of “prosperity and security”.²¹ This notion of mutual service depended on new understandings of ‘natural’ human behaviour conceived “in [masculine] terms of profitable exchange” and “economic activity”.²² With these new conceptions of human being and interaction, “new principals of sociality” emerged that centred work and family.²³ Both were considered pivotal for an ordered society and both were conceived as productive, and emblematic, of moral subjectivity.

Essentially, however, this modern order privileged a bourgeois moral ethos. It was instantiated, not only in a gradual transformation of liberal philosophical ideas about human nature to ‘common sense’ social truths, but by concerted efforts to normalise possessive individualism and universalise “bourgeois values, aspirations and images” through the juridical repression and moral regulation of the working classes.²⁴ As I show in Chapter Three, ‘modernity’ was the product of a mutually constitutive process that comprised the “making up” of working and middle class collective identities and the emergence of liberal government.²⁵ The institutionalisation of a bourgeois moral ethos in the liberal state and in the society informed new conceptualisations of the working class, as a problematic social category.²⁶ The problematisation of the working classes helped to consolidate bourgeois self and collective identification, and it reinforced the fantasy of middle class respectability.

As Stuart Hall has argued, it is “the constitutive outside”, the necessary ‘others’ that enable the consolidation of the process of identification which “entails discursive work, the binding

¹⁹Skeggs, B. (1997) *The Formation of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*. London: Sage Publications.

²⁰ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit..

²¹ Taylor, C. (2002) op.cit: 96.

²² Ibid: 99

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Corrigan, P and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit: 193

²⁵ Ibid: 119

²⁶ Corrigan P, and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit.; Skeggs, B. (1997) op.cit.

and marking of symbolic boundaries”.²⁷ We make ourselves up in the stories we tell; identities always “arise in the narrativization of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity, even the belongingness, the ‘suturing into the story’ through which identities arise is, partly, imaginary (as well as symbolic), and therefore partly constructed in fantasy, or at least the fantasmatic field”.²⁸

Middle class self-definition pivoted upon a “double opposition to both extremes of the social space”; the ‘dissolute’ aristocracy above them and the ‘degraded’ working class below.²⁹ Conceptualisations of the rough working class were, however, entangled with older discourses of racial difference, thus “the cultural accoutrements of bourgeois distinction were partially shaped through contrasts forged in the politics and language of race”.³⁰ The imagined decadence of the aristocracy and degradation of a racialised working classes, as much the product of unconscious middle class fears and anxieties about the tenuousness of their social position as any reality,³¹ were the necessary fictions that enabled the constitution of middle class selves, their assumption of moral superiority and their signification of respectability.

It was not simply that the middle classes claimed respectability, it also was invested in them by the liberal state and used as the measure against which working class subjectivities and life-ways were found wanting. Assumptions about the pathological ‘otherness’ of the working classes informed new technologies of governance developed to reform, reconstruct, socialise and moralise them.³² To bring them closer, that is, to an approximation of the idealised liberal subject upon whom modernity was conceived to rest. These discursive and material processes mediated the embourgeoisement of the English working classes, their internalisation of a bourgeois moral ethos and their desire for respectability.

These subjective and collective shifts were, of course, neither uniform nor complete. While working class ideas about what constituted respectability “implied some acceptance of

²⁷ Hall, S. (1996) ‘Who Needs Identity’, in S. Hall and P. Du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

²⁸ *Ibid*: 4

²⁹ Zizek, S. (1999) *Ticklish Subject: an Essay in Political Ontology*. New York, Verso: 186-187.

³⁰ Stoler, A. (1995) *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press: 5.

³¹ Walkerdine, V. (1995) ‘Subject to Change Without Notice: Psychology, Postmodernity and the Popular’. In S. Pile and N. Thrift (eds) *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation*. London; New York: Routledge.

³² Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) *op.cit*.

bourgeois ways, [they were] reshaped to fit the possibilities of working class life”.³³ What is important here is that working class conceptions of respectable selfhood were constituted against their ‘rough’ others, though the boundaries between respectability and roughness were constantly shifting and open to subjective interpretation.³⁴ These interpretive movements were enabled by distinctions within the English working classes which “retained earlier overtones of artisan independence”.³⁵ That is, narratives of self and collectivity produced within the working classes, tied historically to the influence of occupational differences on identity formation, continued to inform their perceptions of what constituted respectability and its antitheses. Moreover, these meanings were constantly being reworked relationally in the everyday interaction between different groups of working class people.³⁶ Thus the self conscious retention of a “culture of tradition” enabled the English working classes to maintain, to some degree, “a tradition of culture”³⁷ in the face of strenuous attempts by middle class philanthropists and the liberal state to remake them in a bourgeois image.³⁸

Becoming respectable

As I show in Chapter Two, social formation in the colonial context pivoted on the denial of traditional culture shaped by class based identification. I argue that the embourgeoisement of the respectable working class settlers contributed to their repudiation of militant class politics, and class as means of collective identification. And, the acts of symbolic and physical violence against them during this epoch of transformation mediated the intensity of their investment in the notion of respectability. I suggest these experiences informed a foundational act of forgetting - informed by the twin imperatives to ‘get away’ and to ‘get ahead’ - that, together with specific socio-economic and political conditions in the colony, enabled the fantasy, myth and ideology of the ‘egalitarian’ nation to take shape. This act constituted a rejection of their traditional culture by these first “orphans of the imagination” which had been characterised by the formative and sometimes violent, and violating, elements of class struggle that ushered in modernity.³⁹ It contributed to the emergence of a “middle class society”⁴⁰ and the formation of a colonial social imaginary shaped by a Victorian ‘trinity’ of materialism, individualism and moralism; best expressed in the *promise*

³³ Davin, A. (1996) *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914*. London: Rivers Oram Press: 70.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Fuentes, Carlos, original source unknown, cited in Jenks, C. (ed) (1993) *Cultural Reproduction*. London; New York: Routledge: 3.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Orwin, D. (1999) op.cit.

of social mobility and the possibility of attaining respectability - and the *desire* to “get ahead” in order to achieve it.

Respectability ‘stood in’ for class both as a means of self identification, and as the condition for ‘belonging’, and it was closely entwined with ideas about responsibility. Although how responsibility and respectability were understood was differentiated by class, gender and race. The male working and lower middle class majority based their claim for respectability on the practice and ethos of hard physical work.⁴¹ This would enable their self sufficiency, signifying their responsibility and allowing them to create a distance between themselves and their ‘rough’ others; the poor, the vagrant, and the Maori indigenes an ‘absent presence’ in the forming society. In the notion of work, like that of family, fantasy, myth and ideology operated together. As the marker of male identity it fulfilled the fantasy of an appropriately gendered self, unambiguously defining the boundaries between masculinity and femininity. It also served, as I noted above, to differentiate between respectable and rough masculine selves. Myths of individual and national identity were encapsulated, and entwined, in the “belief in vigorous work [that] was central to colonial culture, and [in] the narration of stories of work [which were] vital to definitions of manhood and colonial identity”.⁴² And it operated ideologically in a number of ways: by bolstering the individualisation of responsibility for welfare underpinned by the liberal conceptualisation of a minimal role for the state, and enabling the development of a capitalist economic system; by supporting the truncated liberal model of egalitarianism, and the apparent dissolution of class-based distinctions between men;⁴³ and by providing one central pillar of support for the emergence and institutionalisation of a male breadwinner paradigm, and the development of a ‘gendered culture’ more broadly.

The other mainstay of the breadwinner model and gender culture was the family. For settler women responsibility and respectability were inevitably bound up with their family role. If men’s identification as masculine was tied to the fantasy, myth and ideology of work and their place within the public sphere, women’s sense of a feminine self was historically intertwined with the private realm of domesticity. By the 19th century the pre-modern sense of a “naturalised femininity” rooted in the family had intensified, and their responsibility for the moralisation and socialisation of individual family members was extended to a central

⁴¹ McClure, M. (1993) ‘On Work: Perceptions of Work in Late Nineteenth Century New Zealand, 1870-1900’. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland.

⁴² Ibid: ii

⁴³ James, B. and Saville-Smith, K. (1994) *Gender, Culture and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

role in “the humanisation of the public sphere”.⁴⁴ This shift was a product of modern conceptions of ‘the social’ that I described above.

In the beginning phase of settlement, as I suggest in Chapter Two, out of necessity the boundaries of responsible and respectable femininity were more fluid. By the early 20th century what counted as respectable femininity became constricted and framed in narrow (bourgeois) terms of women’s role as dependent wife and mother, and moral guardian of the nation; “bourgeois women in the colony and metropole were cast as the guardians of the morality of their vulnerable men and national character”.⁴⁵ In the fantasy of gender identification a feminine self was constructed not only against ideas about natural masculine self interest but in counterpoint to ‘fallen’ or ‘defective’ female others. The moralising and socialising role of women was tied to the myth of the modern, progressive colonial nation-state and the ideology of ‘the family’, and femininity became defined “almost exclusively [in terms of] women’s [supposedly biologically determined] nurturant and maternal capacities”.⁴⁶ Femininity and family were thus bound together; defined, delineated and circumscribed by a bourgeois moral ethos and mode of being.

The upper middle class colonial minority embodied respectability. In them the Victorian ‘trinity’ materialised most clearly; in their ownership of property - which signalled their ‘propriety’ and in their family structure which represented - in microcosm – ‘the modern moral order’. As I noted above however bourgeois self definition, individually and collectively, depended utterly upon imagined differences between themselves and their ‘rough’, ‘immoral’, and ‘dangerous’ others. In the colony, and at ‘Home’, “middle class distinctions were made not only in contrast to a European-based [and ‘debased’] working class but through a racialized notion of civility”.⁴⁷ This notion of civility was based, as Edward Said (1993) has argued, on racial boundaries constituted in terms of an absolute ontological distinction between the Occident and its others.⁴⁸

Maori cultural difference thus represented the complete antithesis of civility. Their social organisation and family structure contravened bourgeois norms utterly, automatically excluding them from the ranks of the respectable. They could achieve a modicum of respectability however by assimilating themselves to European world-views and life-ways.

⁴⁴ Riley, D. (1988) *Am I That Name?: Feminism and the Category of Women in History*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire, Macmillan Press: 46-47.

⁴⁵ Stoler, A. (1995) op.cit: 135

⁴⁶ James, B. and Saville-Smith, B. (1994) op.cit: 32

⁴⁷ Stoler, A. (1995) op.cit: 99

⁴⁸ Said, E. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage: 129.

That is, by accepting Christianity, practising possessive individualism through individual land ownership and wage labour, and adopting the patriarchal nuclear family form, Maori could become 'civilised' and have a limited form of respectability bestowed upon them. Their acculturation however could only occur through education, and from the outset it was perceived as crucial first by the missionaries and then by the state that Maori be schooled.

For the European settlers the relationship between education and respectability was differentiated by class and it shifted over time. Schooling was the central mechanism through which the minority elite and upper middle class ensured social reproduction and maintained their signification of respectability. For the working classes education became important to their achievement of respectability when it became tied more closely to their social mobility, through what were largely rhetorical claims of a meritocracy bound up in turn with the myth of the egalitarian nation. From the outset education was essential to the production and reproduction of gendered selves and the gendered culture. As I show in Chapter Four it also quickly became a key site for the state in the socialisation, normalisation and moral regulation of the society's problematic members, those who potentially represented respectability's constitutive limit; 'deviant', 'delinquent' and 'defective' children.

Conceptualisations of respectability were bound up with entrenched ideas about self and family responsibility, as I noted above. The tenuousness of colonial existence intensified the attachment to responsibility/respectability, as markers of differentiation and belonging, amongst the lower middle and working class settlers. For these groups their self understanding in terms of the responsibility/respectability relation created a necessary, if artificial, distance between themselves and those conceptualised as the society's "enemies within". These included, but were not confined to, the undeserving poor who were not just vilified in the Victorian moment but conceived of as "a race apart".⁴⁹ What counted as responsibility and respectability was differentiated by gender, reinforcing differences between and within the sexes, and mediating the expression of proper (in both senses of the word) colonial masculinity and femininity. They also served as markers of difference from the settlers' racial others, reinforcing a collective identification based upon the presumption of racial superiority. The absent presence of Maori and their absolute otherness mediated a sense of belonging to an emergent nation whose boundaries were more overtly delineated by race than by class. Thus responsibility and respectability, as intertwined signifiers of identification, pivoted on exclusions as indeed they had to since "identities can function as

⁴⁹ Stoler, A. (1995) op.cit: 127

points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected".⁵⁰

Such was the investment in these ideas that responsibility and respectability came to represent shared "rules of recognition and realisation" amongst the settlers.⁵¹ Bernstein argues that "[r]ecognition rules create the means of distinguishing between and so *recognizing* the speciality that constitutes a context, and realization rules regulate the creation of specialized relationships internal to that context".⁵² In the colony, responsibility acted as a rule of recognition - that is it functioned as a mechanism of differentiation between valid and invalid selves and groups, and in its association with independence, it marked out the colonial context as an 'egalitarian' space in contrast to the parent culture. Respectability, as the rule of realisation, was the signifier of belonging that stood in for social class among the settlers as a means of collective identification. The responsibility/respectability relation was thus saturated with class, not only because how this was understood differed by class, but also because the internalisation of a bourgeois moral ethos - the Victorian trinity - was its precondition. As I have indicated above, though, class was not the only category of differentiation that mediated these rules of recognition and realisation, they were gendered and racialised as well.

It is through rules of recognition and realisation that socially constructed values and meanings are transmitted within a society, and their internalisation by individuals is crucial to cultural belonging and cultural reproduction. These might be understood as essential filaments in the "webs of significance" that make up the 'culture'.⁵³ Responsibility and respectability as rules of recognition and realisation were thus constitutive elements of the colonial social imaginary, and they were reinforced and reproduced in part through the recontextualisation of "Victorian values" by the colonial state. In Chapter Three I argue that the Victorian trinity of materialism, moralism and individualism, underpinned by the alignment of a Protestant ethos with capitalist 'virtues' and enmeshed with the responsibility/respectability relation, was institutionalised in and by an emergent liberal paternal state at the end of the 19th century. The taken-for-grantedness of this relation underpinned dominant liberal perceptions that capitalism was integral to modernity and the construction of the modern democratic nation. As well as being profoundly bourgeois, this vision was deeply gendered.

⁵⁰ Hall, S. (1996) op.cit: 5, original emphasis.

⁵¹ Bernstein, B. (2003) *Class, Codes and Control*, Vol. 3. London, Routledge.

⁵² Ibid: 15, original emphasis.

⁵³ Geertz, C. (1973) *Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books: 6.

Modernity and masculinity: public men and private women

Liberal conceptualisations of modernity and bourgeois assumptions about masculinity were inseparable. They were bound together in the ontological presumption of the possessive individual - liberalism's central subject, the separation of the (feminine) family and (masculine) civil/political society, and in the masculinised liberal/capitalist state.⁵⁴ The possessive individual was not only bourgeois in his actions but masculine in his 'nature'; autonomous, diffident, independent, outwardly oriented and inherently political.⁵⁵ Thus "the central terms of liberal discourse assume[d] that men circulate[d] in civil society while women were stationed in the family".⁵⁶ The state was masculine, not only in terms of the gender of those who embodied it, but in the liberal paternalism that framed its "juridico-legislative dimension" and its capitalist aspect which provided "capitalism's mooring in private property rights as well as active involvement in capitalist production, distribution, consumption and legitimation".⁵⁷

The masculinism of the liberal colonial state materialised firstly in the intersection between capitalist precepts of property ownership, bourgeois conceptions of women's inherent moralising role, and liberal political rights. Democratic rights were initially granted to men in the colony on the basis of property ownership. These were extended to include Maori who held individual land titles, signifying their 'civilisation', and to working class men as 'owners' of their labour. Thus the relationship between liberalism and capitalism helped produce and reinforce the narrow model of male egalitarianism that characterised the colonial moment. Franchise was given to women on the assumption of their 'natural' feminine role in the socialisation and moralisation of the society, and hopes of their mediating influence on baser masculine impulses in the sphere of politics.⁵⁸ The presumption of women's difference was inscribed in the democratic political process, not transformed by it.

Secondly, the masculinism of the liberal/capitalist state underpinned legislation that served to institutionalise the patriarchal nuclear family. With industrialisation, for example, working women became the focus of public and state concern about threats to their reproductive role. The introduction of the Labour Law regulations in 1873, and the findings of the Sweating Commission in 1890, resulted in heavier regulation of the conditions of women's

⁵⁴ Brown, W. (1995) op.cit.

⁵⁵ Ibid: 149

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Ibid: 176

⁵⁸ Orwin, D. (1999) op.cit.

employment.⁵⁹ As well, the establishment of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (1894) enshrined the rights of the working man in the notion of a 'fair wage'.⁶⁰ This was based upon the assumption of his extant or eventual support of a dependent family, and in combination with other policy measures that protected the male worker, it contributed to the development of the 'wage earner's' welfare state. Not only did this disadvantage vulnerable women without a male provider, it mediated an historical pattern of very low levels of labour market participation amongst New Zealand women, particularly married ones. And it contributed, over time, to the institutionalisation of women's claim to citizenship; that is, their rights to welfare on the basis of their domestic relationship with men.

State control of education strengthened its constitutive and regulatory roles in the production and reproduction of gendered normativity. The institutionalisation of the normative masculine subject of modernity in the colony was facilitated by the state through its intervention into the administration of industrial schooling in 1867, and the development of a national education system from 1877. In the first instance, the state was concerned to become more actively involved in the socialisation, moralisation and control of the problematic working class, boys in particular, for economic and social reasons. Secondly, despite the rhetoric of male egalitarianism, the national system was designed to reproduce social stratification through the production of respectable male working class subjectivities and middle class male elite. State education became a key mechanism "in shaping particular social construction[s] of what it [meant] to be 'male' in New Zealand society".⁶¹

The move to state led education laid foundations for the emergence of a liberal paternal state in the colony; "[i]n accepting education as its legitimate business the state was claiming the authority to protect all children and the responsibility to protect society".⁶² This shift was rationalised in terms of the urgent necessity to develop a viable capitalist economy and liberal democracy.⁶³ In Chapter Four I suggest that the state's recontextualisation of socially produced discourses about the problem of 'larrinikism' was one mechanism that enabled it to rationalise the intensification of its control of education at the time. In this moment as "the scope of the state was extended by making formal education a public concern" the functions

⁵⁹ Wooler, S (1995) 'A State of Inherent Contradiction: The Welfare State in Aotearoa/New Zealand'. Unpublished MJur thesis, University of Auckland: 77.

⁶⁰ Castles, F.G. (1996) 'Needs--Based Strategies of Social Protection in Australia and New Zealand'. In G. Esping-Andersen (ed) *Welfare States in Transition: National Adaptation in Global Economies*. London; New Delhi: Sage Publications.

⁶¹ Shaker, R. (1987) *The One Best System? A Revisionist History of State Schooling in New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press: 231.

⁶² Stephenson, M. (2000) 'Creating New Zealanders: Education and the Formation of the State and the Building of the Nation'. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Auckland: 313.

⁶³ Ibid: 314-315

of education were to be “to be shaped by the role and the nature of the state”.⁶⁴ The liberal modernist project, the production of a gendered (class-based and racialised) culture and the expansion of capitalism - enmeshed in the colony - thus pivoted on education.

Corrigan and Sayer (1985) have argued that “[c]apitalism is not just an economy, it is a regulated set of social forms of life” and forms of capitalist sociality are context specific and historically contingent.⁶⁵ What emerged here was a ‘middle class society’ dependent upon a collective attachment to a bourgeois moral ethos, and a gendered and racialised culture, underpinned by the myth of egalitarianism. Together these elements shaped the subsequent development of a male breadwinner paradigm within which particular conceptions of work and family - and differentiated notions of responsibility and respectability - were enshrined. And it mediated the creation of a national education system designed at the outset to reproduce the social privilege of middle class boys, and to normalise and embed capitalist relations of class, gender and race considered necessary to shape and consolidate an emergent liberal democratic nation-state. The inequalities that inhered in this model of sociality were smoothed over by the fantasy, myth and ideology of an educational meritocracy, and the promise of social mobility (and respectability) that it contained.

Despite their reconfiguration over time, the foundational discourses about family, work and education that were constitutive elements of the colonial social imaginary continue to resonate. They remain enmeshed with responsibility/respectability as rules of recognition and realisation, signifying the “thick continuities”⁶⁶ that bind together the past and present, linking the original “orphans of the imagination” to their ‘postcolonial’ descendents. The enduring influence of these discourses in the culture has been mediated by the liberal/capitalist state. Through its regulation of education and the family, as well as in other ways, the state continues to play a central role in their institutionalisation in the society and in reshaping them. And education remains both as a nexus of the state/society relation, and as a key site of discursive struggles within and between them.

In this thesis I utilise discourses about ‘problem’ boys in different historical moments to examine changes and continuities in the configuration of the state/society relation, and to explore education’s pivotal role within it. My central theoretical claim is that the discursive production of meaning about education occurs not in schools but within the wider society. I

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit: 188

⁶⁶ Haraway, D. (2006) ‘When We Have Never Been Human, What is to be Done? Interview with Donna Haraway. *Theory, Culture and Society* 23 (Nos. 7-8): 149.

argue that the institutionalisation of particular discourses about education is, however, powerfully mediated by state formation at each juncture. This claim is predicated on the assumption of a complex interrelationship between state and society; one that is underpinned by a perception of the state both as both a cultural/discursive construction and as an assemblage of institutions, and thus profoundly embedded in the society, not distinct from it.⁶⁷

Such a conceptualisation, which draws on both Foucauldian and Gramscian theoretical frameworks, enables an analysis of social power relations that recognises the complex, multi-dimensional and unstable nature of power. It recognises both the constitutive and coercive modalities of state power and its ambiguities, that is, its operation as “an institutional field that is primarily a field of struggle”.⁶⁸ In the first instance, through its recontextualisation of expert knowledge, the state plays a significant role in the constitution of individual and collective identities.⁶⁹ Secondly, it is coercive both in terms of its authoritarian governance of ‘problem’ populations and its regulation, in various ways, of other subjects and institutions.⁷⁰ Finally it is the site of external and internal discursive struggle, and these struggles contribute to the ongoing processes of state formation.⁷¹

While internal and external transformation over time has wrought inevitable changes in state form and techniques of governmentality, I maintain there are discernable continuities between the liberal/paternal state and its predecessors particularly in terms of defining and regulating the central function of family, work and education in New Zealand. As I show in Chapter Five, for example, the Keynesian welfare state was instrumental in embedding the nuclear family in Pakeha culture, and institutionalising it in social and economic policy. By the 1950s the family had become entrenched as the signifier of the ‘moral society’ and the materialisation of its bourgeois standards and values, not least because the male breadwinner paradigm was absolutely central to Keynesian techniques of socio-economic management. In this moment of “prosperity consensus” the ideal of the meritocratic society

⁶⁷ See for example Abrams, P. (1988) ‘Notes on the difficulty of studying the state, 1977’. *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1 (No.1): 67-71; Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit; Jessop, R. (2001) ‘The Gender Selectivities of the State’, available online at <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/research/resalph.htm#jessop>

⁶⁸ Abrams, P. (1988) op.cit: 79

⁶⁹ Bernstein, B. (2000a) ‘Official Knowledge and Pedagogic Identities: the Politics of Recontextualising’. In S. Ball (ed) *Sociology of Education: Major Themes, Volume IV, Politics and Policies*. London and New York: Routledge Falmer.

⁷⁰ Hindess, B. (2001) ‘The Liberal Government of Unfreedom’. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26 (No.2): 93-102.

⁷¹ Blom Hansen, T. and Stepputat, F. (eds) (2001) *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

appeared close to realisation.⁷² The boundaries of class seemed no real obstacle to social mobility and the attainment of respectability in the context of relative male working class affluence and the state's guarantee of educational equality of opportunity. I argue, however, that in reality Keynesianism did little to challenge the pattern of gendered and racialised inequalities that remained a legacy of the colonial moment. If anything the liberal bourgeois standards and values of the middle class society, upon which these exclusions were premised, became more deeply entrenched with the intensification of state intervention in the society.

The intensity of social and political investment in the family was reflected in the level of anxiety at what was presumed to be its failure in the context of an apparent 'epidemic' of juvenile and 'moral' delinquency at the time. In this chapter I show that while there was little consensus on what constituted 'failing families', there was general agreement that working mothers were a significant part of the 'problem'. I argue that anxiety about delinquency was partly the consequence of concerns about the social reproduction of the moral middle class and the maintenance of its guardianship role. Middle class respectability was perceived to be under threat from women and girls who contravened bourgeois gender norms, and by the affluence and excessive materialism of middle class boys. As well, despite the disappearance of overt references to class, concerns about working class boys operated as a subtext in delinquency discourses. And, although largely invisible in these discourses, when noted Maori delinquency was conceptualised wholly in terms of cultural deficit.

Education also came under attack for its supposed contribution to the problem of delinquency, although criticisms of it not only varied, they were often diametrically opposed. From the standpoint of some commentators, schooling was both too authoritarian and highly selective, reflecting a society that was deeply conservative and - despite claims otherwise - stratified by social class. They argued that schooling alienated youth in New Zealand, mediating their delinquency.⁷³ Others criticised the education system for its liberalism, claiming that a consequent lack of 'standards' and discipline played a significant role in the production of delinquent youth.⁷⁴

⁷² James, C. (1992) *New Territory: the Transformation of New Zealand, 1984-1992*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.

⁷³ Manning, A. E. (1958) *The Bodgie: A Study in Abnormal Psychology*. Wellington: A.H and A.W Reed; Ausubel, D. (1977) *The Fern and the Tiki: an American View of New Zealand National Character, Social Attitudes and Race Relations*. North Quincy, Massachusetts: Christopher Publishing House.

⁷⁴ Mazengarb, O. C. (1954) *Report of the Special Committee on Moral Delinquency in Children and Adolescents*. Wellington: Government Printer.

As I illustrate in Chapter Six, critiques of liberal schooling in the 1950s and 1960s were part of longstanding discursive struggles over education that had intensified in the 1930s, partly as the result of structural change and the emergence of 'new' liberal middle class identities. Included amongst these was a stratum of psychological 'experts' who, along with teachers and bureaucrats, would comprise the network of expertise central to Keynesian welfarism. These shifts produced new conceptions of 'personhood', and a new understanding of human subjectivity that was implicit in ascendant discourses of citizenship and democracy at the time, though as I argue in the chapter they reinforced rather than challenged bourgeois normativity.

It was the imbrication of these influential ideas that underpinned the major reform of education by the first Labour government from 1935. Labour's educational reforms were a fundamental element of the project of "liberal collectivism" that signalled the instantiation of the Keynesian welfare state in New Zealand.⁷⁵ The universalisation of secondary schooling, in particular, was perceived as essential to both the creation of a liberal democracy and the demands of a modern economy. As the relationship between education and the economy strengthened, schooling became more closely enmeshed with responsibility/respectability as rules of recognition and realisation across class boundaries. Underpinned by the notion of equality of opportunity, these shifts embedded the myth of an educational meritocracy and tied the promise of social mobility more closely to educational achievement. The possibility of realising respectability through educational success, however, remained strongly impacted by class, ethnicity and gender in part because different understandings of education's purpose were mediated by these axes of difference.

The emergence of a liberal middle class also discursively reshaped the relationship between education, work and respectability. The constitution of their identity pivoted on a dissolution of the distinction between work and play.⁷⁶ Progressive education was perceived by this fraction as utterly crucial in the production of subjects for whom work - conceived of as "a personalised act in a privatised social structure" - was intrinsic to self identification and personal fulfilment.⁷⁷ So too was the 'pedagogical' family, the other key site for the production of the future professionals and fully rounded citizens perceived as fundamental to the national and international expansion of liberal democracies. This conceptualisation of the

⁷⁵ Walters, W. (2000) *Unemployment and Government: Genealogies of the Social*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁷⁶ Bernstein, B. (2003) op.cit.

⁷⁷ Ibid: 3

family pivoted on the role of mothers in the development of psychologically sound children, particularly boys, hence public and state concern about working mothers.

Educational underachievement, tied up with discourses about the 'delinquent boy' amongst other problem categories, was associated with social deprivation understood in terms of family dysfunction and cultural deficit. These new conceptualisations justified intensified surveillance and intervention by the state in 'problem' families, and schools and teachers played a significant role in their 'diagnosis'. The liberalisation of education and the family were, therefore, fundamental mechanisms of Keynesian governmentality. The 'new' vision of subjectivity that underpinned it, however, continued to be class, gender, and race specific. So that, despite educational reform, the central subject of education remained the white, male bourgeois individual.

Chapter Seven maps away the shift away from Keynesian welfarism by the early 1980s, and the recontextualisation by the state of neoliberal and managerialist discourses which centred an apparently class, ethnic, and gender neutral entrepreneurial and responsibilised subjectivity. I trace the reconfiguration of fundamental discourses about work, family and education that resulted from this shift. I argue that the neoliberalisation of the state, the economy and education intensified the cultural value accorded to responsibility as a shared rule of recognition. While what counted as respectability became confined to the pursuit of 'enterprise', conceptualised in education in terms of school markets, competitive students and the exercise of parental choice. Simultaneously, however, the social polarisation that resulted from economic and educational restructuring made the possibility of realising respectability through educational success much harder to achieve for some social groups. And, although middle class educational advantage increased during this period, the intensification of positional competition within the middle classes partly because of more obvious achievement by girls as the result of liberal educational feminism, heightened parental anxiety. For the parents of middle class children, responsibility became limited to choosing the 'best' education for their children regardless of the social impacts of that choice.

The period of economic and social flux that I describe in Chapter Seven mediated widespread concerns about a so-called problem of boys' educational underachievement. In Chapter Eight I trace the emergence of these discourses in New Zealand and I show that boys are problematically positioned, against girls, as the 'new' educationally disadvantaged. I utilise some of the extensive critical feminist and pro-feminist literature that has been produced internationally in my analysis of them. This work usefully critiques the dominant

discourses about masculinity and schooling, and the gender politics that underpin some claims of boys' disadvantage. The literature is, however, constrained by its own gender frame of reference and thus can only gesture toward the complex operation of gender, class and ethnicity that mediates educational experiences and outcomes for boys and girls. Moreover, these writers wrongly assume that meanings about the 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement are produced within schools. Thus, they cannot account for the multidimensional, historically embedded, contextually specific and *socially produced* understandings about education, gender, class and ethnicity that I argue powerfully inflect contemporary and historical concerns about different groups of boys in New Zealand. In the chapters Eight and Nine, I show that these shared meanings resonated in mutually constitutive media and educational discourses about the problem of boys' educational underachievement, and in official texts.

I use system theorist Niklas Luhman's (2000) work to explain how the structural operation of the media produces, reproduces and reinforces the particular social 'truths' about education, gender, ethnicity, and class that inflect dominant representations of boys' underachievement.⁷⁸ I think, however, Luhman's theory is problematic in two interrelated ways; firstly he overstates the media's autonomy from the society and secondly he has nothing to say about the role of the media in social relations of power and control. In the first instance, in order to produce its own version of knowledge the media must draw upon the combination of "stories, myths and commonplaces [and] theoretical narratives" that comprise the contemporary social imaginary.⁷⁹ As I show in the thesis, our social imaginary bears traces of earlier cultural scripts and, despite claims to neutrality and truth that underpin 'expert knowledge', it is inevitably partial. Both commonsense and expert knowledge, bound together in the social imaginary, are "self-authenticating (if not self generating): they produce the terms by which they can be understood in producing the conditions in which some understandings count more than others".⁸⁰ And the media is key in this process, it both mobilises and reinforces those understandings through its selectivity.

Thus the media is utterly implicated in social power relations; it plays a fundamental role here in reproducing Pakeha culture as "the culture that dominates the public life of the society - the political and legal institutions, the schools ... [and] is so commonsense as to lie

⁷⁸ Luhmann, N. (2000) *The Reality of the Mass Media: Cultural Memory in the Present*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

⁷⁹ Poovey, M. (2002) op.cit: 131

⁸⁰ Ibid.

beneath the level of consciousness”.⁸¹ Whether or not the media is ideologically biased in the neo-Marxist sense is arguable.⁸² However through the assumption of a normative Pakeha, bourgeois subjectivity - as much a product of its reproduction of the silences that underpin this truncated understanding of ‘culture’ as one of representation - the media performs ideology. The silences convened through the selection processes of the media, like those of the culture it represents, are regulatory and like speech they “harbor meaning”.⁸³ At the same time, the media plays a central role in the production of individual identities and cultural reproduction through the circulation of “‘desired’ and regulatory images of what makes us human” engendering, for *some*, a sense of belonging.⁸⁴ The media, therefore, operates as one mechanism of “symbolic control ... whereby consciousness, the dispositions and desire are shaped and distributed through forms of communication [and meaningful silences] which relay and legitimate a distribution of power and cultural categories”.⁸⁵

In Chapter Nine, I suggest the media is implicated not only in the constitutive modalities of state power that underpin neoliberal governmentality, but its more coercive aspects as well. The Education Review Office [ERO], as an agency of state governance, mobilised the media in strenuous efforts to responsabilise teachers and regulate self-managing schools; key actors and sites for the production of the self-responsible, entrepreneurial subjectivities considered necessary by the state for social cohesion and global competitiveness. ERO utilised the publication of its reports similarly, and in the chapter I analyse three reports which reflect the shift from an emphasis on girls’ disadvantage in the mid-90s to a stress on boys’ educational underachievement by 1999. I argue that, despite the change of focus, all of the reports were underpinned less by a concern about gender issues in education and more by ERO’s desire to ensure that schools and teachers carried out their mandated responsibility to address ‘barriers to learning’ for individuals.

I suggest that, while ERO’s discursive construction of the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement resonated with media and educational discourses, its central concern was with mediating the risk to the state that the underachieving boy represented. What

⁸¹ Bell, A. (1996) ‘We’re Just New Zealanders’: Pakeha Identity Politics’. In P. Spoonley, C. Macpherson and D. Pearson (eds) *Nga Patai: Racism and Ethnic Relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

⁸² See Hall, S. and Critcher, C. et al. (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd.

⁸³ Brown, W. (2005) op.cit: 83, 84

⁸⁴ Blackman, L. and Walkerdine, V. (2001) *Mass Hysteria: Critical Psychology and Media Studies*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke; New York, Palgrave: 4.

⁸⁵ Bernstein, B. (2001) ‘Symbolic Control: Issues of Empirical Description of Agencies and Agents’. *International Journal of Research Methodology* 4 (No.1): 23.

constituted a risk for the state - and thus central to its “core problems”⁸⁶ - in ERO’s view was difference, best managed by the neoliberal, technocratic approach that characterised its *modus operandi*. Against claims that neoliberalism represents a radical break from the past,⁸⁷ I argue that difference continues to be invoked against an ideal model of *respectable* bourgeois subjectivity, reconfigured in the neoliberal context into an apparently class, ethnic and gender neutral entrepreneurial/consuming neoliberal self.

Despite the discursive shift away from concerns with the gender gap to an emphasis on ethnic disparities in state discourses, as I illustrate in Chapter Ten, this idealised self appears to have morphed into the feminine/feminised (bourgeois) subject of postmodernity. I problematise the apparent class and ethnic neutrality of this postmodern subject in the first instance. Secondly, I suggest that the heavy dependence of third way social governance on women’s affective labour in the private spheres of family and community maintains boundaries of feminine respectability produced in earlier moments, while the expectation of their paid employment adds another dimension to it. I suggest that because they have both the cultural and material capital to realise this new dimension of respectability, bourgeois women continue to embody it.

While the primacy of work in the third moment might seem to maintain the boundary of masculine respectability I suggest the ‘feminisation’ in multiple ways disrupts that boundary, especially for working class men. I suggest, however, that class and ethnicity are bound up here and I question whether the third way reconstitutes what counts as respectability for Maori and Pacific Island people. Despite the centring of expansive forms of family and community structure which appear to respond to ethnic difference, I argue a bourgeois model of family behaviour remains the signifier of respectable family practice. And I suggest that, given their high rates of unemployment and continuing poverty in a context that privileges a moral ethos of work, these groups remain the constitutive outside of respectability.

Finally, I question the struggles over representation within the state and between the state and the middle classes that I argue continue to problematically re-invoke a politics of recognition. I argue that in order for the third way to exorcise the “spectral presence” of liberalism and become a ‘third space’ in a substantive way, new multi-tiered

⁸⁶ See Dale, R. (1989) *The State and Education Policy*. Milton Keynes [England]; Philadelphia: Open University Press; Lewis, N. (2000) ‘Restructuring Discourse in the New Zealand Restructuring Experience 1984-1995: the Practices of the Education Review Office’. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Auckland.

⁸⁷ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit.

conceptualisations of social justice that reflect the diverse needs of a globalised, multi-cultural knowledge society need to be created and practiced.

Chapter Two

From outpost to 'Arcadia'?: settlement and social formation in the colony

Being nowhere in particular, and without traditions to adhere to,
we could be whatever or whoever we chose.⁸⁸

Introduction

In Chapter One I argued that contemporary discursive constructions of boys' educational underachievement are filtered through, and partly the product of, culturally produced scripts about class, ethnicity, gender and education that bear traces of the past. These social meanings remain inflected by constitutive elements of the colonial social imaginary; in particular discourses of family, work and education which were, and continue to be, inextricably entwined with responsibility and respectability as rules of recognition and realisation and thus markers of belonging and differentiation in the society. In the next two chapters I trace the development of that imaginary and its materialisation in a "middle class society".⁸⁹

I argue here that the distinctive pattern of social formation⁹⁰ that emerged in the colonial context resulted from both the reproduction of deeply embedded understandings of self and society that were the product of an earlier social imaginary and the settlers' self-conscious repudiation of the traditional class culture that had formed them.⁹¹ On the one hand, the

⁸⁸ Jones, L. (2000) *Book of Fame*. Auckland: Penguin: 13

⁸⁹ Middle class in this usage refers to a "moral category defined more by its political values, social attitudes and moral qualities than by common social or economic position". Orwin, D. (1999) 'Conservatism in New Zealand'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland: 114.

⁹⁰ I do not use the notion of social formation in the traditional Marxian sense which privileges class formation and class relations over other kinds of social relationships. Instead I conceptualise it in terms of the development of the *historically specific* pattern of class, race and gender relations which *together* continue to inform, in often subtle and complex ways, the contemporary social, economic and political relationships in New Zealand. As Roxana Ng (1993) has argued "class cannot be understood without reference to ethnic and gender relations, and that gender and ethnic relations cannot be understood without reference to class relations". Ng, R. (1993) 'Sexism, Racism and Canadian Nationalism'. In S. Gunew and A. Yeatman (eds) *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd: 205.

⁹¹ Ideas about nations and nationalism and the concrete forms they take both draw on and are a rejection of "the large cultural systems" which precede them. Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso: 612.

“embourgeoisement”⁹² of the respectable working class settlers contributed to their rejection of class as a means of collective identification and to their investment in respectability as the signifier of belonging. That investment was intensified by often brutal class struggle, and the coercive attempts by the English state and philanthropic middle classes to reshape the working class, which characterised the ‘modern’ moment. The duality of these experiences informed a powerful desire to forget the past; to ‘get away’ and to ‘get ahead’. Together with the socio-economic and political exigencies in the colony this act of forgetting helped shape the idea of the ‘egalitarian’ nation; an idea, woven from strands of fantasy, myth and ideology into a “national imaginary”⁹³, that would endure into the 21st century.

Despite the rejection of class identification that informed their will to forget, the settlers invested heavily in a notion of respectability-bound up with ideas about responsibility - that was saturated with class. As I show in this chapter and the next the responsibility/respectability relation, while expressed differently in terms of class, race and gender, was underpinned by a bourgeois moral ethos reinforced in the colony by emergent socio-economic and political structures. Paradoxically, this engendered a model of social organisation underpinned by the idea of male ‘egalitarianism’ essential to the myth of the ‘classless’ nation at the same time as it mediated the emergence of a ‘middle class society’ built upon the fundamental trinity of Victorian bourgeois principles; individualism, materialism and moralism. These contradictory elements would, over time, become embedded in the national identity of Pakeha New Zealanders. In this chapter I show how this distinctive pattern of social formation emerged. I point to the complex motivations for annexation of Aotearoa, the varying – and sometimes conflicting- expectations and aspirations of the architects of settlement and the settlers themselves, and the realities of colonial life that worked together to create it. And I argue that it was the repudiation of class politics across boundaries of social class that unified what were otherwise disparate and potentially conflicting visions for the new society.

Section One: Securing the colony: moral and material imperatives

From the 1790s there was some European presence in New Zealand comprising a mostly transient collection of sealers and whalers; the advance guard of emerging industrial

⁹² This refers to the internalisation by the working classes of the bourgeois moral ethos that became bound up with English national identity. Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) *The Great Arch: English State Formation As Cultural Revolution*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell.

⁹³ Brickell, C. (2001) ‘Whose “special treatment”? Heterosexism and the Problems with Liberalism’. *Sexualities* 4 (No.2): 211-236.

capitalism.⁹⁴ In 1814 a small influx of missionaries arrived and established the first mission station at Rangihoua in the North Island. By the early 19th century these disparate groups constituted a small “semi-permanent” population.⁹⁵ Organised settlement began in 1839 with the arrival of the first influx of immigrants brought by Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the New Zealand Company.⁹⁶ Annexation by the British Crown and the founding of the colony followed closely behind in 1840.

In the historical literature the rationale for annexation is open to at least two interpretations. Liberal commentators suggest that it was motivated primarily by increasing pressure put on the British colonial office due the emergence of a variety of social problems brought about by unregulated settlement.⁹⁷ As well as concerns about the dangers facing early settlers there were also fears about the impact of uncontrolled settlement on the Maori population, particularly among the resident missionaries. Contact with Europeans endangered the Maori population in a number of ways: firstly access to European weaponry intensified intertribal conflict; secondly as more settlers arrived interracial conflict began to erupt, and thirdly more contact increased the risks of the depopulation of Maori through disease.⁹⁸ In this view a strong humanitarian element underpinned the colonisation of New Zealand, reflecting a shift away from the earlier, more autocratic and destructive settlement policies to “a new and noble beginning in British colonial policy”.⁹⁹ This shift was context specific however, and “more sophisticated models of classification, and a generally more humane, if still highly patronising”¹⁰⁰ understanding of indigenous people was extended only to those, like Maori, considered superior to other native populations.

⁹⁴ Belich, J. (1996) *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*. London; Auckland: Allen Lane, Penguin Press.

⁹⁵ The sealers were mostly ‘Australian’, though there was a British and American presence as well. The missionaries, though predominantly British (denominations), also included French Roman Catholics. See Belich, J. (2001) *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the End of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 2000*. Auckland: Allen Lane, Penguin Press: 130-135.

⁹⁶ Wakefield, a passionate advocate of the ‘art of colonisation’ and laissez faire capitalism saw the country as a potentially “productive field of employment for superabundant capital”, and a means of addressing “the want of room” in Great Britain for the healthy operation of ‘competition’ and for “the means of a comfortable subsistence according to the respective standards of living established among the classes” that made for it. Wakefield, E.G. (ed) (2001) *A View of the Art of Colonization, with Present Reference to the British Empire; In the Letters Between a Statesman and a Colonist*. Ontario, Canada: Batoche Books Ltd (originally published 1849): 24-25.

⁹⁷ Gardner, W. (1992) ‘A Colonial Economy’. In G. W. Rice (ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed). Auckland: Oxford University Press: 109

⁹⁸ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 156

⁹⁹ Sinclair, K. (1996) *A History of New Zealand* (rev.ed.). Auckland: Penguin Books: 70

¹⁰⁰ Pearson, D. (1990) *A Dream Deferred: The Origins of Ethnic Conflict in New Zealand*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin, Port Nicholson Press: 40.

Against claims of English altruism Marxist writer David Bedggood (1980) argues that annexation was motivated primarily by economic imperatives driven by early capitalist expansionism, and the humanitarian policies implemented by the British state were underpinned more by expediency than 'good intentions'.¹⁰¹ He considers the Crown's humane policy of 'moral suasion' rather than military might, for example, to have been less about official resistance to the use of force than a case of the lack of an adequate army. The apparent humanitarianism of the British state also stemmed from the unintended outcomes of some of its policies rather than by design. The Treaty of Waitangi, an exemplar of this, was never intended to include provision for the retention of Maori land ownership in his view. Instead its original intention was to allow the Crown exclusive rights to purchase so it could resell cheaply bought land at a substantial profit,¹⁰² benefiting capitalists and enabling state funded immigration and infrastructural development. The sole motivation for annexation, he claims, was "the universal expansion of the capitalist mode of production" and the alienation of Maori land was absolutely pivotal to this project.¹⁰³ Amongst other things, this resulted in "the forcible destruction of Maori society".¹⁰⁴

As I suggest below both accounts of the imperatives that drove annexation are problematic, however Bedggood (1980) correctly emphasises the destructive impact on Maori of the drive to acquire their land which was so crucial to the settlement process and the development of a capitalist economy. Early economic relations in Aotearoa were shaped from the amalgamation of British capitalism and traditional Maori modes of production which worked to their economic advantage. For some time after annexation Maori monopolised trade and benefited materially from their interaction with the incoming settlers, who depended on them for the production and provision of foodstuffs and other crucial resources.¹⁰⁵ The end of Maori trade monopoly was mediated by a number of factors, not the least of which was the loss of their numerical dominance around 1858. Increasing Pakeha demand for land following annexation precipitated Maori political activism which undermined their economic participation, and eventuated in a fierce struggle between Maori and the Crown over land

¹⁰¹ Bedggood, D. (1980) *Rich and Poor in New Zealand: A Critique of Class Politics and Ideology*. Auckland: George Allen and Unwin.

¹⁰² This policy of 'setting of a sufficient price' was rationalised by the argument that land sold too cheaply had economic if not moral consequences for the colony: in the first instance ready access to land had the potential to disrupt the supply of 'free' labour necessary for the operation of a healthy capitalist economy; and secondly, it would engender greed among the colonists and nepotism in government which could generate social and political chaos (Wakefield, 2001: 95-98).

¹⁰³ Bedggood, D. (1980) op.cit: 23

¹⁰⁴ Ibid: 41

¹⁰⁵ Walker, R. (1990) *Struggle Without End: Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou*. Auckland: Penguin Press: 95

during the 1860s.¹⁰⁶ Their depopulation through war and disease, the loss of their land by legislative and illegal means and a disintegrating external market, resulted in a significant shift in the balance of power away from Maori which would not be recouped.¹⁰⁷ And they would remain at the margins of the middle class society, an absent presence, well into the 20th century.

Despite elements of truth in both versions of the annexation story neither is satisfactory. The humanitarian thesis glosses over the significance of economic imperialism and, while Bedggood (1980) emphasises this, he ignores the socio-cultural influences of the period. Both oversimplify the more complex and perhaps more contradictory reality wherein economic and socio-cultural elements were inextricably entwined. Annexation was underpinned by both evangelical and capitalist imperatives woven together in the shape of an organisational and ideological alliance between “evangelical humanitarianism” and imperial expansionism.¹⁰⁸ This alliance was organisational in that the missionaries played an essential role by educating Maori in Western social practices - especially the ‘arts of honest labour’¹⁰⁹ - in laying the foundations for imperial expansion. It was ideological because these practices were underpinned by an integration of Protestant and capitalist values considered superior to the life ways and world views of other races. The central aim of this alliance was the ‘conversion’ and ‘civilisation’ of Maori to as close an approximation of an English ‘elect’ as they could become, given their ‘racial inferiority’. Conversion here meant conversion to Christianity *and* to capitalist sociality, interwoven in Victorian sensibility. Maori salvation depended upon their induction into the “moral and industrious habits” that signified civility.¹¹⁰ This idea of civility, which was underpinned not only by racial distinctions but those of social class as well, was integral to notions of respectability.

Section Two: Constructing a Victorian social imaginary

Together these spiritual, moral, and material dimensions were fundamental to English national identity. Their imbrication with “Englishness” resulted from a long process of socio-cultural and economic transformation.¹¹¹ From the Tudor period English nationalism derived

¹⁰⁶ Stephenson, M (2000) ‘Creating New Zealanders: Education and the Formation of the State and the Building of the Nation’. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland: 129

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 182

¹⁰⁹ Lineham, P. (n.d) *Transplanted Christianity*: available online at <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~plineham/RelhistNZ.htm>: downloaded 2006.

¹¹⁰ The words of Samuel Marsden, Anglican minister and prominent missionary, reflect the mutuality of this ethos clearly; cited in Lineham, P. op.cit.

¹¹¹ Corrigan, P, and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit.

from the expansion and increasing dominance of Protestantism.¹¹² Far more than simply a religious creed understood in the contemporary sense, religion was central to the social and political life of the nation. Moreover while it was “an integral part of political culture”, the singular domain of the ruling classes, its tenets also contained the possibility of both a radical “political and religious inflexion”.¹¹³ A ‘radical’ reading of Protestantism enabled the emergence of notions of self governance and individual legal rights which were to become absolutely central to the “embourgeoisement” of English society, and the naturalisation of capitalist sociality. They were also the basis for the beginnings of a collective working class identity. Although, ironically, these principles would be used to rationalise the oppression, exploitation and intensive regulation of the English working classes in the 19th century.

The ascendancy of Protestantism was seminal in the formation of the British state, mediating a break between religion and the royal power that enabled the state to gain authority over the Church. The coincidence of this important transformation with the “evangelisation of the populace” mediated the development of an early form of nation state, following the Reformation, that was vital to an emerging national identity within which the English of all classes perceived themselves as “an elect nation”.¹¹⁴ The partial secularisation of English society, however, displaced religion “as a dominant legitimating code for and within the state” and provided the conditions for a “move towards solid bourgeois values of law property, ‘liberty’ and civility”.¹¹⁵ This shift, and the emerging influence of possessive individualism, marked the beginning of broad cultural change and the embourgeoisement of the state. It also signalled a move from external coercion in the form of the church to the internalisation of “disciplines of conscience and sect [which was] thoroughly consonant with a wider embourgeoisement of social relations and identities”.¹¹⁶ The aristocracy was not exempt from this transformative process, it altered their composition and provided the class Wakefield drew many of his “cultured men of capital” from during the colonisation of New Zealand two centuries later.¹¹⁷

The secularisation of English society was not complete however and the influence of Protestantism helped shape English society through the 18th and 19th centuries, not least because of the affinity between the “Protestant values - individualism, sobriety, abstinence,

¹¹² Ibid: 47

¹¹³ Ibid: 79

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Ibid: 80

¹¹⁶ Ibid: 81

¹¹⁷ Graham, J. (1996) ‘Settler Society’. In G. W. Rice (ed) *Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd edn). Auckland, Melbourne, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press: 114

labour - and the moral relations of capitalism".¹¹⁸ The relationship between Protestantism, bourgeois values and capitalism underpinned the entwined ideas of "material and moral progress"¹¹⁹ central to 19th century liberalism and dominant understandings of modernity.

As I suggested in Chapter One these foundational discourses - constitutive of the Victorian social imaginary - were institutionalised not only in the gradual transformation of extant social truths by new philosophical ideas that informed new understandings of economy, society and state but through coercive practices intended to embed them. They emerged as well, that is, from concerted efforts by the English state and philanthropic middle classes to reshape the English working classes and entrench possessive individualism. This was nothing short of a "moral revolution" wherein "abstract forms of property [came] to be what [was] represented politically, enshrined in law, culturally articulated and, above all, *normalized as a new moral code of individualized character*".¹²⁰ In this moment government became defined "as guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of men of property against, above all, the claims of labour: the new working class being made and seeking to make itself during those years".¹²¹ The 'working class question' became the focus of government; engendering the institutions, laws and practices that combined novel forms of juridical repression and moral regulation - in emergent techniques of liberal governmentality- that would become fundamental to "the modern, democratic nation state".¹²²

The process of 'civilisation' thus not only took the form of imperialism where "it elevated the military and moral 'character of England throughout the world", it was going on within England at the same time.¹²³ One element of this internal civilising project entailed the transmission of middle class views-of the country as an 'elect' nation-to the working classes. At a deeper level this "national system of improvement" involved the "moralization and socialization" of the working classes; their inculcation, that is, into a bourgeois value system with its specific, and entwined, form of socio-economic relations which would provide the basis for capitalist sociality. I discuss the influence of these ideas on the development of a liberal, paternal state in the colony in the next chapter. I want to make two points here however; first these shifts represented the institutionalisation of a bourgeois moral ethos *in* the English state. Secondly the state, in its both constitutive and coercive functions, played

¹¹⁸ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit: 81

¹¹⁹ Hobsbawm, E. (1975) *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875*. London: Weidenfield and Nicholson.

¹²⁰ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit: 116, my emphasis

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid: 122

an absolutely essential part in attempts to remake working class subjectivities into the image of bourgeois respectability.

By the 19th century bourgeois subjectivity had come to signify respectability which was in turn bound up with notions of morality: “respectability was the means by which morality was made public and seen to be an object of knowledge. Respectability embodie[d] moral authority: those who [were] respectable [had] it, those who [were] not [did] not”.¹²⁴ This respectable/moral bourgeois self and collective identification was formed against assumptions of working class and racial difference, and inferiority. Thus, the processes involved in the transformation of the working class into “moral individuals ... in the bourgeois image” were attempts to suppress difference.¹²⁵ Yet at the same time the constitution the of bourgeois depended upon it:

the working class is a category that came into effect through middle class conceptualisations. These conceptualisations were produced from anxiety about social order and through attempts by the middle class to consolidate their identity and power by distancing themselves from identifiable ‘others’. The middle class came... to recognize themselves through difference: a difference they produced through the generation and distribution of representations of different ‘others’.¹²⁶

The conceptualisations of difference that operated as fundamental ‘truths’ in the Victorian social imaginary were interrelated rather than discrete. Discursive constructions of racial difference were underpinned by embedded perceptions of “a fundamental ontological difference between the West and the rest”¹²⁷. In turn racism underpinned other categories of differentiation, including class and gender, through the “phenomenon of ‘depreciation’ and ‘racialization’” whereby fundamentally different groups were understood as ‘invalid’ in analogous ways.¹²⁸ Categorizations of race, for example, interlocked with class through the generic definition of the ‘dangerous classes’.¹²⁹ Those who were relegated to this class, including the ‘undeserving’ poor, were considered to be not just an aberration but a race apart. Similarly, sexual difference was racialised in that women were considered ‘naturally’

¹²⁴ Skeggs, B. (1997) *The Formation of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*. London, Sage Publications : 2

¹²⁵ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit: 116

¹²⁶ Skeggs, B. (1997) op.cit: 4

¹²⁷ Said, E. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage: 129

¹²⁸ Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. (1991) *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London, Verso: 49

¹²⁹ Skeggs, B. (1997) op.cit..

inferior to men and thus “not fully human”.¹³⁰ As I illustrate in Chapter Three these categories of difference mediated colonial politics and the formation of a liberal paternal state by the end of the 19th century, forming the basis of an “historical system of [entwined and] complementary exclusions”¹³¹ that, I argue in Chapter Ten, continues to operate in subtle ways.

These foundational discourses of difference underpinned the bourgeois moral ethos that informed colonial evangelism - imperial and moral - and they were central to the notions of responsibility and respectability which operated as rules of recognition and realisation in the colony, signifying belonging and delineating difference amongst the settlers. In the next section I explore their impact on colonisation and their mediation by the exigencies of settlement. I tease apart the processes of settlement and social formation; the beginnings of nation building with and against the parent culture.

Section Three: Populating the ‘promised land’: the settlement process

Organised settlement began in 1839 under the auspices of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, and the New Zealand Company. In Wakefield's view, and that of the capitalist aristocracy he represented, the primary of objective colonisation was “to provide a productive field of employment for superabundant capital”.¹³² In order for that to occur the socio-economic relations that underpinned capitalism needed to be replicated in the colony. Thus, from the outset, his approach to settlement was socially selective and it was never intended that all classes of British society should be encouraged to emigrate. The New Zealand Company focused its efforts upon two particular social groups; the ‘decent’ rural labouring classes, the raw material from which colonial capitalism and a modern nation would be constructed, and the capitalist gentry whose role it would be to direct this process. Both were seen as crucial to the economic and social viability of the colony. It was during this initial period of settlement that the largest number of the English gentry arrived, and it was from this class that the early ‘ruling elite’ would be drawn.¹³³

Despite efforts to exert control over emigration through the selection process intensified migration from the 1850s brought with it much broader occupational strata than was either

¹³⁰ Denise Riley (1988) points to how perceptions of “woman's entanglement in Nature held her apart from Humanity”. Riley, D. (1988) *Am I That Name?: Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press: 66.

¹³¹ Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. (1991) op.cit.

¹³² Wakefield, E. G. (2001) op.cit: 24

¹³³ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 322

anticipated, or desired.¹³⁴ By the end of the settlement process, the population was made up of a “non-affluent” but fairly heterogeneous majority of ‘decent’ working and lower middle class settlers.¹³⁵ Not only was the settler population more diverse than intended in terms of occupational strata, it was more diverse racially as well. Despite assumptions of cultural homogeneity in historical accounts of settlement (partly a function of the founding myths generated by the “colonising crusaders”¹³⁶ themselves), there was a large degree of social fragmentation within the settler population particularly in terms of ethnic diversity.¹³⁷ There were substantial numbers of Scots and Irish migrants, who considered themselves ethnically distinct groups. Given that the process of consolidating ‘Britain’ was still under way, it is not surprising that the nationalities it would later comprise still considered themselves “distinct peoples”, and had “different economies and societies as well as cultures”.¹³⁸

While these cultural divisions were accompanied by different religious affiliations, the predominance of Protestantism among the settlers may have allowed the formation of social bonds and a sense of common identity between these otherwise disparate, and sometimes antagonistic, groups.¹³⁹ As I noted earlier, individualism comprised a central strand of the Protestantism/capitalism relation and thus was one important common value that bound the diverse settler population together. And it was to become a very powerful element, if not the only one, that contributed to the emergence of the ‘middle class society’ and creation of a collective Pakeha national identity. Moralism was an equally powerful, though perhaps more oblique, facet of this relation. While there were differences between secular and religious views of morality, they converged in embedded ideas about the social and moral value of possessive individualism fundamental to the Victorian social imaginary. These provided the moral justification for materialism - the desire to ‘get ahead’ - that comprised the third element of a collective settler identity. These shared principles not only bridged the cultural gap between the settlers they also mediated class differences as well, as I show in the next

¹³⁴ While it was the aim of the “colonising crusaders” to import predominantly rural workers and gentry, any claim that this was achieved is overstated. At different periods of the settlement process different streams of migrants representing a variety of occupational strata arrived, and “it seems unlikely that most English migrants were farmers or farm workers” (Ibid: 333).

¹³⁵ These included “casual labourers, skilled wage earners, shop-keepers, office staff, small farmers, tradesmen and their families”. Thomson, D. (1998) *A World Without Welfare: New Zealand's Colonial Experiment*. Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books: 4

¹³⁶ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit.

¹³⁷ What is important about the diversity of the population is that, in Belich's (1996) version of the settlement story, there were the two central discourses that underpinned the propaganda campaign for the “colonising crusade”, the Arcadian myth and the Utopian myth. These were framed differently depending on the weight given to ethnic racial difference *within* the settler population. I discuss this in more detail below. Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 287

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid: 297

chapter. That they did so reflects the embourgeoisement of much of the emigrant population, despite its diversity.

The settler population while far from ethnically homogeneous was, initially at least, fairly uniform in terms of gender. As was the case with other colonies, greater numbers of men tended to emigrate than women. Single, working class male migrants to New Zealand predominated well into the settlement period, their numbers peaking in 1867 when they outnumbered women approximately two to one.¹⁴⁰ This was a significant problem from perspective of the architects of settlement, since women were perceived as absolutely crucial for the “social health” and ‘civilisation’ of colonial society.¹⁴¹ Not only that their economic roles, as potential servants and in terms of the productive capacities of colonial households, were fundamentally important as well. The drivers of colonisation “wanted servants, and they wanted brides-to-be, to sop up, civilise and anchor chaotic surplus males”.¹⁴² I begin to explore the impact of embedded assumptions about the social and familial roles of women on the formation of a “gendered culture”¹⁴³ below.

From 1831 to 1881 more than 400,000 migrants arrived in New Zealand, the majority of these (300,000) remained.¹⁴⁴ The sheer magnitude of this diaspora requires explanation, and traditional historiographies have tended to read it wholly as a response to the privations wrought by the development of industrial capitalism during the early 19th century.¹⁴⁵ There is little doubt that socio-economic conditions in Britain were critical by the time organised colonisation began, or that the chance to escape them played an important role in the decision to emigrate for many. In his passionately angry account of the impact of industrialism on the British working classes, with its bitter critique of laissez faire capitalism, Friedrich Engels (2001) wrote

Everywhere barbarous indifference, hard egotism on one hand, and nameless misery on the other, everywhere social warfare, every man’s house is under siege, everywhere reciprocal plundering under the protection of the law, and all so

¹⁴⁰ Fairburn, M. (1989) *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900*. Auckland: Auckland University Press: 165.

¹⁴¹ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 307

¹⁴² Ibid: 334

¹⁴³ James, B. and Saville- Smith, K. (1994) *Gender, Culture and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴⁴ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 278

¹⁴⁵ Sutch argues that steadily rising rates of unemployment and poverty amongst the working classes with the emergence of industrial capitalism was the main impetus behind the mass migration of working class Britons. Sutch, W. (1941) *Poverty and Progress in New Zealand*. Wellington: Modern Books: 24

shameless, so openly avowed that one shrinks before the consequences of our social state as they manifest themselves here undisguised, and can only wonder that the whole crazy fabric still hangs together.¹⁴⁶

British society was in flux as the transformations engendered by industrial capitalism created increasing discontent amongst the working classes, and social critique amongst the 'intelligentsia'. The Chartist movement, which advocated universal male franchise as the basis for the political representation of all classes, arose from this turmoil. These and other movements for social justice such as Owenism¹⁴⁷ played some part in influencing emigration; not only in terms of their promise that a more just society could be created away from the constraints of the English one, but as a means of rationalising an escape from the social turmoil occurring there. Demands for political equality and increasing working class militancy tied up with them, caused no small degree of concern among the middle and upper classes, and in the Church.¹⁴⁸

While the desire to escape these conditions was undoubtedly a powerful imperative for migration, particularly among an impoverished and embattled proletariat, the assumption that little encouragement to emigrate was necessary needs to be questioned. At the least it underestimates the sheer enormity of the act of immigration for individuals and families, both in social and economic terms. This perception also overlooks how the promise of a new society was built upon aspirations of and assumptions about change and continuity, both within the immigrant population and amongst the drivers of settlement, that were often in tension with each other.

One particularly poignant example of how disparate aspirations for the colony impacted negatively on the working class population can be seen in problems that arose from Wakefield's attempts to limit landownership, through the mechanism of "sufficient price" in the initial stages of settlement, to the wealthy. A significant outcome of this policy of offering land as a source of investment to wealthy capitalists was that high rates of absentee landownership occurred. This situation left working class settlers without access to land of their own or employment, and many suffered the miseries of poverty as a result.¹⁴⁹ As I show in Chapter Four, extensive and obvious poverty fuelled a great deal of anxiety about the poor

¹⁴⁶ Engels, F. (2001) *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. London, UK: ElecBook: 81 available online at <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/auckland>.

¹⁴⁷ Sutch (op.cit: 25) also suggests many Britons emigrated to New Zealand influenced by Chartism, while more recently, Belich has pointed to the influence of Owenism - a form of utopian socialism - on perceptions of the potential for creating a more equitable society here, Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 293

¹⁴⁸ Sutch, W. (1941) op.cit: 26

¹⁴⁹ Stephenson, M. (2000) op.cit: 130.

working classes and their potential threat to social order, and to the economic viability of the nascent colony.

There is contention in the literature, however, about the role of land ownership in the formation of class relations at the time. Some liberal histories argue that land ownership was spread more widely amongst the population, circumventing the reproduction of the English class structure in the colony.¹⁵⁰ Miles Fairburn (1989) suggests that claims of settler poverty have been overstated, and argues that there were comparatively high rates of ownership among the working classes which were actively supported by legislation in order to ensure their self-reliance and independence.¹⁵¹ Land tenure, in his view, provided a means of subsistence and obviated the necessity to depend wholly on wage labour for survival in an unstable economic environment. He argues the comparative independence of colonial working men meant they “did not constitute a uniform, separate, specific economic class in the West European sense”.¹⁵² Bedggood (1980), in complete contrast, claims that land ownership was in fact central to the differentiation of settlers “into rich, middle and poor peasantry according to the rent on their land”, providing the means of social mobility only for those at the upper end of the social spectrum and enabling “the establishment of rich capitalist farmers linked to the merchant-capitalist class which would become the basis of...the ‘national bourgeoisie’ ”.¹⁵³

Neither of these positions is unproblematic. While they interpret the land ownership/class formation relationship quite differently both invoke the conceptualisation of New Zealand as an ‘Arcadia’, implicitly privileging “the farm-first mythology”¹⁵⁴ of economic development. Fairburn’s (1989) thesis, which I explore in more depth below, ignores the fact that an absent land-owning elite, while comparatively small, was able to acquire and develop the best property. He assumes, as well, that the working class landowners had the skills and resources to tame and cultivate what land they owned. This assumption in turn relies on two central liberal myths of colonisation; firstly this implies the land, as the term Arcadia suggests, was both fertile and abundant and Fairburn (1989) argues strenuously this was the case. Secondly, it assumes that a significant number of the rural working classes emigrated here during the settlement period, bringing with them the requisite skills with which to build an agriculture-based economy. In the first instance, other commentators have

¹⁵⁰ See for example Arnold, R. (1976) ‘The Village and the Globe: Aspects of the Social Origin of Schooling in Victorian New Zealand’. *Journal of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society* 5 (No.2): 1-12.

¹⁵¹ Fairburn, M. (1989) op.cit: 90

¹⁵² Ibid: 103

¹⁵³ Bedggood, D. (1980) op.cit: 37

¹⁵⁴ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 350-351

suggested that New Zealand was not necessarily as uniformly fruitful and plentiful as the emigration 'propaganda' had promised.¹⁵⁵ Moreover as I noted above, a far greater cross section of the working classes emigrated than liberal histories tend to acknowledge thus not all those that managed to acquire land had the ability to make it productive enough to live on. In addition, the costs associated with subsistence farming meant that farmers needed to subsidise their incomes with wage labour. Given the fragmented nature of settlement and of the working classes themselves, and the tenuousness of subsistence farming, Fairburn (1989) perhaps overstates his case.

While Bedggood's (1980) account highlights some of circumstances that engendered poverty and hardship for many of the working classes lured here with the promise of land and an 'independency', it too is open to criticism. This is partly because he assumes fairly uniform economic development based upon agriculture that is more mythical than real.¹⁵⁶ More importantly, in his somewhat formulaic interpretation of the role of land ownership in class relations which suggests the emergence of a fairly homogeneous "national bourgeoisie", he overlooks the fragmentation of the middle class itself. Belich (1996) argues there were "at least three tiers of middle class respectability", the top tier which comprised "wealthy farmers, urban business families and manufacturers".¹⁵⁷ The next level, which emerged by the end of the century, consisted of "private sector bureaucrats", and there was further fragmentation in the lower middle class into "small but secure businessmen, master artisans and medium farmers".¹⁵⁸ The middle classes were, therefore, far from the homogeneous unity that the concept of a "national bourgeoisie" implies.

The lure of land, and the promise of social mobility attached to it, combined with socio-economic and political conditions at home mediated mass migration of Britons to the colony. Nonetheless, emigrants (of all classes) needed to be "prised out of their ... contexts by powerful myths and prophecies".¹⁵⁹ These took shape in a concerted propaganda campaign begun by Wakefield and the New Zealand Company in 1830 and carried on by Julius Vogel through the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁶⁰ This campaign and the promise of free land grants and assisted passages were the main strategies used to encourage Britons to emigrate. Recent historiography points to the significance of the discursive construction of New Zealand as an

¹⁵⁵ Belich (1996) suggests that despite claims by 'crusaders' of colonisation to the contrary New Zealand's 'natural fertility of New Zealand was mythical and prime land was "creamed off" by the wealthy early on (p. 384).

¹⁵⁶ Belich, J. (1996): 350-51

¹⁵⁷ Ibid: 397

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid: 279.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

“Arcadia” in the propaganda literature in terms of its role in our founding myths, our ‘national identity’ and our social organisation.¹⁶¹ Where these commentators differ is on whether this was the predominant image of New Zealand that was created. They also diverge in their reading of the relationship between the image of Arcadia, the realities of settlement and the role of class relations in the social organization of colonial life.

Section Four: Arcadia: a “labourer’s paradise”?

For Fairburn (1989) the primary images of New Zealand created in the campaign to promote settlement were various versions of an Arcadia, a rural idyll which promised settlers of all classes a better society than the one they would leave behind. The discursive constructions of ‘Arcadia’ the campaign pivoted on were dependent on the idea of the “natural abundance” of land. In the propaganda literature, land ownership promised the possibility of greater prosperity for all and social mobility for some. More wealth would provide the foundation for building a society that retained the very best of the parent culture without any of its attendant problems.¹⁶² This is not to say that the new society would do away with social differentiation. The assumption of it underpinned the different versions of ‘Arcadia’ drawn on to characterise New Zealand as a rural paradise, compared to Victorian England.¹⁶³ The variety of conceptualisations of Arcadia that were utilised to attract prospective emigrants were the “component parts” of a single vision of the society, and the image of New Zealand as an Arcadia that underpinned it, he argues, was not merely propaganda; “the realities of the colonial social pattern went some way in confirming the imported ideas”.¹⁶⁴ The essential themes that frame this vision were that of natural abundance and thus the possibility of an “independency” for the working classes, a naturally ordered society, and a simplicity of life that would guarantee the middle classes “freedom from status anxiety”.¹⁶⁵

The purported natural abundance of land in New Zealand, and the economic wellbeing it promised, was perceived as the panacea for a range of social ills presumed to derive from a scarcity of resources mediated by the spread of industrial capitalism and recent urbanisation. In a dual movement the idea of the colony as Arcadia invoked a ‘golden past’ - the possibility of returning to a simpler way of life - while at the same time it promised the extension of

¹⁶¹ See Belich, J. (1996) op.cit. and Fairburn, M. (1989) op.cit.

¹⁶² The characterisation of these problems depended on the perspective of the commentators describing them. For working classes they existed on a continuum ranging from lack of social mobility to the danger of extreme poverty. For others, like Wakefield, working class discontent with these conditions - fuelled by their access to education - provided a fertile ground for political radicalism in the forms of Chartism and socialism and, thus, the potential conditions for social disorder. Wakefield, E. G. (2001) op.cit: 25

¹⁶³ Fairburn, M. (1989) op.cit.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid: 22

¹⁶⁵ Ibid: 25

modernity. The combination of prolific natural resources and an ‘innately moderate’ population, bound together by common values, would require little in the way of social organisation within the society. Nor would it need regulation from above. In Arcadia:

natural abundance and innate moderation take the place of government institutions, voluntary bodies, informal groupings and networks ... and economic institutions. Natural abundance itself provides what the inhabitants need; resources are so plentiful that collective agencies are not needed for their creation, management, protection, and allocation. At the same time, the innate moderation of the inhabitants of Arcadia ensures their wants are simple; hence the need to construct collective agencies to satisfy superfluous needs has also been eliminated. In Arcadia no contrived associations generate artificial desires, and no artificial desires generate contrived associations It is a place of justice, prosperity, harmony, morality, social freedom, contentment, leisure, and simplicity because, by not requiring a social organisation, Arcadia has abolished the immediate causes of all injustice, poverty, discord and corruption.¹⁶⁶

The image of ‘Arcadia’ was, in essence, built upon bourgeois liberal assumptions about the social and moral value of possessive individualism. It was thoroughly imbued with a Victorian conceptualisation of ‘progress’ central to modernity and dependent on the materialism/morality relation. Social and economic progress, in this view, was ensured through the circular relationship between material development and moral rectitude. What made New Zealand so rich in opportunity for social ‘improvement’ was the perceived lushness of the physical environment and its temperate climate which together would ensure the conditions of possibility for the material growth of the new society. Tied in with ideas about climate and fertility were notions that the countryside would be an abundant source of ‘wild’ and cultivated food that promised better than simple subsistence. These ideas were powerful because, to no small degree, they represented such a contrast to the situation in Britain, particularly for the working classes. So it is not surprising that such images found their way into working class representations of the country, as well as middle class ones. The image of Arcadia constructed for, and sometimes by, the working classes was that of a “labourer’s paradise”.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Ibid: 26

¹⁶⁷ Ibid: 42

For the rural working class, abundant land was construed as the basis for a stronger, more stable labour market offering higher wages and more security than they could hope for at home, as well as the source of cheaper produce and reduced living expenses. The propaganda suggested the apparent stability of wage labour, combined with their prudence and hard work, would provide the possibility of an eventual “independency”. At the least this was perceived as ensuring a means of subsistence; a defence against the vagaries of wage labour and the danger of pauperism not possible in the British context. Potentially, land ownership was believed to be an avenue for social mobility or social improvement for those who wanted it.

There were, however, ambiguities in the discursive construction of the labourer’s paradise. On the one hand the promise of ‘Arcadia’ was constructed in terms of better conditions for wage labour and, thus, more financial security. This view was underpinned by ideas about improvement without changing the ‘natural’ structural conditions of class differentiation. At the same time an essential element of the conceptualisation of a ‘labourer’s paradise’ consisted in its potential for social mobility; the possibility of leaving one’s class designation and ‘getting ahead’. These apparently contradictory views were understood by the working classes “not as two distinct alternatives but as a process by which the average working man could ‘rise’ incrementally”.¹⁶⁸

Working class ambitions for social mobility, in Fairburn’s view, were motivated less by acquisitiveness than the desire for independence from the paternalism of Victorian society. From a working class perspective, it seemed the ‘labourer’s paradise’ offered the promise of an alternative to the hierarchical society they came from; one without its injustices and impediments. Economic independence was seen as the means for freedom from exploitation by landowners and employers, from laws which prevented their access to land, and from the oppressive philanthropic interventions of the middle classes. Moreover, it would enable them to avoid the degradation and depredations of the ‘poorhouse’ system. I explore the relationship between conceptualisations of pauperism, ‘social welfare’, and self sufficiency in the next chapter.

As a basis for the economic independence of the individual *male* worker, it was assumed that the natural abundance of the new society would dispense with the necessity for the range of advantages granted by middle class status in order to achieve social mobility. Thus,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid: 46

forms of collective action by the working classes would not be necessary. The 'Arcadian society', apparently, precluded the possibility of class struggle. The assumption here was that the 'natural abundance' of the prospective colony would 'level the playing field' all that was necessary for individual success were the correct 'moral attributes'. This vision of Arcadia was underpinned by bourgeois liberal ideas about the moralising and socialising virtues of hard work that I noted above. As I illustrate below it was deeply gendered as well, and this mediated gender differentiated understandings of responsibility and respectability in the colony.

From this bourgeois perspective, "individuals win material rewards only in proportion to the extent they have developed industry, energy, perseverance".¹⁶⁹ Social stratification occurred not because some individuals had more economic and social advantages as a function of their class, rather the individual moral attributes that were fundamental for success were considered not to be evenly distributed among the population. These ideas provided the conceptual foundations for an understanding of egalitarianism framed in terms of equality of opportunity, not material equality. Socio-economic relations in 'Arcadia' were to be egalitarian in this sense only. This narrow understanding of equality - and the bourgeois ethos that informed it - served the basis for the formation of a society in which the concept of meritocracy would permeate not only its institutions, particularly state education, but collective Pakeha national identity as well.

Notions of social mobility in this context were tied up with ideas of social improvement that, in turn, depended upon assumptions about ownership as the signifier of respectability. Fairburn (1989) acknowledges the significance of the two central Victorian moral imperatives, the work ethic and the idea of progress, to conceptualisations of and realities in the colony. These were not neutral concepts however. The concept of respectability, as I have suggested above, was underpinned by the fundamental trinity of bourgeois Victorian values - individualism, materialism and morality - which were used as a measure of the validity of subjects and groups. Despite the bourgeois value system that framed them, by the settlement period these ideas had become widely accepted across class boundaries. The desire for social mobility by the working classes described above reflects the depth to which they had absorbed those values, as did their attitudes to their 'rough' others as I illustrate in Chapter Four. As Fairburn's social history suggests, aspects of the colonial environment served to consolidate them. The formation of the state in the colony, as I argue in the next chapter, was not the least of these.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid: 51

Section Five: A haven for the middle classes?

The image of Arcadia created for the middle classes revolved around the idea that the natural abundance of the land would dispense with the economic and social problems that plagued the English context. In the first instance the working classes, apparently able in the colony to accumulate wealth and property of their own, would be no threat to security of the middle classes nor to the order of the society as a whole. The society would be able to 'progress' through the moralisation and 'respectabilisation' of the working classes, brought about by their ownership of property. Owning land was "the greatest teacher of morality" in this view because it gave the individual a stake in maintaining social order¹⁷⁰. In turn, this would eliminate the necessity to regulate social relations in order to control divisive class-based struggles. There would be no need for excessive social organization, itself perceived as grounds for social conflict.

The potential for access to land would also ameliorate 'status anxiety' amongst the middle classes. It offered the middle classes the possibility of increasing their wealth so that any outward expression of their status could be more easily managed financially. More importantly, because the society celebrated the success of the 'virtuous' individual, life in the colony would dispense with the necessity for status maintenance at all. Colonial society would be free of any social pressures to an outward expression of gentility and the taboos which accompanied it, particularly those associated with physical work. This promised freedom for the middle classes from the costs of maintaining servants, and the possibility of increasing the value of their investment by dint of their own labour. So the features perceived to make New Zealand a 'labourer's paradise' were those that would also guarantee the middle classes "the safety of their lives and property", and freedom from the debilitating economic and social demands of maintaining their status in English society.

In the literature produced toward the end of the century the colony was constructed as a liberal bourgeois 'paradise' that

had achieved social harmony through the spontaneous self-interested responses of individuals to the wholly positive influences in the economic environment; to prosperity, strong labour demand, high rates of property-ownership—to the wonderful opportunities of the 'labourer's paradise'.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Ibid: 61
¹⁷¹ Ibid: 64

In the images I describe above, and the presumptions that lie behind them, are the foundations for the idea of egalitarianism that would become central to the construction of Pakeha national identity. Though, as I have already noted the term has a quite specific context dependent meaning, for Fairburn egalitarianism was more than just rhetorical. The “insider’s view” reflected not just an *idealised* vision produced in the propaganda literature, but the aspirations and actual experiences of settlers in the colony. The idea of an egalitarian society in which all could ‘get ahead’ was a powerful motivating factor for emigration. It also helped shape the pattern of social relations in the colony so that the class divisions which characterised English society were not replicated, in form at least, here. As I argue in the next chapter, this does not mean that New Zealand was a class free society. Nor does it suggest that class did not play a fundamental role in the formation of the distinctive pattern of social relations that emerged following settlement. It did so, sometimes quite overtly, as well as in more subtle and complex ways.

For Fairburn, various versions of Arcadia predominated in the literature produced to encourage the settlement of New Zealand. What is significant for him is that the image reflected was not just ‘propaganda’, but based upon the actual perceptions of those who had settled there. One of his key arguments is that the vision of an egalitarian, rural paradise in which individuals could achieve economic wellbeing and social mobility through their own labour coincided reasonably closely with the realities of colonial life, both for the labouring classes and the middle classes.

The claims he makes, and his thesis more generally, pivots on the emphasis he places on access to land and the symbolic meanings associated with the rural setting. The antithesis of ‘Arcadia’, with all that implies, was to be found in urban areas. In the emigration literature, towns were construed as inimical to social mobility, and urban occupations as the least attractive. In part this was because of the small scale of townships and urban businesses, which meant less financial benefits for workers and owners, and fewer opportunities for occupational mobility. As well, urbanisation was perceived as one of the great blights of the English context, sites of working class poverty and thus rife with potential for political dissension and vicious class struggle.¹⁷² Thus, as I remarked earlier, the idea of Arcadia was based upon the premise that colonial life promised a simpler existence, free from these pressures. As I suggest in Chapter Four, public and state anxiety about the issue of

¹⁷² Wakefield, E. G. (2001) op.cit: 26

larrikinism drew heavily upon negative conceptualisations of urban areas, constituting towns and cities as “a moral problem”.¹⁷³

In his view, the commonality of these perceptions amongst settlers of all classes and the transience of wage labour and general fragmentation of the population for much of the settlement period resulted in the emergence of “extreme individualism” in the colony. The outcome of this, according to Fairburn, was a very minimal model of social organisation.¹⁷⁴ The conditions described above also militated against the development of collective class identities, particularly amongst the working classes. I have already noted Fairburn’s claim that widespread ownership of land by the working classes provided alternative means of subsistence to wage labour with the lack of a collective working class in the traditional sense. The implication here is that a combination of these factors mediated the lack of traditional class relations in the colony.

For both the working classes and the middle classes, then, social and economic success would apparently depend utterly on their capacity for self-sufficiency, their talent for “improvisation” and the “extreme individualism” created by the exigencies of settlement. These characteristics, which I argue below were both gendered and racialised, formed the basis upon which the idea of “do it-yourself” Kiwi ingenuity would be founded. This conceptualisation of ‘New Zealandness’ would develop over time and come to feature powerfully in individual and collective conceptions of Pakeha national identity. The point I want to make here is that identity rests, absolutely, on a self-conscious rejection of class difference as the means of forming collective political identities. One of the outcomes of the repudiation of class in these founding moments would be the element of blindness to the impact of class relations on socio-economic organisation that I argue in Chapter One continues to imbue the contemporary context.

However, it is important to note that any conception of a national identity, or indeed a unified nation itself, did not occur until the end of the 19th century. Prior to this New Zealand was divided into provinces, and differences in environment, organisation and governance of these mediated the settlers’ experiences and identities profoundly. Class divisions and

¹⁷³ Valverde, M. (1991) *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada-1885-1925*. Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stewart Inc: 129

¹⁷⁴ This is arguable though, because as Maxine Stephenson illustrates in her thesis the ability of the middle classes to dominate the administration of a rudimentary form of ‘social welfare’, including the provision of industrial education for Maori and other social ‘deviants’ depended upon their social organisation. I explore this further in Chapter Four when I critically analyse the discourses of larrikinism.

identities were more overt in some settlements than in others.¹⁷⁵ As Maxine Stephenson (2000) cogently argues provincial differences in the provision of schooling, for example, were crucial to developing and sustaining collective provincial identity. She suggests that

the provision, administration and organization of schooling reflected such things as local organizational structures, cultural traditions and economic circumstances of the community [and] the outcomes ... of that schooling [sustained] as sense of collective community identity in the young settlements, which stood apart from social divisions and individual differences.¹⁷⁶

Section Six: Arcadia or Utopia?

The conceptualisation of the colony as an Arcadia, in idealised terms and realised form, pivoted on assumptions of ready access to land for all classes. As I have shown, such assumptions are not unproblematic. Neither are claims that the possibility of land ownership was the main attraction of emigration for British working and lower middle classes. Of all of the available emigration destinations at the time, land for agricultural use in New Zealand was generally more expensive and therefore further out of the reach of those with little or no capital.¹⁷⁷ Not only that, the sheer distance of New Zealand from Britain created resistance to emigration. Travel was expensive, and the distance prohibitive in terms of people maintaining family ties. Assisted passages were one strategy for addressing the expense of emigration for the working classes, though it worked against attracting greater numbers of the moneyed classes.

While Belich (1996) agrees that Arcadian imagery played an important role in the ‘crusade’ propaganda, it was not the only discourse mobilised to attract emigrants. Because New Zealand, despite claims otherwise, was not naturally abundant the ‘propagandists’ suggested it was necessary to harness and manage the potential of the land. They drew upon Utopian ideas of ‘collective action’ here. Collective action took the shape of an initial “state like organisation” of settlement by the companies and provincial governments. The Utopian element was underpinned by laissez-faire capitalism which, initially at least, assumed less distinction between the public and the private spheres. It was deemed quite reasonable for the “free enterprise” of the individual to be ‘state’ assisted.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Stephenson, M. (2000) op.cit: 138

¹⁷⁶ Ibid: 144

¹⁷⁷ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 284

¹⁷⁸ Ibid: 305

There was a more positive emphasis on urbanisation in the Utopian vision of New Zealand. Urban areas were seen not just as dens of inequity, and iniquity, but as 'seats of civilisation'. In this vision, the colony would combine the positive features of a rural idyll - "flocks and herds and golden crops" - with the features of 'civilised life' - "cathedrals and libraries" - offered by cities and towns. The Utopian version of colonial society, if still highly idealised, was less narrowly defined than the Arcadian one. It attempted to meld together the 'best' of both worlds, the old and the new, where abundance would be the result of "British insemination of raw New Zealand nature, and fast, artificial town - led by growth powered by progressive collectivities".¹⁷⁹ In this more complex reading of the vision that underpinned settlement two primary discursive constructions of the colony, Utopia and Arcadia, vied for supremacy. Each discourse dominated at different historical junctures but both contributed to the constitution of "an instant collective identity" that was at once "Arcadian and rural and British and progressive", that is modern.¹⁸⁰

While their versions of 'Arcadia' differ, both authors foreground the idea of progress as the foundational discursive construct that powerfully mediated social formation and as a key element in the constitution of a Pakeha national identity. For the drivers of settlement and the settlers themselves, New Zealand promised the possibility of extending that concept to its logical limits because it was supposedly free of the entrenched socio-economic systems and environmental constraints that characterised the English context. In a sense the colony was perceived as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate upon which the vision, or more accurately visions, of 'modernity' could first be inscribed and then become embodied in the form of a progressive, 'egalitarian' nation.

An important contradiction here, though, is that if the idea of 'progress' was absolutely central to visions of and aspirations for the colony - whether Utopian or Arcadian - as I have already signalled this concept was far from neutral. It was, at least in terms of its origins, a class specific idea within which social stratification not only by class but race and gender as well were considered natural and 'god-given'. As I suggest below deeply embedded ideas about race and gender influenced the forms social relations assumed in the colony, and they underpinned different ideas about what constituted responsibility and respectability amongst the settlers. Thus from the outset, the operation of responsibility and respectability as a rules of recognition and realisation was mediated by all of these axes of difference.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid: 306

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

Section Seven: Gender and race in the emerging colonial imaginary

Fundamental beliefs about sexual and racial difference, as I noted above, were already deeply inscribed in the individual and collective psyches of the settlers before their arrival in the nascent colony. Gender relations, for example, were underpinned by embedded understandings of femininity and masculinity that were the product of an ancient patriarchal system within which women were positioned as naturally inferior to men. Despite shifting conceptualisations of the 'nature' of women and men which engendered ideas about the moral superiority of *some* women that became bound up with new conceptions of the social, sexual difference remained pivotal to individual identification, social relations and socio-political and economic organisation in 19th century Western societies.

In the early phase of settlement, the boundaries that demarcated the gendered division of labour in the colony were necessarily more fluid. Settler families' subsistence depended as much on women's domestic production as it did upon the labour of men.¹⁸¹ This changed with increasing industrialisation, urbanisation and the development of the goldfields which enabled men's participation in wage labour, re-establishing a more traditional pattern of gender relations and women's greater dependence on men. As I suggest in Chapter Four women's reliance on men became highly problematic for the state in the context of an emerging depression when large numbers of them deserted their families to find work, leaving women and children destitute. There, I show that State and public concern about increasingly obvious poverty amongst the urban working classes contributed to a moral panic about 'larrikinism' in the 1880s.

Any latitude that might have eventuated in the gendering of identity because of early colonial conditions was also circumscribed by the efforts of the nascent state to impose a 'cult of domesticity' in the colony, partly in the interests of ensuring social order.¹⁸² Although, I would argue that given the embeddedness of sexual differentiation and assumptions about the socialising and moralising role of (bourgeois) women in the Victorian social imaginary, it was also about efforts to normalise social relations in order to construct a modern nation-state. The point here is that this model of social relations was underpinned by narrow bourgeois conceptions of femininity tied up with women's nurturing role. Thus what counted as responsibility and respectability for settler women, despite the life realities of the working class majority, was primarily defined in domestic terms. Colonial women, within this discourse, were 'returned' to their rightful place in the private sphere where they could exert

¹⁸¹ James, B. and Saville-Smith, K. (1994) *Gender, Culture and Power*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

¹⁸² Ibid: 33-40

their moral influence over unruly men and unsocialised children. This version of femininity was not only constructed against understandings of masculine difference it was constituted in opposition to the social danger of ‘fallen’ and ‘defective’ women, the antitheses of respectable, sound middle class femininity. As Margaret Tennant (1992) has pointed out, middle class colonial women played a significant role in the regulation and reform of their ‘rough’ others.¹⁸³ However, as I explain in Chapter Four, the lack of a substantial enough philanthropic middle class fraction in the colony rationalised more intensive state intervention in ‘social welfare’ more broadly.

While gender identity and responsibility/respectability for settler women were absolutely bound up with bourgeois conceptions of femininity and family, masculinity in the colony was constructed around an apparently class neutral ethic of hard work.¹⁸⁴ I noted above that the work ethic was a fundamental aspect of an emergent Victorian imaginary in the British context, informed by earlier conceptualisations of moral and virtuous subjectivity. In the colony it was central, as a practice and as an ethos, to the development of an ordered society, a nascent economy and respectable masculine selves. Together “government pragmatism and immigrant hopes fused in an ethos that idealised vigorous work and its rewards”.¹⁸⁵ The idealisation of the work ethic and perceptions of the respectable working class as the ideal colonialists was evident in the immigrant literature I discussed above. The internalisation of the bourgeois ethos that underpinned it was, in turn, reflected in an intense investment in ideas about the role of work in the assumption of new identities; “the experiences of hard work and achievement were ... vital to an immigrant’s sense of self, a *newly made self*”.¹⁸⁶ As I show in Chapter Four, deeply entrenched ideas about the relationship between work, self-sufficiency and respectability mediated how the settlers perceived their ‘rough’ others, including the poor, the ‘vagrant’ and the deviant.

An important element in the constitution of these ‘newly made’ masculine selves was the discursive dissolution of class difference that underpinned conceptualisations of the relationship between hard work, individual and collective identification and the myth of male

¹⁸³ Tennant, M. (1992) ‘“Magdalens and Moral Imbeciles”: Women’s Homes in Nineteenth Century New Zealand’. In Brookes, B., MacDonald, C. and Tennant, M. (eds) *Women in History 2: Essays on Women in New Zealand* (2nd edn). Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books Ltd.

¹⁸⁴ McClure, M. (1993) ‘On Work: Perceptions of Work in Late Nineteenth Century New Zealand, 1870-1900’. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid: ii

¹⁸⁶ Ibid: 1, my emphasis.

egalitarianism.¹⁸⁷ The imbrication of an egalitarian masculine identity with work pivoted on conceptualisations of the promise of social mobility in the secular sense of individual material progress which was linked with imperialist conceptions of modernity. Work which had been conceived as “bondage” in the old society was recontextualised, discursively anyway, as “freedom” in the new.¹⁸⁸ Thus, masculinity and modernity were bound together in the ‘making up’ of an emerging individual and national identity in the colony against the parent culture.

The recontextualisation of the Victorian trinity of individualism (self-sufficiency), materialism (social mobility) and moralism (the virtue of hard work) in the colony was not only differentiated by gender but also by race. As well as being constituted in opposition to a privatised, domestic feminine subjectivity, colonial masculinity in its imbrication with an ethos of hard work pivoted on differentiation from a racial other. Assumptions about the inherent laziness of Maori underpinned colonial discourses and there was an obvious consonance between evangelist and imperialist understandings of racial difference, both of which pivoted on entrenched ideas about work as the marker of civilisation. Samuel Marsden, for example, exhorted his missionaries to educate Maori in the virtue of hard work, arguing that “[t]he attention of the heathen can be gained and their vagrant habits corrected, only by the arts” of honest labour, that is.¹⁸⁹ Beliefs about work’s civilising virtue were clear in colonial politician Julius Vogel’s (1878) assertion that “[i]n the love of work lie the boundary lines between the civilised and uncivilised races”.¹⁹⁰

For both moral and material evangelists the education of Maori was thus crucial to the civilisation and colonisation process. A concern with the education of Maori women and girls, for their moral improvement and for the acculturation of their people through them, underpinned early missionary initiatives that pre-dated annexation by nearly two decades.¹⁹¹ The establishment of missionary schooling for Maori girls in 1823 was closely followed by education for their brothers in 1827. From the outset Maori education was designed to

¹⁸⁷ Lloyd Jones (2000) beautifully captures a sense of this egalitarian rhetoric and the imbrication of male identity and work (and sport) that remains, despite significant social change, a powerful signifier of ‘New Zealandness’, in his novel about the first New Zealand national rugby team, the 1905 Originals. Amongst others the team comprised: “Billy Stead ... bootmaker; Bunny Abbott, farrier and professional runner; Dave Gallaher ... foundryman ... Frank Glasgow ... bank officer ... Mona Thompson ... civil servant.” Jones, L. (2000) op.cit: 9.

¹⁸⁸ McClure, M. (1993) op.cit: 12

¹⁸⁹ Cited in Lyneham, P. (n.d) op.cit: no page number.

¹⁹⁰ From Vogel’s address to the Royal Colonial Institute in London; *New Zealand and the South Sea Islands, and Their Relation to the Empire*, cited in McClure, M. (1993) op.cit: 13.

¹⁹¹ Fitzgerald, T. (1995) ‘In a Different Voice: a Case Study of Marianne and Jane Williams, Missionary Educators in Northern New Zealand, 1823-1835’. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

assimilate them not only to European models of family life and gender relations but to their 'proper' position, predicated on assumptions of their racial inferiority, as a rural working class. In the 1840s the early colonial state, concerned about Maori disaffection with missionary schooling and driven by the necessity to hasten their assimilation in order to intensify and expand settlement, intervened in Maori education. State intervention at this time laid the foundations for a paternalistic and segregated Native School system of vocational education for Maori that remained in place until 1969. Education was thus key for the 'respectabilisation' of Maori, and their assimilation of European life ways and capitalist sociality were its pre-conditions.

Amongst the settlers the relationship between education and respectability differed by class and altered over time. As education became more closely tied to social mobility for the working classes, it also became more entwined with conceptions of responsibility and respectability. For the middle class minority, schooling was essential early on for their social reproduction and thus the reinforcement of their moral superiority as signifiers of respectability. I examine colonial education in more depth in Chapter Four

Above I have argued that deeply embedded ideas about gender, race and class underpinned the formation of social relations during the settlement period. In Chapter Three I show how state formation contributed to the recontextualisation and institutionalisation of socially produced 'truths' about gender and race, embedding them in the colonial social imaginary to the degree that they became some of its central constitutive elements. State led education played a key role in this process and was a crucial mechanism for both the constitution and regulation of gendered, classed and racial identities by the state.

Concluding remarks

As I argue above, the colony was generally perceived as *tabula rasa*, both by the drivers of colonisation and the settlers who emigrated here. It held the promise for colonists, of all classes, of building a society that did not exactly replicate the socio-economic structures, and constraints, of the parent culture. Visions of the shape this society would take, however, were sometimes disparate and in conflict with each other depending on the social class of those who conceived them. Class as a means of political and collective identification, though, was anathema in the nascent colony. Middle class norms, values and aspirations had been already been thoroughly instilled in much of the population across class boundaries before settlement, and these mediated conceptions of responsibility and respectability despite the differentiation of those ideas by class, race and gender. The repudiation of class politics and the bourgeois value system were, perhaps, unifying threads

that enabled the coexistence of competing and often contradictory visions of and aspirations for settlement amongst the colonists. These threads would be woven together to create the fabric of a nation and national identity within which capitalist sociality would be thoroughly naturalised.

Other factors also worked to embed and normalise gendered and racialised conceptions of responsibility and respectability, reinforcing the bourgeois ethos and model of capitalist sociality that underpinned them, more deeply during social formation. As I illustrate in the next chapter, the shape that colonial politics took was crucial to this process. The formation of the state in New Zealand was driven by those for whom these values were 'commonsense'; they were by then 'natural', unquestionable and probably to a large degree unconscious. In that chapter I explore the emergence of the state in New Zealand, its imbrication with the society and the role of this interrelationship in instantiating and embedding the social and economic relations of capitalism during the colonisation process. It shows that from the outset, despite the egalitarian rhetoric that underpinned emigration 'propaganda', colonial politics were exclusionary and political power was class based. This was one of the features of the settlement process, though not the only one as I have already illustrated, that militated against the development of a collective working class political and social identity that in any way resembled what was in the process of emerging and consolidating in the English context. The lack of a politically strong and socially organised working class mediated the institutionalisation of middle class cultural hegemony and the emergence a 'middle class society' in New Zealand.

Chapter Three

Nation building: politics and state formation

Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye.¹⁹²

Introduction

The distinctive pattern of social formation which began to emerge in the colonial context was, as I have shown, the result of a complex process involving the transplantation of some Victorian cultural structures and norms and the rejection of others. The nascent colonial society was paradoxical to the extent that despite a self-conscious rejection of economic class as a means of socio-political collective identification and, ostensibly, social organisation, it was deeply imbued by a Victorian bourgeois value system underpinned by three interrelated principles-individualism, materialism and moralism. These principles mediated conceptions about responsibility and respectability in the colony, and they underpinned ideas about 'egalitarianism' and the myth of the 'classless' nation upon which a Pakeha national identity would be built. The shared repudiation of class politics and the deeply entrenched bourgeois value system across class boundaries informed the coexistence of competing and sometimes contradictory visions of and aspirations for settlement that contributed to the creation a colonial imaginary, and the emergence of a 'middle class society'. Here I explore the role of state formation in this process.

I draw conceptually on Gramscian and Foucaultian notions of power and hegemony. From Gramsci I take the idea that culture is a key dimension of hegemonic power and that the cultural hegemony of a particular group is the product of the institutionalisation of particular ideas about morality, certain customs and context specific traditions which are the result of "organic relations between State ... and civil society".¹⁹³ I draw on Foucault's notion of 'the micro-physics of power'¹⁹⁴ which centres discourse in social relations of power. Together these ideas enable a sophisticated conceptualisation of how hegemony operates, "not simply through practices of coercion or ... practices of consent, but also by way of other

¹⁹² Bhabha, H. (ed) (1990) *Nation and Narration*. London; New York: Routledge: 1.

¹⁹³ Roseberry, W. (1994) 'Hegemony and the Language of Contention'. In Gilbert, D. and Nugent, M. *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*. Durham, Duke University Press: 355-366.

¹⁹⁴ Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. London: Penquin Books.

practices, techniques and methods that infiltrate minds and bodies as well as cultural values and behaviours as apparently naturally occurring properties".¹⁹⁵

I use this expansive understanding of the state/society relation against Bedggood's (1980) Marxist characterisation of the colonial state as an 'agent' "of the imperial State", whose primary role was to extend "the expansion of British capitalism" by ensuring the reproduction of class relations of production.¹⁹⁶ From a classical Marxist perspective, production is the primary basis of social formation and the class relations that inevitably order it, and "class is used in no other sense than to mean relations of production".¹⁹⁷ The 'ruling class' is able to dominate and exploit the labour of the 'subordinate class' - the *economic base* - because it controls the means of production. The reproduction of that dominance, that is, "the submission of the exploited class"¹⁹⁸ is secured through the power of "bourgeois ideology" - "capitalism ... as the only reality" - which permeates all social institutions that comprise the superstructure including the family and especially the state. Here the state, because it ensures the hegemony of the ruling class - by which Bedggood means the *imposition* of their *will* - is nothing more or less than an 'agent' for their interests. At the very least, this narrow understanding of hegemony overlooks the ways its cultural underpinnings must resonate with the "authentic longings" of the population in order for it to be internalised and perform ideologically.¹⁹⁹

Bedggood's definition is problematic, as well, because he assumes an homogeneous 'state thing';²⁰⁰ an entity within which the interests of its actors coincide and are reducible to the creation and smooth operation of a viable capitalist economic system. He also implies a separation between state and society. In this chapter I challenge both of these assumptions. In the first instance I will show that the state was a "field of struggle"²⁰¹ between the interests and ideologies of its key actors. Secondly, while I agree that the state played a significant role in ensuring the socio-cultural hegemony of the middle classes in the colonial context,

¹⁹⁵ Olssen, M. (1999) *Michel Foucault: Materialism and Education*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey: 104.

¹⁹⁶ Bedggood, D. (1980) *Rich and Poor in New Zealand: A Critique of Class, Politics and Ideology*. Sydney, Auckland: Allen and Unwin: 32

¹⁹⁷ Ibid: 11

¹⁹⁸ Ibid: 12

¹⁹⁹ Zizek, S. (1999) *Ticklish Subject: An Essay in Political Ontology*. New York: Verso. Zizek argues "the ruling ideology, in order to be operative, has to incorporate a series of features in which the exploited/dominated majority will be able to recognize its authentic longings" (p. 184).

²⁰⁰ Blom Hansen, T. and Stepputat, F (eds) (2001) *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

²⁰¹ Abrams, P. (1988) 'Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State, 1977'. *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1 (No.1): 67-71

exemplified in the emergence of the 'middle class society', I argue it could do this because of the imbrication between state and society:

State power is not 'superstructural': it is centrally - which does not mean exclusively - through state formation that the social relations of production and reproduction which underpin a civilization which is bourgeois and patriarchal have been made hegemonic, though 'the State is not generally the source of such relations'.²⁰²

In both liberal and Marxist readings of colonisation, the hegemony of the 'ruling class' is attributed to the relationship between their economic power and their political influence. That there was significant overlap between economics and politics which contributed to the state form that emerged from the settlement process is clear. But that state form derived as much from the struggles of these actors as it did from any coincidence of their economic and other interests. I argue that the formation of the 'historical bloc'²⁰³ in the colonial context occurred out of a complex process of struggle and accommodation between the 'gentry' and middle classes.

This materialised, at the level of 'political society',²⁰⁴ in the eventual formation of a 'paternal' state based upon the political alliance of conservatives and liberals. Their coalition was made possible in part, but not only, because of the overlap between economic and political power in the colonial context. More significant from my viewpoint was that despite ideological tensions between these actors, particularly around the idea of democracy, they shared hostility toward radical working class politics²⁰⁵ and their values intersected at particular points. They were able to align because of the embeddedness in the Victorian social imaginary of 'possessive individualism' which underpinned assumptions about the materialism/morality relation. In this way a central aspect of the bourgeois moral ethos, and the operation of responsibility and respectability as rules of recognition and realisation, was institutionalised in the state. As I show in the next chapter, education was a key means by which this ethos was recontextualised by the state.

²⁰² Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) *The Great Arch: English State Formation As Cultural Revolution*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell: 200

²⁰³ Demetriou, D. (2001) 'Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique'. *Theory and Society* 30 (No.3): 337-361. He draws on Gramsci here.

²⁰⁴ Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith (eds) London: Lawrence Wishart.

²⁰⁵ Orwin, D. (1999) 'Conservatism in New Zealand'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

Section One: Colonial politics: an overview

From the beginning of the colonisation process, and for much of the settlement period, the locus of political power in the colony was narrow. Initially, political power was situated with Wakefield's capitalist 'aristocracy'.²⁰⁶ A 'constitution' was drawn up by the directors of the New Zealand Company which represented a 'code of law' laying down the terms for the governance of the - mainly working class-settlers, who themselves played no role in its formulation.²⁰⁷ Their ready agreement to these terms may have been motivated by a degree of expediency since passage was conditional upon it. It also represented a generally unquestioning acceptance of the political dominance of the upper classes, still a salient feature of English social organization at the time.²⁰⁸ The 'constitution', however, was illegal and the responsibility for colonial governance was quickly assumed by representatives of the British state following annexation. Both of the colony's governors were high ranking naval men and colonial administration was dominated by professional men and members of the 'gentry'. Although the political dominance of the gentry would be reasonably short-lived, some of these men would remain influential members of the colony's political elite.

The political sphere in the colony was contentious from the outset. Following annexation the colonial government was under enormous pressure, both externally and internally. Essentially it was caught between the Charbydis of the British state's expectation it would be self sufficient,²⁰⁹ and the Scylla of trying to reconcile the mutually exclusive interests of Maori and settlers.²¹⁰ In order for the colony to be self-sufficient a viable economy had to be created. This pivoted in the first instance upon the acquisition of substantial amounts of Maori land, and utilising it to attract greater numbers of settlers into the colony in order to make it 'productive'. Whatever degree of humanitarian commitment to Maori well-being the British state may have had was largely subordinate to the practicalities of building a capitalist economy, and managing increasing political pressure from the settlers.

The desire for self-governance was a powerful imperative amongst the settlers, and autocratic government under Governor Grey, amongst other things, engendered increasing resistance to control of the colony by the British state. Political activism, though, was

²⁰⁶ Belich, J. (1996) *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*. London, Auckland: Allen Lane, Penguin Press. Belich suggests this group was a admixture of upper middle class professionals and "lesser gentry" (p. 323).

²⁰⁷ Dalziel, R (1992) 'The Politics of Settlement', in G. W. Rice (ed) *Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed). Auckland: Oxford University Press.

²⁰⁸ Dalziel, R (1996) op.cit: 87

²⁰⁹ Gardner, W. J. (1992). 'A Colonial Economy'. In G. W. Rice (ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed). Auckland: Oxford University Press. New Zealand's status as a Crown colony was conditional upon "the principle that its government would be self-supporting" (p. 59).

²¹⁰ Dalziel, R. (1996) op.cit: 88

confined to the upper and middle classes rather than a broad cross section of the emerging society. It was “politically aware gentry and middle-class families” in the New Zealand Company, and Canterbury and Otago settlements that applied increasing pressure on the colonial government.²¹¹

The suspension in 1848 of an initial Constitution Act passed by the British parliament in 1842, further galvanised settler activism. This took shape in the establishment, in Wellington and Nelson, of Settlers’ Constitutional Associations. Membership comprised a very narrow section of the population and the resulting Associations “were the preserve of the wealthier, better educated – [male] settlers”.²¹² That is not to say that these men shared a unified social, economic or political vision for the colony. Indeed “politics [was such] a maze of competing and conflicting interests” it lacked clear divisions or distinct party lines and even land policy, a fundamental issue at this time, was not “sufficient to sustain a division into fixed political parties”.²¹³

The institution of provincial governance and a central parliament in the colony followed the passage of a second Constitution in 1852. The Act established a general assembly comprising an elected House of Representatives and a nominated Legislative Council. The colony was divided into six provinces governed by elected superintendents and provincial councils. The councils, however, had limited powers of legislation and any laws passed could be vetoed by the governor so they were ultimately “subordinate to the General Assembly”.²¹⁴

In effect, the governance of the provinces and the colony itself was controlled by a small male elite, many of whom continued to dominate colonial politics after the disestablishment of the provinces in the 1870s. For a significant part of the settlement, politics was effectively the exclusive domain of what one commentator has called the colony’s “business politicians”.²¹⁵ While the overlap of business and political interests is an accepted ‘fact’ of New Zealand history, there are differing views about the impact of that relationship on social and state formation in the colonial context. For some historians this relationship had very negative implications for the colony because, in their view, it contributed both to the

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid: 94-95

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Gardner, W.J. (1992) op.cit: 24. While Gardner is referring specifically here to “the close informal partnership between the [Vogel] government and the banks” in the 1870s, I use the term more loosely to include the landowning politicians.

economic hardship experienced by the settlers and to the embedding of class relations of production in the colonial context.²¹⁶ For others, this mutuality was both an “inevitable and even constructive element in politics and economic development”.²¹⁷ Commentators who take this view point to the crucial nature of the relationship between politics – as the basis for the nascent state - and economic development. Jamie Belich (1996), for example, argues that “[p]ublic and private providentially converged ... Both were run by the same people, and both were locked into the progress industry”.²¹⁸

While the economic dominance²¹⁹ of this minority male elite was a significant contributory factor in their control of political power, it was not the only one. Another important element was the widespread political apathy which was characteristic of the period. Given the particular demands of the settlement process this was hardly surprising. Most settlers had neither the time for political activism nor the income to support the role of political representative.²²⁰ As well, the fragmentation of the population geographically mediated the possibility of becoming actively involved in the political process. In addition, franchise in the early stages of colonisation was conditional upon property ownership as I note below. This could be rationalised because of entrenched ideas about morality and materialism – expressed in this case in terms of beliefs about ‘property and propriety’²²¹ - that I noted in Chapter Two were fundamental to the Victorian social imaginary. The conditions attached to franchise thus acted as an effective gate-keeping mechanism, ensuring that only some settlers were able to engage politically.

The narrow locus of political power in gentry and middle class men during much of the settlement period was both enabled and maintained by the exclusionary nature of the political process. Prior to the Constitution Act of 1852 franchise was accorded only to

²¹⁶ Sutch, W. (1941) *Poverty and Progress in New Zealand*. Wellington: Modern Books. Sutch characterises these actors as a “conservative oligarchy” made up of New Zealand’s property owning “ruling class” and argues the “machine of the state” was run in order to further their interests (pp. 86-87). He claims that “New Zealand was ... an example of what happened to colonies when *laissez-faire*, or the unregulated freedom of action of owners of capital, is the rule for getting rich” (ibid). He assumes, like Bedggood (1980), an homogeneous capitalist class as the repository of economic and political power in the colony. Such assumptions overlook not only the competing economic interests of these actors but their ideological differences as well, implying a more homogeneous unified state than actually existed.

²¹⁷ Dalziel, R. (1992) op.cit: 106

²¹⁸ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit: 350

²¹⁹ Fairburn, M. (1989) *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850-1900*. Auckland: Auckland University Press. As Fairburn points out “by 1882 one per cent of private landowners held over 40 per cent of the total value of landed assets” (p. 84, my emphasis).

²²⁰ Dalziel, R. (1992) op.cit: 93

²²¹ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit.

landowning white males, who were entitled to plural votes based on the number of properties they owned.²²² In 1867, the vote was extended to other 'respectable' males over twenty one with a minimum of property.²²³ Maori men were granted suffrage with the introduction of Maori seats in parliament at this time as well.²²⁴ In 1879 a residential qualification was added, granting the vote to men on the basis of their residency in a region for at least one year. The residential qualification continued to exclude the large numbers of itinerant working class men forced to be transient in search of employment, as well all women. In 1893 New Zealand women, including Maori were given the vote, though franchise still depended upon property ownership.²²⁵

Section Two: Politics, property and class

The exclusionary nature of the political process had implications for the lack of development of a politically active working class in the colony comparable to the British context. But it contributed to this rather than causing it. As Jane Jenson (1990) has argued, politics involves "actors' efforts to carve out a constituency for themselves by mobilising support for their preferred formulation of their own collective identity (and often that of their protagonists) and for their enumeration of their interests".²²⁶ As I argued in the previous chapter several factors undermined the construction of a unified collective working class identity in the colony. Not least was the quite self consciousness rejection of 'tight' class as a means of collective identification and social organisation during settlement.²²⁷

As I argued in Chapter Two, the repudiation of class as a means of collective political identification by the settlers was partly a response to the socio-political and economic upheavals in 19th century England and political rejection of its rigid social system. It was also tied up at a more subliminal level, I suggested, with the long process of embourgeoisement experienced by the English. This process embedded the merits of possessive individualism - what Corrigan and Sayer (1985) have termed "the cardinal middle class socio-economic virtues"²²⁸ - in part through the recontextualisation and institutionalisation of liberal ideas about the inalienability of property rights and freedom from state intervention which were

²²² A few Maori men who had individual title to land were able to vote in the 1853 election, but the majority were excluded because land 'ownership' was communal.

²²³ See Sinclair, K. (2000) *History of New Zealand*. Auckland: Penguin, and Dalziel, R. (1996) op.cit

²²⁴ Maori representation was minimal however given that out of 105 seats in parliament Maori held four.

²²⁵ All women granted the right to own property in 1884, but this was still highly problematic for Maori women in terms of franchise because of communal land ownership.

²²⁶ Jenson, J. (1990) 'Representations in Crisis: The Roots of Canada's Permeable Fordism'. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* XX111 (No.4) December: 653-683: 662.

²²⁷ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit.

²²⁸ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit: 138

mobilised in the development of laissez faire capitalism. These secular ideas aligned closely with Protestant values including the work ethic, thrift and self-reliance, and together they formed the basis for deeply held beliefs about a relationship between materialism and moralism, property and propriety. The degree to which this bourgeois ethos was internalised by the settler population was reflected in the powerful imperative to achieve self-sufficiency and social mobility through land ownership that motivated emigration. This drive was underpinned not simply by settlers' economic concerns, but by an equally powerful desire for the respectability an 'independency' would confer upon them. Mobilising politically was far less important for the migrant working classes than first surviving, and then "getting ahead".²²⁹

The combination of an exclusionary political system and the broad rejection of class politics amongst the settlers meant that there was little working class political representation until the 1890s. The 1887 election was "the first in which class interests emerged in an organized form".²³⁰ It was also the moment when "national issues took precedence over local and regional issues",²³¹ though there would not be an issue based parliament until the 1890s. Another way of framing this point might be to argue that this moment signalled the first time in which class interests other than those of the gentry and middle classes found a forum. Working class interests would, however, be largely interpreted through a bourgeois lens and represented by middle class men for much of the 19th century.

While the relationship between political rights and property ownership ensured that the dominance of particular social groups in the colonial context, it was not arbitrary nor was it simply the result of cynical 'machinations' of the 'ruling class'. Instead, beliefs about this relationship derived from the central role of ideas about possessive individualism in the Victorian social imaginary. By then human beings had come to be understood as acquisitive by nature, and the working class "because they were not fully part of an acquisitive individualism, were not fully participants in human life".²³² The assumption here was that "the working class could not achieve full citizenship until they acquired a stake in the community through property ownership".²³³ A fundamental element of this assumption was the belief that property ownership conferred respectability. And, as I argued in the preceding Chapter, respectability was inextricably entwined with morality.

²²⁹ Belich, J. (1996) op.cit.

²³⁰ Ibid: 109

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Orwin, D. (1999) op.cit: 111

²³³ Ibid: 112

The political exclusion of those without property could thus be rationalised in terms of their lack of respectability and morality and, at a deeper level, of full humanity. Conversely, in the early phase of colonisation the fitness of the gentry to govern was predicated upon and justified by assumptions (their own and those of others) about their inherent moral superiority:

The most respectable emigrants, more especially if they have a great deal of property, and are well connected in this country, lead and govern the emigration of the other classes. These are the emigrants whose presence in a colony most beneficially affects its standard of morals and manners, and would supply the most beneficial element of colonial government.²³⁴

Section Three: Politics, gender and race

The exclusions built into the political process had racialised and gendered dimensions as well as class based ones. Women and Maori were denied political rights because they were, for cultural reasons on both accounts, excluded from property ownership. For Maori individual ownership did not exist prior to colonisation because they did not understand themselves as individuals to begin with.²³⁵ The lack of a system of individual ownership among other things was perceived as evidence of the inferiority of Maori, of their 'barbarian' status. The assimilation by Maori of Pakeha norms including those of possessive individualism was perceived, as I have already noted, to be absolutely essential by missionaries to 'civilise' and 'Christianise' Maori. For the colonial state, assimilating Maori to Pakeha norms of ownership was also a central mechanism through which their land could be acquired.²³⁶

As for women, I noted in the previous chapter that a long tradition of patriarchal relations was based upon conceptions of women as fundamentally different from and inferior to men. Possessive individualism and political subjectivity rested upon the notion of rationality as the signifier of full humanity. Women, because they were associated with Nature, were understood as irrational and therefore neither equipped to manage the responsibility of ownership nor that of political citizenship. Although these ideas were being fiercely debated

²³⁴ Wakefield, E. (2001) *A View of the Art of Colonization, with Present Reference to the British Empire; In the Letters Between a Statesman and a Colonist*. Ontario, Canada: Batoche Books Ltd (originally published 1849): 41

²³⁵ Walker, R. (1990) *Struggle Without End: Ka whawhai Tonu Matou*. Auckland: Penguin Press. Ranginui Walker points out that Maori conceived themselves as both guardians of and linked spiritually to the land.

²³⁶ Stephenson, M. (2000) 'Creating New Zealanders: Education and the Formation of the State and the Building of the Nation'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

in the 19th century, claims for women's property and political rights continued to be informed by beliefs about women's fundamental difference from men. Arguments for their inclusion in the political sphere, however, were predicated on emerging ideas about the moral superiority of (bourgeois) women to men.

Settler women were granted property rights in 1884, and much has been made in liberal histories of the comparatively early enfranchisement of New Zealand women in 1893. This move has often been read as evidence of the radical egalitarian nature of the colonial society. More recent critical work, however, has shown that the desire to include women in the political sphere was underpinned by the assumption that they would "keep it clean".²³⁷ More importantly because of the association of women with both the 'social' and the 'moral', which I discussed in the introductory chapter, their engagement in politics was perceived as one means to achieve the "social regeneration and moral improvement" of colonial society essential to the creation of a modern nation-state.²³⁸

While the political exclusion of significant numbers of the population resulted in a relatively homogeneous House of Representatives in terms of class, race and gender, the interests and ideologies of these political actors were far from identical. For much of the settlement period provincialism significantly shaped colonial politics.²³⁹ There were conflicts between provincial governments, and within them, as the political elite vied for the supremacy of their particular social vision and their specific economic interests. The political sphere was the terrain of discursive struggles, between the gentry elite and the middle classes and fractions within the middle classes, that would play an important role in shaping and consolidating the emerging nation. Perhaps the most significant of these from my viewpoint was the struggle over democracy.

Section Four: Constructing a democracy: 'secularising' conservatism and embedding liberalism

Liberal historians have tended to overstate the egalitarian impulse behind state and social formation during settlement, claiming a unitary vision of political and social relations which was modelled on American democracy.²⁴⁰ Not only did the realities of provincialism undermine the possibility of such a vision, in his recent doctoral thesis David Orwin (1999)

²³⁷ Orwin, D. (1999) op.cit: 115-117

²³⁸ Ibid: 2

²³⁹ Ibid

²⁴⁰ See for example Arnold, R. (1976) 'The Village and the Globe: Aspects of the Social Origin of Schooling in Victorian New Zealand'. *Journal of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society* 5 (No. 2): 1-12.

suggests that political and social relations in New Zealand “fell uncomfortably” between English and American models of democracy.²⁴¹ The central difference between these models was that while American democracy was entwined with its “political life” because of its “revolutionary break” with English social structure, England was able - because of its” historical continuity and habits of deference” - to “adopt democratic forms without at core admitting democratic substance”.²⁴²

In other words, the English variety of democracy left class based social relations, and the assumptions that underpinned them, largely intact. The maintenance of the English constitutional and legal framework in New Zealand allowed for resistance, in the political sphere, to “subversive notions about men and women enjoying inalienable rights and liberties derived from nature, [and] the belief that the people were sovereign”.²⁴³ The degree to which this form of democracy dominated during the early years of settlement is reflected by the exclusionary nature of colonial politics until late in the century.

The idea of democracy was itself a significant bone of contention amongst the political elite and the discursive struggle over it permeated colonial politics, inflecting public issues such as the debates about larrikinism that I examine in the next chapter. This section explores conservative resistance to discourses of democracy. In it I show that disputes about democracy were characterised not only by contending views about individual sovereignty and citizenship, but by differing beliefs among the gentry and middle classes about their social roles. The gentry were doomed to lose this struggle, not only because of the powerful ideological influence of ideas about democracy at the time but because the realities of settlement precluded the possibility of reinscribing a social structure that could maintain their socio-political dominance.

In the conservative view of the colonial gentry the notion of democracy was anathema. The idea of a democratic society went against the belief of the English aristocracy in the naturalness of social stratification, and their conviction that the privileges accorded them because of their class were accompanied by moral obligations to those lower on the social scale. Against notions of the sovereignty of the people and of equality that underpinned democratic ideals, traditional conservatism was framed by belief that:

²⁴¹ Orwin, D. (1999) op.cit: 11

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

in a naturally hierarchical society and a privileged class independent of the everyday pursuit of wealth aristocracy was a trust for the benefit of society, it could appeal to mutual duties and obligations and far loftier ideals than simple materialism.²⁴⁴

One mechanism through which conservatives attempted to replicate an aristocratic system during settlement was education. The first two grammar schools Wanganui Collegiate and Christ College, established 1854 and 1850 respectively, were modelled upon the English public school. These were considered essential to the social reproduction of this elitist stratum of colonial society and its governance. 'Patrician' conservatives "hoped to produce the gentleman rulers of the future" through an education designed to "select the elite, perpetuate it, and thus preserve it".²⁴⁵ Failure of this plan was inevitable, however, because "like other projects to establish a permanent conservative ruling elite, the gentlemanly ideal was never practical in a nascent society".²⁴⁶ Colonial society was too fluid; it lacked both the traditional social structures necessary to support an aristocracy and the desire to reinstate them. Without both of these elements the aristocracy was redundant since

an authentic aristocracy must have legitimising functions that justify its privileged social and political position. English aristocracy acquired its legitimacy through its control of elite functions exercised through generations as prerogatives, and further through its cultural dominance in a class-structured society. Aristocracy was part of a complex social and cultural arrangement that once transplanted to a generically classless colonial society lost its logic and legitimacy. It slowly dissolved into the democratic mass.²⁴⁷

It was impossible to legitimate the social function of an aristocracy in the colony, because one of the powerful motivations behind the emigration of the mainly working class population was the desire to escape the very kind of social organisation upon which such legitimacy was premised. Moreover as I noted above Wakefield's 'gentry' were mainly upper middle class, there were few actual aristocrats and these tended to be 'second sons' seeking their fortunes outside of the aristocratic hierarchy that existed in Britain. The colony not only lacked the historical and social structures necessary to legitimate aristocratic privilege, there was no desire to replicate them. Thus, conservative nostalgia for a social structure that

²⁴⁴ Ibid: 13

²⁴⁵ Ibid: 28

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid: 25

belonged in the past and their consequent resistance to mass democracy was out of step with the ideals which motivated emigration for the majority and with the modern ethos developing in the colony.

The resistance to democracy amongst the conservative elite was not entirely motivated by the impulse to preserve their own interests. It was also inspired by their profound resentment at the increasing social and political dominance of the middle classes. In their view democracy “was the method by which the middle classes enslaved the poor”.²⁴⁸ Conservatives believed that the relationship between the gentry and the working class was paternal, one of “benevolence and kindness” on their part and “good-will” in return from the working class.²⁴⁹ The reciprocal nature of this relationship ensured the reproduction of traditional moral values necessary for social order. Middle class socio-political dominance, through the mechanism of democracy, undermined the reciprocity of social relations and therefore the possibility of an harmonious, ordered society.

Other aspects of the colony also potentially undermined the possibility of social order from the viewpoint of the conservative gentry. They had powerful ‘reservations’ about the class location of the majority of the settlers, whom they perceived as “poor gentility” and “starving clerkdom” out to “plunder the land, to enrich themselves without scruple”.²⁵⁰ It was believed that unregulated self interest combined with the primitive nature of the land and the democratic tendency of new societies “undermined the traditional authority and social structures which kept in check people’s violent impulses”.²⁵¹ Because of the redundancy of their role as moral guardians, conservatives believed colonial society was in danger of being “swamped or overrun by those who lurked below”.²⁵² As I show in the next chapter, they were not the only ones preoccupied with fears about ‘enemies within’.

For patrician conservatives, then, colonial society was an atomised society devoid of “the familiar Old World qualities of public spirit, patriotism and community” and lacking in “national feeling” and “popular responsibility”.²⁵³ Because it did not - nor could it - faithfully replicate English socio-political structures, the colony was considered rife with the possibility of “moral and political corruption, cultural regress, even physical degeneration”.²⁵⁴ Without the moral guidance of a socially responsible aristocracy, what conservatives perceived as

²⁴⁸ Ibid: 52

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid: 19

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid: 12

the base materialism and self interest of the bourgeois that underpinned democracy could only serve to exacerbate these features rather than address them.

While there were sharp ideological differences between conservative and middle class political actors, there were also points at which their values intersected; shared beliefs about the social role of women and the family was one such. Despite the anti-democratic ethos that underpinned patrician conservatism in the colony, there was an element of conservative support for women's suffrage. This support was given not because they thought women should be politically or socially equal to men, rather it was assumed "that women were by nature more conservative and more sensible, than men, and by granting them suffrage they would act as a brake on democracy's more radical and baser impulses".²⁵⁵ In assumptions about women's moral superiority to men conservative dogma aligned very closely with and supported the bourgeois family model, which was a fundamental element of the colonial social imaginary and an emergent 'middle class society'.

By this period bourgeois liberals and conservative patricians shared a conceptualisation of domesticity, reinforced in part by Christian doctrine, which was underpinned by a 'sanctification' of the home. The home was perceived as key site for the moral and social development of the young and, moreover, as a micro-model of consensual relations between individuals. As such the family was regarded as a template for social relations more broadly, and 'appropriate' family practices were considered absolutely pivotal for an ordered society and as a marker of 'civilisation'.²⁵⁶ This model of family life, as I noted in Chapter Two, utterly depended upon a bourgeois idealisation of women's moralising, socialising and nurturing roles. What is key here is that the centring of the family in the Victorian social imaginary contributed to middle class perceptions of their role as the society's moral guardians. Ideas about moral guardianship, which underpinned the emergence of a liberal, paternal state in the colony, pivoted on the belief by the middle classes that "they could transcend their own interests and govern in the interests of all".²⁵⁷

As I suggested above, the traditional conservatism of Wakefield's gentry was inevitably in tension with the realities of the colony. Given the influence of democratic ideas and movements like Chartism and Owenism amongst the settlement population and 'radical' politicians, they were simply unable to reinscribe the kind of unequivocal class distinction that English social relations were historically based upon. Their political influence was all but

²⁵⁵ Ibid: 74

²⁵⁶ Taylor, C. (2002) 'Modern Social Imaginaries'. *Public Culture* 14 (No.1): 91-124.

²⁵⁷ Orwin, D. (1999) op.cit: 76

spent by the end of the 19th century, and the election of the Liberal party in 1890 sealed their fate. They could no longer sustain anything remotely like the political influence they once wielded and for some the triumph of democracy, in the form of taxation, reduced them “nearly to the point of extinction”.²⁵⁸ Traditional conservatism was forced to adapt itself to the dominance of democracy at the end of the 19th century.

Unable to maintain their political dominance, the conservative gentry aligned themselves with liberal and political radicals. That is, with fractions of the middle and respectable working class. A number of significant shifts enabled this alliance. In the first instance, as I noted above, conservatives simply could not maintain their privileged social position in the colony. In order “to establish a truce between the classes and the masses [they] became increasingly secular and non-aristocratic and thus much less repugnant to “true liberals”.²⁵⁹ At the same time social mobility amongst the respectable working classes who espoused radical politics lessened their antipathy toward traditional elites. This alliance was possible partly because the interaction of liberal and radical ideas with conservatism helped reshape conservative political priorities and ideas. Conservative views about the role of the state, for example, shifted away from a belief in the necessity of a “strong state to maintain social order”, and to protect their privilege, to more liberal ideas about the importance of a politically impartial state in order to avoid “arbitrary rule”.²⁶⁰ This shift was underpinned by a concern about collectivist (class) politics, as well as a ‘conversion’ to laissez faire capitalism and the “attractions of ... the free market”.²⁶¹

Anxiety about collectivist politics was not peculiar to conservatives, it was an element of concern for individualistic liberals and radicals as well. This “shared hostility towards organised working class political activity” among conservatives, liberal and radicals, and the desire to circumvent the development of “working class militancy” in the colonial context, was an important affinity that enabled their political alliance.²⁶² Orwin (1999) argues that “The result of the fusion of conservatism and old liberalism was a bourgeois ideology committed to the defence of property, the rule of law and the free market”.²⁶³ The alliance between conservative and liberals politicians underpinned the formation of a paternal, liberal state by the end of the 19th century and played a significant part in the emergence of a ‘middle class society’.

²⁵⁸ Ibid: 80

²⁵⁹ Ibid: 103

²⁶⁰ Ibid: 103

²⁶¹ Ibid

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid: 104

Section Five: Liberal governance and ‘normalisation’ of the working classes

Orwin's (1999) thesis emphasises the central importance of the alliance between conservative and liberal political actors in the formation of the 'middle class society' during the settlement period in New Zealand. I suggest this alliance both reflected and reinforced the rejection of class as an element of collective identification in the broader colonial society. In order to understand the intricate fabric of that society, and some of its basic tensions and contradictions, it is necessary to examine more closely some of the shared assumptions about the mutuality of social and economic relations that made such a coalition possible. As I noted above, and in Chapter Two, these assumptions have their foundation in the profound influence on the English of first and second wave liberal ideas about social stratification, property ownership and morality which amongst other things provided the conditions of possibility for the emergence of English capitalism. I argued that normative assumptions about materialism and morality underpinned evangelical and imperialist concerns with the 'civilisation' of the indigenous people during settlement. The assimilation by Maori of this bourgeois moral ethos was conceived as essential for their 'betterment', and crucial to capitalist expansion and the creation of a modern nation-state. I also pointed out that the Victorian 'civilising' project was not confined to racial others but focused upon the British working classes as well, particularly those outside the normative relations of capitalist sociality.

In this section I revisit the work of Corrigan and Sayer (1985) to argue these understandings were absolutely pivotal to the creation of a colonial social imaginary and the emergence of the 'middle class society'. Their embeddedness enabled the genteel middle class and working class settlers to align politically because they conceived of themselves as respectable, that is, more moral, more civilised and therefore fundamentally different from their 'rough' others. Settler conceptions of responsibility and respectability, however differently expressed, were bound up with the conditions of capitalist sociality. Whatever the class differences between settlers, they were less significant than the sense of belonging and sameness - in the shape an assumed moral superiority over the poor, the degraded, the deviant and Maori - that the entwined notions of responsibility and respectability conferred. As I show in Chapter Four concerns about the necessity to 'normalise' the poor and 'rough' working classes in the social and moral virtues of possessive individualism were as strident in the colony as they were in the British context; perhaps more so, given its 'raw' state and the heavy psychic investment amongst the settlers in ideas about responsibility and respectability that stood in for class as markers of individual and collective identity.

What I want to argue here is that the ‘hammering and machining’²⁶⁴ of the working classes in the English context played a powerful role in their rejection of class as a signifier of identity in the colony, in part because those processes were underpinned by assumptions of an integral ‘wrongness’ in working class ways of being. These processes redefined and circumscribed the boundaries of working class legitimacy in (bourgeois) terms of the ‘virtues’ of possessive individualism, the assimilation of which promised inclusion and acceptability as well as the possibility of material improvement and social mobility. The embourgeoisement of the working classes was, however, not simply a gradual process of their internalisation of those values. The attempt to ‘make’ the English working class in the bourgeois image was “a struggle - material, categorial, moral - of possessive individualism with displaced collectives which attempts to individualize the latter *as if they had, or could someday possess, bourgeois properties individually without possessing profitable property*”.²⁶⁵

The making up of the working class involved a contradictory ‘double movement’ whereby the poor working classes were simultaneously collectivised by the bourgeois through the conceptualisation of their labour as a form of property. And, I would add, through their problematisation. At the same time, it involved the “parallel project of forming moral individuals of and from labouring persons, in the bourgeois image [denied] this same difference and collectivity”.²⁶⁶ Thus, as “labour is homogenized within production ... within society ... the extensive theorization of persons (in general) proceeds apace”.²⁶⁷ This irresolvable tension between labour as “a collective and collectivising category” in which there is “a shareable sense (across differences) of subordination [and] a tendency toward unity in difference” and capital as an “individual and individualising possession”, Corrigan and Sayer (1985) argue, represents capitalism’s fundamental contradiction.²⁶⁸

The degree to which labour understood itself collectively, as I show in these early chapters, was however absolutely context dependent. In the colony, demographic, economic and political factors, combined with the success of the moral revolution they describe so vividly, militated against the development of a collective working class socio-political identity comparable to its English counterpart. As I have already suggested, understandings of difference and belonging- centred in the colony on notions of responsibility and respectability- remained pivotal in individual and collective identity formation.

²⁶⁴ Corrigan, P. and Sayer, D. (1985) op.cit: 115

²⁶⁵ Ibid: 116, my emphasis.

²⁶⁶ Ibid: 117

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

The struggle to 'make' the working class was material in that it involved the development of repressive juridical processes, that is, laws that structured the relations between capital and labour. And it was categorial in that the discursive construction of the working class by the middle classes depended upon their understanding of themselves collectively as morally and intellectually superior to the working classes, and thus as appropriate models for and drivers of the moralisation and reconstruction of the poor working classes. Essentially, the material aspect of this process represented the institutionalisation of bourgeois norms/ moral ethos at the level of the state; a process in which "some values, norms and qualities (appropriate to the life situation of some social groups) were elevated to become value, normality, the quality of life itself".²⁶⁹

As I have noted, in this moment of 'triple making', both bourgeois and working class collective identities were constituted and a new state form emerged. 'Making up' the working class involved new forms of juridical repression and new mechanisms of moral regulation; the first the sole domain and site of coercive state power and the second a function the state shared with the moral middle class.²⁷⁰ These shifts, as I pointed out in Chapter Two, enabled a new liberal state form, and new modes of liberal governmentality, within which "The State' [came] to represent a neutral ... set of institutionalised routine practices ...". Knowledge about populations becomes pivotal here, and with this shift "the most neglected class [becomes] the principal object of care".²⁷¹

The 'normalisation' of the working classes through the processes described above was emphatically not an attempt to create an homogeneous society in egalitarian terms. As Corrigan and Sayer (1985) argue, " 'Society [the bourgeois] sought to mould and civilize society [the masses], to individualize and moralize its members differentially, in ways appropriate to their respective 'stations' ".²⁷² Difference, constituted by the 19th century against a bourgeois ideal, was thus fundamental to liberal governance in all its forms and the 'neutral' state was experienced differently according to class, gender and, in the colony, race. It played a fundamental role, moreover, in the reproduction of those differences.

In terms of gender difference, for example, as I suggested above the colonial state made intensive efforts to embed the 'cult of domesticity' and inscribe the gendered identities that

²⁶⁹ Ibid: 123

²⁷⁰ See for example Valverde, M. (1991) *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart; Cruikshank, B. (1999) *The Will to Empower*. New York: Cornell University Press.

²⁷¹ Ibid: 126

²⁷² Ibid: 132

underpinned it. The 'middle class society' depended upon women's association with the social which was bound up with new understandings about the role of families in the socialisation and moralisation of the young. These ideas also provided the basis for extending the socialising and moralising functions of middle class women into the public domain where they played an important role in dispensing charitable aid. Although, as I suggest in the next Chapter, the philanthropic middle class was not large enough to assume a significant role in social governance and this justified more intensive state intervention in moral regulation in the colony.

The development of a cult of domesticity however was an uneven process and, as I show in Chapter Five, only reached anything like its idealised form in the 1950s. This was largely the result of Keynesian modalities of social and economic management initiated by the First Labour government from 1935. In both moments the model of domesticity, and the narrow version of femininity that was bound up with it, was class and culturally specific; the influence of the colonial social imaginary continued to filter through and inflect the Keynesian one, just as elements of its predecessor mediated the shape the colonial imaginary assumed and the 'truths' about gender and identity produced within it. What I want to emphasise here is that the formation of a paternalistic liberal state in the colonial context contributed to the institutionalisation of difference, the naturalisation of social stratification and the formation of gendered, class, and racial identities, all of which continue to mediate social, economic and political relations in New Zealand.

Concluding remarks

The socio-cultural, political and economic shifts in the English context that I have described above, mediated the powerful tendency to 'moral paternalism' that characterised 19th century liberalism. Assumptions about 'natural' difference informed philosophical, political and economic justifications for social stratification. Political exclusion could be rationalised because 19th century liberals shared the belief that social stratification was the natural order and while they may have subscribed to a belief in "formal equality", it was based upon the idea that political rights were not automatically granted on the basis of citizenship but "accompanied personal and social enlightenment".²⁷³ Thus, only some social groups were deemed to be *fit* to exercise their democratic right and their rule could be justified by liberals because they believed:

²⁷³ O'Brien, M. and Penna, S (1998) *Theorising Welfare: Enlightenment and Modern Society*. London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage: 27.

the middle and aristocratic classes had the interests of the impoverished and working people at heart - the political interests of the working classes could be represented satisfactorily by those who were educated and intellectually [and morally] superior - and [liberals] represented the emergent bourgeois political class as a class of magnanimous benefactors who, through their wisdom and humanity, were able to forward the ideals of Enlightenment".²⁷⁴

This narrow form of equality, with all of its moralistic and paternalist assumptions, framed colonial ideas about democracy and contributed to the possibility of a political alliance between conservatives and liberals in the colony. The alignment of these oppositional groups, the emergence of party politics and increasing conflicts between capital and labour in the context of an economic depression in the late 19th century eventuated in the election of a Liberal government in 1891. If this first colonial liberal state represented the materialisation of a political coalition between conservative, middle and working class actors anxious to 'get on', the interests that underpinned these groups often conflicted or were contradictory. The connecting thread that bound them together was the internalisation of a bourgeois moral ethos that centred possessive individualism based upon the intersection of religious and secular notions of materialism and morality, property and propriety. The embourgeoisement of the broader population, together with demographic factors that included male numerical dominance and the fragmented distribution of the populations, as well as economic contingencies, made it possible to weave the fabric of a 'middle class society' – underpinned by the myth of male egalitarianism - from these disparate strands.

Given the political, social, economic and physical marginalisation of Maori by this time, the biggest threat to the society was perceived to be its 'enemies within'. These poor working class, deviant and vagrant others represented the potential for chaos and disorder, and the possibility of social and economic breakdown in the nascent and still fragile society. Hence, as I explain in the next chapter, the project to civilise, moralise, socialise and regulate them continued apace in the colonial context. Increasing intervention by the state in education was a central mechanism through which it assumed a key role in the moral regulation of such groups. I use the 'moral panic' about larrikinism in the 1880s as a lens through which to examine these processes and I argue they were not only aimed at normalising marginal populations, they were key in the constitution of gendered, classed and racial identities in the population as a whole.

²⁷⁴ Ibid

Chapter Four

Vile boys and degraded families: regulating the “antisocial poor”²⁷⁵

But a stranger bird haunts our streets at night, Bred of civilisation and sin ... We call him Larrikin.²⁷⁶

... I abandon the boy to the censure of the sanctimonious and the self-righteous. For the boy has learned long how to endure punishment. I throw him to the wolves of respectability.²⁷⁷

Introduction

The Britons who immigrated to the colony were, as I have suggested, heavily invested in the possibility of a new society however differently they conceived of it. Driven by a powerful desire to ‘get away’ and ‘get ahead’, the settlers hoped to gain at the least the material security and independence that Arcadia promised them; as much if not more for the respectability their self-sufficiency would confer upon them than for the attainment of wealth. The architects of colonisation wanted to create a modern capitalist nation-state²⁷⁸, one within which the relations of production that capitalism depended upon would be reproduced but without the socially disruptive and economically draining class struggles that characterised the Victorian context. Both visions required a functioning economy and an ordered society. By the late 19th century these conditions seemed tenuous, generating increasing public and political anxiety which coalesced in a moral panic about larrikinism that emerged in the 1880s. This concern was focused upon poor working class boys and their families who were perceived, and discursively constructed, as a threat to social order, the development of a viable economy, and the creation of a modern nation.

The larrikin and Lee’s abandoned boy-child are thus one and the same, a ‘child of the poor’, though discursively constructed in diametrically opposed ways. From the first perspective he is a ‘villain’, an object of fear and loathing demonised by a society for whom he represents not only the antithesis of the values it holds dear but also the embodiment of a deeply buried

²⁷⁵ Cruikshank, B. (1999) *The Will to Empower*. New York: Cornell University Press: 50

²⁷⁶ W.C Hodgson (1896) *Poems*, cited in Orsman, E. H. (1994) *The Dictionary of New Zealand Words and Phrases*. Auckland: New House Publishing: 152.

²⁷⁷ Lee, J. A. (1935) *Children of the Poor*. London: Mayfair Books: 8.

²⁷⁸ Stoler, A. (1995) *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press. As Ann Stoler has argued, it is important to understand “colonies as more than sites of exploitation but as “laboratories of modernity” (p. 15).

anxiety that the security they cling to tooth and nail is illusory. In Lee's (1935) view he is the 'victim' of a society which continues to wrongly attribute poverty to poor parenting, individual failure and 'sin'. It is a moralistic society that sanctifies 'respectability' and vilifies the poor. As I show here the roots of that society, and its judgmental attitudes towards the 'undeserving poor' that *remain* characteristic of it, can be traced back to colonial and earlier discourses. In this chapter I argue that the discursive construction of the larrikin as a villain prevailed in settler society. It did so however for varied and complex reasons. There were multiple strands, representative of a number of social and political issues and a variety of perceptions about them, woven through the discourses of larrikinism. These reflected not only the pressures experienced in a colonial society in the process of formation. They can be linked both to earlier discourses about class and poverty, and to a moment of flux more broadly when conceptions of society, the individual and the state itself were undergoing a significant shift from earlier understandings.

As I illustrated in Chapters Two and Three the processes of social and state formation in the colonial context were mutually constitutive and the pattern of social relations that emerged during settlement was underpinned by a bourgeois moral ethos. The central principles that underpinned this society were informed by what I have called the Victorian 'trinity' of materialism, individualism and moralism. Here I use an analysis of the moral panic about the 'problem' of larrikinism as a lens to further examine the mutuality of state/society relations and the state's contribution to the construction of a colonial social imaginary, and a 'middle class society'. I link the moral panic about larrikinism to earlier anxieties about criminal and neglected children and argue that particular discursive constructions of these entwined 'problems' pivoted on claims about poor working class children and their families. These discourses, mainly produced by the middle classes, were recontextualised and mobilised by the state to rationalise its intervention into society during a period when the political tenets of liberalism and *laissez faire* capitalism prevailed.²⁷⁹ I argue that the intervention by the state into charitable aid in the form of industrial schooling in 1867, and the development of a national education system a decade later, signalled its assumption of a central role in the moral regulation of the emerging society; formerly the domain of civil society and presided over by the philanthropic middle classes. Education would become an important mechanism in the institutionalisation by the state of the bourgeois ethos that society was premised upon,

²⁷⁹ Cruikshank, B. (1999) op.cit: 45. The problem for liberal government was to ensure the self-regulation of society without interfering in its progress. In an established society, government had to be the art of governing indirectly. The colony was a society in formation however so technologies of governmentality were by necessity cruder and more justifiably state interventionist.

and it would continue in its efforts to embed the middle class family model; the other key site for the socialisation and moral regulation of the populace.

The discourses about neglected and criminal children and larrikins were produced within and able to be dominated by the middle classes for material reasons, including the exclusionary nature of colonial politics, their ownership of the media and the operation of demographic and other aspects of colony in their favour. But those discourses were recontextualised by the state, and middle class cultural hegemony instantiated in the colony, in part because the bourgeois moral ethos which underpinned them was already institutionalised *in* the state. I am not suggesting that the interests of the state and the middle classes were identical though. The class and culturally specific understandings about individuals, families and social relations that informed this ethos would be institutionalised by the state not simply because it shared the desire to control groups that deviated from bourgeois norms. Its embedding was considered crucial to the constitution of self governing subjects necessary for a liberal democracy. In the nascent colony, the problem was finding a mechanism for instilling the values of possessive individualism and normative behaviours constitutive of liberal individuals without a substantial enough 'philanthropic class' "[t]o bring citizens into society ... [and] transform the apathetic into citizens willing and able to govern themselves ...".²⁸⁰ Hence, the state was crucial in the moral regulation of 'problem' populations in the colony.

Section One: Interrogating the social control thesis

A number of studies have examined social anxiety about particular groups of children during the settlement period in relation to colonial systems of charitable aid and schooling.²⁸¹ This work points to the decisive role of the middle classes in the discursive constructions of these 'problem' groups and it has contributed to development of the arguments I am making in this thesis. The tendency among many of these writers, however, is to characterise the moral panics about criminal and neglected children and larrikinism in a fairly narrow way, focusing almost entirely on middle class concerns about issues of social control and social order in the fledgling society. Roy Shuker (1987) argues that intense public anxiety about criminal

²⁸⁰ Ibid

²⁸¹ See for example Gregory, P. A. (1975) 'Saving the Children in New Zealand: a Study of Social Attitudes Towards Larrikinism in the Later 19th Century'. Unpublished MA thesis, Massey University; Vincent, C. (1985) 'Special Education as Social Control: the Historical Development of Industrial Schools and Special Classes'. Unpublished MA thesis, Massey University; Shuker, R. (1987). *The One Best System?: A Revisionist History of State Schooling in New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press; Whelan, L. (1999) 'Children Incarcerated, Conscience or Convenience?: the State and the Third Sector in the Treatment of Children at Risk'. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland; Stephenson, M. (2000) 'Creating New Zealanders: Education and the Formation of the State and the Building of the Nation'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

and neglected children and larrikins represented “boundary crises”, moments when the radical social and economic change mediated by settlement created an environment of “ambiguity and strain” within which extant issues became magnified.²⁸² He suggests categories of ‘problem’ children, including larrikins, destitute and criminal children, truants and street kids, were discursively produced in these moments that reflected “emerging definitions of social deviance ... dependent to a large degree on the interests of the dominant group”; an emergent middle class.²⁸³ In his view state intervention into the social domain and the creation of “institutional solutions” to social problems resulted from its capture by that class. One such solution was the development of a national education system which would serve to regulate school attendance and “control the activities of disruptive or delinquent youth”.²⁸⁴

Whelan’s (1999) thesis shifts the balance of power from society to the state. From the outset, the colony could not sustain the level of private philanthropy that underpinned the provision of charitable aid in the British context because it lacked the substantial strata of wealthy upper and middle class necessary to support it. Consequently the provision of charitable aid for much of the settlement period was characterised by the interdependence of the state and the ‘third sector’.²⁸⁵ Despite the pragmatic nature of this alliance, the state’s involvement in society was the focus of heated debate that pitted the entwined ideologies of liberalism and laissez faire capitalism against arguments about the relationship between philanthropy and Christian virtues. The role of the middle classes in philanthropy was, in her view, underpinned by a basic humanitarianism that derived from Christian doctrine. It emphasised the mutuality of the relationship between givers and receivers of charity and assumed the middle classes, as society’s moral guardians, were best fitted to reform those at its margins. Moreover, in a broad context where the ‘working class question’ informed the development of new modes of social and political governance, philanthropy was perceived as a social mechanism capable both of circumventing class conflict and reforming errant working class families.²⁸⁶ As I suggest below however, understandings of charity and philanthropy were tied to the development of distinctions between deserving and undeserving poor and were intended to serve a constitutive function as well as a regulatory one.

²⁸² Shuker, R. (1987) op.cit: 75

²⁸³ Ibid: 80

²⁸⁴ Ibid: 86

²⁸⁵ Whelan, L. (1999) op.cit: 9

²⁸⁶ Ibid: 47

Whelan (1999) suggests that in the colony the lack of a strong enough 'third sector' legitimised state intervention into industrial schooling as "a means of controlling the working class threat to social stability", and compulsory schooling developed "as a form of "social insurance".²⁸⁷ The state co-opted the administration and control of industrial schooling from the middle classes, she argues, in order to utilise children as human capital in the 'rehabilitation' of the nation. In her view, this move was primarily an attempt "to regenerate national strength".²⁸⁸ Thus the

child control reforms during the period 1867- 1908 were not in any meaningful sense expressions of social or economic instrumentality but primarily institutional and political in nature. The social control system reflects the value preferences of powerful groups in society, that structural reforms are strongly influenced by incumbents' attempts to maintain legitimate control over the system.²⁸⁹

There is little doubt that social order and social control were issues of concern for both an 'anxious middle class' and a nascent capitalist state. Settlement occurred, as I have already noted, in a period wherein the working class was the focus of intense political debate and social anxiety. The promise of the colony was an escape from these pressures, and the presence of large numbers 'problem' working class children represented the potential for more of the same. These fears, combined with and exacerbated by anxiety about the manifest *disorder* of raw physical environment and Maori resistance to the appropriation of their land during the Land wars, must have contributed for some to a deep sense of the tenuousness of their existence. More pragmatically the emerging economy, and thus the 'nation' itself, depended on an acquiescent and properly socialised working class. Immediately, and in the future, control of working class children and their parents was perceived as a means of achieving both. However the emphasis both authors place on concerns about social control overlooks the multiplicity of anxieties that underpinned 'moral panics' about deviant children. By their very nature "[m]oral panics ... are ... multidimensional, and the social anxiety associated with them is probably rooted in the unconscious coming together or condensation of different discourses, different fears, in a single image".²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Ibid: 66

²⁸⁸ Ibid: 224

²⁸⁹ Ibid: 230

²⁹⁰ Valverde, M. (1991) *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart: 14

The concept of moral panic needs to be thought about more critically particularly in terms of the operation of power and ideology. On a neo-Marxist view, moral panics are conceived as “a connective strategy” which, because they extend the influence of the ruling group, “[become] the envoy for dominant ideology”.²⁹¹ Because they are couched in commonsense language they operate “as an advanced warning system ... [progressing] from local issues to matters of national importance, from the site of tension and petty anxieties to full-blown social and political crisis”, legitimating an intensification of “control and coercion”.²⁹² The value of this analysis is that it shows that “ideology is a suffusive social process ... not a simple question of the distortion of truth,...rather that [it is] is a force which works continuously through the mobilization of ‘commonsense’ ”.²⁹³ Neo-Marxist conceptions of ideology are problematic however in that they are

always obliged ... to refer and contrast ‘representation’ to the arbitration of ‘the real’, and [are] hence unable to develop a full theory concerning the operations of ideology within all representational systems. [Thus] moral panics seem to appear and disappear, as if representations were not the site of *permanent* struggle of the meanings of signs.²⁹⁴

The presence of continuous discursive struggles over meaning within societies implies that power, as Foucault (1980) has argued, operates in a capillary manner rather than simply being imposed from above.²⁹⁵ And thus “the moral panic is best seen as a local intensification [of extant power struggles] or ‘the site of the current front line’ rather than an unpleasant and anticipated development”.²⁹⁶ As I illustrate below, the ‘moral panic’ about larrikinism resonated powerfully with earlier concerns about neglected and criminal children which in turn bore the traces of discourses of poverty and class in the English context. Moreover, struggles over meaning go on within classes as well as between them. By conceptualising the moral panic about larrikinism only in terms of public and state concern with social control both Shuker (1987) and Whelan (1999) presume a unitary state and an homogeneous middle class, and they oversimplify class relations and social relations of power in the colonial context.

²⁹¹ Hall, S. et al (1978) cited in McRobbie, A. (1991) *Feminism and Youth Culture: from ‘Jackie’ to ‘Just Seventeen’*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan: 184

²⁹² Ibid

²⁹³ Ibid

²⁹⁴ Watney, S. (1987) *Policing Desire: Pornography, Aids and the Media*. London: Methuen: 41, original emphasis.

²⁹⁵ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press.

²⁹⁶ Watney, S. (1987) op.cit: 41

What differs between their accounts is the locus of power. In Shuker's (1987) analysis the economic and political power of an emerging middle class enabled it to capture the state. For Whelan (1999) the state is the embodiment of power in the colonial context. In both analyses power is situated unequivocally with one or the other group of actors. There is little sense of the struggles for power, through discourse, *within* the state and the middle classes. And for both authors power, as the concept of social control implies, is fundamentally coercive. Through the state or through the middle classes via the state, social control was exerted over the poor working class and middle class values and norms imposed upon them. Neither writer appears to recognise the constitutive nature of power; firstly in relation to class formation in the colonial context and secondly in terms of the constitutive role of the state.

In the first instance, because they understand power as coercive they are unable to perceive class formation as a "dialectical process" within which similar practices formed both classes.²⁹⁷ As I have suggested, in the New Zealand context bourgeois values had already been internalised to some degree by the working class before their settlement here. They underpinned a shared repudiation of class politics and, tied to that, an investment in notions of respectability as the signifier of belonging, in the place of class. For both the respectable working and lower middle classes this identity was informed by embedded ideas about their fundamental difference from the poor and rough residuum, who thus functioned both as the 'enemies within' the society and the (necessary) constitutive limit of various interpretations of respectable social identity. Moreover, what is understood by adherents of the social control thesis as simply the imposition of the values of the dominant class on others was simultaneously "a process of creating and reaffirming" that class.²⁹⁸ Both Valverde's (1991) Canadian study and Stephenson's (2000) in New Zealand have illustrated that philanthropy played a constitutive role in the formation of the new middle classes in these colonies. Their reform work served as the foundation for "the development of the professional and management classes and the incipient state bureaucracy".²⁹⁹

In addition to being a class-based activity, reform was also shaped by and helped form gender and race relations. It helped to mediate relationships between women in the colonies, enabling middle class women a public role which empowered them compared to working class women. As well, the reform work of bourgeois women contributed to the entrenchment of narrow definitions of femininity and female respectability. Despite their

²⁹⁷ Valverde, M. (1991) op.cit: 29-33

²⁹⁸ Ibid

²⁹⁹ Ibid

relative social power, however, they remained subordinated within their organisations, and socially, to middle class men. Moral reform was also racialised. Native schooling, for example, was more about re-forming Maori into “conforming and contributing citizens” who had assimilated Western value systems and life-ways than educating them.³⁰⁰

Section Two: Moral regulation and the colonial state

Where the social control thesis mobilises the repressive hypothesis of power, Valverde (1991) and Stephenson (2000) point to its capillary operation and constitutive modality both of which were crucial in shaping individual and national identity and both of which enabled the state to assume a moral regulatory role. Moral regulation by the state, crucial to its own formation and to nation-building in the colonies, depended upon socially produced moral distinctions which it then mobilised to create codifiable categories amongst problem populations.³⁰¹ The categorisation of problematic social groups, like larrikins, facilitated their further subjection to practices of liberal governmentality designed not simply to control them but to remake them into liberal bourgeois subjects. Education, as I have noted, became an important mechanism through which the state was able to regulate, moralise, normalise and socialise marginal subjects. At the same time, the state’s recontextualisation and institutionalisation of those moral distinctions reinforced their ‘truth value’ and thus their function as the constitutive outside of respectable individual and collective colonial identity. In this quite subtle and complex way the state played a significant role not only in the institutionalisation of a bourgeois moral ethos but in entrenching middle class cultural hegemony in the colony. Thus the hegemony of particular group in a society emerges from complex and multiple processes rather than via repression or the imposition of ‘false truths’, and

attempts to constitute hegemony work not simply through practices of coercion or ... practices of consent, but *also* by way of other practices, techniques and methods that infiltrate minds and bodies as well as cultural values and behaviours as apparently naturally occurring properties.³⁰²

Stephenson’s (2000) work points to the complex nature of the relationship between the colonial state and the diverse groups involved in charitable aid. She suggests that resistance to state intervention by this early third sector was itself an important “part of the process of state formation in the colony”.³⁰³ Where both Shuker (1987) and Whelan (1999) seem to

³⁰⁰ Stephenson, M. (2000) op.cit: 154

³⁰¹ Valverde, M. op.cit: 164

³⁰² Olssen, M. (1999) *Michel Foucault: Materialism and Education*. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey: 28, original emphasis.

³⁰³ Stephenson, M. (2000) op.cit: 171

assume a more unified nation, state and middle class than actually existed, Stephenson (2000) emphasises the importance of provincial differences and the “local specificity of the production of poverty”.³⁰⁴ The problem of neglected and criminal children, for example, was perceived as a provincial issue that required “localized responses” rather than central administration. The state intervened in the provision and administration of charitable aid and it did so in order to legitimate and consolidate itself, and the nation. Thus its intervention into the public domain signalled a constitutive moment in “the creation of a modern, democratic nation”.³⁰⁵

In her view state, intervention into charitable aid was a pragmatic response to colonial conditions and it was

a commonsense solution to a complex problem, one which was *possible* because it retained maximum available input from all existing contributions and *feasible* because it supported a universality of perceived and desired norms of behaviour throughout a nation of diverse local characteristics.³⁰⁶

Most importantly, her thesis shows how the intense focus on ‘deviant’ groups of children during the settlement period was driven not only by concerns about social control but was a significant element in efforts by the middle classes and the state to institutionalise the bourgeois moral ethos. This multidimensional process was aimed not only at normalising working class children but embedding a bourgeois model of family life through “the coercive impact of legislative pressure in shaping the role of the family and other legislation shaping its form”.³⁰⁷ Thus attempts to shape the family were integral to “universalizing bourgeois norms”.³⁰⁸ Poor working class families were not the only ones that were to be reconstructed. Maori were also subject to regulation by the state, through its control of Native schooling and other ways, in order to ensure their assimilation of Pakeha norms and values- encapsulated in the bourgeois model of family life and the Protestant work ethic. As I noted earlier, this project had begun before state formation with the efforts of the missionaries to Christianise and civilise Maori. Changing the form of Maori family life was a fundamental goal for both Church and State because the bourgeois family embodied both Christian and secular virtues.

³⁰⁴ Ibid: 176

³⁰⁵ Ibid: 180

³⁰⁶ Ibid: 181, original emphasis.

³⁰⁷ Ibid: 187

³⁰⁸ Ibid: 188

The bourgeois family model was tied up with and underpinned by entrenched beliefs about class and gendered identities which, as I noted in Chapters One and Two, were not separate from discursive constructions of racial difference. As Ann Stoler (1995) has argued, in the 19th century “bourgeois identities in both metropole and colony emerge tacitly and emphatically coded by race”.³⁰⁹ It also figured by implication in the constitution of ‘respectable’ working class because of the racialisation of their poor and ‘rough’ others. This sense of the fundamental racial difference and innate inferiority of the poor and ‘unfit’ urban working classes underpinned eugenic discourses, elements of which filtered through discursive constructions of *Iarrikinism*.³¹⁰ I have already suggested that the middle class embodied respectability and they did so because of their own, and the state’s, ideas about ‘bourgeois civility’. This notion pivoted on an integration of religious virtues and materialistic values expressed as “self-control, self-discipline and self-determination [and perceived to be] defining features of bourgeois selves”, and “[t]hese features [were] affirmed in the ideal family milieu”.³¹¹ The idealisation of a bourgeois self and family model underpinned concern with ‘degraded’ working class families in the colonial context. Public and state anxiety about working class families, and individuals, was exacerbated by increasingly visible poverty in the colony.

Section Three: A Serpent in Paradise: poverty in the colony

Existence in the nascent colony proved to be far more tenuous for some social groups than either the promise of a rural ‘Arcadia’ or an urban ‘Utopia’ implied would be the case. As settlement increased unemployment and poverty, mediated by multiple factors and a combination of problems, impacted fractions of the working class. In the preceding chapters I noted that emigration for many Britons was predicated on the promise of widespread access to land which was more rhetorical than real. The mechanism of “sufficient price”, as it was intended to, served to exclude from landownership those without enough capital making them dependent on wage labour. Wakefield’s vision of a “squire system”, comprising land owning gentry and rural labour, was untenable because the physical environment was too harsh and the population too small and too widely dispersed to provide a market.³¹² It was also undermined by the prevalence of absentee landlords. The colony’s initial dependence on a pastoral economy which was dominated in the early stages by regionalism undermined its stability. That instability, combined with the seasonality of agricultural work, contributed to

³⁰⁹ Stoler, A. (1995) *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press: 7.

³¹⁰ Stephenson, M. (2000) *op.cit.* As Stephenson points out the eugenics discourses here were concerned about racial purity and dangers to it from the poor and mentally ‘unfit’ *within* the settler population.

³¹¹ Stoler, A. (1995) *op.cit.*: 8

³¹² Sutch, W.B. (1941) *Poverty and Progress in New Zealand*. Wellington: Modern Books.

high rates of transience amongst the “lower strata of colonial society” predominantly men under thirty.³¹³

Increasingly obvious urban poverty was exacerbated by the discovery of gold in the South Island in the 1860s. Significant numbers of working class men abandoned their families to join the gold rush, leaving destitute their dependent wives and children. As the gold dwindled there was an exodus of unemployed miners back into urban areas in search of work. The infrastructural development initiated by Vogel in the 1870s provided employment for some, however it was mainly designed to enable access to rural employment and thus did little to alleviate the problem of transience. In addition falling wages and increasing urban unemployment due to external factors, including an economic crisis in Scotland, contributed to the stagnation or near stagnation of the economy by 1895.

Despite these structural causes of colonial poverty the uncompromising attitudes of the settlers towards the poor, in part, reflected the doxa of the period which was the product of a “veritable war on pauperism” in the English context.³¹⁴ The debates about pauperism began in the late 18th century culminated in the reform of ideas, policies and practices of poor relief in England in 1834. It is worth briefly exploring this shift “in modes of moral regulation and governance”³¹⁵ because it profoundly affected the way the settlers viewed themselves, and their ‘others’, in relation to poverty. As I illustrate below, these perceptions inflected the discourses on criminal and neglected children and larrikins during the settlement period. Moreover, traces of the opprobrium attached to the poverty of some social groups in the colonial context - the combined product of the Victorian social imaginary and the exigencies of settlement - remain evident in contemporary New Zealand.

Section Four: Pauperism and poverty in the Victorian social imaginary

Dean (1991) argues

The event of pauperism was as much about ‘morals’, forms of everyday life, families, breadwinners, households and self-responsibility, as economics, the state poor laws and poor policies. It is about the formation of particular categories of social agent, and of

³¹³ Fairburn, M. (1989) *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: the Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850-1900*. Auckland: Auckland University Press: 130-131.

³¹⁴ Dean, M. (1991) *The Constitution of Poverty: Toward a Genealogy of Liberal Governance*. London; New York: Routledge: 3.

³¹⁵ Ibid: 9

specific class and familial relations, in as far as they were promoted by governmental practices.³¹⁶

The primary role of liberal governance was, in his view, a constitutive one and through it the state attempted to promote “a particular form of life”.³¹⁷ Its aim, he argues, was to develop “a certain ascetic lifestyle among the propertyless”.³¹⁸ As I have argued, however, the form of life these governmental practices were meant to engender amongst the impoverished, and the working classes more generally, was not some universally accepted or politically neutral model of human relations. It was a bourgeois form of life underpinned by a bourgeois moral ethos instantiated, above all, in the self-responsible patriarchal nuclear family. And, whether or not this was a self-conscious attempt to impose a model of social relations that supported the expansion of capitalism, a material effect of those discourses, practices and techniques of liberal governance in the colony and elsewhere was the institutionalisation of a particular mode of social relations and family life that enabled capitalist sociality to become hegemonic.

What I want to emphasise here is that these shifts mediated the development of value-laden distinctions between poverty and pauperism which underpinned conceptions of the deserving and undeserving poor that inflected colonial discourses. This fundamental differentiation was tied up with the emergence of distinctions between charity and philanthropy. Charity, underpinned by Christian morals and conceived as mainly “individual and impulsive”, had served a dual function of poor relief for *deserving* recipients and as a means of bolstering the virtue of the giver.³¹⁹ This understanding became perceived as problematic because of growing concern, in a liberal context, with the dependency of the poor. Philanthropy, as “organized charity”, was meant to circumvent this problem by eliminating “both the individual and impulsive elements of giving” and engendering “habits of thrift, punctuality and hygiene” in the poor.³²⁰ Thus, as I suggested above, it was not simply a means of social control. At this time dual definitions of pauperism developed; a legal definition that was encapsulated in the Poor Law and a “broader meaning of the term, indicating a larger social process specific to capitalism and affecting the working class in general, not just legal paupers”.³²¹ Pauperism became conceptualised as “the want of industry, of thrift, or self-reliance” and, by implication, as endemic in the working classes;

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid: 14

³¹⁸ Ibid: 15

³¹⁹ Valverde, M. (1991) op.cit: 19

³²⁰ Ibid

³²¹ Ibid

hence their powerful investment in ideas about self sufficiency, independence and respectability in the colony.

In the preceding chapters, and above, I noted the association of the 'working class question' with new understandings of the social that emerged during this epoch of transformation. In this period the social came to be understood not only as a sphere distinct from the political and economic "but as a new way of conceptualizing any and all problems of the collectivity".³²² Conceiving the social in this way provided justification for more intensive state intervention in the economy and society than classical liberal tenets formally allowed. In Valverde's (1991) view the (Canadian) state was able to rationalise economic intervention, for example, "because extreme exploitation was seen as a social problem involving the creation of paupers, the breakdown of the family, and a general crisis in the cohesion of the social formation".³²³ The point I want to make here is that discursive constructions of the problem of pauperism were not only mobilised by the middle classes and the state in attempts to regulate and re-form the working classes, the internalisation of an ethos of self-sufficiency was an important element of the embourgeoisement of the working classes themselves.

In his analysis of colonial attitudes to the social wellbeing of the aged, Thomson (1998) points to the influence of "Victorian values" the "virtues of personal independence, family responsibility and the minimal state".³²⁴ These values framed the ethos of self-help which was particularly intense in the colonial context. The antipathy to the undeserving poor was the result not only of these already existing elements of the Victorian social imaginary and social organization, it was also tied up with the fears engendered by the tenuous nature of colonial existence especially for the lower middle classes and respectable working classes who made up the majority of the settler population. The possibility of their fall from grace was too close for comfort. By individualising poverty rather than acknowledging the structural reasons for it, the settlers were able to hold the fear that it could happen to them at bay. It allowed them to manufacture a distance between themselves and the poor, one which pivoted on the idea that their respectability and moral rectitude, achieved for those without property through hard work, would preserve them from the same fate.

This investment in work, as I argued in Chapter Two, was bound up with masculine identification and male forms of respectability. Work was an important means of achieving

³²² Ibid: 20

³²³ Ibid: 21

³²⁴ Thomson, D. (1998) op.cit: 17

respectability and, thus, moral subjectivity for those men excluded from property ownership.³²⁵ The obvious presence of poverty undermined the Arcadian promise in general terms and it threatened the assumption of respectable manhood bound up with ideas about the necessity of work “for happiness, the achievement of a man’s full stature, and the possibility of choice and change”.³²⁶ The fates of individuals and the nation were bound together since the development of a working class - Maori and Pakeha - was absolutely essential to building a viable economy and an independent nation-state. In the idealisation of work, social ethos and pragmatic necessity were aligned and entwined. The moral value of work took on mythical proportions in the colony because it was fundamental to both these things, as was ‘the family’. The colonial state’s assumption about the moral value of work, and the (bourgeois) family’s role in producing individuals of ‘good character’, is reflected in early economic and welfare legislation. The moral and material value of work, the sovereignty of the individual and the sanctification of the family were tied together in this moment. Over time they became enshrined in the meritocratic myth that remains a powerful feature of contemporary Pakeha cultural identity. In the colonial context they served to demarcate boundaries between the ‘rough’ and the respectable legitimating state intervention in the social and the intensification of its regulation of some social groups, including poor white working class boys and their families.

Section Five: The discourses of ‘larrikinism’: demonising working class boys

Public anxiety around the emergence of a perceived problem of ‘larrikinism’ in the colony surfaced in the mid-1880s in the midst of an economic depression, and debates about the problem would feature in the media and in parliament for the next decade. While there were multiple and sometimes contradictory discursive constructions of larrikinism, what remained fairly constant was its association with a particular gender and class. In some quarters, and for particular reasons, the term larrikin included females.³²⁷ Generally, however, “[t]he incidence of larrikinism was seen to be a problem that belonged overwhelmingly to boys”.³²⁸ ‘Larrikins’ were mainly working class boys and, more often than not, they were characterised as ‘villains’ or potential ‘villains’.

³²⁵ James, B. and Saville-Smith, K. (1994) *Gender, Culture and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. It was not the mechanism for male respectability however, as James and Saville-Smith point out, state attempts to institutionalize the cult of domesticity were focused on making ‘family men’ as well as ‘family women’.

³²⁶ McClure, M. (1993) ‘On Work: Perceptions of Work in Late Nineteenth Century New Zealand, 1870-1900’. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland: 53.

³²⁷ *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates [NZPD]*, 1896, Vol. 94: 321-324. Efforts to pass a Juvenile Depravity Suppression Bill were seen by some as “an attempt on the part of the Government to suppress larrikinism amongst both sexes”.

³²⁸ Gregory, P. (1975) op.cit: 8

The term larrikin originated from the British word for “a mischievous and frolicsome youth”.³²⁹ In the colony its connotations were often darker than mere mischief, though what constituted ‘larrikinism’ varied as did ideas about the nature and the gravity of the problem. For some it was characterized as the

vile conduct of certain gangs ... of impudent and ferocious young scoundrels who appear to have no respect nor fear for God, man, law, order, decency or right of property, and who perambulate the streets, enter upon [Education] Boards and other properties, take bad women there into, break the fences, locks and fastenings, damage roofs, windows, drains and other fixings, spit, curse, damn, smoke, card-play and cause properties or parts thereof to present a thoroughly disreputable appearance ...³³⁰

For other less vituperative but equally moralistic commentators, the ‘problem’ was conceptualised in pathological terms. While the definition of larrikinism was less dramatic, its effects upon the society were assumed to be pervasive and profound:

The coarse and unseemly conduct and language of young men in our public thoroughfare is quite a new disease in our social organism. Although larrikinism of the streets may be just a harmless development of the times, it contains an element which is laden with immeasurable possibilities for evil. The majority of young criminals who are now in the goals and reformatories probably owe their position to the training they received on the street corners at night.³³¹

At one level these fears were underpinned by concern with what was believed to be a sharp rise in rates of juvenile crime, though there was little significant statistical evidence to support such fears.³³² Official sources at the time indicated that “there was no more than a pro rata increase in juvenile ... crime” and that the rate tended to fluctuate rather than steadily increase or decline.³³³ Thus, concerns about larrikinism were more a ‘moral panic’ than justifiable fears based on fact. Then, as in other moments, anxiety about youth was both the repository of public anxiety about the present state of the society and concerns for its future - both aspects particularly strident in the colonial context - as well as nostalgia for

³²⁹ Orsman, H. (1994) op. cit: 152

³³⁰ Cumming, I. (1959) *Glorious Enterprise: the History of the Auckland Education Board 1857-1957*. Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, cited in Gregory, P. (1975) op.cit: 9

³³¹ *Christchurch Press*, 1886, cited in Shuker, R. (1987) op.cit: 88-89

³³² Gregory, P. (1975) op.cit : 8

³³³ *Appendices to the House of Representatives [AJHR]*, 1891, Vol. 3. H-4: 3

an imaginary past.³³⁴ Behind the panic about larrikinism, however, was a whole range of interrelated anxieties produced by the realities of settlement which included: the rugged physical environment; urbanisation and socio-economic instability; debates around schooling and the varying perceptions about the purpose of education; and concerns about the role of the family and religion in social life. These broad concerns coalesced, in public and state discourses, into a generalized anxiety about the social threat of poor working class boys and the 'degraded' nature of their families.

In the years between 1880 and 1896 urban areas became a particular focus of anxiety in the colony, not the least because of the social and economic consequences of the 'Great Depression'. Anxiety about larrikinism surfaced partly because the combination of overcrowding and obvious urban poverty gave rise to the belief that cities were "the main breeding ground for subversive activity".³³⁵ Concerns about the problematic nature of urban areas were not peculiar to the colony however, they were characteristic of the Victorian social imaginary more widely. As Valverde (1991) has argued, while cities had been conceived as morally problematic well before the Victorian era, in this moment "the problem of the city [became] intertwined with fears about racial, moral and social degeneration".³³⁶ Those fears materialised in the presence of poor children on the street, who were perceived as evidence of that degeneration. The widespread nature of these concerns was evident not only in public and media discourses but in educational ones as well. Responding to claims that lax teaching contributed to larrikinism,³³⁷ one School Inspector argued

It is not in our schools, or under the watchful supervision of our teachers, that boys learn to swear, to smoke and to pilfer. The seminaries for these and kindred habits are acquired in our towns are the street-corners, where groups of lads who ought to be home may be seen lounging of an evening ...³³⁸

Anxiousness about the excessive independence of working class children, particularly boys, was entwined with perceptions of the corrupting influence of 'the streets'. The idea that the "the Devil makes work for idle hands", especially adolescent male ones, underpinned the perception that "lads had too little work and too much liberty" and if they "were kept doing

³³⁴ Shuker, R. (1987) op.cit: 75

³³⁵ Gregory, P. (1975) op.cit: 37

³³⁶ Valverde, M. (1991) op.cit: 130

³³⁷ Gregory, P. (1975) op.cit. Gregory has argued that some commentators attributed larrikinism to the increasing dominance of secular education.

³³⁸ *AJHR*, 1880, H-11: 5.

nothing until they were fifteen or sixteen, they would get into evil ways and would eventually join the larrikin class".³³⁹

Concerns about apparent social problems engendered by urbanisation may also have been partly the product of an investment in the vision of New Zealand as an 'Arcadia' - a rural idyll - used to attract prospective settlers.³⁴⁰ As I have already suggested, however, this image was far removed from the harsh realities of rural life. So much so, that in some quarters the 'problem' of larrikinism was linked to rural isolation and the lack of organised leisure for young people.³⁴¹ This was another variation of the 'idle hands' thesis, but perhaps a more liberal one - and ahead of its time - since it shifted responsibility for addressing the issue from the individual and their family to the society.

Just as this Arcadian ideal was unrealistic, so was the "social stereotype of respectability [that] was firmly imprinted in the colony's consciousness".³⁴² It was a stereotype which belonged firmly within the Victorian middle class, and the norms and values that informed that stereotype powerfully mediated both the perception and construction of the 'problem' of larrikinism. Whether the 'problem' of larrikinism was attributed to urbanisation or rural isolation, it was seen to potentially threaten the veneer of social respectability that the colonial middle class wanted to claim for New Zealand. As Gregory (1975) suggests, middle class anxiety about larrikins was not only underpinned by concerns about social order but by concerns about New Zealand's reputation as well.³⁴³ In Chapter Five I point to similar concerns with the reputation of the 'Dominion' in the context of public anxiety about moral and juvenile delinquency in the 1950s.

In the view of some commentators, it was the lack of established values and embedded (class) structures characteristic of the Old World that threatened both order and reputation in the new. Moreover, that vacuum apparently produced a particularly troublesome version of Antipodean larrikinism:

There is a variety [of larrikin] well known in old and settled communities - a starved, hungry-looking thing maddened by privation and suffering, but cowed and fear-stricken in the presence of the law. Our creature braves the law undaunted, and, sprung from the

³³⁹ *NZPD*, 1896, Vol. 4: 328.

³⁴⁰ Fairburn, M. (1989) *op.cit.*

³⁴¹ Gregory, P. (1975) *op.cit.*: 21

³⁴² *Ibid*: 23

³⁴³ *Ibid*

prevalent laxity of domestic discipline, and nurtured in the free atmosphere of democracy, it fears neither man nor devil.³⁴⁴

If the 'dangers of democracy' were held accountable for the production of a new and bold variety of the 'larrikin' by some, the overwhelming consensus was that it was the inadequate working class family that was largely to blame for the problem of larrikinism. A lack of parental control was perceived as the "primary weakness of colonial life".³⁴⁵ This social problem was, of course, related to the economic contingencies of the period, particularly in terms of the kinds of employment available to men. As I noted above, the problem of the desertion of their families by men to take up work in the goldfields was rife and men's absence was assumed to encourage delinquency and larrikinism amongst young boys. It was in the context of the discourses about the inadequacy of the working class family that larrikins were sometimes constituted as 'victims'. But even within these discourses children themselves were demonised:

the frequency with which young children were to be found roaming the streets without parental supervision was regarded not only as a result of parental neglect, but as part of the cause. The streets seem to provide endless opportunity for learning to disobey and disrespect one's elders, so that if a child was out of control, it was no doubt because he had been roaming the streets at improper hours.³⁴⁶

This ambivalence reflects what Hendrick (1994) has characterised as the victim/threat dualism that underpinned middle class Victorian discourses about poor working class children. Behind their construction as victims children were seen as "harbouring another condition, one that was sensed as threatening" morally, socially and economically.³⁴⁷ Within colonial discourses of larrikinism, however, the emphasis was upon the social (and economic) consequences of unregulated and unruly behaviour in working class boys. Thus they were discursively constructed mainly as 'villains', and concerns were more *about* these boys than *for* them.

Shuker (1987) has argued

³⁴⁴ Ibid: 33, citing the *New Zealand Herald*, 1896.

³⁴⁵ Gregory, P. (1975) op.cit: 27

³⁴⁶ Ibid: 29

³⁴⁷ Hendrick, H. (1994) *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989*. London and New York: Routledge: 8.

The moral panic over larrikinism in the late nineteenth century in New Zealand was an attempt on the part of an emergent middle class to establish their ethic of respectability as a norm. This attempt was successfully undertaken through the middle class dominance of a state which was increasingly intervening in the regulation of social life in New Zealand.³⁴⁸

As I suggested earlier this is a theoretically unsophisticated account of what was in fact a complex relation between state and society, and a far too simplistic explanation for the rationales that underpinned assumption by the state of a moral regulatory role in the colony. However, Shuker rightly emphasises education as a primary site of state intervention into the social domain during this period. While schooling was perceived both as a means of ensuring socialisation and as a mechanism for social control, it was also conceived as absolutely crucial for the constitution of liberal individuals and the normalisation of their deviant others. State intervention into education for settler children came in the form of compulsory elementary schooling with the passage of the Education Act in 1877. According to Shuker (1987), compulsory schooling was perceived as an important mechanism for the control of delinquent boys.

While the Education 1877 Act was in part an institutional response to middle class anxiety about working class children, particularly boys, it was not the first such. In 1867 state intervention into the formerly private realm of industrial schooling was marked by the passage of the Neglected and Criminal Children's Act. The state intervened in this early educational arena partly because of strident, middle class concerns about the inadequacy of working class families as well as in its own interests.³⁴⁹ The discursive constructions of the 'problem' of 'larrikinism', and of the 'larrikin' himself, drew upon these earlier concerns.

Section Six: 'Problem' families: constructing the issue of 'neglected' and 'criminal' children

I suggested above that increasing poverty with the intensification of settlement in the colony impacted particularly harshly upon the working class families that comprised the majority of the settler population. One outcome of this situation was that growing numbers of children were left destitute, for one reason or another. These problems, combined with rapid urbanisation and important demographic shifts, generated increasing anxiety among the

³⁴⁸ Shuker, R. (1987) op.cit: 95

³⁴⁹ See Stephenson, M. (2000) op.cit.; Whelan, L. (1999) op.cit; and Vincent, C. (1985) op.cit.

middle class about the impoverished working class. At the centre of this anxiety were interrelated concerns about the control of youth and the breakdown of poor working class families.

As I have argued, the patriarchal nuclear family was central to a Victorian social imaginary which pivoted upon the idealisation and universalisation of a bourgeois moral ethos. The family was considered both the 'social bedrock' and representative - in microcosm - of a modern social order. Not only was it regarded as the fundamental site for the socialisation of the young, it was considered the primary provider for the social welfare of its members. Entrenched expectations that families could and should undertake this role - and as a corollary that the state should not - were intensified by the discourses of 'self-help' that prevailed in the colonial context. The breakdown of working class families that resulted from the social and economic pressures of colonisation, and the dislocation of the many young people (males in particular) from their families due to immigration, was considered highly problematic.

Behind the growing sense of social crisis were concerns with the (in)ability of poor working class families to both *control* and *socialise* their young. This anxiety was underpinned by widespread acceptance of a purported link between poverty and crime that derived from the prevailing discourses of Social Darwinism. Ideas about the 'deviance' of the poor were informed by the increasing influence of theories of hereditarianism. These theories equated poverty with 'internal weakness of character' rather than structural circumstances, and it was believed that such weaknesses were passed from one generation to the next. The distinction between poverty and criminality, thus, became increasingly blurred.

This kind of thinking underpinned eugenic discourses at the time, and these would continue to circulate in the colonial society into the 20th century. As Stoler (1995) has argued these ideas were underpinned by "distinctions between normality and abnormality, between bourgeois respectability and sexual deviance, and between moral and eugenic cleansing".³⁵⁰ Thus they were the container for a multiplicity of social fears and anxieties, as well as particular assumptions about what constituted valid ways of being. Because eugenics discourses comprised "erudite and subjugated knowledges" – the combination, that is, of the

³⁵⁰ Stoler, A. (1995) op.cit: 34

theory, myth and commonsense understandings constitutive of a social imaginary - they were assured of “broad dissemination and wide appeal”.³⁵¹

In her doctoral thesis, Stephenson (2000) argues that these discourses mediated and inflected ideas about education in the colony, and they were mobilised by “policy makers to legitimate and reinforce the continuing prejudices implicit in the classifications and uncritical acceptance of racial and social hierarchical arrangements that underpinned educational initiatives”.³⁵² As she points out eugenics here was neither unified nor was it widely popular, and it comprised a combination of ‘expert’ medical knowledge and theosophical thinking that conflated “moral with mental or physical degeneration”.³⁵³ What gave it credibility and legitimised it, in her view, was its institutionalisation in central and provincial legislation. Eugenic discourses here focused almost exclusively on concerns about the settler population, rather than Maori who were marginalised physically and socially and expected to remain so. They emphasised in particular the moral dangers of urban life and the problem of the urban poor and unemployed, perceived as morally degraded, genetically weak and a threat to the purity of the society. Juvenile criminals were included in these problem categories and their criminality was associated with a combination of urban conditions and their “inherited low physical and moral nature...”.³⁵⁴ As I suggest below similar kinds of concerns were mobilised by the colonial state to rationalise and justify its intervention into industrial schooling in the late 1860s.

Section Seven: Industrial Schooling: institutionalising the discourses of ‘neglected’ and ‘criminal’ children

Lyn Whelan (1999) has characterised industrial schooling as an “integral part” of the development of an institutional network “for the control, surveillance and reform of indigent and delinquent youth”.³⁵⁵ Its primary function, in her view, was to morally educate and socialise the destitute and ‘criminal’ children of the working class in order to control and reduce both juvenile delinquency and deprivation.³⁵⁶ She argues that “the [f]ear of non-supervised youth led to a desire for formal [that is, State] control”.³⁵⁷ However as I have

³⁵¹ Ibid: 65

³⁵² Stephenson, M. (2000) op.cit: 283

³⁵³ Ibid

³⁵⁴ Hogben, G. (1900) Report on Dependent Children, *AJHR*, 1900, E-3: 2, cited in Stephenson. M (2000) op.cit: 291

³⁵⁵ Whelan, L. (1999) op.cit : 6

³⁵⁶ Ibid

³⁵⁷ Ibid: 20

suggested above, and as Stephenson (2000) illustrates so clearly in her work, the state was concerned as much with normalising bourgeois habits in these children as it was about controlling them.

In an environment where debates raged around the costs to the nation of a national education system, the state drew upon the discursive constructions of the 'problem' of 'neglected' and 'criminal' children produced by the middle class to rationalise its intervention into industrial schooling. Middle class anxiety about the potential danger of an emergent "youthful criminal class", comprising mainly poor working class boys, underpinned the construction of the problem of 'neglected' and 'criminal' children, and the porous boundary between neglect and criminality was evident.³⁵⁸ Concerns about criminality, and its association with inadequate working class families, was quite explicit in explanations that rationalised industrial schooling. H. Prins, Medical Officer at the Burnham School, for example, claimed that "the growth of a juvenile criminal class will be much kept in check in future owing to the fact that neglected children are now carefully looked after and sent to the industrial schools."³⁵⁹

While boys were the main focus of social anxiety, girls were also included within problematic categories of 'neglected' and 'criminal' children. They were represented as a very different kind of danger to society than boys however. More often than not the risk that 'deviant' girls posed was characterised as a sexual one, and concerns about them were underwritten by the "fear that sexually precocious young females would spread disease and moral degradation throughout society".³⁶⁰ As I suggest in the next chapter, anxiety about unregulated female sexuality - which has an ancient history - was strident in public and media discourses about juvenile and moral delinquency in the 1950s.

Writing from the British context, Hendrick (1990) explains the dominance of ideas about male dangerousness at the time thus:

Male adolescents were the focal point of concern because they were potentially dangerous in all sorts of ways, and, therefore, under the reformers gaze needed to be disciplined, controlled, educated and managed. Working class girls on the other hand were perceived to be far less dangerous, partly because of assumptions about

³⁵⁸ Vincent, C. (1985) op.cit: 58

³⁵⁹ *AJHR*, 1883, E-3: 7.

³⁶⁰ Whelan, L. (1999 op.cit: 202

the [biddable and passive] 'nature' of girls, and partly because of the primacy of their roles as wives and mothers. As wives and mothers women, whether working class or not, had far less potential to wield social economic and political power than men.³⁶¹

The problem of neglected and criminal children as I have already suggested was strongly linked to entrenched ideas about the inadequacy, at the least, of working class families. The issue of inadequate parenting was a dominant one and it was mobilised in political discourses to rationalise state intervention into and control of education. Schooling was construed as the means by which the potential damage done to children within their 'degraded' families might be averted if the state were to assume the legal role of '*parens patriae*'.³⁶² Member of Parliament (and later New Zealand's premier) Sir Robert Stout claimed that "it was better to take children when young and impressionable and give them a good moral education, than to allow them to grow up criminals and thus cost society far more than their education costs".³⁶³ He declaimed that "children whose parents were criminal, low and degraded who have, through being taken in time and placed in our Industrial Schools, turned out to be good members of society."³⁶⁴ This early justification for state paternalism was echoed in ongoing debates about the establishment of a national education system which was instantiated, as I noted above, in 1877. In the parliamentary debates on the Education Bill at the time Charles Bowen, referring to problems with youth in Australia at the time, argued that: "If [delinquent] children had obtained elementary education under the care of the State it is impossible they could have manifested any of the rowdiness of larrikinism" since schooling "teaches self control that is absolutely necessary for a civilised state or society".³⁶⁵

Section Eight: Schooling in the colony

The colonial state formally established a national primary education system with the introduction of the Education Act in 1877. Primary schooling was to be free, secular, and compulsory, reflecting the state's "qualified commitment" to a narrow form of egalitarianism and liberal perceptions of education's civilising value.³⁶⁶ The promotion of this gendered (and

³⁶¹ Hendrick, H. (1990) *Images of Youth: Age, Class and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920*. Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press: 7.

³⁶² This term signifies the assumption by the state of a role of legal guardianship over minors and others considered 'incompetent' of their own care.

³⁶³ *NZPD*, 1885, Vol. 52: 116.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*

³⁶⁵ *NZPD*, 1877, cited in Shuker, R. (1987) *op.cit.* 44. Bowen was chairman of the Board of Education in 1873 and 1874, and later Minister of Justice.

³⁶⁶ Shuker, R. (1987) *op.cit.* 42

race specific)³⁶⁷ model of egalitarianism, and its imbrication with ideas about meritocracy, is evident in the political rhetoric of the period preceding the nationalising of education when it was claimed that schooling would enable “the poorest boy in the street to reach, by exercise of his own intelligence and application, the university of the land”.³⁶⁸ Thus from its inception, the national education system was understood first and foremost as a mechanism to civilise and educate *boys* in order to provide social stability and produce the citizens necessary to develop a liberal democracy.

Early primary schooling, while not strongly differentiated by gender in terms of content, was numerically dominated by boys from the outset. Fewer girls attended both public and private schools and they enrolled later and exited earlier.³⁶⁹ This may be attributable to broader social trends as well as Victorian gender mores. In the first instance, while colonial families depended heavily on the labour of their children regardless of gender, the education of girls was given less priority because of assumptions about the natural primacy of their future nurturing and domestic roles. It was also grounded in arguments about biological difference which at the time were mobilised to claim intellectual superiority for males. Girls did, however, appear to do better than boys at primary school. Despite the enduring disparity in attendance, it appears that girls passed through the standards more quickly than boys,³⁷⁰ a trend that may explain in part their earlier exit. Such factors, however, were also explained in biological terms. For example, in his 1912 report to the Minister of Education, Inspector General George Hogben rationalised both their superior performance and early exit from school thus:

The reason is that girls develop mentally at a more rapid rate than boys, and consequently pass through the standards at an average of a year quicker than boys. Hence a proportionately higher number of girls succeed in obtaining an exemption certificate a year or more before they reach the age of exemption, and of these many are

³⁶⁷ Whilst Maori children were not excluded from the schools established under the 1877 Education Act (and settler children were not excluded from the Native Schools system established in 1867), there were instances of Maori children being ‘unofficially’ excluded through community response to their presence.

³⁶⁸ *NZPD*, 1871, Vol. 13: 198.

³⁶⁹ McGeorge, C. (1987) ‘How Katy Did at School’. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 22 (No.1): 103-109.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* McGeorge draws on statistics from the Wanganui district collated by School Inspector Henry Hill in 1881 but it is unlikely this pattern was confined to one area.

withdrawn from school immediately before the child has obtained the full benefit of school discipline and instruction.³⁷¹

Similar lower attendance patterns were also evident in relation to secondary schooling. While New Zealand is perhaps notable for the paucity of comparative educational statistics at this level of schooling at the time,³⁷² it seems relatively clear that girls were underrepresented in both private and public secondary schools.³⁷³ Because prior to 1903 both private and public schools were fee-based, and parents were often unwilling to spend money on their daughter's education, without financial support girls were often precluded from attending secondary schools.³⁷⁴ Comparatively few girls received the necessary scholarships to gain access to this level of schooling. The statistics gathered by the Otago Education Board in 1896 show that from 1878 to 1895, 768 boys underwent the junior scholarship examination compared to 531 girls, while 446 boys compared to 218 girls sought senior scholarships. Of the boys who sought junior scholarships, 14.2% were successful compared to 9.8% of the girls. At the senior scholarship level 28.9% of boys compared to 26.6% of girls were granted scholarships.³⁷⁵ This pattern appears to have remained fairly consistent into the early 20th century.

When secondary schooling was extended to meet public demand from 1900, it was more heavily differentiated in terms of gendered content. In a context where concerns over national demographics and 'racial fitness' were prominent, eugenics discourses were mobilised to rationalise different kinds of education for boys and girls based on the presumption of their different social roles: the "education of boys was aimed at developing [their] virile qualities" while for girls was on the development of "womanly qualities".³⁷⁶ Such expectations were reflected in their relative absence in examination statistics. Based on the data for the 1914 Matriculation Examination, and summarising girls' early participation in both primary and secondary education, McGeorge concluded:

³⁷¹ Ibid: 105

³⁷² In contrast to the dearth of statistical evidence of girls' academic achievement over time here, Kamperos' Australian-based research shows a consistent pattern of their superior achievement in the matriculation examinations in New South Wales, for over a century. Kamperos, G. (2000) 'Gender Equity: Academic Performance in Public, Matriculation Examinations in New South Wales Secondary Schools (1884-1995)'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney.

³⁷³ McGeorge, C. (1987) op.cit: 106

³⁷⁴ Fry, R. (1985) *It's Different for Daughters: a History of the Curriculum for Girls in New Zealand Schools, 1900-1975*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research: 29.

³⁷⁵ McGeorge, C. (1987) op.cit: 108

³⁷⁶ Shuker, R. (1987) op.cit: 216. For a detailed examination of the curriculum for girls see Fry, R. (1985) op.cit.

- (1) notwithstanding their lower rates of attendance, girls did slightly better, on average than boys at primary school;
- (2) girls got lower average marks than boys in the Junior National Scholarship, Junior Civil Service Examination and Matriculation, and they had slightly lower pass rates; but these differences were, generally, not statistically significant;
- (3) the relatively low numbers of girls gaining these awards was largely the result of relatively small numbers of entrants rather than poor examination performance.³⁷⁷

Ideas about intelligence and gender difference, though, were deeply entrenched as were assumptions about intellect and social class. Differentiation of schooling in the colony by social class was not necessarily overt, with opportunity apparently being mediated by 'ability'. Entry into the academically orientated secondary schools was open, however these schools were initially fee-based precluding all those unable to afford fees and not 'bright' enough to attain scholarships. In 1877 District High Schools were made official, but were mainly for the rural population. These came to serve "the dual function" of providing an academic education for 'able' students and more vocational schooling for the rest.³⁷⁸ Selection operated internally and students were sorted out "into discrete categories based on their intended duration of schooling, their *perceived* aptitude, and their vocational preference(s)".³⁷⁹ A third stratum of post-primary education, Technical High Schools, had emerged following legislation of 1905 and these were intended to provide vocational education for "pupils with practical aptitudes".³⁸⁰ In effect, internal selection processes and external stratification of schooling combined with a new credentialing system³⁸¹ contributed to the reproduction of social class relations in the society, despite claims of egalitarianism and investment in ideas about schooling and social mobility.

During the colonial period and well into the 20th century, as I have noted, schooling was quite overtly differentiated by race. A Native schools system was established in 1867, enabling the state to wrest control of Maori education from the missionaries. As I have suggested the intention here was to facilitate Maori 'civilisation', their assimilation and the assumption of the

³⁷⁷ McGeorge, C. (1987) op.cit: 109

³⁷⁸ Openshaw, R., Lee, G. and Lee, H. (eds) (1993) *Challenging the Myths: Re-thinking New Zealand's Educational History*. Palmerston North: Dunmore: 104.

³⁷⁹ Ibid: my emphasis

³⁸⁰ Ibid: 119

³⁸¹ A new credentialing system regulated access to the various forms of provision thus available. In 1903 free places were made available for all pupils who gained the proficiency examination. A further credential, the Competency Certificate, was to provide access to the 'less academic' Technical and District High Schools.

role of a rural proletariat, all of which were necessary for the development of a functioning capitalist economy and the creation of a (mono-cultural) nation-state. As Stephenson (2000) has argued

Although objectives of civilization, protection and social control...were still important aspects of the state's agenda, these were transcended to focus more on national ends. National integration demanded the establishment of a popular national culture and the establishment of a state controlled Native schools system was to provide a key instrument in the dissemination of ideas and in consolidating the political and ideological hegemony of Pakeha in defining such a culture.³⁸²

Education, thus, became a central mechanism through which the state was able to more proactively control the moral regulation and normalisation not only of problematic social groups but of the population more broadly. Schooling was crucial to the production and reproduction of a gendered, classed and racially differentiated populace constitutive of, and essential to, the development of a liberal capitalist democracy. And it was essential for the institutionalisation and internalisation of the bourgeois ethos that signified, in ways differentiated by gender class and race, what counted as responsibility and respectability in the colony. It was thus absolutely implicated in the construction of a colonial social imaginary that pivoted upon exclusions.

Concluding remarks

I have suggested in this chapter that the discourses of larrikinism, and earlier concerns about neglected and criminal children, were mobilized in the vilification of poor working class families and used to rationalize and legitimate state intervention in the society. Through its assumption of a moral regulatory role the state attempted, among other things to institutionalize the bourgeois family form considered the ideal social unit for the development of a capitalist economy and a liberal democracy. Thus, both state controlled education and the family were considered optimal sites for the socialization, moralization and production of liberal, individual selves upon whom the modernist project depended.

Neither of these social institutions would assume anywhere near their idealized forms until the reforms of the first Labour government, and the introduction of Keynesian modes of socio-economic management, from 1935. Despite contention and struggles over education,

³⁸² Stephenson, M. (2000) op.cit: 166

it remained highly selective. And, in spite of the state's best efforts to inscribe bourgeois family relations, this family form largely remained an ideal because of the economic realities and demographic exigencies of colonial and early 20th century life. Working class women, when they could, needed to work in order to help sustain their families and themselves through extended periods of economic instability. And 'mothers mutinied' against pressure to have larger families in the context of social and state anxiety about falling Pakeha birthrates:

From every side, for their own fulfillment and for the sake of the society and the race, 'fit' married women were urged to breed. But they did not. Between 1881 and 1926, the rate of childbearing among women aged fifteen to forty five years more than halved, and it remained low until the late 1940s.³⁸³

By the 1950s, though, this family ideal and the male breadwinner paradigm that depended upon it constituted the normative pattern of Pakeha socio-economic relations in New Zealand. In both the bourgeois ethos had materialized. As I illustrate in the next chapter, however, an apparent problem of moral and juvenile delinquency emerged that was read as both the embodiment of 'family failure' and of incipient social breakdown. In this context it was affluence not poverty that constituted the problem and while the focus remained intensely upon boys they were characterized more ambivalently, as victims as well as villains.

³⁸³ Belich, J. (1996). *Making Peoples: a History of the New Zealanders: From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*. London; Auckland: Allen Lane; Penguin Press: 181

Chapter Five:

Re-inscribing the boundaries of 'morality': juvenile delinquency and family failure

It has become an essential ritual of our societies to scrutinize the countenance of the family at regular intervals in order to decipher our destiny, glimpsing in the death of the family an impending return to barbarism, the letting go of our reason for living; or indeed to reassure ourselves at the sight of its inexhaustible capacity for survival.³⁸⁴

Introduction

Public anxiety about the 'problem' of larrikinism in the 1880s was mediated, in part, by the desire to embed and normalize a bourgeois model of family life. By the time the furore over an alleged epidemic of juvenile and moral delinquency erupted in the early 1950s, that family model was institutionalized in the culture and in policy. In the New Zealand of the 1950s and 60s "[t]he nuclear family was not just an ideal, but the norm ...".³⁸⁵ It was considered not only a social building block, but had come to signify the 'moral' society. In the family the (bourgeois) 'values' and 'standards' of that society materialized. The historicity, and the class and race based specificity of this normalised family model had become invisible, lost in the almost mythic proportions it assumed (for some) in the socio-cultural life of New Zealand:

The family (meaning thereby the father, mother and children) from time immemorial has had a definite and recognized status in our national life - a place which has not always been enjoyed in other cultures and other systems of law. There is in our culture an air of sanctity about the home where parents and children dwell.³⁸⁶

For those who subscribed to this myth, family failure threatened the values the society was believed to be based upon and thus its moral stability. An apparent problem of widespread delinquency in the 50s was widely perceived as just such a threat. The National government, responding to increasing fears about youthful sexual promiscuity - exacerbated if not generated by intense interest from the media - commissioned an inquiry into the 'problem'. This resulted in the publication of the Mazengarb Report in 1954 which emphasised family

³⁸⁴ Donzelot, J. (1979) *The Policing of Families*. New York: Pantheon Books: 4.

³⁸⁵ James, C. (1992) *New Territory: the Transformation of New Zealand, 1984-1992*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books: 31.

³⁸⁶ Mazengarb, O. C. (1954) *Report of the Special Committee on Moral Delinquency in Children and Adolescents*. Wellington: Government Printer: 4.

culpability for the delinquency of the young. Failing families were not the only problem though. The report also blamed the secularization of the society and the resulting degradation of its foundational values. In addition, some commentators attributed delinquency to a purported decline in educational standards. In contrast to the colonial context where larrikinism was blamed on the lack of education, in the 50s delinquency was widely attributed to the dominance of liberal education and not just in submissions to the ultra conservative Mazengarb committee.

Behind anxiety about youth were fears that 'the family' was being undermined by a variety of undesirable changes. Broad socio-cultural and other shifts were occurring that were read as threats to the 'sanctity' of the family and the moral fabric of the society. Despite the narrow focus and deep conservatism that underpinned the debates about delinquency during the 50s, their implications would continue to resonate long after the actual furore died down. Not only did their stridency mediate the development of child welfare policy and practice for the next two decades, the debates reflected deeply entrenched beliefs about what constituted a 'proper' (in all senses of the word) family form which remains the subject of passionate public argument today.

While the focus on problem families is a discernable continuity between the discourses of larrikinism and those about moral delinquency, there are also important contextual and discursive differences between them. For example, in contrast to public anxieties about poor working class children during settlement - partly a reflexive response to economic and social instability - concerns about 'juvenile' and 'moral' delinquency occurred against a backdrop of relative economic wealth and apparent social stability. Affluence not poverty was constituted as problematic, perhaps because it signalled the end of adolescent dependence on and therefore regulation by their families as well as allowing them to evade the 'discipline' of unemployment. The concern with the affluence of males also extended across class boundaries so that middle class boys became seen as problematic as well.

Another significant difference between the two events was the emphasis on the *sexual* behaviour of the young and the apparently "new pattern" of "moral delinquency" that had emerged in the 50s.³⁸⁷ This pivoted largely on the demonisation of sexually precocious girls and, in a shift away from their unequivocal characterization as 'villains', the constitution of

³⁸⁷ Mazengarb, O.C. (1954) op.cit: 9

boys as 'victims'.³⁸⁸ The emphasis on female promiscuity suggests that moral delinquency was, implicitly, perceived as a profound threat to the maintenance and reproduction of the family.

The other notable distinction was the general absence of explicit reference to class in the debates about moral delinquency. Given the power of the cultural myth of egalitarianism which was reinforced by the institutionalisation of the notion of equality of opportunity that underpinned the reforms of the first Labour government, this is not surprising. To the degree that the "prosperity consensus"³⁸⁹ reflected the social dominance of bourgeois 'standards' and 'values', the 'middle class' society had come closer to material reality than ever before. Class operated as a subtext though, then as it does now, in the institutionalisation of 'the family' and in struggles over education.

In the previous chapter I suggested these social institutions emerged during the colonisation process as key sites for the moral regulation and, thus, the constitution of both individual liberal subjects and the 'nation'. Here I show how shared assumptions about the nature of the family and its role in the socialization and moralization of the young was, by the 1950s, a fundamental aspect of the middle class society. When individuals or groups contravened the standards of that society, often it was the 'failing family' that was held responsible. If there was a broad-based public consensus about family form and the significance of its social role however, this chapter shows how views on what constituted good (and bad) families differed.

There was also much less consensus at the time on what constituted good education than is often realised. In the 1950s, as now, education was perceived as both as the cause of and the solution to particular social issues and was thus a central site of contestation in what many have claimed was an overwhelmingly consensual society. I point to these varying, even contradictory, critiques of education here but explore discursive struggles over the postwar education settlement in much greater detail in Chapter Six.

³⁸⁸ Ausubel, D. (1977) *The Fern and the Tiki: an American View of New Zealand National Character, Social Attitudes and Race Relations*. North Quincy, Massachusetts: Christopher Publishing House. Despite the discursive emphasis on 'bad' girls, however, Ausubel notes that around ten times more boys appeared before the courts than girls.

³⁸⁹ James, C. (1992) op.cit.

Section One: The 'prosperity consensus': economy and society

The panic about delinquency took place in the context of an unprecedented level of socio-economic stability. New Zealand was in the midst of an extended boom, mediated to no small degree by intensive state regulation of society and economy. State interventionism was underwritten by the principles and practices of Keynesian economic management which had gained ascendancy amongst western nations after World War 11. These pivoted on protection of the national economy and provision of social security by ensuring full male employment. While "the doctrine of economic management" and its central "principles of *"prosperity, security and opportunity"* dominated in the West, the shape it took differed cross-nationally.³⁹⁰

State protectionism in New Zealand combined with private investment to ensure the stability of the national economy.³⁹¹ Practices such as import licensing encouraged private investment in industrial development and the state insulated the economy, imposed tariffs on luxury goods and, through its ownership of the Reserve bank, controlled foreign exchange:

The aim was balance in the external account or at most to run small deficits. That way debt could be contained and internal stability maintained. Budgets, too, were to be balanced or kept in small deficit. These constituted an integral and critical element of stabilization and thus of the prosperity consensus. This, plus strict monetary controls, was important in allowing the extensive system of regulation to work tolerably well.³⁹²

The New Zealand economy remained predominantly based on agriculture and export, mainly to Britain, though by the 1950s it was beginning to diversify with the growth of manufacturing industries.³⁹³ The development of the industrial sector brought with it the urbanization of the labour market and the demand for a mixture of skilled, non-skilled and semi-skilled labour.³⁹⁴ As well, intensive housing development during the 50s and 60s provided both apprenticeships and unskilled labouring work. The ready availability of employment and comparatively high wages mediated the upward mobility, in material terms, of unskilled workers and this helped create a relatively affluent working class.

³⁹⁰ Brown, P. and Lauder, H. (2001) *Capitalism and Social Progress: the Future of Society in a Global Economy*. Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave: 16.

³⁹¹ Hawke, G. (1992) 'Economic Trends and Economic Policy'. In G. W. Rice (ed) *Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed). Auckland: Oxford University Press: 421.

³⁹² James, C. (1992) op.cit: 28

³⁹³ Hawke, G. (1992) op.cit. Hawke notes that "more than 90 per cent of New Zealand's exports consisted of meat, wool and dairy produce, and nearly two thirds of them went to the UK" (p. 413).

³⁹⁴ Ibid: 418-422

The expansion of the service sector also contributed to the affluence of the society by providing greater opportunities for women's labour market participation. Despite a fall in the number of Pakeha women in paid employment post World War 11, after 1951 the participation rates of both Pakeha and Maori women rose markedly.³⁹⁵ At the same time, however, women with children experienced intense social pressure to prioritise mothering in an attempt to revivify the 'cult of domesticity'. This was driven at one level by economic expediency and the desire to recuperate, and further embed, the dominance of the male breadwinner paradigm after the shifts of the war years.³⁹⁶ It was also underpinned by powerful social discourses about the primacy of mothering in the production of psychologically and 'morally' healthy young people. I discuss this in more detail below.

The development of the service sector and the increasing bureaucratization of the public and private sectors also contributed to the diversification and expansion of the middle class. This process had begun in the interwar years when economic and demographic shifts changed the composition of the labour force, increasing the requirement for specific labour categories.³⁹⁷ These shifts resulted in a labour force where 55 percent of workers were employed in the tertiary sector, predominantly the service sector.³⁹⁸ During this period "the new middle class grew from 9 per cent to 22.9 per cent ... with the principal beneficiaries being the professions (teachers, accountants) and white collar workers (especially clerical)".³⁹⁹ The composition of the middle classes continued to change after the Second World War with the continued diminution of the old middle class and the expansion of the new which reached some "38.9 per cent of the total".⁴⁰⁰ The increase of the new professions that mediated this pattern resulted from the growth of public and private sector bureaucracies.

State expansion and state driven economic growth benefited some fractions of the middle class more than others though. While the urban middle class had "come to terms with the omnicompetent state and live[d] by, with and even from it",⁴⁰¹ for others the effects of

³⁹⁵ Davies, L. and Jackson, N. (1993) *Women's Labour Force Participation in New Zealand: the Past One Hundred Years*. Wellington: Social Policy Agency: 40.

³⁹⁶ Women were never regarded as a significant secondary labour force in New Zealand as they were in the Scandinavian countries at the time. Instead it increasingly comprised Maori and, a little later, Pacific Island peoples invited to migrate for just this purpose.

³⁹⁷ Openshaw, R. (1995) *Unresolved Struggle: Consensus and Conflict in New Zealand State Post-Primary Education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore: 28.

³⁹⁸ Ibid: 29

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid: 77

⁴⁰¹ Chapman, R. (1999) 'Great Expectations: New Zealand since the War: New Zealand Politics and Social Patterns'. In E. McLeay (ed). *Selected Works by Robert Chapman*. Wellington: Victoria University Press: 62

Keynesian economic management - as it played out in the New Zealand context - were less positive. These policies were not well received by small businesses or the farming sector both of whom objected strongly to state control of the economy. Divided opinions on economic intervention by the state created a schism between political parties and their electorate during this period so that, despite claims about the consensual society, there were deep political divisions in the society which were demarcated by an urban/rural split.⁴⁰²

Disaffection amongst particular fractions of the middle class appears to have had little impact on policy making. Left and Right politics were notable for their similarity, not their differences. This was probably a reflection of the deep conservatism of the period as well as a general consensus about what counted as efficient economic management despite opposition by some to the state's control of it. Both parties accepted a welfare state structure that had changed little since 1938, and social security and the 'mild' redistribution of income remained its focus; as did the emphasis on full employment, the promotion of low cost housing, significant state investment in education and infra-structural development. In spite of claims, in retrospect, about intensive state control of the economy at the time, "... both parties concurred in leaving the major portion of the economy to the operations of private capital, checked and controlled in part by the State, but neither comprehensively planned or threatened with expropriation".⁴⁰³

New Zealand was considered exceptional in economic terms because of state protection of industry rather than agriculture, which some have argued was driven by a combination of market and social motivations.⁴⁰⁴ It was also viewed as extraordinary in terms of social policy and the intensive regulation of the social domain by the state. General social and political consensus about the role the state in the provision of social security was the legacy of the social policy reforms of the first Labour government. The Social Security Act (1938) represented the acceptance by the state of the responsibility for social welfare in a much more expanded sense than at any time prior to it. Following the Act's introduction, New Zealand became regarded as a leader in innovative and radical social policy: "What distinguished the New Zealand legislation from social policy schemes in other countries at this time was the comprehensive and unified nature of the social protection envisaged in the

⁴⁰² Ibid

⁴⁰³ Ibid: 59-60

⁴⁰⁴ Hawke, G. (1992) op.cit: 423

Act”.⁴⁰⁵ The universalisation of social security included the extension of welfare to the middle classes, “increasing their willingness to pay for it”.⁴⁰⁶

Section two: Institutionalizing the standard family

Political and social consensus converged in the idea that social security for the society was ensured by state support for the traditional patriarchal nuclear family through the maintenance of existing social and economic policies. In effect this reinforced the valorization of that family model in the culture, embedding even further its constitution as the fundamental moral social unit. Postwar demographic, cultural and economic shifts, mediated and reinforced by the pronatalism of the first Labour government, profoundly influenced its institutionalisation as the norm. The postwar ‘baby boom’ doubled birthrates, couples married and formed younger families younger, and as I noted earlier, there was a conscious effort to “restore post war normality” by “recuperating the idealized family”.⁴⁰⁷

Pragmatic economic policies maintained and reinforced the “standard family’s” function as an economic as well as social unit.⁴⁰⁸ Wages were set relatively high based on the idea of the standard family and the presumption that young men were supporting a dependent wife and two children. Family income was augmented by payment to the mother of a family benefit for each child. At the same time the state increased and varied its support for home buyers and the family benefit could be capitalized on for house purchase.⁴⁰⁹ The benefits to families of a ‘youth welfare state’, which both rested upon and maintained the male breadwinner paradigm, made the traditional nuclear family far more economically viable than it had been in the past. This model of family life became the norm partly because most families could comfortably survive on one income. Even though greater numbers of women were entering the labour market than in the past, for most their domestic role remained primary. Thus, the mutuality of socio-cultural ideologies and social and economic policy underwrote the male breadwinner paradigm in the New Zealand context.

The ‘long boom’ certainly contributed to embedding this paradigm and institutionalizing ideas about the economy and the society that underpinned it. Prosperity mediated “social attitudes

⁴⁰⁵ Castles, F. (1985) *The Working Class and Welfare: Reflections on the Political Development of the Welfare State in Australia and New Zealand, 1890-1980*. Wellington, N.Z, Allen and Unwin: Port Nicholson Press: 27.

⁴⁰⁶ Belich, J. (2001) *Paradise Reforged: a History of the New Zealanders From the End of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 2000*. Auckland: Allen Lane; Penguin Press: 262.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid: 490

⁴⁰⁸ Thomson, D. (1991) *Selfish Generations? The Aging of New Zealand’s Welfare State*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid: 39

and politics alike”, and, some commentators believed, engendered an “ethos of conformity and consensus”.⁴¹⁰ I suggest that it did not provide the foundation of that ethos though. While economic wealth may well have embedded the ‘middle class’ society, it did not form it. As I argued earlier, partly because of the embourgeoisement of the English working class prior to colonization and the particular features of social and state formation during it, the values of working class settlers were already quite closely aligned with - if not identical to - those of the middle classes. The prosperity consensus reinforced the individualism, materialism and moralism already embedded in Pakeha culture.

Section Three: Cultural identity in the consensual society

Socio-cultural and demographic features helped embed the prosperity consensus. The New Zealand of the 50s was a society “with a cultural identity” and “widely shared values”, both of these bound up with its colonial past and ongoing affiliation with Britain as the “mother culture”.⁴¹¹ Cultural identification with Britain was reinforced by New Zealand’s economic dependency upon it. The society was ethnically homogeneous, with most post war migrants coming from the United Kingdom or Europe and ‘blending’ into the background. Despite their increasing urbanization following the Second World War, Maori remained largely invisible for much of the Pakeha population partly because the majority tended to reside in poorer housing areas.⁴¹² While the welfare reforms of the first Labour government included Maori in order to address their obvious disadvantage compared to Pakeha, the aim behind their inclusion was integration into Pakeha society. Maori were “to become in effect brown Europeans”, largely in order to “reinforce the prosperity consensus”.⁴¹³ Their inclusion was conditional, however, and cultural deficit assumptions about Maori continued to be entrenched in the society.⁴¹⁴ That they remained socially and economically marginalized is reflected in high rates of Maori poverty at the time and their over-representation in negative statistics on all social indices.⁴¹⁵

Above all Pakeha New Zealanders of the 50s were “security seeking individuals” who, despite the liberal ethic of self responsibility inherited from their colonial forebears, believed it was the role of the state to ensure social well being.⁴¹⁶ The “friend state” was fundamental to the

⁴¹⁰ Sinclair, K. (1991) *A History of New Zealand*. Auckland: Penguin Books: 288-289.

⁴¹¹ James, C. (1992) op.cit: 9

⁴¹² Dunstall, G. (1981) The Social Pattern, in W. H. Oliver and B. R. Williams (eds) *Oxford History of New Zealand*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴¹³ James, C. (1992) op.cit: 13

⁴¹⁴ Cultural deficit notions underpinned influential theories about acculturation and social development at the time which explained Maori poverty in terms of incomplete acculturation and Maori collectivism was held responsible for this.

⁴¹⁵ This was identified in a parliamentary report from the Maori Affairs Department. See Hunn, J.K. (1960) *Report on Department of Maori Affairs*. Wellington: Government Printer.

⁴¹⁶ James, C. (1992) op.cit: 18

prosperity consensus, providing social security through the intensive regulation of the economy and society.⁴¹⁷ The concept of equality of opportunity which had underpinned the reforms of the first Labour government was, by then, thoroughly institutionalised in the state and the society. The society conceived of itself as a fully fledged meritocracy where equality - which took the form of social mobility for individuals and their families - was believed to be achievable through the combination of opportunity, intelligence and hard work. State intervention supported the “prevailing belief in social mobility” in a society of, ostensibly, “fair shares” and a “common mean in lifestyles”.⁴¹⁸ Thus, it helped make the colonial dream of ‘getting ahead’ - for some - seem more tangible a reality than ever before.

This was particularly the case in the domain of education in large part because of the first Labour government’s broad reform of schooling in the 30s and 40s. The universalisation of access to secondary schooling had contributed to investment in the notion of meritocracy and an ethos of equal opportunity, both of which were tied up with the promise of social mobility. As I illustrate in the next chapter, these shifts created a number of social pressures. These included middle class concerns about social reproduction, generated by fears about increasing competition for credentials at school, but there was also contention over liberal education. The expansion of secondary schooling also led to the greater visibility of teenagers and, since “[t]he key site for teenage culture seems likely to have been the secondary school”,⁴¹⁹ probably contributed to increasing anxiety about their delinquency.

The conception of equality that underpinned meritocracy remained essentially narrow, however, as the form of egalitarianism that prevailed at the time was young, male and white.⁴²⁰ The inherited exclusions that underpinned this model of egalitarianism, therefore, continued to be deeply embedded in the society despite the changes wrought by the Keynesian social settlement. The dependence of the Keynesian welfare state on the self responsibility of the patriarchal nuclear family and, tied in with this, the centrality of paid employment to citizenship rights meant that some groups remained marginalized in the society.

In essence, the Keynesian welfare state was a ‘men’s welfare state because of their entrenched association with the labour force. The status it gave men differentiated their entitlements from those of women in a number of ways; as workers they could claim the ‘right’ to dependence on the state based the presumption of their past or future contribution to

⁴¹⁷ Ibid

⁴¹⁸ Dunstall, G. (1985) op.cit: 405-406

⁴¹⁹ Bellich, J. (2001) op.cit: 506

⁴²⁰ James, C. (1992) op.cit.

economy. That status also mediated their benefit rates, partly because of the assumption of men as providers. As Castles (1996) points out the unemployment benefit, unlike other benefits, was at least set at a “genuine subsistence level”.⁴²¹ Supplements were available for those men with dependents which could double or triple the rate of payment.⁴²² The “men’s welfare state” and the “women’s welfare state” differed fundamentally in that men were treated as *individuals* in terms of their occupational status while women were treated as “family members”, that is in terms of their relationship to others.⁴²³ Because of the emphasis on occupational status it was men from the *dominant* group who benefited most, since Maori men (and women) comprised the majority of the secondary labour force and were overrepresented amongst the poor.

In the context of relative economic wealth, moreover, the conception of ‘relative poverty’ “was slow to emerge in New Zealand ... beneficiaries who remained relatively poor termed themselves forgotten men and women”.⁴²⁴ Women with children and without a male breadwinner, for example, struggled in the society. The state’s determination to make families responsible for their own welfare and “not to take over the father’s economic role” underpinned the difficulty for these women to gain assistance.⁴²⁵ As well the tendency to individualise poverty which, as I have shown, was already entrenched in the middle class society was reinforced by the dominance during this period of theories of ‘personhood’. I discuss the development of those ideas and their impact upon Keynesian welfarism in the next chapter.

This was a context wherein a “[f]ascination with the psychological welfare of the individual [ran] parallel to official ignorance over what state support could or could not buy for people”; thus state support did not actually alleviate their poverty and the “supervision of the behaviour of the poor” that ensued served “as a diversion from financial reassessments of social security’s redistribution”.⁴²⁶ In effect this left the system of redistribution unchanged, the prosperity consensus intact and the structural inequalities that inhered in this capitalist society unchallenged. These factors also mediated the tenor of concerns about juvenile delinquency in

⁴²¹ Castles, F.G. (1996) ‘Needs-Based Strategies of Social Protection in Australia and New Zealand’. In G. Esping-Andersen (ed) *Welfare States in Transition: National Adaptation in Global Economies*. London; New Delhi: Sage Publications: 89.

⁴²² Ibid: 90

⁴²³ Bryson, L. (1992) *Welfare and the State: Who Benefits?* New York: St. Martins Press: 166.

⁴²⁴ McClure, M. (1998) *A Civilised Community: a History of Social Security in New Zealand 1898-1998*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs: 130.

⁴²⁵ Ibid: 143

⁴²⁶ Ibid: 149

that they emerged in “an atmosphere in which the threat to the family was regarded as cultural and moral rather than economic”.⁴²⁷

The individualization of disadvantage helped obfuscate class based economic disparities at the time as well. While the relative economic wealth of the nation contributed to a more affluent working class, the economic disparities between classes only diminished, they did not disappear. In the first instance, this was reflected in the intersection of class-based and racial disparities that underpinned the continued disadvantage of Maori in the context of the prosperity consensus. Secondly, disparities between families dependent on one income and those with two increased in the post-war society.⁴²⁸

Discontent with the status quo may have contributed to the emergence of one of New Zealand’s few episodes of overt and protracted class struggle - unusual given the country’s “normally apolitical working class”- which took shape in the Watersiders’ strike of 1951.⁴²⁹ While accounts of the nature of this struggle vary, Belich (2001) argues that it was motivated as much by self interest as the desire for social justice. He suggests that it reflected a combination of the “tight occupational subculture of the militant unions” and “a desire to use their strategic position in the recolonial economy to defend and increase their prosperity”.⁴³⁰ Public response to the strike was rabid, perhaps representative of “a deep-seated double-standard” toward “milking the system” where, although it was considered acceptable for businesses and farmers to exploit their strategic position because of their pivotal place in the economy, “average New Zealanders [may have] resented privilege most when it accrued to people like them”.⁴³¹ I would suggest it was probably a little more complex than this given that, as I have argued, the aspirations of the respectable working class required them to distance themselves from its rough and militant elements. The point here, though, is that this moment of apparent consensus was actually characterized by multiple contentions which can only have exacerbated public anxiety about social issues like delinquency.

The prosperity consensus comprised both historical and contextual economic, socio-cultural and demographic features that were woven together to form a society in which the ‘Victorian trinity’ of moralism, individualism, and materialism was profoundly entrenched. It was a society where what counted as morality was informed by the implicit dominance of a conservative bourgeois ethos. That is, it was “moral stability in the narrow churchy, sense

⁴²⁷ Ibid: 151

⁴²⁸ Dunstall, G. (1985) op.cit.

⁴²⁹ Belich, J. (2001) op.cit. 302

⁴³⁰ Ibid

⁴³¹ Ibid

...” and it was “overseen by the ‘nanny’ state”.⁴³² In James’ (1992) view, it was a society with an “accent on individual autonomy and a social concern for fellow citizens that amounted to “a sort of secular Christianity”.⁴³³ The image of the autonomous individualistic New Zealander is undermined to some degree by the powerful tendency to conservatism and conformity prevalent at the time; just as the claim about our collective social conscience is disrupted by the very clear demarcation that operated between those who deserved that concern and those who did not. This suggests that Christian values did not necessarily dominate. The culture was more secular than Christian in that it also was underpinned by a deep concern with “[m]aterial prosperity and social stability in the here and now [which] substituted satisfyingly for spiritual salvation in the hereafter”.⁴³⁴

Given the temporal proximity both of the Depression of the 30s and the struggles of settlement itself, a strong imperative toward socio-economic stability was not surprising. The depth of that imperative, however, contributed to the formation of a narrow culture which was by its very nature stultifying and suffocating for those who did not fit the narrow, rigid model of the ‘proper’ New Zealander. Analysis in retrospect does not adequately capture how claustrophobic the society was. Nor how its fundamental principles were permeated by what was essentially middle class anxiety. In his passionate repudiation of our central myth New Zealand writer Bill Pearson (1951) argued that the concept of equality here meant homogeneity, itself bound up with an overweening concern with security.⁴³⁵ For him the depth of that desire was representative of a society dominated by:

a middle class conception of a universe well-plumbed and shockproof ...That is at the bottom of the ideal world of the New Zealander, is one that ‘runs by clockwork’. You get up at a regular hour, go to work, you marry and have a family, a house and garden, and you live on an even keel till you draw a pension and they bury you decently.⁴³⁶

Predictability and conformity, it seemed, promised individual and therefore collective stability. For some the predominance of the nuclear family symbolized that stability. For Pearson conformity to the family, with its constraints and shallow representation of respectability, was perhaps the most potent symbol of an unimaginative, deeply moralistic and bourgeois society. Conformity, in all its manifestations, was underpinned by a powerful combination of fear of what others thought and desire for material security which was bound up with

⁴³² James, C. (1992) op.cit: 30

⁴³³ Ibid: 31

⁴³⁴ Ibid

⁴³⁵ Pearson, B. (1974) *Fretful Sleepers and Other Essays*. Auckland: Heinemann Education Books.

⁴³⁶ Ibid: 3

homogeneity: "Somewhere at the back of the outlook of the New Zealander is a dream, a dream of security in equality. Everyone acts the same, receives the same amount of the world's goods, everyone moves in the same direction".⁴³⁷ The mutual desire for security and sameness shaped a "New Zealand way of life [that was] dumb, numb and dull", where (male) individuals were confined to labouring out their days with irritating responsibilities to the newer and ultimate realities - wife and family and house and back garden, and the nagging unrecognized dissatisfactions that a Saturday afternoon in the pub after the football might yet appease?".⁴³⁸

Pearson's grim picture of the confines of family life was the antithesis of the idealized model held up as the bedrock of the nation in the Mazengarb report. The report evoked very clearly the moralistic streak in our society that Pearson railed against, in its valorization of 'the family' and its condemnation of those that 'failed'. In it the problem of moral delinquency was perceived and discursively constructed as the result of families that did not adhere to that ideal and, at the same time, as a threat to the stability of the family and that of the society.

Section Four: The Mazengarb Report: (re)claiming the moral high ground

"There is no emotion we feel so at home in as moral indignation".⁴³⁹

The Mazengarb committee was established in the context of "an alleged mass outbreak of sex among schoolchildren" in the Hutt Valley in 1953.⁴⁴⁰ Commissioned by the National government, its main raison d'être was to analyse what was perceived as a widespread and growing problem of sexual immorality among adolescents in New Zealand. Anxieties about the behaviour of adolescent youth had begun to (re)surface early in the decade and the Mazengarb report was a response to the increasing stridency of those concerns.⁴⁴¹ The commission of enquiry comprised: the chairman, Queen's Council - and "trusted ally of the Government"- Oswald Mazengarb; a Justice of the Peace; the vice president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Inter-Church Council on Public Affairs; president of the Catholic Women's League; the Headmaster of Christchurch Boy's High, a clergyman; the director of

⁴³⁷ Ibid: 18

⁴³⁸ Ibid

⁴³⁹ Ibid: 10

⁴⁴⁰ Belich, J. (2001) op.cit. Arrests were made at the time and "fifty nine adolescents were charged with 107 sex offences" (p. 504).

⁴⁴¹ Earlier concerns about delinquency emerged in during the Second World War, partly in response to the absence of men in families at the time.

the Child Hygiene Unit of the Health Department and the president of the New Zealand Junior Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁴²

This formidable array of 'solid citizens' were tasked with identifying the cause of the 'problem' and recommending solutions to it. The commission's role was

To inquire into and report upon the conditions and influences that tend to undermine standards of sexual morality in children and adolescents in New Zealand, and the extent to which such conditions and influences are operative, and to make recommendations to the government for positive action by both public and private agencies, or otherwise.⁴⁴³

Evidence was presented personally to the commission by the representatives of a variety of public organisations and by private individuals. Written submissions were also considered. It was noted in the report that "[m]uch of the evidence ... was secondary or hearsay evidence", and that the young people involved were not interviewed by the commission.⁴⁴⁴ Neither of these points was considered particularly problematic, in part because of the 'reliability' of those who spoke for the children and those who presented secondary evidence.⁴⁴⁵ Also the committee was concerned with the "broad general aspects" of the problem, not its specificities. No bones were made about it: "the Committee was not engaged on a fact-finding mission, but was seeking to evaluate the evidence in a broad way" - nor did there seem to be any perception that this rationale might need justification.⁴⁴⁶

As well as delineating and suggesting solutions to the problem of moral delinquency among the youth of New Zealand, the report had other functions. It was also meant to provide a measured response to what was perceived as the media's overstatement of the problem of delinquency and to protect the country's reputation. The committee was anxious to dispel the image of an epidemic constructed by the media and was concerned with "[t]he extent to which juvenile delinquency may in New Zealand have been greatly magnified abroad".⁴⁴⁷ One of its tasks was to repair any damage done to the "good name of the Dominion" by

⁴⁴² Yska, R. (1993) *All Shook Up: the Flash Bodgie and the Rise of the New Zealand Teenager in the Fifties*. Auckland: Penguin Books: 68.

⁴⁴³ Mazengarb, O.C (1954): op.cit: preamble.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid: 11

⁴⁴⁵ Although the report stated that a decision had been made, presumably by the committee, not to interview the children involved, no rationale was given for this decision. Presumptions about the reliability of those agents who spoke for them seems to have rested upon their professional expertise, as police officers or welfare workers but this also reflect a rigidly authoritarian society in terms of relations between adults and the young.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid: 10

inaccurate publicity; another was to “do something in the interests of morality which may also lead other countries”.⁴⁴⁸ New Zealand, in the view of the committee, could potentially lead the crusade against the ‘global’ decline of standards and morals.⁴⁴⁹

The media proved a powerful influence in disseminating, and exacerbating, the public sense of crisis about emergent moral delinquency in the 50s. The “hundreds of newspaper clippings” about the crisis was read as evidence that there was one.⁴⁵⁰ Media characterization of the so-called problem of moral delinquency reflected the conservatism and conformity of the broader society, as indeed it must, given the necessary reliance of the media on extant cultural scripts -and the myths, narratives and theories they are constructed from - in the ‘truths’ it represented and reinforced in society. As I have argued in chapters One and Seven the media *is* selective; it uses particular criteria to measure what counts as ‘news’, and it seeks out ‘expert’ opinion - which is invariably partial - therefore not all possible stories are told and the truths it *re*-presents are of necessity narrow. Openshaw (1989) suggests that when fears about delinquency resurfaced in the 1960s the media did not “simply report delinquency; it also defined deviancy” in its “active structuring of ‘the problem’ ... it influenced the views of magistrates, police and, later, politicians and educators”.⁴⁵¹ If it did so, this was because it operated as an important part of the feedback loop that compromised the existing social imaginary wherein “*all elements inform one another so that causation flows in multiple directions simultaneously*”.⁴⁵² This is not to downplay the significant role the media plays in ‘making up’ social truths but to situate it *in* the society - not at some remove which enables it to wield power over the society and impose its own meanings upon it. As Hall et al (1978) argued some time ago, “the process of signification -giving social meanings to events - both assumes and helps to construct society as a ‘consensus’ ”.⁴⁵³ Thus, “problematic events breach our commonly held expectations and are therefore threatening to a society based around the expectation of consensus, order and routine”.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁴⁹ The broad concerns that underpin the Mazengarb report also need to be contextualised in terms of conditions external to New Zealand. Similar anxieties were characteristic of other Western nations at the time, partly in response to social upheaval caused by the war and also because of the rise of communism. McCarthyism emerged in the United States in the context of this generalised hysteria about socio-political change.

⁴⁵⁰ Mazengarb, O.C. (1954) op.cit: 6

⁴⁵¹ Openshaw, R. (1989) ‘Hooligans at Hastings: Reactions to the Hastings Blossom Affray, September 1960’. *History of Education Review* 18 (No. 2): 32-43.

⁴⁵² Poovey, M. (2002) ‘The Liberal Civil Subject and the Social in Eighteenth Century Moral Philosophy’. *Public Culture* 14 (No.1): 132, my emphasis.

⁴⁵³ Hall, S., Critcher, C. et al. (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd: 55.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid: 56-57

These terms were in a sense the 'mantra' of 1950s New Zealand. This was the case, I think, not only in response to the upheaval the 30s depression and of World War Two, or the social flux of the period itself. It seems to me that the concern with order and conformity was also a product of the proximity of the colonial moment, and its myths. The 'nation', that is, 'we Pakeha' were still very close to our past, and the colonial social imaginary still heavily inflected our perceptions of what was valuable, moral and respectable.

While the acknowledgement of overreaction by the media suggests that the magnitude of the problem of moral delinquency may have been open to debate, the belief that there was a significant problem was not questioned. Citing evidence presented by the prosecuting officer in a case of indecent assault or carnal knowledge against a group of Lower Hutt youths, the report states that

The police investigations revealed a shocking degree of immoral conduct which spread into sexual orgies perpetrated in several private homes during the absence of parents, and in several second rate Hutt Valley theatres, where familiarity between youths and girls was commonplace.⁴⁵⁵

The incidents that occurred in the Hutt Valley in June 1954 were the basis for public anxiety about adolescent sexuality at the time. This local problem was generalized in the claim that "similar environmental conditions obtain in other districts".⁴⁵⁶ As I explain later in the chapter one of the explicit 'conditions' believed to exacerbate if not cause moral delinquency was the absence of parents, particularly mothers in paid work; another, that was not commented on in any explicit way, was the impact of suburbanisation and the housing crisis on the mainly working class families who lived in the area.⁴⁵⁷ Claims about the increase in immoral conduct among New Zealand youth in the report were based on statistics which compared cases of sexual misconduct brought before the courts in 1952 and 1954.⁴⁵⁸ What is notable about these statistics is that they highlight the fact that, despite the claims about the predominance of immorality among girls in the report and in the media, the figures show that boys were still the majority of offenders. This may have been rationalised by the belief that girls 'led boys astray'.

⁴⁵⁵ Mazengarb, O.C. (1954) op.cit: 7

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid: 13

⁴⁵⁷ Yska, R. (1993) op.cit: 45-46

⁴⁵⁸ Mazengarb, O.C (1954) op.cit. see p.11

The report's vilification of sexually precocious girls was strident. It was claimed that girls in the 50s were breaking patterns of (largely passive) sexual interaction with boys by *initiating* "sexual misbehaviour":

Nowadays, girls do not always wait for an advance to be made to them, nor are they as reticent as they used to be in discussing intimate matters with the opposite sex. It is unfortunate that in many cases girls, by immodest conduct, have become the leaders in sexual misbehaviour and have in many cases corrupted boys.⁴⁵⁹

Discursively this draws on the duality that underpinned Victorian (and older) constructions of female sexuality as passive and underdeveloped, yet potentially dangerous and uncontrollable. As I noted in the previous chapter, when discursive constructions of larrikinism included poor working class girls they were invariably characterized as dangerous to society because of their aberrant sexuality. The degree to which boys are constructed as the victims of a predatory and out of control female sexuality in the report is striking though. Especially in contrast to the near invisibility of girls in the discourses of larrikinism and the almost unequivocal demonisation of poor working class boys in them. The attitudes to gender and sexuality resonant in the Mazengarb report were indicative of the deep conservatism of some of the society's more influential members. An explicit function of the commission was to *recuperate* certain standards and values thought to have dissipated due to social and economic change. It was the role of the middle class moral guardians who comprised it to point out the deviation from the bourgeois moral ethos those attitudes reflected and guide those who had strayed back 'into the fold', for the good (name) of the nation.

The report claimed that

We have not the same worry about boys as we have about girls. The worst cases we have are girls, and it is quite clear some of them are an absolute menace. They have *dragged* boys into this sort of thing. In general the girls are far worse than the boys.⁴⁶⁰

'Immoral' girls not only contravened the gendered 'norms' of (hetero)sexuality, representing a risk to the reproduction of the 'normal' family in their own right, they also signified the

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid: 18

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, my emphasis.

failure of families to carry out their socializing and regulative role. The report blamed irresponsible or inadequate families for the 'problem' arguing that the

common denominator in the majority of the cases studied by the Committee ... is the lack of appreciation by parents of their responsibility for the upbringing and the behaviour of their children, or if they do appreciate their responsibility, they are unable to guide them correctly and maintain control of them.⁴⁶¹

The social anxiety about the behaviour of girls these comments reflected was tied up with deeply held beliefs about the sanctity of 'the family', as well as assumptions about the fundamental importance of its regulatory role and fears about its capacity to withstand the onslaught of socio-cultural, economic and demographic change. In common with the discourses of larrikinism in the 1880s, the Mazengarb report emphasized the role of inadequate families in the production of juvenile and moral delinquency. In contrast to them, it was affluence not poverty which was constituted as problematic for families and the society.

In a context of comparatively high wages and an emerging consumerism which did not appear to be mediated by class, materialism was held up as a social evil. The critique of excessive materialism was linked to conservative anxiety about the morally debilitating effects of the welfare state and the dangers of welfarism believed to undermine the (Christian) "virtues of thrift and self-denial".⁴⁶² Both the moral wellbeing of the individual and the family were potentially threatened because welfarism weakened the ethic of self responsibility.

Incentive does not have the place in our economy it used to have. The tendency has been to turn to the State for the supply of all material needs. By encouraging parents to rely on the State their sense of responsibility for the upbringing of their children has been diminished. The adolescent of today has been born into a world where things temporal, such as money values and costs, are discussed more than spiritual things.⁴⁶³

Materialism and easy access to paid employment for youth was also thought to deflect them from the spiritually and intellectually 'broadening' effects of further education and, as a result,

⁴⁶¹ Ibid: 44

⁴⁶² Ibid: 45

⁴⁶³ Ibid

“these young people, having too much interest in material things, and not enough in the things of the mind and the spirit, become a potential source of trouble in the community”.⁴⁶⁴ Excessive materialism undermined the family in another way. It was blamed for the growing numbers of mothers in the workforce who were, in turn, held responsible for the delinquency problem. According to the report “Nearly one third of the delinquent children whose cases were considered by the Committee belonged to homes where the mother worked for wages”.⁴⁶⁵ While it was acknowledged that for some women paid employment was a necessity, the report claimed that “many of them work in order to provide a higher standard of living than can be enjoyed on the wages earned by their husbands, or because they prefer the company at an office, shop or factory to the routine of domestic duties.”⁴⁶⁶

Though the absence of fathers was noted in the report as a contributing factor in the problem of delinquency, it was most often ‘irresponsible’ mothers who were emblematic of family failure. This view was also explicit in the media which claimed: “the Hutt Valley episode had proved conclusively that mothers had not realized their responsibility”.⁴⁶⁷ Both mothers who worked and ‘bad’ girls contravened bourgeois norms of femininity, if in different ways. Their demonisation in the highly gendered discursive constructions of the moral delinquency ‘epidemic’ was an attempt to regulate and re-inscribe those norms, to re-moralise those women and girls who had deviated in one way or another from them.

The heavy emphasis on (im)morality also inflected the report’s analysis of submissions criticizing the role of education in the emergence of the problem. Co-education was thought to “increase the chances of immorality”, though the Commission concluded there was little evidence to prove that “acts of immorality among pupils did in fact arise from their association at school”.⁴⁶⁸ Other submissions suggested that educational change had contributed to the problem. In particular, they blamed the shift to child-centred education for creating a ‘predisposition’ to delinquency in children.⁴⁶⁹ While the report again noted the lack of any convincing evidence to confirm these claims, as I show in the next chapter, debates about education were a powerful current of dissent and contention running beneath the apparently broad social consensus at the time.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid: 36

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid

⁴⁶⁷ *Evening Post*, 15 July 1954.

⁴⁶⁸ Mazengarb, O.C. (1954). op.cit: 25

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid: 27

In spite of the strong emphasis on moral delinquency and the tendency to feminize its causes, there was a fairly constant slippage throughout the report between moral and juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency, however, was almost exclusively associated with adolescent males.⁴⁷⁰ And, while adolescent girls were generally associated with sexual misbehaviour, delinquent boys had usually committed some crime against property and made court appearances.⁴⁷¹ The Mazengarb report noted ethnic differences in offending amongst males stating that “juvenile delinquency among Maoris was three and a half times that among the rest of child inhabitants of New Zealand”.⁴⁷² Despite recognition that race was significant in some way here it was noted only in passing and attributed to the cultural deficiency of Maori. It was claimed that “[a] considerable portion of offences may come from factors inherent in the culture and traditions of the Maori and their difficulty in conforming to another mode of living”.⁴⁷³

Essentially, the report reflected the deep conservatism of certain influential social elements and was underpinned by an obsessive concern with the relationship between morality and the nuclear family. The panic about teenage sexuality which was its focus reflected profound anxiety about broad social change and the threat that represented to the security of the society and its microcosm, the family: “Postwar New Zealand was torn between two strong trends: a sense of irrevocable change, a world shattered and rebuilding in different shapes; and a desire to *restore* - to restore a past that, ideally at least, was more familiar and secure”.⁴⁷⁴ Juvenile delinquency remained the focus of public and expert attention long after the Mazengarb report had faded from the limelight, however, and the dysfunctional family remained a central theme in the discourses produced about it.

Section Five: The ‘Expert’ view: psychologising the problem

Psychologist A.E Manning published his research on a particular category of delinquent youth, the ‘Bodgie’ and his female equivalent the ‘Widgie’, in 1958. His comparative study was based upon interviews with groups of Australian and New Zealand youth. Bodgies and widgies were, in his reading, “emotionally disturbed” young people whose behaviour was the

⁴⁷⁰ Dalley, B. (1998) *Family Matters: Child Welfare in Twentieth Century New Zealand*. Auckland: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs. In the view of one Child Welfare officer, “the average juvenile delinquent was male, physically healthy, likely to come from a satisfactory physical environment in a suburban locality, but probably living in a difficult or unusual family relationship” (p. 185).

⁴⁷¹ Lavelle, B. (1990) ‘Youth Without a Purpose: Juvenile Delinquency in New Zealand in the 1950s’. Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Otago: 187.

⁴⁷² Mazengarb, O.C (1954) op.cit: 16

⁴⁷³ Ibid

⁴⁷⁴ Belich, J. (2001) op.cit: 297

result of intense frustration.⁴⁷⁵ Manning perceived the moment as anomic, and the problem of delinquency among ‘bodgies’ and ‘widgies’ as representative of their alienation from a society that had abandoned the moral values necessary for the development of psychologically healthy individuals. Bodgies and widgies were conceptualized as the symptoms of a social sickness –“social boils” caused by “the failure of society”.⁴⁷⁶

An important aspect of this pathology was a collapse of morals attributed to the shift to a more materialistic culture noted above, that was underpinned by “a long competition for the desirable things of life”.⁴⁷⁷ Manning related the dominance of materialism to an adult (rather than cultural) anxiety for the “security money brings”.⁴⁷⁸ Like the Mazengarb report he did not situate the drive to materialism in any one class, suggesting instead it was endemic to the society as a whole. What he did do however was to criticise the middle classes, implying they had absolved themselves of responsibility for guarding the morals of the society. The neglect by this class of its crucial role of moral guardianship undermined social values in Manning’s view because:

It is in the middle class that strength is found, but if this class is attacked by apathy, freedom becomes license, moral standards are reduced or ignored.⁴⁷⁹

For Manning the emergence of delinquency signified the failure of the society’s central institutions, “Church, Home and School”.⁴⁸⁰ In his view, failure by families to provide a healthy psychological environment contributed to delinquent behaviour among ‘bodgies’ and ‘widgies’. They were among the “many thousands of young people [who] are *not* emotionally balanced because they have not known the love of a good home”.⁴⁸¹ In particular, and in keeping with the doxa of the period as well as his own discipline, he located inadequate mothers as the central cause of the problem: “[t]he most important single factor in the whole problem is the mother round whom the home should revolve, and must be made to revolve”.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁵ Manning, A. E. (1958) *The_Bodgie: A Study in Abnormal Pyschology*. Wellington: A.H and A.W Reed: 11.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid: 26

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid: 89

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid: 6

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid

⁴⁸¹ Ibid: 27

⁴⁸² Ibid: 90

This claim reflected the powerful influence of theories about human development, like those of Bowlby, which emphasized the importance of mothering in the psychological health of children and young people. The child's psycho-social development including the capacity for self-regulation, Bowlby believed, pivoted on the presence of the mother. During infancy and early childhood

... the child is dependent on his mother performing [the function of ego and superego] for him. She orients him in space and time, provides his environment, permits the satisfaction of some impulses, restricts others. She is his ego and superego. Gradually he learns these arts himself, and as he does, the skilled parent transfers these roles to him. This is a slow, subtle and continuous process, beginning when he first learns to walk and feed himself, and not ending completely until maturity is reached ... Ego and superego development are thus inextricably bound up with the child's primary human relationships.⁴⁸³

The absence or neglect of mothers was not the only problematic factor in New Zealand families though. Manning hints at a pattern of overly authoritarian family relations here in which discipline was excessive, and young people were given little opportunity to make decisions for themselves. This pattern was mirrored in an equally disciplinarian and anachronistic education system. He implies that secondary schooling, in terms of both curricula and culture, had to shoulder some of the responsibility for the problem of delinquency. In a series of rhetorical questions about education he manages to critique both parenting and the education system. In the first instance, he questioned the pressure on young people (by parents and teachers presumably) to take certain subjects at schools regardless of their interest in them. This was bound up with what he saw as an increasingly instrumental approach to education which questioned whether teaching was "a process of fitting and adapting a child to the requirements of industry and commerce or a process of developing character and good social attitudes".⁴⁸⁴

His critique here was not aimed at any vocational content in secondary schooling though, instead he implied that the education system was anachronistic in its continued adherence to (what had become largely irrelevant) "academic subjects of an earlier age" and "archaic and brutal forms of discipline".⁴⁸⁵ These elements of schooling reflected the anachronism of the

⁴⁸³ John Bowlby (1951), cited in Bretherton, I. (1992) 'The Origins of Attachment: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth'. *Developmental Psychology* 28: 759-775.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid: 10-11

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid

social rules that inhered in the culture itself, particularly those rules that enforced hierarchical relations between adults and youth and which, in his view, served to 'infantise' young people. He argued that "In New Zealand schools boys are forced to wear " 'little boy' clothing up to the age of eighteen or nineteen".⁴⁸⁶ The insistence on uniforms at school reflected the uniformity of the society itself which in turn forced "[t]he boy or the girl ... into a mould of mediocrity", if it didn't inspire their outright rebellion.⁴⁸⁷ This tendency toward educational mediocrity, which he ascribed to both New Zealand and Australian society, undermined the development of individual potential in his view. In such societies "[s]chool and social strata and the home itself offer countless obstructions to the child's natural development".⁴⁸⁸

Manning's often implicit critique of family, schooling and society in NZ was echoed, amplified and extended by American educational psychologist David Ausubel (1977), whose analysis of New Zealand culture was first published in 1960. If Ausubel's book sometimes reads as a barely disguised defense of American culture rather than the wholly objective outsider's view of New Zealand society he claimed it was, his criticisms often resonate with Pearson's insider's view.⁴⁸⁹ Ausubel too evoked a suffocatingly narrow society dominated by the values and beliefs that he associated quite explicitly with Victorian mores. Like Pearson he questioned the central myth of egalitarianism. Criticizing race relations in the country, he pointed out that claims to equality between the races, dominant at the time, were not grounded in fact. He was struck by "the almost universal and uncritical acceptance of the unvalidated national belief regarding racial equality and the reluctance of New Zealanders to look unpalatable facts in the face".⁴⁹⁰

While the issue of race and delinquency was largely absent in public discourses like the Mazengarb report, and completely invisible in Manning (apparently bodgies and widgies were a Pakeha phenomenon?), Ausubel pointed to the high incidence of Maori delinquency compared to Pakeha. He associated this with the urbanization of Maori and closer contact with Pakeha, suggesting that the "more intense conflict between cultural values and standards of behaviour, and the more rapid rate of assimilating Pakeha culture add immeasurably to the ordinary tensions of cultural integration".⁴⁹¹ He also highlighted the

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid: 26

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid: 27

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid

⁴⁸⁹ Openshaw, R. (1989) op.cit. One strand of the arguments about the cause of delinquency was the claim that "mass consumption and mass communication (representing an infiltration of American culture seen as antithetical to the social values of new Zealand) were ... undermining traditional Kiwi values and individual moral strength" (p. 32).

⁴⁹⁰ Ausubel, D. (1977) op.cit: 155

⁴⁹¹ Ibid

conservatism and conformity of both society and state at the time arguing that the problem of delinquency in New Zealand, though overstated, was the result of and a reaction to these features of the culture and others tied up with them. I discuss this in greater detail below.

Firstly, he contextualized the problem, locating it within a “world-wide epidemic of delinquency”.⁴⁹² He saw this as a response to the period of social upheaval in western societies that followed the Second World War:

The post-war increase in adolescent delinquency reflects the operation of several causal factors both in New Zealand and in many other parts of the world. Chronic international crises and the serious threat of nuclear war have engendered everywhere a somewhat fatalistic, cynical and Epicurean approach to life.⁴⁹³

Secondly, his categorization of youthful ‘deviancy’ was more expansive than that of either the Mazengarb report, with its excessive - even voyeuristic - focus on ‘moral delinquency’, or Manning’s study. There were four main types of “rebellious teenager”: larrikins “loosely organized, noisy, loutish and mischievous street corner boys; hardcore delinquents “aggressive and anti-social, often vicious and vindictive, and sometimes ... organized into gangs”; sexually promiscuous adolescents and bodgies and widgies who wear distinctive clothing and are sexually promiscuous—and “in even greater revolt against authority and conventional standards of respectability” than larrikins.⁴⁹⁴

In contrast to claims about the prevalence of adolescent immorality he argued that “[s]exual misdemeanours constitute only a small percentage [of court appearances] for either sex”.⁴⁹⁵ While he claimed that moral delinquency accounted for “only a tiny fraction of offences among boys but almost a third of all female delinquency”, Ausubel characterised those statistics as a reflection of the “prevailing ‘double standard’ of morality regarding sex behaviour and the earlier sexual maturation of girls”.⁴⁹⁶ Contradicting suggestions that sexual immorality was a growing problem compared to earlier historical moments, he argued that there was little evidence to suggest that sexual behaviour had changed substantively.

⁴⁹² Ibid: 129

⁴⁹³ Ibid: 133

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid

While implicitly critical of the panic about morality, he was unequivocal about the existence of a problem. Delinquency in his view was directly attributable to urbanization, an unstable family life and, related to this, mothers in paid employment. To this list he added the possibility of an emerging recession combined with a rapidly increasing adolescent population which would put an end to the problem of too much time and money and replace it with the “problems related to widespread teen-age unemployment and the constriction of economic opportunity”.⁴⁹⁷ Much of his commentary, however, emphasized the role of the family and education in adolescent rebellion.

What makes Ausubel's research particularly interesting is his comparative view, both temporally and cross-nationally, and his emphasis on the elements of New Zealand *culture* he believed contributed both to the problem and its perception. In the first instance, he argued there were features of delinquency that were generalisable cross-culturally. For example, incidents of delinquency and bodgieism were different from those of the past in that they were representative of the constitution of “a more prolonged and characteristic way of life for a minority of adolescents”.⁴⁹⁸ What was particularly problematic with the ‘new’ patterns of delinquency was the “anti-adult orientation of the present-day deviant groups [which had] become more intense, bitter and tinged with resentment than it formerly was”.⁴⁹⁹ He also believed that “delinquent youths [were] more highly organized and engaged in more viciously aggressive activities than was previously the case”.⁵⁰⁰

In New Zealand, though, in his view there was less gang activity and delinquency was both more diffuse and generalized across class boundaries. What made it distinct here, he argued, was that

Compared to its American counterpart, it is less related to a specific frustrating situation, i.e., the slum, affecting a limited segment of the population, and appears to be more widely distributed among all social classes. The reaction is less directly aggressive, less intense, less narrowly focalized and less vindictive. It consists more of a diffuse revolt against conventional standards and values of respectable behaviour than outright delinquency.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid: 134

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid: 134-135

⁵⁰¹ Ibid: 141

For Ausubel, the conservatism and conformity that underpinned the ‘conventional standards and values’ of the society were exacerbated if not created by the welfare state. It engendered uniformity through policies and practices which encouraged homogeneity and mediocrity. This undermined the possibility for “people to develop fully their unique potentialities based on natural differences in ability and drive”.⁵⁰² He criticised the attempt to ensure social security mediated through a ‘top heavy’ bureaucracy, claiming the state was obtrusive and seemed “to have a regulatory finger in every pie” effectively limiting the scope for “individual initiative and independent action”.⁵⁰³

The conservatism and authoritarianism of the state mirrored an homogeneous society that was distinctive in terms of its heavy emphasis on an out-dated mode of discipline at home and at school. The society had, from his viewpoint, remained in a time-warp and “of all of the cultural institutions transplanted from Victorian England none could possibly have remained more faithful to their original traditions than the New Zealand family and the secondary school”.⁵⁰⁴ He was struck by what he saw as a lack of differentiation, by class, of parenting styles, and associated the predominant pattern of authoritarianism with a ‘lower class’ rather than a middle class model of family relations. The rigid discipline that characterized this model was rationalized, he argued, by the belief that “this type of training invariably develops such traits of character as industry, courage, forthrightness, resolution and self-reliance”.⁵⁰⁵

Schooling was even more dysfunctional than the family. If family relations were based upon working class mores, secondary schooling, paradoxically, attempted to replicate “snobbish English public schooling” with its rigid class distinctions.⁵⁰⁶ It was, according to Ausubel, “the most authoritarian, tradition-bound, and hierarchically organized institution in New Zealand”.⁵⁰⁷ In a context where the myth of the classless society was deeply embedded, he implied that conservative critiques of education were underpinned by the desire to keep hierarchical class-based relations firmly in place by reinstating selective access to secondary education. He argued

Some of the principal aims of educational conservatives in New Zealand are to reduce the number of children attending school to make schooling the prerogative of a highly selected minority, to reintroduce the curriculum of the old Victorian public

⁵⁰² Ibid: 41

⁵⁰³ Ibid: 44

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid: 86

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid: 87

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid: 91

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid

school, to reduce the university population and to slash school expenditure dramatically.⁵⁰⁸

The dysfunction at the heart of New Zealand society was mediated in part by its 'gendered culture' which manifested clearly in secondary education. He suggested that one of the casual factors that predisposed New Zealand youth to delinquency was the high degree of separation between the sexes, including in the education system. As well as rebelling against restrictive and constraining gender relationships, youth were resisting the climate of excessive authoritarianism. Contradicting claims about the relationship between liberal parenting, liberal education and delinquency, he argues that

In varying degree, overtly or covertly, they resent the arbitrary and heavy handed controls of parents and teachers, the "little boy" attitudes implicit in the school uniform approach, and the indignity of corporal punishment ... Secondary schools offer teenagers insufficient opportunity to achieve status and self-determination in extra-curricular and school government activities ... Insufficient opportunity also exists for boy-girl relationships in everyday working and social situations because of the emphasis on single sex-schools and clubs and the absence of genuine co-educational practice.⁵⁰⁹

These central institutions reflected a level of 'dysfunction' in social relationships that permeated the whole society. In a damning statement, Ausubel suggested that the antipodean version of delinquency was not so much a radical divergence from an established set of norms. Rather, he claimed, "such behaviour is simply a more active and exaggerated manifestation of the same aggressive proclivities that are expressed in more direct and devious ways by many of their non-deviant age-mates".⁵¹⁰

There is an implicit critique of New Zealand masculinity here. In his view the line between deviant and stereotypical masculinity was so fine as to be virtually non-existent. Both forms were problematic, both were the product of a gendered and deeply dysfunctional society manifested most clearly in family failure and a flawed education system.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid: 92

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid: 143

⁵¹⁰ Ibid

Concluding remarks

By the 1950s the middle class nuclear family had not only become the 'norm', it had become "a relay of different and varied forms of power".⁵¹¹ It was the site of new techniques of state and other forms of intervention and regulation, not least because "the failure of the family unit in the first place ... provides the pretext for the adjustment and correction of deficiency".⁵¹² Drawing on the work of Donzelot (1979), Kendall et al (1997) argue that "failure is built into to the family mechanism, precisely because the modern family is that which fails, which needs gentle correction and regulation. Without failure there would be no welfare, there would be no 'social'".⁵¹³ These texts, therefore, might be thought of as discursive attempts to 'fix' (that is, to stabilize and remedy) the family, not only to ensure social order which the 'functional' family is supposed to support and represent, but also to reinforce the expertise of those individuals and institutions which govern it.

As I have suggested in earlier chapters understandings of what constitute 'proper' families are not arbitrary, they are underpinned by the valorization of a middle class and culturally specific model of family life which is mobilized in all three of the discourses I discussed above. Interestingly, that same model is read differently by Ausubel who associates the authoritarianism of the typical New Zealand family at the time with working class relational practices, reflecting the stronger influence of *liberal* bourgeois life-ways in the American context than here in the 50s. Thus the middle class model of family life normalized and valorized here was, in his view, not bourgeois enough (or at all) and it was precisely this that was the problem. Basil Bernstein (2003), however, has associated similar modes of ultra conservatism and authoritarianism with the 'old (conservative) middle classes in Britain and he argues that their practices, which are maintained by insularity and cultural homogeneity, produce and reproduce a conservative element in the 'national psyche'.⁵¹⁴ He suggests that with the emergence of a liberal middle class competing, and quite different, bourgeois relational practices underpinned discursive struggles over education in this period. I develop this point in the next chapter. Here, I want to suggest that the tendency to conservatism in New Zealand, which I have related to the continued influence of the colonial social imaginary, was a feature of both a dominant old middle class and with a working class concerned with respectability.

⁵¹¹ Kendall, G., Collins, A. and Michael, M. (1997) 'Constructing Risk: Psychology, Medicine and Child Welfare'. *Journal of Applied Social Behaviour* 4 (No.1): 22.

⁵¹² Ibid

⁵¹³ Ibid: 23

⁵¹⁴ Bernstein, B. (2003) *Class, Codes and Control Vol.3*. London: Routledge.

Amongst these discourses about delinquency readings of the problem also vary in terms of its gendered association. They range from the Mazengarb report's emphasis on female immorality and its claims about girls' precocity which implicitly draws upon the madonna/whore duality that has underpinned normative assumptions about femininity and sexuality for time out of mind; to Ausubel's association of masculinity - both deviant and 'normal' - with aggression, also a deeply entrenched normative understanding about masculinity. They converge, however, in assumptions about what constitutes adequate mothering, again relying upon and invoking dominant conceptions of femininity and women's nurturing role; in Mazengarb as ordained by God and in Ausubel and Manning proven by 'science' to be both natural and essential to individual psychological development.

While concerns about class largely remain a subtext in these texts and in public discourses about delinquency more broadly, there are occasional explicit associations made to working class and family failure. For example, referring to the incidence of sexual delinquency in girls, an investigating officer for the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Education claimed that "the concentration of semi- and unskilled industrial jobs should mean some concentration of sub-standard families".⁵¹⁵ With Maori only just beginning to urbanise these families would have been predominantly Pakeha. Such concerns point to assumptions about the dysfunction of working class families, perhaps exacerbated at the time by the development of state housing and fears this might generate working class 'ghettoes', as well as ideas about the inherent moral and social rectitude of middle class family life. Class mainly operated as a subtext however and not necessarily always a conscious one, to the degree that all the texts I discuss invoke - as normal and centrally important to individual and social well-being, a family form that is in its essence bourgeois and which has its basis in the Victorian nuclear family. And all hold up family failure, particularly absent mothers, as a causal factor in the problem of delinquency.

I would argue that there is another level at which concerns about social class operated as a subtext and that is anxiety about the moral guardianship role of the middle class. This is particularly the case in the Mazengarb Report and in Manning. In the Mazengarb report this function materializes in the composition of the committee and in the powerful imperative to 'recuperate' the bourgeois model of family life - apparently undermined by the desire for affluence and social change more broadly - that drives it. Yska (1993) describes the report as the "morals report" and who better to measure and guard social morality than the class that embodies respectability and moral authority. Concern with the decline of the middle

⁵¹⁵ Cited in Dalley, B. (1998) op.cit: 193

class's role of moral guardianship, as I have shown, is explicit in Manning and it seems to me it also operates in Ausubel to the degree that he implicitly invokes the liberal middle class family as the only functional kind.

In this way class relations continued to mediate the perception of social issues and remain an essential, if obscured element, in the society. This invisibility, moreover, was reinforced by reliance upon 'expert' discourses which drew on highly influential psychological theory, within which class disappeared. As Griffin (1993) has argued "the mainstream sociology of youth" obscured "the potential importance of class, and the psychology of adolescence was bringing adolescence out of the sphere of education and towards the medical arena of psychiatry and clinical psychology".⁵¹⁶ Psychological explanations of delinquency powerfully mediated the development of policy and, through that, the governance of 'deviant' youth and their 'dysfunctional' families; and they informed commonsense understandings of both.⁵¹⁷ The theories of child development that provided the frame for both Manning's and Ausubel's analysis of the problem of delinquency underpinned what Bernstein (2003) has described as 'invisible pedagogies' which were the basis of a child-centered or 'progressive' education.

As I illustrate in the next chapter, discourses of delinquency were mobilized in critiques of liberal education and the establishment of the Currie Commission in 1959 was partially in response to claims about progressive education's contribution to the 'problem'. Discursive struggles over education, as I show, were dominated by fractions of the middle class as they had been for quite some time. Contention, at this time, over education might be thought of in terms of the institutionalization of a bourgeois moral ethos that emphasized the imperative to 'put family first'. In effect the valorization of this impulse, shaped by a deeply entrenched cultural script that privileged "the necessary virtue of family responsibility, self-reliance and containment", served to obscure the ethos of individualism and competition that underpinned it.⁵¹⁸ Then, as now, "the changing economic conditions of education make the middle classes [and the schools that service them] more *alert* to their competitive interests and ... the changing political (and economic) conditions of, and in, education make them more *able* to pursue their competitive interests".⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ Griffin, C. (1993) *Representations of Youth: the Study of Youth and Adolescence in Britain and America*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press: 22.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid

⁵¹⁸ Ball, S. and Vincent, C. (2001) 'New Class Relations in Education: The Strategies of the 'Fearful' Middle Classes'. In J. Demaine (ed) (2001) *Sociology of Education Today*. Basingstoke: Palgrave: 194.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid: 195, original emphasis.

Chapter Six

Reforming education; remaking the nation

In all modern societies the school is a crucial device for writing and rewriting national consciousness, and national consciousness is constructed out of myths of origin, achievement and destiny.⁵²⁰

Introduction

The attacks on 'failing families' in the 1950s that I described above were matched by virulent critiques of the national education system. While contestation over education was not new, schooling had become the site of considerable contention following its reform by the first Labour Government more than a decade before the publication of the Mazengarb Report.⁵²¹ Critiques of New Zealand education were not unified however. For some it was the liberalisation of education that was held responsible for an apparent decline in standards and discipline and the 'outbreak' of 'moral delinquency' in the fifties. Other commentators implied that, despite reform, little had changed. Secondary schooling remained an outdated, authoritarian and highly selective system that was, at the least, responsible for producing mediocre, conservative adults. At worst it was partially culpable for the alienation of the young and their subsequent delinquency.⁵²²

While discourses emphasising moral delinquency gradually disappeared, youthful misbehaviour continued to be a source of general apprehension. Strong media interest in and public concern about delinquency, and claims of its association with a flawed education system, re-emerged in 1960 precisely at a time when schooling in New Zealand was under review.⁵²³ This was not coincidental; an enquiry into education had been commissioned by the second Labour government in 1959 partly as a defensive response to arguments that the post-war education reforms were to blame for rising rates of juvenile delinquency amongst New Zealand youth. The findings of the Commission were published in 1962.

⁵²⁰ Bernstein, B. (2000b) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers: xxiii.

⁵²¹ Scott, D. (1996) 'The Currie Commission and Report on Education in New Zealand, 1960-1962', Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Auckland: 88.

⁵²² Manning, A. E. (1958) *The Bodgie: A Study in Abnormal Psychology*. Wellington: A.H and A.W Reed; Ausubel, D. (1977) *The Fern and the Tiki: an American View of New Zealand National Character, Social Attitudes and Race Relations*. North Quincy, Massachusetts: Christopher Publishing House.

⁵²³ Openshaw, R. (1995) *Unresolved Struggle: Consensus and Conflict in New Zealand State Post-Primary Education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore.

In the first part of this chapter I briefly examine the Commission's response to these claims, locating it both in the context of an emerging international research culture which focused intently upon the (mis)behaviour of boys and in terms of longstanding discursive struggles over education in New Zealand. It has been suggested that the revival of arguments about education and delinquency represented the "renewal of the long standing conservative-liberal debate over educational standards" which intensified with the reform of education by the first Labour government from 1935.⁵²⁴ These reforms need to be situated within a complex web of internal and external structural and discursive shifts which underpinned the "intense period of modernization [involving] the industrialization, urbanization, and rationalization [associated] with modernity and the modern welfare state".⁵²⁵

Labour's educational reforms, I argue, can be thought in terms of a project of "liberal collectivism", underpinned by Keynesian theories of social and economic management.⁵²⁶ The central concern of the state was "the strategic collectivization of certain aspects of social life",⁵²⁷ a process deeply influenced by the constitutive relationship between prevailing concepts of social democracy and social psychological theory. The attempt to inscribe a collective national identity by democratising education and 'making' democratic citizens was a crucial feature of this project. At the same time, the ascendancy of behavioural and developmental psychology contributed to changing ideas about identity formation.

Arguments for progressive education in New Zealand, promulgated by an increasingly influential liberal middle class, were underpinned by these theories of child development. One of their principle advocates was Clarence Beeby who was a key figure in the educational bureaucracy over an extended period; he served as Secretary of Education for the first Labour Government, Director of the New Zealand Council of Educational Research from 1934-1938 and Director of Education from 1940-196.⁵²⁸ Beeby assisted in writing Minister of Education Peter Fraser's inaugural speech quoted below, which outlined the first Labour government's vision for liberal education and equality of opportunity through universal access to secondary schooling. The speech reflects Beeby's assumption about intellectual difference, informed by his disciplinary background in psychology, which was

⁵²⁴ Openshaw, R. (1989) 'Hooligans at Hastings: Reactions to the Hastings Blossom Affray, September 1960'. *History of Education Review* 18 (No.2): 32.

⁵²⁵ Popkewitz, T. (1998) 'Dewey, Vygotsky, and the Social Administration of the Individual: Constructivist Pedagogy as Systems of Ideas in Historical Spaces'. *American Educational Research Journal* 35 (No.4): 537.

⁵²⁶ Walters, W. (2000) *Unemployment and Government: Genealogies of the Social*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 102.

⁵²⁷ Ibid

⁵²⁸ See Alcorn, N. (1999) *To the Fullest Extent of His Powers: Clarence Beeby's Life in Education*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

underpinned by emerging conceptualisations of individual competence. This idea reflected a shift away from earlier beliefs in the hierarchical distribution of intelligence by race, class and gender to ascendant notions of 'natural' individual capacity. This new conception of subjectivity was, in turn, tied to ideas about citizenship and nationhood. What linked individuals together, in this liberal view, was a common national identity; that perception of commonality, however, was bound up with the "particular universalism of Protestant, bourgeois society".⁵²⁹

Liberal arguments pivoted on ideas about the relationship between the production of psychologically sound and critically thoughtful individuals, and the development of national and international democracy. In this context the individualisation and socialisation practices of the family and education were of paramount importance. These ideas about family practice and the pedagogical theories that underpinned them were diametrically opposed both to the views and practices of the working class majority, and to those of the conservative middle class who had dominated New Zealand education since its inception. The fragmentation of the middle classes was the outcome of structural changes in New Zealand, in particular a process of economic diversification that gained impetus in the 1930s and intensified under the aegis of the Keynesian welfare state.

Discursive struggles over education within the middle classes at the time were essentially struggles over the different cultures and pedagogic identities that underpinned the 'old' and 'new' middle class.⁵³⁰ These might be understood as struggles over "symbolic control", that is, over the power to make meaning.⁵³¹ Material conditions and discursive shifts thus entwined to provide the conditions of possibility for the emergence of contestation over education *within* fractions of the middle class, as well as stimulating contention more widely. These struggles need to be situated within the broader context of emergent democracies and increasing concerns with the "need to for [the] optimal social training and economic mobilisation of the population".⁵³² Below I critically examine the educational reforms of the first Labour government, the notion of democracy and citizenship that underpinned them and the discursive struggles they engendered.

⁵²⁹ Popkewitz, T. (1998) *op.cit.*: 540. Moreover, as Bernstein argues these new 'personalised identities' were a means of linking the citizen to a class-based economic structure. Bernstein, B. (2003) *Class, Codes and Control, Vol. 3*. London, Routledge.

⁵³⁰ Bernstein, B. (1999a) 'Pedagogy, Identity and the Construction of a Theory of Symbolic Control: Basil Bernstein questioned by Joseph Solomon'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20 (No.2): 265-279.

⁵³¹ *Ibid*

⁵³² Hunter, I. (1994) *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism*. St. Leonards, N.S.W: Allen and Unwin: 109.

Section One: Contextualising the Currie Report: consensus

As I noted in the previous chapter, the Mazengarb committee remained fairly neutral toward suggestions that a relationship existed between liberal education and libertine youth. Its focus was more intently upon 'failing' families and their contribution to moral delinquency in young New Zealanders. While the emphasis on moral delinquency faded over time problem adolescents remained a matter of public anxiety in the decade that followed the report, and increasingly their schooling became an important issue. The intensity of these concerns required some form of state response to the 'problem'. Manning's (1958) study, which I discussed in the previous chapter, was one outcome of an "interdepartmental committee on juvenile offenders" established by the second Labour government in 1958.⁵³³

Juvenile delinquency became the focus of intense media attention, and subsequent public and state disquiet, in New Zealand again in 1960 with an "outbreak of mob violence and civil disturbance" following the Hastings Blossom Festival.⁵³⁴ The Hastings affair was the latest in a number of incidents of youthful misconduct and crime that had occurred in urban areas that year. Public (over)reaction to them was partly due to their cumulative effect, as well as being fuelled by the media. The "cycle of outrage" generated by these events and exacerbated by their representation in the media became grist for the political mill, with the National opposition party mobilising this issue to attack the liberal 'softness' of the second Labour government.⁵³⁵

Claims about the negative impact of liberal education on young people were revived, and links were made between what occurred at Hastings and "the alleged short-comings of modern teaching methods."⁵³⁶ The child centred 'play way' at primary school level was criticised and the liberalisation of schooling associated with a decline in 'standards', and discipline in secondary schools. In this concerted attack,

Parents' organisations and employers groups supported by a sympathetic press, complained of poor classroom discipline, due in part to the gradual easing of corporal punishment, coupled with low attainments in basic skills due both the dropping of the Proficiency Exam (1936) and the inclusion of 'soft' curriculum options.⁵³⁷

⁵³³ Openshaw, R. (1989) op.cit: 32

⁵³⁴ Ibid: 34

⁵³⁵ Ibid

⁵³⁶ Ibid: 38

⁵³⁷ Ibid

Public, political and media antipathy to the existing education system culminated in the “demand for a full enquiry into falling educational standards”.⁵³⁸ A Royal Commission on Education, led by Sir George Currie the Vice Chancellor of the University of New Zealand, was established in January 1960. The findings of the Commission were published in the Currie Report two years later. As well as being thematically different from the earlier Mazengarb Report, it reflected at least one highly significant contextual difference. Where a decade earlier, in the context of a public panic about moral delinquency, conservative interests “were able to override the opinions of experts” by 1962 it was the “ideological hegemony of experts, educationalists, psychologists and others” that dominated.⁵³⁹

The role of expert knowledges, both in the immediate context of the Report and historically, cannot be overstated. The emergence of psychology at the end of the 19th century played a crucial role in the development of ‘expert’ knowledge of the population, and ‘deviant’ categories within it. The techniques developed to manage these problematic groups and individuals became a fundamental aspect of liberal governance over time. The theorisation of delinquency can be traced back to the emergence of psychology and the ‘discovery of adolescence’ at the turn of the century.⁵⁴⁰ These theories pivoted on ideas about adolescence, its gendered nature and the porous boundary between it and delinquency. Adolescence was both normalised and pathologised, and the potential for delinquency and criminality considered inherent within it. As I noted in Chapter Four, from the outset it was generally a problematic (working class) male subjectivity that was the focus of attention. According to some commentators this would shift over time, in part because of changing conceptualisations of childhood and a growing concern with the welfare of children, to a concern with the behaviour of individuals.⁵⁴¹ Others have argued, however, that social class continued to underpin research on problem boys in particular.⁵⁴²

In the case of New Zealand it is difficult to make unequivocal claims about the centrality of class in conceptualisations of delinquent boys. Certainly in the 19th century it was poor working class boys who were at the centre of discourses about larrikinism. While ‘global’ shifts away from the overt problematisation of class occurred here as well, these were

⁵³⁸ Ibid

⁵³⁹ Ibid: 40

⁵⁴⁰ See for example: Griffin, C. (1993) *Representations of Youth: the Study of Youth and Adolescents in Britain and America*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press; Hendrick, H. (1994) *Child Welfare: England 1872-1989*. London and New York: Routledge; Muncie, J. (2004) *Youth and Crime*. London: Sage.

⁵⁴¹ See for example: Garland, D. (1985) *Punishment and Welfare: A History of Penal Strategies*. Aldershot (Hampshire): Gower; Pratt, J. (1997) *Governing the Dangerous: Dangerousness, Law and Social Change*. Sydney: Federation Press.

⁵⁴² See for example: Hendrick, H. (1994) op.cit; Griffin, C. (1993) op.cit.

combined with an already existing widespread resistance to discourses of class informed by the primacy of the egalitarian myth. So in a context where 'talking' class was hard enough, there was little space for analysis of social problems like delinquency using it as a frame of reference. As I suggest below however, it operated as a subtext in welfarist discourses about delinquency, like those that underpinned the Currie Report, in that the problem was attributed to socio-economic as well as other features.

The bicultural nature of the population complicated things further, mediating differential explanations of the causes of delinquency. These were based on assumptions about the interrelatedness of socio-economic and cultural influences in the problem of Maori delinquency. Maori however were substantially poorer than most Pakeha, and as the physical separation between the populations decreased with the urbanisation of Maori this became harder to ignore. Explanations of the comparatively high rates of Maori delinquency, which I discuss in more detail below, emphasised their economic circumstances and their cultural difference often, but not always, conceived in terms of deficit and deviance (from the Pakeha norm). There began to be some recognition of the cultural alienation experienced by Maori and this informed the maintenance of separate institutional arrangements for them after the war.⁵⁴³ At the same time the socio-economic location of Maori was never understood as an outcome of colonial class relations but instead in terms of educational and, by some, cultural deficits.

As I suggested in Chapter One, what has occurred over time has been the gradual racialisation of the 'problem' population. This is partly an outcome of the unspeakability of class among Pakeha and, as a consequence, a lack of recognition of its intersection with ethnicity and gender. But it is also tied in with the self-conscious adoption by Maori of identity politics from the 70s and the institutionalisation of biculturalism - as the manifestation of Maori identity politics - with the fourth Labour government in the mid eighties. I explore these shifts in Chapter Seven and I argue in my concluding chapter that the emphasis on cultural identity has served to obfuscate how the interwoven nature of class *and* ethnicity has mediated, and continues to affect, the life chances of Maori in New Zealand.

The publication of the Hunn Report in 1961 confirmed their socio-economic and educational disadvantage and education was perceived as a central mechanism by which those disparities could be addressed and Maori 'normalised'. This report was drawn upon by the

⁵⁴³ See Dalley, B. (1998) *Family Matters: Child Welfare in Twentieth Century New Zealand*. Auckland: Auckland University Press in association with the Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs.

Currie Commission. As I have shown, education had been tied up with the regulation and normalisation of those children considered 'deviant' from the settlement period, with the establishment of industrial schooling well before the development of the national system in 1877. The role of the Education Department in managing the welfare of children strengthened following the passage of the Child Welfare Act in 1925 and the establishment of its Child Welfare Branch. As well as overseeing the care of 'neglected' and 'indigent' children, one of the key functions of this arm of the Department was the investigation, analysis and regulation of delinquents.⁵⁴⁴

The passage of the Act and the establishment of the Child Welfare Branch were aspects of an ongoing, though gradual, shift away from punitive approaches to the management to 'deviant' children, which began with the establishment of children's courts in the early 20th century.⁵⁴⁵ This shift reflected the reconstitution of that management from a judicial to a "welfare matter", in keeping with changing understandings of childhood and attitudes to the behaviour of the young.⁵⁴⁶ It encompassed the move away from police jurisdiction of delinquent and other problem children to that of welfare officers, whose central concern was the "investigation and adjustment" of problem children.⁵⁴⁷ There would however continue to be struggles over the role of the courts between the judiciary, arguing for the preventative function of punishment, and welfare professionals concerned with remediation.⁵⁴⁸ These disputes amounted to an ongoing "battle between professionals over the control of child welfare in the courts".⁵⁴⁹

Section Two: Defining delinquency

The ideological differences between these professionals (and within the judiciary) narrowed as welfarist discourses became hegemonic in New Zealand, as elsewhere, by the 1960s. Criminological views of delinquency were mediated by what David Garland (2001) has called "penal welfarism" underpinned by "rehabilitative interventions rather than negative, retributive punishments" of youth and other forms of crime.⁵⁵⁰ Crime increasingly became perceived as "a symptom of inequality" and, thus, "criminals needed to be understood before

⁵⁴⁴ Philipp, E. (1946) *Juvenile Delinquency in New Zealand: a Preliminary Study*. Wellington, New Zealand: Council for Educational Research.

⁵⁴⁵ Dalley, B. (1998) op.cit

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid: 103

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid: 105

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid: 107-108

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid: 110

⁵⁵⁰ Garland, D. (2001) *Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 34.

being judged”.⁵⁵¹ This shift “gave rise to a whole new network of interlocking principles and practices that included “the juvenile court with its child welfare philosophy; the use of social inquiry and psychiatric reports; the individualization of treatment based on expert assessment and classification ...”.⁵⁵² In New Zealand, because child welfare came under the aegis of the Education Department, education too can be seen as an important part of this network.

The Currie Report drew upon legal and other definitions in its discursive construction of the delinquent, embedded by the time of its publication. During the inter-war and post-war period the essential criterion for official categorisation as a delinquent was, first and foremost, appearance before the Children’s Court. Although technically delinquency was “a complaint not a charge”, it also became used as an umbrella term when a child or young person appeared in court charged with a number of offences.⁵⁵³ With changing conceptions of children’s behaviour, and with them conceptual shifts from notions of mischief to misdemeanour, these could and did include children being brought before the courts for ‘cheekiness’ and “cycling on the footpath”.⁵⁵⁴ Thus, changing patterns in court appearances of young people reflected changing social attitudes to the behaviour of young people as much, if not more, than any increase in youthful criminality.⁵⁵⁵

A distinction, however, existed between delinquency and juvenile delinquency. As well as misdemeanours such as those described above, delinquency encompassed “theft, offences against property and charges of wilful damage or mischief”.⁵⁵⁶ Juvenile delinquency also included theft and property offences as well as “offences against morality and the person”.⁵⁵⁷ In legal terms the juvenile delinquent was “a child or young person ... apprehended for committing what [was] classified ... as a serious offence against the law”.⁵⁵⁸

Other discursive constructions of delinquency circulated during the inter-war period in New Zealand that “encompassed a range of childhood and adolescent behaviour and activities

⁵⁵¹ Ibid: 37

⁵⁵² Ibid

⁵⁵³ Philip, E. (1946) op.cit: 11

⁵⁵⁴ Dalley, B. (1998) op.cit: 102. According to Dalley these forms of ‘delinquent’ behaviour comprised 80-90% of all cases before the courts from 1926-1948.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid: 103

⁵⁵⁶ Philip, E. (1946) op.cit:17

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid: 21

[and] various forms of criminal and petty offences”.⁵⁵⁹ And while the variety in conceptualisations of delinquency was matched by its attribution to a multiplicity of causes, in the arena of welfare psychological explanations had increasingly gained currency. They had begun to inform both conceptual ideas about delinquency as pathological, and welfare practices. Those involved in children’s welfare began to attribute “juvenile delinquency to socio-economic and ‘socio-psychological’ causes such as traumatic family relationships and lack of familial affection”.⁵⁶⁰ The emerging ‘psychologisation’ of delinquency extended the ambit of these professionals, justifying the increasing supervision of delinquents in their homes and the surveillance of their families, and with that “the revelation and rectification of ... additional problems [which] was exactly what supervision was meant to accomplish”.⁵⁶¹ Thus problem children and their families, though understood in terms different from those of the 19th century, increasingly became targets for intervention by these experts, and through them, the state.

Section Three: Expertise and Keynesian welfarism

Psychological explanations of delinquency emerging in the interwar years were related to the development of social and developmental psychology in the 20s and 30s which was itself entwined with socio-political and economic changes occurring at the time.⁵⁶² Social psychology became absolutely enmeshed with the development of welfarism in New Zealand and elsewhere, and thus it became one crucial element of the interlocking network of expertise that underpinned Keynesian social policy. By the 60s welfarist discourses, reliant upon the analysis of these experts, were entrenched and mediated the discursive production of social problems like delinquency in very specific ways.

The identification and remediation of delinquents was underpinned by liberal democratic discourses of social security, and was perceived in terms of the amelioration of “the class pathologies of industrialized, inegalitarian, class society”.⁵⁶³ Such strategies were considered necessary to circumvent “the social and political instability caused by class antagonism and unregulated economic exploitation”.⁵⁶⁴ Social security was thus a central mechanism for the management of risk by Keynesian welfare states that required the development of a new

⁵⁵⁹ Dalley, B. (1998) op.cit: 112

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid

⁵⁶¹ Ibid: 128-129

⁵⁶² Rose, N. (1990) ‘Psychology as a Social Science’. In I. Parker and J. Shotter (eds) *Deconstructing Social Psychology*. London: Routledge.

⁵⁶³ Garland, D. (2001) op.cit: 45

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid

strata of “social service professionals”.⁵⁶⁵ This expanded network of expertise played a key in a “new style of [social] regulation [which] empowered expert authorities to establish social norms and standards in areas of life (child rearing, health care, moral education etc.) that had not formerly been regulated”.⁵⁶⁶ As I showed in Chapter Four however, in the colonial context, before and after the assumption of its control by the state, education was already a key mechanism for social regulation. In this moment that regulation merely intensified with the extension of its management to this new stratum of apparently class-neutral ‘experts’.

Garland (2001) claims this shift was essential to the gradual fading of “old hierarchies of class and rank”, and that “professionals and social experts came to enjoy an enhanced status and authority” that was based solely upon their expertise.⁵⁶⁷ With the ascendancy of these experts, achieved because of “the persuasiveness of their normative claims and the willingness of individuals, and families to bring their conduct into line with [prescriptions produced by them]”, social regulation was no longer a matter of institutional (or class-based) power operating from the top down.⁵⁶⁸ Instead, “[t]he informal social controls exerted by families, neighbours and communities, together with the disciplines imposed by schools, workplaces and other institutions created an everyday environment of norms and sanctions”.⁵⁶⁹

These shifts do not obviate the necessity to keep issues of social class in close focus though. While not denying that expertise may have been the basis of their status rather than class, particularly in the context of the ‘classless’ society, I wish to emphasise that these experts were drawn from and comprised an important segment of the ‘new’ (white) middle classes. They were not representative of a wide cross section of the society. And, tied in with this, it is important not to lose sight of the grounding of concepts of normality in psychological theories dominated from the outset by a class based view of deviance, however submerged that had become over time. In other words, it was bourgeois normativity that became ‘universalised’ and an essential part of expert, social and institutional ‘commonsense’, not some arbitrary form. That these norms were universalised *and* internalised reflects the subtle operation of class power in hegemonic terms.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid: 46-47

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid: 47

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid: 49

As I argue later in the chapter, these norms were reproduced through the *regulative* and *constitutive* function of the “control and manipulation of symbolic or cultural property” by the new middle classes, particularly in the realm of education.⁵⁷⁰ This would have implications for the social reproduction of different fractions of the middle class and the differential outcomes of education across axes of class, gender and ethnicity.

Section Four: The Currie Report: maintaining the illusion of consensus

The discursive construction of juvenile delinquency in the Currie Report, and its claims about the role of education in mediating this social ‘problem’, reflects the *enmeshed* nature of these various expert discourses - criminological, psychological and educational - about deviant youth. These discourses continued to bear traces of the genealogy I recalled above, as well the more immediate history of social and economic Keynesianism that had become thoroughly embedded by the early sixties. In a fairly predictable response to claims that the liberalisation of education had contributed to increasing incidents of juvenile delinquency, the Currie Report (re)located culpability for the problem away from the education system. It attributed the problem to a morally deficient society on the one hand, and inadequate and irresponsible families on the other. Family inadequacy was understood in this context in terms of the psychological theories of “social deprivation” most often understood in emotional rather economic forms.⁵⁷¹ The Report stated that

The incidence of delinquency is closely related to the moral climate of the whole adult community, but most intimately to the number of parents who for any reason are unable or unwilling to meet the exacting demands of parenthood.⁵⁷²

The discursive construction of juvenile delinquency in the Report was unequivocally masculinised and framed exclusively in juridical and social scientific terms. That is, delinquency was defined first and foremost in relation to a criminal act committed by a juvenile male, and explained psychologically and/or sociologically:

He is a boy, aged 14 to 16 years, charged with theft. He comes from a large family, where ill health is likely to be present to a greater degree than normal and where family relationships are unsatisfactory in some respects. His home was the town rather than the country, and he may well have been living away from home when he got into trouble, or

⁵⁷⁰ Bernstein, B. (2000b) op.cit.

⁵⁷¹ Garland, D. (2001) op.cit.

⁵⁷² Currie, G. (1962) *Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer: 655.

may come from a broken home. He is likely to be of low average intelligence, making rather slow progress at school and have attended school irregularly.⁵⁷³

This framing reflects the institutionalisation of psychological and other theories of delinquency by this time. Concern about the contribution of urbanisation to juvenile delinquency in the Report (p.658), for example, refers to American research.⁵⁷⁴ In this research the focus was on 'slums' and the writers posited a "general pattern of association" of delinquency with specific, poor, urban areas characterised as "delinquency areas".⁵⁷⁵ The detrimental effects of poverty, in this view, were tied up with its contribution to a predominance of "criminal values". That is, variability in rates of delinquency was thought to reflect "the differences in social values, norms to which ... children are exposed".⁵⁷⁶ Children in poor slum areas, by necessity, were more exposed to daily contact with 'criminal values' than children in other (more middle class) areas. These writers characterised delinquency as a "normal part of [urban] community life" and emphasised the "ecological correlates of crime and delinquency".⁵⁷⁷ As I noted in previous chapters, urbanisation had long been associated with social problems among the poor working classes.

Slums, or in the Report's terms "overcrowded living areas with poor living conditions", were not the only problematic urban area.⁵⁷⁸ The fairly recent construction of state housing was also perceived as potentially contributing to problems of delinquency. The location of problems with delinquent youth in areas of state housing in New Zealand was perceived as comparable to problems on British housing estates. Here the issue was not necessarily exposure to 'criminal values' so much as, an implied, *lack* of exposure to proper moral ones. These areas "if left without appropriate provision for communal life and adequate social leadership can be as deadly as any decaying slum".⁵⁷⁹ The concern with moral values reflects similar anxiety to that characteristic of the Mazengarb report, a decade earlier. I would suggest this represents ongoing assumptions about the moral superiority of the middle classes in New Zealand and their inherent embodiment of respectability. Apparently those most in danger from these insidious influences were boys. The definition of delinquency utilised in the Report reflects the intense focus on boys in the research on

⁵⁷³ Ibid

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid: 658. The report refers to the 1940s edition of: Shaw, C. R. and McKay, H.D (1969) *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban areas; a Study of Rates of Delinquency in Relation to Differential Characteristics of Local Communities in American Cities* (rev.ed) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

⁵⁷⁵ Shaw, C.R. and McKay, H.D. (1969) op.cit.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid: 315

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid: xi-xii

⁵⁷⁸ Currie, G. (1962) op.cit: 658

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid

delinquency at the time. Much of the international literature was based upon research, carried out within both psychology and sociology, which focused on groups of young (working class and poor) males in urban areas.⁵⁸⁰

Although class was not as overt an issue in the New Zealand context as it was in the British in terms of the discursive construction of delinquency, it continued at a subliminal level to permeate it. While couched in terms that reflected the hegemony of welfarism, the expert discourses that informed the conceptualisation of delinquency in the Currie Report have their foundation in 19th century (class based) discourses about deviance. The focus on boys in the research during the post-war period bears traces of the historical emphasis on the 'dangerousness' of (working class) males in the 19th century. Changing conceptions of children and an increasing emphasis on child welfare during the late 19th century combined with the development of psychological theories to influence a significant discursive shift away the association of 'deviance' with the "dangerous classes" to dangerous, or potentially dangerous, individuals.⁵⁸¹ However, as I noted above, other commentators have argued social class was never superseded as the predominant object of reformers' concern.⁵⁸²

An important aspect of this shift was the development of a psychological theory of adolescence which replaced pauperism as the "perceived cause of delinquency".⁵⁸³ Adolescence was naturalised, and thus universalised, as a normal developmental stage and it was pathologised; becoming perceived as "replete with 'negative and 'troubling' connotations".⁵⁸⁴ The boundary between adolescence and delinquency barely existed because the potential for delinquency and criminality was considered inherent within adolescence. From the outset it was generally problematic male adolescent subjectivity that became, and would continue to be, the focus of intensive theorising and research.

Similarly, concerns about the effect of urbanisation on the behaviour and morals of the young can also, in part, be traced back to the 19th century. As I suggested in Chapter Four anxiety about urbanisation in the colonial context, particularly in relation to the poor working class and their children, were both a function of the power of the 'Arcadian myth' and of the influence of Victorian bourgeois discourses about 'the morally problematic nature of urban areas'. Urbanisation became tied in to psychological and sociological theories of youthful

⁵⁸⁰ Griffin, C. (1993) op cit. Griffin points to the heavy emphasis on researching boys that was characteristic of these disciplines from the 20s.

⁵⁸¹ Pratt, J. (1997) op.cit: 8

⁵⁸² See for example Hendrick, H. (1994) op.cit

⁵⁸³ Muncie, J. (2004) op.cit: 69

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid: 68

deviance partly because of the visibility of the young in these areas but also because of the continued association with the urban environment as potentially dangerous and corrupting.

Rejecting claims that liberal education engendered delinquency, the report positioned schools as the “residual legatees” of the consequences of parental neglect and societal breakdown. The role of education in this discursive construction was partially remedial and therapeutic, though in terms of supporting other ‘experts’ rather than shouldering the complete responsibility of rehabilitating delinquent youth. Schooling was construed as crucial in cases “[w]here the home has failed” and “in moral education and ... remedial work in cases of latent delinquency”.⁵⁸⁵ It was also diagnostic and teachers were perceived, ideally, to belong to the network of experts within the school - as well as that external to it - who were engaged in the surveillance of potentially problematic young people.

If located in a wider context of expertise, the remedial and diagnostic roles of teachers were not considered secondary to their educative function. In the view of the Commission

every effort should be made by the school to and through its ordinary teaching staff to fit pupils happily into the work of the school and the school community, and only when the children cannot be fitted in satisfactorily should other special services be called in.⁵⁸⁶

On these grounds claims were made in the Report for the provision of more staff and more training for staff. This can be situated within a broader context of arguments being made at the time for the professionalisation of teaching. Thus the discussion of delinquency in the Report was not just a reactive response to attacks on liberal education, but actively mobilised as a platform to argue for the professional status of teaching and its expansion. The role of the teacher as the facilitator of learning, and in the surveillance of children, was fundamental to the “invisible pedagogy” that underpinned the tenets of progressive education.⁵⁸⁷ I develop this point in more detail below.

The expansive view of schooling that underpinned the conceptualisation above reflected liberal ideas that schools were more than just institutions for the transmission of the ‘three Rs’. They also performed a crucial function in the formation of moral individuals/citizens and

⁵⁸⁵ Currie, G. (1962) op.cit: 661

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid: 662

⁵⁸⁷ Bernstein, B. (1997) ‘Class and Pedagogies: Visible and Invisible’. In A. Halsey, et al (eds) *Education: Culture, Economy, Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

reform of those at the risk of being excluded from the society because of their 'deviance'. Liberal ideas about education and the reform of deviant individuals were not simply altruistic, they were tied up with broader economic concerns and the belief that "the effort [of reforming the deviant] is not only worth while on humanitarian grounds but also worth while on the grounds of economy".⁵⁸⁸ Unless they could be reformed, delinquents were potentially wasted human capital and an economic drain on the nation.

In the context of the Currie Report the school was constructed as a key site wherein these problem children could be regulated, rehabilitated and brought 'back into the fold' to become useful citizens. Institutional and societal expectations about the role of schooling were underpinned by liberal assumptions about the interrelationship between its civic and economic functions, read by this time through the lens of the 'psy' discourses where individual development and national progress were bound together. The schooling of the nation's children needed to "take into account the whole personality of the child so that he [sic] may ultimately take his place in the community as a good citizen to the best level that his natural endowment permits".⁵⁸⁹

Within the (impossibly broad) scope of liberal expectations of education, schooling was seen as central in the development of full human potential and through that the smooth operation of a capitalist economy and democratic nation. It was (and is) expected to contribute significantly to the production of psychologically sound, self governing, responsible, moral citizens able to participate in a democracy and comprise the 'nation', and workers in a hierarchically organised capitalist economy while ensuring, or at least promising, social mobility. In this idealistic liberal view where schooling was construed "as [a] politically neutral [force] for social change", the tensions between the promise of social mobility and the economic necessity for class reproduction were rendered invisible.⁵⁹⁰

Ultimately, the Currie Commission engaged with the issue of delinquency at a fairly superficial level and had little in the way of substantive recommendations to offer about how the 'problem' might be addressed. It did recommend raising the school leaving age, however, both as a means of more control over problem boys and in order to prolong attempts at their reform. Given the primary task of the Commission was to review the education system as a whole, the fact that it dealt with the issue of delinquency in quite 'site' specific, though fairly shallow, ways is understandable. It is also perhaps representative of

⁵⁸⁸ Currie, G. (1962) op.cit: 663

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid: 655

⁵⁹⁰ Dale, R., Esland, G., and MacDonald, M. (eds) (1976) *Schooling and Capitalism: a Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul (for) Open University.

the dominance of a bureaucratic perspective implicitly informed by and concerned with 'expert knowledge' of, rather than lay opinions about, education and social issues. As Scott (1996) has argued "[t]his was...a commission of 'insiders', and one of its legacies was the "important ratification of the increasing power of 'selected experts' to voice opinion".⁵⁹¹

These 'insiders' constructed delinquency as a social issue but understood it in narrow, circumscribed terms as an individual pathology resulting from family (and societal) inadequacy, not necessarily as evidence of social inequality in structural or systemic terms. In the Report

Issues of social inequality were translated into administrative adjustments within the structural boundaries of existing education provision. The poor were subsumed in categories such as 'early leavers', Maori non-attenders', 'delinquents', the 'handicapped', and 'slow learners'. Poverty was never a considered category.⁵⁹²

Thus the Currie Commission, established to review an education system instantiated with reforms of the first labour government ostensibly to address inequalities in New Zealand, maintained the myth of egalitarianism and the illusion of consensus. Bureaucratic dominance of educational debates served to keep largely invisible the very real tensions both contained in the education system and woven through, but obscured within, the Keynesian social settlement more broadly in New Zealand. These were informed by particular assumptions (and exclusions) inherent in liberalism, as well as specific features of the national context. The reform of education by the first Labour government and the education settlement that emerged was both fundamental to and a microcosm of the broader social compact. For those groups, largely excluded from access to secondary education until this moment, the promise of educational reform held out the possibility of social mobility and through that the means to 'get ahead' not only in material terms but, more subliminally, as a way to achieve 'respectability' and with it belonging. It is to these reforms that I now turn.

Section Five: Instantiating a meritocracy? The educational reforms of the first Labour government

... class mobility is the system's tacit recognition that inequality is normative.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹¹ Scott, D. (1996) 'The Currie Commission and Report on Education in New Zealand, 1960-1962'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland: 336, 345.

⁵⁹² Ibid: 330

⁵⁹³ Aronowitz, S. (2004) 'Against Schooling: Education and Social Class'. *Social Text* 22 (No.2): 16.

The reform of the national education system in New Zealand in the interwar period was an essential element of the first Labour government's social democratic project that I outlined in the previous chapter. The central ethos of social democracy was equality of opportunity and embedded within that the notion of meritocracy. In New Zealand nowhere would both be held more sacrosanct than in education. The universalisation of access to secondary schooling and, with it, the claim of a meritocracy gave the idea a tangible form and in doing so embedded the egalitarian myth more deeply into the national consciousness. In liberal discourses about education at the time, and in more contemporary accounts, this moment of reform has been discursively constructed as part of a 'radical social experiment' primarily driven by a Labour's concern with social justice.⁵⁹⁴ This section questions that reading.

The Labour government's promise, perhaps its *hope*, was that the universalisation of access to secondary school would ensure social mobility for individuals, guarantee their inclusion as citizens of a democratic nation-state and address the needs of a modern economy. In the debates that led up to the reforms it was argued that social inequality was maintained, if not created, by a selective system of secondary education that reinforced the socio-economic advantages of the few and constrained the upward mobility of the many. Not only that, it excluded the majority of New Zealanders from the kind of education necessary to develop their potential as democratic citizens and whole human beings; in doing so selective education undermined the unity and progress of the nation. At a time when the development and interests of individuals and the nation were becoming perceived as inextricably enmeshed, the existing system of post-primary schooling, which was dominated by a "highly abstract and stubbornly elitist curriculum", was perceived by liberals and Labour politicians to significantly undermine the wellbeing of both.⁵⁹⁵

The transformation of the national education system began the liberalisation of the primary curriculum and the abolition of the Proficiency Examination in 1936 which provided, technically at least, automatic access to secondary schooling for all children.⁵⁹⁶ Between 1941 and 1945 a raft of other reforms followed that included: raising the school leaving age from fourteen to fifteen years; the establishment of the Thomas Committee (1942) to review the post-primary curriculum; transferring the University Entrance examination from the fifth to the sixth form and introducing accreditation. In 1945 the introduction of School Certificate

⁵⁹⁴ See for example: Campbell, A. (1941) *Educating New Zealand*. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs; Dakin, J. (1973) *Education in New Zealand*. Auckland: L. Fullerton; Grace, G. (1990) 'Labour and Education: the Crisis and Settlements of Education Policy'. In M. Holland and J. Boston (eds) *The Fourth Labour Government: Politics and Policy in New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁹⁵ Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 25.

⁵⁹⁶ Dakin, J. (1973) op.cit: 32

and a core curriculum, and the publication of the Education (Post-Primary) Regulations “gave effect to the recommendations of the Thomas Report”.⁵⁹⁷ These and other changes were essentially an attempt to dispense with the existing system of highly differentiated post-primary education, with its socially selective function, in favour of comprehensive secondary schools where academic and vocational learning were combined.⁵⁹⁸

Liberal commentary at the time characterised the reforms as the next phase of an attempt to liberalise education in order to meet the needs of a growing democracy that began with George Hogben (Inspector- General of Schools and Secretary for Education 1899, Director of Education, 1915) in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁵⁹⁹ Hogben’s efforts were met with either considerable resistance or outright indifference. Campbell accounts for these contrasting responses tentatively, on the one hand as the result, “of the working of [a] peculiar colonial conservatism” and, with more conviction, on the other as consequence of “the individualist traditions” the immigrant settlers brought with them. In his view it was the power of these traditions that “led, in New Zealand as elsewhere, to the acceptance by a large part of the community of almost any form of schooling provided it [opened] the door to vocational success”.⁶⁰⁰

Those who opposed the liberalisation of education during that earlier moment defended a selective secondary schooling system designed from its inception to reproduce (the natural order of) social stratification. For all of the colonial period and into the early twentieth century middle class boys were its main beneficiaries and it was through them the middle class reproduced itself. For the lower middle and working class majority who were excluded in significant numbers from access to post primary education, primary schooling was perceived of as “the transition point between institutionalised training and work”.⁶⁰¹ This basic form of education offered little opportunity for real social mobility for the majority of the population during the 19th and early 20th centuries. For most ‘vocational success’ through education amounted mainly to limited movement *within* not out of their class designation.

⁵⁹⁷ Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 49

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹⁹ Campbell, A. (1941) op.cit. 105. Campbell, who held a key position in the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, was seconded by Clarence Beeby, Director of Education and principle architect of the reforms, to write this liberal account of New Zealand’s educational history.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid: 107. This view, of course, completely ignores resistance by Maori to implicit and explicit policies by both missionaries and the state to exclude them from any other kind of education but vocational. But then, Maori were still at the margins of ‘the community’ he referred to.

⁶⁰¹ Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 30

In spite of this reality Campbell's comments suggest an instrumental approach to education by the majority of Pakeha New Zealanders, concerned not with the content of the education their children received but its promise of 'getting ahead' whatever the limitations. This instrumentalism needs to be understood in terms of its relationship to the cultural significance that the notions of responsibility and respectability had amongst Pakeha settlers that I discussed in Chapter Two. Conceptions of responsibility and respectability were underpinned by a complex relationship between individualism, materialism and morality, which I argued was the inheritance of an earlier process of embourgeoisement continued and deepened by social formation during the settlement period. Framed in terms of self-sufficiency (through employment) and self and family responsibility, respectability became a marker of belonging and differentiation. It became the signifier of individual and collective identity amongst the predominantly lower middle and working class settlers in place of social class. The notions of responsibility and respectability, entwined in colonial sensibility, thus became fundamental rules of recognition and realisation, and constitutive of *shared* meanings about work, self and society that enabled a sense of individual and collective identity.⁶⁰²

Recognition rules enable individuals to identify the specificity of their context and how to 'read' it.⁶⁰³ Recognition rules are created and regulated by the social and linguistic process of classification (naming and knowing) which pivots on the relation *between* categories.⁶⁰⁴ Classification and its function in the regulation of recognition rules is saturated with power since "power lies in the capacity to classify and define the phenomena of the world...".⁶⁰⁵ Meta-categories, like race, class, and gender, as well as the mundane (and the pedagogical), are defined relationally in terms of the distinctions between them. And "what keeps categories distinct from each other also establishes their identity and points to a division of labour between them", because meaning, invariably bound up with *value*, is attributed to those distinctions.⁶⁰⁶ For Bernstein

The classificatory principle regulates recognition rules, recognition rules refer to power relations. Certain distributions of power give rise to different social distributions

⁶⁰² Bernstein, B. (2000b, 2003) op.cit.

⁶⁰³ Bernstein, B. (2000b) op.cit: 17

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid; Hasan, R. (2005) *Language, Society and Consciousness*. London; Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishers.

⁶⁰⁴ Hasan, R. (2005) op.cit: 25

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid: 26

⁶⁰⁶ Bernstein, B. (2000b) op.cit: 17

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid

⁶⁰⁶ Hunter, I. (1994) *Rethinking the School: Subjectivity, Bureaucracy, Criticism*. St. Leonards, N.S.W: Allen and Unwin.

of recognition rules and, without the recognition rule, contextually legitimate communication is not possible.⁶⁰⁷

In other words recognition rules mediate what is sayable (and therefore what is also unspeakable) in a given context. They need not be differentially distributed however. Rules of recognition can be shared because they *are* contextual, as I argue was the case with the notions of responsibility and respectability. What acts as the medium of differentiation is the rule of realisation which enables “contextually legitimate communication”; it “determines how we put meanings together and how we make them public”.⁶⁰⁸

As the relationship between education and the economy strengthened, schooling became more and more bound up with both responsibility and respectability as a rules of recognition and realisation. Education became perceived of as a central mechanism for realising respectability but what schooling was *for* was understood in fundamentally different ways dependent on social class. This difference mediated educational outcomes, disadvantaging some groups. Rules of realisation require a match between local and official pedagogies.⁶⁰⁹ That is, the production of meanings (about education) that are the outcome of the formative or socialising practices of the family must match those of the school in order for educational success. The education system was underpinned by *particular* middle class ways of knowing (and ideas about ‘being’) and it was a particular “middle class family milieu” that became constituted as the “pedagogical norm”.⁶¹⁰ Some groups thus lacked the rules of realisation necessary for educational achievement and social mobility.

As I noted earlier the promise of greater social mobility was implicit in the Labour reforms but, as I suggest below, this was only one strand of the interwoven rationalities behind them. Liberals emphasised the individual and civic value of progressive education, foregrounding its crucial importance in the construction of a social democracy populated by thinking citizens. These ideals were the lens through which the reforms and the response to them were read at the time. Campbell’s (1941) account of the educational reforms of the first Labour government, for example, reflects an uncritical, even idealistic, view of the imperatives behind the reforms that is to be expected given the moment within which it was written and its author’s liberal values. Locating them within emerging discourses of social democracy, he suggested they were driven by a growing concern with the training of future

⁶⁰⁷ Bernstein, B. (2000b) op.cit: 17

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid

citizens necessary for democratic nationhood by the state. And he argued their acceptance, in contrast to that earlier moment, reflected a more 'mature' social climate amenable to collective goals.⁶¹¹ This interpretation inscribed more deeply the myth of egalitarianism, and ideas about the pivotal role of education in its development.

A similar reading remains something of orthodoxy, even amongst some more contemporary commentators. Gerald Grace's (1990) recent overview reflects the institutionalisation of that belief. Or, at least, the tendency to mobilise it strategically as a point of contrast with earlier periods but especially in critiques of the educational reforms of the late eighties. He argues that the reforms of the first Labour government "originated in the principles of Welfare Labourism" and were "part of a commitment to the creation of a just and equitable society".⁶¹² The social democratic principles behind these shifts are then compared with the neo-liberal ethos of the Fourth Labour government. Grace suggests a radical disjuncture between these two significant moments of education reform.⁶¹³ Below, I suggest that this difference is overstated and that a continuity exists between them which pivoted on shared assumptions about production of liberal citizens through the "civilising function of the market" that mediated policies for and treatment of those considered problematic by state and civil society in both moments.⁶¹⁴ These have their foundation broadly in classical liberalism and more specifically in the mutually constitutive processes of state and social formation during the settlement.

Section Six: The post-war education settlement: liberal vision or socio-economic expediency?

Roger Openshaw (1995) takes a less sanguine view of the post-war education settlement and the imperatives behind it, as do other educationalists.⁶¹⁵ His critical account of the struggles over post-primary education in the inter-war and post-war periods emphasises the necessity for the state to manage the effects of demographic and economic change as the primary motivation behind education reform. The reforms were motivated, in his view, more by expediency than any deep commitment to social democratic principles and "the educational bureaucracy as a whole seems to have regarded [them] more as a response to

⁶¹¹ Campbell, A. (1941) op.cit: 117

⁶¹² Grace, G. (1990) op.cit: 168

⁶¹³ Ibid: 170

⁶¹⁴ Hindess, B. (2002) 'Neo-liberal Citizenship'. *Citizenship Studies* 6 (No.2): 127-143.

⁶¹⁵ For various critical readings of particular facets of the reforms see Openshaw, R., Lee, G. and Lee, H. (1993) *Challenging the Myths: Re-thinking New Zealand's Educational History*. Palmerston North: Dunmore; McCulloch, G. (ed) (1992) *The School Curriculum in New Zealand: History, Theory, Policy and Practice*. Palmerston North, N.Z: Dunmore Press.

a demographic problem than as a considered moral or philosophical course of action”.⁶¹⁶ The reforms were implemented to address the dual problems of rising birth rates and a marked growth in the number of children attending secondary schools. Thus, they were perceived by the state as a means of both forward planning and addressing the immediate demands placed on the sector by a notable increase in students.

Urbanisation, economic expansion and the consequent diversification of the labour market played a key role in the emergence of a closer relationship between post primary education and the economy. The emergence and expansion of a service sector was especially significant. “By 1936 some 27 per cent of the work-force were employed in the primary sector, compared with 17 per cent in the secondary sector, and 55 per cent in the tertiary sector (mainly a service sector)”.⁶¹⁷ The greater possibility of social mobility through education was tied up, as I noted earlier, with the shift away from the transitional role of primary education for training and employment and the increasing importance of the relationship between post primary education and labour market participation.

As the economy expanded and diversified so did the middle classes. While the middle class pastoral and property owning business pastoral elites remained static at about 10 per cent of the population, “the ‘new’ middle class grew from 9 per cent to 22.9 per cent ... with the principal beneficiaries being the professions (teachers, accountants) and white collar workers (especially clerical)”.⁶¹⁸ The opening up of the service sector and the crucial role of post primary education as the pathway into it mediated an intensification of interest amongst a wider cross section of the population in greater access to secondary schooling. The more important education became to social mobility, the greater the engagement of the ‘general public’ in debates over it.

The level of apparent self-interest behind the desire for post-primary education frustrated those educationalists who argued for the liberalisation of education of the grounds of its crucial role in building a democratic nation. Openshaw (1995) suggests

It was trends such as these that help explain the acute disappointment that educational commentators ... felt as they came to realise that the public agitation for free post primary education, far from reflecting any real desire for a radically new type of schooling within

⁶¹⁶ Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 50

⁶¹⁷ Ibid: 29

⁶¹⁸ Ibid: 30

an emerging Antipodean democracy, simply amounted to a rather grubby attempt on the part of ambitious lower class families to 'get on' within the existing social structure. Such manoeuvres became increasingly urgent as the country became steadily more bureaucratised in the name of economic efficiency and class lines became less fluid.⁶¹⁹

Class lines solidified and class differentiation increased during this period, according to one commentator because "occupations became more sharply defined, jobs became vocations, specialisation became more important than versatility [and] became a central principle of social organisation".⁶²⁰ Thus, occupation came to mediate an individual's "income, status, life chances and lifestyles".⁶²¹ This shift was evidenced by the decline in rates of marriage between members of different occupational strata, that is, between white and blue collar workers. The rate of intermarriage across these class lines dropped "from one quarter of all marriages at the end of the nineteenth century, to less than one fifth by the 1940s".⁶²² As occupation became a more significant principle of social organisation and tied more closely to educational attainment, competition and contestation over education intensified. More than ever before, post-primary education was caught between "the demands of a hierarchical economy [for] a differentiated labour force" and increasing pressure from disadvantaged social groups, including Maori, for "greater access and equality".⁶²³

Concerns about access to post primary education were exacerbated by economic depression in the 1930s. The effects of this were experienced particularly on the lower and working classes. The privations they experienced and Coalition government policy at the time, which seemed designed to aggravate rather than ameliorate their hardship, generated increasing resentment. With the combination of large scale unemployment, wage cuts, and the retrenchment of the Civil Service and education their well-being and their children's futures appeared tenuous. Outrage at their immediate economic struggle, and the obstruction of their access to mechanisms of social mobility in the future, influenced a shift to the left of the political spectrum.

If this move disrupted an historical pattern of political conservatism amongst the majority of New Zealanders, it did not necessarily signify the triumph of social democracy in any

⁶¹⁹ Ibid: 29-30

⁶²⁰ Olssen, E. (1992) 'Towards a New Society'. In G. W. Rice (ed) *Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed) Auckland: Oxford University Press:172, cited in Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 30

⁶²¹ Ibid

⁶²² Ibid

⁶²³ Ibid

substantive sense since “[t]here was little coherence in their anger [and] no ideological unity”.⁶²⁴ The anger that generated this shift “was, for the most part, an inchoate radicalism”.⁶²⁵ I would suggest that if it was radical (as opposed to being driven by fear or pragmatism), that radicalism was underpinned by a sense of threat to the possibility of ‘getting ahead’ and achieving respectability for individuals and their families. It was not necessarily driven by concern with collective wellbeing in any sense that could be understood as having a ‘socialist’ imperative. That is, it did not represent a moment of national political or philosophical enlightenment.

The pragmatism of the public was mirrored by the pragmatism of its politicians. New Zealand’s ‘radical social experiment’ was made possible by the coincidence of particular discourses and conditions of the time. Economic change *and* economic depression enabled an environment more receptive to arguments for economic and social policies underpinned by Keynesian managerialism. In the first instance, the shift away from the primacy of a rural economy reinforced political struggles between the conservative, rural elite and urban middle classes. As the importance of the rural economy lessened so did the political power of the conservative middle class. At the same time, economic hardship exacerbated by the existing government’s policies galvanised a usually conservative, if not politically apathetic, working class in support of Labour because it promised both immediate respite and future possibilities.

In this context the population was more receptive to Labour’s arguments for monetary reform which called for a level of state intervention in the economy that contravened past liberal and conservative orthodoxies. Economic management by the state could be rationalised in terms of its central role in ameliorating unemployment. Keynesian economic and social policies were perceived as the best mechanisms for addressing the “paradox of poverty in a land of plenty”.⁶²⁶ This ‘paradox of poverty’ referred to the growing impoverishment of the respectable classes which, in the context of an economic depression, was beyond their control. The already impoverished (the undeserving poor) continued to remain largely invisible.

Economic hardship and obstructions to ‘getting ahead’ were an affront to the sensibility of a society whose investment in the notion of the egalitarian nation was not only instrumental, it

⁶²⁴ Gibbons, P. (1992) ‘The Climate of Opinion’. In G. W. Rice (ed) *Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed) Auckland: Oxford University Press: 328.

⁶²⁵ Ibid

⁶²⁶ Richardson, L. (1992) ‘Parties and Political Change’. In G. W. Rice (ed) (1992) *Oxford History of New Zealand* (2nd ed) Auckland: Oxford University Press: 224.

was psychic. And the anger generated by these conditions at times created political and public concerns about the possibility of open class struggle. Thus the persuasive weight of the democratic discourses mobilised by Labour was intensified by economic depression. Labour's political project and the philosophical arguments and advocacy enmeshed around democracy and citizenship. Education Minister Fraser's statement of the government's vision for education reflected these entwined ideals of democracy and citizenship. In it he pronounced that

The government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever the level of his [sic] academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right as a citizen to a free education of a kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers.⁶²⁷

Nevertheless, the reform of the education did not occur without contention about a variety of issues. The major struggle over education that characterised the inter-war period, however, centred on arguments between proponents of selective education and those that sought its democratisation. For some, these debates were seen as a "a struggle between good and evil - on the one side a university dominated academic formalism with a predilection for selective examinations in the interests of the elite few ... on the other, a more democratic liberalism concerned with the needs of the less academic majority".⁶²⁸ As I suggest below, these debates were essentially between fractions of the middle class and were underpinned by issues more complex than Openshaw (1995) gives them credit for. Behind struggles about selection and democratisation were fundamentally different, even antithetical, ideas about the role of education in identity formation and cultural (and class) reproduction.

As well, debates raged between advocates of differentiated education (by class and region) and those who argued for a more comprehensive model of schooling underpinned by a core curriculum.⁶²⁹ In addition there were arguments about credentialing and examinations, arguments about the professionalisation of teaching, and heated debates over the role of teachers within secondary schools which were increasingly being seen as sites for the production of citizens and workers. Arguments for the liberalisation of education from groups in the wider society, however pragmatic their imperative, and from educationalists could be

⁶²⁷ *AJHR*, 1939, E-1: 2-3, cited in Jones, A. et al (eds) (1995) *Myths and Realities: Schooling in New Zealand*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press: 57.

⁶²⁸ Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 26.

⁶²⁹ Ibid

accommodated relatively easily within the broader discourses of social democracy promulgated by liberal educationalists and mobilised by the first Labour government.

Section Seven: Making democracies: constructing citizens

Deepening concerns with developing democracy internationally were partly mediated by perceived threats to the primacy of the capitalist system following the First World War. From the 1930s, discourses of democracy became both inextricably entwined with the ongoing expansion of industrial capitalism and, through their constitutive link to the development of social psychology, fundamental to the governance of liberal subjects.⁶³⁰ In the first instance the optimal operation and further development of industry required not just the development of a labour-force with a greater diversity of skills, but the mutual co-operation of capitalists and workers. Secondly, in order “to rule subjects democratically it [was] necessary to know them intimately”.⁶³¹ Social psychology would play an important part in both ‘knowing’ and ‘making’ liberal subjects, understood in terms of their location within groups, not as the atomistic individuals of classical liberalism. At the same time, ideas about the mutual interdependence of the individual and collective was echoed in the perception that unitary nations were located within an interdependent system of international democracies.⁶³²

The governmental role of social psychologists was two dimensional. They produced “intellectual technologies”, the knowledge that informed theories of liberal subjectivity. And they were involved in the “human technologies” in that the knowledge they produced mediated, and changed, institutional and social practices.⁶³³ In this way quite particular representations of “self and social interaction” were transmitted and “transformed into practice[s]” which were constitutive of particular kinds of subjectivity.⁶³⁴

Schools and families, understood as central social institutions engaged in the “practices of individualisation”, were increasingly seen as crucial to the production of liberal individuals upon whom democratic nation states depended. What were considered *appropriate* practices of individualisation, however, were not universal nor were they arbitrary. They were informed by new conceptualisations of human development emerging at the time which assumed age-based norms and which emphasised the crucial importance of a particular

⁶³⁰ Rose, N. (1996) *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood*. Cambridge, England; New York, Cambridge University Press.

⁶³¹ Ibid: 117

⁶³² See for example Hindess, B. (2002) op.cit; Helliwell, C. and Hindess, B. (2002) ‘The “Empire of Uniformity” and the Government of Subject Peoples’. *Cultural Values* 6 (Nos.1 & 2): 139-152; Jenkins, C. (2000) ‘New Education and its Emancipatory Interests (1920-1950)’. *History of Education* 29 (No.2): 139-151.

⁶³³ Rose, N (1996) op.cit: 119

⁶³⁴ Ibid: 120

kind of environment for healthy psychological development. In order to produce liberal democratic subjects, disparate practices of socialisation needed to be homogenised through the regulation of families and the liberalisation of education.

Social psychological theories about the relation between self and group underpinned the conceptualisation of an integral link between democracy and industrial productivity. This pivoted on ideas about the centrality of work and productivity for “human contentment”, and the necessity of efficient production for the economic wellbeing of the nation.⁶³⁵ In this move, the needs and the good of the individual and the nation were discursively enmeshed. They became institutionalised in the social and economic policies that characterised Keynesian managerialism. This combination of discursive and structural institutionalisation, in the New Zealand context, acted not only to reinforce an already powerful ethic around work that had its basis in social formation, and before, but to bind that ethic more profoundly to respectability and self and collective identification.

According to Rose, “[t]he psychological constitution of the individual and the group would enable a reconciliation of the doctrines of liberty and the requirements of regulation by means of a rational knowledge and a neutral expertise.”⁶³⁶ The neutrality of expert knowledge was apparently “grounded in truth, not politics”, ostensibly removing the dual processes of ‘knowing’ and ‘making’ liberal subjects from social power relations.⁶³⁷ I would suggest that neutrality was an illusion. Social and other psychologists were engaged, consciously or not, through their processes of classification and categorisation in ‘symbolic control’ and therefore in continued attempts to institutionalise bourgeois normativity.⁶³⁸ I develop this point below.

The reconceptualisation of liberal subjects underpinned theories of progressive education which tied the holistic development of children to national and social reconstruction.⁶³⁹ These new ideas about education developed in two phases after the First and Second World Wars, and were an extension of the modernist project of enlightenment and emancipation. The emancipation of children through education was significant here and its justification was part of a broad critique of authoritarianism, fundamental to post-war reconstruction, which blamed social crisis on “systems of government and education as well as the exercise of paternal

⁶³⁵ Ibid: 146

⁶³⁶ Ibid

⁶³⁷ Ibid: 122

⁶³⁸ Bernstein, B. (2000b, 2003) op.cit

⁶³⁹ Jenkins, C. (2000) op.cit: 139-151

authority at the time”.⁶⁴⁰ This psychologisation of the micro and the macro levels of human interaction was an early aspect of the integration of the social and the economic that underpinned Keynesianism, wherein the micro level of individual and family relations and practices became entwined with the macro concerns about societal wellbeing and national (and international) progress. In the new progressive education, emancipation was understood as the “freedom to develop naturally” which was perceived as absolutely crucial to enhancing children’s “natural potential for citizenship”.⁶⁴¹ In this context, driven by concerns about the dangers to the state and the democratic nation of parental incapacity, the family - and *parenting styles* - came under much more intense surveillance. Of particular concern were ‘dominating mothers’ and ‘authoritarian fathers’, especially in terms of their impact on the psychological development of boys.⁶⁴²

These conceptual shifts produced a new model of the ideal family, the ‘pedagogised family’, wherein mothers assumed an absolutely essential role not just in the socialisation and moralisation of the young but in their early education. Donzelot (1979) sees the liberalisation of the family over this period as central to the empowerment of women; Celia Jenkins (2000) is however more equivocal. She points to the “spurious freedom” offered to mothers with the professionalisation of the family and the ascendance of “emancipatory pedagogy” which positioned them as “the primary agents of the new cultural reproduction”.⁶⁴³ She argues, “[t]he mother’s power was emotional rather than material and the need for constant maternal availability for the child meant that mothers remained in a position of economic dependency within the family”.⁶⁴⁴ Where these writers converge though is in their emphasis on how these shifts naturalised a (new) middle class family upon which, Jenkins suggests, “future national stability rested ...”⁶⁴⁵

The liberalisation of the family was entwined with the liberalisation of education and the articulation of a *child-centred* pedagogy understood to be crucial to the development of personalised identities.⁶⁴⁶ This ‘invisible pedagogy’, which was primarily associated with early childhood and primary education, and characterised - often negatively - in the 1950s as the ‘play way’, differed markedly from traditional (conservative) hierarchical educational practices. In terms of the structuring of the teacher-child relation, and the learning,

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid: 140

⁶⁴¹ Ibid: 141

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Ibid: 146

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid: 149

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid

⁶⁴⁶ Bernstein, B. (1997; 2003) op.cit

experience the teacher's control of the child was implicit. Her role was to arrange the context of the learning experience and facilitate the child's self directed exploration of it. There was little emphasis on specific skill transmission and acquisition, and evaluation criteria was "multiple and diffuse".⁶⁴⁷ The process of learning was understood to be sequential, that is age and developmental stage- based; tacit and invisible, and universal - that is, not mediated by socio-cultural difference.⁶⁴⁸ In this pedagogical model the boundary between play and work disappears, "play is work and work is play"; just as the distinction between family (that is mother-child interaction) and educational practice blurs.⁶⁴⁹

I want to reiterate here firstly that these ideas developed with the emergence and increasing influence of different strata of the new middle classes - experts, professionals including teachers and bureaucrats (Beeby represents perhaps the materialisation in one body of all three). Contention over them was essentially a discursive struggle between antithetical cultures *within* the middle class over what constituted appropriate forms of educational and family practice for identity production, and social and cultural reproduction. Conservative and liberal identities were fundamentally different and their practices of identity formation diametrically opposed. Conservative middle class families, concerned with reproducing individualised identities, tended "to be positional ... boundary procedures [were] strong, the differentiation of members and the authority structure ... based upon clear-cut, unambiguous definitions of the status of [family members], assuming and producing "specific, unambiguous role identities and relatively inflexible role performance",⁶⁵⁰ hence their emphasis on traditional, hierarchical education which replicated these practices.

Relations within liberal middle class families, concerned with producing "personalised identities", were more democratic, roles more flexible and ambiguous, and individuals understood to be varied and unique.⁶⁵¹ The fundamental contradiction for the new middle classes was the potential mismatch between the production of "subjective personal identity and an objective privatised identity; [that is] between the release of the person and the hierarchy of class".⁶⁵² Thus while the 'play way' was the preferred socialisation practice of the liberal middle classes at home and in early education, it was important for the reproduction of their privileged class position that secondary schooling was "more traditional

⁶⁴⁷ Bernstein, B. (1997) op.cit: 59

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid. 60

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid

⁶⁵⁰ Bernstein, B. (1971) *Class, Codes and Control, Volume 1*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul: 184, cited in Power, S. and Whitty, G. (2002) 'Bernstein and the Middle Class'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23 (No.4): 595-605.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid

⁶⁵² Ibid: 136

and hierarchically ordered”.⁶⁵³ The point I want make here though is that these struggles between and within fractions of the middle class over schooling were essentially conflict over symbolic control, that is, over meaning making and the production of particular (class-based) pedagogic identities.

Secondly, the recontextualisation by the state of emergent and entwined concepts of personalised selves, pedagogical families and “familialised schooling”,⁶⁵⁴ and democratic nationhood underpinned particular ideas about citizenship that became embedded in welfare states. That conception of citizenship was a meliorist one. It was meant to modify “the negative impact of the capitalist market by the redistribution of resources on the basis of rights” but contained within it the “permanent tension between the principles of equality that underpin democracy and the *de facto* inequalities of wealth and income that characterize the capitalist market place”.⁶⁵⁵ Citizenship was perceived as a means of averting the class struggle that these inequalities threatened to engender by creating a status position based upon rights; “a status position that mitigates the negative effects of economic class within capitalist society”.⁶⁵⁶ Ideas about citizenship presumed social and individual differentiation, however, and progressive education was implicated in moralising the division of labour, “emphasising interdependence [and] productive differentiation rather than stultifying stratification”.⁶⁵⁷

Education (as a basic social right) was key here because it was supposed to replace the reproduction of class privilege through ascription with social mobility based upon the achievement of educational credentials. The principle of equality of opportunity was pivotal. Replacing the selective system with one to which all were granted access would ensure that social mobility, predicated on educational achievement, would be the result of the combined attributes of ability and effort rather than (middle) class designation. The notion of meritocracy, then, was fundamental to the discourses of democracy and citizenship that gained ascendancy in the inter-war and post-war years. Ideas about citizenship presumed social and individual differentiation, however, and progressive education was implicated in moralising the division of labour, “emphasising interdependence [and] productive differentiation rather than stultifying stratification”.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵³ Power, S. and Whitty, G. (2002) ‘Bernstein and the Middle Class’. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23 (No.4): 601.

⁶⁵⁴ Hunter, I. (1994) *op.cit.*

⁶⁵⁵ Turner, B. (2001) ‘The Erosion of Citizenship’. *British Journal of Sociology* 52 (No.2): 190.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid*

⁶⁵⁷ Arnot, M. (2002) ‘Complex Gendering of Invisible Pedagogies: Social Reproduction or Empowerment’. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23 (No.4): 592.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid*

This conceptualisation of citizenship, formulated by T.H Marshall, was never intended to provide a substantial form of social equality that dispensed with class relations. Instead the aim was to “impose modifications on class”.⁶⁵⁹ His central concern was with the equalization of status between *individuals* not social classes. For Marshall, “[e]qualization is not so much between classes as between individuals within a population which is treated for this purpose as if it were one class. Equality of status is more important than equality of income”.⁶⁶⁰ The equalization of status was crucial, in his view, because income would be lifted by the provision of services based on the entitlement that accompanied citizenship. And the exploitative nature of the capitalist system would be modified because the right to social security would limit the power of employers.⁶⁶¹ Essentially the instantiation of this model of citizenship signified the next phase of modernity, extending the civil and political rights of individuals that had their basis in liberal ideas about democracy in the 19th century. Because these rights did not address economic inequalities in any substantive way Marshall’s was, in effect, an “empty equality”.⁶⁶²

Not only did citizenship status not ensure substantive equality, it acted as a regulatory and constitutive category reinforcing differentiation within the population. The principle of redistribution that underpinned social security and the rights of citizenship required the regulation of access to services so “recipients are subjected to an administrative and normative scrutiny that precisely differentiates their treatment from the treatment of other members of the population”.⁶⁶³ I would argue citizenship status in New Zealand, in the interwar and post-war period, reinforced certain aspects of identities already partially formed during processes of social formation such as the ones I discussed in Chapter Two. The discourses and policies relating to citizenship that prevailed, and the exclusions contained within them, resonated with that earlier moment.

In New Zealand despite the institutionalisation of ideas about citizenship and social security to the degree that they became thoroughly embedded in the myth of the egalitarian society, the differentiation between the ‘self sufficient’ population and those reliant on social security bore traces of earlier distinctions between the “deserving’ and the ‘undeserving’ poor. This

⁶⁵⁹ Marshall, T.H. (1950) *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 102-103, cited in Barbalet, J. (1993) ‘Citizenship, Class Inequality and Resentment’. In Turner B. (ed) *Citizenship and Social Theory*. London; Newbury Park, Calif: Sage: 40.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶⁶¹ Ibid: 41

⁶⁶² cited in Schmitt, C (1985) *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 25.

⁶⁶³ Ibid

distinction, in turn, was entwined with the categories of 'rough' and 'respectable' that were a legacy of the colonial moment and before. The differentiation of the population in this way continued to operate, however subliminally, all the more because citizenship rights were predicated on employment. Work and respectability were already tied together; citizenship status based upon employment embedded this relation and its function as a rule of recognition even more deeply because it was institutionalised in social and economic policy.

Concluding remarks

As I have suggested above this period of social and educational reform has been read as primarily driven by the first Labour government's commitment to social justice. It was this commitment in Grace's (1990) view that underpinned Fraser's statement and encapsulated the central principles behind it. These were: equal educational opportunity; education as a right of citizenship; free and comprehensive provision of education and, implicitly, more intensive state intervention into education in order to ensure these would be acted upon.⁶⁶⁴ Greater state intervention, in a national context where its role had always been a strongly debated, could be justified because

Welfare Labourism entailed a view of education as a public good which ought to be provided by the State at all levels...Within this political perspective, a democratic centralized State agency was seen to be the most efficient and effective means for expanding the education system, improving the quality of its services and opening access to it from all sectors of the community.⁶⁶⁵

While Grace acknowledged these reforms were not enacted without resistance, in his account the education settlement was conceptualised as a triumph; "a decisive ideological victory over interest groups with very different education agendas."⁶⁶⁶ And although he recognises that the settlement was neither unproblematic nor a "smoothly linear" process", he argues "that *the policy as principle* remained as the deep regulative structure which significantly shaped the education system in New Zealand until the 80s".⁶⁶⁷ Essentially, then, he idealises the settlement as an innovative attempt to socially embed notions of social justice and equality through 'radical' social reform.

⁶⁶⁴ Grace, G. (1990) 'Labour and Education: the Crisis and Settlements of Education Policy'. In M. Holland and J. Boston (eds) *The Fourth Labour Government: Politics and Policy in New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press: 168-169.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid: 169

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid

Ultimately, however, “the original settlement was conservative and limited” and, because of its antecedents, almost bound to fail.⁶⁶⁸ Whatever the multiple motivations the reforms behind the reforms and resistance to them:

After 1945, post-primary education retained much of its elitist pre-war pattern. Many female, Maori and working class students were effectively marginalized. At the same time, the post-primary schools were obliged to face the charges of numerous critics to the effect that they had abandoned academic standards in favour of mediocrity. Moreover the longstanding tensions between general education and vocational education; between schooling and the economy, were to remain unresolved to haunt a later generation.⁶⁶⁹

Increasingly broad-based and volatile contestation over schooling would play an important role in the radical educational reforms implemented by the fourth Labour government in 1987 and substantially extended by the National government in 1991. These were part of a fundamental shift away from Keynesian social and economic management and the restructuring of state and society in New Zealand. In the next chapter I analyse these reforms.

⁶⁶⁸ Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 7
⁶⁶⁹ Ibid: 8

Chapter Seven

Neoliberalising education: recuperating 'responsibility'

For any way of thought to become dominant, a conceptual apparatus has to be advanced that appeals to our intuitions and instincts, to our values and desires, as well as the possibilities inherent in the social world we inhabit.⁶⁷⁰

Introduction

Despite nostalgic claims otherwise Keynesian social settlements were deeply flawed. The delivery of social welfare was premised on long term, full, male employment and the protection of the discrete national economies that became difficult to sustain in the face of economic recession and change. Predicated on the amelioration of class inequalities and based upon male egalitarianism in New Zealand it left intact gender and racial inequalities, as well as an urban/rural divide, which "remained fundamental cleavages in [the] society".⁶⁷¹ The end of the post-war boom and the expansion of the international economy, together with the emerging influence of new social movements, increasingly challenged both the efficacy of and the ideology behind Keynesian welfarism. These shifts strengthened the position of neoliberal political and economic arguments for the radical restructuring of national economies and the dismantling of welfare states.

With the contraction of national labour markets, growing unemployment and the pressure of international economic competition education took on heightened significance; as it always had when unemployment, particularly among the young, was high. The post-war education settlement here came under renewed attack from disparate positions. Conservatives criticized the education system reviving claims about 'falling standards', demanding a return to the "three Rs" (reading, writing and arithmetic) and a more vocational emphasis in education in the face of economic change. While left critics, liberal feminists and Maori academics pointed to growing evidence that equal access to education did not guarantee equal outcomes. Compared to white, middle class boys, working class and rural children, girls and Maori children were educationally disadvantaged and, as a result, excluded from full economic and social participation.⁶⁷²

⁶⁷⁰ Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁷¹ Larner, W. (1998c) 'Hitching a Ride on the Tiger's Back: Globalisation and Spatial Imaginaries in New Zealand'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16: 603.

⁶⁷² Benton, R. (1987) *How Fair is New Zealand Education: Report to Royal Commission on Social Policy, Part 1*. Wellington: NZCER.

Critiques of the education system's failure to ensure equity were mobilized by Labour to rationalise its reform in 1987, though the flaws in education were conceptualized as administrative rather than systemic.⁶⁷³ Fundamental changes were made to the governance of education. The extension of this program of reform by the subsequent National government in the early nineties tried to 'marketise' education and embed entrepreneurialism through the constitutive and regulatory mechanisms of choice and audit. These governmental techniques attempted to 'responsibilise' "teachers, management [including principals] and families", and constitute new entrepreneurial subjectivities across a range of sites".⁶⁷⁴

The neoliberal emphasis on 'responsibilisation' resonated powerfully in New Zealand with culturally produced rules of recognition and realisation which, from the colonial moment, have pivoted on notions of responsibility and respectability. As I have shown in the thesis responsibility, as a rule of recognition, has been bound up with family and work since settlement and with education since the 1930s. How the relation between these has been understood has differed by social class and its intersection with ethnicity and gender, just as the nature of that relation has shifted over time. Respectability as a rule of realization, however, has always been configured around a middle class moral ethos 'standing in' for class in a nation seduced by its own myth of egalitarianism. Over time, these rules of recognition and realization have become deeply embedded in dominant conceptions of Pakeha national identity.

In this chapter I argue that the neoliberalisation of the economy and state intensified the cultural value accorded to responsibility as a shared rule of recognition. It did so by constituting the education/work/consumption relation as crucial to the social and economic well-being of the nation and its population, in the context of a competitive global economy. At the same time, the management of that relation became (again) exclusively the responsibility of individuals and their families. These shifts, which cohered in a new conceptualization of citizenship predicated solely on participation in the labour market, narrowed the definition of responsibility reinforcing the class-based nature of respectability as a rule of realization. The constitutive role of 'responsibilisation' pivots on the production of "the 'entrepreneur' as a

⁶⁷³ Dale, R. and Jesson, J. (1993) 'Mainstreaming Education: The Role of the State Services Commission'. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education* 2: 7-34.

⁶⁷⁴ Lewis, N. (2000) 'Restructuring Discourse in the New Zealand Restructuring Experience 1984-1995: The Practices of the Education Review Office'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland: 154-155.

category of person” which assumes “ontological priority” under neoliberalism.⁶⁷⁵ Thus, responsibility becomes narrowly defined in terms of practices that are ‘entrepreneurial’.

In what follows, I overview the educational reforms of the 80s and 90s. I argue that the ascendancy of neoliberalism and managerialism, recontextualised by the state in education, significantly changed what counted as responsibility. In terms of education it was signified by competition between schools and individuals, and the exercise of parental choice. With the devolution of educational governance educational ‘failure’ became the responsibility of families (who failed to make the ‘right’ choices), schools and communities. These shifts impacted differently on different social groups. In a context where economic restructuring exacerbated the socio-economic disadvantage of Maori and Pacific Island peoples, constraining their ‘choices’, the rules of realisation for educational success (and respectability) were pushed further out of reach.⁶⁷⁶ While educational reform increased the historical advantage of middle class children, the intensification of “positional competition” *within* the middle classes and the “democratization of insecurity” heightened middle class anxiety about their children’s education.⁶⁷⁷ For them responsibility became confined to identifying and accessing the ‘best’ schooling they could for their children, regardless of the broader social implications of their actions.

Section One: Contextualising reform

Global changes

The fourth Labour government, like the first, came to power in 1984 on the promise of fundamental economic reform and this was to be predicated on market modes of resource regulation and ‘rolling back’ the state.⁶⁷⁸ Policies were introduced to deregulate the economy, ‘downsize’ government, restructure and ‘managerialise’ the public sector, and privatize state owned enterprises.⁶⁷⁹ As a number of commentators have noted, these policies were implemented with little consultation outside of government and remarkable speed.⁶⁸⁰ What

⁶⁷⁵ Du Gay, P. (1996) *Consumption and Identity at Work*. London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage: 157.

⁶⁷⁶ Fiske, B. and Ladd H. (2000) *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press. According to Fiske and Ladd (2000) the stratification of schooling and society increased following the introduction of parental choice policies in 1991 (p. 9).

⁶⁷⁷ Brown, P. (1995) ‘Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion: Some Observations on Recent Trends in Education, Employment and the Labour Market’. *Work, Employment and Society* 9 (No.1): 29-51.

⁶⁷⁸ Easton, B. (1997) *The Commercialisation of New Zealand*. Auckland: Auckland University Press; Gamble, A. (1988) *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.

⁶⁷⁹ Castles, F., Gerritsen, R., and Vowles, J. (eds) (1996) *The Great Experiment: Labour Parties and Public Policy Transformation in Australia and New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press.

⁶⁸⁰ See for example Kelsey, J. (1993) *Rolling Back the State: Privatisation of Power in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books; Kelsey, J. (1995) *The New Zealand*

occurred was a reform process characterized by the “blitzkrieg” approach, with the government taking unilateral decisions in the development and implementation of its policies.⁶⁸¹ State and economic restructuring was followed in the late 80s by the reform of education which would contribute to fundamental shifts in its governance, in educational practices, and institutional and social understandings of its role in the society. Restructuring was embedded and extended by the conservative National government from 1990 in an attempt to neoliberalise state, economy and society. Continuous educational reform was pivotal in this process.

The fourth Labour government initiated the radical restructuring of the state and the economy in a context when support for Keynesian welfarism had declined internationally in the face of economic and social flux. The exhaustion of Fordism internationally, global economic recession and the rapid expansion of a global economy undermined national economies. It destabilised the class compromise welfare states were predicated upon, seriously challenging the efficacy of Keynesian models of economic management. Economic change combined with social shifts to militate against the continued dominance of the male breadwinner paradigm which had been the foundation of Keynesian social and economic governance. The decline in mass production, technical innovation and emergence of service economies signaled the end of long term full time employment, contributing to changing patterns in the gendered division of labour. Simultaneously an emerging politics of identity and difference, which had its basis in the new social movements of the 60s, mobilised critiques of the gendered, racialised and other exclusions that underpinned Keynesian welfarism and undercut the class-based redistributive politics that had characterized welfare states.

These new social movements, partially enabled by the institutionalisation of liberal democracy, criticized liberalism’s assumption of the homogeneity of the sovereign individual upon whom the formal rights of citizenship were bestowed.⁶⁸² They emphasised the gendered, classed, racial, sexual and physical specificity of liberalism’s universal subject, arguing that the assumption of *his* primacy underpinned the exclusions and social injustices

Experiment: A World Model for Structural Adjustment? Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books.

⁶⁸¹ Castles et al (1996) op.cit: 37

⁶⁸² Brown, W. (1995) *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton, N.Y: Princeton University Press. Writing from the North American context, Wendy Brown positions “politicized identity as both a production and contestation of the political terms of liberalism, disciplinary-bureaucratic regimes, certain forces of global capitalism and the demographic flows of postcoloniality...”. (p. 54).

inherent in it. And they mobilized discourses of disadvantage to make claims for collective rights and recognition on the basis of gender, ethnicity and other social identities. Critics of liberalism pointed to the persistence of social inequality as evidence of the flawed nature of the liberal concept of equality of opportunity fundamental to Keynesian welfarism, particularly in education. Equality of opportunity was replaced, in a discursive shift, with the concept of equity. This was underpinned by the idea of *group* disadvantage in societies, and called for the utilization of strategies such as positive discrimination and affirmative action in order to 'level the playing field' and address issues of social justice.

As well as significantly challenging liberal notions of equality, the theories and politics of identity and difference largely superseded Marxist theoretical accounts of the structurally embedded, class-based nature of social inequalities in capitalist societies. Their ascendance played a central role in the "breakup of class politics and the proliferation of other sites of political identification", contributing to "the demise of a critique of capitalism and of bourgeois cultural and economic values."⁶⁸³ I suggest below that the ascendance of identity politics, together with an historical refusal of class as an individual or collective identification in any substantive sense, significantly influenced public and educational discourses about boys' underachievement. I argue in Chapter Eight that both of these factors have underpinned the (continued) emphasis by the contemporary state on ethnic disparities in education.

Keynesianism also came under sustained ideological attack from other quarters. In discourses which drew upon neoliberal and institutional economics and public choice and new public management theories, the Keynesian welfare state was criticized for its costliness, interventionism, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, and for the passive, dependent subjectivities it produced institutionally and socially. Increasingly influential in the context of proliferating multi- and transnational business and the internationalization of labour and capital, these arguments coalesced into a powerful "transnational consensus about the appropriate relationship between states and markets".⁶⁸⁴ The Washington consensus was underpinned by claims that the only antidote to the economic and social ills created by Keynesian was economic and state restructuring in line with the central tenets of neoliberalism; competition, deregulation and privatization. Economies were to be liberalized

⁶⁸³ Ibid: 59

⁶⁸⁴ Dale, R., and Robertson, S. (1997) 'Resiting the Nation, Reshaping the State: Globalisation Effects on Education Policy in New Zealand'. In M. Olssen and K. Morris-Matthews (eds) *Education Policy in New Zealand: the 1990s and Beyond*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press: 210.

and deregulated, state owned enterprises and state provision of social services privatized, and the interventionist state 'rolled back' in some areas and 'rolled forward' in others.⁶⁸⁵

Economic restructuring initiated a "complex process of de-skilling, reskilling and upskilling", the impacts of which were differentiated along (intersecting) axes of gender, ethnicity and class.⁶⁸⁶ In New Zealand, for example, the decline of manufacturing and the privatization of state owned enterprises exacerbated already high rates of unemployment amongst low and unskilled labour - predominantly Maori and Pacific Island workers of both genders - intensifying the racialisation of poverty.⁶⁸⁷ Internationally, de-industrialisation and the emergence of service economies significantly altered patterns of male working class labour participation. As well as increasing unemployment amongst working class men, their labour-market participation becoming increasing casualised and flexibilised.

The flexibilisation of work also mediated changes in middle class employment, though this materialised differently amongst different fractions.⁶⁸⁸ These shifts occurred alongside a changing relationship between education and occupation, partially influenced by an increasing demand for technical innovation, and changing organizational and management models. Both impacted upon middle class employment patterns and educational practices.⁶⁸⁹ The ascendance of managerialism underpinned changing workplace cultures and recruitment practices mediating, on the one hand, the expansion of management roles utilizing different models of management and organization and, on the other, the destabilisation of bureaucratic career structures, lower rates of long term job security and greater downward mobility. The combination of economic restructuring, recession and unemployment that characterized the 80s contributed to a "dislocation between education, credentials and labour market opportunities", intensifying middle class anxiety about social reproduction.⁶⁹⁰

At the same time, as a result of the expansion of "[m]ass education and the decline of blue collar work", expectations of social mobility increased producing an "influx of [new]

⁶⁸⁵ Jessop, R. (2002). 'Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance: A State Theoretical Perspective'. *Antipode* 34 (No.3): 454.

⁶⁸⁶ Brown, P. (1995) op.cit: 32

⁶⁸⁷ Larner, W. (1996b) 'Labour Force Trends'. In S. Britton, R. Le Heron and E. Pawson (eds) *Changing Places: New Zealand in the Nineties*. Auckland: Longman Paul.

⁶⁸⁸ See Brown, P. (1995) op.cit; Brown, P. (2003) 'The Opportunity Trap: Education and Employment in a Global Economy'. *European Educational Research Journal* 2 (No.1): 141-179.

⁶⁸⁹ Brown, P. (1995) op.cit.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid: 32

contestants due to changes in class structure and gender relations” and intensifying positional competition.⁶⁹¹ Women in particular became perceived as “serious contenders for professional and managerial employment”.⁶⁹² Due in large part to the influence of liberal educational feminism which significantly contributed to rising achievement amongst middle class girls, “[t]he academic performance of women, especially from middle class backgrounds, has intensified competition for elite credentials”.⁶⁹³ Whether women (as a group) represent real competition to the economic (and social) primacy of men is, however, arguable. What signifies elite employment has changed and these new occupations remain dominated by men.⁶⁹⁴ Nevertheless, these shifts have mediated the intensification of “internecine struggles within the professional classes”.⁶⁹⁵

The feminization of the labour market and decline of the male breadwinner paradigm (and purportedly of the nuclear family), together with the apparent demise of class has been perceived as evidence not only of radical economic change but significant social transformation, signaling an epochal shift in the West. It has been argued that in the context of “reflexive modernity” individualisation has intensified, undermining traditional gender and class relations and identities.⁶⁹⁶ Theoretical claims of significant class and gender change have contributed to arguments that a ‘crisis of masculinity’ has emerged, particularly for working class men. While there are grounds for such critical assertions, gender shifts in particular have been constituted in popular and media discourses as representative of a more ‘global’ masculinity crisis.⁶⁹⁷

In such discourses (and, for that matter, in theories of reflexive modernization) significant changes for *some* women have been generalized as the achievement of something close to gender equality in economic terms, as well as evidence of women’s increasing social power and thus a profound transformation of gender relations. The gains that have been made for

⁶⁹¹ Brown, P. (2003) op.cit: 152

⁶⁹² Ibid: 154

⁶⁹³ Ibid

⁶⁹⁴ McDowell, L. (1997) *Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City*. Oxford: Blackwell.

⁶⁹⁵ Brown, P. (2003) op.cit: 157

⁶⁹⁶ See for example; Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity; Bauman, Z. (1992) *Intimations of Postmodernity*. London; New York: Routledge; Beck, U., Giddens, A. and Lash, S. (1994) *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity.

⁶⁹⁷ See for example: McDowell, L (2002) ‘Transitions to Work: Masculine Identities, Youth Inequality and Labour Market Change’. *Gender, Place and Culture* 9 (No.1): 39-59; Fine, M. and Weis, L. (1998) *The Unknown City: The Lives of Poor and Working Class Young Adults*. Boston: Beacon Press. I mean this both in the sense of a crisis for masculinity in which masculinity is universalised and that the ‘crisis’ is perceived as an international one.

women are not only overestimated, in populist and media discourses they have been characterised as the result of Western feminist hegemony and at the expense of men. Commentators critical of feminism, moreover, have argued that social, economic, and educational feminization has mediated the emergence of an international pattern of 'boys' educational underachievement'.⁶⁹⁸ In Chapter Eight I argue that claims about feminization underpin the dominant discursive construction of boys as 'victims' in educational and media discourses in New Zealand.

The shifts I have briefly described above had, of course, profound implications for economic structures and social relations within individual nation-states. These global pressures and responses to them, however, were mediated by national specificities. And if the introduction of neoliberal market mechanisms was the panacea of choice to address economic crisis and change cross-nationally, neoliberalism was not imposed upon states nor was its application uniform. Not only were states actively involved in restructuring processes, the rationale behind reform and the shape it took was both nationally specific and fluid, changing over time.

Local crises

In New Zealand, the fourth Labour government's introduction of market mechanisms in the 80s was a political strategy aimed at the addressing both the nation's economic decline and social equity issues by increasing administrative and economic efficiency (Larner, 1996, 1998, 2005). New Zealand's economic crisis resulted from a combination of international shifts including the end of the 'long boom', the 70s oil shocks and global recession, and the particularities of the nation's economy. Our national economy was especially vulnerable because of traditional links to Britain, its decline exacerbated by the British joining the EEC, and among other things because of its dependence upon "a narrow range of commodities in the primary sector for export income" and an inefficient and expensive system of trade protectionism in place since the post-war period.⁶⁹⁹

Economic downturn had negative social consequences, impacting particularly severely on Maori (and Pacific Island) workers who were overrepresented in the manufacturing sector and low skill occupations. Evidence of their relative economic and social disadvantage, as

⁶⁹⁸ Hoff Summers, C. (2000) 'The War Against Boys'. *Atlantic Monthly*, May.

⁶⁹⁹ Larner, W. (1996a) 'The "New Boys": Restructuring in New Zealand, 1984-1994'. *Social Politics* 3 (No.1): 34.

well as concerns for social cohesion in the face of it, made increasingly vocal political claims by Maori difficult for the state to ignore. The emergence of a Maori identity politics during the 70s and 80s was accompanied by, and intersected with, the development of feminisms in New Zealand. Feminist lobbying, in the context of a Labour government with a traditional political commitment to social democracy, played its part in the shifts of the 80s. And both Maori and feminists utilized the concept of equity in their political claims.

Social equity and claims for reparative justice were mobilized in Maori arguments for legal recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and for biculturalism.⁷⁰⁰ The notion of gender equity was central in feminist arguments about the socio-economic disparities experienced by women, increasingly perceived to be related to the educational disadvantage of girls. Equity became a key word in state discourses and policy, including education, in the 80s and was used by the fourth Labour government to rationalise state, economic and educational change. In New Zealand, “the claims of social movements [were] part of the discursive construction and reconstruction associated with welfare state restructuring”.⁷⁰¹ As I suggest below Maori identity politics would be especially influential attaining primacy over gender issues, particularly in education, with the institutionalization of biculturalism.

Section Two: Maori identity politics: institutionalizing ‘biculturalism’

While the influence of identity politics crossed national boundaries it assumed nationally specific forms, the product as much of history as the moment they materialised within. In New Zealand, the emergence of a ‘Maori renaissance’⁷⁰² in the 70s began a process of ethnic politicization of Maori which would contribute to the subsequent institutionalisation of biculturalism in the late 80s. Though Maori political activism had a history that began with colonization their dissent during the 70s became more vocal and public, coalescing around entwined issues of language and culture loss and the continued ‘legal’ alienation of Maori

⁷⁰⁰ Sharp, A. (1990) *Justice and the Maori: The Philosophy and Practice of Maori Claims in New Zealand since the 1970s*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

⁷⁰¹ Larner, W. (2000) ‘Neo-liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality’. *Studies in Political Economy* 63: 18.

⁷⁰² Sharp, A. (1990) op.cit. This term was coined by Maori activists and academics at the time and signified the emergence of more militant “confrontationist politics” (p. 7). For detailed analyses of this moment and its implications for the institutionalization of biculturalism see Sharp, A. (1990) op.cit; Sharp, A. (1995) ‘Why Be Bicultural?’. In M. Wilson and A. Yeatman (eds) *Justice and Identity: Antipodean Practices*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books; Larner, W. and Spoonley, P. (1995) ‘Post Colonial Politics in Aotearoa/ New Zealand’. In D. Stasiulis and N. Yural-Davis (eds) *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class*. London: Sage; Fleras, A. and Spoonley, P. (1999) *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*. Melbourne; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

land. The political power of claims made by Maori at the time, as I noted above, was reinforced by the persistence of sharp socio-economic and educational disparities between themselves and Pakeha. The social inequalities experienced by Maori had become increasingly apparent by the late 50s and were deepened by recession in late 70s and economic restructuring in the mid 80s.

Maori political critique pivoted on claims of institutional racism. They criticized the (historical) tendency of the state bureaucracy, particularly the Department of Maori Affairs, to conceptualise Maori as a problem population. Such conceptualizations implied “[t]hey either ‘had problems’ or ‘created problems’ because of cultural differences and a reluctance to play by Pakeha rules”.⁷⁰³ Maori criticised the assimilationist and integrationist policymaking of the past, and the desire for political and social homogeneity that underpinned it, arguing for policy that reflected the bicultural nature of the society and their right to sovereignty in matters of their social and economic governance. Under pressure for biculturalism from Maori, and in the face of deeply entrenched socio-economic disparity, the National government made significant changes to Maori Affairs policy which materialized in the form of Tu Tangata (‘Stand Tall’) policies in 1977. The intention here was to mobilize Maori communities and this represented a new commitment by the state “to Maori structures and culture as solutions rather than problems”.⁷⁰⁴ It was also perceived as a means of empowering them through “the creation of community driven, culturally sensitive programs”.⁷⁰⁵ It was the failure of these policies, as much as anything else, that influenced the development of a politics of biculturalism.

By the 80s Maori activism consolidated into a politics of tino rangatiratanga which foregrounded arguments that the Treaty of Waitangi gave them rights not only to social equality with Pakeha but to sovereignty, understood in terms of self determination. Maori critiques of policy emphasized “the constitutional status of Maori under the Treaty of Waitangi and the failure of the state to represent Maori interests”.⁷⁰⁶ And they pointed out the inability of supposedly empowering policy to mediate negative statistics. In the face of these critiques the Treaty of Waitangi was amended, effectively extending institutional biculturalism. The Treaty was also mobilized by Maori to argue for reforms to education in the face of strong evidence that pointed to marked educational disparities, at all levels,

⁷⁰³ Fleras, A. and Spoonley, P. (1999) op.cit: 110

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid: 115

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid: 116

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid: 121

between Pakeha and Maori.⁷⁰⁷ Maori argued that the Treaty guaranteed their right to equivalent educational outcomes and an education system that both acknowledged their difference and was culturally appropriate.

Maori arguments for institutional change and a bicultural society were supported by particular fractions of the Pakeha middle class, their engagement with biculturalism partially rooted in the challenge Maori political ethnicisation presented to Pakeha. While it generated defensive responses from many Pakeha,⁷⁰⁸ Maori identity politics also catalysed questions about an ethnicity - based Pakeha identity in a postcolonial context. And “the contemporary understanding of what it means to be Pakeha [was] formed in the debates surrounding post-colonialism in Aotearoa”.⁷⁰⁹ These debates contributed to the emergence of a “bifurcatory politics of Maori and Pakeha”.⁷¹⁰ This did not, however, result in the emergence of any unified Pakeha political identity.⁷¹¹ It tended to be liberal intellectuals, including feminists, “with a commitment to traditional egalitarian ideals” who most often engaged positively with postcoloniality and issues of Maori rights and political identity.⁷¹² Despite their relative minority, these intellectuals had a crucial role in the institutionalisation of biculturalism, and have significantly “reshaped aspects of the political agenda since the late 80s...”.⁷¹³

Maori political ethnicisation also had an important influence on the development of feminisms in New Zealand. Women’s liberation movements, from early on, were challenged by potent critique from Maori women who pointed both to the universalist assumptions that underpinned them and their inherent racism.⁷¹⁴ By the mid 1980s the amendment of the Treaty of Waitangi and the foregrounding of issues of tino rangatiratanga and biculturalism mediated the practices and politics of some feminists here. In particular, “the Treaty ... came

⁷⁰⁷ See Sharp, A. (1990) op.cit: 184 for a snapshot of Maori educational underachievement compared to Pakeha.

⁷⁰⁸ This was the case particularly among the conservative middle class and an equally conservative Pakeha working class.

⁷⁰⁹ Larner W. and Spoonley, P. (1995) op.cit: 97

⁷¹⁰ Ibid: 98

⁷¹¹ The Springbok tour protest in 1981 was perhaps the first public expression of Pakeha postcolonial politics, as well as opposition to it.

⁷¹² Ibid: 107

⁷¹³ Ibid: 108

⁷¹⁴ Smith, L. (1992) ‘Maori Women: Discourses, Projects and Mana Wahine’. In S. Middleton and A. Jones (eds) *Women and Education in Aotearoa* 2. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books: 33-51; Larner, W. and Spoonley, P. (1995) op.cit.

to be seen as the basis for possible alliances between Maori and Pakeha feminists” and helped shape both institutional and grass roots feminist organizations.⁷¹⁵

Before I briefly discuss New Zealand feminism and its institutional impact I wish make note here of important critical arguments about the emergence of bicultural politics. Steven Webster points to the coincidence of neoliberalisation and the institutionalisation of biculturalism as the context which shaped “a small but increasing Maori elite”, at the same time as it created “the rising unemployment, impoverishment, lumpenproletarianisation, and criminalisation of other Maori”.⁷¹⁶ He questions whether the development of an academic and managerialist Maori elite during the 80s might not have been “as much an integral part of national capitalist restructuring as it was a “renaissance of Maori culture”.⁷¹⁷ Similar concerns underpin Rata’s (1999) claims about the contribution of neoliberalism and bicultural politics to an emerging “neotribal capitalism” which contributed to the intensification of disparities among Maori. I will revisit this discussion in my concluding chapter.

Section Three: The liberal femocracy and educational feminism

While multiple feminisms emerged out of the early women’s movement in New Zealand, as they did internationally, liberal feminism tended to exert the greatest institutional influence. Liberal feminists were largely concerned with equal political and economic inclusion for women (understood as a unitary group whose interests were identical) on the dual grounds of “equal citizenship and fair competition in a meritocratic system.”⁷¹⁸ They assumed that women’s inclusion in the public sphere would create social and economic parity with men. Their claims, because they did not question capitalist socio-economic structures, could be accommodated relatively easily by the state and influenced legislative change in New Zealand in the early 70s.⁷¹⁹

Education, given its fundamental role in social equality on a liberal view, was a key site for feminist initiatives. Indeed, the emergence of liberal feminism in New Zealand was partially generated by “the contradiction experienced by educated women between the liberal idea of

⁷¹⁵ Lerner, W. and Spoonley, P. (1995) op.cit: 54

⁷¹⁶ Webster, S. (1998) *Patrons of Maori Culture: Power, Theory and Ideology in the Maori Renaissance*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press: 13.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid: 16

⁷¹⁸ Armstrong, N. (1992) ‘Handling the Hydra: Feminist Analyses of the State’. In P. Bunkle and R. Du Plessis et al (eds) *Feminist Voices: Women’s Studies Texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Auckland, NZ: Oxford University Press: 227.

⁷¹⁹ This was instantiated in policy with the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1972 and the Human Rights Commission Act which prohibited discrimination against women in 1975.

equality (as sameness) and domestic femininity (as difference)".⁷²⁰ Liberal feminists claimed that the education system, because of its inherent sexism, reproduced gender inequalities and undermined the potential of girls as individuals to contribute to social progress. They argued for "equal access to various curriculum subjects and non-traditional occupations, equal representation in senior positions in educational hierarchies, and increased visibility of women in curriculum content".⁷²¹

In New Zealand state response to gender issues has tended to be uneven, with different governments responding differently to feminist lobbying.⁷²² Traditionally Labour governments, with their emphasis on moderate liberal democratic goals, have been more open to feminist arguments and the greatest advances for women occurred under their aegis.⁷²³ During periods when a conservative National government has been in power these gains have often been retrenched. This pattern was reflected in education policy in the late 80s with the inclusion by Labour of a mandatory gender equity clause in the school charters, though this was contained within broader equity concerns, and responsibility for its oversight was devolved away from the state.⁷²⁴ When National came to be power in 1990 the clause was made voluntary, and equity issues were left entirely to the discretion of schools and their Boards of Trustees.

While the 70s and 80s saw greater state support for gender issues the lack of any substantive gender policy in New Zealand education, comparative to that of other nations, stands out. In Australia, for example, under pressure from feminists the government at the

⁷²⁰ Middleton, S., Codd, J., and Jones, A. (eds) (1990) *New Zealand Education Policy Today: Critical Perspectives*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin: 93.

⁷²¹ Middleton, S. (1988) 'Towards a Sociology of Women's Education'. In S. Middleton (ed) *Women and Education in Aotearoa*. Wellington: Port Nicholson Press: 1.

⁷²² Watson, H. (1988) 'The Impact of the Women's Movement on Policies and Practices in Schools'. In S. Middleton (ed) *Women and Education in Aotearoa*. Wellington: Port Nicholson Press.

⁷²³ For a discussion of early Labour feminism see; Dann, C. (1985) *Up From Under: Women and Liberation in New Zealand, 1970-1985*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin; Port Nicholson Press. Further gains were made for women under the fourth Labour government across a range of issues including parental leave and childcare funding, employment and pay equity, and rape legislation. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was also established under its aegis. See Du Plessis, R. (1992) 'Stating the Contradictions: The Case of Women's Employment'. In P. Bunkle and R. Du Plessis et al (eds) *Feminist Voices: Women's Studies Texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press: 214.

⁷²⁴ Middleton, S. (1992) 'Gender Equity and School Charters: Some Theoretical and Political Questions for the 1990s'. In S. Middleton and A. Jones (eds) *Women and Education in Aotearoa 2*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books. It was made mandatory for Boards of Trustees to "assume responsibility for promoting 'equitable educational outcomes' for both sexes by developing "equal opportunity objectives, provid[ing] non sexist role models, develop[ing] a non-sexist curriculum, and provid[ing] freedom from sexual harassment" (p. 2).

time commissioned a report on girls and education.⁷²⁵ The report emphasised the connection between girls' schooling and women's socio-economic position in the society, and argued for broad educational reform on that basis. It influenced the development and implementation of *The National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools* in 1987. This policy represented a significant gain for educational feminists and (some) girls. As Lyn Yates points out, however, differences (such as social class and ethnicity) between girls "were treated...as appendices to the central problem" of gender disparities.⁷²⁶ The intersection of axes of social class and ethnicity, and their impact on the underachievement of different groups of girls, was largely ignored.

Different responses to gender issues by similar liberal democratic states need to be understood, on the one hand, in terms of the differing "politics of practice in women's engagement with the state".⁷²⁷ The specificities of national contexts invariably shape the forms feminist politics takes, the issues they privilege and the effectiveness of their engagement with the state; if indeed they choose to engage with it. For example, as I suggested above, Maori identity politics played an important part in the formation of feminisms here. And it was liberal feminists with their focus on legislative change around "income maintenance, and provision of public services such as health and education" who dominated interactions with the state.⁷²⁸ In turn, liberal feminist engagement with the state was mediated by restructuring in the 80s and the separation of social and economic policy that resulted from it. These shifts led to a focus on single issue campaigns and a "fragmented set of feminist claims on the state".⁷²⁹

The fourth Labour government's response to feminist claims was itself characterized by "unevenness and contradiction", partly because it was caught between the "conflicting demands" of multiple groups.⁷³⁰ The political claims of Maori were given precedence for the economic and political reasons mentioned, as well as others including an historical relationship between Maori and Labour party. How, and if, the state responds to gender politics is thus the result of a complex interplay of contextual (historical and contemporary)

⁷²⁵ Commonwealth Schools Commission: "Girls, School and Society" (1975) cited in Yates, L. (1993) 'The Education of Girls: Policy, Research and the Question of Gender.' *Australian Education Review* 35.

⁷²⁶ Yates, L. (1993) op.cit: 98.

⁷²⁷ Armstrong, N. (1992) op.cit: 234

⁷²⁸ Du Plessis, R. (1992) op.cit: 211

⁷²⁹ Ibid: 212

⁷³⁰ Ibid: 213

and conjunctural elements (internal and external) that mediate its “strategic selectivities”.⁷³¹ In the context of neoliberalisation, for example, the constitution of de-gendered ‘consumers’ and ‘active citizens’ articulated with “feminist claims for gender neutrality on the assumption that women have a right to autonomous personhood and neo-liberal claims for possessive individualism”.⁷³² The selectivities of the capitalist state are inevitably underpinned by the necessity to address its “core problems”⁷³³ through the combination of governmental techniques (that is, in Foucauldian terms, its productive power) - and education is key here - and more coercively through structural change. Thus the state’s role in the maintenance of a capitalist economy, the social relations it depends upon and the subjectivities considered necessary for both, is both constitutive and regulatory.

While the combination of contextual elements I described above explains the lack of substantive gender policy in New Zealand education, - before and after restructuring - that is not to say that gender reform did not occur. Much of the furor over ‘the problem of boys’ educational underachievement’ has been based upon claims that girls are outstripping boys in education thanks in large part to liberal feminist educational initiatives. And, indeed, educational feminism - which in NZ might be conceived largely as grassroots (or rather chalk-face) politics - has had a profound impact upon the educational achievement of middle class girls in particular.⁷³⁴ Educational feminism, as it evolved, variously drew upon liberal, radical, socialist feminisms, utilizing these to construct discourses of girls’ educational disadvantage which came to dominate feminist research and educational debates on gender in the 80s and early nineties. With educational restructuring, the emergence of self-managing schools and the devolution of responsibility for equity issues to them strategies to address this problem were largely school-based and driven by feminist teachers.

Section Four: Unsettling the post-war settlement

Feminist and Maori were not the only voices of discontent with regards to the post-war education settlement. In the decade or so leading up to the reforms, criticism of the

⁷³¹ Jessop, R. (2001) ‘The Gender Selectivities of the State’, available online at [http:// www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/research/resalph.htm#jessop](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/research/resalph.htm#jessop)

⁷³² Larner, W. and Walters, W. (2000) ‘Privatisation, Governance and Identity: The United Kingdom and New Zealand Compared’. *Policy and Politics* 28 (No. 3): 20.

⁷³³ Dale, R. (1989) *The State and Education Policy*. Milton Keynes [England]; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

⁷³⁴ See Sturrock, F. (1993) *The Status of Girls and Women in New Zealand Education and Training*. Wellington, New Zealand: Data Management and Analysis Section, Ministry of Education; Jones, A and Jacka S. (1996) ‘Discourse of Disadvantage: Girls’ School Achievement’. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 30 (No.2): 165-175.

education settlement was emerging from both inside and outside the education system. Internally, support for the settlement from “key groupings who had previously, either actively or tacitly, underwritten [it]” was weakening.⁷³⁵ There were institutional concerns about the militancy and political influence (in terms of their influence in policy development) of the Post Primary Teachers’ Association, the key teachers’ union. At the same time there was growing criticism by teachers, through the union, both of their working conditions and of the system itself.

In the wider society, emerging recession and extremely high rates of youth unemployment exacerbated longstanding conservative dissatisfaction with progressive education. Conservatives, concerned with social reproduction of both class and gender roles in a context where growing economic contraction and the influence of new social movements seemed to challenge both, argued for a return to the ‘basics’ and a greater emphasis on vocational education. And, in keeping with an historical pattern of social and political conservatism in ‘hard times’, there was increasing popular support for such arguments. This would have crossed class boundaries since recession undermined the promise of social mobility for the working classes in very real ways, intensifying perceptions about the importance of educational achievement to ‘get ahead’.

Openshaw (1995) argues that “the grassroots conflicts of the 1970s encouraged the polarization of educational battlelines”.⁷³⁶ An important strand of contestation coalesced around institutional and public concerns about the educational bureaucracy. These were underpinned by a combination of structural issues and apprehension about the dominance of educational experts. This related to what was widely perceived as the system’s lack of responsiveness to the diverse needs of its constituents. In the 70s pressure for greater community and lay participation in educational decision-making emerged more strongly. The voice of Maori, in the context of the Maori political ‘renaissance’, was particularly strong here. Arguments for greater community empowerment were later mobilized by the fourth Labour government to rationalize the devolution of educational governance, and by the subsequent National government in implementing policies of parental choice.

As well as being the focus of internal contention and public discontent during the 70s, the post-war education settlement came under strong critique from within the academy.

⁷³⁵ Openshaw, R. (1995) op.cit: 104

⁷³⁶ Ibid: 110

Influenced by Marxist and structural critiques which powerfully challenged the liberal myth of equality, the academic Left withdrew its support for the settlement and retreated from educational activism. Deepening ambivalence toward liberal humanist education on the Left echoed feminist and Maori concern with the persistent inequalities despite equality of opportunity. Together these factors undermined perceptions of the viability of the existing system, and “by the mid-80s active support for the educational status-quo had become seriously eroded so that what was widely perceived to remain was a small rump of educational bureaucrats intent on holding out against any change”.⁷³⁷

According to Openshaw, the “intellectual hiatus” that characterized this period contributed significantly to the (re)formation of the right in New Zealand into a ‘New Right’ out of which a powerful impetus for reform would emerge.⁷³⁸ This explanation is too simplistic, however. It implies a unified neoliberal politics when there was none and a radical shift in Labour’s political stance with regard to social democracy.⁷³⁹ As I suggest below this was not case, the fourth Labour government attempted to utilize neoliberal economics and managerialist strategies to achieve social democratic goals in the first phase of restructuring.

Section Five: Rationalising educational reform

Following its election in 1984 the fourth Labour government responded to intensive criticism of the education system by initiating a Curriculum Review. In stark contrast to the restructuring process itself, the review process was characterized by a high level of community consultation. An important outcome of the Review was the replacement of the notion of equality of opportunity with that of equity which mobilized ideas about positive discrimination to equalize educational achievement. This principle underpinned its recommendation that educational policy be reformed to address the needs of Maori and to “counter racism and sexism through curriculum innovation and promote more active partnership between schools, families and communities”.⁷⁴⁰ The emphasis on community input in education would become absolutely central in restructuring arguments, and a language of partnership emerged which would become embedded in policy discourse.

⁷³⁷ Ibid: 122

⁷³⁸ Ibid

⁷³⁹ See for example: Kelsey, J. (1995) *The New Zealand Experiment: A World Model for Structural Adjustment?* Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books; Lerner, W. (2000) op.cit.

⁷⁴⁰ Olssen, M., and Morris Matthews, K. (eds) (1997) *Education Policy in New Zealand: The 1990s and Beyond*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press: 11.

As various commentators have suggested, the bulk of the Review's recommendations were largely ignored by the government on its re-election in 1987.⁷⁴¹ This has been attributed to the power of Treasury's influence and its pressure to prioritise "issues of management and consumer choice".⁷⁴² Treasury's critique of education and the new conceptualization that underpinned it was clearly outlined in its 1987 briefing document to the incoming government, *Government Management Vol. II*. This document has been closely and critically analysed in depth by a number of commentators.⁷⁴³ Here I simply outline Treasury's position.

Persuaded by neoliberal theories of the free market and concerned with state spending in an environment of 'fiscal austerity', Treasury advocated the commodification of education to address what it perceived were fundamental flaws in educational administration.⁷⁴⁴ Treasury argued poor administration undermined the education system's responsiveness to its constituent groups, particularly the business sector and the community. Mobilising evidence of continuing educational disparities, it suggested schooling had failed to secure equality of opportunity largely because of its 'capture' by teachers and bureaucrats.⁷⁴⁵ Bureaucratic control of education, in Treasury's view, contributed to an inflexible and inefficient system, these flaws being exacerbated by the lack of mechanisms of accountability both at an institutional and school level. The devolution of aspects of educational governance to the community and the introduction of market mechanisms of choice and competition, it claimed, would ensure a responsive *and* cost effective education system.

Treasury's critique of education was underpinned by a conceptualization of it that radically diverged from the more expansive understandings that had characterized the postwar education settlement. Under Keynesian welfarism education was believed to make a contribution to the public good, both in terms of (supposedly) ensuring social mobility and greater equality and producing democratic citizens crucial for national progress. *Government Management Vol. II* conceptualized it, in contrast, quite simply as a service and a commodity. Schools were constituted as providers of education (as a service and a product), and students (and their parents) as individual consumers. Education, in this view, was thus understood entirely as a private good, though at the same time crucial to national economic

⁷⁴¹ See for example: Codd, J., Harker, R., and Nash, R. (eds) (1990) *Political Issues in New Zealand Education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press; Olssen, M. and Morris Matthews, K. (eds) (1997) op.cit.

⁷⁴² Middleton, S., Codd, J. and Jones, A. (eds) (1990) op.cit: 16

⁷⁴³ For a feminist analysis of *Government Management Vol. II* see Middleton, S. (1992) op.cit.

⁷⁴⁴ Dale, R and Jesson, J. (1993) op.cit.

⁷⁴⁵ Olssen, M. and Morris-Matthews, K. (1997) op.cit.

competitiveness. This wholly instrumental conception of education became embedded with the extension of the reforms by the National government from 1990, contributing to a decline in social equity objectives in education.⁷⁴⁶

Treasury was not the only driver of reform. The State Services Commission [SSC] played a significant role during this initial phase.⁷⁴⁷ The SSC was concerned with what it perceived as a lack of “accountability and efficiency” in the state’s provision of education and, like Treasury, was anxious about ‘provider capture’.⁷⁴⁸ Anxiety about capture extended beyond the public sector and concerns about self interested bureaucrats, to schools and the teaching profession itself. The SSC set out to depoliticize and ‘mainstream’ education and was instrumental in disembedding the educational bureaucracy. With the application of the State Sector Act (1988) to education in 1989 the SSC became in effect the “collective employer in the devolved education system”, intensifying state control and regulation of teachers.⁷⁴⁹ Concern with accountability and efficiency also rationalized more extensive monitoring of education and thus greater control of it by the state, at the same time as its responsibility for provision lessened. Dale and Jesson (1993) have argued that the SSC was driven by the desire “to change the culture of schools, to move them from a ‘professional’ culture to a managerial culture committed to the efficiency ethos”.⁷⁵⁰

Below, I briefly contextualise that imperative within the broader, international ascendancy of managerialism. I argue that reconstructing the culture of schools depended upon a combination of structural change and a discursive reconstruction of pedagogic identities which privileged an ‘entrepreneurial’ subjectivity in multiple educational sites.

Section Six: Restructuring education

Labour responded to Treasury’s indictment of education by establishing the Taskforce to Review Education Administration. Comprising Treasury and State Services Commission officials, representatives from the business sector and some educationalists, the Taskforce had as its central terms of reference notions of devolution and efficiency.⁷⁵¹ These were set by the State Services Commission and underpinned by theories of public choice, new public

⁷⁴⁶ Dale, R. and Jesson, J. (1993) op.cit

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid: 6

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid: 13

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid: 33

⁷⁵¹ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit.

management and consumer sovereignty.⁷⁵² From the outset, the mandate of the taskforce was not to find “optimal education solutions” but rather to develop mechanisms to facilitate devolution and the separation and specification of the function of central agencies.⁷⁵³

The key recommendations made by the Taskforce were published in what became known as the Picot Report. The report recommended that: boards of education be abolished and replaced by Boards of Trustees (in order to facilitate community input and responsibility for the governance of schools); bulk funding be introduced (this rationalized in terms of enhancing institutional flexibility and responsibility – and conceived by Labour as a means of delivering equity through needs-based differentiated funding; functions of policy development and delivery be separated; school charters be introduced which would include both local and state goals for education and serve as a contract between Ministry of Education and the Boards of Trustees; and that a review and audit agency be created to “review and audit the performance of every institution in terms of its charter”.⁷⁵⁴ This agency was to provide “independent comment on the quality of policy ... and how well policies were being implemented at the national level”.⁷⁵⁵ That is, it was proposed that the review office would monitor the performance of schools and the state. According to the Picot Report, the role of the review agency would be simply to monitor not advise or guide schools in any way. Its regulatory function was implicit, however, in that “[t]hreat of a bad ERO report was designed to produce compliance ...”.⁷⁵⁶ These recommendations shaped the reforms of education implemented with the Education Act in 1989.

The initial phase of educational restructuring focused solely upon the administrative efficiency of educational governance, and the accountability of those involved in it, rather than the education system’s “curricular, pedagogic, and organizational effectiveness”.⁷⁵⁷ At the state level, the educational bureaucracy was down-sized, the Ministry of Education replaced the Department of Education and the Education Review Office (ERO) was established. The responsibility for the governance of education was devolved to communities and schools through a process which involved schools becoming “independent

⁷⁵² MacKenzie, D. (1999) ‘The Clouded Trail: Ten Years of Education Post-Picot’. In M. Thrupp (ed) *A Decade of Reform in New Zealand Education: Where to Now?* Hamilton, New Zealand: School of Education, University of Waikato.

⁷⁵³ Lewis, N (2000) op.cit: 116

⁷⁵⁴ MacKenzie, D. (1999) op.cit: 14

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid

⁷⁵⁷ Dale, R. and Jesson, J. (1993) op.cit: 4, original emphasis.

crown entities”, through the establishment of Boards of Trustees and the introduction of bulk funding and school charters.⁷⁵⁸

Following the election of the National government in 1990, the process of reform continued with the scrapping of zoning regulations and introduction of parental choice, and the establishment of the National Education Goals [NEGs] and the National Curriculum Framework [NCF]. The policy of parental choice was an attempt to ‘marketise’ education by stimulating competition between schools, based on the assumption this would act as a spur to their improvement. The NEGs and NCF defined what *the state* considered were education’s “appropriate goals and administrative and pedagogical practices, and set national curricula (the non-discretionary element [of the charters])”.⁷⁵⁹

While education restructuring became integral to “an overall attempt by governments of both political parties in New Zealand ... to change radically both the extent and the nature of state involvement in both the economy and social provision”, the rationales behind that move were quite different.⁷⁶⁰ I want to reiterate here Labour’s continued concern with social equity in the early phase of restructuring. The introduction of neoliberal market mechanisms was “a political strategy”, an attempt to address economic crisis and its social implications by increasing efficiency in the face of expanding internationalization.⁷⁶¹ Thus, the initial shifts in education described above were essentially part of an (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to cobble together particular elements of neoliberalism and managerialism in order to achieve social democratic goals.⁷⁶² Labour’s broader reform project, however, provided the conditions of possibility in New Zealand for the expansion and consolidation of neoliberalism (as ideology and governmentality) following the election of a conservative National government in the 1990s.⁷⁶³

Section Seven: Globalisation and education

The neoliberalisation of state, economy and society by National pivoted on a particular representation of globalization which was mobilized to discursively reconstruct the nation “as

⁷⁵⁸ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit

⁷⁵⁹ Lewis, N. (2004) ‘Embedding the reforms in New Zealand schooling: After Neoliberalism?’ *GeoJournal* 59: 152.

⁷⁶⁰ Dale R. and Jesson, J. (1993) op.cit: 34

⁷⁶¹ Larner, W. (1998c) op.cit: 604

⁷⁶² For a more in-depth discussion of the struggles between social liberals and neoliberals during this phase of restructuring see Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit.

⁷⁶³ See Larner, W. (2000) op.cit.

a regime governed by the dictates of international competitiveness, economic efficiency and consumer demand".⁷⁶⁴ In a qualitatively different conceptualization, the economy was "no longer envisaged as coterminous with the nation-state" but represented, in the context of transnationalisation and regionalization, "a space of flows in which regions, industrial sectors, and individuals are directly articulated into networks of global capital".⁷⁶⁵ Globalisation emerged as a central element in a new, more fundamentally neoliberal, "political rationality" which pivoted upon the discursive separation of economy and society and a reconceptualisation of the state's role in both domains. Crucially, the emergence of this new rationality

... involved the reconstitution of the object of economic governance. No longer is the national economy governed via interventions in the social domain. Instead individuals, sectors and regions are the new focus of economic governance, and policies and programmes are aimed at promoting entrepreneurial, competitive and individualistic ways of being.⁷⁶⁶

This shift has been conceptualized in terms of the emergence of an overriding concern to reshape New Zealand into a "competition state".⁷⁶⁷ In this new state form economic regeneration is privileged over social equity; with that the "state's traditional accumulation-legitimation dilemma [collapses] into one where accumulation *is* legitimation".⁷⁶⁸ That is, the role of the state becomes confined, at least discursively, to providing the conditions for economic expansion. The results of economic growth, it is presumed, will 'trickle down' through the society mediating the worst effects of social inequality. Education takes on heightened significance in this moment, becoming characterised in purely instrumental terms as crucial to international competitiveness for individuals and the nation.

Informed by a new international (neoliberal) consensus on the role of education in the global economy, education becomes conceived narrowly in terms of skills and training. It is also, however, seen as "capable of serving both economic and social ends, first by enhancing the qualifications of the labour market ... and second by providing avenues for equity and employment opportunities for groups and individuals who have hitherto been relegated to

⁷⁶⁴ Larner, W. (1998c) op.cit: 599

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid: 604

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid

⁷⁶⁷ Dale, R. and Robertson, S. (1997) op.cit.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid; original emphasis.

low paid work or excluded from the labour market altogether”.⁷⁶⁹ An essential element of this consensus is the perception that in order for ongoing global expansion, the necessary precondition for continued national and individual well-being, identities and subjectivities must be remade; it “is people rather than skills at the centre of contemporary changes in the global economy”.⁷⁷⁰ This moment begins a process in which education becomes not only crucial for the development of human capital but, over time, will emerge as the nexus between economic and social policy in the context of a global ‘knowledge’ economy. I develop this argument in the concluding chapter.

While globalization has mediated educational policies practices and structures internationally, it has done so *through* the state not in spite of it. On the one hand, globalization has inhibited “states’ capacities and policy making discretion”, generating similar challenges and broadly similar responses to them internationally.⁷⁷¹ Its effects on education have generally been indirect, “mediated through the discretion and direction of nation-states”, and have materialized differently in response to national specificities.⁷⁷² As Roger Dale has argued

National modes of regulation, social structures of production, societal and cultural effects, all not only interpret, modify, mediate, resist, support or are indifferent to the direct and indirect effects of globalization, but they may both transform or invert those effects and bring about changes in them.⁷⁷³

States have contributed to global processes of economic, political, educational and social change through their recontextualisation and institutionalization of neoliberal and managerialist discourses. In New Zealand, the neoliberalisation of education was a state driven project which effectively strengthened its power over education.⁷⁷⁴ Educational restructuring simultaneously decentralized aspects of educational governance *and* re-centred state regulation of education. This shift could be rationalized in terms of the crucial

⁷⁶⁹ Delhi, K. (1993) ‘Subject to the New Global Economy: Power and Positioning in Ontario Labour Market Policy Formation’. *Studies in Political Economy* 41: 86.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid: 89

⁷⁷¹ Dale, R. (1999) ‘Specifying globalization effects on national policy: a focus on mechanisms’. *Journal of Education Policy* 14 (No.1): 1.

⁷⁷² Ibid: 2

⁷⁷³ Dale, R. (2000b) ‘Globalization: A New World for Comparative Education’. In J. Schriewer (ed) *Discourse Formation in Comparative Education*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang: 91.

⁷⁷⁴ Dale, R. (1997a) ‘The State and the Governance of Education: an Analysis of the Restructuring of the State-Education Relationship’. In A. Halsey et al (eds) *Education: Culture, Economy, Society*. Oxford: Oxford University.

function of education in the development of a globally competitive economy. At the same time the re-centering of the state enhanced its constitutive function. That is, it reinforced the part the state plays - as an “official recontextualising field” - in the constitution (and regulation) of the entrepreneurial and responsibilised subjectivities necessary for a global economy.⁷⁷⁵ I explore this interplay of structural and discursive change, and its role in production of these “new pedagogic identities”, below.

Section Eight: Re-centering the state

Educational restructuring combined particular structural and discursive shifts, enabling the state to intensify its power in education while divesting itself of accountability for particular aspects of educational governance. Roger Dale identifies three key mechanisms which underpinned this process; de-regulation, juridification and managerialism.⁷⁷⁶ Linked together, they enabled the state to re-shape educational governance. Deregulation and the limited marketisation of education underpinned the introduction of parental choice policies which were facilitated by dezoning. Alongside enrolment based funding these shifts were intended to create a competitive school market. The process of juridification comprised the introduction of a national curriculum which legally constrained what could be taught in schools, and school charters based upon the law of contract.

The third component of this framework, managerialism, was intended to depoliticise and ‘mainstream’ education. This process involved the disembedding of the educational bureaucracy (to circumvent ‘bureaucratic capture’), the disempowerment of teacher unions and deprofessionalisation of teaching (to prevent ‘provider capture’) and a separation between funding and provision. Through the Ministry of Education, and enabled by the elimination of union and teacher influence, restructuring re-centered state control of policy development while simultaneously devolving responsibility for its implementation to schools and communities.

The introduction of the charter, bulk funding, and parental choice devolved particular governance functions, and accountability for educational outcomes, away from the state to community, schools and families. At same time these mechanisms comprised a “new grid of control” exerted over education by the state through the regulatory mechanisms of the

⁷⁷⁵ Bernstein, B. (2000a) ‘Official Knowledge and Pedagogic Identities: the Politics of Recontextualising’. In S. Ball (ed) *Sociology of Education: Major Themes, Volume IV, Politics and Policies*. London and New York: Routledge Falmer.

⁷⁷⁶ Dale, R. (1997a): op.cit: 277

Education Review Office, New Zealand Curriculum Framework [NZCF] and National Education Guidelines.⁷⁷⁷ The charter makes it the legal responsibility of Boards of Trustees [BoTs] to ensure schools deliver the NEGs and NZCF. In this move the liability for ensuring equity, for example, becomes that of schools and their BoTs.⁷⁷⁸ The ERO audits the charter reinforcing its regulatory effects on behalf of the state. Bulk funding plays a dual (potential) role of consolidating and intensifying marketisation and responsabilisation.⁷⁷⁹ Parental choice, which privileges exit over voice,⁷⁸⁰ is supposed to enhance competition by acting as a regulatory mechanism to ensure schools provide 'quality' education. With restructuring, schools became conceived as self managing organizations, though they remained controlled and regulated by the state (at a distance) through the law (of contract) and the audit function of the ERO. I briefly discuss the regulatory and constitutive function of the ERO below.

The adoption of managerialism by the state was never purely instrumental. Though, the pragmatic concerns that underpinned managerialism; "accountability, explicit standards and measures of performance ... outputs, not inputs ... contracts and competition, and insistence on parsimony maintained by budget discipline", were certainly those of the (neoliberal) state.⁷⁸¹ As I noted above, however, the state was also concerned with 'cultural' change and managerialist discourses, which were underpinned by a new conceptualization of human subjectivity, were recontextualised and institutionalized by the state in order to bring about and *embed* that change. Recontextualisation is an essential element in the process "by which discipline-specific or domain specific knowledge is converted or pedagogised to constitute school knowledge ..." and mediates new practices of and new meanings about schooling.⁷⁸² The penetration of managerialism into all levels of education was central to the process of constructing new pedagogical identities, including principal/managers and 'responsibilised' choosing parents and students, in order to create "an entrepreneurial, competitive culture" in the context of a global economy.⁷⁸³

⁷⁷⁷ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 123

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid: 125

⁷⁸⁰ Hirschman, A. (1970) *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁷⁸¹ Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Port Chester, New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁷⁸² Singh, P. (2002) 'Pedagogising Knowledge: Bernstein's Theory of the Pedagogic Device'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23 (No.4): 572.

⁷⁸³ Bernstein, B. (2000b) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Section Nine: Inscribing entrepreneurialism

At the core of managerialist discourses are notions of 'excellence' and 'enterprise' and, importantly, new conceptualizations of work. They are explicitly anti-bureaucratic, positioning bureaucracy as the antithesis and constitutive other of enterprise.⁷⁸⁴ Managerialist critiques of bureaucracy extend beyond institutional practice to the subjectivities bureaucracies (supposedly) produce. They characterise public and private bureaucracies as fundamental impediments to "the 'efficient and effective' provision of goods and services *because* they engender bureaucratic subjects who are procedure bound, uncritical of organisational hierarchy and (as a function of 'professionalism') emotionally uninvolved with their work."⁷⁸⁵ Against this (purportedly) inherently dysfunctional and, in their view, unethical model of organization and subjectivity managerialists invoke specific notions of enterprise which pivot upon a subject who acquires and reflects "more 'market-oriented, 'proactive' and 'entrepreneurial' predispositions and capacities".⁷⁸⁶

The entrepreneurial subject is simultaneously "a reactivation and a radical inversion" of traditional 'economic man'.⁷⁸⁷ On the one hand the central subject of classical liberalism, *homo economicus*, is re-invoked in the privileging of individual choice which is based upon the assumption of a *naturally* calculative, inherently self interested being. In enterprise discourse, however, human subjectivity is not constituted as static and, because individuals are considered intrinsically manipulable, their actions are no longer conceived "as private and therefore sacrosanct in terms of external intervention".⁷⁸⁸ Instead, the entrepreneurial subject is conceptualised as, 'by nature', "perpetually responsive to modifications in [their] environment".⁷⁸⁹ In an ontological shift, the human subject becomes conceived "not just as an enterprise [to be worked upon] but the entrepreneur of him or herself",⁷⁹⁰ a subject, that is, who is engaged in a process of perpetual self reconstruction in a 'market society' where identity now pivots on consumption. The shift from production to consumption characteristic of late modernity, it has been argued, is central to this 'new' consuming self to whom choice is a duty "already internalized and re-forged into a life-vocation".⁷⁹¹ In this view the primacy of

⁷⁸⁴ Du Gay, P. (1996) *Consumption and Identity at Work*. London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage: 71.

⁷⁸⁵ Du Gay, P. (1994) 'Making up Managers: Bureaucracy, Enterprise and the Liberal Art of Separation'. *British Journal of Sociology* 45 (No.4): 656.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid

⁷⁸⁷ Du Gay, P. (1996) op.cit: 156

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid. This move effectively lifts the liberal sanction on state intervention in the private sphere, justifying quite explicit 'social engineering'.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid

⁷⁹¹ Bauman, Z. (1998) *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*. Maidenhead, Berkshire (England); New York: Open University Press: 29.

consumption has radically changed the status of work and, thus, its relationship to identity construction. The shift to an “aesthetics of consumption”, Bauman argues, has undermined the work ethic, its moralizing and humanising function which applied to *all* work and, therefore, its “message of equality”.⁷⁹² In the market society the only work that ‘counts’ are the (elite) professions that require “good taste, sophistication, discernment, disinterested dedication and lots of schooling”.⁷⁹³

Paul Du Gay (1996) suggests work remains vitally important to identity production, though in new ways. He argues, following Nikolas Rose, that with the ‘autonomization’ and responsabilisation of contemporary subjects (through the mechanism of individualized choice), all paid employment becomes discursively constructed as “an essential element in the path to self fulfilment and provides the *a priori* that links together work and non-work life”.⁷⁹⁴ Managerialist, and other economic discourses, constitute both work and consumption as interconnected terrains in which the ‘sovereign consumer’ engages in the activities of self mastery, self-improvement and self-actualisation that are her life project. In these discourses “the prevailing image of the worker ... is of an individual in search of meaning, responsibility and a sense of personal fulfilment ... Work is a site and an activity which forms an integral aspect of an individual’s ‘style of life’ as a consumer”.⁷⁹⁵

The enterprising self whose identity pivots on this new integration of work and consumption is not simply the product of contemporary economic transformations and discursive shifts, however. The centrality of consumption to Western culture has a history that predates its ‘respectabilisation’ through an association with “bourgeois domesticity” in the 19th century.⁷⁹⁶ Bound up with possessive individualism in that moment, the identity of the consumer, through the assumption of respectability, became “one of the private, enterprising individual who [stood] at the centre of the very notion of modernity”.⁷⁹⁷ And, as such, that individual was culture, class and gender specific. In the contemporary moment the historicity and specificity of ‘the consumer’, as the model of human subjectivity, disappears. Not only has

⁷⁹² Ibid: 32

⁷⁹³ Ibid: 33

⁷⁹⁴ Du Gay, (1996) op.cit: 65

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid: 80

⁷⁹⁶ Slater, D. (1997) *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. Oxford: Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press and Blackwell Publishers: 15.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid: 23

the (freely choosing) consumer become universalised, discursively anyway, the consuming self is the only *legitimate* mode of being and the 'freedom' to consume is compulsory.⁷⁹⁸

I see the enterprising self as the extension of personalised identity which is tied at one level to class specific subjectivity bound up with work. At another, it links back to classical liberal conceptions of possessive individualism which constitute property ownership as the basis for the legitimacy of the sovereign individual. Ownership of material goods becomes translated into the ownership of oneself in the shift from ontological from conceptions of the individual to the notion of 'persons', as I noted in Chapter Six. The *embedding* of what historically is a middle class subjectivity also underpins the 'new' conceptualisation of the work/identity relation which is now, seemingly, inseparable from consumption. As I suggested in Chapter Six, structural and discursive shifts prior to and following the Second World War contributed to the emergence of a new middle class fraction and a new conception of personhood. In an ontological shift mediated by the production and institutionalisation of expert (psy) discourses, the 'person' was substituted for the 'individual' in dominant theories of human development.⁷⁹⁹ These understandings of personhood, remained tied to classical liberalism in that they were formulated within an "implicit framework of 'possessive individualism'".⁸⁰⁰ That is, theories of personhood (abstracting subjects from their social context) assumed that all persons 'naturally' possessed the same potential to develop an 'authentic self', irrespective of class, race or gender.⁸⁰¹

The point I want to reiterate here is that the state, through education and in other ways, has a pivotal role in the production and regulation of particular national identities and individual subjectivities. Through the institutionalisation and recontextualisation of managerialist and neoliberal economic discourses it contributed to the "hegemonic reconstruction" of the consumer/worker as an "enterprising self".⁸⁰² This self, I would argue remains implicitly underpinned by class specific values and ways of being that have become universalised as 'human nature'. The re-centred state mediated not only the production of entrepreneurial selves but their regulation, at a distance. It did so both through managerialist techniques of

⁷⁹⁸ Ibid: 27

⁷⁹⁹ Shotter, J. (1993) 'Psychology and Citizenship: Identity and Belonging'. In B. Turner (ed) *Citizenship and Social Theory*. London; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid: 117

⁸⁰¹ Kohn, M. and Schooler, C. (1983) *Work and Personality: an Inquiry into the Impact of Social Stratification*. Norwood, N.J: Ablex Publishing Corp. Kohn and Schooler show that "social structure is significant for psychological functioning because it embodies systematically differentiated conditions of life that profoundly affect people's view of social reality", and, therefore, constrains the ways they can be in the world" (p. 1).

⁸⁰² Du Gay, P. (1996) op.cit.

contract and audit and policies of parental choice in secondary schooling, and the Education Review Office played a significant role in both these processes.

Section Ten: ERO: transforming schools and schooling

Initially, as I noted above, the culture of the ERO and its procedures were underpinned by social-liberal objectives which emphasised community engagement, social equity and an ongoing understanding of education as a public good.⁸⁰³ It was conceptualised in the first phase of restructuring as a means for effecting educational change. With the ideological ascendance of neoliberalism, social equity imperatives were replaced by a concern with economic revival and educational outputs. These were conceived in terms of a particular (narrow) definition of achievement based upon examination results, and the provision of state funding to schools was linked to them. The ERO, in this context, assumed two quite distinct formal roles; to “ensure that charter obligations of the BoTs [were] met, and to report on the progress of students and the achievement of the school in meeting these expectations”.⁸⁰⁴ Schools, thus, came under increased pressure both to quantify achievement and to address ‘underachievement’.

As I suggest in the next chapter, these changes contributed to the narrow way educational and state discourses framed the ‘problem’ of boys’ underachievement during the late 90s. They also shifted the onus for addressing this ‘problem’ directly onto schools. The ERO helped devolve “responsibility for what was previously part of the government’s legitimisation problem [in order to secure legitimisation the state had to be seen to be involved in redressing educational issues] to sites within the school”.⁸⁰⁵ Moreover, it exerted a powerful influence on the terms of the debates about boys’ education in a number of ways. Its publication of two reports on boys’ educational (under)achievement reinforced the discursive construction of boys as an homogeneous group who were ‘failing’ at school, compared to girls. And, as I show in Chapter Nine, it mediated the strategies schools introduced to address this ‘problem’ both directly and indirectly.

The ERO also played a significant part in the reconstruction and regulation of the role of the principal in schools. With the introduction of contractualism into schools, in the form of the charter, principals assumed the function of Chief Executive Officer of their school. This new identity was both constituted *and* regulated by the ERO which “made specific efforts to

⁸⁰³ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid: 144

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid: 55

construct a managerial personality for principals”.⁸⁰⁶ For some principals⁸⁰⁷ restructuring extended their autonomy, empowering them in concrete ways and through assumptions of their expertise by the board and community. For example, the “culture of competition” enhanced the power of the principals of oversubscribed (elite) high decile schools to choose students for enrolment.⁸⁰⁸ This enabled these actors to control the school mix ensuring the success of the school, and facilitated a coincidence of interests between the school and (middle class) families in that “[p]arents are seeking to enrol their child in the best possible school, while schools are seeking not only to fill all their classroom seats but to do so with the best possible students”.⁸⁰⁹ Furthermore, “[s]chools with control over their student intake are not only in the position to ensure academically able student bodies but also have the ability to tailor their academic offerings to such students”.⁸¹⁰ This capacity served to attract particular constituents, excluding others, and acted as an extension of the selection process. Importantly, in a competitive environment it also maintained the prestige of elite schools and strengthened the public credibility of their manager/principals, reinforcing and rewarding their performance as entrepreneurial selves

The ERO acts as both a regulatory and constitutive mechanism to engender and embed change, functioning coercively to enforce new practices, and constitutively (as a governmental technique) to produce new pedagogic identities. As a regulatory mechanism and in the constitution of enterprising selves (manager/principals, choosing parents and enterprising/ competitive students) the ERO operates at multiple levels and in multiple sites. It audits school accountability to state and community, specifies areas of practice that require improvement, provides information that mediates the exercise of parental choice and “examines and reports on the quality of pre-tertiary education to public and state audiences”.⁸¹¹ Responsibilisation, as Lewis has argued, is the ERO’s “central technique” and has been dispersed to the various selves participating in school space by the charter, the

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid: 255

⁸⁰⁷ Thrupp, M., Harold B., Mansell H. and Hawksworth L (2000) *Mapping the Cumulative Impact of Educational Reform: a Study of Seven Schools: Final Report*. Hamilton: School of Education, University of Waikato. This study shows how others were constrained by the necessity to ‘market’ their schools. For these principals the assumption of an entrepreneurial self places them in a “pedagogic schizoid position” in which they are caught between their former ‘therapeutic’ identity and the expectations of entrepreneurialism that accompany their managerial role. Moore, R. (2004) ‘Between Covenant and Contract: the Negotiation of Academic Pedagogic Identities’. *Journal of Education* 30.

⁸⁰⁸ Fiske, B. and Ladd H. (2000) *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid: 216

⁸¹⁰ Ibid: 217

⁸¹¹ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 153

establishment of the BoTs, [managerialism] and parental choice”.⁸¹² It materialises across a range of sites from community, BoT, and school spaces to homes, and is enforced by the ERO in all of them.

As an audit agency, and in other ways, the ERO is a mechanism *par excellence* through which “external subjection and internal subjectification are combined so that individuals conduct themselves in terms of the norms through which they are governed”.⁸¹³ In terms of parental choice, for example, it works to reinforce the constitutive role of policy in producing choosing parents. Not only does its review methodology assume the universality of a rational, utility maximising human subjectivity, the ERO “uses its reports to inform the market, urges parents to become choosers, and outlines a model of the ideal parent”.⁸¹⁴ For some social groups this identity was already in place, and the emphasis on choice has worked to re-legitimate and (re)moralise the competitive individualism that underpins it.⁸¹⁵ For others however, as I suggest below, the introduction of parental choice policies has worked against them by exacerbating their (historical) educational and social disadvantage.

Section Eleven: Parental choice and social polarization

Recent research on the impact of introducing parental choice policy in New Zealand reveals its effects were racialised and mediated by social class.⁸¹⁶ This work has pointed to the part parental choice has played in an increase in the stratification of schooling and the society in New Zealand. One study suggests that five years after its introduction in 1991 “New Zealand students [had] sorted themselves out by ethnic group and to a lesser extent by socio-economic status to a degree that cannot be explained by changes in ethnic and demographic residential patterns”.⁸¹⁷ The research has suggested “that much choice is motivated by considerations related to the school’s mix of students and that the system has produced both white and brown flight from unpopular schools”.⁸¹⁸ This led to the segregation

⁸¹² Ibid

⁸¹³ Shore, C. and Wright, S. (2000) ‘Coercive Accountability: the Rise of Audit Culture in Higher Education’. In M. Strathern (ed) *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics, and the Academy*. London; New York: Routledge: 62.

⁸¹⁴ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 246

⁸¹⁵ See Ball, S. (2003) ‘The Risks of Social Reproduction: The Middle Class and the Education Market’. *London Review of Education* 1 (No.3).

⁸¹⁶ See for example: Waslander, S and Thrupp, M (1997) ‘Choice, Competition, and Segregation: An Empirical Analysis of a New Zealand Secondary School Market’. In A. Halsey, et al (eds.) *Education: Culture, Economy, and Society*. Oxford, Oxford University Press; Lauder, H., Hughes, D., Watson, S. et al (1999) *Trading in Futures: Why Markets in Education Don't Work*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press; Fiske, B. and Ladd, H. (2000) op.cit.

⁸¹⁷ Fiske, B. and Ladd, H. (2000) op.cit: 9

⁸¹⁸ Ibid

of schooling by ethnicity and socio-economic status because, while they were not the only ones to exercise their choice to exit such schools, “[p]akeha families [were] more aggressive in taking advantage of their new option”.⁸¹⁹ ‘White flight’ resulted in the increasing concentration of ethnic minorities in low decile schools. This shift exacerbated the existing disadvantage of poor schools and poor (mostly brown) students in a context where racialised poverty had increased, schooling had taken on heightened economic significance and the state had retreated from responsibility for addressing inequity in schooling.

At the same time, because the capacity to choose is mediated by material, cultural and social capital, the introduction of parental choice intensified the advantages of particular fractions of the (largely Pakeha) middle class. The research has pointed to the correlation between the concentration of high socio-economic families and high decile schools and shown that “even after they [controlled] for student achievement the possibility that a student will be accepted for a high decile school is higher for high socioeconomic students than for low socioeconomic students”.⁸²⁰ Effectively, parent choice policy has enabled the emergence of a ‘schoolocracy’, so that “[w]hat began as a system of parental choice has become for all practical purposes, a system of school choice”.⁸²¹ Because they are oversubscribed such schools are able to select which students they enrol and are, thus, insulated from competition in the school ‘market’. And evidence has suggested, as I noted above, that a combination of school and parental choice has enabled an alliance between elite schools and some fractions of the middle class.

For the rest, however, the introduction of parental choice has intensified the necessity for schools to compete with (against) each other for able students. The increased emphasis on examination results, as the sole measure of the ‘successful’ school, places pressure on them to enrol the most academically competent students possible in order to maintain or elevate their reputation as a ‘good’ school and enhance their competitiveness. Some of the British literature has suggested the introduction of education quasi markets has changed what schools regard as the ‘desirable’ student, resulting with rising rates of achievement for (some) girls in their valorization and commodification.⁸²² Whether or not this is case here, as I argue in next chapter, the intensification of both positional competition in the labour market

⁸¹⁹ Ibid: 189

⁸²⁰ Ibid: 209

⁸²¹ Ibid: 222

⁸²² Ball, S. and Gewirtz, S. (1997) ‘Girls in the Education Market: Choice, Competition and Complexity’. *Gender and Education* 9 (No.2): 220.

and competition within and between schools has contributed to parental anxiety about the educational achievement of (middle class) boys.

Concluding remarks

Educational restructuring was underpinned by a new dual conceptualization of education.⁸²³ In the first instance, it was expected to produce entrepreneurial and competitive individuals in multiple educational sites. All were considered necessary, in one way or another, to the creation of a competitive economy. Secondly, the (enduring) expectation of a relationship between education and social mobility, which was a legacy of the postwar education settlement, was reworked so that responsibility for ensuring social mobility was devolved away from the state to schools, communities and families. Thus, the responsibility for ensuring the educational outcomes which could mediate social mobility and the management of risk (of failure) were privatized.

In this move the state effectively changed the rules of the game in education, though the impacts of these shifts materialized differently in different social groups. Restructuring exacerbated the existing educational and social disadvantage of Maori and Pacific Islands peoples in particular, moving access to the necessary rules of realization for educational success - material, cultural and social capital - significantly further out of their reach. It did so at a time when social mobility became inextricably bound up for most with educational achievement, and in the context of a radical retrenchment of the welfare state when participation in paid work, or preparation for it, became privileged as the *sole* condition for citizenship. Moreover, attempts to inscribe and universalize the entrepreneurial/consuming subject that underpinned restructuring, based on assumptions about the flexibility and manipulability of the human subject, negated class, cultural (and gender) differences in the constitution of subjectivity. It reified and attempted to embed, as the only legitimate mode of being, what remains historically linked to an essentially Western bourgeois (masculine) model/understanding of human behaviour. And it delimited what counts as respectability, in the post-colonial context, to the pursuit of 'enterprise' in various forms.

Educational restructuring reinforced the self-seeking, competitive behaviour (on behalf of their children) of some fractions of the middle class in order to ensure social reproduction. Their mobilization of the material and cultural resources available to them to 'get ahead of the game' was supported by the actions of the manager/principals of elite, high decile schools, concerned to maintain a particular constituency and their reputation in the

⁸²³ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit.

education market. Restructuring intensified such behaviour among others, undermining egalitarian impulses within the liberal middle class by exacerbating anxiety about their children's future, and it engendered a more intense 'prudentialism' amongst them also motivated by concerns about social reproduction. Whatever the ambivalence of some families around the social effects of educational markets, the imperative to put their children first was reinforced by the re-legitimation and re-moralisation of competitive individualism, on the one hand, and embedded cultural understandings about what constituted good family practice on the other.

Contextual factors mediate the way markets operate as well, and "market behaviour can only be understood in terms of the specific cultural contexts in which markets are located and the practices of cooperation and collusion which emerge in those contexts".⁸²⁴ What I argued in Chapter One, and want to reiterate here, is that the logic of competitive individualism was already quite deeply inscribed in Pakeha national identity. It was profoundly embedded in the notion of 'getting ahead' that underpinned the expectation of social mobility the nation was built upon, and which has served as (an often unconscious) mantra for many New Zealanders since colonization. The emphasis on family (and self) responsibility that is central to neoliberalism appealed to an extant 'collective commonsense' about family and respectability that has its roots in social and state formation during settlement. The 'new' responsibilised and entrepreneurial subjectivities the state hoped to engender through its recontextualisation of neoliberal and managerialist discourses and practices in education are, thus, not antithetical to historically constituted and culturally embedded models of responsibility and respectability already embedded in and embodied by the middle classes.

It has been suggested that attempts to produce an 'enterprise culture' are "interwoven with a new mobilization of the family as a category for government" and that education has become a key site for the identification and surveillance of children who are 'at risk' of exclusion from that culture.⁸²⁵ As I have illustrated in earlier chapters the role of education in identifying and scrutinizing 'problem' children and their families is not new. In the next two chapters I suggest that the underachieving boy is the latest in a long line of problematic subjectivities that have, along with their families, come under regulation by the state. In Chapter Eight I map and critically analyse emergent discourses about the so-called problem of boys' educational underachievement, that were, I suggest, partly a product of the complex internal

⁸²⁴ Waslander, S and Thrupp, M (1997) op.cit: 439

⁸²⁵ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 112

and external shifts I have described above. I focus in particular upon media and educational discourses.

Chapter Eight

Debates? What Debates? Mapping the educational and media discourses about the 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement in New Zealand

Introduction

The economic restructuring and broad socio-political shifts of the 1980s contributed significantly to the emergence of what some commentators have characterised as a “globalized moral panic” about boys and education in the 1990s.⁸²⁶ Rather than simply reflecting a generalised anxiety about their schooling, however, discursive constructions of the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement were underpinned by various concerns about different groups of boys.⁸²⁷ While the framing of the ‘problem’ differed within and between national contexts, three particular discursive constructions seemed to predominate internationally.⁸²⁸ The first, the “poor boys” discourse, constructed boys as a unitary group by virtue of their ‘shared’ masculinity and the victims of educational and social feminisation. Entwined with this construction, the “boys will be boys” discourse attributed boys’ ‘failure’ at school to certain of their ‘natural’ behaviours. The “failing schools failing boys” discourse blamed boys’ educational under-achievement on poor school management and poor performance in the educational marketplace. As I will show, New Zealand was no exception to this international trend. Here, as elsewhere, the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement served as a proxy for multiple anxieties about particular groups of boys.

The framing of public issues, like concerns about boys and education, is not neutral of course. Particular discourses will prevail at different times, and how they are framed will reflect the dominance of certain values and certain interests. Thus, “we need to read and understand these discourses and the research and the strategies that are part of them in terms of a “taken-for-grantedness” that hides the politics of what is being taken up and *whose* definitions are being taken up”.⁸²⁹ In my analysis of media and educational discourses in this chapter, and ERO reports on boys in the next, I point up the *strategic* mobilisation of common themes. In

⁸²⁶ Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., and Maw, J. (eds) (1998) *Failing Boys? Issues in Gender in Gender Achievement*. Buckingham: Open University Press: 3.

⁸²⁷ See: McDowell, L (2002a) ‘Transitions to Work: Masculine Identities, Youth Inequality and Labour Market Change’. *Gender, Place and Culture* 9 (No.1): 39-59; McDowell, L. (2002b) ‘Masculine Discourses and Dissonances: Strutting ‘Lads’, Protest Masculinity, and Domestic Responsibility’. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20: 97-119.

⁸²⁸ Epstein et al (1998) op.cit: 6

⁸²⁹ Yates, L. (1997) ‘Gender Equity and the Boys Debate: What sort of challenge is it?’ *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 18 (No.3): 339-340, original emphasis.

each discursive domain evidence of a gender gap in education was mobilised to construct boys as the 'new educationally disadvantaged', and the problem conceptualised partly as one *of and for* education.

There are important differences, however, in the ideological work that framing does. The media and educational discourses I discuss below construct their claims about an emerging 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement in terms of the feminisation of school *and* some families, drawing upon and reinscribing traditional gender (and racial) stereotypes and emphasising the impacts of social change on boys in general. Over time these discursive constructions of the problem took on crisis proportions. As I show in Chapter 9 the ERO reports echo and reinforce this sense of crisis, however they unequivocally position schools and teachers as both a central part of the problem and absolutely responsible for its resolution.

In this chapter I contextualise the emergence of concerns about boys and education in New Zealand with the 'discovery' (discursive production), in 1997, of a gender gap in achievement that favoured girls. I argue that from this gap the research extrapolated a generalised problem of boys' educational underachievement, generating a discursive construction of boys as the 'new disadvantaged' in education. I problematise this interpretive move, arguing that it depends among other things upon the homogenisation of boys as a unitary group based upon an understanding of masculinity that is stereotypical, uni-dimensional and conceptually impoverished. This interpretation attributes boys' underachievement to a combination of 'gender politics' and teachers' poor classroom management skills, implying girls' superior achievement to boys at school is new. This suggests a decline in boys' performance and changes in their behaviour at school. I question the assumption that gender gaps in education which favour girls are a new phenomenon. I point to evidence of gender differences in educational achievement which shows a discernable pattern of girls' higher achievement at different levels of schooling and in different subjects.

I show how media stories and particular educational discourses invoked a discursive construction of the problem of boys' educational underachievement that mainly conceptualised boys as victims of a feminised education system and often feminised sole parent families. I argue that these discourses were mutually constitutive and that multiple concerns about different groups of boys underpinned their anxiety about boys and schooling. On the one hand, fears about feminization, I would argue, reflected a deeper anxiety about threats to 'masculinity in general' generated by economic restructuring and social shifts

which appeared to centre and privilege women, or at least 'the feminine'. While not particular to New Zealand, I suggest concerns about 'the feminisation of post-modernity' were exacerbated by deeply embedded gender norms in this society. An important element of which was an apparently racially neutral male 'egalitarianism'. As I have suggested elsewhere in the thesis this has contributed to the 'unspeakability' of issues social class, particularly with regard to education. The mutuality of these discourses and the shared meanings about boys, masculinity and education they reproduced are a product of enduring elements of an historically formed, deeply embedded gendered, racialised and class-based culture in this society. Not least of these historical patterns is the location of boys as the central subjects of education that continues to inform gendered discourses, patterns and practices at school in one way or another.

Assumptions about gender differences were one element of the emphasis on boys' behaviour as an explanatory mechanism for their underachievement in these discursive constructions. I suggest, however, that behavioural deficit explanations are multidimensional, with class and ethnic specificities that reflect contemporary concerns about different groups of boys in the society. They also bear traces of and are bound up with historically produced discourses about class, race and education. I demonstrate for example that behaviour deficit explanations were mobilised, implicitly, to rationalise the superior performance of *some* middle class girls to that of *some* middle class boys. Concerns about boys' behaviour also had a racialised dimension which mediated anxiety about the potential threat to social order that underachieving, socially and economically disadvantaged Maori and Pacific Island boys were perceived to represent. These fears, I argue, resonate with the historical concerns amongst the middle classes about white, working class masculinity in the colony that I discussed in Chapter 4. Then, as now, 'poor' boys were the focus of intense social and state anxiety though they were conceptualised mainly as villains not victims, and the problem was their character not their poverty. And, then as now, their location in problem families was emphasised. Over time discourses about class-based deviance have been replaced by 'theories' of cultural deficit, and it is these which implicitly underpin assumptions about the ability and behaviour of Maori and Pacific Island boys.

Finally, I suggest that the neoliberalisation of schooling also mediated how educators perceived and constructed the problem of boys' educational underachievement. I argue that the combined pressures of the school 'market' and state expectations of 'responsibilised' teachers and self-managing schools contributed to their tendency to oversimplified explanations of the problem and simplistic strategies to address them. I develop this argument further in Chapter Nine.

Section one: (Re)constructing boys as the ‘new disadvantaged’

In 1997 David Fergusson and John Horwood, researchers at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, argued that “the traditional educational disadvantage shown by females has largely disappeared and has been replaced by an emerging male disadvantage”.⁸³⁰ They based this claim upon the findings of a Ministry of Education report and the results of their own research. The Ministry report showed higher rates of female participation and achievement in Secondary School examinations, higher rates of retention among girls in the sixth and seventh form and fewer girls than boys leaving school without qualifications.⁸³¹ Fergusson and Horwood measured the educational performance of over one thousand Christchurch children from school entry to exit with a series of standardised tests, teacher ratings of performance and learning outcomes. They found that boys performed on average less well than girls and concluded that gender differences in classroom behaviour rather than cognitive differences played a significant role in boy’s educational under-achievement. Their central proposition was that

gender differences in educational achievement largely reflect gender differences in classroom behaviour with males being more prone to disruptive, distractible and inattentive behaviours that impair learning opportunities and act to impede educational achievement.⁸³²

In their view, boys’ behaviour at school “conspire[d] to place [them] at an educational disadvantage”.⁸³³ Moreover, they argued that a “pervasive emphasis” on impediments in the education of girls since the 1980s was “likely to have obscured and rendered invisible an emerging male disadvantage”.⁸³⁴ While acknowledging that the gender gap in education was small, they suggested that there might be a “need for explicit policies that focus[ed] on males and attempt[ed] to reduce male educational disadvantage”.⁸³⁵ Rather than these policies being framed by a “politics of gender” though, Fergusson and Horwood argued that because what was at issue for boys was behaviour policy change should focus on the development of “practical classroom management practices”.⁸³⁶

⁸³⁰ Fergusson, D. and Horwood, J. (1997) Gender Difference in Educational Achievement in a New Zealand Birth Cohort’. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 32 (No.1): 83.

⁸³¹ Ibid: 84

⁸³² Ibid

⁸³³ Ibid: 93

⁸³⁴ Ibid

⁸³⁵ Ibid: 94

⁸³⁶ Ibid

The interpretative leap they make here is quite breathtaking. In the first instance, their argument about the emergence of broad-based male educational disadvantage pivots on the existence of what they readily admit is a minor difference in achievement between girls and boys, as unitary groups. And those findings partially depend upon aggregated data which conceals the significant underachievement of Maori and Pacific Island boys compared to other boys. As well as test and examination results, this data includes teacher ratings of boys' educational performance and their behaviours in the classroom. British research has shown that teachers' perceptions of student ability and behaviour were mediated by an internalised model of the 'ideal' pupil which was underpinned by an unconscious class bias.⁸³⁷ More recent research here, which focused on Pakeha and Pacific Island girls' schooling, illustrated how class and cultural bias were entwined and worked together to mediate teachers' different perceptions about girls' ability and behaviours at school.⁸³⁸

Teachers' presumptions about ability also have a gendered dimension that I would argue is historically informed. As I noted in Chapter 2, from its inception education in the colony was differentiated by gender, race and class. That differentiation was based upon assumptions of natural, hierarchically organised difference, and it positioned middle white, class boys as the central subjects of education based upon ideas about their 'naturally endowed' intellectual superiority to Maori boys and *all* girls. Assumptions about gender and intelligence remain deeply embedded, and inflect how teachers and others perceive gender differences in achievement.⁸³⁹ The taken-for grantedness of such ideas may well underpin Fergusson and Horwood's insistence that girls' superior achievement is the result of a behaviour deficit in boys (understood in terms of the natural attributes of masculinity) which is poorly managed in classrooms, rather than reflecting cognitive differences between boys and girls. This kind of reading 'makes sense' because girls' cognitive superiority is, at some level, 'unthinkable' in this gendered culture.

⁸³⁷ Keddie, N. (1971) 'Classroom Knowledge'. In Young, M. (ed) *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Collier Young.

⁸³⁸ Jones, A. (1991b) *At School I've Got a Chance: Culture/Privilege: Pacific Islands and Pakeha Girls at School*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

⁸³⁹ McDonald, G. (1992) 'Are Girls Smarter Than Boys?'. In S. Middleton and A. Jones (eds) *Women and Education in Aotearoa 2*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.

I would suggest another layer of differentiation may operate here as well, and that the behaviour deficit account has a class-specific dimension. That is, it is mobilised to 'explain' differences between middle class boys and middle class girls, since it is the achievement rates of these girls that challenge the long established pattern of male, middle class dominance at school. Not only does this upset the 'natural gender order', which is anxiety provoking enough, in the context of economic 'feminisation' and intensified positional competition within the middle classes it is presumed to reflect male middle class 'disadvantage'.⁸⁴⁰ Behavioural deficit explanations maintain taken-for-granted ideas about the intellectual superiority of middle class boys, and assuage anxiety about their 'disadvantage' by implying it can be reversed by removing 'gender politics' from schooling and managing boys' classroom behaviours more effectively. The other significant dimension that underpins behavioural explanations of boys' educational underachievement is ethnic. Maori and Pasifika boys' substantial underachievement and their overrepresentation in 'risk' categories, I would argue, is understood in terms of equally embedded ideas about behaviour and ability underpinned by cultural deficit theories. I come back to this point later in the chapter.

Fergusson and Horwood's utilisation of aggregated statistics supports what seems to be an underlying assumption that gender differences in education in favour of girls are entirely new (something they attribute to the influence of 'gender politics', if not liberal educational feminists per se), and by implication that boys' rates of achievement are declining. While there is no doubt that liberal educational feminism has contributed significantly to higher levels of achievement for middle class girls' in particular, achievement levels for New Zealand students have risen overall.⁸⁴¹ Research has shown no decline in male achievement, and there is evidence of existing differences between girls and boys since the late 1980s.⁸⁴² Moreover as I illustrated in Chapter Four, gender differences in educational achievement in favour of girls at particular levels of education and in certain subjects can be traced back to the 19th century.

Concerns about the behaviour of boys at school are nothing new either. Indeed there are striking similarities between the depiction of boys in classrooms mobilised in 20th century

⁸⁴⁰ Yates, L. (1997) op.cit: 343

⁸⁴¹ Alton-Lee, A. and Praat, A. (2000) *Explaining and Addressing Gender Differences in the New Zealand Compulsory School Sector: A Literature Review*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

⁸⁴² Praat, A. (1999) *Gender differences in achievement and participation in the compulsory school sector: A review of information held by the Ministry of Education, 1986-1997*. Wellington: Research Division, Ministry of Education.

discourses about the so-called problem of boys' educational underachievement and those that underpinned the comments of Victorian educationalists.⁸⁴³ Interestingly, given the century that separates them, both these depictions invoke and problematise virtually identical behaviours which, I would argue, reflect assumptions about the immutable essence of masculinity; in both moments it is assumed that 'boys will be boys'. As I have pointed out in earlier chapters, however, particular groups of boys have been singled out in different historical moments as the subjects of public anxiety about their behaviours in the society at large. As a rule, working class boys have been the focus of that attention and the overriding pattern in these moments has their discursive identity as 'villains' (see Chapters Four and Five).

What is significantly different in the late 20th century is that this *overt*, class based differentiation between boys disappears. In contemporary discursive constructions of the problem of boys' educational underachievement, they are overwhelmingly constituted as 'victims'. Fergusson and Horwood's paper marks the emergence of this discursive shift in New Zealand. Their conceptualisation of boys' as the new educationally disadvantaged pivots on the homogenisation of boys as a unitary group which, I argue later, obscures not only significant differences between boys in terms of educational achievement but the *multiplicity* of concerns about them. Some of these anxieties have subtle resonances with the past and some are absolutely contextual. Their construction as victims, however, is reinforced by the assumption that higher rates of achievement for (some) girls is evidence of a significant change in boys' performance (and, by implication, in their behaviour) at school which I have demonstrated are spurious. Such an assumption, I argue, enables a highly problematic construction of boys as the new disadvantaged in education. This pivots, in turn, on their constitution as an homogeneous group and reinforces claims about their 'victimhood'. And at its core are concerns *for* and *about* 'masculinity'. Below I illustrate how this conceptualisation has predominated in media and educational discourses about boys and education in New Zealand since the late 1990s.

Section Two: The 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement: media stories

The next two sections critically examine media representations and particular educational discourses about the so-called problem of boys' educational underachievement through the

⁸⁴³ *AJHR*, 1883, E- 1B. Concerns about boys' behaviour are evident in the 1883 submission to the Minister of Education by William Taylor, School Inspector of the Dunedin District. Commenting on the subject of discipline Taylor complained that "the boys especially do not manifest a good spirit. They are disrespectful, are given to talking and idling away their time and become sullen when reproved" (p. 35).

late 1990s and into the early 2000s. I argue that these were mutually constitutive and together produced a discursive construction of boys as an homogeneous group by virtue of their 'shared' masculinity, and as 'victims' of a feminised education system (and often of female dominated families) within which their specific needs as boys were neither recognised nor addressed. Boys' underachievement was thus constituted as the result of natural, biologically determined behaviours and its causation was externalised in the feminisation argument. I suggest, however, that this construction was underpinned by different anxieties about different groups of boys. These concerns were mediated, on one hand, by the impacts of economic and educational restructuring and social change in the preceding decade. They also bore subtle traces of historically produced discourses about gender, race, class and education that I have discussed in this thesis and noted above.

Following the publication of the Fergusson and Horwood report, concerns about the emergence of an apparent problem of boys' educational underachievement began to draw media attention. An article published in the *Listener* took up the theme of the gender gap in educational achievement, canvassing the views of several educationalists in an attempt at 'in-depth' reporting.⁸⁴⁴ Roy Nash pointed out that his research in 1991 showed quite clearly that girls were outperforming boys. The biggest gap in achievement was in English with a disparity of "five or six marks between the average boy and average girl in School Certificate".⁸⁴⁵ While boys did marginally better than girls in School Certificate maths, girls had overtaken them by the sixth form. This pattern, he argued, was largely due to girls' success in the internal assessment used at this level. The problem, from his perspective, was that "the better girls [did] in school, the more gender-disloyal it seem[ed] to some boys to do well".⁸⁴⁶

Nash explained away girls' higher achievement here by implying that it was their 'style of learning', that is, the consistent application over time that is required to do well in internal assessment rather than their intellectual superiority to boys which was key to their success. Like the research discussed above, he attributed something other than girls' intellect to their higher achievement, consciously or not. As I indicate below, this kind of explanation was central to discursive constructions of the 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement in the media, teachers' 'talk', and the ERO reports. As I have already noted, this reflects deeply embedded beliefs about the gendering of intellect which has particular historical resonance

⁸⁴⁴ *New Zealand Listener*, 'Girls on Top' January 17, 1998.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid*: 18

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid*

in a society more strongly differentiated by gender than some. Moreover, Nash appeared to take for granted boys' investment in and policing of a model of masculinity in which academic success is portrayed as 'feminine' and denigrated accordingly. Rather than problematising this model, he implied boys were the 'victims' of girls' success.

This discursive construction of boys as victims also underpinned the explanation Robert Zordan, Headmaster of Christ's College, gave of boys' educational underachievement, although in contrast to Nash he expresses concerns about the "narrow gender stereotypes" boys attempt to fit into. He claimed stereotypes of masculinity encourage boys to be "dominant, independent, aggressive, fearless and unemotional", appearing critical of these behaviours and their outcome for boys.⁸⁴⁷ He went on, however, to argue that the problem was the mismatch between these behaviours and "school norms of obedience, conformity and passivity", rather than the model of masculinity they represent.⁸⁴⁸ Thus he invoked arguments about the feminisation of education, implicitly on one hand by situating the 'ideal' student as female, and explicitly on the other when he argued that it had been the intense focus on girls in education which has mediated their success to the detriment of boys.

Educational feminisation arguments are, I would argue, inextricably bound up with a critique of the liberal feminist educational initiatives of the 80s and early 90s that mostly operates as a subtext in media stories and 'teachers' 'talk', though at times it is quite explicit. Ironically, given this implicit criticism, these same initiatives were mobilised by Zordan when he argued that the key to boys' (renewed?) success at school was more research and resources devoted to understanding and addressing educational issues specific to boys, and the presence of more male role models at school.

Claims about feminisation, however, extend beyond schooling into the society in this article. Zordon suggested that the mismatch between socially produced stereotypes of masculinity and expectations of boys at school may have been exacerbated by feminisation of the family. At issue here are sole parent families in New Zealand which, according to Zordon, "has the second-highest percentage of single parent families; most without a father".⁸⁴⁹ Concerns about the effects on boys of female headed sole-parenting, I argue, reflect a deeper social anxiety about the 'breakdown' of the nuclear family which has traditionally

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid: 19

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid: 21

been conceived as a key site for the socialisation and social control of the young, especially males. As I have shown in this thesis periodic anxiety about deviant and dysfunctional families has a long history here, with a shift over time from ideas about class-based deficit to the dominance of cultural deficit theories. Given this history and assumptions about the predominance of Maori sole parent families in the context of ongoing public discourses about the problem of 'benefit dependency',⁸⁵⁰ I would suggest anxiety about family feminisation had a racialised dimension as well as a gendered one.

The point I want to make here is that the arguments about feminisation that became a central theme in both media discourses and teachers 'talk' during this period ignored an embedded gender division of labour which continues to mediate occupational segregation on the one hand, and gender relations and family dynamics on the other. Nothing was made, for example, of the association of teaching with caring and thus its perception as 'women's work'. Overlooked, as well, was how professions dominated by women have historically tended to be lower both in remuneration and status than those in which men predominate. That these factors might influence men's perception of teaching was disregarded. So too was the long history of women's prevalence in teaching at particular levels and in particular subject areas here, and the relationship of this pattern to the formation of gendered culture.⁸⁵¹

Continuity in occupational segregation by gender reflects the entrenched nature of similar patterns within the nuclear family, which claims about family feminisation discount. These arguments tend to problematise the capacity of female solo parents to raise sons in the absence of their fathers, overlooking an historical pattern of gender roles within nuclear families which centred 'family' women and 'working' men. Bound up with gender identity these roles continue to demarcate labour within families, even in the context of greater

⁸⁵⁰ Shirley, I., Koopman-Boyden, P., Pool, I. and St. John, S. (1997) 'Family Change and Family Policies: New Zealand'. In S. Kamerman and A. Kahn (eds) *Family Change and Family Policies in Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁸⁵¹ See Fry, R. (1985) *It's Different for Daughters: A History of the Curriculum for Girls in New Zealand Schools, 1900-1975*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research: 24.

labour market participation by mothers.⁸⁵² Thus, parenting boys and girls remains ‘women’s work’ in a culture where “men are [still often] absentee parents and husbands”.⁸⁵³

The *Listener* article attempted some level of critical engagement with the topic of boys’ achievement at school, perhaps in the interests of ‘investigative journalism’. Claims about educational feminisation which suggested that the gender of the teacher made a difference to boys’ performance at school, for example, were criticised by one commentator who argued that research on reading in New Zealand showed that teachers’ gender had little significance in outcomes for boys and girls. What was crucial to the achievement of both boys and girls was the ability of the teacher, not their gender. And, in an attempt to contextualise the gender gap more broadly, researcher Marilyn Stephen also pointed out that educational disparities between boys and girls did not result in a similar disparity in girls’ favour in the labour market.

This critical element was notably absent from most accounts of - what had become - the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational under-achievement which intermittently appeared in the print media between 1999 and 2002. Print media articles tended to be short pieces which reinforced boys’ constitution as the ‘new disadvantaged,’ echoing and often magnifying the sense of ‘crisis’ promulgated by the mostly male commentators whose opinions were sought. These actors were mainly teachers, principals or other educational ‘experts’, and their viewpoints reflected the tendency to discursively construct boys as ‘victims’ and blame their problems on educational and family feminisation that I noted above. And, like the commentators discussed above, they drew upon and mobilised culturally produced, ingrained assumptions of a biologically determined, essentialised masculinity shared by all boys irrespective of ethnicity, class or other differences.

At times the reporting was blatantly emotive, unequivocally reinforcing boys’ victim-hood. One article, for example, began with the strident claim by its author Theresa Garner that “boys [were] being *robbed* of their futures in the nation’s classrooms”.⁸⁵⁴ This piece was produced the day after the release of the Education Review Office report on boys, which I discuss in the next chapter. It echoed the report’s sense of crisis, emphasising ERO’s claims

⁸⁵² Callister, P. (2005) *The Changing Gender Distribution of Paid and Unpaid Work in New Zealand*: Treasury Working Paper 05/07, June 2005.

⁸⁵³ James, B. and Saville-Smith, K. (1994) *Gender, Culture and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 49.

⁸⁵⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, July 30, 1999, my emphasis.

that boys' underachievement had serious social and economic implications for boys and the nation. The article also pointed to concerns about educational feminisation.

Another article the following day highlighted claims amongst educationalists about feminisation. It pointed to the comparatively low numbers of male teachers which was explained by the male principal of one school in terms of the feminisation of 'educational methodology'. He claimed that "modern teaching strategies did not appeal to men because they required multi-tasking and thought patterns inherent in women".⁸⁵⁵ The same piece noted concern among female teachers about the "55, 000 boys growing up in households without a male role model, and being taught only by women".⁸⁵⁶ The implication here was that neither site provided boys with models which enabled the formation an appropriate masculine identity because they were dominated by women. I critique feminisation arguments below.

In 2000 the publication of a Ministry of Education report on gender and achievement in the compulsory schooling sector again drew media attention to concerns about boys and schooling.⁸⁵⁷ Commissioned by the Ministry in response to concern amongst policy makers and practitioners about boys and education, the review's purpose was to examine the research literature on disparities in education by gender and ethnicity over the decade between 1989 and 1999. It focused upon the curriculum and was intended to serve as a resource for teachers in the development of "an informed and research-based dialogue around issues of gender, identity and behaviour". The review found that gender gaps differed by curriculum subject, with girls doing better in some subjects than boys and vice versa. And they noted that some of these patterns, particularly girls' higher achievement in literacy, had been consistent for an extended period of time rather than being an emergent trend.⁸⁵⁸ The review also found that school decile level mediated gender gaps, drawing on ERO's statistics to point to "an 8.34 percent gender gap favouring girls between girls' and boys' School Certificate Grades of B or higher in Decile 10 schools, and a gender gap of 2.04 percent favouring boys".⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, July 31, 1999.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid

⁸⁵⁷ Alton-Lee and Praat (2000) op.cit.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid: see p. 157

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid: 22

Differences between girls and boys were explained utilising a range of feminist, poststructuralist and masculinities theories. Drawing on this literature, the authors argued that the curriculum itself was implicitly gendered with some subjects like mathematics and the 'hard' sciences considered 'masculine' and others, like English, considered 'feminine'. They suggested that in the context of a highly gendered culture such assumptions powerfully influenced girls' and boys' (gender appropriate) subject choices. For boys in particular, they argued, these factors worked together to mediate their underachievement compared to girls in compulsory subjects they considered feminine.⁸⁶⁰

Importantly, the review highlighted considerably wider disparities in educational achievement among boys by social class and ethnicity than between boys and girls. When gender gaps measured by the National Education Monitoring Project were compared to disparities in achievement by school decile and ethnicity, it was found that

... school decile level was related to the largest gaps in performance ... Significant differences by ethnicity were the next greatest level of disparity, and gender differences were the least evident of the three variables. The boys who are doing particularly badly are Maori, Pacific and Pakeha boys attending low decile schools.⁸⁶¹

School decile also mediated significant differences in girls' achievement, with poorer outcomes for Maori, Pacific and Pakeha girls attending low decile schools than others.⁸⁶² Given that school deciles correlate closely with socio-economic status it is clear that in New Zealand social class and ethnicity plays a greater role in mediating educational achievement than gender. As I suggest below, the Alton-Lee and Praat report reflected the state's position on disparities in education which from 2000 to the present has emphasised ethnic rather than gendered underachievement as its key priority.

Media response to this publication varied from neutral to scathing. In one *New Zealand Herald* article written by education reporter Rebecca Walsh, the possibility was raised that it might be less than objective given its explicit use of feminist theorising to explain gender differences in education. This critique was supported by an interview with a male secondary

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid: 301

⁸⁶¹ Ibid

⁸⁶² Ibid

teacher, who argued that the report “had taken a ‘post-feminist slant’ on the issue”, ‘sweeping it under the carpet’.⁸⁶³ The review was described in a later article as “a strange document” which attempted to efface and substitute educational problems more amenable to the position of its authors, rather than address the ‘fact’ that boys are under-achieving.⁸⁶⁴ It was claimed that “[w]hen the other gender was a matter of concern it was up there with Polynesians and the poor for urgent educational remedies”.⁸⁶⁵

Here a more complex explanation of the gender gap and an attempt to put it into a broader perspective was rejected out of hand, not least because it was produced by feminists involved in education. I would argue the negative response to the review was also underpinned by deep discomfort about its emphasis on educational disparities by social class. As I have argued throughout this thesis class remains in many ways ‘unspeakable’ here, particularly in educational discourses, and thus its interplay with ethnicity and gender remains ‘invisible’. This silence underpins and enables the reproduction of (spurious) distinctions between cultural and gendered disadvantage that are implicit in the last comment above. As I argued in Chapter One the ‘unspeakability’ of class, and the ideological work that it performs, is reproduced and reinforced by the media. In this case the media privileged an antagonistic reading of the review, reinforcing the veracity of simplistic accounts amongst some educators which constructed boys as victims and pitted them against other ‘disadvantaged’ social groups.

The framing of these ‘stories’ is *partly* shaped by the structural operations of the print media and their constraints, as well as its (self-defined) role in the production of knowledge, information and ‘truth’ in the society. System’s theorist Niklas Luhmann (2000) argues that “whatever we know about our society ... we know through the media”.⁸⁶⁶ In his view, the mass media is a self-referential cognitive system that constructs an illusion of reality from selected knowledge shaped by the frames of other cognitive systems within the society.⁸⁶⁷ Reality is produced by the media “by means of sense-making”, and within that system it carries a dual meaning “as an operation that ... is observable, and as the reality of society and its world”.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶³ *New Zealand Herald*, July 7, 2000.

⁸⁶⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, July 15, 2000.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶⁶ Luhmann, N. (2000) *The Reality of the Mass Media: Cultural Memory in the Present*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press: 1.

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid*: 4

⁸⁶⁸ *Ibid*: 7-8

For Luhmann, the media functions autonomously creating rules of operation which are driven by its “chronic need for information”.⁸⁶⁹ Both the oversimplification and the agonistic representations of the issues I note above, he would argue, are a function of these processes (rather than necessarily reflecting any ideological investment in the reproduction of particular representations of the ‘truth’). If the media “serves society (itself included) with truths”, however, it is “only interested in things that are true under severely limiting conditions”.⁸⁷⁰ What counts as news must contain among other things: an element of surprise “intensified by a marked discontinuity”; some form of conflict; quantities or statistics which increase its information value (and, incidentally or not, the veracity of the account privileged); local relevance; some type of norm violation, and the event must be topical and allow for recursivity.⁸⁷¹

As I explained in Chapter One there are problems with Luhmann’s conceptualisation of the media, not least of which is his utter disregard of social power relations and how these mediate meaning making and what counts as knowledge. Nevertheless, I think the formula described above can be usefully applied to the media stories about the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement I have discussed. The print media privileged accounts that constructed the gender gap as something new and discontinuous with established patterns of (middle class) boys’ superior educational performance; it centred agonistic perspectives which put the interests of boys in conflict with those of girls; the gender gap in educational achievement was presented as statistical evidence of boys’ educational disadvantage; the focus was almost entirely upon the purported educational and social crisis of New Zealand boys (as a group); the gender gap violated at least two social norms, it contravened the ‘natural (gender) order’ and norms around fairness and the educational meritocracy; in a competitive educational and economic environment this ‘event’ was highly topical and, given embedded patterns of contestation over education and the heightened emphasis upon credentials in the context of a globalising ‘knowledge’ economy, recursivity was all but guaranteed.

Media stories ‘make sense’ because they both reflect and reinforce particular socio-culturally produced scripts about specific issues which are in turn underpinned by the dominance of

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid: 9

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid: 26

⁸⁷¹ Ibid: 28-33

some shared meanings about the society itself. Not all possible understandings are included, and amongst those that are represented not all carry equal weight. The media *is* selective and, as I have shown, that these stories privileged the opinions of some 'expert' commentators and not others is not incidental. What I want to suggest here, though, is that the kinds of explanations about the 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement which represented 'truth' and 'knowledge' in these accounts were not peculiar just to the teachers and principals canvassed by the media. Such views seemed to be shared more widely amongst those involved in the education of boys.

This was the case, I would argue, partly because of the embeddedness of ideas about gender, ethnicity and education and the reliance of those discourses upon the unspeakability of social class here all of which, bear traces of our colonial history. Anxiety about the problem of boys' educational underachievement amongst educators was also absolutely contextual. That is, multiple concerns about the schooling of different groups of boys were the product, as well, of the economic, educational and social changes of the preceding decade. These shifts, as I suggested in Chapter Seven, intensified parental and state pressure on schools and teachers in the context of credential inflation and middle class anxiety about positional competition on the one hand, and problems associated with social polarisation on the other.

Section Three: Teachers' 'talk'

While I cannot claim that the discursive constructions described above reflected the understandings of all those involved in educating boys in New Zealand, I will show that they prevailed among some of the educators who took part in a three day conference on boys' educational issues organised by the Manukau Institute of Technology in July 2000.⁸⁷² For these actors the proposition that there was a widespread problem of boys' underachievement in New Zealand was a given. And, like the commentators privileged by the media, they drew upon culturally produced, ingrained assumptions of a biologically determined, essentialised masculinity shared by all boys (irrespective of ethnicity, class or other differences) to argue boys' underachievement was caused by educational and family feminisation. Thus concerns about boys' schooling in this context continued to be entwined with, and amplified by, anxiety about the purported 'breakdown' of the nuclear family and the absence of fathers in boys' lives. Together these circumstances were taken, by some, as

⁸⁷² The conference was entitled From Awareness to Action: Meeting the Needs of Boys in Education.

representative of a 'masculinity crisis' for boys which, though inextricably tied to their 'underachievement', had broader social implications.

For one presenter, a primary school principal, schooling was not simply feminised it was feminist and the "feminist curriculum" had much to answer for.⁸⁷³ It had caused "boys to become confused and disenfranchised with [sic] school" because it ignored biological differences between the sexes and their effects on the learning styles of boys and girls.⁸⁷⁴ Instead, "in the interests of equality" boys and girls were educated "in identical ways, [and taught] they are as equal and capable as each other".⁸⁷⁵ Schools were failing boys, in his view, because they were "consistently inept when it [came] to providing a curriculum and pedagogy that [was] empathic to boys and their needs".⁸⁷⁶ He suggested this had wider implications because boys were in crisis socially as well as educationally, and that, "boys' plight [was] pandemic". If schools were part of the problem for boys they were also, as "pivotal site[s] for social change", in his view, an important mechanism for its solution. Thus curriculum reform would not only redress the problem of boys' educational underachievement it would provide them with the tools to be better and happier human beings.

Concerns about the educational and social alienation of boys underpinned another presenter's claim that they were the victims of institutional neglect and inefficiency, on the one hand, and the breakdown of the nuclear family on the other. In the first instance, she argued that her own research pointed to a gender gap in literacy evident since 1983. She suggested, however, that boys' educational problems had been neglected because, between the 80s and 90s, either gender was not considered "a significant indicator in performance", or (because of the influence of liberal educational feminism) a focus on boys "wasn't politically correct". Thus, she suggested, despite recognition of the gap during this period "boys' issues were not a ... priority".⁸⁷⁷

⁸⁷³ John Taylor-Smith (2000) What About The Boys?: A time to reengineer pedagogy and the curriculum. Unpublished conference paper presented at Awareness to Action: Meeting the Needs of Boys in Education. Manukau Institute of Technology, July 5, 6, 7 2000 (pages unnumbered).

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷⁷ Maureen Rutledge (2000) Teaching Boys, parenting sons, researching male issues in education: Some insights from working in these spheres over the past 20 years. Unpublished conference paper presented at Awareness to Action: Meeting the Needs of Boys in Education. Manukau Institute of Technology, July 5, 6, 7 2000 (pages unnumbered).

In her view the gender gap in literacy signified a problem of boys' educational underachievement that had existed for some time and which could, at least in part, also be attributed to broad social change. She was particularly concerned with the impact on boys of changes to the family, stressing the importance of adequate parenting for boys and arguing that it was "a crucial front for the wellbeing and development of boys".⁸⁷⁸ The implication here was that family breakdown was particularly problematic for boys because of the "necessity to raise [them] in two parent families".⁸⁷⁹ Other changes had also negatively impacted upon boys as well in her view. Their poorer literacy, she argued, was partly the result of the replacement of books by television in modern society, and a subsequent decline in the interactive and social life of families. For Rutledge, the responsibility to resolve boys' problems lay both with the (two parent, heterosexual) family, and educators who had "a significant role to play in addressing the needs and problems of boys", and, she argued, "awareness and action must continue and increase on several key fronts if the situation for boys is to change".⁸⁸⁰

Both of these accounts were unequivocal; boys as a group were in crisis and feminised and feminist education was partly responsible for the problem. In their view schooling also, however, had a key role to play in its resolution. Underpinning their shared perception that schools can and should resolve equity issues, I would argue, are entwined assumptions about an educational meritocracy on the one and schooling's socialising role on the other. As I've suggested in earlier chapters, ideas about educational meritocracy are entrenched in New Zealand and what these commentators perceived as an unfair bias in schools towards girls to the disadvantage of boys contravenes its rules of operation. As well, their comments reflect embedded liberal perceptions that school has an important humanising and socialising role to play in the society, particularly for (problem) boys and particularly in the absence of an 'appropriate' family life. As I have shown in this thesis, such notions have a long history here. I argue in the next chapter that in the context of self-managing schools and 'responsibilised' teaching, these ideas were not only reinforced they were mobilised by ERO to regulate and control schools and teachers.

Not all the educationalists present at the conference shared the view that schooling could address the problems faced by boys, and some challenged prevailing conceptions about the gender gap. The keynote speaker, Stuart Middleton, argued that "the disparate levels of achievement between boys and girls is neither new nor surprising".⁸⁸¹ He pointed out that it

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸⁸¹ Stuart Middleton (2000) Boys Drifting Without an Anchor. Unpublished conference paper presented at Awareness to Action: Meeting the Needs of Boys in Education. Manukau Institute of

was quite possible that “boys’ achievement has not declined ... [and that] the seeming trend downwards is caused as much by [the] fact that girls are more adequately and proportionately represented at all levels of academic achievement”.⁸⁸²

Nevertheless, Middleton claimed if “they [were] under-represented in the statistics of academic achievement, boys [were] disproportionately and overly represented in the statistics of juvenile crime, youth mental health problems, alcohol and substance abuse and so on”.⁸⁸³ In his view, because the breadth of issues for boys were “much wider than schools [they were] in some ways well beyond the ability of schools to change on their own”.⁸⁸⁴ Thus school-based strategies, such as the introduction of male role models and curriculum change, were not necessarily useful or effective means to address their social crisis. The crucial problems for boys, he suggested, were the socially dominant model (hegemonic) models of masculinity, and the culturally produced images of them that permeated the wider society and mediated how boys perceived themselves. He argued that “boys are being seriously affected by the images of masculinity and maleness that surround them. In the absence of a set of values agreed on and promoted by the community, these images are influential and damaging”.⁸⁸⁵

Middleton rightly criticised a gendered culture which privileges very narrow masculine stereotypes which boys have to draw from to form their identities. And his comments, I think, point to a fairly porous boundary between hegemonic (stereotypical) and problematic (anti-social) masculinities that are enacted here. He seemed to imply however that all boys were equally ‘at-risk’, re-invoking a discursive construction of them as an homogeneous group and ‘victims’ albeit of a macho culture rather than a feminised and feminist education system. In doing so he too bracketed out differences of class, ethnicity and sexuality that mediate the performance of hegemonic (and problematic) masculinities among boys.⁸⁸⁶ This was probably partly a strategic move motivated by a concern not to reproduce the negative cultural stereotypes that continue to prevail here. Effectively, though, it obscured the overrepresentation of particular groups of boys in the risk categories he cited and, therefore,

Technology , July 5, 6, 7 2000 (pages unnumbered). Middleton at the time was the Director of Secondary Teacher Education and Information Technology Services at the Auckland College of Education.

⁸⁸² Ibid

⁸⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁸⁶ See for example; Connell, R. W. (1995) *Masculinities*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin: 111.

glossed over how differences among boys affect the impact of the gendered culture upon them.⁸⁸⁷

Section Four: Contextualising and deconstructing the discourses of boys' disadvantage: the critical literature

As I have noted in Chapter Seven concerns about boys, schooling and masculinity emerged against a backdrop of radical economic and political change that exacerbated youth unemployment, eroded working class male employment, and intensified positional competition for educational credentials and professional occupations within the middle classes. At the same time social shifts, influenced in part by second wave feminism, mediated an apparent transformation of gender relations challenging traditional masculine stereotypes in particular. In the international context these factors generated widespread concern about their impact on working class boys and men though, as I noted above, this specific focus was submerged in discursive constructions about social and educational crises for boys 'in general'.

The extensive body of critical feminist and pro-feminist work, generated mainly in the United Kingdom and Australia that developed in response to these claims have problematised them on multiple grounds.⁸⁸⁸ Connell (1993), for example, has argued that concerns about the gender gap are exaggerated and claims that schooling disadvantaged boys are spurious given that historically schools were established for boys and were perceived from the outset as "masculinity making devices".⁸⁸⁹ He, and other writers, point to the crucial role of schools in the construction, not just reproduction, of gendered identities and gender relations.⁸⁹⁰ They emphasise the multiplicity of forms of masculinity, their ethnic and classed specificity and the

⁸⁸⁷ See Te Puni Kokiri for statistics on comparative rates re offending and suicide between Maori and non-Maori for example. Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Maori Development. *Maori in New Zealand: Rangatahi Maori Youth*. Available online at <http://www.tpk.govt.nz/maori/population/youth.asp#health>.

⁸⁸⁸ See, for example: Mac an Ghaill, M. (1994) *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling*. Buckingham; Philadelphia: Open University Press; Mac an Ghaill, M. (1996) *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Arenas*. Buckingham; Philadelphia: Open University Press; Connell, R. (1996) 'Teaching the boys: new research on masculinity, and gender strategies for schools'. *Teachers College Record* 98 (No.2): 207-235; Kenway, J. and Willis, S., et al (1997) *Answering Back: Girls, Boys and Feminism in Schools*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin; Gilbert, R. and Gilbert, P. (1998) *Masculinity goes to School*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin; Lingard, B. and Douglas, P. (1999) *Men Engaging Feminisms: Pro-feminism, Backlashes and Schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press. The breadth and depth of this gender work may well go some way toward explaining the relative lack of a similar critical literature from feminists here. Though, as I suggest below, other factors have also contributed to the lack of substantive critical engagement by feminists with similar discourses here.

⁸⁸⁹ Connell, R. (1993) 'Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: the Interplay of Masculinity and Education'. In L. Angus (ed) *Education, Inequality and Social Identity*. Washington, D.C: Falmer Press

⁸⁹⁰ Connell, R. (1993) op.cit; Connell, R. W. (1995) op.cit. Connell, R. (1996) op.cit.; Mac an Ghaill, M. and Hayward, C. (2003) *Men and Masculinities: Theory Research and Social Practice*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

social dominance of hegemonic masculinities which vary depending on historical moment and particular cultural and local context. These theorists argue gender is relational, boys understand themselves as masculine not only in opposition to the 'feminine' but in relation to, affiliation with and resistance to other versions of masculinity. They suggest masculinities are dynamic, shifting and changing over time, and that identity production (the enactment of masculinity) is an active process of negotiation/accommodation/resistance. That is, the formation of gendered identity is a *process* and always *in process*.

Drawing on Connell's work, Jane Kenway (1996) argued that claims of a crisis reflected the "reassertion of masculinity" in (a defensive) response to widely held perceptions that it was, in one way or another, "under siege".⁸⁹¹ Mobilising Connell's conceptualisation of the social construction of multiple masculinities, she pointed to the central role of the media in privileging hegemonic models and emphasised its part in the generation and perpetuation of a sense of crisis for boys and men".⁸⁹² She highlighted the existence of tensions between different forms of masculine identity and argued that "dominant and dominating expressions [of masculinity] are constantly on the defensive and in need of repair, adjustment and renewal", and the mobilisation "of a sense of crisis is one defensive strategic response".⁸⁹³ This "recuperative politics of masculinity", which was mobilised by the Men's Movement in Australia, has been a very vocal and influential force in the discursive construction of boys' as the 'new' disadvantaged not only educationally but socially.⁸⁹⁴

Roulston and Mills (2000) have pointed to the particular influence of the mythopoetic strand of the Australian Men's Movement.⁸⁹⁵ They suggest that the work of the mythopoets is underpinned by anxiety about threats to 'deep masculinity' and associates boys and men's problems "with a civilising or feminising of Western modern societies".⁸⁹⁶ These actors invoke nostalgia for a past wherein boys were guided by men, through 'rites of passage', in their assumption of a 'mature masculine' identity. And, they construct boys as victims of modernity which has left them without the traditional frameworks of support they need for healthy emotional development. Arguments about the feminisation of schooling, and advocacy for its "re-masculinisation" through the induction of more male teachers and public figures to act as

⁸⁹¹ Kenway, J. (1996) 'Reasserting Masculinity in Australian Schools'. *Women's Studies International Forum* 19 (No.4): 449.

⁸⁹² Ibid

⁸⁹³ Ibid: 450

⁸⁹⁴ Lingard, B. and Douglas, P. op.cit: 168

⁸⁹⁵ For example, see Biddulph, S. (1997) *Raising Boys: Why Boys are Different, and How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-balanced Men*. Sydney, N.S.W: Finch Publishing.

⁸⁹⁶ Roulston, K. and Mills, M. (2000) 'Male Teachers in Feminised Teaching Areas: Marching to the Beat of the Men's Movement Drums'. *Oxford Review of Education* 26 (No.2) June: 229.

role models for them, draw upon these ideas.⁸⁹⁷ Although, I would suggest that this is not always done consciously since mythopoetic conceptualisations of a natural, essentialised masculinity reflect common-sense understandings about gender formation. Ironically, given the strong element of 'backlash politics' that operates within these discourses, not only are they "couched in [naïve and simplistic] terms reminiscent of the [feminist] gender reform discourse of the 1970s", they recycle liberal feminist educational initiatives like role modelling and single sex classes that gender reformers have since realised are inadequate to the task of producing substantive change.⁸⁹⁸

Critics suggest claims about feminised schools and attempts to re-masculinize them are highly problematic. In the first instance, they ignore enduring continuities in the gendered, hierarchical organisation of schools where men still dominate the high status, well remunerated positions.⁸⁹⁹ These writers point to an emergent "culture of blame" that holds women teachers responsible for boys' 'failure' at school and they argue this "negates [how] dominant constructions of masculinity inhibit some students' learning."⁹⁰⁰ They suggest arguments about feminisation are underpinned by concerns about boys' behaviour and the lack of 'authority figures' in schools, and in homes. Advocates of re-masculinisation expect male teachers to stand in for absent fathers and, based upon ingrained assumptions about men as 'natural' disciplinarians, presume male teachers can control and socialise boys more effectively than women.⁹⁰¹ What this overlooks, however, is the implication of male teachers in the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities and, thus, of ongoing gender power relations in schools and outside them.⁹⁰²

As various commentators have pointed out, claims about boys' educational and social disadvantage often imply a radical transformation of gender relations more broadly. The media in particular, they argue, has mobilised statistical evidence of a gender gap at school to suggest gender relations have altered significantly in favour of girls and women. These writers have critiqued media representations of the gender gap, suggesting that strident claims about an *emergent* crisis were underpinned by (mis)interpretations of aggregated examination and

⁸⁹⁷ Mills, M. and Martino, W., et al (2004) 'Attracting, Recruiting and Retaining Male Teachers: Policy Issues in the Male Teacher Debate'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25 (No.3), July.

⁸⁹⁸ Kenway, J. and Willis, S. et al (1997) op.cit: 50

⁸⁹⁹ Mills, M. and Martino, W. (2004) op.cit: 355

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid: 361

⁹⁰¹ Ibid: 364

⁹⁰² Ibid

other data.⁹⁰³ And, they argued that the media's tendency to "over read" the data underpinned its perception that *all* girls were achieving and *all* boys under-achieving.⁹⁰⁴

Not only does the homogenisation of girls and boys obscure significant differences among girls and among boys across axes of class and ethnicity, as I have noted above, it is underpinned, critics argue, by broader presumptions of gender equality.⁹⁰⁵ They suggest that the media has constructed boys as a group with "equal but different problems and [as] equally disadvantaged in society and schooling".⁹⁰⁶ Such assumptions are problematic because they ignore continuing socio-economic disparities between women and men which are "supported by the continuity of a gendered division of labour".⁹⁰⁷ They also overlook "the failure of enhanced female participation in higher education to convert to more equal post-options in terms of career opportunities and income for women comparable with men".⁹⁰⁸ Thus even if girls achieve at school more highly than boys, the gendered power relations that continue to structure society at every level lend little credibility to the constitution of boys as a disadvantaged group.⁹⁰⁹

Although claims about social change to the advantage of women are overstated, educational restructuring appears to have had gendered effects that mediate the experience of *some* girls at school. British commentators have argued that the marketisation of education, with its heavy emphasis on school effectiveness and competition, has resulted in schools actively pursuing girls as their preferred 'clients'.⁹¹⁰ Girls are perceived as a "particularly desirable category of children ... behaviourally more amenable than boys and academically more highly achieving".⁹¹¹ And, they argue that whilst "many of the changes taking place in schools in the context of marketization appear to be retrogressive in terms of ensuring equality of opportunity, where girls are concerned the market seems to be having the opposite effect".⁹¹² Moreover, these writers have suggested that the boys' backlash in schools is partially a

⁹⁰³ See Lingard, B. and Douglas, P. (1999) op.cit; Arnot, M., David, M. and Weiner, G. (eds) (1999) *Closing the Gender Gap: Postwar Education and Social Change*. Cambridge, UK : Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers.

⁹⁰⁴ Lingard, B. and Douglas, P. (1999) op.cit.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid: 95

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid

⁹⁰⁹ Connell, R. (1996) op.cit

⁹¹⁰ Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. and Bowe, R. (1995) *Markets, Choice and Equity in Education*. Philadelphia: Open University Press: 140.

⁹¹¹ Ibid

⁹¹² Ibid: 173

response to the valorisation and commodification of girls “as market objects” due to the girl friendly policies of marketised schooling.⁹¹³

Others have argued that the combination of social, economic and educational change over the last two to three decades in Britain has worked to the advantage of girls, playing a significant role in their increasing educational achievement.⁹¹⁴ They identify two major changes in patterns of gender achievement in Britain. The first is an improvement by girls in assessments and examinations; the second is a decrease in sex segregation of subject choices up until the age of sixteen.⁹¹⁵ They also note that girls are staying longer in educational institutions than boys after the age of eighteen. These shifts, they claim, have resulted in the closing of the gender gap in British education and a reduction in gendered differences in achievement in most subjects, which signals “greater gender equality” in British education.⁹¹⁶ At the same time economic changes have resulted in the predominance of technological and service type industries, and a marked increase in women’s labour market participation. They argue that economic transformation, the competitive individualism that underpins the neo-liberalisation of education and the influence of educational feminism have worked together to positively affect girls’ educational achievement.⁹¹⁷

Not enough emphasis is placed on the fact that this has not been the case for all girls however, and that these shifts have particularly advantaged middle class girls.⁹¹⁸ I also think these writers overestimate the breadth of social and economic change and, therefore, the significance of girls’ achievement in relation to the social and economic position of women. The increase in women’s participation in the labour market does not necessarily signal significant positive change for women, given that the work available to the majority of women - 90% in Britain, according to Franks (1999) - within the new service-type economy is most often part time, poorly paid and insecure.⁹¹⁹ Only a small percentage of (middle and upper class) women have achieved anything like equality with men in the labour market, and not without struggle.⁹²⁰

⁹¹³ Ibid: 214. This is a gendered consequence of educational marketisation which has enhanced school choice not just parental choice, as I suggested in Chapter Seven.

⁹¹⁴ Arnot et al, (1999) op.cit.

⁹¹⁵ Ibid: 21

⁹¹⁶ Ibid: 23

⁹¹⁷ Ibid: 151-153

⁹¹⁸ See Harris, A. (2004). *Future Girl: Young Women in the Twenty First Century*. London; New York: Routledge.

⁹¹⁹ Franks, S. (1999) *Having None of It: Women, Men and the Future of Work*. London: Granta Books.

⁹²⁰ Ibid

While they optimistically predict that girls “may well have new opportunities in high-status graduate professions, such as finance and accounting ...”,⁹²¹ Linda McDowell’s (1997) study of merchant banking in London illustrates the embeddedness of male middle and upper class privilege in the labour market.⁹²² McDowell argues that despite broad changes to the structure of the financial sector which have come about through globalisation and in spite of unprecedented numbers of young women entering these professions, “the class and gender composition of the City remains solidly biased toward middle-class men ...”⁹²³ In a recent essay, furthermore, she has argued the new economy has exacerbated class differences between women in the British context.⁹²⁴

As I have noted the impacts of economic change and restructuring, while broadly similar, are also shaped by context. Here, I have argued, these have strongly been differentiated by ethnicity as well as gender and class. In terms of educational patterns, the Ministry review seems to suggest that New Zealand girls (and boys) continue to make gender-based subject choices in secondary schooling, if not to the same degree as in the past. These choices influence their post-school pathways and maintain patterns of gendered occupational segregation. Although there has been a marked shift in the gender composition of the (middle class dominated) professions here, as I have noted, this pattern of ‘feminisation’ has been matched by the predominance of males in the new elite professions. Although it does appear that characteristics associated with femininity such as well developed communication skills, collaborative learning and sustained application have become privileged in education here, which “girls are being constructed as a vanguard of the new subjectivity” is a moot point.⁹²⁵ I develop this discussion further in Chapter Ten.

Feminist and pro-feminist scholarship has been invaluable in pointing up the highly problematic assumptions about masculinity and schooling that have underpinned dominant accounts of the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement. And these commentators have usefully analysed and critiqued the gender politics that have driven some of these claims about boys’ disadvantage. As I have suggested above, however, this work is

⁹²¹ Arnot et al (1999) op.cit: 151

⁹²² McDowell, L. (1997) *Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City*. Oxford: Blackwell.

⁹²³ Ibid

⁹²⁴ McDowell, L. (2006) ‘Reconfigurations of Gender and Class Relations: Class Differences, Class Condescension and the Changing Place of Class Relations’. *Antipode* 38 (No.4) September: 671-884.

⁹²⁵ Harris, A. (2004) op.cit: 1

constrained by its own gendered terms of engagement. Given that the primary focus of the literature is on gender as the key marker of identity and difference, it can do little more than gesture towards the impact of class and ethnic differences among boys and girls on educational achievement. Moreover, because this work operates on the assumption that meanings about masculinity and schooling are produced within schools, it overlooks how contemporary discourses about boys' disadvantage are multi-layered and bear traces of the past. As I have shown, woven through arguments about boys' underachievement and claims about masculinity and schooling here are historical discourses about class, race, gender and education produced and embedded within the society over time.

Concluding remarks

It may be the limitations of a gender framework for the analysis of educational disparities that has mediated a reluctance to engage substantively in debates about the so-called problem of boys' educational underachievement here. Apart from the Alton-Lee and Praat (2000) report, which points to far greater ethnic and socio-economic gaps in educational achievement, there has been little comparable critical analysis of claims about boys' disadvantage in New Zealand. In the context of continuing feminist commitment to biculturalism, privileging a gender analysis is inappropriate because it reproduces silence about *which* boys are significantly underachieving here. In order for feminists to produce more nuanced accounts that differentiate between boys they would have to address issues of ethnicity, masculinity and schooling, thereby running the risk of inadvertently contributing to ingrained negative representations of Maori and Pacific boys. It would also be considered inappropriate for Pakeha feminist to undertake this kind of work, and Maori feminists remain committed to issues of ethnicity more broadly. Because of the relative silence of feminists here, by comparison to the international context, I am unconvinced that we can talk in terms of *debates* about boys' educational underachievement in New Zealand. Instead what we have had (and continue to have) are interdependent and mutually affirming representations, in media stories and teachers 'talk', of a problem of boys' educational underachievement that construct boys as a unitary group of victims; the 'new' disadvantaged in education.

In this chapter I have shown that influential research on gender disparities in education, media 'stories' and the accounts of some educationalist, have shared in common a highly problematic tendency to constitute boys as an homogeneous group on the basis of narrowly conceived understandings of masculinity. And, moreover, these discourses constructed boys implicitly and explicitly as 'victims' of a feminized and feminist education system. This entwined construction of boys is deeply problematic, I would argue, firstly because it ignores the fact that the positional privilege of middle class Pakeha boys remains intact. Also, and

perhaps more importantly from my point of view, the stubborn tendency to privilege gender over other, broader frames of reference obfuscates the impact of the interrelationship between gender, class and ethnicity on poor educational outcomes for *some* boys (and girls). In doing so it renders invisible the historical basis of the educational and social disparities they experience

The powerful tendency to oversimplify issues of boys' educational underachievement in the media and among teachers is accompanied by enduring, if contradictory, assumptions that it is a problem for (and of) education. These link back both to liberal expectations of education more generally and a powerful cultural investment in the myth of an educational meritocracy that, I argue, has its roots in social and state formation during the colonial period in New Zealand. This myth allows the interplay of class, gender and ethnicity in educational inequalities, and their impact on continuing socio-economic disparities in the society, to be obscured. Indeed it depends upon that invisibility, as does our investment in it. That investment, I suggest, has been intensified with the restructuring of the economy and education. The narrow focus on gender that underpins the way some teachers and principals conceptualise issues of educational underachievement has been exacerbated by the pressures exerted on them following the neoliberalisation of schooling. Their simplification of what are in fact highly complex, interwoven structural and social issues enables the illusion that schools, by themselves, *can* make a difference; that they are able, in other words, to meet the (heightened) expectations of parents and the state. I develop this discussion further in the next chapter.

Chapter 9

From the gender gap to “closing the gaps”: mapping state discourses about educational underachievement

Introduction

In the preceding chapter I argued that media stories and teachers ‘talk’ about the problem of boys’ educational underachievement were mutually constitutive. They mobilised a discursive construction of boys as the ‘victims’ of feminised schooling and families which, while partly informed by international discourses, drew as well on deeply embedded cultural scripts about gender, ethnicity, class and education. I suggested that anxiety about the impacts of economic transformation, educational restructuring and social shifts on different groups of boys has reinforced rather than challenged these ingrained ideas. And I argued that heightened state and parental expectations of schooling in the context of these changes intensified pressure on schools and teachers, exacerbating the propensity of some educators to stubbornly privilege claims about a problem of boys’ educational underachievement despite overwhelming evidence of more significant disparities by ethnicity and social class. Below I suggest that ERO, in its audit and regulatory functions, contributed to this tendency.

This chapter maps the shift from an official concern with gender issues in education to an emphasis by the state on ethnic disparities. Utilizing reports produced by the Education Review Office, I trace the trajectory away from a discourse of girls’ educational disadvantage evident in the ERO report *Barriers to Learning* (1995), to an emphasis on the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement by 1999. I argue, however, that issues of gender equity were not ERO’s primary concern. Rather, in both moments ERO mobilised arguments about gendered underachievement in schools to focus on school ‘failure’ and the reports, thus, served mainly as a mechanism for disciplining and regulating teachers and schools.

As I noted in Chapter Seven, educational restructuring mediated a new, dual conceptualization of education.⁹²⁶ In the first instance, schooling was considered crucial for the production of entrepreneurial individuals necessary for the creation of a globally competitive knowledge economy. Secondly, as “key legitimacy institutions”, schools and teachers were expected to assume responsibility for ensuring individual social mobility by

⁹²⁶ Lewis, N. (2000) ‘Restructuring Discourse in the New Zealand Restructuring Experience 1984-1995: the Practices of the Education Review Office’. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

identifying and addressing 'barriers to learning'.⁹²⁷ I show in this chapter that ERO acted as both a regulatory and constitutive mechanism, engendering and embedding change by coercing new practices in schools and producing new pedagogic identities.

Similar concerns significantly contributed to the shift away from a focus on gender issues in education to an emphasis by the state on ethnic disparity from 2000. Following the election of the fifth Labour government, concerns about the gender gap were replaced in state discourses by an expressed commitment to 'closing the (socio-economic and educational) gaps' between Maori and Pacific Island people, and Pakeha. I situate the state's focus on ethnicity in the context of the intensification of surveillance and regulation through schooling, and in other ways, of 'at risk' children in 'problem' families. I suggest that this emphasis is problematic because it reproduces silences about the imbrication of class, ethnicity and gender that operate in the same way as the silences in the boys' 'debates'. I query whether the foregrounding of ethnicity is gender neutral, a discussion I develop in my final chapter.

Section One: ERO: managing education, guarding the state

As Lewis (2000) has so ably illustrated in his doctoral research, from its inception the role of the Office has not been static nor has its relation to the state been particularly transparent. The Education Review Office's predecessor was initially established as a review and audit agency whose main function was to monitor the performance of schools in terms of their charter. It was also meant to provide "independent comment on the quality of policy ... and how well policies were being implemented at the national level", thus monitoring the state's performance as well.⁹²⁸ The initial intention was that the review process would contribute to the achievement of social equity goals in education. The election of the National government in 1990 extended and embedded neoliberalisation and managerialism, and economic renewal became the primary concern of the state. In 1992 a new Chief Review Officer, Judith Aitken, was appointed and her mandate from the state was "to create a more managerialist ERO".⁹²⁹ It was her own ideological commitment to managerialism, however, that underpinned her conviction that schools could be improved by the adoption of managerialist techniques.⁹³⁰ Under Aitken's direction, with state support, ERO became a key mechanism for "monitoring, risk management and direction [of education] exercised from the

⁹²⁷ Ibid: 95

⁹²⁸ MacKenzie, D. (1999) 'The Clouded Trail: Ten Years of Education Post-Picot'. In M. Thrupp *A Decade of Reform in New Zealand Education: Where to Now?* Hamilton, New Zealand: School of Education, University of Waikato: 14.

⁹²⁹ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 146

⁹³⁰ Ibid: 147

centre”.⁹³¹ It allowed, in other words, the distantiated control of education by the re-centred state ensuring, in both creative and coercive ways, that the practices of schools and teachers meet the state’s expectations. Within the constraints of ERO’s “statutory obligations, the new state sector legislation, and its budget” Aitken largely defined the Office’s role, and her vision drove its redefinition through the 90s.⁹³²

Her perception of ERO was underpinned by an agency theoretical approach which emphasized above all the Office’s “obligation to advance the state’s interests”.⁹³³ What constituted those interests was, however, open to her interpretation. Based upon that understanding Aitken amplified ERO’s agenda, perceiving its function as (at least) tripartite: in its audit role it would serve as a regulatory mechanism ensuring schools met their contractual obligations; it would “produce market and creative effects” and it was, potentially, “the basis of [multiple levels of] guardianship ... [tying] ERO to the interests of the state”.⁹³⁴ The Education Review Office, Lewis argues, “develops and legitimates its guardianship by aligning its strategies with those of the state in the policy arena, the child’s interests in the public sphere, and neoliberal ideology in the political debate that links the two”.⁹³⁵ This notion of guardianship was underpinned by a prevailing assumption that education had become too important - to the competitive capacity of the nation in the context of a global economy - to be left entirely in the hands of politicians.

In the first instance, ERO “provides the institutional structure and technologies of control to identify and secure the state’s interests in neo-liberal governmentality” in two ways; by ‘encouraging’ self-regulation through audit and the neoliberalisation of school subjectivities, and by identifying and managing “risk to the state where self-regulation is ineffective”.⁹³⁶ Secondly, ERO discursively constructs the interests of the child in (instrumental and individualistic) terms of her entitlement to maximum human capitalisation, achievement opportunities and parental entitlement as taxpayers.⁹³⁷ Thirdly, ERO’s claim to expertise serves as the legitimacy basis for the amplification of its agenda in political debate which “encompasses a claim to guardianship [reframed] in terms of independence, loyalty to the state, and the suppression of provider capture”.⁹³⁸ Finally, ERO “exercises a fourth layer of guardianship, over the further penetration of the reforms in the political arena” in that “ it

⁹³¹ Ibid: 314

⁹³² Ibid: 315

⁹³³ Ibid: 317

⁹³⁴ Ibid: 318

⁹³⁵ Ibid: 319

⁹³⁶ Ibid

⁹³⁷ Ibid

⁹³⁸ Ibid

pushes the boundaries of the current regulatory framework, urging tighter contracts with schools, and working to develop market relations in schools”.⁹³⁹ And, importantly, it “cultivates and maintains a sense of crisis to sustain the legitimacy conditions for further reform ...”.⁹⁴⁰ It does this largely through the active mobilisation of the media in a move that simultaneously draws upon, and reinforces, simplistic accounts of educational issues and exerts pressure on schools and teachers to address them. This sense of crisis permeates the reports I examine below and, though the gender of those subjects constituted as ‘in crisis’ shifts over time, what remains constant is the expectation that schools and teachers can (indeed must) resolve that crisis.

Drawing on the governmentality literature Lewis points to ERO’s *self-defined* status as the primary site of educational expertise and “an independent authority of truth”.⁹⁴¹ As such it is one of many domains for the production of ‘truth’ that operate “at various scales within, across, and beyond the state [and that] attempt to exercise control, reproduce space and contest the authority of other institutions”.⁹⁴² In his view ERO is “simultaneously an instrument of the new [neoliberal] order, its guardian, and an organization engaged in the struggle for its own survival”.⁹⁴³ Its functions are framed by its interpretation of the state’s interests which is underpinned, he suggests, by a neoliberal/managerialist understanding of and, consequently, a technocratic response to the core problems of the state. The Education Review Office’s understanding of the state’s interests and protection of its own interests (that is, its continued existence) are tied together in its guardianship role and risk management function, and “ERO seeks to manage [risk] by exposing it and exhorting government to intervene”.⁹⁴⁴ What constitutes risk for ERO, he argues, is *difference*. Implicitly, it is the model of the ideal school (and student) against which difference is measured and this ideal is to be imposed, if necessary, on ‘risky’ schools and ‘risky’ students.

For Lewis ERO is both a product and instrument of the ‘new neoliberal order’, and its cipher; a symbol of what he construes as “a decisive historical juncture”, a break from our social democratic past.⁹⁴⁵ This juncture is represented, in his view, by ERO’s attempts to re-form education and educational subjects (principals, teachers, students and parents) in order to support the competition state’s economic role - considered its primary function and core

⁹³⁹ Ibid

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid

⁹⁴¹ Ibid: 326

⁹⁴² Ibid

⁹⁴³ Ibid: 327

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid: 330

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid: 334

problem - in the neoliberal moment. I want to question this claim of radical change with ERO's risk management function, and its emphasis on difference, in mind.

While the core state problems of supporting, expanding and legitimating "the capitalist mode of production" can be generalized, their specifications are always contextual temporally and spatially, and invariably mediated by conditions internal and external to the nation.⁹⁴⁶ In New Zealand, as I argue in my introductory chapter, particular elements of liberalism have had a formative influence, becoming embedded in 'the national imaginary' and binding together the capitalist and liberal dimensions of the state.⁹⁴⁷ I suggest that despite significant changes in perceptions of and technologies for the management of the capitalist state's core problems over time, those problems remain entangled with the tensions and ambivalences (around difference) that derive partly from our colonial heritage.

Difference in Western societies has been (and continues to be) measured against the liberal bourgeois ideal of a moral, rational and autonomous subject whose development depends upon interaction in the market which "is ... seen as promoting the capacity for autonomous, self-directing activity first by encouraging individuals to calculate the costs and benefits of their decisions and thereby ... fostering the cultivation of prudential virtues, and secondly, by undermining relations of subservience".⁹⁴⁸ Those groups wilfully outside market relations, "in whom the capacity for autonomy is [considered] insufficiently developed", are subjected to authoritarian government.⁹⁴⁹ This other side of the 'liberal government of freedom' is rationalized by the belief that "the capacities required for autonomous conduct and the social conditions that foster them can be developed in a population through compulsion, through the imposition of more or less extended periods of compulsion".⁹⁵⁰ As Hindess has argued, assumptions about the moral and formative functions of capitalist sociality underpinned not only classical liberal governmentality but the benign and "authoritarian side of the modern welfare state" as well.⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁶ Dale, R. (1989) *The State and Education Policy*. Milton Keynes [England]; Philadelphia: Open University Press: 27-28.

⁹⁴⁷ Brickell, C. (2001) 'Whose 'special treatment'? Heterosexism and the Problems with Liberalism'. *Sexualities* 4 (No.2): 212.

⁹⁴⁸ Hindess, B. (2001) 'The Liberal Government of Unfreedom'. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26 (No.2): 97.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid: 97-98

⁹⁵¹ Ibid: 98

If neoliberalism pivots on “the commodification of everything”⁹⁵² mobilising ideas about the state, economy and society relation and governmental technologies fundamentally different to what has gone before, its concern with the authoritarian governance (at a distance) of those outside the market reflects continuity with classical and Keynesian liberalism. That is, the neoliberal justification for coercive government draws (like those that precede and follow it), however unconsciously, upon assumptions about the civilizing and moralizing function of capitalist sociality which rely upon and invoke a bourgeois self as the ideal liberal/capitalist subject. As I argued in Chapter One these assumptions are also tied to materialistic, moralist and individualistic elements of a Pakeha national identity that have their genesis in colonial state and social formation.

What I am suggesting is that there is common-sense, taken-for-granted (and therefore largely unconscious) level at which ERO’s ideal of the middle class school and subject operates, because bourgeois selves continue to symbolize moral, responsible, autonomous (and now entrepreneurial) subjectivity. The middle class continues to signify respectability.⁹⁵³ How ERO (as a neoliberal state institution) conceptualized difference, I would argue, was partially the result of the imbrication of capitalism and liberalism characteristic of western societies in general but with particular resonances in the New Zealand context. Thus its support of the neoliberal emphasis on the accumulation role of the state has broad historical and specific socio-cultural underpinnings; it is not *just* the product of a radical (right) turn to economic rationalism.

ERO acted as a mechanism of authoritarian governance, attempting to enforce this ideal on behalf of the state in at least two ways. It did so, firstly, through its own identification of ‘risky’ schools and their regulation through the publication of its reports.⁹⁵⁴ And secondly, it served this function through its insistence that schools and teachers identify ‘at risk’ and ‘risky’ students (and, as ever, where specific groups of boys are concerned the boundary between these categories is porous). Where risk (for groups of students and for the state) was signified by educational underachievement, it was expected that schools and teachers could and should resolve this problem. Schools, therefore, were to have a key role in the surveillance of those deemed to be ‘at risk’ of becoming excluded from market relations. As I illustrate below the ‘underachieving boy’ was discursively constructed in ERO’s reports as

⁹⁵² Ball, S. (2004) *Education for Sale! The Commodification of Everything*. Karl Mannheim Lecture, July.

⁹⁵³ Skeggs, B. (1997) *The Formation of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*. London: Sage Publications.

⁹⁵⁴ See Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 271-274

both at risk of such exclusion and a risk to other students, and as a potential risk to the development of a socially cohesive society necessary for global economic competitiveness.

To expand this argument about neoliberalism's continuity with the past just a little further, I want to highlight Lewis' point that the insistence schools and teachers be responsabilised in the ways described above was driven by Judith Aitken's absolute conviction that schools *can* make a difference to the achievement of individual children regardless of 'exogenous factors'. In the strength of that conviction the "neoliberal ideologue" (and 'arch-technocrat') retains links with the social liberal (and femocrat). There are resonances here with broad liberal expectations of education's economic and civic roles. That is, with liberal assumptions that education is key in the achievement of "economic growth and social progress" and capable of "redressing social inequalities ... through the equalization of educational opportunity".⁹⁵⁵ The distance between Keynesian directive that education provide the conditions of possibility for social mobility, through the redistributive provision of equality of educational opportunity, and Aitken's neoliberal vision is artificial to the degree that both are concerned with individual social mobility not collective social equality in any substantive sense.

This emphasis on individual mobility through education is also resonant with the historical production of a Pakeha national identity which I have suggested is tied to the myth of an egalitarian society. The production of this myth was enabled by the conscious rejection of class as a political identity during social and state formation and has, over time, become underpinned by the assumption of - and a heavy psychic investment in - the idea of an educational meritocracy. There is an enduring relationship here between the tendency to a fairly instrumental approach to education and the promise of 'getting ahead' which has historically been tied to inclusion in 'market relations', and the achievement of respectability through occupational mobility.

As I have already argued, the state - in its legitimacy function - is deeply implicated in the production and maintenance of a national identity and education plays a central part in this process. The production of a national identity is a means of creating "*horizontal solidarities*" whose object is to contain and ameliorate vertical (hierarchical) cleavages between social groups", in part to ensure the social conditions (order and cohesion) necessary for the

⁹⁵⁵ Dale, R., Esland, G. and MacDonald, M. (eds) (1976) *Schooling and Capitalism: A Sociological Reader*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul (for) Open University: 1-2.

continued expansion of capitalism.⁹⁵⁶ It attempts to produce these solidarities through “mythological discourse”, like that of the egalitarian society for example, which comprises

two pairs of different elements which, although having different functions, combine to reinforce each other. One pair celebrates and attempts to produce a united, integrated, apparently common national consciousness; the other pair work together to disconnect the hierarchies within the school from a causal relation to hierarchies outside the school.⁹⁵⁷

In assuming education can make a difference for individual children, while managing to ignore socio-economic differences (that is, unequal class relations in the wider society), Aitken drew upon a deeply embedded cultural script which is woven together with liberal/neoliberal ideologies.⁹⁵⁸ This blindness to class relations, and the inevitability of inequality built into the capitalist structure they reflect, is something she shared with the liberal femocracy that contributed, if inadvertently, to her powerful position within the neoliberal state. As I argued in the previous chapter, liberal femocrats do not challenge structural inequality on the basis of class. Their interest is gender equality which essentially means equal access for women to the (capitalist) economy and (liberal democratic) political sphere. Moreover, as Yeatman (1990) argues, theirs is a relatively privileged (middle) class position in comparison to that of the majority of women they advocate for. Thus, their “practical ideological commitments often best express the interests of women who like themselves who are positioned within the full time labour market”.⁹⁵⁹ In other words, consciously or not, they further the interests of middle class women and in doing so help perpetuate the unequal class relations upon which capitalism depends. Aitken’s blindness to the structural context of education, of course, does precisely the same thing.

Aitken, unlike her femocrat predecessor, was initially employed by the fourth Labour government as chief executive of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs specifically because of her

⁹⁵⁶ Bernstein, B. (2000b) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers: xxiii, original emphasis.

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid

⁹⁵⁸ Arblaster, A. (1984) *Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism*. Oxford: Blackwell. As Arblaster has argued, among liberals there is an inherent and “constant evasiveness and uneasiness about the whole question of class”, while liberalism is itself “an essentially middle - class or bourgeois political creed” (p. 90). While this view is precisely that which the governmentality theorists, including Hindess, critique, ignoring this element of liberalism allows issues of class to disappear off the radar and I want to keep them central. That a consideration of the impact of social class on educational achievement should be absent in the neoliberal moment, then, is inevitable given liberal political discomfort with issues of class, and that ‘liberalness’ is interwoven with (Pakeha) national identity in this particular context.

⁹⁵⁹ Yeatman, A. (1990) *Bureaucrats, Technocrats, Femocrats*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin: 83.

technocratic credentials.⁹⁶⁰ It was, however, the institutionalisation of liberal feminism at the state level that created the possibility of that position. Various feminist commentators have analysed what they see as the coincidence of neoliberalism and feminism. Teghtsoonian (2004), for example, points to an “international proliferation of gender-sensitive approaches to government policy” on the one hand, and neoliberalism’s “erasure of ‘women’ as a social and political category, and their reconstitution as degendered ‘workers’ and ‘consumers’”, on the other.⁹⁶¹ In a vein more critical of what she sees as feminism’s inadvertent ‘liaison’ with global capitalism, Hester Eisenstein (2005) argues that in some ways “feminist ideas and action have been extremely useful to the powers that be”.⁹⁶² And feminist political initiatives have “been steadily co-opted and cleverly used to strengthen and to legitimize the expansion of corporate capitalism”.⁹⁶³

Despite these tensions, as I suggested in Chapter Seven, middle class girls have certainly been the beneficiaries of liberal feminist initiatives to address the masculine bias in education which was central to the discourse of girls’ educational disadvantage⁹⁶⁴ in the 80s and early 90s. These initiatives, and the subsequent rise in middle class girls’ educational achievement, have been read as evidence of the feminization (in various ways) of economy and society.⁹⁶⁵ I show here how both the focus on girls’ educational disadvantage in 1995 and the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement by 1999 were strategically mobilized by ERO, not so much in the interest of gender equity but as a means of regulating school management and teacher practice.

Section Two: Reporting on schools: technologies of (neoliberal) regulation

Before I examine ERO’s approach to gender issues in education I want briefly to point to the central assumptions that underpin its method of review and how it achieves the compliance of schools and teachers, not only with their legislated obligations but with its own vision of schooling.⁹⁶⁶ ERO’s role, as an audit agency, is to measure schools’ compliance with their

⁹⁶⁰ Teghtsoonian, K. (2004) ‘Neoliberalism and Gender Analysis: Mainstreaming in Aotearoa/New Zealand’. *Australian journal of Political Science* 39 (No.2): 267-284.

⁹⁶¹ Ibid: 268

⁹⁶² Eisenstein, H. (2005) ‘A Dangerous Liaison? Feminism and Corporate Globalization’. *Science and Society* 69 (No.3): 511.

⁹⁶³ Ibid: 513

⁹⁶⁴ And, ironically given their often virulent critique of feminism, it is liberal feminist discourses of disadvantage and educational initiatives that tend to be re-invoked by advocates for boys.

⁹⁶⁵ Whether their achievement signifies *middle class* women’s parity with middle class men or, more importantly from my point of view, the centering of a feminine neoliberal subject, is something I explore briefly in the concluding chapter.

⁹⁶⁶ For a detailed description of ERO’s review method process, see: Robertson, S., Thrupp, M., Dale, R., Vaughan, K. and Jacka, S. (1997) *A Review of ERO: Final Report to the PPTA*. Auckland: UniServices, University of Auckland; Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit.

contractual obligations and that function is underpinned by the assumption of “the self-regulating school which is materialized through the imposition of various internal and external regulatory mechanisms.”⁹⁶⁷ Internal mechanisms comprising regular self review, teacher appraisal, the assessment of ‘value-added’ through student testing, reflect ERO’s strong emphasis on the production of documentation by schools which effectively “extends the formal expectations of schools set out in the legislation and [National Education Guidelines]”.⁹⁶⁸ Staff self review procedures and staff performance appraisal

transfer self-regulation into the daily routines of schools and their staff. They shift responsibility for what was previously part of the government’s legitimization problem [around the redress of educational inequalities] to sites within the school.”⁹⁶⁹

External mechanisms of “parental choice and market disciplines” exert pressure on schools and reinforce their competition.⁹⁷⁰ The reports themselves act as market information for parents, exposing schools to the risk of student exit if their reviews are negative.⁹⁷¹ And they are based upon assumptions of “a market standard product” which they then attempt to produce through “standardized review procedures and [an] implicit model of good practice”.⁹⁷²

ERO’s technicist review methods are underpinned by “ ‘value-added approaches ... [which suggest] that the teaching-learning process can be improved by imposing stricter standards of assessment and monitoring of outcomes’ ”.⁹⁷³ The reviews measure ‘school effectiveness’, the key signifier of which is student achievement. In the official definition “[a]n effectiveness review is an evaluation of student achievement and the impact of the teaching services and management practices within a school on that achievement”.⁹⁷⁴ What the review actually measures is school compliance with the National Education Guidelines, and thus with government policy which emphasizes the responsibility of boards of trustees to improving

⁹⁶⁷ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 153-154

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid: 154

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid: 155

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid

⁹⁷¹ Lauder, H., Hughes, D., and Watson, S. et al (1999) *Trading in Futures: Why Markets in Education Don't Work*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press. Though Lauder et al (1999) argue that this is the case for some schools and not others, and that it tends to be decile ratings that parents look to as the measure of a ‘good’ school.

⁹⁷² Ibid

⁹⁷³ Robertson et al (1997) *A Review of ERO: Final Report to the PPTA*. Auckland: Auckland Uniservices Limited: 39.

⁹⁷⁴ ERO’s Manual of Standard Procedures, cited in ibid: 49.

achievement.⁹⁷⁵ While it is the legal responsibility of Boards of Trustees to ensure schools are performing effectively, they are largely directed by principals and teachers who “hold *natural* responsibility”.⁹⁷⁶ Because the reviews are mostly concerned with schools’ self-assessment capabilities they rely heavily upon school achievement information and school policy documents, and therefore on the perceptions and practices of teachers and principals.⁹⁷⁷ These actors, of course, are under considerable pressure to perform ‘effectiveness’ in order to ensure that the review they receive is positive.

That pressure is reinforced by ERO’s active utilization of the media which, as I noted above, is crucial for the continued “cultivation of crisis” that is a key mechanism of regulation for the Office.⁹⁷⁸ In common with other national contexts in which ‘the failing boys’ failing schools discourse’ predominates at the state level,⁹⁷⁹ ERO mobilizes the media in its campaign of ‘shaming and blaming’ teachers for educational underachievement. It perceives “media reporting [as] the most effective means for promoting school accountability”.⁹⁸⁰ For schools, the media serves a dual function. It can either enhance their reputation and competitiveness in the school market through its publicizing of a ‘good’ review or, if the review is negative, it can act as a ‘platform’ for contesting ERO’s criticisms.⁹⁸¹ As Robertson et al point out, however,

schools in this situation do so from a position of weakness, - firstly because of their relative defensive position to ERO as the evaluative agency, and secondly because the media selection and construction processes focus in certain [negative and critical] ways on schools which are already struggling in the marketplace.⁹⁸²

Effectively, ERO’s mobilization of the media works in tandem with the media’s practices of selectiveness and its “irritative function”,⁹⁸³ and a competitive school market to produce more homogeneous schools. That is, in order to maintain their ‘good reputation’ and their competitiveness in the ‘marketplace’, schools actively seek out ‘ideal’ students whose achievement (and behaviour) is not an issue. Thus ERO’s self-constructed - and quite

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid: 50

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid: 54-55

⁹⁷⁸ Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit

⁹⁷⁹ See for example; Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., and Maw, J, (eds) (1998) *Failing Boys?: Issues in Gender in Gender Achievement*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

⁹⁸⁰ Robertson et al (1997) op.cit: 145

⁹⁸¹ Ibid: 176

⁹⁸² Ibid: 176-177

⁹⁸³ Luhmann, N. (2000) *The Reality of the Mass Media: Cultural Memory in the Present*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

conscious - mobilization of the media serves as a powerful mechanism for the control of teachers and schools, enabling the state to enforce their accountability and compliance to their legislated responsibilities from a distance.

As Blackmore and Thorpe (2003) have argued “ ‘managing the media’ is critical to the contemporary state as well as individual schools, teachers, principals and parents in increasingly more competitive systems and times of radical social and economic change”.⁹⁸⁴ And ERO is not alone in utilizing the media for its own ends. The competitive education market has contributed to concerns with “image management” among “new ‘entrepreneurial’ principals”, and media management is an important part of their overall management role.⁹⁸⁵ Some principal/managers of boys’ schools have been very proactive in this way, perhaps partly in defence of single sex schooling for boys following ERO’s critical assessment of it in the report I discuss below. The media has served as a forum for their views on the problem of boys’ educational underachievement helping to produce them as the new gender ‘experts’ in education, and for their advocacy of single sex schooling as its panacea. A similar trend is evident in Australia where boys’ and some co-educational schools have mobilised the media to market themselves, and their engagement in the debates through the media has acted “as a marketing device ... for the schools involved”.⁹⁸⁶

Nevertheless, what I want to suggest here is that ERO’s utilization of the media is one of multiple and interwoven, and quite coercive, mechanisms of teacher governance. The pressure these exert upon schools cannot help but have profound implications for how teachers perceive educational inequality, and the strategies they develop to address it. ERO’s regulation of teachers may well contribute to their tendency to narrowly frame boys’ issues and privilege the gender gap over ethnic and class disparities in education, though in quite subtle ways. What teachers ‘see’ as the problem of boys’ educational underachievement might well be partly the result of their internalization of ERO’s discourse of accountability, and what they can ‘do’ has to fit into the very narrow model of ‘good practice’ produced by ERO.⁹⁸⁷

⁹⁸⁴ Blackmore, J. and Thorpe, S. (2003) ‘Media/ting Change: The Print Media’s Role in Mediating Education Policy in a Period of Radical Reform in Victoria, Australia’. *Journal of Education Policy* 18 (No.6): 578.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid: 582

⁹⁸⁶ Mills, M. (2004) ‘The media, single sex schooling, the boys’ debate and class politics’. *Journal of Educational Policy* 19 (No.3): 344-345.

⁹⁸⁷ Robertson, et al (1997) op.cit: 6, 196.

The stress on standards-based education here is underpinned by the central assumption “that more extensive amounts, and more systematic forms, of assessment will produce higher standards of achievement”.⁹⁸⁸ Hence ERO’s heavy emphasis on the documentation and collation of aggregated assessment data. Standardization, however, amounts to “the imposition and enforcement of a set of codified practices” in all schools “in order to ensure consistency across all schools in the delivery of the National Curriculum, the National Education Guidelines, and the National Administration Guidelines”.⁹⁸⁹ The intention is to deliver “a basic entitlement for all children in the same way, regardless of socio-economic or ethnic circumstances”.⁹⁹⁰ Effectively, however, “[a]udit-based accountability disembods teachers’ professional ethic and replaces it with an elaborately produced set of rituals and records that are driven by *anxiety and fear* and which masquerades as reality “. ⁹⁹¹

Section Three: Findings, ‘facts’ and fictions: ERO and gender issues in education

Part one: Explaining girls’ ‘disadvantage’?

In 1995 ERO published a report entitled *Barriers to Learning* which reviewed how Boards of Trustees, and their schools and teachers conceptualized *school based* learning barriers, and what programmes (if any) had been established to address them. The report drew upon a case study produced during the review that focused on girls’ experiences at school because they constituted “a group identified both nationally and internationally as disadvantaged in schooling”.⁹⁹² The explicit purpose of the study, which was carried out by the Office but partially funded by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, was to explore “the extent to which Boards of Trustees, through their principal and teachers, have identified, analysed and addressed “barriers to learning” for girls in their schools”.⁹⁹³ From the findings the report concluded that, because “many schools do not identify girls as a group for whom there are “barriers to learning” ... and [w]here they do identify barriers to girls’ learning further analysis has not been undertaken”, they and their managers were not meeting their legal responsibility to recognize and address inequalities in education.⁹⁹⁴

The failure of boards, schools and teachers to identify, that is to document, and address girls’ educational disadvantage was partly attributed to what ERO saw as a tendency among these actors to locate significant barriers to learning outside of schools. The report

⁹⁸⁸ Codd, J., McAlpine, D. and Poskitt, J. (1995) ‘Assessment Polices in New Zealand: Educational Reform or Political Agenda?’ In R. Peddie and B. Tuck (eds) *Setting the Standards: Issues in Assessment for National Qualifications*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press: 33.

⁹⁸⁹ Robertson et al (1997) op.cit: 196

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid: 197

⁹⁹¹ Ibid, my emphasis.

⁹⁹² Education Review Office (1995) *Barriers to Learning*. ERO, Wellington: 4.

⁹⁹³ Ibid: 18

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid: 6

emphasized - and criticized - their tendency to privilege exogenous factors, in particular “family conditions”, which were seen by school management and teachers “as beyond the school’s control”.⁹⁹⁵ It also highlighted the opinion of some boards and principals that in both primary and secondary schools teachers themselves contributed to students’ disinterest in learning, either because they lacked behaviour management skills or because of inappropriate teaching styles for or low expectations of particular groups.⁹⁹⁶ The report criticized what it perceived as schools’ presumption of “an ideal student who comes from the family that conforms to the “norm” and that deviations from this “norm” of the family and child need to be overcome before learning can occur”.⁹⁹⁷

There are interesting resonances here with Keddie’s (1971) research about teacher’s implicit centring of a class based model of the ideal student that I noted in Chapter Eight.⁹⁹⁸ Though, there is nothing in the report that hints at a similar critical perspective around issues of social class and education. Quite to the contrary, this crucial contextual element is subordinated to ERO’s heavy emphasis on the idea that schools can make a difference to students in spite of socio-economic and contextual factors. Accordingly, its findings are used to vilify schools and teachers and to coerce their compliance with legislation and ERO’s project of responsabilisation. There is no small irony, as well, in ERO’s concern about bias in teachers’ perceptions and practice given the implicit bias operating within its selective utilization of evidence, and its intensive efforts to impose a normative middle class model on schools and students.⁹⁹⁹

This selective use of research is mobilised in *Barriers* to construct a particular (partial in both senses) discourse of girls’ disadvantage, drawing on some elements of research on the educational and employment status of girls and women while excluding others.¹⁰⁰⁰ It presents these findings in a way that lacks any real coherence because its engagement with the research is absolutely superficial. For example, in the introduction it gestures to evidence which shows a marked improvement in educational and employment outcomes for girls and women by situating girls as a group who “do succeed at school” although they are disadvantaged by “barriers in *post-school education, training and employment*”.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid: 7-8

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid: 8

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁹⁸ Keddie, N. (1971) ‘Classroom Knowledge’, in M. Young (ed) *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Collier Young.

⁹⁹⁹ See Robertson et al (1997): 4.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Sturrock, F. (1993) *The Status of Girls and Women in New Zealand Education and Training*. Wellington, New Zealand: Data Management and Analysis Section, Ministry of Education.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ibid: 122, cited in ERO, (1995) op.cit: 4, my emphasis.

Henceforth, however, the educational success of *some* girls is largely subordinated to their discursive construction as an homogeneous group who are disadvantaged at school, not least because schools and teachers inadequately understand what constitutes barriers to their learning in *that* context. The significant tensions and contradictions that exist for some girls and women, which their simultaneous location as successful at school and disadvantaged outside it suggest, are largely glossed over; as is the impact of social class and ethnic differences among girls at school and women in the society.

Instead the report emphasises Sturrock's (1993) argument that education, though not the only factor, is "responsible for the existence of disadvantages faced by women ... [and] has contributed to and perpetuated [their] social and economic disadvantage."¹⁰⁰² What is omitted is her emphasis on "the complex [socio-cultural] variables", and the influence of the socio-economic context of their families, which mediate gender identity and girls' choices in education. So too is her admonition that "[s]chools cannot be expected to counter these entrenched social attitudes on their own".¹⁰⁰³ Moreover, the report carefully ignores the point made in the Ministry publication that socio-economic disparities remain between women and men in the society, despite higher rates of achievement for girls at school, that are powerfully connected to our gender culture.

The case study describes, with critical comment, what the schools that have identified barriers to learning for girls perceived these to be and how they were addressed. In secondary schooling, for girls as a group, these comprised: low numbers of girls in mathematics, science, and technical subjects; the dominant or aggressive behaviour of boys; the absence of women teachers as role models in mathematics, science and technology; and the absence of women in senior management positions".¹⁰⁰⁴ This list reflects schools' continued emphasis on areas of concern that educational feminists highlighted in the 80s and early 90s, and the strategies they mobilise such as girls' only classes in maths and science are a product of the influence of these (mainly liberal) feminist discourses. In their assessment of barriers to learning for Maori and Pacific girls, schools emphasized quite different issues. These ranged from individual elements such as self esteem and health issues, to family expectations and peer pressure and, for Pasifika girls, "second language needs".¹⁰⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰² Sturrock, F. (1993) op.cit: 12, cited in ERO (1995) op.cit: 19.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁰⁴ ERO (1995) op.cit: 20

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid

These perceptions serve as very clear examples of teachers' tendency to perceive exogenous factors (of cultural difference in this case) as central to the educational underachievement of particular social groups. I am not privileging ERO's position here. Rather I want to recall Keddie's (1971) observation that teachers appear to depend on a "social pathology" approach which contributes to the individualization of failure and is underpinned by notions of " 'under-socialization' and instability originating with the social disorganization of the 'background' of the pupil".¹⁰⁰⁶ In other words, schools that identified the above as barriers to Maori and Pacific girls' learning did so through the lens of cultural deficit (and class difference, since these intersect here). Moreover both the schools that produced these 'findings', and the report itself, implicitly invoked middle class girls in their homogenization of girls as a singular group.

Barriers' mobilisation of the discourse of girls' disadvantage is, as I have suggested, highly problematic. This discursive construction was a significant element of feminist educational discourse in the 70s and 80s and has since been cogently critiqued for a number of reasons by feminist poststructuralists in education.¹⁰⁰⁷ Constituting girls as disadvantaged is problematic because differences *among* girls in terms of educational achievement and life chances, which are strongly mediated by social class and ethnicity, are obscured. Secondly, this discursive construction was central in a (liberal) feminist campaign to encourage girls to make non-traditional subject choices and tended to construct them in limited, limiting and contradictory ways.¹⁰⁰⁸ The report constitutes 'girls' as educationally disadvantaged, however, in the context of international concern with an emergent gender gap in their favour. *Barriers to Learning* is a highly simplistic (and not particularly coherent) account that mobilizes a discourse of girls' educational disadvantage to emphasise school failure, as a means of disciplining and regulating teachers, rather than a genuine critical engagement with gender issues in education. This is a very good example of how neoliberalism has co-opted elements of feminism for its own purposes.

As I will illustrate below ERO's (1999) report on the educational achievement of boys, while overtly gender focused, was similarly flawed. Like *Barriers* this report reflected ERO's entrenched view that educational inequality is unequivocally the problem of schools and teachers, in two senses. Firstly boys' educational underachievement is a problem (like barriers to learning for girls) partly related to deficient aspects of schools' own practices, and

¹⁰⁰⁶ Keddie, N. (1971) op.cit: 142

¹⁰⁰⁷ See Jones, A and Jacka S. (1996) 'Discourse of Disadvantage: Girls' School Achievement'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 30 (No.2):165-175; Kenway, J. and Willis, S. et al. (1997) *Answering Back: Girls, Boys and Feminism in Schools*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Jones, A. and Jacka, S. (1996) op.cit: 167

secondly it is emphatically their responsibility to resolve. While this report was significantly more comprehensive than *Barriers*, drawing heavily (if selectively and uncritically) upon a potpourri of international and national research and literature, these often contradictory findings were utilized to support its central premise that ‘failing schools’ were producing ‘failing boys’.

Part Two: ‘Failing schools, failing boys’: problematising ERO’s discursive construction of the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement

ERO’s Report *The Achievement of Boys* (1999) was published in the context of increasing public concern about the apparent emergence of boys’ educational disadvantage. Its stated purpose was to “[examine] the relationship between boys’ achievements and Education Review Office findings on the quality of education provided to boys”.¹⁰⁰⁹ That a ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement existed, and that it was the responsibility of schools and teachers to address, was a given. Citing the existence of “evidence that girls and boys learn and respond in different ways, and achieve best with different teaching styles”, the report stated that in order “[t]o address boys’ educational underachievement, teachers need to be knowledgeable about differences in the preferred learning styles and behaviour of boys and girls [and they] need to be able to adopt a range of teaching strategies to help accommodate the differences”.¹⁰¹⁰

The report’s central claim was that “enough boys across all socio-economic groups achieve poorly [at school] to show there is a pattern of boys’ under-achievement”.¹⁰¹¹ This conclusion was based upon ERO’s reading of aggregated statistical data of the comparative performance of girls and boys in secondary school examinations; School Certificate, University Entrance and Bursary. These showed that “boys [had] lower rates of participation and success in *School Certificate* and *University Bursaries* examinations than girls ... lower rates of retention and [were] more likely to leave school without qualifications”.¹⁰¹² It also drew upon the Ferguson and Horwood (1997) study, and on international research, to imply that boys as a group were experiencing an educational crisis. And this ‘crisis’ in ERO’s view had both social and economic implications, “for boys themselves and for society at large” in a context where “employment is increasingly based on knowledge and communication skills”.¹⁰¹³ According to the report, “New Zealand’s future economic prosperity and social

¹⁰⁰⁹ Education Review Office (1999) *The Achievement of Boys*. ERO, Wellington: 2.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹¹ Ibid: 3

¹⁰¹² Ibid: 4

¹⁰¹³ Ibid: 6

cohesion depend on giving all students (boys as well as girls) the opportunity to succeed to their full potential".¹⁰¹⁴

While this report referred to a range of national and international research and opinion it did so uncritically and selectively, presenting the findings in an ad hoc manner that contributed to an overall lack of coherence. For example, the report gestured to external factors which might mediate boys' achievement at school such as "family influences, TV and other mass media and a *macho* peer culture that affects some boys' attitudes towards schoolwork and homework".¹⁰¹⁵ This statement draws on *disparate* research and arguments which actually contradict each other. The first part of the statement reflects prevailing ideas about boys as a unitary group which naturalises masculinity and constitutes them as 'victims' of social change and poor family practices. In contrast, research on the effects of 'peer culture' on boys tends to perceive masculinity as socially or discursively constructed, policed by boys themselves, differentiated by class (at least) and reproduced in schools.¹⁰¹⁶ Similarly, the report makes reference to claims about the feminization of schooling *and* more complex feminist arguments about the gendering of the curriculum stating that

Most teachers are women. It is argued that some schools place a greater emphasis on feminine values and that teachers adopt teaching styles and assessment practices that favour girls over boys. This may lead to differences in the performance of boys and girls that are unrelated to their ability. Changes in teaching practices may be needed to counter boys' perception of literacy as a feminised subject.¹⁰¹⁷

Firstly, as I have already argued, the feminization argument is problematic not least because it depends upon the homogenisation of boys by dint of their 'shared' masculinity. Secondly, in terms of gendered perceptions of subjects at school, poststructural feminist writers have pointed to the deeply embedded discursively constructed processes of gender identity which mediate them.¹⁰¹⁸ The complex nature of gender identity formation militates against any simplistic claim that changes to teacher practice alone can address boys' and girls' gendered experiences of schooling.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid, original emphasis.

¹⁰¹⁶ See for example: Connell, R. (2000) *The Men and the Boys*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Gilbert, R. and Gilbert, P. (1998) *Masculinity goes to School*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin; Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., and Maw, J, (eds) (1998) op.cit.

¹⁰¹⁷ ERO (1999) op.cit: 7

¹⁰¹⁸ See for example: Kenway et al (1997) op.cit; Alton-Lee, A. and Praat, A. (2000) *Explaining and Addressing Gender Differences in the New Zealand Compulsory School Sector: a Literature Review*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

The acknowledgement of complexity, however, is antithetical to ERO's *modus operandi*. Instead, in order to achieve its aim of responsabilisation it privileges research on gender and schooling that pivots on a narrow conceptualization of masculinity, reinforcing the view that schools are part of the 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement and key to its resolution. In doing so, it can claim that "[r]esearch on boys' achievement within schools focuses on two main issues - differences in boys' and girls' *learning* styles, and the greater range of *behavioural problems* presented by boys. In both cases, the key factor affecting boys' achievement is the ability of schools to put in place effective policies that address boys' needs".¹⁰¹⁹ The point here is that these 'key' issues are situated *within* the school, suggest deficient practice and, thus, the possibility of their school-based resolution. The multiple and complex factors that mediate educational outcomes for boys including the interplay of ethnicity, social class and masculinities, and their impact on perceptions of and performance at school for different boys, is ignored.

A superficial pass over the international debates about boys and education, and its highly selective utilization of the various literatures, is evident in the section of the report that critiques single sex schooling for boys. Here it cites OFSTED's (the United Kingdom's Office for Standards in Education) definition of the key features of failing schools. These comprise: low literacy standards; behavioural issues; truancy and punctuality issues and high rates of suspension, particularly among ethnic minorities; and a substantive gender gap in achievement.¹⁰²⁰ Epstein et al (1998) have pointed out that, in Britain, many these characteristics have been associated explicitly with the educational under-achievement of white, working class boys who continue to be the focus of state and public concern there.¹⁰²¹ Here, as I suggest below, issues of class are submerged in a (state and public) concern about problem 'brown' boys. This operates largely as a subtext in the report however, despite periodic references to the significant underachievement of Maori and Pacific Island boys; partly because of ERO's cultivation of a sense of *general* crisis for boys in the interest of regulating schools and teachers.

ERO utilizes this designation of the failing school to support its argument that "[the] performance of schools is not directly related to the examination results of students" which, in turn, serves as the basis of its criticism of boys' only schools.¹⁰²² In a comparative analysis

¹⁰¹⁹ ERO (1999) op.cit: 6-7. Which research this might be is not cited, though it resonates strongly with Fergusson and Horwood's (1997) 'findings', which I have critiqued above.

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid: 15

¹⁰²¹ Epstein et al (1998) op.cit: 60

¹⁰²² ERO (1999) op.cit: 13

of school effectiveness the report found that despite the fact that “[boys] in single sex schools tend to achieve higher examination results than boys in co-educational schools”,¹⁰²³ boys’ schools performed more poorly than both girls’ schools and co-educational schools against most indicators.¹⁰²⁴ As I suggested above, ERO’s criticism of boys’ schools may well have influenced a more proactive role in educational discourses about boys’ underachievement by the principals of boys-only schools, both in terms of their identification as entrepreneurial principal/managers and in defence of their practices in that role, and in defence of single sex schooling for boys per se.

In ERO’s view the existence of a substantial gender gap in co-educational schools is *the* signifier of their failure. The report suggests that a gender gap in favour of girls is evidence that these schools are not addressing their responsibility to identify and address “barriers to learning” for boys and, indeed, “the key factor affecting [boys’] achievement is the extent to which co-educational schools put in place policies and programmes to address their educational needs”.¹⁰²⁵ As I suggested earlier in this chapter, the uncritical utilization of the gender gap as evidence there is a generalised problem of boys’ educational underachievement is highly problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, it overlooks the tendency toward a “far greater overlap in performance between the two groups than difference” and, perhaps more importantly, that “the range of performance within gender groups generally reveals far more variability within each gender group, than variability between groups”.¹⁰²⁶ In other words, privileging the gender gap in terms of educational disparity obscures the fact that some boys are doing substantially worse at school than others. I discuss this point in more detail below.

Overall, the report concludes that “[t]he underachievement of boys has serious consequences for boys as a group and for society as a whole. Improving boys’ achievement is important both for equity and the effectiveness of the education system in preparing New Zealanders for life in a modern economy”.¹⁰²⁷ It is unequivocal that the burden of responsibility for ensuring these conditions is that of schools and teachers, not that of the state, since “[t]he obligation on schools to provide equal opportunities for boys is implicit in the *National Education Guidelines*, which require schools to *identify and remove barriers to achievement*”.¹⁰²⁸ This is not to say that the state has no role to play in securing these

¹⁰²³ Ibid

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid: 13

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid: 16

¹⁰²⁶ Alton-Lee, A. and Praat, A. (2000) op.cit: 21

¹⁰²⁷ ERO (1999) op.cit: 8

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid, original emphasis.

conditions, it does. Although, this amounts only to the potential for the intensified regulation of schools: “To ensure this obligation is met, it may be necessary for the Government to consider whether *stronger requirements should be placed on schools to assess and address the achievement of boys*”.¹⁰²⁹

ERO’s follow up report, *Promoting Boys’ Achievement* (2000), was a short analysis of the degree to which the schools reviewed in the earlier report recognized and addressed boys’ underachievement. Like the prior report, it tended to contradictory claims about boys as an homogeneous group. It registered the necessity to be aware of distinctions among boys (and girls) while simultaneously reinforcing assumptions of their homogeneity. Again while cognizance was made of the disparities between boys in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic status, these were subordinated by the persistent reinscription of boys as a unitary group. In *Promoting Boys*, ERO simply reiterates its central claim that schools and teachers are responsible for addressing the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement, emphasizing even more strongly the central role of monitoring and evaluation in addressing equity issues.¹⁰³⁰

ERO’s discursive construction of the problem of boys’ educational underachievement simultaneously draws upon, and reinforces, the sense of a general crisis for all boys that also prevails in media representations and teachers’ ‘talk’. While the reports described above gesture to significant ethnic disparity in the educational outcomes of boys, these findings are subordinated to a simplistic account that foregrounds the gender gap; perhaps partially in an attempt to circumvent teachers’ recourse to cultural deficit explanations, which externalize the causes of educational underachievement for some groups, but also in order to reinforce responsabilisation. By emphasising gender differences in underachievement and locating some of their causation and all of their resolution at school, ERO simplifies what are in fact the complex and overlapping issues of class, gender and ethnicity that mediate poor educational outcomes for particular groups of boys and girls. As I noted in the previous chapter, the complex interplay of these factors and their impact on educational outcomes is evident in the Alton-Lee and Praat (2000) Review.

While ERO’s reports on boys’ education reinforced simplistic accounts of their ‘disadvantage’ that pivoted on the existence of a gender gap, they were produced in the context of increasing state anxiety about ethnic disparities and at the cusp of a discursive shift in social, educational, and economic policy toward ‘closing the gaps’ between Pakeha and the Maori

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid, my emphasis.

¹⁰³⁰ Education Review Office (2000) *Promoting Boys’ Achievement*. ERO, Wellington. See p. 4.

and Pacific Island population. As I noted above, a concern with ethnicity operated as a subtext in ERO's account of educational issues for boys. The emphasis on school failure, for example, existed in the broader context of increasing state anxiety about 'risky' and 'at-risk' students. In the figure of the 'underachieving boy' various risk categories of concern to the state overlapped. He was also often 'the truant' and 'the delinquent' with violence and substance abuse issues,¹⁰³¹ and he was most likely to be 'brown'. These boys were a risk to the state because, in its view, they constituted a danger to the viability of the knowledge economy; both in terms of the development its skill-base, and because they represented a threat to the social cohesiveness necessary for economic competitiveness in the global marketplace and, thus, for state legitimization.

An overriding concern with the racialisation of socio-economic and educational disparities, and 'risk', is clear in the *Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Education* (1999). The *Briefing* highlights the fact that both Maori and Pacific students significantly underachieve, compared to other groups, in a context where it claims underachievement threatens the nation's socio-economic welfare.¹⁰³² It states that "[i]t is important for New Zealand's social and economic wellbeing that levels of achievement keep rising for all students and there is a substantial closing of the gaps between those students who achieve well and those who do not".¹⁰³³ While both groups are subjects of concern, in discussing Maori underachievement the *Briefing* emphasizes the Government's obligations to them under the Treaty of Waitangi. The document mobilises the language of partnership and emphasizes the necessity to "strengthen the role families and communities play in the learning process [through] better co-ordination of services and policies across government agencies, case management of at-risk children and families, early intervention programmes, and informing family members of practical approaches to support their children's literacy and numeracy development".¹⁰³⁴

As I noted in Chapter Seven, Maori and Pacific Island peoples groups bore the brunt of economic restructuring which had exacerbated and entrenched poverty amongst them, and they had also experienced the negative effects of educational restructuring. As a result of the devolution of educational governance to schools and communities and the social polarization that resulted from the marketisation of education, "those communities who [found] themselves with the more intractable problems to preside over [were] those same

¹⁰³¹ ERO's risk categories here align with those in the Ministry of Education's (1999) *Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Education*. Ministry of Education, Wellington: Executive Summary.

¹⁰³² Ministry of Education (1999) *ibid*: 1

¹⁰³³ *Ibid*

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid*

communities with the fewest material, cultural and social resources to govern with".¹⁰³⁵ The racialisation of risk positioned Maori and Pacific people as "fiscal and social risks to the state and its investment in education and the social infrastructure";¹⁰³⁶ although, as I suggest below, their discursive construction as 'risky subjects' by the state was also mediated by the continuing pressure of bicultural politics which influenced its campaign to 'close the gaps'. At the same time localization of risk brought Maori and Pacific families and communities more closely within the ambit of the state, through schools, with the introduction of a variety of 'wrap around projects' aimed at surveillance and intervention in and beyond school.¹⁰³⁷ In this moment, education became positioned more strongly at the nexus of social and economic policy and schools became even more closely involved in the authoritarian governance of 'problem' populations.

Section Four : Closing the Gaps: ushering in New Zealand's 'third way'

Following its election in 1999 the Labour Coalition government instigated a campaign to close the socio-economic gaps between Maori and Pacific Island populations and other New Zealanders, centering ethnicity "as the major axis of difference for the targeted social policies and programmes of the 2000s".¹⁰³⁸ This move represented a shift away from 'hardcore' neo-liberal social policy to attempts to create and embed an Antipodean version of the 'third way'. While third way politics underpinned the discursive and policy changes that characterized this moment they were discursively constructed and utilized in ways that were specific to this post-colonial context, with all of the tensions and contradictions this implies. I come back to this point in my critical discussion of the third way in Chapter Ten, here I simply overview the elements of this initial shift.

Mobilising broad third way principles, 'Closing the Gaps' emphasized the private delivery of social goods and services, a central role for paid employment and education, and stressed human and social capital development in the context of a globalised knowledge economy.¹⁰³⁹ It foregrounded notions of social inclusion underpinned by concerns about "multiple disadvantage and its intergenerational transmission" and the threat it posed "to social cohesion of New Zealand society", centering 'at-risk' children.¹⁰⁴⁰ Here, however,

¹⁰³⁵ Robertson, S. and Dale, R. (2002) 'Local States of Emergency: the Contradictions of Neo-liberal Governance in Education in New Zealand'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 23 (No.3): 468.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid: 470

¹⁰³⁷ Ibid; see also Lewis, N. (2000) op.cit: 111

¹⁰³⁸ Elizabeth, V. and Larnar, W. (2003) 'Children, Families/Whanau and Communities: Gender and Ethnicity in New forms of Social Governance in Aotearoa/New Zealand', under review for *Social Politics*: 4.

¹⁰³⁹ Ibid: 6

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid: 9

policy discourses stressed ethnic disadvantage and children's location in 'at-risk' families and communities. The discourse of social inclusion was premised upon a re-configuration of the state-society relation which pivoted on paid employment, or preparation for it, as "an obligation of citizenship".¹⁰⁴¹ It also invoked a 'facilitative state' whose role, in partnership with communities and the third sector, was to "pro-actively encourage poor people and beneficiaries to become independent and self-responsible citizens".¹⁰⁴²

Concluding remarks

As I noted above, where New Zealand's version of the third way diverged was in its emphasis on ethnicity. This focus was rationalized in terms of three central concerns; social justice, Treaty obligations and social cohesion.¹⁰⁴³ These rationales reflected the continuing influence of bicultural politics insofar as they appeared "to correspond with the three articles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The "social justice" discourse correlates with Article Three, a "Treaty" discourse acknowledging tino rangatiratanga coincides with Article Two and the "social cohesion" discourse is in line with Article One."¹⁰⁴⁴

Multiple and sometimes conflicting models of social justice underpinned Closing the Gaps, however, and similarly implicit tensions existed between its rationales and the three Treaty articles.¹⁰⁴⁵ As ever, the concerns of the state did not easily align with those of Maori even in this 'hybrid' moment.¹⁰⁴⁶ In the concluding chapter I argue that these kinds of tensions inhere in the third way/third space moment and are powerfully connected to liberalism's continuing ambivalent relationship with its racialised 'other'.

The privileging of ethnic disadvantage also produced a strong negative response from the public and media which contributed, by 2001, to a policy shift away from an *explicit* focus on ethnicity that underpinned 'Closing the Gaps' to discourses of social development and investment.¹⁰⁴⁷ This shift was more discursive than substantive, however, because although discourses of social development emphasized "social wellbeing for all New Zealanders", the main focus of concern remained "with those ... who [were] experiencing 'poor outcomes'

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid: 11

¹⁰⁴² Ibid

¹⁰⁴³ Humpage, L. and Fleras, A. (2001) 'Intersecting Discourses: Closing the Gaps, Social Justice and the Treaty of Waitangi'. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 16, July: 37-53.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid: In Article One of the Treaty the Crown was given authority over the Europeans living in New Zealand; Article Two guaranteed Maori unqualified sovereignty over their lands, their villages and their cultural treasures; Article Three guaranteed Maori citizenship rights.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid: 39

¹⁰⁴⁶ Elizabeth, V. and Lerner, W. (2003) op.cit.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ibid: 13

because of entrenched poverty”.¹⁰⁴⁸ Because Maori and Pacific people were invariably overrepresented in this population ethnic disparity remained the center of state concern, even if not in explicit terms.

The point I wish to reiterate here is that ‘Closing the Gaps’ signaled the beginning of the development of a New Zealand version of the third way and the moment within which a gender focus in education policy discourses essentially disappeared. That is not to say that the state was no longer concerned with the underachievement of particular boys. Rather, gendered underachievement was subsumed in discourses of racialised risk and ethnic disadvantage. As I argue in my concluding chapter, this focus continues to obscure the interplay of ethnicity, social class and gender and the impact this has on educational underachievement.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ibid: 13-14

Chapter Ten

Third Way/Third Space? Questions of social justice in the knowledge society.¹⁰⁴⁹

We find ourselves in a moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion.¹⁰⁵⁰

Globalization is changing the way we argue about social justice.¹⁰⁵¹

Introduction

In “moments of transit” it is difficult to be unequivocal much less conclusive. As I suggested in my introduction, I come to the end of the thesis with questions about the future rather than conclusions about the present. Discursive struggles over educational disadvantage here remain dominated by a politics of representation and therefore continue to be too narrowly framed. Some actors still claim a generalised ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement, while state discourses continue to emphasise ethnic disparity - rightly so, though wrongly framed. And while it is quite clear that here as elsewhere middle class girls have benefited from the coincidence of liberal educational feminism and neoliberal individualism, at least in terms of a discernable upward shift in their educational achievement, the state’s position here makes it impossible to argue unequivocally that they *are* the new subjects of education. Equally, claims about the feminisation of the postmodern which position women ‘in general’ as the beneficiaries of socio-economic transformation are disrupted by tensions between the heavy reliance of third way social governance upon women’s affective labour at the same time as their labour market participation has become a given. As I suggest below this re-inscribes rather than disrupts a bourgeois embodiment of respectability, and this is reinforced in the first instance by the centering of *particular* forms of family and conceptions of community that re-inscribe the (undeserving) poor and the ‘benefit dependent’ as respectability’s constitutive limit; and secondly by the continuing dominance of

¹⁰⁴⁹ Larner, W. (2005) Co-Constituting ‘After Neoliberalism’: New Forms of Governance in Aotearoa New Zealand. Mini-Keynote Address; Studies in Political Economy Annual Conference: Towards a Politics of Scale’, February 3-5, 2005. I use the notion of knowledge society because I write this in retrospect; although technically in 2002 the conceptual shift from knowledge economy to knowledge society - that is from a concern with international competitiveness “to a [third way] message about socio-economic inclusiveness, human capital and leadership”- that Larner identifies was still in process (p. 9). And in fact it is evident from Kelly’s comments that state concerns about boys were still dominated by economics.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Bhabha, H. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge: Introduction.

¹⁰⁵¹ Fraser, N. (2005) ‘Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World’. *New Left Review* 36, November-December: 69-88.

representation politics in state constructions of social justice that invoke the past without ever acknowledging it.

Education ‘after neoliberalism’: making ‘poor boys’ into ‘good’ girls?

Claims about a ‘problem’ of boys’ underachievement did not simply disappear with the introduction here of a variation of third way politics which emphasised ethnic socio-economic and educational disparities. In July 2002 Television New Zealand screened an Assignment documentary, entitled *It’s Cool To Be A Fool*, which again attempted to discursively construct the gender gap in school achievement as *the* educational issue of the moment. A central premise of the programme was that boys here were not getting a ‘fair go’ at school; they were being left behind by girls partly because of a dominant youth culture in which it was ‘cool’ to be a ‘fool’. This theme appeared to suggest a shift away from the narrow association of the ‘problem’ with economic, educational and social feminisation that I described in Chapter Eight, to a recognition and focus on a problematic masculine culture in New Zealand. This was emphatically not the case. While concern was expressed about the influence of boys’ subcultures on their perception of academic achievement as well as a distraction from their commitment to schooling, the underlying assumptions about masculinity that underpinned those cultures - and the variation of their *impact* by class and ethnicity - was never examined. And yet the key theme of the programme was an often quite explicit concern that boys’ needs as *masculine* beings, educationally – and in terms of appropriate identity construction - were still not being met at school. The same sense of a crisis for all boys which had characterised earlier discourses pervaded this programme as well, and feminisation remained the central explanation for the ‘problem’ of boys’ educational underachievement. The frames of reference for discourses about boys and education in the media remained exactly the same as those five years earlier.

It was also abundantly clear in the documentary that the state’s position remained unchanged; both in terms of its primary concern with ethnic disadvantage and the expectation that self managing schools and responsibilised teachers had a fundamental role to play in addressing underachievement. In the first instance, emphasising the findings of the Alton-Lee and Praat (2000) review Frances Kelly - then spokesperson for the Ministry of Education - stated that the government was reluctant to highlight the gender gap given it was relatively small. Kelly argued that the focus on the gender gap was problematic to the degree it served as a distraction from the “real area of disparity” between Maori and Pacific Islands children, and Pakeha. Secondly she suggested that the National Education Guidelines, the framework for education practice, was the appropriate mechanism through which schools and teachers could address the educational needs of individual students, including particular

boys who were underachieving at school. The state's reluctance to accept claims about a significant gender gap in educational achievement did not signal a lack of concern with gender and schooling per se. Indeed, according to Kelly, a key responsibility schools needed to address was teaching boys the ('feminine') skills business sector employers increasingly expected of school leavers. She claimed that employers wanted school leavers "who are able to collaborate, who communicate well, and are able to learn things over an extended period of time", invoking attributes stereotypically associated with femininity. From the state's perspective, then, boys needed to be more like girls if they were to be individually successful at school and thus better able to contribute to a competitive knowledge economy in the globalised marketplace.

Kelly's comments seem to imply the shift in New Zealand, as elsewhere, to the primacy of a new feminine educational subjectivity; that in the postmodern moment the world really is "girls' oyster".¹⁰⁵² It is young women who appear to embody the new entrepreneurial consuming subject of postmodernity. In Harris's (2004) terms they "have become the focus for the construction of an ideal late modern subject who is self-making, resilient and flexible".¹⁰⁵³ This shift is largely due to the temporal coincidence of neoliberalism and liberal feminist identity politics on the one hand, and neoliberalism's self conscious co-optation of feminist discourses to further its own project of politico-economic and social change. As a consequence, in the knowledge society it is young women who have become perceived as "the real beneficiaries of the new economy, and it is young women who are constructed as the most capable of seizing its opportunities".¹⁰⁵⁴ As Harris points out, and as I have suggested in Chapters Seven and Eight, despite the prevailing tendency to discursively construct this shift in terms of girls 'in general' the female beneficiaries of the economic, political and social changes that have occurred are class and culturally specific. That is, the 'can-do' girls and new women professionals "who are represented simply as 'the next generation of young women' are predominantly middle class and of the cultural majority".¹⁰⁵⁵ My first question here, then, is; has a *bourgeois feminine* consuming self come to represent the new embodiment of 'respectability' in the postmodern moment? And secondly, if this is the case and if education 'after neoliberalism' remains tied up – from the state's point of view

¹⁰⁵² John Morris, principal of Auckland Boys' Grammar School and *still* one of the most vocal advocates for the 'problem' of boys' educational underachievement - and single sex schooling as its solution - made this comment when interviewed in the documentary.

¹⁰⁵³ Harris, A. (2004) *Future Girl: Young Women in the Twenty First Century*. London; New York: Routledge: 6.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid: 40

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid: 44

- with “transformation of school subjectivities”,¹⁰⁵⁶ are the mostly brown, poor boys (and girls)
- the ‘risky subjects’ who continue to underachieve substantively at school by comparison to both middle class Pakeha boys and girls - to be remade in self managing schools by responsibilised teachers in the image of bourgeois feminine respectability?

A new state/society relation? The third way and the feminisation of postmodernity?

A central concern of this thesis has been to explore continuity and change in the complex configuration of the state/society relation in New Zealand from the colonial moment and into the second millennium. I have suggested that from its inception New Zealand, like other Western nations, has placed the family, work and education at the nexus of that relation. This third way moment is no exception. If anything, as both proponents and critics have pointed out, the emphasis on the crucial socio-economic functions of all these elements of human interaction has intensified with the shift to variations of a third way.¹⁰⁵⁷ The family and education remain primary sites for the production of socialised, moralised and individualised (and feminized?) entrepreneurial citizen/subjects. What constitutes ‘the family’, though, has expanded (discursively anyway) beyond the narrow boundary of the bourgeois nuclear version to encompass diverse forms of ‘de-traditionalised’ social relationships.¹⁰⁵⁸ Education, as the idea of a knowledge society clearly reflects, is utterly central; on the one hand to the production of new subjectivities and citizens, and on the other to the relentless push for innovation that is required by national economies for global competitiveness. Moreover, the *continuous* production and reproduction of flexible, innovative selves depends upon ‘lifelong’ education. And, finally, work as the primary basis for both citizenship rights and consumption assumes a new level of social significance. It has become, as Nik Rose argues, the pre-condition for “full membership in a moral community”.¹⁰⁵⁹

In this re-configuration of social and economic life the state, as I suggested in the previous chapter, assumes a facilitative role. It functions in ‘partnership’ with society - constituted in the third way in terms of the family/community dyad - and the economy to enable the conditions of possibility that will engender a knowledge society. The state’s role is neither that of Keynesian interventionism nor neoliberal minimalism; instead it is one characterised

¹⁰⁵⁶ Lewis, N. (2003) ‘Embedding the Reforms in New Zealand Schooling: After Neoliberalism?’. *GeoJournal* 59: 157.

¹⁰⁵⁷ As a primary example of third way advocacy see: Giddens, A. (2000) *The Third Way and its Critics*. Malden, Mass: Polity Press. And for cogent criticism of it see: Rose, N. (1999b) ‘Inventiveness in politics’. *Economy and Society* 28 (No.3): 467-493.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Giddens, A. (2000) op.cit.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Rose, N. (1999b) op.cit: 487

by a “double movement” in which it seeks to re-embed the economy within the society and to “reassert a degree of control and social regulation around market relations”.¹⁰⁶⁰

The partnership state, however, is no less ‘masculinist’ than its liberal predecessors. Like the paternal and Keynesian liberal state forms, the partnership state depends heavily upon the affective labour of women in the private spheres of family and community. What has shifted, as the consequence of neoliberalisation and the centering of the work/citizenship relation, is the expectation of their labour market participation as well. In the third way, “women are simultaneously embedded in the private relations of family and community and the public sphere of economics” and thus “the discursively gendered political divisions [central to liberalism] are left intact”.¹⁰⁶¹ This shift is of course mediated by class and ethnicity. As I suggested in chapters Seven and Eight the socio-economic and political shifts of the last two and a half decades have intensified stratification among women, so middle class women are often better equipped financially at least to manage the intensification of their work - in all of its dimensions - than are other groups of women.

The point I want to emphasise here is that in the dependence upon women’s affective labour in the postmodern moment, as in the modern, respectability for women remains tied up with ideas about femininity that I have argued were constitutive of the colonial imaginary. What has changed is that the state’s expectation of their participation in the labour market - embedded in the third way - adds another dimension to what counts as respectability for women in the contemporary social imaginary. In their capacity to meet these multiple demands (while that might be as much façade as reality) it is bourgeois women who continue to embody, though in *new ways*, feminine respectability.

On the face of it the primacy of the work/citizenship relation would appear to alter very little men’s conceptualisation of respectability, which I have argued has been bound up with work here since settlement. As I suggested above, however, the contemporary moment is characterised - or at least has been read - in terms of a valorisation of the ‘soft’ feminine skills of communication, relational capacities, flexibility and self-invention. And as I noted in Chapter Seven, the ‘feminization’ of work coupled with high rates of male unemployment has thrown up challenges for working class male identity construction in particular. While I cannot explore this point here, I would imagine these shifts have had significant implications for how working class men might conceive the relationship between their masculinity and

¹⁰⁶⁰ Roelvink, G. and Craig, D. (2005) ‘The Man in the Partnering State: Regendering the Social Through Partnership’. *Studies in Political Economy* 75 (Summer): 4.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid: 13

respectability given that the former foundations for both have been undermined. What I do want to emphasise, however, is that these issues of working class male respectability are cut across by an ethnic dimension that I have suggested throughout the thesis cannot be thought separately from social class here.

Ethnicity and respectability in 'new' times

In the postmodern moment (how) do third way politics re-constitute the boundaries between respectability and 'roughness' for Maori and Pacific Island peoples? I suggested in earlier chapters that because Maori and Pacific family and social structures contravened bourgeois Pakeha norms, they were automatically excluded from respectability and intensive efforts have been made by the state in a variety of ways to 'normalise' them. In the emphasis on diverse family forms and dependence on community governance that underpins third way politics-consonant here with bicultural political demands - this barrier to their respectability appears to have been lifted. I would argue, however, that if what is considered as acceptable forms of family life have expanded, appropriate family practices remain framed by what I described in Chapter Six as the pedagogised (liberal middle class) relational model. More than ever before (bourgeois) family practices of socialisation, moralisation and individualisation have become central in "the reproduction of the [new?] moral order".¹⁰⁶² Moreover, in a context where work - as a "moral ethos"¹⁰⁶³ - is bound up more closely than ever with respectability to the degree that citizenship rights are predicated upon it, Maori and Pacific Island peoples remain overrepresented amongst the unemployed and thus are excluded not only from participation but from 'respectability'. And, related to this, in a knowledge society where (good) work and educational achievement are entwined and the relationship between education and respectability embedded, Maori and Pacific Island children of both genders continue to underachieve significantly compared to their Pakeha peers.

The politics of representation: questions of social justice

Continuing attempts to claim a generalised problem of boys' educational underachievement, and contention within the state and in the public domain over issues of ethnic disparity, are discursive struggles over representation.¹⁰⁶⁴ These ongoing struggles reflect the embeddness of a politics of recognition that I argued in Chapter Seven became ascendant and coincided with the early phase of neoliberalisation here. In that chapter I argued,

¹⁰⁶² Rose, N. (1999b) op.cit: 487

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid: 189

¹⁰⁶⁴ Claims about boys' underachievement have not gone away in the intervening years, as the recent conference "Boys in Education" held on April 21 2006 at Massey University indicates.

following Wendy Brown (1995) and Nancy Fraser (1997), that the displacement of redistributive politics by recognition claims was highly problematic, not least because it obscured enduring inequalities for some groups that were mediated not only by cultural or gender identity but – in complex ways - by social class as well. And I pointed to critiques of bicultural politics here that have emphasised the intensification of stratification among Maori in the context of institutionalised biculturalism.¹⁰⁶⁵ I want to develop that discussion further here, situating my concerns about the continued dominance of recognition politics firmly in this contemporary moment.

I suggested in Chapter Nine that the shift to the third way in New Zealand was predicated on - or at least has mobilised - concerns about socio-economic and educational disparities between Maori and Pacific Island peoples, and Pakeha. And although public pressure over the 'privileging' of ethnic disadvantage mediated a discursive shift away from an overt emphasis on ethnicity in policy and state discourses, concerns remained focused on ethnic disadvantage. It appeared then that the third way in New Zealand centred issues of social justice, although as I pointed out, multiple and contending representations of justice which bore traces of historical tensions as well as contemporary concerns characterised its emergence here.

Nancy Fraser has argued that "the knowledge society is generating a new grammar of political claims making" which centres on recognition.¹⁰⁶⁶ This new political language is underpinned by the shift away from the "truncated economism" that underpinned a class-based politics of redistribution characteristic of the Keynesian moment in the West to the "truncated culturalism" that underwrites contemporary identity politics.¹⁰⁶⁷ She argues that the current focus on cultural politics is reifying social identities and promoting repressive communitarianism", and that "struggles for recognition are serving less to complicate and enrich redistribution struggles than to marginalise, eclipse and displace them".¹⁰⁶⁸

These critiques are potent and highly relevant in terms of the politics of representation that continue to dominate here at the moment. In the first instance, her concerns about the reification and essentialisation of social/cultural identities resonate powerfully with elements

¹⁰⁶⁵ Webster, S. (1998) *Patrons of Maori Culture: Power, Theory and Ideology in the Maori Renaissance*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press; Rata, E. (1999) *Political Economy of Neotribal Capitalism*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Fraser, N. (2001) *Social Justice in the Knowledge Society: Redistribution, Recognition and Participation*. Available online at <http://www.wissensgesellschaft.org/themen/orientierung/socialjustice.pdf>: 1.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Ibid: 2

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid: 3, 4

of contemporary critiques of the emphasis on biculturalism in New Zealand. Webster (1998), for example, has pointed to the homogenisation of Maori identity that has occurred with the ascendance of bicultural politics which he suggests obscures economic stratification and the urban/rural split between them.¹⁰⁶⁹ More recently, Rata has critiqued what she calls the neotraditionalism that underpins contemporary bicultural politics here.¹⁰⁷⁰ This depends, she argues, upon the re-invocation and a reinvention of the past within which Maori cultural identity is both sanitised and reified.¹⁰⁷¹ This is an interesting reversal of what I have claimed has been essential to the construction of a Pakeha national identity which began, I suggest, with a foundational act of forgetting traditional, class based identity. Part of what makes New Zealand a rich ground for political struggle is then the clash between a reclamation of the past (idealised according to Rata) by Maori and its denial by Pakeha which I have argued contributes both to class blindness and entrenched ideas about cultural deficit.

In terms of the second problem Fraser identifies, in the New Zealand context this might be thought of in terms of the devolution of some of the state's governance functions to communities which are central, as I suggested above, to third way social governance. Although this shift was partly in response to calls for self determination by Maori for example, it enabled the state to shift some of the burden of its role in the authoritarian as well as other forms of governance to communities and third sector organisations.¹⁰⁷² The 'partnership' state is implicated in new forms of devolved authoritarian governance, and education remains a key mechanism of identification and surveillance of 'at risk' and 'risky' subjects and families. These are defined, as I suggested above, in terms of potential or existing social exclusion; a sanitised way of (re) framing poverty.

The re-framing of poverty as exclusion abstracts it from the structural relations of capitalism maintaining and reinforcing its individualisation which, I have argued, can be traced back to the colonial moment here. Poverty is reconstituted in terms of "a lack of belonging and hence a lack of responsibilities and duties to others which such belongingness generates through connection to the responsabilizing circuits of the moral community".¹⁰⁷³ This is highly problematic in a broad context where the expansion of global capitalism has exacerbated the

¹⁰⁶⁹ Webster, S. (1998) op.cit.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Rata, E. (2003) *The Failure of Biculturalism, Implications for New Zealand Education*, Paper submitted to NZARE, 2003.

¹⁰⁷¹ Rata, E. (2005) *The Rise and Rise of the Neotribal Elite*. Address to the Summer Sounds Symposium, Marlborough Sounds, 11-13 February.

¹⁰⁷² An example of such an organization is the non-descent based urban Maori community Te Whanau o Waipereira in Auckland, an initiative made possible by the dissolution of the Department of Maori Affairs in 1988, to serve the Maori community 'at the flax roots level'.

¹⁰⁷³ Rose, N. (1999b) 'Inventiveness in politics'. *Economy and Society* 28 (No.3): 487.

polarization of the rich and the poor in Western nations, at the same time as “globalization is undermining state capacities to address both [structural and cultural] types of injustice”.¹⁰⁷⁴ The disappearance of the language of poverty, I think, reflects the taken-for-grantedness - the inevitability - of neoliberal economism that underpins the third way politics, and in doing so reinforces contemporary global capitalism’s “monopoly on the Real and the imaginable”.¹⁰⁷⁵ Moreover, in the “new moral vocabulary”¹⁰⁷⁶ of third way politics, where respectability has become more narrowly defined than ever, “[t]he immoral [the poor and unemployed], unable to be ... proper respectable citizens, [continue] to work as the constitutive limit; the limit of value”.¹⁰⁷⁷

Fraser (2005) points to dual problems of misrecognition and mis-framing in the politics of representation and I suggest these underpin, however implicitly, contemporary state political representations of problem populations here.¹⁰⁷⁸ These issues continue to frame political justice insofar as it is ‘risky subjects’ and sectors who tend to experience both maldistribution (poverty) and misrecognition (they remain problematised and invalidated in terms of difference and, implicitly, cultural deficit). They are, thus, subject to misrepresentation which “occurs when political boundaries and/or decision rules function to deny some people, wrongly, the possibility of participating on a par with others in social interaction - including, but not only, in political arenas”.¹⁰⁷⁹ Because these subjects and groups are “misframed”, they are “deprived of the possibility of authoring first order claims [thus] they become non-persons with respect to justice”.¹⁰⁸⁰

There are implications in terms of the role that self managing schools might play in the mis-framing of ‘risky students’ in the context of continuing state expectations that they must identify and manage these subjects. This is highly problematic not least because, as I have argued, there is a prevailing tendency by some schools and teachers to see behavioural and learning problems amongst particular students in terms of either gender difference or cultural deficit. That together gender, class and ethnicity might work against the success of particular groups of students appears to be unthinkable for the partnership state; and the schools and teachers through whom it attempts to regulate and constitute the kinds of entrepreneurial,

¹⁰⁷⁴ Fraser, N. (2001) op.cit: 3

¹⁰⁷⁵ Brown, W. (2005) *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press: 107.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Rose, N. (1999b) op.cit.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Skeggs, B. (2005) ‘The Making of Class and Gender Through Visualising the Moral Subject Formation’. *Sociology* 39 (No. 5): 977.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Fraser, N. (2005) op.cit.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ibid: 76

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ibid: 77

innovative, flexible - and ultimately bourgeois subjectivities- it deems necessary for the development and expansion of the knowledge society in a global marketplace. And what of those 'problem' students (most often brown and usually, though not only, boys) - the antitheses of these new pedagogical identities, these markers of (youthful) respectability - if:

A school metaphorically holds up a mirror in which an image is reflected. A school's ideology may be seen as a construction in a mirror through which images are reflected. The question is: who recognises themselves as of value? What other images are excluded by the dominant image of value so that some students are unable to recognise themselves? And "what are the acoustics of the school? Whose voice is heard? Who is speaking? Who is hailed by this voice? For whom is it familiar? ... there are visual and temporal features to the images the school reflects and these images are projections of a hierarchy of values, of class values."¹⁰⁸¹

Concluding remarks

Homi Bhabha (1990) has argued that "forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity", that is they are perpetually 'in transit'.¹⁰⁸² He defines hybridity as "the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom".¹⁰⁸³ I do not think this has occurred here despite changing configurations within the state and shifts in the society; I do not think the third way is yet a third space. But it certainly is "an interstitial space and time of conflict and negotiation",¹⁰⁸⁴ though as I have suggested above that conflict and negotiation remains problematically caught up with a narrow politics of representation. These struggles, narrowly framed in terms of identity-whether gendered or ethnic- because they preclude a structural critique and reject the language of class serve to maintain rather than challenge the boundaries of culture/class and spurious distinctions between ethnic and class disadvantage. And I would argue that elements of them reflect at some level "the spectral presence" of liberalism. Thus, postmodernity remains tied to the modern moment in complex and subtle ways. As Bhabha argues: "Liberalism in our 'long' end of the twentieth century is not something that can be bracketed out, nor can it be revived. It has a spectral

¹⁰⁸¹ Bernstein, B. (2000b) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers:

¹⁰⁸² Rutherford, J. (1990) 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha'. In J. Rutherford (ed) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart: 211.

¹⁰⁸³ Ibid

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid

presence".¹⁰⁸⁵ The postmodern moment/the third way/the contemporary social imaginary bears within it, and is inflected by, the past. In order for the third way to become a 'third space' we need to develop, together, multi-tiered conceptualisations of justice which must include recognition and redistribution if they are to ensure participatory parity - in all of its dimensions - which is crucial in the context of globalised, multi-cultural knowledge societies.¹⁰⁸⁶

¹⁰⁸⁵ Hoeller, C. (nd) 'Don't Mess with Mister In-Between': Interview with Homi K. Bhabha, in *Translocation_new media/art*. Available online at [http:// www.translocation.at/d/Bhabha.htm](http://www.translocation.at/d/Bhabha.htm) : 3.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Fraser, N. (2005) 'Reframing Justice in a Globalizing World'. *New Left Review*, vol.36, November-December: 69-88.

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