

Constructions of Knowledge, Tertiary Education and Research Policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Sharon Harvey

Auckland University of Technology

ABSTRACT

This paper engages with Michael Peters' Macmillan Brown lectures through an investigation of the genealogy of the collocation/statement knowledge society in New Zealand science and tertiary education policy texts. The intention is to show that the use of the collocation/ statement knowledge society in post 1999 New Zealand adheres most strongly to its associations with national wealth enhancement. This sets up a problem for tertiary education research, in particular. Previously considered to be vital for the development of disciplinary knowledge and extending the sum of human wisdom, academic research emerges, along with the national science system, as a primary tool for lifting New Zealand's economic performance and reinstating the country into the top half of the OECD. Being identified as the country's economic saviour has its advantages as, for example, research budgets are increased. The risks, however, have yet to be fully understood. An emphasis, even insistence, at government level on producing for-profit knowledge and new technological gadgets sets up path dependencies for research which bypass critical, reflective research mainly undertaken in the humanities and social sciences. It is quite possible that vigorous social democracies and even capitalism itself require such knowledge to pluralise available discursive formations, providing alternatives, sometimes even new ways of thinking. The paper suggests that while we continue to live in a world of suffering, higher education and research conducted in the sector have a cultural and ethical mission to alleviate injustice and maintain the possibility of change.

Introduction

This paper engages with Michael Peters' Macmillan Brown lectures through an investigation of the genealogy of the collocation/statement *knowledge society* in New Zealand science and tertiary education policy texts. The intention is to show that the use of the collocation/ statement *knowledge society* in post 1999 New Zealand adheres most strongly to its associations with national wealth enhancement. This sets up a problem for tertiary education research, in particular. Previously considered to be vital for the development of disciplinary knowledge and extending the sum of human wisdom, academic research emerges, along with the national science system, as a primary tool for lifting New Zealand's economic performance and reinstating the country into the top half of the OECD. Being identified as the country's economic saviour has its advantages as, for example, research budgets are increased. The risks, however, have yet to be fully understood. An emphasis, even insistence, at government level on producing for-profit knowledge and new technological

gadgets sets up path dependencies for research which bypass critical, reflective research mainly undertaken in the humanities and social sciences. It is quite possible that vigorous social democracies and even capitalism itself require such knowledge to pluralise available discursive formations, providing alternatives, sometimes even new ways of thinking. The paper suggests that while we continue to live in a world of suffering, higher education and research conducted in the sector have a cultural and ethical mission to alleviate injustice and maintain the possibility of change.

Michael Peters, Knowledge and Freedom

Michael Peters wrote and delivered the 2000 Macmillan Brown lectures in the aftermath of the 1999 New Zealand general election. The election ushered in a Labour-led coalition government, the first centre left government New Zealand had experienced for twenty four years (the Kirk/Rowling government was defeated by Muldoon's National party in the 1975 election). Expectations for the new government were high as New Zealand reeled in the wake of fifteen years neoliberal governance. Michael outlined some of the effects of this period in his first lecture, "Neoliberalism, Postmodernity and the Reform of Education in Aotearoa /New Zealand" (2002a). The general privatisation and then degradation of public services, a poorly performing economy, under-resourced health and education systems, depopulated and infrastructurally withered regions and a general hollowing out of civil services have also been well-documented elsewhere (see also Hazeldine, 1998; Jesson, 1999; Easton, 1999a; Kelsey, 1997).

Michael pointed out that the neoliberal shift in policy and philosophy was nowhere more evident than in the related areas of education and social policy. As the tide of his lecture series, *Education and Culture in Postmodernity: The Challenges for Aotearoa/New Zealand* suggests, education in New Zealand is a core focus throughout and Michael engages theoretically with the education changes in New Zealand under strong neoliberal governments from 1984. However, the shape and outcome of Labour policies (promised to be very different from their predecessors) were still unravelling and it was too soon to make judgement calls on their impact. The Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) had been set up in April 2000 and the Commission released their first report *Shaping a Shared Vision* (TEAC, 2000) in July 2000. Michael's preliminary comments were that the Commission repeated ideas and slogans already in wide circulation in the West, and the UK in particular. The twin discursual pillars were *lifelong learning* for the *knowledge society*. Michael makes the point that the term knowledge society is not fully explored in the first document (TEAC, 2000) and any differentiation from the term knowledge economy is not explicated. He also contends that issues of globalisation and their impact on tertiary education do not receive "...the analysis they deserve" (Peters 2002a: 9). He considers the term lifelong learning to be underconceptualised beyond being identified as a "...key force in human capital development" (Giddens cited in Peters 2002a: 13). He agrees, however, with TEAC's emphasis on "cooperation, collaboration and partnership". This is in contrast to the previous regime's move to demand driven funding and the dubious promise of a level competitive playing field for all New Zealand tertiary institutions, public and private alike.

Towards the end of Michael's first lecture he points out that as the worst effects of neoliberalism were felt across the world "Governments ... looked to a new philosophy and policy mix, one that preserved some of the efficiency and competition gains but did not result in ... forms of nation splitting and social exclusion" (Peters 2002a: 12). The contours of this new "philosophy and policy mix" are now well recognised. They are generally named "third way" politics and associated most closely with Tony Blair's Labour government in Britain. Michael ends the lecture with a characterisation of third way politics and the relationship with education, concluding with the fairly damning comment, "The underlying concept of education is the dominant conceptual weakness in third way politics" (Peters, 2002a: 13). He believes that while (lifelong) education has been identified as the key ingredient in building a knowledge society, there is more to be said about education and

its links with democracy, its contribution to civil life and education as a right rather than a privilege. Michael links his characterisation of third way politics back to New Zealand where Helen Clark's Labour coalition is committed to the policy mix. Because education is a central tenet of the mix, Michael suggests that its current philosophical underpinnings in New Zealand need stronger analysis, particularly from the Left.

Nearly three years on from the Macmillan Brown lectures, New Zealand had an early election in 2002 (July, 2002) which again returned a Labour-led coalition, but this time a much more centrist one, with Labour's largest coalition partner being the Christian dominated United Future Party. The election was New Zealand's first fought primarily over issues of science (specifically genetic engineering) and the concomitant relationship with business. The Greens were found by Labour to be wanting as a coalition partner since they had clearly signalled their intention to fight the lifting of the moratorium on the commercial release of GE organisms scheduled for October 2003. This was despite a close fit between the two parties on many social issues. The situation was exacerbated when, two weeks out from the July election, the publication of *Seeds of Distrust: The Story of A GE Cover-Up* (Hager, 2002) played ironically into the hands of the Labour Party. The swift moving Labour media machine suggested that the Greens were playing dirty politics by accusing Labour of a cover-up when there had been no such thing. The bad press saw the Greens slip from 10% in the polls to 7% on election night (Mold, 2002). Observers surmised that the decision by Labour to distance itself so decisively from the Greens was due to a clear Labour intention to court business and corporate interests.¹

On the international stage, Republican, George Bush Junior, was confirmed President of the United States by a miniscule majority on December 13, 2000, reinforcing just how undemocratic certain so-called democratic practices can be. September 11, 2001 gave more veracity to the concept of the Risk Society (Beck, 1992) than ever before. Ordinary people interviewed on the streets of New York following the suicide bombings of the Twin Towers said repeatedly that they could never again feel safe in their own country, the strongest and wealthiest in the world. Ironically, the American right wing pundit, Frances Fukuyama (1992) was recently in Wellington at the invitation of the Business Roundtable - the neoliberal think tank at the centre of much economic and social restructuring in New Zealand between 1984 and 1999. As Gordon Campbell (2002: 23) reported:

Here was Fukuyama telling them (the winners from the Thatcher, Reagan and Roger Douglas years) that no, their gains had not been due to their ability to write the economic rules to suit themselves - but were rather the outcome of humanity's endless striving for economic and social perfection, which had reached final fruition in their own good selves. They were not only the anointed best outcome of history, but stood astride the best system that humanity would ever, could ever devise.

September 11, however, was a clarion call to all those who thought there was nothing more to be said, that the West and its neoliberal dream of global economic integration underpinned by trade in techno-scientific knowledge (Lyotard, 1979) had outflanked the competitors (Communism and then Islam). The neoliberal metanarratives, which began to have widespread policy implications under the Thatcher and Reagan governments, at no time looked more empty and pointless for many than after September 11. Gordon Campbell (2002: 23) again:

On September 11 ... Fukuyama's notion that the historical contest was over took a right old hammering. In the pundit stakes, Fukuyama lost ground to his fellow pundit Samuel Huntington, who in 1993 had predicted a future marked by a clash of civilisations - in large part between the West and Islam. Good call.

For others, September 11 was no more than a call to action to defend contemporary forms of neoliberalism in the name of freedom and democracy. In the last two years we have witnessed the attack of one of the poorest nations (Afghanistan) on the planet by the richest (USA) and the invasion of Iraq by America as well.

Questions of freedom and participative social democracy are at the core of this (and Michael's) analysis of the new education and knowledge policy discourses. My purpose here is to engage with

Michael's lectures from the point of view of some of the policy developments in tertiary education and particularly research in New Zealand in the period since mid-2000.

Foresight, Knowledge and Economic Growth

Firstly, it is worth considering the genealogy of the now common collocation/statement, "knowledge society", in New Zealand. This gives some background into the way policies in tertiary education have developed since Michael presented the Macmillan Brown lectures in 2001. References to the knowledge society first appeared in general circulation in New Zealand as part of the Foresight exercise undertaken by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST) in 1997 to reprioritise national science funding. New Zealand Foresight followed a similar process to the first round of UK Foresight initiated in 1994 (see *Foresight*, 2003). However, while the purpose was ostensibly to identify areas of strategic research most likely to benefit the country socially and economically, in New Zealand this was given a narrower interpretation. James Buwalda, who took on the role of CEO of MoRST in 1996, articulated vigorously and publicly the connection between science, technology, knowledge and the economy. His article "Foresight-Innovation-Technology; today's successful business trinity" (Buwalda, 1996: 6) leaves no room for doubt as to how he viewed science research and where strategic planning in the Ministry was heading. In the article, which had been printed in the *Dominion* the month before, Buwalda (1996) puts forward a market logic for private and public science which bypasses the broader goals for science, present in earlier MoRST documents. Basically, innovation (increasingly a synonym for research) was to be utilised for the design of new products headed for hyper-competitive world markets: "Success in such dynamic markets will depend increasingly on anticipating or leading changes in consumer preferences, and being the first to develop new products to fit" (Buwalda, 1996: 6).

In the 1998 MoRST publication *Building Tomorrow's Success: Guidelines for Thinking Beyond Today*, the first of the booklet's apparent purposes was to "explain the Foresight Project and how it relates to the concept of the knowledge society" (MoRST, 1998: 5). In line with Lyotard's (1979) observation that capital generation has become inextricable from technology and science, that is techno-scientific knowledge, throughout the rest of the book "knowledge society" is conceptually linked to technological change and globalisation. Some examples are: "Technology is a key driver for knowledge societies" (MoRST, 1998: 5) and "Globalisation of the world's economies has fuelled competition, and increasingly competitiveness is achieved through knowledge-based technological innovation" (MoRST, 1998:8) and "Knowledge societies will exploit the enormous potential of new knowledge - intensive technologies in areas such as information and communications, biotechnology, medical systems, and nanotechnology" (MoRST, 1998: 9) to name but a few. The Foresight exercise, while using the term knowledge *society* appeared to be putting forward an argument for knowledge production to fuel a knowledge *economy*. Its failure to define and differentiate the two terms added to the possibility for future semantic slippage. Indeed the Ministry's favoured Foresight scenario for New Zealand "Nga Kahikatea: Reaching New Heights" (see MoRST, 1998: 31) characterised New Zealand's most positive future alternative as privatised and corporatised; New Zealand Incorporated competing fiercely with the rest of the world to grow its economy and eventually (hopefully?) achieve social cohesion as a result. As one participant in *talk-foresight* (the Ministry's on-line chat group) noted (McDonald, 1999):

Certainly it is much easier to make progress if you ignore some of the issues - but will the direction be right? ... All our science planning is being directed towards economic growth, with the promise that when we have enough growth, we will have a better life. Growth is usually assumed to be good, no argument. Why do we assume this so lightly? Is the economic growth we are hoping to achieve appropriate? Do our plans include it stopping, ever? If not, why not? If so, how will we know when to stop? Perhaps we should have stopped already?

Roger Hay (1999), in the same chat group, wrote: "... it left me with an image of our society as a sort of Titan rocket slowly lifting off the launch pad and then gradually accelerating into outer space until it disappeared altogether".

In another contribution to *talk-foresight*, Foresight's narrow constructions of knowledge were critiqued. For example, Derek Wallace's (August 12, 1999) message pointed out:

...a crucial requirement...is the development of a national knowledge policy that would encompass all the relevant institutions and knowledges, rather than being restricted by the ad hoc and partial policy measures we have been seeing. Such a policy would, among other things, recognise the mutual constitution of and interaction between sciences and humanities...

The biggest gap in the Foresight discussions around the primacy of knowledge for economic development or otherwise was the exclusion of the universities (as the major societal knowledge producers) from the discussion. Apart from a few university "followers", Foresight was a process designed specifically to bring together Ministry, FoRST, Crown Research Institute researchers and business users of research. As Michael Peters and Peter Roberts (1999: 73) noted: "(Foresight) ... does not move from the question of the 'knowledge society' to questions of the main 'knowledge institutions' or the way these are being transformed. There is, for example little or no attention given to New Zealand's universities or other tertiary institutions ..."

The absence of explicit university involvement in New Zealand Foresight indicated that even in the late nineties the national science and tertiary education fields were considered separate spheres of endeavour. The lack of coordination between MoRST and the Ministry of Education was further highlighted since the government had instigated a tertiary education reform process at about the same time as Foresight. A Green Paper was released in 1997 and a White Paper (*Tertiary Education in New Zealand: Policy Directions for the 21st Century*) in December 1998. Michael Peters and Peter Roberts wrote a critique of the White Paper in *University Futures and the Politics of Reform in New Zealand* (1999). Peters' and Roberts' "reading" of the White Paper was similar to that of other observers. The review was considered to be an extension of the 1988 *Hawke Report* (Department of Education) agenda and included specific proposals to move tertiary education in New Zealand further along the road of privatisation in line with the most ardent forms of neoliberal theory (despite protestations to the opposite, see the White Paper, 1998: 14). Specific policies proposed in the 1998 document included a pseudo voucher system of funding, the consistent construction of students as consumers, the funding of private educational organisations on the same basis as public institutions, and in line with this the non-differentiation of tertiary entities according to purpose (for example, small private training establishments were deemed as important as universities and to be treated on a competitive "level playing field"), the eventual unbundling of research and teaching with most research money migrating into a contestable pool, and, contradictorily, stronger powers of government intervention through university council accountability procedures. In addition, the document was light on historical and contextual analysis and written solely by Ministry of Education officials without the benefit of wider input. Peters and Roberts (1999) noted:

The white paper can be seen as a synthesis of neoliberal ideas developed and applied over more than a decade of social policy reform in New Zealand (37).

The recommendations in the white paper signal a decisive shift from collegial, democratic and representative systems of governance to a business model (46).

Critics highlighted the inadequacy of the White Paper in terms of preparing New Zealand for the knowledge society. In comparison with the United Kingdom's *Dearing Report* (1997), for example, New Zealand's tertiary review effort was seen as somewhat dated and ineffective. The media in 1999 was awash with the rocketing economic successes of countries like Finland and Ireland and how these had been achieved through government coordination, strategising and prioritised funding for tertiary education. By contrast New Zealand's economic and social indicators looked dismal and did nothing to support claims that Rogernomics² was good for New Zealand (see for example Easton, 1999b: 54).

Even as the White Paper was released, the National Government and the newly appointed Minister of Tertiary Education, Max Bradford, quickly distanced themselves from the document. Just eight months after the White Paper appeared, the weekend paper sub-headline read: "A review of *tertiary education* on hold as the Government rethinks *economic strategy*" (my emphases) (Small, 1999:1). Indeed, the White Paper's recipe for hollowing out postgraduate programmes and research generally, haunted the government as increasingly the warnings and realities of the "brain drain" and truncated science careers commanded expanding media space (see for example, Ansley, 1998).

The *Bright Future* package (Ministry of Commerce, 1999), launched by Max Bradford and Prime Minister, Jenny Shipley, on August 18th 1999, very clearly underscored the fact that some thinking *had* gone into repositioning the National government's tertiary education policy just three months out from an election. *Bright Future* (Ministry of Commerce, 1999) was the government's answer to accusations of a lack of government leadership and direction in New Zealand's knowledge policy. It explicitly pulled together research, business and education for the service of business and economic performance. It was significant that *Bright Future* had been published by the Ministry of Commerce and not the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology given that most of the policies dealt with education and science.

In *Bright Future* the cultural and social fields are studiously ignored. Education, science and technology exist to service the needs of a knowledge *economy*. Slippage between knowledge society and knowledge economy occurs with ease. Significantly, the decision to use the singular *future* rather than plural *futures* reinforces the notion of one New Zealand working as a corporate body for one outcome: increased economic performance.

Tertiary Education, Labour and the Knowledge Society

By the time the Labour government came to power towards the end of 1999 there was considerable bipartisan support for "New Zealand as Knowledge Society". The actual election rhetoric was divided down the economy/ society line with National opting for the knowledge economy and Labour for the broader notion of a knowledge society. Media and political discourse increasingly positioned:

1. Education, tertiary education and particularly postgraduate education as key drivers of the knowledge economy;
2. The government as a necessary lead player who should provide coordination and direction for tertiary education;
3. The university as the vital production line generating knowledge workers and knowledge products;
4. Research as the lifeblood of "innovative" knowledge production.

The Knowledge Society became the primary sign dominating New Zealand policy moves, in many directions, and continues to operate as a supposedly politically neutral, beneficial and therefore uncontested rallying point for Labour initiatives. This has been nowhere more apparent than in the tertiary education review by TEAC. The establishment of the Commission was one of the earlier major initiatives of the incoming Labour-led coalition following the 1999 election. The key phrase *Lifelong learning for the knowledge society*, appeared at the bottom of every page of the first TEAC report (TEAC, 2000). Although this practice was dropped from the remaining three reports, the fourth and final report of the Commission thematises the concept of knowledge society in the Preface, noting: "The overall aim of the strategy is to make New Zealand a world-leading knowledge society by providing all New Zealanders with opportunities for lifelong learning" (TEAC, 2001: vii).

Significantly, though, knowledge is never defined. I would like therefore to offer a description of knowledge from Jean Francois Lyotard (1979:19):

Knowledge ... is a question of competence that goes beyond the simple determination and application of criteria of efficiency (technical qualification), of justice and/or happiness (ethical wisdom), of the beauty of a sound or colour (auditory and visual sensibility), etc. Understood in this way, knowledge is what makes someone capable of forming 'good' denotative utterances, but also good prescriptive utterances and good evaluative utterances ...

The consensus that permits such knowledge to be circumscribed and makes it possible to distinguish one who knows from one who doesn't (the foreigner, the child) is what constitutes the culture of a people.

The message here is that what is good knowledge in one context may not be good knowledge in another. Knowledge devoid of context, corporeal traces and history, circulated along computer cables and between transmission stations, across the globe, may not be the best knowledge for invigorating civil society or even local economies. Knowledge, according to Lyotard (1979), depends on culture. As Jeremy Rifkin (2000) observes, culture (and therefore knowledge) cannot be exhaustively mined and treated as a "standing reserve" (Heidegger, 1977) for the economy because the result will be an emptiness in all spheres. Rifkin (2000: 252) says:

... culture must be rejuvenated for its own sake and on its own terms because it alone is the source for human values. While a restored culture will undoubtedly benefit the market, it can't be allowed simply to be the market's raw resource.

Rifkin explains also that culture symbiotically depends on place, geography. This concept is rarely conceded in the New Zealand policy documents (education and science), which unproblematically transpose discursal imperatives for action (foresight, lifelong learning, knowledge society) from one side of the planet to the other.

All real cultures exist in geography because that's where intimacy takes place, and without intimacy it is not possible to create bonds of social trust and engender true feelings of empathy. Resurrecting and revitalising culture, then, means paying at least as much attention to geography as to cyberspace and to participation in real communities (Rifkin, 2000: 253).

Further, in the TEAC documents, which advocate the importance of all knowledge, including supposedly critical knowledge, the contested theoretical nature of terms like the "knowledge society" are not critically explored. Michael Peters (1997) has pointed out that the term has a number of different theoretical and philosophical lineages including those constructions of knowledge closely aligned to techno-scientism and the hypergeneration of global capital. As Steve Fuller (1997: 76) observes:

... it is truly perverse of celebrants of the Knowledge Society to declare that humanity is on the threshold of a new conception of knowledge that will have to be evaluated on its own emerging terms. After all those terms emerged long ago, but are now only fully realisable. They can be summed up in the word Positivism: industrial society's final frontier.

There also seems to be a theme in the TEAC documents: that the much-desired knowledge society (how will we know when we have got one?) will result in a more equitable and just society, but as Chisholm points out:

Knowledge societies ... theoretically offer 'unprecedented means to empower social actions and to add to the self-transforming capacity of society' [Stehr]. Yet in practice they appear to be highly susceptible to recreating and reinforcing systematic social inequalities and to exacerbating economic and social polarisation (Chisholm, 1999:3, cited in Peters, 2002c: 45).

The term knowledge society and what it might stand for became increasingly narrow in New Zealand as the Labour government began to strategise in a very "hands on" (as opposed to "hands together") way for the whole country, dictating what the purpose of tertiary education should be. The knowledge society is apparently to be undergirded by the government's five high level goals for New Zealand. These goals explicitly prioritise economic growth before other types of social and cultural development in New Zealand. In the third TEAC report (TEAC, 20016: 14) the national strategic goals were stated as:

- Innovation
- Economic development
- Social development
- Environmental sustainability
- Fulfilling Treaty of Waitangi obligations

Innovation is an awkward term in the tertiary education context. In the TEAC document it is placed in the prioritised initial position of the five strategic national goals. With the term innovation so closely associated with product development for hyper-competitive markets, tertiary education appears first and foremost as a tool for the generation of capital. Lyotard analysed the importance of so-called innovation to capital regeneration more than twenty years ago. He pointed out:

... the system can and must encourage ... movement to the extent that it combats its own entropy; the novelty of an 'unexpected move' with its correlative displacement of a partner or group of partners, can supply the system with that increased performativity it forever demands and consumes (Lyotard, 1979: 15).

According to this analysis, innovation or the novelty of an "unexpected move" constitutes a vital ingredient in the growth of capital wealth. However as one commentator noted: "Universities' principal mission is nurturing intellectual ability and not aiding economic development" (Cassie, 1999: 2).

The Association of Crown Research Institutes' (2000) document *Knowledge Underpins Quality of Life: an Economic Commentary* noted that the reason the eighties and nineties reforms did not result in economic growth for New Zealand was not the underlying neoliberal philosophy of the reforms themselves but the fact that innovation and entrepreneurship were apparently lacking. It goes on to explain that the so-called efficiency gains over this period of time were essentially misguided. Rather, the path to economic success is innovation. In this document, like many recently produced in Western countries, particularly in science institutions, innovation is constructed as the key to prosperity, and as such innovation and its relationship to knowledge has taken on some very specific meanings and triumphalist attributes. The 2000 report by the Australian Chief Scientist, Robin Batterham: *The Chance to Change - A Discussion Paper* describes innovation as follows:

Where knowledge is an essential ingredient, innovation is the activity that utilises that resource. As sunlight is to photosynthesis, knowledge is to innovation. Innovation is the process that translates knowledge into economic growth.

Innovation is much more than invention or R&D. It encompasses all activities encouraging the commercialisation and utilisation of new technologies - scientific, technological, organisational, financial and business.

It is now widely accepted that innovation is the key to future prosperity (Batterham, 2000:15).

Here innovation and knowledge are very closely interrelated and in these particular constructions neither have much to do with culture, history, society and, by association, people. They are presented as the only way to imagine the future. Another possibility for New Zealand's national strategic goals would have been to prioritise justice, and social and community well being. Significantly, by the time the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002/07* (Ministry of Education, 2002) was published the government strategic national goals had been renamed, rearranged and extended to six with economic transformation now in first place followed by social development Maori development, environmental sustainability, infrastructural development (new) and innovation falling to last place. Perhaps the privileging of innovation and economic goals signalled too strongly the government's economic intentions for tertiary education.

Research Policy in TEAC Four

The recommendations finally developed for tertiary education research in the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission's fourth report, *Shaping the Funding Framework* (2001 *b*), speaks very clearly to restrictive constructions of knowledge, who should produce it and why.

The key research policy points in TEAC four (2001 *b*) are that:

1. Research and tuition money would be largely unbundled with most research funding being directed through a Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF). Money returning to institutions through the proposed mixed model PBRF would be calculated on:
 - The level of research activity of staff
 - Research degree completions
 - External research income
2. That teaching need only be informed by research at the postgraduate level.
3. That so-called centres or networks of research excellence would be established to foster and fund internationally reputable research teams.

While there was a strong recommendation for strengthened research capability in postgraduate programmes, the report relaxed the requirement for staff teaching at undergraduate level to be involved in research. The recommendation signalled a move away from a key distinguishing feature for universities, research-based teaching. The recommendation also threatened to reduce the capability of universities to fulfil a key legislative requirement: that they undertake a critic and conscience role in society, as fewer staff would be expected to be involved in research. The strategic concentration of research funding and activity at the postgraduate level along with an emphasis on greater accountability and efficiency through PBRF reinforced a certain "managerialist" construction of research, which fits comfortably with neoliberal dreams of totalised systems where input/output factors are completely measurable (Levine and Kaplan, 1997: 13) who write:

The intrusion of corporate ideals into the running of the universities - the teeth grinding acronyms, the movement towards 'efficiency and accountability', the celebration of individual enterprise - is only a symptom of effects visible globally ...

In addition, having to take account of external funding within the PBRF formula would be an obvious problem for Humanities and Social Science research, which does not attract the same proportion of government research funding, nor the linkages with private industry, nor does it have a tradition of seeking external research funding. This requirement already implies a marketised and scientised notion of research and knowledge. As de la Campa (1997:76) states:

The academy, increasingly dependent on the scientific model that equates grants with research value, now asks humanists to openly embrace the rigours of marketability: a constant stress on funding, grants . . . links to regional economies and the increasing commercialisation of professional roles.

The received notion that "quality", and so-called "useful/relevant" research can only be produced by those working in the most well-funded, high status sections of the system (postgraduate sector and Centres of Research Excellence, according to TEAC) reinforces the stereotype of the dire, professionally correct researcher churning out prestigious papers, too busy to turn a hand to less "valued" outputs such as policy submissions, course handbooks and widely read newspaper articles.

In an explication of the dynamics of a knowledge society, HUMANZ notes that an important condition for a knowledge society is that:

The increase in expert knowledges needs to be balanced by the transcoding of these knowledges into forms of language and modes of dissemination, which permit wide diffusion of ideas and concepts from one knowledge domain to others. Education and media organisations have a principle responsibility for this work (HUMANZ, 2000: 6).

TEAC research policy suggestions may actively work against encouraging the wider educative responsibilities of academics.

An obvious problem linked to counting research degree completions in the PBRF funding formula is that academics and departments may well focus on enrolling "low risk" research students, tending to screen out people who might initially be perceived as "too hard" to get through to completion. For example, this might include single parents, English as second language speakers, non-pakeha, lower academic achievers - all of whom may well be more able to create truly differentiated knowledge because of the very different tacit knowledge they bring to codified academic enquiry:

... all scientific advances and technological innovations are bound up with tacit knowledge. They rely on accumulated skills and habits, embedded in individuals and institutions. The creative spark is often the result of the striking of intuition upon the flintstone of tacit skills, rather than coming by logical deduction or rational deliberation (Hodgson, 1998: 419, in HUMANZ, 2000: 26).

Another research policy suggestion was the development of strategic Centres of Research Excellence (COREs). The ostensible purpose was that, New Zealand, because of its size, needs to "pick winners" in order to have any hope of developing strategic world class research capability. TEAC's recommendation was a two strand system where Model A COREs would concentrate on "world class research at the creation/discovery end of the spectrum irrespective of discipline". While Model B COREs were also supposed to be working at a world class level but would incorporate additional elements of:

... leveraging and lifting private sector investment in research and development, enhancing collaborative networking between research providers and users; improving the uptake of research findings (including commercialisation); and focussing upon the nation's strategic goals, not only in terms of economic development but also social development and environmental sustainability (TEAC, 20016: 103).

In practice, the government moved quickly to establish the COREs as a halfway house between the two models. Like the PBRF, this development underpinned the notion of research hierarchies where only the most prestigious, star researchers can gain a voice. One can only wonder at this move, which has attracted substantial new money (fifty three million dollars between 2002 and 2006) (Ministry of Education, 20026: 4) when New Zealand could apparently not afford to ensure that all degree level teaching is research based. In addition, the channelling of new, scarce, university research money into nationally strategic research when approximately \$450 million dollars already goes in that direction through vote: RS&T³ seems unwarranted. As the HUMANZ submission to TEAC pointed out tertiary educational institutions are educational institutions not Crown Research Institutes (HUMANZ, 2000a).

Other potentially problematical areas for research in the TEAC document are the explicit calls for universities to diversify their funding sources, particularly through developing links with industry and business. A key suggestion here and one underpinned through the PBRF is actively seeking commissioned research contracts and engaging in other entrepreneurial activities. The report specifically advocates more private sector investment in New Zealand tertiary education, not through increased taxation but through direct contributions, thus giving more say to the private sector as to how universities should conduct education and research (TEAC, 20016). Recently, the ability of the government to assure academic freedom in government sponsored business/university (research) partnerships has been questioned by the Association of University Staff National President, Grant Duncan. The AUS's press release states:

... the published goals and criteria for Cabinet approval of funding for (university and private enterprise) partnerships say nothing at all about academic freedom, scientific rigour or critical enquiry ... 'Mr Maharey's framework for approval does not ensure that his government's drive to commercialise university funding will in practice uphold the values that are crucial to the university's role in the advancement of knowledge' (Association of University Staff, 2002: 1).

Another area that impacts on research is the strong support in the TEAC review for tertiary education as an important export industry for New Zealand:

The country as a whole gains significantly from the export-education industry. For instance, the government would gain \$125 million in GST alone from a \$1 billion industry (TEAC, 20016: 142).

As Jane Kelsey (2000) has pointed out, though, the Commission needs to distinguish between internationalisation of education and the liberalisation of international trade in education and research activities. Kelsey notes that successive international trade agreements already regard education and research in New Zealand as commercial products, which can be traded internationally. Ramifications for research are evidenced through the increasing pressure placed on academics to engage only in commercially tradeable, profitable and quick-to-market products, and to train their research students to do the same.

In fact there is a major contradiction in the government's tertiary education strategy which may be a direct outcome of the "third way" philosophical and policy mix. TEAC's dear message to New Zealand publicly funded educational institutions has been to collaborate and cooperate. In the meantime the export education strategy sees neighbour universities competing vigorously in foreign and domestic markets for students. For example, the University of Auckland as part of the UNNERSITAS 21 consortium is offering distance courses over the internet to students around the world, as is the Auckland University of Technology through the Global University Alliance (the two universities sit on either side of Wellesley St, Auckland). Also, both universities vie to attract international students to New Zealand and often from the same international markets (such as, China, Malaysia, Korea). This philosophical tension between "education for nation building" and "education as a commodity", to be bought and sold on the international market is not addressed at all in the TEAC review.

More recently, the rhetoric of the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002/07* seemed to be linking tertiary education even more closely with economic performance. In this introductory paragraph of the second chapter, "The New Zealand Context: Our Development as a Prosperous and Confident Nation" of the *Tertiary Education Strategy* we are left in no doubt about the purpose of tertiary education in New Zealand:

The world's economy is undergoing significant change, with an increasing emphasis on the creation and application of knowledge as the foundation for prosperity and social inclusion. For New Zealand, the development of a prosperous and confident knowledge society must build on this nation's uniqueness and its strengths. To create, market and sell high-value products and services will require a strong focus on the global market place, and sophisticated new skills and knowledge. It will also require a culture of continuous inquiry, innovation and improvement - and of risk-taking and entrepreneurship (Ministry of Education, 2002a: 10).

Contesting Discourses

The four TEAC reports and the subsequent *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002/07* (Ministry of Education, 2002) contain contesting and contradictory discourses, especially as these pertain to research policy. The reports discuss the importance of humanities and social sciences research in one sentence and then put discriminatory funding allocation mechanisms in place in another (through PBRF). Despite lip service to wide interpretations of the knowledge society, there is a strong emphasis on the culture of enterprise and building skills of entrepreneurship, which is not very different from the discourse which underpins the notion of knowledge economies. In many ways policy developments are a more sophisticated (hands on?) version of earlier research policy drives by neoliberal governments in New Zealand wishing to explicitly yoke academic research closely to economic development. Rather than promoting the marketisation of tertiary education per se, "third way" policies under Labour promote knowledge production by universities *for* competitive international markets. As Michael Peters (2002c: 41) noted in his last lecture entitled "Globalisation

and the Knowledge Economy: Implications for Education Policy in New Zealand": "A certain tedium has crept into official policy documents and academic papers that derives from the new hyper-discourse and seemingly endless inflated claims that entertain the prospect of the so-called new knowledge economy and its implications for education".

The question has to be whether romanticised notions of the knowledge society and neoliberal knowledge economy fantasies *are* the most promising way to underpin policy and especially research developments in tertiary education. I would like to draw on the summary report of the UNESCO world conference on higher education *Higher Education in the Twenty First Century: Vision and Action* (1998) to imagine further ways of talking about higher education and especially research. The report notes:

As regards the mission of higher education, the debates have shown that it needs to be widened. Beyond its traditional functions of teaching, training, research and study, all of which remain fundamental ... higher education also has a contribution to make to the solution of the major problems of planetary, regional and local importance (poverty, homelessness, worsening inequalities, environmental degradation, etc.) and to work to promote development, the sharing of knowledge, solidarity, the universal respect of human rights, democracy, equality of rights between women and men and a culture of peace and non-violence (UNESCO, 1998: 4).

Further to this, the conference stressed the cultural and ethical mission of higher education. These are obviously not new ideas but they are worth reiterating in the face of new and stronger calls to make our research count in terms of dollars and weighted output scores rather than in terms of difficult and theoretically intricate questions about knowledge, politics, ethics and the quality of people's lives.

Acronyms

AUS - Association of University Staff

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

CO RE - Centre of Research Excellence

CRI - Crown Research Institute

ForST - Foundation of Research, Science and Technology

GE - Genetic Engineering

HUMANZ- Humanities Society of New Zealand/Te Whaingāronui

MoRST - Ministry of Research, Science and Technology

PBRF - Performance Based Research Fund

RS&T - Research, Science and Technology

TEAC - Tertiary Education Advisory Commission

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USA - United States of America

Note

1. Comment by Nicky Hager, Research Seminar, School of Communication Studies, AUT, 19 August 2002.
2. Rogonomics is the name given to New Zealand's particular variant of neoliberalism. It was named after the former Labour Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas.

3. Vote: RS&T refers to the money allocated in the annual government Budget to Research, Science and Technology through the Ministry of Research Science and Technology and the Foundation of Research Science and Technology

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