**Mediation, Regulation, Critique: Mapping the Relationship between
Cultural Meanings and Political Responses to Poverty, 1970-2010**

By

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For Rachel, for Tui Love, for Ida June

Abstract

Since 1970 there has been growing concern over poverty in New Zealand in academia, government, and popular culture. From 1970 until 1984, this concern focused on New Zealand's prolonged recession and falling standards of living in a period of high inflation. Since then, however, poverty and economic disparity have increased dramatically. The 1970-1984 period is now looked upon as relatively generous and committed to economic equality.

The increase in poverty in contemporary times is marked by two political features. Neoliberal economic and social policies have resulted in the polarisation of wealth, increased employment insecurity, and reduced income for those reliant on state benefits (Harvey 2005). At the same time, discourses of morality have blamed beneficiaries for their "dependence" on the state. These features are not simply coincidental: the Governments that pursued income supplement reductions in New Zealand also employed the rhetoric of "welfare dependency" (O'Brien, Bradford, Stevens, Walters & Wicks 2010). As such, the link between moral discourse about poverty and political outcomes for the poor seems undeniable.

I argue in this thesis that the relationship between these moral discourses and political outcomes is not as straightforward as the narrative above suggests. To make this argument I analyse moral discourses of poverty in the pre-neoliberal and neoliberal periods and find that these discourses are not as clearly aligned with macroeconomic periods as some suggest. Using this analysis, I then draw upon three traditions of cultural studies with macro-sociological theoretical orientations to determine a more fruitful analysis of the relationship between cultural meaning and political outcomes.

I propose in this thesis that an analysis of the cultural meaning and political outcomes of poverty requires an investigation into three related spaces of contestation: mediation, regulation, and critique. To operationalise this analysis I focus specifically on newsprint mediation of poverty and neoliberalism, the institutional arrangements of the state that correspond to macroeconomic periods, and anti-poverty social movements. I also argue – counter to trends in sociological cultural studies – that the concepts of ideology and class must be re-introduced to effectively analyse the relationship between the cultural meanings and political outcomes of poverty.

In my analysis I find considerable spaces of contestation between newspaper media, state institutions, and social movements. At the same time, synergies between them emerge. In all three, a "cultural logic" that promotes social and ethnic identities over economic identities becomes institutionalized within social movements, state institutions, and media reporting within the neoliberal era. This promotion of identities runs counter to the economic regulation of the period, where polarization occurs throughout society. As this "cultural logic" is institutionalized in the state, it is used to promote the understanding that economic disparity occurs between cultural identities rather than across them. As such, it translates

potentially radical claims for economic redistribution into claims for inclusion. From this finding I conclude that the cultural logic, although it is called upon by actors across the political spectrum, nevertheless constitutes an ideology. It not only serves, in economic terms, a limited class at the expense of many, but also masks relative class benefits.

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List of Abbreviations

ACC	Accident Compensation Commission
AUWRC	Auckland Unemployed Workers Rights Centre
CCCS	Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
CER	Closer Economic Relations (agreement between NZ and Australia)
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
CTU	Council of Trade Unions
DPB	Domestic Purposes Benefit
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECA	Employment Contracts Act
FOL	Federation of Labour
HNZ	Housing New Zealand
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NSC	New Spirit of Capitalism
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Poverty Action Coalition
RBNZ	Reserve Bank of New Zealand
SHAC	State Housing Action Committee
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
WFF	Working for Families

Introduction

Since 1970, the social meanings attributed to poverty have changed dramatically, as have political responses to the poor. The connotations of the word, the prevalence of its use, and common understandings of its underlying causes all mark cultural shifts in New Zealand, while the composition, depth, and prevalence of poverty speak to changes in the material organisation of the state and economy.

This project aims to understand poverty on its multiple levels: as a cultural referent and moral marker, as an effect of economic systems and political decisions, and as a governing practice through which social order is contested and disciplined. The exploration into poverty thus confronts the relationship between meaning and politics. The question of politics is always already-present in the analysis of culture when using sociological cultural studies. As Wagner (2001) asserts, the sociological project attempts to find coherence in the face of social contingency, and thus needs to be regarded as a political project from the outset. Sociological cultural studies provide this coherence, in part, through the analysis of cultural production, continuity, and challenge to ways in which meaning is constructed. For the theories employed in this dissertation, culture – or the way that meaning made – provides some structuring function: as an area of mystification and justification, as a vehicle for contestation, or as a realm in which actions are informed if not necessitated. In these theories, ties between culture and politics are unquestionable, yet the nature of these ties is debated.

I pursue two objectives in this dissertation. The first is to analyse poverty from a cultural and political perspective, that is, a perspective that takes into account the relationship between cultural meanings and political outcomes. The second is to engage with cultural studies in a sociological manner to demonstrate that the analysis of poverty cannot neatly conform to analytical and theoretical trends in cultural studies. These two objectives will inform one another: the use of theory is grounded empirically, and the analysis of empirical data benefits from theoretical considerations.

To address both objectives, the dissertation is broken into three sections. First, I present material and moral accounts of poverty from 1970 to 2010. Specific chapter contents are detailed below, but I will note here that the incidence of poverty increases markedly with the neoliberal transformation of the state, even as it existed in less severe form earlier. Here, as well, I complicate the simple connection between changing morality and macroeconomic periods by pointing to relatively stable moral coordinates across eras. Second, I use the accounts from the first section to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of three traditions within sociological cultural studies. I conclude with a heuristic model for analysing poverty as a cultural and political phenomenon in New Zealand. Third, I follow this heuristic model in the final three chapters to analyse poverty in New Zealand. Mediation, regulation, and contestation are analysed individually but considered in tension with each other.

In pursuing the first objective – the analysis of poverty in New Zealand – I make two primary arguments. First, a cultural logic that privileges social and ethnic identities and effaces economic (class) identities develops in the Keynesian era and becomes institutionalised in the neoliberal state and media. More than direct moral discourses about poverty (such as who is deserving or undeserving) this cultural logic shapes the current era in terms of how critique is made and how it is channelled. Second, “legitimate” and “illegitimate” political spaces are also determined. These spaces mark the delineation and overlap between the state, media, and anti-poverty movements.

My second objective, engagement with cultural studies, is premised upon three arguments. First, a cultural-political analysis of poverty in New Zealand requires a distinction between political spaces. My division of mediation, regulation, and critique speak to separate, yet related, spaces of contestation. Second, where cultural meanings may inform action, a deeper reading is required to see the broad functioning of culture across political spaces, including how culture is itself informed. Here it is not enough to note the cultural motivations of actors, without also noting the use and manipulation of cultural meanings and how these relate to broader social outcomes. Third, and related to the first two, I argue that cultural studies needs to be more self-reflective about its own political position. In particular, I argue that a return to the concept of ideology – and in the case of poverty, class ideology – is warranted. In the post 1984 period of increasing income and social disparity, we need to

think about ideology in relation to the relative economic benefits that our cultural meanings afford economic classes.

Four bodies of literature – sociological cultural studies, social policy, governance, and critical media studies – underpin this analysis. First, sociological cultural studies of poverty from materialist and constructivist positions provide a theoretical framework to contemplate the project as a whole. From a materialist perspective, Piven and Cloward (1972) present a seminal examination of the stabilising function of welfare within a liberal capitalist political economy. From increasingly constructivist perspectives, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) analyse the criminalisation of predominantly poor groups as a means of securing consent in the capitalist state (Hall, Crichton, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts 1978), and Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) similarly consider poverty as a corollary of capitalism, but one that varies in response to critique and justification. From more explicitly constructivist positions, examinations of social identities and representation predominate. Discourse Theory offers insight into the construction of identities that constitute “the poor” and Gans’ (1995) historical analysis of “categories of worth” (Steensland 2008) provides an understanding of persistent representations of the poor as deserving or undeserving. Critical media analyses (such as Barnett, Hodgetts, Nikora, Chamberlain & Karapu 2007) and cultural studies of public policy (Steensland 2008) rely predominantly on these constructivist positions.

Although all of the studies incorporate, to varying degrees, the importance of cultural understandings of poverty, their foci vary. I identify three primary strands: where poverty is a function of the capitalist state; where poverty is carried through media and popular discourse with varied effects on politics; and where poverty is a function of relations that emerge out of critique and compromise between market forces and social actors.

Shortcomings in these works, explored in Chapter 3, relate to the ways that culture is theorised in relation to politics, the related methods of analyses, and their applicability to New Zealand.

The second body of literature examined – social policy related to poverty – tends to have two subsets: specific policy changes that correspond to elected governments, and broader changes corresponding to state eras, most notably the pre-1984 interventionist state and post 1984 market-directed state. These two foci blur at times, resulting in both overestimation of the

political differences in specific policy changes (Roper 2005a; Kelsey 2002: 47-87) and, conversely, in assigning too much coherence to state eras (Larner 2000). The question of the correspondence between the micro and macro is difficult to judge from social policy literature alone, as a recent collection on social welfare in New Zealand (Lunt, O'Brien & Stephens 2008) makes clear in its varied contributions.

In order to establish a comprehensive understanding of political eras and broader shifts in the politics of poverty, I incorporate governance literature in addition to social policy. In New Zealand, governance is not, in itself, well researched, but is limited to a few key authors such as Larner, Craig, Porter, Kelsey and Humpage. However, the issue of governance enters into public administration literature (Duncan & Chapman 2010; Chapman & Duncan 2007; Christensen & Lægreid 2007) as well as literature from various policy areas such as education, health, and science. Bringing these studies of governance together with social policy enables me to consider politics in terms of the institutionalisation of social relations, the promotion and exclusion of social identities, and the interaction between social actors and the state.

Finally, I draw on critical media studies to examine cultural representations of poverty alongside the depiction of social and economic identities. In contrast to social policy and governance literature, critical media studies allow a clearer understanding of non-regulative politics. From within this body of literature, I focus on the construction of audiences (Wood 1984), state manipulation of media (Scott 1997; Hope 1999), media reliance on “primary definers” (Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978), and disconnections between media and the poor (Hesmondhalgh 2006).

Methodology

As already noted, I draw on a number of sociological cultural theories: most prominently the cultural studies of the CCCS during the 1970s, The Essex School of Discourse Theory, and New American Cultural Sociology (associated with Jeffrey Alexander). These traditions have been chosen because they provide macro-sociological accounts of cultural studies and because they represent relatively ‘pure’ theoretical moments. For example, the CCCS during the 1970s is grounded in Western-Marxist theory; the Essex School of Discourse Theory

(Discourse Theory from here on) rejects Marxism in favour of Foucauldian and Derridian concepts of “the social” and the nature of social relations; and New American Sociology rejects Marxism and poststructuralism in favour of Durkheimian structural analysis, and preoccupation with social harmony, disruption and repair. In other words, I do not draw as readily on theorists who already bring together aspects of Marxism and poststructuralism¹.

The traditions chosen also largely rely on literary analytical techniques rather than linguistic techniques. Alexander and Smith (2002) openly advocate for these techniques, whereas the CCCS adopts literary techniques to best analyse ideology (see Hall 1973; CCCS 1992). Discourse Theory, like the CCCS and New American Sociology, provides no systematic analysis of language (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 24). The complimentary approach to textual analysis allows for a relatively easily comparison and translation across theories². In the traditions chosen, theoretical distinctions are given priority while analytical methods remain loosely prescribed.

I also draw upon other theorists to clarify or further concepts. The French cultural sociology associated with Luc Boltanski – as I expand upon in Chapter 3 – provides insight in relation to critique and social change. Other key theorists, including Mouzelis, Mann, Mitchell, and Therborn, are also used.

Empirically, I track cultural values that relate to poverty, the representation of poverty-inclined groups, formal political interventions into poverty (in terms of policy, governance, and moral commentary), popular political responses, and economic occurrences. To achieve this tracking over roughly forty years, I use a selective media analysis where budgets, elections, and significant events are examined at regular intervals within popular media, government documents, and social movement literature. Where significant issues arise within the time periods analysed, the analysis extends until the issues no longer appears in the news cycle.

¹ Theorists such as Fairclough (1992, 2001) have not, in my opinion, struggled with the difficult definitional and epistemological differences between the moments that I do in Chapter 3. Using the theoretical strands that I do allows for comparison on points that, I believe, are glossed over by others who use them together uncomplicatedly.

² For example, Stuart Hall’s use of “articulation” has affinities with Discourse Theory’s use of the same word, the use of semiotic analysis in the CCCS relies on similar assumptions to New American Sociology’s reliance on binary codes, and so on.

For the majority of popular media analysis, I used *The Dominion* and its successor, the *Dominion Post*, in the first instance. *The Dominion* and *Dominion Post* are published in Wellington but have distribution throughout New Zealand. Where significant contestation was at stake (such as after the 1991 budget) or where contestation occurred more prominently in Auckland (such as with the deportation of Pacific Peoples) I also analysed the *New Zealand Herald*. The *New Zealand Herald* is the longest running and most widely distributed of Auckland newspapers. No electronic databases were available for the majority of the time in question (until roughly 1996 for *The Dominion* and late 1998 for the *New Zealand Herald*) so the majority of newspaper analysis was conducted on microfilm. However, in Chapter 4 I examine specific moments in the popular media with the aid of electronic databases to ensure that the media is examined exhaustively. My selective media analysis examined election year budgets and the first budgets of new governments from two weeks before the budget date until one week after in *The Dominion* and its successor, the *Dominion Post*. It also examined national elections three weeks before election and one week after. This time period was extended forward or backward as necessary. In addition, I also examined key political moments such as the December 1990 benefit reduction and Employment Contracts Act announcement, the “week of action” that responded to that announcement in 1991, and mediation regarding the deportation of Pacific Peoples in 1976. I also examined contestation of the New Right as well as poverty more generally in the 1991-1993 period, in the Beyond Dependency conference in 1996, the Hikoi of Hope in 1998, the representation of homelessness in Wellington from 2002-2004, and in the mediation efforts of the Child Poverty Action Group. In Chapter 4, where mediation in newspapers is considered in depth, I have specified the newspapers used and the time periods analysed in relation to specific sections of the chapter.

Aside from instances where electronic databases were used, I analysed whole newspapers. As the project set out to consider the broad social discourses operating in various periods, I was concerned with the representation of social groups, poverty, political priorities, and macroeconomic discourse. This allowed for a broader understanding of the cultural preoccupations in all periods, rather than just the understanding of poverty, but it was equally time consuming, and unsustainable when analysing an event such as the Hikoi of Hope that received media coverage from August 1998 to January 1999. The terms used, newspapers

analysed, and selection criteria for analysis using electronic databases are also detailed in Chapter 4.

Alternative newspapers and social movement newsletters were used to provide alternative views from mainstream media. These tended to have short life spans, but have also changed their format with the electronic dissemination of media. As such, they do not necessarily adhere to the same periodic analysis as popular newspapers. For the most part, these publications were examined more intensively, but over a shorter period of time. Union publications included the *Federation of Labour Bulletin*, the Clerical Workers' Union publication, *Paperclip*, and for New Zealand Labourers, General Workers and Associated Trades Unions, *Clarion* and *The Manual*. In the post 1987 period, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (CTU) electronic archive served as the predominant source of union literature. Alternative media also included the feminist magazine *Broadsheet*, which had the longest run of any of the alternative periodicals, from 1972-1997. The Communist Party and Maoist newspapers, *Worker's Voice*, *People's Voice* and *Red Flag*, constituted the alternative media from the far left that was supplemented with websites such as the Aotearoa Independent Media Centre. From a more specifically anti-poverty perspective, the newsletters of the Auckland Unemployed Workers Rights Centre (AUWRC), *Mean Times*, the Wellington Unemployed Workers Union, *Doledrums*, the Poverty Action Coalition (PAC), *PAC Newsletter*, the Combined Beneficiaries magazine, *Fair Deal*, and the Te Roopa Rawakare magazine for the National Unemployed and Beneficiaries Movement, *Declaration*, provided alternative mediation for the 1980s and 1990s. This was supplemented from the mid 1990s onward with the electronic archives of CPAG, the Family Centre, other church organisation anti-poverty publications, and the *Jobs Letter*.

Alternative media was also central to the analysis in the period before poverty was widely reported in newsprint media (from 1970 until the late 1970s). During this period, issues that affected groups more likely to be experiencing poverty were found first in the social movement literature and then traced backward through popular media accounts and government documents (such as parliamentary debates in the Hansard reports). A large portion of Chapter 2 is based on this type of analysis, where media representations were pursued rather than occurring within the regular sampling. I make explicit in the areas where

this occurs that representations of groups are not ubiquitous throughout popular media, but are contested.

All alternative media was supplemented with academic accounts of the movements as there was considerable crossover between academic and activist circles. For example, Susan St John is a spokesperson for CPAG and also an academic that comments on social policy. Similarly, feminists such as Dann and Bunkle contributed to academic literature about the women's movement as well as to *Broadsheet*. In tracking academic accounts alongside popular and alternative media, I aimed to find a plurality of views rather than relying strictly on popular, social movement, or academic accounts. The multi-sided media approach is thus meant to balance some of the shortcomings of the popular print media in its representation of poverty, economics, anti-poverty actors, and audience construction.

Supplementing the media analysis, I pursued further sources as was deemed necessary. For social movement actors of the 1970s onward, literature situated concerns, demands, and group dynamics that were not necessarily evident in popular and alternative media. For principle actors in the economic sphere research papers and occasional papers dating from the early 1970s situated the changing understanding of global economics, the particular economic problems of New Zealand, the development of a market-liberalisation policies, and macroeconomic ideologies generally. Official government documents, from various ministries and from parliament, provided insight into government rhetoric and internal state mechanisms that helped shape poverty over the period. These included the published national budgets, articles from the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Bulletins, publications from the New Zealand Planning Council, and working papers for the Treasury.

Terminology

As one would expect in a thesis about the politics and meanings of poverty, the terms used throughout this analysis are contestable. I go over a few here to clarify some of the more obvious problem terms.

First, poverty measurement throughout the period of investigation is not consistent; for this reason I do not use a single measure of poverty but instead try to find commonalities in

poverty measurement research³. I believe that where economic inequality leads to poor health outcomes, over-crowded housing, and poor educational results, we can safely say that poverty is an “absolute” phenomenon rather than a relative difference in luxury expenditure (as discussions of “relative” poverty in Chapter 4 imply). However, I do not know of a current measure that adequately marks a poverty line⁴. Thus, where I note increases in poverty and economic disparity, these correspond to significant changes across a range of studies. For example, although Easton (1997b) and Stephens, Waldegrave and Frater (1995) argue over appropriate poverty measurements, they nevertheless agree that in the 1980s, “poverty and hardship rose, [using] any reasonable definition” (Easton 1995: 209). Similarly, O’Dea’s (2000) work for the Treasury argues that across all measures, income inequality rose markedly in New Zealand compared to other OECD countries in the 1980s to mid 1990s. In these periods, I simply note that poverty and income inequality increased.

Second, in line with Piven and Cloward (1977: preface) references to the poor throughout this dissertation are often interchangeable with “the working class.” Throughout the entire period examined, popular cultural representations thwart any link between work and poverty and yet in all eras the poor are indeed workers engaged in both domestic and paid labour, and they are also those most critically affected by market fluctuations. For this reason, I use “class” as a descriptive term for the poor and those most prone to poverty. Where possible, I have specified how class should be understood: in Marx’s relations of production, or Weber’s market position. From Chapter 3 onward, I argue that the poor constitute a class based both on their market position and their relation to production. Class refers to those excluded from paid employment as well as those in precarious, low-waged employment.

³ Briefly, poverty measurement tends towards two different foci: income measurement and market purchasing power. Income measurement is further divided into relative measures (usually 50 or 60 percent of median income) or constant measures (against a specific living standard or an income level that is adjusted for inflation). The difference between these measures can be significant during periods of rapid inflation or deflation. The measurement of market purchasing power tends to better measure the economic position of individuals, but is subject to more subjective reporting. Importantly, there is only about a 50 percent overlap between people considered poor in income and market purchasing power measures. These measures result in a greater overlap when income is measured longitudinally, indicating that prolonged periods at the low end of income (such as beneficiaries and those in precarious employment are prone to) tends to result in low levels of purchasing power.

⁴ Long-term expenditure outcomes (or market purchasing power) is probably the best indicator, but is not readily available and has not been used extensively to measure against health and education outcomes in New Zealand.

Third, for the analysis of media beginning in Chapter 2, I borrow key terms from previous cultural studies. The categorisation of representations of the poor draws on the work of Alexander (1988b; 2006a). The symbols used constitute “codes” based in Durkheimian structuralism that distinguishes between the profane and sacred. Alexander (2006a) distinguishes between “civil” and “anticivil” representations, terms that translate directly to the designation of deserving and undeserving poor (Gans 1995). In this categorisation, individuals and groups are labelled in easily distinguishable terms, and thus, little subjective reading of language is required. Whereas a more extensive and subjective reading, such as the semiotic tradition associated with Barthes’ (1977), is easily contestable, Durkheimian structuralism is less subject to individual interpretation.

Fourth, I use the term neoliberalism in line with Harvey (2005). Harvey (2005) argues that neoliberalism is ideologically promiscuous (it can be combined with a number of long-running ideologies such as social conservatism or social liberalism) and can be manifested in a number of political arrangements. The few constant coordinates of neoliberalism include a shift in wealth from the lower classes to the economic elite alongside ideological valuation of the market over the state. In New Zealand, both of these coordinates are features of the state from roughly 1984 onward. I use the term neoliberalism to signify this period and the predominant economic and social policies of the state during this period – regressive taxation, weakened industrial relations legislation for unions, low inflation/ high unemployment maintenance through reserve bank policies, and resulting insecure employment⁵ – though I also recognise the differences between governments within the period (see Chapters 1, 5).

In the dissertation I develop the term “cultural logic.” I use the terms culture to denote “meaning-making” and “cultural logic” to identify particular meanings that become predominant. For example, in Chapters 4 through 6 I discuss a “cultural logic” that develops and is promoted through social movements, media, and state institutions after 1984; this cultural logic interprets poverty as based on ethnic division rather than economic-political arrangements. This understanding of poverty becomes dominant through particular

⁵ Other political economic changes that are commonly attributed to neoliberalism, such as state austerity in social welfare and reduced social welfare benefits (see Roper 2005a) can also be considered part of neoliberalism. In this project, however, I use the term to consider the broader time period from 1984 onward, where the polarisation of wealth is not significantly altered by changes in social welfare benefit levels (see Perry 2012).

institutional arrangements, though it is not absolute or unchallenged. As Chapter 6 makes clear, the cultural logic structures criticism but is also resisted.

Alongside “cultural logic” I use the term ideology in a critical sense to denote moments when cultural meaning is used to obfuscate differences in power. For example, where concerns over the systemic production of poverty are rearticulated through media or state channels into concerns over the differences between Māori and Pakeha achievement (see Chapter 4 and 5), the cultural logic noted above is used as an ideology.

Finally, I distinguish between “differentiated” and “undifferentiated” identities. This refers to two related phenomena. First, the social differentiation of economic identities – for example, the designation of the material deprived as Māori, single mothers, the aged, the low-waged, or beneficiaries rather than “the poor” or “the working class.” Second, the tendency to represent social or cultural identities as undifferentiated economically – for example, where Māori, Pakeha, workers, the aged, or taxpayers are represented as economically homogenous groups.

Thesis Structure

Chapter one provides an overview of the material incidence of poverty in New Zealand from 1970-2010 along two primary axes: the macro-economic and the micro-economic (or changes to the shape of the political economy within the state versus policies specific to particular parties but with little greater change). Three periods become apparent in this analysis. 1970 through 1984 marks a period in which the state expands its welfare programmes for those excluded from paid labour yet the working poor become more prone to poverty. Beginning in 1984, and accentuated from 1990, the breadth and depth of poverty increase alongside growing economic disparity in New Zealand. Finally, from 1999 onward, poverty is lessened somewhat, but a greater economic division between workers and beneficiaries results and economic polarisation continues⁶.

This rough sketch of material levels of poverty in Chapter 1 is followed by an analysis of morality associated with poverty in Chapter 2. Here I challenge the connection between

⁶ Economic polarisation continues if one takes into account housing costs (Perry 2012).

shifting morality and macroeconomics. This is done through an examination of two discourses of morality that persist through political economic eras. I first contextualise the myth of a poverty-free New Zealand that persisted until the end of the 1970s within a stratified political community. I argue that although this myth contributed to generous state responses for incidences where poverty was acknowledged, it also allowed some forms of poverty to remain hidden, a function it increasingly fulfilled after 1990. Next, the generous moments of the 1970s where those recognised as “the poor” are given historically high levels of economic assistance is contrasted with the political use of “undeserving” representations that mask growing disparities and economic crises. The “undeserving” are presented in social rather than economic terms. At the same time, social groups that are “undeserving” are disproportionately economically as well as socially marginalised. As a result, the widespread support of “the poor,” at this moment, is mirrored by social divisions between groups that dominate poverty statistics. Although there is an undeniable shift in the discourses of morality that corresponds to the post 1984 state, in all periods the explicit use of “undeserving” representations mask economic crises and maintains relatively consistent social identities for the “undeserving.”

This chapter implicitly calls upon three different sociological cultural studies traditions: the Western Marxist based analysis of the CCCS in the 1970s, Discourse Theory, and the Durkheimian New American Cultural Sociology associated most closely with the work of Jeffrey Alexander. Chapter 3 examines the respective values of these theories in relation to the first two chapters: the class-based analyses of the CCCS; post-structural concerns with plurality, social incoherence, non-essentialism, and the analytical shift in focus from representation to discourse; and the Durkheimian analysis of stable cultural structures that act as guiding landmarks in the topography of social life. I argue that four trends within sociological cultural studies limit its effectiveness in analysing poverty as a cultural and political phenomenon: an over-estimation of the political significance of symbolic life, the promotion of non-economic identities, the increasing acceptance of liberal democracy for addressing political subordination, and the treatment of political institutions. I argue, by drawing on the theories, for the heuristic differentiation of mediated, regulated, and critical spaces: the coordinates that mark the remainder of the project. I also argue for a return of the critique of capitalism, or the recognition of the economic structuring of society across social groups.

Although I rely heavily on government, and popular media to analyse discourses of morality and political responses to poverty in Chapter 2, these accounts are combined with academic and social movement literature. Chapter 4 departs from this method to examine popular newsprint media in relation to a number of key moments that relate to poverty in New Zealand. In particular, I examine contestation of the New Right in popular media alongside the representation of contentious anti-poverty politics. Through this analysis I argue that popular newsprint mediation represents economic identities in social terms and, further, presents social identities as economically homogenous. At the same time, print media distinguishes strongly between legitimate and illegitimate political channels to delegitimize contentious politics. Both the poor and anti-poverty advocates find political channels for expressing demands limited except through direct mediation.

As Chapter 1 highlights, the regulation of poverty relates to the spheres of production and economic distribution (or the Marxist and Weberian concepts of class respectively). Chapter 5 extends the examination of regulation by considering the broad shifts of power within the state and how these translate into the institutional arrangements of the state. Using a Gramscian (1971), framework the state is understood as a balance between political and civil societies. Key to this analysis is the emergent power of the New Social Movements and the New Right in the 1970s alongside the declining power of organised labour. In this chapter I argue that the institutionalisation of neoliberalism occurs alongside the promotion of ethnic and gender identities and the suppression of economic identities. The biggest shifts in this regard are the institution of Māori and women's concerns within the state alongside the severe weakening of unions. At the same time, however, the institutionalisation of Māori through the Treaty of Waitangi claims process, to use the most obvious example, contributes to economic polarisation within Māoridom. In this case, the working class and the poor have political channels as Māori, but as an economic class *within* Māoridom, formal political channels are limited. Where increased institutional channels for the poor appear within the state, economic demands are re-articulated into demands for equality between cultural groups rather than across economic groups. In this way, the market logic of the state remains unaffected. Rather, state responses for the poor result in limited policy compromises and reconfigured governance structures, both of which maintain the market logic of the neoliberal era.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I examine the anti-poverty movement. The spaces of contest and critique are contrasted with the state, even as the state and social movements contribute to the development of each other. In simplified form, the power of politics “from below” is based in local communities, whereas the power of the state is derived from maintaining boundaries between these communities and the formal state apparatus. The development of local communities and the retreat to these communities by the anti-poverty movement are mapped alongside state attempts to distance itself from the communities or colonise them. In this chapter I make two arguments. The cultural logic that weakened the economic demands of the New Social Movements through state institutionalisation also threatens the broader anti-poverty movement. Although the reasons that economic demands are weakened vary between movements, this weakening is generally tied to the expansion of state-institutional arrangements to address the New Social Movements. However, as the New Social Movements gain increased institutional channels to sound demands, the anti-poverty movement is effectively limited within the state. Paradoxically, political spaces for the anti-poverty movement become somewhat liberated as state institutional channels narrow.

I conclude the dissertation by arguing for a return of the concept of class in both sociological cultural studies and the anti-poverty movement. “Class” in this instance is a descriptive term meant to acknowledge the economic structuring of poverty that cuts across social identities. As such, it is central to reintroducing the critique of capitalism. At the same time, I argue for a return to the concept of ideology. The cultural logic – that develops from the New Social Movements, that contributes to the structuring of state institutions after 1984, and that predominates media representations of poverty – is one such ideology in its current manifestation within the state. While it is called upon throughout society, it nevertheless obfuscates the economic structuring of society by equating economic divisions to social divisions. This has been a predominant feature of New Zealand in our current era.

Chapter 1:

Overview of Poverty in New Zealand 1970 – 2010

In this chapter I draw on poverty measurement literature and social policy literature in order to map the changing structure of poverty in New Zealand. Within academic literature, the political economic arrangements of the state and market conditions correlate most significantly to poverty in New Zealand. More specifically, poverty increased most noticeably during two waves of neoliberal policy adoption within the state, coinciding with the tenures of the Fourth Labour (1984-1990) and Fourth National Governments (1990-1999). At the same time, poverty increased during periods of economic recession but did not decline as expected after these periods. The chapter details large shifts in the composition of poverty alongside smaller-scale policy changes that also impacted poverty from 1970 onward.

1970-1984

The 1970-1984 period in New Zealand is commonly characterised as a decline from the ‘golden weather’ of the post-war era (Roper 1993a). This narrative will be examined shortly, but first it is important to consider the post-war boom that serves as a comparative base to this decline. The premises, promises and contradictions of the post-war boom all serve to form an understanding of poverty in New Zealand.

The post WWII welfare state continued a combination of pre-war commitment to social security with Keynesian economic policy. In line with the 1938 Social Security Act, the state attempted “to provide, as generously as possible, for all persons who have been deprived of the power to obtain a reasonable livelihood through age, illness, unemployment, widowhood, or other misfortune” (Savage, quoted in Gustafson 1986: 223). In concert with this, the Keynesian state served a more explicit function vis a vis the market: “to protect citizens from the unwelcome effects of the operation of market forces, and... to compensate those who have been adversely affected by market forces (the unemployed) as well as those unable or unwilling to participate in paid work” (Rudd 1993: 237-238). In simple terms, the state

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would protect citizens from the impact of market fluctuations. The Reserve Bank Act of 1936 allowed for greater state intervention in the economy for “the economic and social welfare of New Zealand” (Statutes 1936, No. 1, Section 10, Subsection 1, quoted in Dalziel 1993: 80). During the war this intervention increased without political opposition due to the production requirements of WWII and became a feature of the post war state (Rudd 1993: 240). During the post-war period, then, the individual was protected from market risks through government controls of the economy and welfare system. Added to this protection, an extensive state housing program, free education, and largely free medical care were the cornerstones of the welfare state.

From 1945 through 1984, Keynesian doctrine was unchallenged by major parties, with only incremental changes to economic and social policy (Roper 2008: 12-14). The New Zealand economy was controlled by the state in a myriad of aspects: incomes, prices, domestic credit, import quotas and tariffs, interest rates and exchange transactions (Oliver 1988: 33, in Davey & Grey, 2008). These measures allowed the state to pursue the goals of full employment and social welfare, with the added benefit of social cohesion gained through compulsory union membership and infrastructure gained through times of expanded public employment (Rudd 1993). While all aspects of the Keynesian state worked together, full employment and social welfare speak most directly to poverty and social equity: wages and benefits determined social and economic participation. Social welfare benefits available before the 1970s were, at least initially, considered generous: the Social Security Act 1938 included benefits for the elderly, sick, widows, children, veterans, the unemployed, as well as an emergency benefit (Rudd 1993: 242). The family benefit encouraged the nuclear family and could be capitalised towards mortgage payments, encouraging home ownership. But despite the benefits available, the vast majority were means-tested, leaving wages as the far more important measure of economic equality in New Zealand (O’Brien & Wilkes 1993: 54). The pursuit of full employment and a reliance on wages also limited benefit payouts and subsequent costs to the state (Boston 1999; Castles 1996, in Humpage & Craig 2008: 43).

Under the Keynesian consensus, full employment was pursued by smoothing over the cyclical fluctuations of capitalist economies by creating demand in weak economic times (Dalziel 1993: 81). The public sector absorbed surplus labour from the private sector when labour demand decreased (thus maintaining product demand) through a range of financial

interventions that allowed control over the national economy. From 1945-1974, state-economic intervention proved extremely successful in minimising employment fluctuations: unemployment never exceeded 1 percent, averaging only 0.17 percent from 1945-1974 (Rudd 1993; Roper 1993a: 2). Alongside full employment, the state assumed responsibility for the general redistribution of income through progressive taxation and insinuated itself as a third party in labour-industry wage negotiations (Boston 1984; Roper 2008: 13). In these ways, economic equity appeared an achievable political project.

New Zealand, along with OECD states generally, experienced a “long boom” in the post-war economy, a boom marked by sustained high increases in real GDP, moderate inflation, and real rises in living standards (Roper 1993a: 2-3). At the beginning of this period, New Zealand ranked among the highest in productivity within the OECD (Easton 1997a). Roper (1997: 4) effectively sums up the 1945-1973 period as “characterised by sustained economic growth fuelled by historically high levels of profitability and productive investment, full employment, low inflation, rising real wages, and the absence of prolonged balance of payments problems owing to the historically favourable terms of trade.”

Although the “golden weather” is somewhat mythologized in the literature, significant warning signs about its limitations and contradictions arose prior to the economic recession of the 1970s. New Zealand’s historic role as a leader in social welfare (Rudd 1993: 242) eroded through the 1960s so that by the time the Royal Commission on Social Security in New Zealand was established in 1969, the welfare system was seen by those in need as unresponsive to contemporary relationships, mean-spirited, inadequate in scope, overly discretionary, and unable to deal with difficult economic events, such as the wool crisis of 1966, which caused unemployment to grow from 230 in 1966/1967 to 4424 people in 1967/1968 (McClure 2003; Parliamentary Library 2000). The sharp end of this critique is aimed at the residual nature of welfare provision, where, aside from pensions and the family benefit, benefits were means tested and subject to morality clauses (Rudd 1997: 242). Also, the benefits of riches, while more equitably distributed than in other periods, nevertheless benefitted some more than others.

From 1968, the working class suffered a number of setbacks, beginning with the 1968 nil-wage order that essentially froze earnings and threatened to continue the decline in economic

share for wage earners (Roper 2005a). Throughout the 1970s, wage earners' demands were blamed for the "wage-price spiral," or inflation (Muldoon 1970b: 2, 6; 1972: 2-3; 1977: 38; Bank of New Zealand 1974: 3; Tizard 1975: 3, 27), and a number of measures such as wage and price freezes were put into place to limit inflation. Contestation by unions thwarted these measures, and only until 1978, when industrial disputes became defensive, wages and conditions became less favourable, and unemployment grew quickly (Roper 2010). Limited poverty measurement occurred during this period, but studies argued that large families were more likely to experience poverty (Cuttance 1980), particularly if they were wage earners in the early stages of their careers (Easton 1976). Thus, we can surmise that these setbacks to the working class significantly impacted the poor.

Equally importantly, women and ethnic minorities were less protected by the Keynesian state. Women were unduly disadvantaged economically as the "wage-earner state" was explicitly male (Rudd 1993: 243; Du Plessis 1993: 212; Humpage & Craig 2008; Davey & Grey 2009). Rural and urban Māori were more likely to experience poverty in the 1960s (Forster & Ramsey 1971) and this increased from the late 1960s, due to inequities within the wage system and the large, young, composition of Māori families (Easton 1976; 1981). Māori protest and resistance increasingly rejected "orthodox political processes to reform the worst excesses of racism and Māori inequality" in favour of demanding systemic changes to address ethnic and economic inequality (Poata-Smith 1997: 175). Pacific Peoples likely had similar levels of poverty to Māori, due also to wage inequities and family composition, though research at the time did not measure poverty among Pacific Peoples (see Easton 1976). In simple terms, the riches of the welfare state benefitted particular sectors of the population while systematically disadvantaging others.

Through the state's advances towards economic equality and in the state's failure to distribute riches to specific groups, three points should be made about poverty during this period in New Zealand. On the macroeconomic level, the welfare state – in both its employment and social welfare roles – reduced destitution markedly. The advances of the welfare state were very real for the majority of people (Rudd 1997; McClure 1998). Second, because full employment policies and the economic boom of the period precluded reliance on core benefits, income replacement policy did not represent a financial strain on the state. Third,

and resulting from these first two points, inadequacies within the social security system remained largely hidden.

However, the inability of the system to accommodate significant economic challenges came into sharp relief at the first significant downturn, a fact exemplified by the call for a Royal Commission on Social Security in response to the 1966 collapse of the wool market and the consequent increase in unemployment (McClure 2003; Easton 1976; 1981; 1995). Subsequent economic shocks proved more profoundly troubling still.

Decline narratives and social welfare policy 1970-1984

Literature on the New Zealand state most commonly categorises the 1970s as a period of decline after the post-war boom (see Boston & Dalziel 1992; Roper & Rudd 1993; Rudd & Roper 1997; Easton 1997a; Jesson 1999; Roper 2005a). Five significant factors are cited as causes of the decline or significant markers of the end of ‘the golden weather’: the wool commodity crash in 1966 (Easton 2008), the entry of Britain into the European Economic Community in 1973, the oil crises of 1973 and 1977, European recession and inflation throughout the 1970s (Roper 2005a), and economic mismanagement by the Third National Government (Easton 1997a). From the same body of literature, the period of decline is marked by high inflation, lack of productivity, social unrest over declining real wages, unfavourable terms of trade resulting in foreign trade deficit, rates of unemployment markedly higher than in the previous period, decreases in unemployment benefit rates, and government moves away from full employment policy. With very few exceptions, the narrative of decline is unchallenged, indicating a general consensus that the state required significant change to accommodate changing economic circumstances (see Bertram (1997) for a cautious exception to this narrative, and O’Brien & Wilkes (1993) for an analysis of the transition as a move from Fordism to post-Fordism).

Alongside the decline narrative runs a contradictory current in social welfare policy. As declines in productivity and profit became more constant features of the economy by 1974, social welfare expenditure increased sharply. The 1969-1972 Royal Commission Inquiry into Social Security indicates an earnest attempt to address the reality faced by those on the “cold

fringes of the welfare state” (McClure 2003: 270). The commission examined the accessibility of benefits to various sectors of society, the amount of benefits relative to income earners, and argued that beneficiaries should “enjoy a standard of living much like that of the rest of the community, and thus be able to feel a sense of *participation and belonging* to the community” (Royal Commission, quoted in Muldoon 1972: 26). As a result, benefit levels rose dramatically in 1972 (Muldoon 1972: 27) and in 1973 the Domestic Purposes Benefit became a statutory benefit (McClure 2003: 272). In 1974, the government introduced accident compensation (ACC) for workers and in 1977 New Zealand Superannuation was implemented – at that time a generous, universal, benefit for those over 60. In the early 1970s, then, social welfare policy aimed at increasing economic equality seemed to be gaining momentum, partly as a response to new social realities, such as changing family structures, and partly in response to the deficiencies in the system that were highlighted by severe economic downturn (McClure 2003).

However, the extent to which social policy coherently pursued economic equality in this era should not be overstated; McClure (2003), for example, changes her assessment of social security as “generous” during the 1970s to one of “confusion.” McClure’s assessment is grounded on the following factors: high inflation during the 1970s resulted in declining benefit levels in relation to costs and wages (benefits were not indexed); and the political processes to determine benefit rates and structures seemed arbitrary. Added to these, the Third National Government reduced Domestic Purposes Benefits (for single mothers) on the grounds that it erodes family structures (Muldoon 1977), and the incremental move away from full-employment policy (Dalziel 1999; Endres 1984, 1989, in Roper 1997: 10; Pearson & Thorns 1983) began to undermine the economic security of workers. National Superannuation, aside from its basic increase, benefitted the middle classes more than the poor, as the poor were already permitted benefits through means testing whereas the middle classes were now automatically eligible for their pension at 60 years of age. In industrial relations, the government’s attempted wage and price freeze of 1976 and the previous wage constraints of the 1970s can be read as attempts to stop inflation, yet these initiatives impacted the working poor in particular and, thus, can also be read as an attempt to shift the welfare state’s balance of power in favour of capital (Bramble & Heal 1997; Boston 1984). Finally, in symbolic terms, the Royal Commission’s desire for “participation and belonging”

for beneficiaries was certainly not held up by the Muldoon Government, where saving those from financial hardship was based strictly on “need” (Muldoon 1972: 25).

By the end of this period, lowered unemployment benefits, taxation of this benefit, and increased unemployment in working class communities, such as South Auckland (Nicholls & Piesse 1982: 130), began to restructure poverty towards the unemployed. At the same time, the 1981-1984 wage and price freeze also made low income earners vulnerable through the early 1980s until it was lifted in 1984.

To put the era more firmly in perspective, then, social welfare and the welfare state generally seemed to be moving in contradictory directions. Socially, the inclusion of marginalised groups and the redress of gender inequalities in social welfare policy made leaps forward even as benefit rates continued to slide backward. Economically, the great concern over inflation in policy circles did not translate to social policy that addressed inflation for those most susceptible to the adverse effects of the market. At the same time, increased social security payments (due largely to superannuation) and the gradual move away from full employment policy during the third National Government’s tenure put greater stress and reliance on the welfare system.

The state’s material responses to poverty in the 1970-1984 period can be categorised as inconsistent. Macroeconomic policy reduced poverty to a far greater extent than in the pre-Keynesian and post-Keynesian eras (Perry 2012), yet low-waged workers in large families were more prone to poverty than other groups, and as unemployment increased, so did poverty in New Zealand. Where poverty was acknowledged, it was remedied through economic redistribution, but acknowledgement generally did not extend to workers or, especially towards the end of this period, to the unemployed. At the same time, some of those that reaped the benefits of the welfare state (such as middle-class and wealthy senior citizens) were not poor, and these benefits represented a significant portion of state spending. To this end, New Zealand Superannuation represented three times the expenditure of the Unemployment and the Domestic Purposes benefits combined (O’Brien & Wilkes 1993: 62).

1984-1993

Although macro-economic changes had been taking place during the term of the Third National Government (1975-1984), including a move away from full-employment policy, cautious attempts at integration into the global economy (particularly with Australia through the CER), and (by comparison) modest economic liberalisation (Roper 2005a; Easton 1997a) – interventions into the economy with the Think Big projects, wage and price freezes, protection and subsidisation, all spoke of an actively interventionist economic government policy. As such, the Fourth Labour Government (1984-1989) is contrasted in literature as radically neo-liberal, pushing through a raft of policy changes over a very short period to liberalise the economy and alter the underpinnings of social security and the economy in New Zealand (Kelsey 1997; Easton 1997a; Jesson 1999; Roper 2005a).

The influence of a variety of economic theorists can be found in the rhetoric of neoliberal advocates in New Zealand from this era (Easton 1988; Bertram 1997). The applicability of these theorists to New Zealand's economy is highly disputed (Easton 1988; 1989; 1997; Kelsey 1997; Dalziel 1999; Jesson 1999; Roper 2005a), yet a coherent ideology and policy programme emerged that was based on three related principles. First, the economy, if left to its own devices, finds equilibrium of competition, minimal unemployment, strong productivity, and acceptable inflation. Second, intervention in the economy to affect change in any of these features results in distortion rather than correction: at best it does not benefit the economy, and at worst it actually harms it. Third, non-market principles (such as those of the public sector) operating in the marketplace are inefficient and costly (Douglas 1984; 1985; Treasury 1984; 1987).

In economic policy, the Fourth Labour Government first devalued the New Zealand dollar and then floated it, allowing its value to be determined by the market. Controls over foreign exchange were removed, and private banks were allowed to operate within New Zealand. The Reserve Bank replaced its mandate of full employment with the sole pursuit of minimal inflation (initially within the range of zero to two percent). The government eliminated wage and price freezes though they threatened to reinstate these if wage negotiations threatened to increase inflation (Lagan Nov 23, 1984). Import tariffs were abolished or substantially reduced, and farming subsidies were removed. Public sector organisations that operated within markets (such as the post office) were turned into State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and operated under market principles (Bramble & Heal 1997). Regressive tax changes through

the introduction of a Goods and Services Tax and reduction in income tax for corporations and high earners re-stratified New Zealand society economically (Roper 2005a).

The need for and outcomes of neoliberal policy remains debated. Those in favour of neoliberalism saw the changes as necessary and, in the end, beneficial (see, for example, Douglas 1985; 1988; Treasury 1987; 1990; New Zealand Business Roundtable 1990; Brash 1996). Others debated its necessity, merits, and distribution of benefits (see, for example, Rudd & Roper 1993; Easton 1995; 1997; Kelsey 1997; Jesson 1999; Roper 2005a). Here it is enough to note that regardless of the political view taken regarding the changes, a number of indisputable characteristics of New Zealand society emerge. First, economic inequality in the 1980s grew more quickly in New Zealand than anywhere else in the industrial world. According to O'Dea (2000: 9) "income inequality rose... regardless of how income is measured: individual or household incomes, before or after tax, from different data sources, and after adjusting for changes in household size and composition." Second, unemployment in the short, medium, and long term fluctuated at rates much, much higher than were considered acceptable before 1977 (Easton 2008) and this, in turn, increased welfare expenditure. Third, the highs and lows of economic cycles that the Keynesian state mitigated from 1952 through 1974 resurfaced to become a permanent feature of the New Zealand economy, at least in its current form (Jesson 1999). These severe fluctuations are evidenced by the stock market crash of 1987, the recessions of the early 1990s, the Asian economic crisis of 1998, the global economic crisis of 2008, and the European debt crisis that emerged as a result.

To a large extent, these macroeconomic characteristics influence the prevalence and shape of poverty in New Zealand, regardless of specific social welfare policy changes to redefine poverty, change benefit levels, or target specific groups (Rudd 1997; Humpage & Craig 2008). Poverty, particularly after 1987, became more widespread and more extreme than before, especially within traditional working class occupations. To this end, employment markets changed remarkably quickly from manufacturing to financial activities (Jesson 1999) and, later, into other newly developed labour markets (Ongley 2011). Job losses and increasing earnings gaps disproportionately affected unskilled and low-skilled workers (Singley & Callister 2002; O'Dea 2000).

However, in terms of redistribution, the social policies of the Fourth Labour Government contradicted similar economic restructuring in other countries such as Britain and the United States in that they attempted to continue mitigating the negative effects of the market – at least in the 1984-1987 term – even while pursuing a market orientation. Here, the traditional working class suffered through unemployment (Poata-Smith 2008; Kelsey 1993; Hyman 1997) even as the benefit system within the welfare state appeared to be responsive to workers.

At this point, the Fourth Labour Government continued to proclaim commitment to social equality and maintained that full employment was not only achievable (Douglas 1984; 1985; 1987), but on the near horizon (Caygill 1989). Family support replaced the family allowance in 1986, accompanied by a Minimum Family Income Scheme; however, these were available only for those in full time employment (Douglas 1987). Almost all benefit rates increased versus average wage earning during the first term of government, peaked in 1987, and then began a gradual decline until the election of the Fourth National Government (in 1990). The unemployment benefit declined sharply (by over five percent against average wage earnings) in 1987, only to continue its decline through the 1990s (Parliamentary Library 2000).

The 1987 stock market crash, along with structural changes to the economy, once again increased the number of unemployed. And despite the welfare increases in Labour's first term, the unemployment benefit by the end of the 1980s was at its lowest real level since 1973. Added to this, the wage constraints that followed the dissolution of the wage and price freeze in 1984 did not match rises in inflation (see Douglas 1985). As Easton notes, it is hardly a surprising that in the 1980s "poverty and hardship rose, [using] any reasonable definition" (1995: 209). Both the inability of the interventionist state to adapt to international economics and the rapid adoption of market-oriented policies affected low waged earners most severely. Increases in inequality in New Zealand during the period exceed international trends, and poverty became a more prominent feature of social life (Stephens 2000; Krishnan 1995).

Two policy changes beginning in 1991 further affected the incidence and severity of poverty in New Zealand, whether measured in economic terms alone or including areas such as health and education. First, social welfare policy reduced benefit entitlements for all but those on

New Zealand Superannuation and the Invalid's benefit (Parliamentary Library 2000).

Second, industrial relations policy deregulated the labour market with the implementation of the Employment Contracts Act (Walsh 1997; Walsh & Brosnan 1999). As Boston and Dalziel (1992: ix) argue, these policy changes resulted in "large numbers of disadvantaged New Zealanders [needing to] rely on voluntary agencies to satisfy their basic food and clothing needs." I will now outline these policy changes in greater detail.

Explicitly from 1991, social policy distinguished between long term and short term benefits: while individuals presenting long term need (such as invalids) required income replacement, those on short-term benefits required less (Shipley, Upton, Smith & Uxton 1991). As a result, benefits designated short term, including the Domestic Purposes Benefit, sickness benefit, and unemployment benefit, were reduced significantly. At the same time, eligibility requirements for some benefits (such as the invalids benefit) became more stringent, so that fewer beneficiaries were acknowledged as needing long term support. The unemployment benefit had a longer stand-down period between the end of work and the beginning of benefit eligibility and young people (under 18) were excluded from the Domestic Purposes and unemployment benefits, while those 20 to 25 years old received less income through the unemployment benefit. In sum, aside from those on New Zealand Superannuation or those still eligible for the Invalids benefit, financial support decreased substantially.

During this period, the highest incidence of poverty in New Zealand occurred for those reliant on benefits as a sole means of income (Jensen, Krishnan, Spittal & Sathiyandra 2003). Consequently, the severe reduction of benefit levels increased the depth of poverty felt by those already in need (Stephens 1999; Easton 1995). Additionally, the lowered levels of support alongside rising unemployment figures through 1993 exposed greater numbers of people to poverty, especially since the low-waged were more susceptible to employment fluctuations over this period (Herzog 1996; Stephens 1999; Hyman 1997). Until a short-term relaxation of the emergency benefit (in 1995 following rising concern over the incidence of poverty in New Zealand) relief for impoverished people proved inadequate, especially among single parent households and multiple children households (Krishnan 1995: 15). Even after welfare agencies began granting the emergency benefit more frequently, beneficiaries still accounted for the majority of the poor (Stephens & Waldegrave 2001).

The introduction of the Employment Contracts Act (ECA) marked the second significant policy change of this period. Labour relations had already been reshaped by the Labour Relations Act (1987) which, despite resulting in decreased real wages, nevertheless attracted criticism from the Employers' Federation and Business Roundtable (Walsh 1997: 193). According to the New Zealand Treasury (1990: 145), the labour market required a reduction in wages and increased flexibility. The ECA fulfilled these criteria, and real wages continued to fall as they had during the latter part of the 1980s.

The ECA decimated union power in New Zealand (Kelsey 1997; see Chapters 5 and 6) and resulted in the "widespread elimination" of penal and overtime rates (Walsh & Brosnan 1999: 123-124). Grievances put to the Employment Tribunal and Court doubled from the introduction of the act to 1996, however the cost of legal representation "put access... beyond the reach of a large portion of the non-unionised workforce" (Walsh & Brosnan 1999: 131). For those on the economic margins, decreases in union membership and strength, reductions of overtime and penal rates, and reductions in real wages represented a cumulative erosion of their economic safety net. Singley and Callister (2002) note the resulting risk of working-poverty for those coming out of unemployment. While widespread unemployment may have resulted in drops in wages regardless, "significant" drops in income levels for low wage earners due to the ECA are, for Conway, "not a surprise" (Conway 1999: 43; see also Hyman 1997: 156).

Aside from wage reductions for low-income earners, Walsh and Brosnan (1999) also suggest that reductions in overtime and penalty rates resulted in more overtime worked, and thus less job creation in a period already marked by record unemployment. This cannot be ignored as another area where the ECA may have contributed directly to poverty as both under and over-employment produced inequalities in the workforce (Hyman 1997: 158). Because unemployment remains the most significant correlative of poverty during this period, such outcomes are significant. The ECA, then, contributed to poverty in two significant ways: first by reducing earnings for already low-wage employees, and second, by promoting structural deterrents to workforce participation.

Finally, in addition to lower benefit rates and the ECA, other social policy changes also contributed to poverty in New Zealand. Rents for state housing tenants became market-

determined rather than based on tenants' income levels. Accommodation supplements were granted to those in need, yet according to poverty researchers, the higher than anticipated uptake of accommodation supplements (Murphy 1999) did not mitigate the problem of high housing costs on the poor (Stephens & Bradshaw 1995; Stephens, Waldegrave & Frater 1995; Stephens 2003). Rather, as of 1998, housing costs remained a significant factor in determining poverty as measured by expendable income (Perry 2012; Stephens & Waldegrave 2001). And in addition to housing policy, changes to health services, utilities, and other social services also impacted economically and socially on communities. Although outside of the scope of this research, it is worth note that areas such as health and education also negatively impacted the poor (Boston & Dalziel 1992; Boston, Dalziel & St John 1999). Coupled with the persistence of very high levels of unemployment throughout the 1990s, poverty increased markedly in New Zealand (Dalziel 1999). At the same time, quantifying the social signs of poverty during the period was difficult: charitable food parcels, overcrowded accommodation, and poverty-related illness are not as statistically visible as anti-poverty advocates would like (Stephens 2000). Although a growing body of literature indicated increasing poverty levels in New Zealand, throughout this period, it remained unacknowledged by key political and media elites (see Chapters 2 and 4).

For the period as a whole, the combination of three factors – unemployment, reduced social security, and decreases in real wages – resulted in a situation of marked economic insecurity and poverty. Reduced benefit levels, deregulation of the labour market, and housing policies resulted in economic insecurity, and along with regressive taxation also contributed to increased economic disparity. At the same time, the effect of recession and high unemployment also contributed to the scope and depth of poverty.

1999 - 2010

Increasing evidence of poverty in the mid 1990s resulted in the introduction of a family benefits package in 1996. Due to its implementation through tax credits, the policy alleviated strain on working families with children, even as it reinforced the disparity between beneficiary earners and wage earners (St. John 2008: 80-82). Regardless, the package began a trend towards increased social assistance for families and the working poor generally. In its

first term in office, the Fifth Labour Government (1999-2002) made significant moves to reduce poverty by reintroducing subsidised housing, raising New Zealand Superannuation, recognising the role of unions in labour negotiations, raising the minimum wage, and improving health care access for the poor (Waldegrave, Stephens & King 2003).

Despite indications that Labour would also increase short-term benefit levels (New Zealand Labour Party 1988) these remained unchanged (Stephens 2008: 35). As a result, policies reduced poverty among beneficiaries initially, but failed to mitigate poverty as the economy expanded from 1999. An unexpected feature of the neoliberal state became evident at this point: with economic expansion the presumed benefits for the working poor did not materialise. From 1998 to 2004, working poverty increased significantly (Stephens 2008: 34). Labour's introduction of the 2004 Working for Families Package (WFF) addressed this problem and simultaneously increased the disparity between those in work and the unemployed (St. John 2008). Those families with one or two earners in low-waged employment that increasingly found themselves living in poverty benefited from WFF whereas the unemployed and underemployed did not. The disparity between the working and non-working, however, were not as noticeable during this period as the tenure of the Fifth Labour Government coincided with the lowest levels of unemployment in the post 1984 period (O'Brien 2008a; St John 2008).

Alongside increases in poverty among the employed, government reports in the late 1990s drew together statistical data from a number of indicators to highlight the ethnic dimensions of poverty (Poata-Smith 2008). This government research mirrored assessments of poverty in the non-governmental sector where, for example, Stephens claimed that, "the real issue for social exclusion in New Zealand is ethnic disparities." Recognition of Māori poverty in particular resulted in new government strategies from 1998-2004, but these had little effect on the ethnic dimension of poverty (Poata-Smith 2008). Rather, aside from the reduction of poverty amongst the working, the composition of the poor has remained fairly stable.

On one hand, the increasing levels of poverty and income disparity that feature in New Zealand since the 1980s seem to come to an end in this period. Incidence of poverty peaked between 1998 and 2001 in New Zealand and income disparity peaked in 2004, after which both subsided significantly (MSD 2010: 64, 66). The decrease in the frequency of poverty

relates most strongly to improvements in the labour market; while, a higher percentage of beneficiaries lived in poverty, but the overall numbers of poor declined due to increased employment (Stephens 2008). Decreases in income disparity relate, instead, to the WFF package. On the other hand, there remain concerns over whether reductions in poverty are only an aberration in the current political-economic context: the reliance on employment for WFF benefits, alongside increasing poverty for beneficiaries, leads to concerns of growing poverty once market conditions again become unfavourable (St John 2008).

More recently still, government initiatives appear to be retreating from the policies that reduced poverty. As an example, the government-appointed 2010 Welfare Working Group published options to address and reduce 'long-term dependency', including limited benefit entitlement over one's lifetime (2010). The group's final recommendations (2011) reduced options for poverty alleviation to employment, indicating that poverty alleviation through more equitable redistribution of wealth seems unlikely in the current climate. Rather, the politics of the period seems content with moderate levels of poverty amongst the unemployed.

In this most recent era, then, the incidence of poverty has been reduced for the first time since the 1970s, although the current levels of poverty remain above 1987 levels (MSD 2010). Redistribution from WFF has shifted poverty once again from the employed to the unemployed and current political responses to poverty rely on employment, regardless of market conditions.

Conclusion

The most significant changes in poverty composition and depth relate to macroeconomic policies and economic downturns. The first of these includes specific government policies such as employment policy, industrial relations policy, taxation, and social policy more generally. In short, the institutionalisation of neoliberalism across the policy spectrum has resulted in higher levels of poverty and income disparity regardless of market conditions. The second, economic downturns, contribute to poverty through increased unemployment. Where this was mitigated to some extent in the Keynesian state, the prolonged recession of

the 1970s nevertheless demonstrated limits to state intervention. In the post 1984, neoliberal, era, the effects of market downturns became more apparent still, in part because of the social policy changes noted above.

Chapter 2:

Morality and poverty

More than material measures of poverty, such as those used in Chapter 1 to provide an overview of material deprivation, media and government representations of the poor call upon discourses of morality to construct broad cultural understandings of who is poor, the reasons for their poverty, and appropriate political solutions. In this way, discourses of morality inform much of what we take for granted in our understanding of poverty.

Alongside the material changes in New Zealand noted in Chapter 1, where macroeconomic policy in large part determined deprivation, commentators such as Easton (1996), Wood & Rudd (2004: 120), Roper (2005a: 142), O'Brien (2008b:81), and O'Brien, Bradford, Stevens, Walters & Wicks (2010) note related changes in discourses of morality. For these writers, the ubiquitous use of "welfare dependency" by government officials becomes "one of the key arguments supporting... benefit cuts" (O'Brien 2008: 24). Underlying this argument, a relatively generous ethos in New Zealand during the Keynesian era where all members of society should be able to "eat the sort of food that other New Zealanders usually eat, wear the same sort of clothes, take a moderate part in those activities which the ordinary New Zealander takes part" (Royal Commission on Social Security 1972: 62) is replaced, with the adoption of neoliberal policies, by a discourse that blames beneficiaries for their poverty (O'Brien and colleagues 2010: 36).

On a grand scale, I agree with this argument; as I point out below, the "welfare dependency" discourse that becomes broadly circulated in government documents with the adoption of neoliberal policies marks a distinct shift in the representation of poverty in New Zealand. But even with this notable change in discourse, I challenge this straightforward narrative that, in my view, oversimplifies the alignment of moral discourse with macroeconomic periods. To make this challenge, I examine two moral discourses that feature in the neoliberal state but can be traced back through the Keynesian era as well. First, the ethos of egalitarianism in the Keynesian era that finds poverty morally objectionable (what I term the poverty-free myth) also obscures poverty throughout the 1970s and, much later, becomes a politically salient discourse that absolves society for responsibility of the poor. Second, the designation of "deserving" and "undeserving" poor is notable in both eras. Here, despite a lack of explicit undeserving representations of "the poor" during Keynesian state, I argue that those groups

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more prone to poverty are more likely to be represented as undeserving due to their social, rather than economic, identities. In other words, many people living in poverty are designated undeserving but are not acknowledged as poor.

Methodologically I use the term discourse in this chapter to denote – in line with Discourse Theory (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 105) – the positioning of social identities in relation to each other. I use discourse to denote symbolic representations, but I also point out where material practices align with these representations. The characterisation of Pacific Peoples as undeserving by the Third National Government, for example, symbolically differentiates Pacific Peoples from other New Zealanders. However, the distinction is not merely symbolic: it also results in discriminatory policing practices and, for some, expulsion from the country. I also draw on New American Cultural Sociology to analyse the characterisation of the deserving and undeserving poor as Alexander's (2006a) distinction between "civil" and "anticivil" discourses has clear affinities that I will expand upon throughout the chapter. Finally, throughout the chapter, I draw on the class-based analysis of the CCCS to point to underlying economic structures. The tensions between the theories used and their values will be elaborated upon in the next chapter.

My purpose in pointing out these discourses and their continuities through state eras is neither to vilify the Keynesian state nor to diminish the punitive symbolic and material treatment of the poor in the neoliberal state. Instead, the evidence and arguments presented here uncover a few of the longer standing cultural discourses that underpin discussions of morality and poverty across eras. The discussion will be used in the next chapter to consider how to best analyse the cultural meanings associated with poverty and the political changes they correspond to.

The poverty-free myth

The recognition of poverty, and more specifically, economic destitution as a structural result of economic and political relations, is apparent at key points in history, most notably in the formative years of the 1938 Social Security Act and the period that followed (Sutch 1966; 1969), as well as in the late 19th century (Belich 2001: 39). Also apparent are historical

periods where poverty is largely denied or ignored. In these periods cultural myths predominate and mask poverty, or justify its existence. Here, the historical belief that New Zealand is egalitarian (Belich 2001: 338-339, 463) is closely related to the myth of a poverty-free country.

The 1970s begins in such a moment, with a broad belief throughout the country that poverty does not exist in New Zealand. Two primary effects of this belief can be found in the political and moral structure of the country for the subsequent four decades. First, the poverty-free myth contributes to a broad popular belief in egalitarianism as a moral-political project. Until roughly 1987, where economic destitution is recognised, it is responded to directly through economic relief. Second, the poverty-free myth results in obfuscation of poverty and scepticism of poverty claims. This scepticism is notable in the 1970s when workers were not considered among the poor, and after 1990, when the poverty free myth was used to absolve society of social responsibility for the poor. Its persistence through to the present day thwarts attempts to appeal to egalitarian moral-political projects and speaks to the power of the discourse in the face of contradictory evidence.

As late as 1973, a New Zealand sociology textbook claimed, “the term poverty is not in common usage in New Zealand today – at least not in regard to the financial position of any New Zealand citizens” (Jack 1973: 163). The belief that New Zealand was poverty-free at the time can be traced, in Easton’s (1976) estimation, to official sources, such as the 1972 Royal Commission on Social Security where economic hardship was presumed to be the territory of the unemployed, as well as academic sources, such as Jack’s (1973), where facile links between beneficiaries and poverty gave no attention to other demographic determinants. In both cases, ignorance of poverty is embedded in the national culture, so that the Royal Commission’s “failure to discuss the possibility of poverty among families involves an impressive exercise in self deception, not... of the commission itself so much as of the nation” (Easton 1976: 130). The poverty-free myth was structurally enabled by a lack of statistical data before 1973 that made poverty estimation extremely difficult (Easton 1995), indicating that, along with the 1972 Royal Commission, the myth constituted an ideology in the sense that the CCCS use the term: as both symbolic and institutionally supported. In effect, the lack of poverty recognition precluded the need to measure poverty, which in turn led to a lack of recognition: a self-perpetuating model.

Historically, the poverty-free myth is attached to the perception of government assistance and opportunities for employment. Jack (1973: 163) attributes the national poverty-free myth to the success of the 1938 Social Security Act, which promised to “to provide, as generously as possible, for all persons who have been deprived of the power to obtain a reasonable livelihood through age, illness, unemployment, widowhood, or other misfortune” (Savage, quoted in Gustafson 1986: 223). The act, according to Jack, led to a longstanding belief in economic security and equality in New Zealand. However, others trace the “egalitarian myth” further back to the beginning of New Zealand as a settler society as it became known as a “glorious country for a working man” (Considine 1989: 174). The “working man” qualification established a white, universalistic identity that excluded Māori and undervalued the role of women in the settler society (True 1996). This limited egalitarianism was also reinforced materially as men, encouraged to emigrate from England, were promised minimum wages and full employment (Dalziel 1992). Prime Minister Seddon’s naming of New Zealand as “God’s own country” alongside the introduction of old age pensions, an industrial arbitration system and women’s suffrage seems to have solidified the joint notions of abundance and security based in egalitarian principles (Belich 2001: 45). However, as Belich contends, the prosperity of the late 19th century aided in maintaining these notions. At this moment, the prosperity of the times allowed for more generous economic support of the poor, just as greater welfare support in 1938 occurred within the highly productive (though volatile) years until the sustained boom of 1945-1970s. In both cases, steps were made towards promoting egalitarianism in parts of the population and economic conditions allowed for those measures to seem generous.

However, in the early 1970s a convergence of factors disrupted the myth of New Zealand as poverty-free: first, the 1972 Royal Commission, even though it made no attempt to measure poverty, “focused attention on income adequacy” (Easton 1995: 183); second, the economic climate following the 1966 wool market crash reinforced the need for state assistance to guard against the market (McClure 2003); third, the collection and dissemination of statistical data through the state statistics department allowed for a quantitative analysis of poverty; and fourth, overseas research on poverty “percolated to New Zealand” (Easton 1995: 183).

The recognition of economic destitution improved the outlook for those acknowledged as poor, even though it did little to further our understanding of who the poor were. At this

point the egalitarian ethos of the times corresponds positively with the poverty-free myth to create political pressure: in 1972 benefit levels were raised for all beneficiary categories, and the Domestic Purposes Benefit and New Zealand Superannuation were introduced in 1973 and 1977 respectively. Such developments, for those recognised as poor, lead McClure to initially categorise the decade as ‘generous’ (McClure 1998; 2003). For those not recognised as poor, such as Easton’s (1976) working families in low-waged employment, the results were quite different. Thus, despite real and significant moves towards egalitarianism at particular moments, the poverty-free or egalitarian myth nevertheless obfuscates counter evidence.

At particular historic periods, the egalitarian myth is challenged. Dalziel (1992: 90, 109-111) recounts strikes in the mid 1800s due to the fallacious promises of emigrant recruiters, the emergence of class-based politics in 1887, and intensified strikes and industrial conflict in the early 1890s. In these cases, unrest occurred where the egalitarian ethos of the settler society did not correspond to the material experiences of workers. Added to these moments, unrest also followed prosperous times, bringing to light the uneven distribution of riches. For example, two of the more prominent strikes in New Zealand history, the 1913 and 1951 waterfront strikes, both occurred after extended periods of economic prosperity; these actions drew attention to the financial hardship and working conditions of those less equal in the “egalitarian” society despite rising economic fortunes nationally. Also, in the era of the 1966 wool crisis, photographs (cf. Tai Awatea n.d.) and sociological accounts (cf. Forster & Ramsay 1971) documented widespread rural poverty among Māori. The extent to which these challenges disrupted popular belief in the egalitarian myth is difficult to ascertain, but the 1970s must be considered as another moment of challenge, as low-waged workers with large families were not recognised as poor, despite bitter industrial struggle (Roper 2010).

In contemporary times, despite the attention paid to poverty in academic, government and popular circles, the myth of a poverty-free New Zealand continues to be called upon, so that even in 1984 when unemployment had risen to its highest level in forty years, an economic conference participant noted that “For most people in this room, poverty does not exist” (Stevens in New Zealand Government 1984: 62). Similarly, in 1998, when the Hikoi of Hope marched on Wellington to raise the spectre of poverty as a political issue that required state redress, the Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley refused to concede that poverty existed in New

Zealand (*The Dominion* Dec 18, 1998: 2), a position she first explained in 1996 by distinguishing between “absolute” and “relative” poverty (*Evening Post* Sep 12, 1996: 3, 11). Popular media carried these distinctions as well (see Chapter 4), despite a growing body of literature to document increases in poverty since the mid 1970s. Although no longer uncontested at this point, the poverty-free myth persisted despite contrary evidence, so that, as an editorial in *The Dominion* put it: “Clearly some people in New Zealand have much less money than others, but whether they live in abject poverty, as claimed, is a different matter” (*The Dominion* Oct 1, 1998: 8). This sentiment was reflected in the *Evening Post*’s claim that “anecdotes and stories [of poverty] are not necessarily factual. They often only tell half the story” (*Evening Post* Dec 11, 1998: 4). Tellingly, protesters in the Hikoi of Hope felt that overcoming the poverty-free myth was extremely important; by the end, Bishop John Paterson claimed that “the first great achievement of the hikoi was that politicians were no longer able to evade or deny the existence of poverty” (*The Dominion* Dec 10, 1998: 2).

Here, then, we see the poverty free myth in the 1970s both hiding poverty but also being used to combat poverty where it is recognised. Yet by the late 1980s the poverty free myth no longer operates in the same way. Rather, the understanding that poverty exists is evident to some and more thoroughly supported by research, yet the myth still retains the power to shape understandings of whether or not people are “really” poor, and what should be done about it. From 1987 onward, the poverty-free myth, rather than informing an egalitarian ethos, instead absolves society of social responsibility for the poor. As a *Waikato Times* editorial succinctly put it,

it’s hard to get revved up [about domestic poverty claims] when images of real poverty abroad... appear nightly on our screens... The issue is to differentiate between the moaning classes and those who simply cannot cope.” (*Waikato Times* Sep 17, 1998: 6)

In sum, the poverty-free myth is persistent, and resurfaces throughout history, indicating that it has deep cultural meaning within New Zealand. Yet the myth cannot be attached only to particular material moments: it has influence in both times of greater and lesser equality. Also, it has contradictory effects: to obfuscate poverty, alleviate poverty, and absolve social

responsibility. Thus, although the power of the myth is undeniable, its correlation to material life is not straightforward.

The deserving versus undeserving poor

Alongside persistent myths about equality in New Zealand and its effects, understandings of poverty are structured by deep, or long-standing, moral distinctions between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor. In the 1970-2010 period, the 1990s stands out as a decade when beneficiaries were intentionally vilified, as, for example, when in an opinion piece in the *Evening Post* (9 May 1995: 4), Alan Duff could complain about “the worst of ingrates, the unemployed.” Such vilification led to contestation in media and also through government channels, evidenced by concerns that the government had the agenda of “bashing beneficiaries” (DSW 1998: 30). Negative portrayals of those affected by poverty was by no means uncontested, yet the decade is marked by attempts to delegitimize the poor, and stands in stark contrast to the more generous and inclusive moment of the Royal Commission on Social Security (1972), the subsequent introduction of the Domestic Purposes Benefit (1973), or the extension of New Zealand Superannuation (1977).

With negative or “undeserving” representations of the poor appearing more commonly in the 1990s, the decade of severe cuts to welfare, it is easy to hypothesise a direct correlation between the symbolic and the political-economic. Similarly, the relative lack of an acknowledged “undeserving poor” during the early 1970s seems to correlate with the expansion of economic support in the welfare state, such the Domestic Purposes Benefit, Accident Compensation, and New Zealand Superannuation. In this section I argue that deserving/undeserving is as a constant feature in the representation of poverty and the acknowledgement of who is and is not poor. Its outcome, though important to those engaged in struggle, does not decide political-economic responses to poverty. Rather, undeserving representations correspond to economic crises; they are called upon to respond to and mask these crises. In both the Keynesian and neoliberal eras, “undeserving” representations establish moral, psychological and cultural terms of contestation while mystifying, or delegitimising, economic terms.

In both international and New Zealand literature, undeserving and deserving designations form deeply embedded cultural structures (Steensland 2006: 1274) in that they persist throughout recent history. In a comprehensive study of poverty labels in the United States, Gans (1995: 6-7) traces the origins of deserving and undeserving designations to the English poor laws that informed early understandings of poverty and charity. Gans (1995: 15) finds a number of different articulations that can be reduced to the concepts of undeserving poor that correspond to different time periods: for example, defective, dependent and delinquent in the 19th century, compared with welfare dependent, underclass, and illegal immigrant in contemporary America. Rudd (1997: 242) similarly attributes the morality of poverty in New Zealand to the English Poor Laws, and also notes the dichotomous use of deserving and undeserving labels. These labels are cross-cultural and span economic and political systems throughout recent history, indicating their relative permanence in structuring the poverty debate (Gans 1995: 75).

Importantly, distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor are not necessarily based on material deprivation, but are also used to categorise larger groups. For example, Gans (1990; 1995) traces the development of the term “underclass” from a descriptor of the unemployed or underemployed (and the subsequent need for new economic policy) to a synonym of the “undeserving.” As the term “underclass” gained popular currency, it became associated almost exclusively with Hispanic and African American peoples, or neighbourhoods made up of these ethnic groups, and attributed them behavioural and psychological characteristics (Gans 1990: 272; Gans 1995). The categorisation, then, of the deserving and undeserving, or who is believed to be poor or not really poor, alongside the reasons for poverty, extend beyond the economic position of those labelled to their moral status.

New American Cultural Sociology provides a broader perspective from which to consider moral designations of the poor and how they are contested. Drawing on Durkheim sociology of religion, Alexander argues that cultural representations of groups are structured by the dichotomous designations of “civil” or “uncivil” behaviour (2006a), designations that correspond to a number of characterisations. For example, “civil” groups act in “reasonable, rational, calm, self-controlled, trusting, and honourable” ways, whereas “uncivil” groups are “self-interested, greedy, calculating, dependent, irrational, and deceitful” (Alexander 2006a:

57-58). Although these lists are not exhaustive, some immediate similarities between the representation of beneficiaries in Gans' (1995) work (as lazy, greedy, unmotivated, dependent) and Alexander's "anticivil" labels (greedy, dependent, calculating) are notable. Importantly, for Alexander, groups that are categorised as anticivil struggle to present an effective political voice, or to achieve justice in democratic society. Added to this, the materially deprived are particularly vulnerable to "anticivil" representation as "material asymmetry inherent in economic life becomes translated into projections about civil competence" (Alexander 2006a: 207). In other words, the moral distinctions made in everyday, public, life can easily correspond to the financial success of individuals. Again the link between "anticivil" categorisation and the "undeserving" poor becomes apparent: material deprivation, for the "undeserving," is understood as the result of their behaviour (Gans 1995: 6-7).

Keeping in mind the interconnection of material deprivation, material wealth, and moral designations, I argue that there is a continuity between Keynesian and neoliberal eras in the "civil" and "anticivil" or "deserving" and "undeserving" representations of poor groups. In both eras discourses emerge that distinguish between those that deserve the economic riches of society (either through wages or state benefits) and those that do not. As I noted above, these discourses are not simply symbolic, but are constituted through institutionalised practices and symbolic representations that designate relatively consistent relationships between groups (such as "the undeserving" and "the deserving"). In other words, the categorisation of "undeserving" or "anticivil" corresponds to institutional practices. In the discussion that follows, I focus on government practices that are reproduced in popular media. These are focused on due to their prominence in social movement literature. In each case, the "deservingness" of the groups affected is contested in popular debate, media, and government policy. Before discussing the Keynesian (1970-1984) and neoliberal (1984-2010) periods, I will provide a short historical survey to demonstrate the persistence of deserving and undeserving categorisations in New Zealand.

Documents from the beginning of twentieth century in New Zealand indicate the use of deserving and undeserving labels to justify or deny access to charity. According to McClure (1998: 12-13, 17) those seeking charity were required to demonstrate a willingness to work, provide a reference from a "respectable person" and also demonstrate "good moral

character.” Only people unable to participate in the labour force, such as the elderly and later, widows and children, were exempt from these requirements (McClure 1998). However, as the photo of the children below indicates, even these groups participated in symbolic battles to justify their needs.

Children declare themselves a ‘Deserving Case’ for charity as they beg for assistance (Webb in McClure 1998: 15).

In this photo, the children’s sign signals a need to justify their economic needs: their father was crippled while working in the mine. The photograph illustrates the interconnection of moral discourses, material deprivation, and charity in an era when the central government had a minimal role in welfare provision. It indicates that even those unlikely to be determined undeserving due to their behaviour could be considered undeserving due to their associations.

The elderly, though generally considered deserving, also had to appeal to moral codes: alongside residency requirements and a life upholding familial and legal norms, pensioners had to lead a “sober and reputable life” for five years prior to the pension (McClure 1998: 187). The inclusion of moral clauses in the 1898 Old-Age Pensions Bill establishes a legal framework for distinguishing between the poor that the state is responsible for helping and those responsible for their poverty. And while the obvious moralistic sentiments of the 1898 Old-Age Pensions Bill seem outdated against the spirit of the 1938 Social Security Act

(where relief is guaranteed for those that experience material deprivation) they are by no means extreme for their time. According to the first inspector of Hospitals and Charitable Aid in New Zealand, elderly who were not able to provide for themselves should be confined to institutions so that supervision could be maintained (McClure 1998: 14) – the connotation being that the poor are either untrustworthy or intellectual unable to care for themselves.

In contrast to those categorised as legitimately poor (such as children and the elderly) in the pre 1938 period were those of less symbolic fortune. In his assessment of poverty, a one-time Minister of Labour distinguished between the deserving and the undeserving succinctly: “dire poverty in New Zealand is almost confined to the aged, to disabled workers, to deserted wives and children, and to a few loafers, drunkards and weaklings” (Pember Reeves 1902: 43, in Easton 1981: 25). The Minister’s claims of a lack of poverty in New Zealand are contradicted by historic records that indicate cyclical unemployment for many in the country (Belich 2001) and very high levels of male unemployment from 1891 into the second decade of the 20th century (Rankin 1991, in Dalziel 2010). In the above quotation, those excluded from legitimacy – drunkards, loafers and weaklings – are the unemployed, under-employed, or working poor. In this instance the moral categorisation of materially deprived groups contributes to the poverty-free myth: where the poor are not deserving, poverty does not really exist.

Also at this point in history, however, there was no guarantee that the deserving would receive government aid. The mention of the aged in the Pember Reeves quotation indicates an understanding of the legitimate need in older people that was already legally codified in the Old-Age Pensions Bill, yet, the Old-Age Pensions Bill was neither universal nor available to all ethnicities (McClure 1998, 19-20). The Widows Pension was not introduced until 1911 and the family allowance not until 1926, nine and twenty-four years after Pember Reeves’ writing respectively, and only five years before unemployment relief (Sutch 1966). In other words, the categorisation of the deserving and undeserving did not automatically correspond to state assistance for those groups, even if deserving individuals had easier access to non-governmental relief.

The 1938 Social Security Act articulated a different appreciation of the deserving and undeserving. By the mid 1930s, the devastating unemployment of the 1920s and 1930s was

increasingly attributed to market forces rather than individual deficiencies, seemingly eliminating the undeserving class. Yet it would be mistaken to think that the debate over the deserving and undeserving, or that the fear of the undeserving taking advantage of others' generosity, had disappeared. Government concern over the introduction of the employment benefit was not over the level of benefit payment, but in

...ensuring that only those *genuinely* unable to work would be eligible for the benefit.... The [Interdepartmental] committee recommended that all who had contributed employment tax for at least thirty weeks in a two-year period should be able entitled to as-of-right payments for the first twenty-six weeks of unemployment. (Hanson 1980: 53, emphasis added)

The universality of the proposed legislation worked in ideological opposition to any presumption of undeservingness, but the distinction between those “genuinely” excluded from paid employment versus others who may claim state benefits illegitimately demonstrates that moral questions about deservingness remained. The subsequent decision to make the unemployment benefit means tested rather than universal may have been decided on financial grounds, but nevertheless would have quelled some moral concerns. The family benefit, unemployment benefit, and invalid's benefit addressed the same moral concerns with the threat of cancellation or postponement if beneficiaries failed to meet particular, often subjective, criteria (O'Brien & Wilkes 1993). So although less outwardly detectable in this period, the distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor nevertheless persisted (Rudd 1997: 242).

Anticivil groups, or the undeserving poor, in the 1970s

From the introduction of the Social Security Act until the mid 1970s, New Zealand's unemployment rate remained exceedingly low, both against historic and international standards. With the exception of the 1972 Royal Commission, the lack of recognition of poverty in New Zealand throughout most of this period precluded public discussions of deserving versus undeserving poor, at least as a domestic issue. Coupled with minimal public belief in poverty, minimal reliance on the state for primary income through benefits allowed

the financial viability of the welfare state to remain relatively unquestioned. In other words, the deserving versus undeserving distinction failed to play an overt role in the moral discourse about poverty.

However, as in the late 1930s, the distinction did not disappear altogether. Throughout the 1970s, the use of anticivil labels corresponds to poverty both directly and indirectly. Four groups represented as anticivil require scrutiny: first, workers, from the beginning to the 1970s, particularly those in “militant” or “red” unions; second, Pacific Peoples from 1975; third, single mothers; and finally, the unemployed. I draw on the labels applied to workers, single mothers, Pacific Peoples, and the unemployed because, together, they indicate a broader trend in the representations of those more likely to be living in material deprivation. Members of each of these groups were more likely to be living in poverty in the 1970s, and that trend continues today. And while their categorisation as anticivil was not ubiquitous (the categorisation of each group was contested), I aim to show that moral discourses concerning the groups corresponded to government policies. Taken together, the use of anticivil codes for these groups indicate a relatively consistent moral and political treatment of the materially deprived, even where material deprivation is not publicly recognised.

With the advent of full or near-full employment during the early 1970s, deserving and undeserving labels were applied not to beneficiaries – or the recognised poor (Jack 1973) – but anticivil labels were used to represent workers – a portion of whom constituted the unrecognised poor (Easton 1976). Internationally, inflation became a worry to governments from the late 1960s, and despite foreign domestic attempts to quell inflationary pressures, the New Zealand Government feared an invasion of the “wage/price spiral” to the domestic economy (Muldoon 1970a: 19; 1970b: 2). In 1970 the Reserve Bank of New Zealand proclaimed that “cost-push” seemed dominant over “demand-pull” inflation (1970: 5), so that the wage portion of the spiral “threatened to bring economic chaos” (Muldoon 1971: 2). Finance Minister and later Prime Minister, Robert Muldoon’s assessment of the situation clearly blamed particular unionists, demarcating the good from bad, or those behaving versus those acting against the interests of the economy. In his words, “Strong and more militant unions moved to direct negotiation thus beginning a process which led to the wage/price spiral of 1970” (1971: 3). This language clearly meant to divide “ordinary, decent working men” from the unionists who would “victimise” them (Muldoon, in New Zealand Parliament

Aug 31, 1971: 2808). Of particular concern were “militant”, “radical” or “red” unions (Douglas, in New Zealand Parliament Nov 17, 1971). To this end, a 1975 National Party election cartoon featured Cossacks dressed in red, symbolising the threat of communism from the unions. The government’s nil-wage order of 1968, the remuneration tribunal’s over-ruling of arbitration court decisions in 1971, and the wage and price freeze of 1976 attempted to suppress wages and address inflation, but even when the 1976 freeze was lifted in 1978, “excessive” demands by “groups of workers... threaten[ed] free-wage bargaining” (Muldoon 1978: 8). As a result, the repeal of negotiated awards continued even after the freeze.

Such characterisation of unions was not limited to Muldoon’s combative style. George Walsh, a National Party backbencher, argued in parliament that a portion of the many strikes taking place were “without justification”:

Not only are they illegal, but their perpetrators intend them to damage industry... to force their very selfish point of view.... Those who take part show no regard for the needs of the country and our way of life.... The welfare of New Zealand was put in jeopardy for the benefit of a few. (in New Zealand Parliament Jul 7, 1972: 837-838)

The correspondence between this quotation and Alexander’s (2006a) list of anticivil attributes is notable as unionists involved in these strikes are depicted as “self-interested”, “greedy” and “calculating”: the “selfish point of view” that is juxtaposed with “the needs of the country” clearly means to delegitimize claims of the unions.

While the Labour Party did not categorise the unions in this way, both major parties pursued wage restraint, further limiting the economic shares of the working poor. Industrial disputes increased rapidly in number from 1968 through 1975 (Roper 2010: 18) eliciting comment not only from Muldoon, but from the National Development Council (Watt 1973) and, in their regular reporting, the Department of Labour as well. The Third Labour Government replaced the “wage/price spiral” terminology with “cost and price inflation” (Rowling 1974: 2) but the 1975 budget calling for “continued restraint of prices and incomes” (Tizard 1975: 3) indicates that both major parties believed in the Bank of New Zealand assessment: inflation had been caused in part by “domestic income increases far in excess of productivity” (Bank of New Zealand 1974: 3). For workers, however, the dramatic rates of growth in the 1960s that had not translated into gains in real wages and this still needed to be rectified (Roper 2010). For

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example, consumer prices rose 5.3 percent in the first half of 1967 while in 1968 they increased by another 5 percent and import prices increased by 17.75 percent; regardless, the arbitration court ordered a nil-wage order in 1968 (Boston 1984: 90-91). Little or no wage growth in an era of high price inflation threatened the standard of living for all workers, but for the working poor, those on the least generous wages, the effects were far more severe (Easton 1976).

Large, single-waged families were at the greatest risk of experiencing material deprivation as a result (Easton 1976; 1981). While benefit increases acknowledged the plight of beneficiaries, wage-earner poverty was ignored, ideologically obfuscated, or overlooked due to other poverty foci in countries such as Britain, where pensioner poverty caused concern (Easton 1981: 73-74). An under-developed and under-funded family policy resulted, leaving those on low wages with families among the poorest in New Zealand (Easton 1981). The remuneration policies of the late 1960s through to 1984 discriminated against workers generally with little or no acknowledgement of those workers with most need. Thus, according to Easton (1981: 97), by 1976 the most dramatic falls in real incomes were most likely being experienced by “wage earners with children... despite [already] being the poorest.” Here though, “militant workers” were not acknowledged as representing or constituting the poor. Rather, government discourse distinguished between the civil and the anticivil – those working for the general interest versus those “promoting their selfish point of view” – in effect treating wage negotiation as a moral exercise. In this dichotomous judgement of workers, militant unionised workers were clearly tied to the failing economic fortunes of the state and nation.

We can find a similar dichotomous presentation of unions in popular media. For example, on May 20, 1975, *The Dominion* published an article praising workers, their union, and the management of Shortland Meatworks for using a works council rather than allowing disputes to turn into work stoppages, while in the same publication, less than a week later, *The Dominion* published an article and editorial that demonised specific union behaviour. I will examine these articles in chronological order. In the first article, according to *The Dominion*, the success of the union–management relationship at the meatworks was due, in part, to the civil behaviour of the union and its members:

...the union has compromised. Before the current rapprochement the company complained that it could never get to speak directly with its workers... Now the union lets management speak directly... As well the workers wanted better contact with management and a greater degree of responsibility themselves. (*The Dominion* May 20, 1975: 8).

Here, the union and its members are presented as rational, trusting, and conciliatory, features that underpin civil discourses (Alexander 2006a). Importantly, the union and unionists at stake are from the freezing works, an industry, according to Muldoon, whose unions were among the most militant (New Zealand Parliament Aug 31, 1971). The article implies that the tumultuous industrial relations in the “troubled freezing works industry” can be rectified, in large part, through civil behaviour.

Later in the same week, however, the inverse presentation of unions appears in the same newspaper. In the article, “Devastating case against the unions,” Johnson sets out to demonstrate that “trade unionism is not only self-defeating, [but is also] killing socialism in Britain” and is set alongside an editorial, “Betrayal of socialism” (*The Dominion* May 26, 1975: 6) that links the British argument to the New Zealand context. According to Johnson, the unions have crippled economic and political life in Britain:

Huge unions, each pursuing wage claims at any cost, have successively smashed other elements in the State – governments, political parties, private industry, nationalised boards – and now find themselves amid the wreckage of a deserted battlefield, the undoubted victors.

The language in this quotation is similar to Walsh’s, cited above. In one, the unions “force their very selfish point of view” whereas in the other they pursue “wage claims at any cost.” Similarly, Walsh’s anticivil unions attempt “to damage industry” while Johnson’s unions “smashed... private industry.” Johnson goes further still, as the unions in his article then found themselves “dazed and bewildered”:

They did not plan on the victory. They do not know what to do with it now that they have got it... [they] are not equipped by function or experience to embark on positive and constructive thinking. That is not their job. (*The Dominion* May 26, 1975: 6)

This representation of unions – as neither “positive” nor “constructive” – is accompanied by an assessment of the historic value of unions: in the 19th century, they had “an essential, even noble part to play” as they fought against “powerful, highly-organised and ruthless capitalist forces.” But, according to Johnson, capitalism could no longer be characterised this way, particularly in a time of recession: “when those [capitalist] forces are disarmed, when they are in headlong retreat... the union has no function to perform.” Johnson’s analysis would strike a chord with the New Zealand readership as New Zealand also suffered through its worst recession since WWII. While Johnston’s portrayal of unions is more encompassing than Walsh’s or Muldoon’s above (in that he characterises the entire trade union movement in anticivil terms), he similarly notes a threat to what Muldoon called “ordinary, decent working men” (in New Zealand Parliament Aug 31, 1971: 2808): “Since 1945 the British working class has been desperately badly served by the trade union movement. Its standard of living has gone up with agonising slowness” (*The Dominion* May 26, 1975: 6). The anticivil behaviour of the unions, then, first destroys “governments, political parties, private industry, nationalised boards” and then harms the working class as well. In effect, we see some striking similarities between the government discourse that depicts some unions and unionists as anticivil and Johnson’s article.

The editorial accompanying Johnson’s article that relates British unions to the New Zealand context strikes a more moderate stance yet also sets out the criteria for civil and anticivil behaviours. The editor begins by stating that “the sickness infecting British unionism has not taken root in this country on anything like the same chronic level” because, in the editor’s opinion, the New Zealand government demonstrated “statesmanship” in maintaining a consistent incomes policy, while unions, under the direction of the Federation of Labour, acted responsibly in kind. “But,” the reader is warned, “that statesmanship and sense of responsibility are constantly under threat by certain rank and file elements... [that] pursue sectional ends at the expense of the national interest” (*The Dominion* May 26, 1975: 6).

As in the categorisation of unions in parliament, the reader is presented with a clear distinction between civil and anticivil motives and behaviours. Importantly for the working poor, their material needs do not enter into the discussion. The “sectional ends” they pursue

are not considered in terms of rising costs due to inflation, instead they are contrasted with a vague “national interest.” In effect, behaviour that is disruptive to industry is anticivil and not deserving of the economic shares that it seeks.

The categorisation of unions is also reflected in economic policy circles in the 1970s. Into the early 1970s, the Phillips Curve was the predominant economic theory used to explain inflation in New Zealand (Gillion 1972: 69). The Phillips Curve proposes that inflation results from high employment due to the fact that without excess labour, workers are able to demand wages that exceed advancement in productivity. Although the theory lost some credibility in the late 1960s due to inflationary pressures persisting in countries where high unemployment was also occurring, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand conceded that “by and large... the Reserve Bank model comes down in favour of the Phillips Curve” (Gillion 1972: 69). According to the Phillips Curve model, full employment and the wage/price spiral worked in tandem to drive inflation and undermine productivity. Thus, wage earners and the economic policy community experienced the crisis very differently. For wage earners, real cost increases resulting from inflation necessitated wage increases; for economic policy advisors and prominent politicians, employee demands, enabled by full employment, caused inflation in the first place.

In this case, the representation of unionists as anticivil was not merely political manipulation, but also structured beliefs and actions. Again, actions such as wage and price freezes and calls from government to limit wage increases had significant impact on workers. And at the same time, the representation of anticivil workers masked working class poverty, and its ethnic composition. To this end, the freezing works unions and waterside workers unions – both with high levels of Māori and Pacific Island employment (Roper 2005a) – were singled out by parliamentarians as particularly disruptive and hurtful of New Zealand’s interests, in contrast to more conservative unions, such as the Clerical Workers’ Union (New Zealand Parliament Aug 31, 1971; Jul 7, 1972), despite disruptive action among both blue and white collar workers (Roper 2010).

The ethnic composition of “anticivil” workers is important as it mirrors the ethnic composition of material deprivation during this period: Easton (1976; 1981) estimated that Māori were three times more likely to be living in poverty in the early 1970s, and this figure

may be an underestimation. Māori disproportionately occupied low-paid labour roles (Forster & Ramsey 1971: 201), such as in the freezing works, waterside work, sawmilling, infrastructure labour and building (Roper 2005a) – industries that would be devastated due to mechanisation or economic slowdown before the 1984 reforms and then by the restructuring of the economy. Māori also paid a large economic share of the nation's childrearing costs: in 1961, 48 percent of the Māori population was under 15, whereas only 20 percent of the non-Māori population fell in that age group. Also, because the age composition of the Māori population is younger than its Pakeha counterpart, Māori were more likely to be in early career stages: earning less relative to their industry counterparts and requiring more income for the accumulation of basic living assets. A lack of statistics for Pacific Island peoples made calculation of their circumstances impossible, yet research into their housing, employment and struggles with discrimination indicated that Pacific Islanders fared no better than urban Māori (Easton 1976). Evidence of Pacific Peoples' poverty may have been glossed over (see, for example, *The Dominion* Jun 16, 1972) but can be found in documentary footage (Fepulea'i 2005; Polynesian Panthers 2010) where, for example, housing conditions in Auckland did not always include indoor plumbing.

I am not arguing that anticivil labels were applied to these unions because of ethnic membership, nor because some members suffered from material deprivation. Rather, the “red” unions were able to disrupt large segments of the economy. However, the categorisation of “red” unions as anticivil should be read as a construction of the “undeserving” – and unacknowledged – poor: even though the entirety of unionists affected did not live in poverty, they were more likely to be poor than those around them. The categorisation of these unions as anticivil not only attempted to undermine contentious political behaviour, it also drew attention from material deprivation to focus instead on behavioural attributes. At the same time, it focused attention away from the economic crises of the period and the inability of political economic system to protect workers from economic destitution: anticivil unions were believed to cause inflation rather than being caught in an economic system that could not maintain adequate standards of living. Importantly, working class poverty persisted throughout the period regardless of whether the National Party (that overtly categorised workers) or the Labour Party (that did not) was in power: the discourse ran deeper than symbolic categorisation. Both Labour and National Governments in the

1970s pursued wage and price fixing (Boston 1984) and largely ignored poverty in working families for the first half of the decade by treating the economic crisis in institutionally similar ways (Easton 1981; 1984).

As I will take up shortly, the categorisation of unionists also prefigures the later designation of the largely working class unemployed. Many of those most adversely affected by poverty after 1980 found themselves under symbolic assault in their roles as workers through the 1970s. For example, the devastating job cuts in the freezing works disproportionately affected Māori and Pacific Island workers and their broader communities (Peck 1985: 10). Already more subject to poverty because of wages and family structures, members of this group were symbolised negatively as anticivil unionists before the issue of poverty was acknowledged. In the post 1980 period, amid job losses due to restructuring, unions still found themselves under symbolic assault as they attempted to negotiate adequate redundancy payments for workers. Leitch (1986) documents this treatment of unions in an extensive study of media from 1981-1983. Importantly, in his analysis he finds that the anticivil categorisation of unions similarly mystifies the economic needs of workers; rather, worker interests are presumed to align with the “national interest” of industry. At this later point however, poverty was more acknowledged in research (Melser 1982; Nicholls & Pierce 1982; Peck 1985; Houghton, Wilson & Dixon 1987) and media (see Chapter 6).

Unlike the implicit coding of ethnic groups in the “militant” unions, explicit ethnic labels also distinguished between the civil and anticivil. The National Party’s 1975 election campaign featured two advertisements in cartoon that attempted to construct specific social groups to contrast to ordinary New Zealanders. The first was the already mentioned Cossack advertisement, delineating the ‘red’ unions from others – a project easily interpreted from a class perspective. But the second posited immigration, and specifically dark-skinned immigration, as the cause for increased violence and industrial unrest in the country (Spoonley, in Fepulea’i 2005). According to the cartoon, the cities of New Zealand had once been good places to bring up families but in recent times:

People began to pour in... from other countries.... 62 000 in just two years. Then one day, there weren’t enough jobs either. The people became angry and violence broke out, especially among those who had come from other places expecting great things. (National Party advertisement 1975, in Fepulea’i 2005)

The text of the cartoon did not name specific immigrant groups, but the violence in the cartoon features the only dark skinned, dark haired character. According to Richard Prebble, the Pacific Island community was an easy but unjustified “scapegoat” for unemployment after the first oil shock (in Fepulea’i 2005). Whereas earlier in the 1970s the focus on specific unions disproportionately singled out the working poor, the negative representation of brown-skinned immigrants went further still, targeting the group that would later be found to have the deepest and most prevalent impoverishment in the country (Jensen and colleagues 2003).

After the election and in the public memory of the Muldoon era, the backlash against immigrants would be constructed largely as a response to illegal immigration, or against “overstayers” (immigrants with expired residency permits) but I focus my analysis here on the targeting of the National Party’s rhetoric, and also of police efforts, which was based on ethnicity rather than citizenship (Anae 1997). As a participant in a television survey explained at the time, “we’re having trouble accepting the Polynesians fast enough... we can’t educate them, they’re not used to our way of life” (in Fepulea’i 2005). Much of the concern centred on the perceived disorderly and criminal activities of Polynesian peoples, a concern expressed by police (Fepulea’i 2005) but also in government reports, where Polynesians were characterised as “particularly vulnerable [to the affects of alcohol] as they enter a highly competitive and disciplined society” (Dansey, in the *New Zealand Herald* Oct 6, 1976). Muldoon proposed that Pacific Island immigration should be limited, and that immigrants should have a probation period during which they could be expelled if they “did not fit in.” Such measures were necessary, according to Muldoon, because immigrants were “bringing to New Zealand the class-warfare approach to trade unionism” and causing inflation (in *The Dominion* May 20, 1975: 6). To return to Alexander’s behaviours and motivations once again, Pacific people were represented as lacking the calmness, reasonableness and self-control that New Zealand society (or at least the society depicted by the National Party advertisement) claimed.

As with the representation of unions, the moral and economic are intertwined: in this case, the government of the day characterised Polynesians as anticivil in response to the growing

unemployment. More specifically, as the reserve labour force became unnecessary, anticivil labelling was used to delegitimize its claims to economic security, despite the fact that the majority of overstayers held regular employment. In the cases of militant unions and Pacific Peoples, moral terms distinguished the anticivil minority from the civil majority while the poverty afflicting those groups remained largely hidden.

Pacific Peoples in this period fared a worse fate than “red” unionists. Police conducted “random checks” of people they believed to be of Pacific Island origin, and also entered Polynesian houses in the early mornings to catch overstayers – a practice that would later be termed “the dawn raids.” As the Auckland Chief of Police explained, police “could have reason to suspect anyone who does not look like a New Zealander or who speaks with a foreign accent” (*New Zealand Herald* Oct 23, 1976: 1). The focus on ethnic identities predominated discussion in print media, in part because many police could not distinguish between the indigenous Māori population and the Pacific Peoples they claimed did not “look like” New Zealanders, and the Auckland Chief of Police clearly conflated non-white people and criminality as he explained that “these people must expect to arouse some suspicion” (Berriman in the *New Zealand Herald* Oct 23, 1976: 1). The ethnic signifiers, again, cannot be reduced to class position, yet it is important to note that these signifiers – skin colour and foreign accents – also did not acknowledge the economic position of Pacific Peoples, nor of the Māori who were wrongly identified as foreign. Overstayers found their economic fortunes threatened, not only because of deportation from New Zealand but also because of the severe economic recession throughout the Pacific Islands. And although the impetus for the anticivil representations of Pacific Peoples may have been labour market conditions, the targeting of Pacific Peoples over other (white) overstayers (Gill, in New Zealand Parliament Oct 16 1976: 4171-4172) indicates an undeniable racist motive (Fepulea’i 2005).

Other police tactics against Pacific Peoples – both overstayers and residents – suggests that negative categorisations of Pacific Peoples had significant non-economic as well as economic effects, especially in policing and incarceration (Polynesian Panthers 2010). For example, the *New Zealand Herald* reported that on October 21, 1976, 10 people were arrested on suspicion of overstaying immigration permits, only two of which had actually breached immigration rules (*New Zealand Herald* Oct 23, 1976: 1). In this case the position of Pacific Peoples within the labour market resulted in adverse treatment, yet the entirety of the

persecution suffered by Pacific Peoples cannot be reduced to labour market position. Again, the economic position of the group is significant. The Pacific population in New Zealand was more likely to experience material deprivation (and to greater degrees) than other ethnic groups, and were also likely associated with the “red” unions. As a former task-force commander of the Dawn Raids noted, the middle-of-the-night timing of the dawn raids was justified because, “these young fellows were working in the freezing works... they were gone by five in the morning and working long days” (in Fepulea’i 2005). Once again, however, social attributes – such as the inability to “fit in” – mask economic inequalities. As with the unions categorised as anticivil, we see the construction of an undeserving poor.

As with the representation of Pacific Peoples as anticivil, the anticivil labels assigned to Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries did not appear to be class based. Prejudice against single motherhood (aside from widows) predated the Domestic Purposes Benefit (McClure 2010), yet the introduction of the benefit indicated, at least in part, acknowledgement of the changing composition of families in New Zealand and the responsibility of the state in providing for women and children. For feminists, the introduction of the Domestic Purposes Benefit signalled recognition of the economic and social inequalities suffered by women and one of the great advances for the feminist movement in the twentieth century (Bunkle 1993: 90). But take-up of the benefit was quicker and more pronounced than expected and financially it quickly became a cause for concern in political circles (McClure 1998; New Zealand Planning Council 1979). According to a 1977 Department of Justice report divorce correlated to reductions in living standards (Gillespie 1980: 109) indicating that the increase in beneficiary levels was at least partly economically determined. Yet in 1976 the government conducted a review of the benefit to determine its *social* effects; reductions for the first six months of benefit payment ensued as it was believed to be breaking up marriages (Muldoon 1976: 31-32; 1977: 31).

At this point, a “conflict over representation” (Alexander 2006a) becomes clear. For those in support of the Domestic Purposes Benefit, economic government support provided women independence from bad relationships, whereas for those objecting to the benefit, it threatened the institution of marriage, family life, and social morality generally. On the more extreme end of the latter belief, the President of Birthright New Zealand stated that single mothers should give their babies to nuclear families to raise (*Broadsheet* Jan 1975: 5), clearly

indicating that the moral implications of the benefit were taken, at least by some, very seriously. Muldoon, in the 1976 Budget, announced “additional interviewing and follow-up work with Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries and their families” (1977: 31), providing the groundwork for moral assessment of beneficiaries. Further, the welfare system subjected Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries to more scrutiny than other benefit recipients. For example, the Department of Social Welfare asked people to “dob in” single mothers who they suspected of living in defacto relationships even though the Ministry had no criteria to determine a defacto relationship or whether it should be based on economic or sexual relations (New Zealand Parliament Oct 18, 1976: 4173). When an opposition MP asked for assurance that the Minister of Social Welfare would investigate the “undesirable practices” of his department that questioned the sexual lives of single mothers, the Minister responded: “I can give no such assurance” (Walker, in New Zealand Parliament Oct 18, 1976: 4173). Given that the outcome of these departmental practices could result in economic sanctions, the implication of economic undeservingness due to moral (in this case sexual) conduct could not be clearer.

The practices of social welfare agents deserve some note. Social welfare officers made repeated visits to solo mothers without prior notification or explanation; questioned Domestic Purposes beneficiaries’ neighbours, male friends and family about their “living habits”; and made comments to single mother beneficiaries about their personal effects, such as the size of their beds (New Zealand Parliament Oct 18, 1976: 4173). The practices implied that women on the benefit had either chosen sexually promiscuous lifestyles, or that they claimed the Domestic Purposes Benefit while secretly living with the father of their children, or both. McClure (1998) attributes these implications to the Minister of Social Welfare, Bert Walker, who claimed “he had received so many reports of... [benefit] abuse and illegal drawing of the benefit” that “more stringent checks” were required (*Christchurch Star* Mar 23, 1976). According to feminist critics, “the problem of solo parents” became a “national cliché” (*Broadsheet* Jan 1975: 5) as “the press ran purple with exposures of bludgers and defacto relationships” (Gillespie 1980: 109). The context for this type of reporting was established by Walker’s assertion that “the ‘in thing’ was for the mother to claim they do not know who the father really was” – thus leaving the state with no avenue for recovering the costs of the benefit (*Christchurch Star* Mar 23, 1976). To return to Alexander’s (2006a) typology of

anticivil representation, single mothers are depicted as economically “dependent”, “greedy”, and “calculating”, sexually undisciplined, and generally “secretive.” As Chapter 4 highlights, the longevity of these representations has yet to be exhausted.

The anticivil representation of single mothers (aside from widows), again, predates the Domestic Purposes Benefit, but it is important to note that the political use of morality discourses coincides with the higher than expected cost of the benefit and features when the fiscal deficit also becomes a political issue. The review of the benefit was announced shortly after the wage and price freeze in the budget of 1976 in which wage earners were told they would need to take a “deliberate cut in [their] standard of living” (Muldoon 1976: 31-32, 27, 2) and the reduction of the Domestic Purposes Benefit (at least in the initial six month period) was announced at the same time as an overall reduction in the budget: the year that the word “restraint” profiled highly in the economic plans for the country (Muldoon 1977). The Domestic Purposes Benefit review implied that the economic enticement of the benefit led to moral breakdown in society (see Muldoon 1977: 31; Easton 1981: 93). But equally importantly, and similar to the two cases above, the economic crises (the cost of the Domestic Purposes Benefit in a period of concern over the deficit and declining standards of living for low-waged workers) led to an aggressive questioning of the moral legitimacy of beneficiaries. So although moral judgements of single parenting foregrounded the debate over the legitimacy of the benefit, the political manipulation of that discourse had an economic basis.

Similar to the representation of “radical unionists,” though, the representation of Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries did not result in economic penalties for single mothers as a group, except in the first six months. Even as single mothers remained economically vulnerable (Aitken 1980: 30; Gillespie 1980), the Domestic Purposes Benefit maintained its highest real dollar value from 1978-1987 (Parliamentary Library 2000). Surprisingly, the largely female part-time workforce was taxed more heavily starting in 1978 (promoting the continuation of full-time male employment). Although the government actions questioned the economic legitimacy of Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries, then, there is not a direct correlation between this questioning and the benefit level. But as with Pacific Peoples and low-waged workers prone to unemployment, single mothers would later (especially after 1990) occupy a central role in the categorisation of beneficiaries as undeserving.

For “red” unionists, Pacific Peoples, and Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries, group identities were not synonymous with poverty in the public imagination as long as poverty remained hidden, even though members from those groups were more likely to suffer material deprivation. In other words, many met the criteria of being poor but were not recognised as such. The negative representations of these groups meant to delegitimize economic claims on moral grounds (increases in wages, eligibility to work and live in New Zealand, and eligibility for the Domestic Purposes Benefit respectively) yet the results of the labels were not primarily economic: aside from Pacific Peoples, the groups noted were not punished economically more than other groups around them. For Pacific Peoples, punishment first occurred through discriminatory policing practices, with economic penalties following. In the 1970s, then, we see the making of the undeserving poor, even where poverty is not readily acknowledged as a common element among the groups represented as anticivil.

The representation of the unemployed as anticivil or undeserving can be found in the early 1970s when registered unemployment was only 6000, as the government stated that some workers were “deliberately living in remote areas” so that they could refuse work, thus dishonestly claiming the benefit rather than abiding the social contract to work (*The Dominion* Nov 21, 1972). The taxation of the unemployment benefit beginning in 1979 and cuts to the unemployment benefit in 1981 to “encourage” workers back into employment (Stevens in New Zealand Government 1984) prefigured responses to unemployment in the neoliberal state, the latter of these initiatives occurring during a government “campaign to discredit the unemployed as ‘dole bludgers’” (Leitch 1986: 184). Official documents acknowledge that the stigmatisation of the unemployed during this period could be severe. According to the Ministerial Taskforce on Income Maintenance (1986: 31) the low rate of unemployment benefits in relation to other benefits “seems to reflect the attitude of a sizeable proportion of society towards the unemployed.” For example, even the National Council of Women (1987: 4-7), which advocated for a “fair society” that included “an adequately paid job for most” also argued that the unemployment benefit “takes away the will to work” and thus should be lowered beneath the lowest wage to “encourage” work. A writer for the Inner City Ministry in Wellington expressed concern over common labels for the unemployed such as “bum”, “bludger” “sponger” and “cheat” (Solomon 1990: 9). And in response to negative stigma, there is evidence that particularly Māori and Pacific Island communities, felt

“reluctant to seek help” from official agencies, relying on their respective ethnic communities rather than taking up welfare (Peck 1985).

The threat of unemployment in the 1970s, though low on official registers, nevertheless appeared in a variety of media from early in the decade. In the already mentioned advertising of the 1975 election campaign, Pacific Peoples were a threat because “one day, there weren’t enough jobs.” Union media from the early 1970s onwards also note the unemployment problem with headlines such as “Watch the figure rise – unemployment on the increase” (FOL 1972: 11), and the publication of the largely female clerical workers association provided advice on how to apply for the unemployment benefit (*Paperclip* Apr 19, 1975: 5). Despite its limited “real” threat during this period (again, registered unemployment levels were very low), unemployment existed in the social imagination much more than poverty.

Political responses to unemployment throughout the 1970s contributed to its prominence in media: the already mentioned deportation of Pacific overstayers, the heavy taxation of part-time workers, and the encouragement of women to stay at home (Gillespie 1980: 108) all drew attention to growing unemployment. Leitch (1986: 179-180), writing specifically about the 1981-1983 period, notes that media organisations rarely initiated critical news articles about the unemployed, but, rather, that the stories of “dole bludgers... emanated mainly from sources in the offices of the Ministers of Social Welfare and Labour and from their respective departments.” For example, then Minister of Labour, Jim Bolger, warned that those on the unemployment benefit for more than six months aimed to “make a career of being unemployed” (Leitch 1986: 180). At the same time, Bolger clearly distinguished between civil and anticivil (or deserving and undeserving) behaviour: after calling for a “crackdown” on “dole bludgers” Bolger qualified his characterisation of the unemployed by saying “he was sure such people exist, but in much lesser numbers than many believe by casual observation” (in Leitch 1986: 180). According to the Wellington Unemployed Workers Union, in the early 1980s:

The harassment of by the Department of Social Welfare which DPB women have complained about for years now seems to have been extended to the unemployed. (*Doledrums* Aug 1983: 3)

This “harassment” meant to uncover dishonest claims for the benefit. One benefit recipient, for example, recalled an interview with the Department of Social Welfare that “began with the interviewer telling a story about a beneficiary currently serving a prison sentence for abuse [of the system]” (*Doledrums* Aug 1983: 3). Once again, the defining characteristics of anticivil or undeserving identities are behavioural and motivational; the material deprivation of the unemployed, where anticivil representations are involved, is obfuscated.

Strangely, however, negative representations of the unemployed did not correspond to the economic cost of the benefit (at least initially) nor to the high uptake of the benefit; rather, into 1980 anecdotal and media accounts overstate unemployment or, more likely, government statistics under-report unemployment. In 1981, for example, the National Research Advisory Council published a report that claimed 150 000 New Zealanders were unemployed despite the official figure of 33 000 (*The Dominion* Jul 7, 1981: 3). This means that despite (or because of) the concern about unemployment and the negative coding of the unemployed, very few people chose to or were able to register as unemployed through the Department of Labour. In effect, the official registration numbers, regardless of their relation to the prevalence of poverty or hardship, mean that the cost of the unemployment benefit within New Zealand caused little concern at this time. Evidence of this comes not only from the accounts of the government, but also from critics of the welfare state’s social spending – such as the New Zealand Planning Council – members of which would later draw public concern to the cost of the unemployment benefit. The New Zealand Planning Council, in their 1979 examination of the costs of the welfare state, grouped the unemployment benefit with sickness and invalids benefits as part of “other benefits” that did not account for a significant cost to the state (1979: 78). In contrast, both superannuation and the Domestic Purposes Benefit were specified due to their economic cost to taxpayers. A publication by the same group in the following year suggested that the unemployment benefit be kept minimal as it should only provide transitional support, but once again did not consider the cost of unemployment benefits high (New Zealand Planning Council 1980).

Like single mothers, “radical” unionists, and Pacific Peoples, moral judgements against the unemployed predate the time period examined. As such, it is possible that undeserving representations of the unemployed simply became more apparent as unemployment increased. Nevertheless, it is important to note that fears over inflation, wages, and lack of

productivity constitute an economic crisis in policy circles that corresponds to the negative representation of unemployment beneficiaries by government officials. Again, economic models are important, as the Phillips curve model prescribes a “natural” level of unemployment that allows the market to function in a neutral manner, reducing inflationary pressure. Such a level would not only reduce inflation by reducing employee demands during wage negotiations, but also by encouraging a reduction in the standard of living as the unemployed price their labour at lower levels to re-enter the workforce. This economic thinking allowed economists to begin questioning the negative effects of a full employment policy (see, for example, Gallagher 1975). Economic policy circles since the mid 1970s began to advocate increases in unemployment, some even as a remedy to reduce unemployment in the longer term (Gallagher 1975; Grimes 1981; 1988; Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1982a)⁷.

Here we have to see unemployment as having a contradictory function according to economic policy makers. Short term unemployment was believed to pressure wages downward (Bascand 1988), a desired objective that would presumably lead to less unemployment in the medium term and a lower overall standard of living (Grimes 1981; 1988; Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1982a), which was also a desired outcome to mitigate the lack of productivity gains relative to incomes (Bank of New Zealand 1974: 3; Bascand 1988). However, longer term unemployment did not exert the same downward pressure on wages, and was thus considered a problem: unemployment for over six months (as Bolger warned about, above) was categorised in this way (Bascand 1988). Bascand (1988) notes two prominent theories that explain long term unemployment: the first of these points to the effects of industrial relations in disallowing lower wages and, as a result, keeping unemployed workers from pricing themselves into employment. The second theory argues that the worker’s skills become diminished, the worker becomes discouraged, resulting in lower “job search intensity” (Bascand 1988: 276). Three other factors are believed to be important in this later theory: “Job search intensity is also thought to depend inversely upon the ease of access to benefits, benefit-wage replacement ratios, and the degree of social acceptability in living off the state” (Bascand 1988: 276).

⁷ Incidentally, economic policy circles continue to propose a “natural” level of unemployment, though with more qualification (see Szeto & Guy 2004).

The representation of the unemployed as undeserving, or anticivil, needs to be considered in light of these theories circulating within the economic policy community. But rather than attributing lowered unemployment benefits to economic policy, government record indicates that reductions in unemployment benefits and popular representations of the unemployed are causally linked. The Ministerial Taskforce on Income Maintenance (1987), for example, argues that because a negative popular understanding of the unemployed occurs alongside increases in unemployment throughout the 1970s, the taxation of the benefit in 1979 and the reduction to the benefit in 1981, income maintenance levels occur *due to* popular sentiment. I do not dispute the deep held belief for many that the unemployed are undeserving, and that this influences the treatment of the group. However, the evidence above suggests a different relationship between the discourse of morality and government policy. Here one would note that short term unemployment was deemed necessary for the economic benefit of the country, but that long term unemployment was believed to have little benefit. In terms of the unemployment benefit, the government could influence two features believed to contribute to long term unemployment: the ratio of the benefit to earnings and the social acceptance of the benefit as income replacement. Publicly, Prime Ministers Muldoon (1977) and David Lange (*The Dominion* Oct 20, 1988: 1), and Social Welfare Minister Jenny Shipley (*New Zealand Herald* Apr 5, 1991: 3) expressed the need to lower benefits to produce significant gaps between benefits and wages. Benefit reductions allowed for falls in the standard of living (so that workers would be encouraged to price their labour at lower levels to return to the workforce) and thus discourage long-term unemployment. The social acceptability of the benefit had to be addressed in a different manner: the Third National Government's (1981-1983) "campaign" against the unemployed (Leitch 1986: 184) was one such means of addressing the problem, and this tactic continued into the neoliberal state under the guise of "dependency" rhetoric (below).

In contrast to the first three examples, cultural representations of the unemployed correspond directly to a reduction in income. Yet, as with the other groups, political manipulation of "deep cultural codes" occurs in response to economic crises: in this case, continued concern over productivity, the belief that wages were too high, and, ironically, concern over high unemployment rates. At the same time, the problem of "dole bludgers" – those aiming "to make a career out of unemployment" masks structural unemployment by presenting it instead

in moral and behavioural terms. Thus, the hypothesis that unemployment benefit reductions result from cultural discrimination against the unemployed is not convincing. Rather, the economic treatment of the unemployed seems to correlate more directly to state economic goals (chiefly lower wages), whereas the negative representations of the unemployed mask those goals.

For all groups, then, anticivil representations are premised on social rather than economic attributes. In to gain acceptance Pacific Peoples needed to learn to “fit in” to the Pakeha mainstream (Polynesian Panthers 2010); unionists to work “within” the system rather in opposition to it; Domestic Purposes Beneficiaries had to return to married life or cease to have sexual relationships; and the unemployed simply needed to work to become “civil” once again. In the first three of these cases, the economic aspect of the identities – the high levels of poverty among those represented as anticivil – remained unacknowledged.

To sum up the use of discussion of anticivil representations in the 1970s above, three significant trends should be noted. First, anticivil representations relate to economic crises: an excess of reserve labour, unemployment, increasing deficits and social security spending, and the inability of the economic system to maintain equitable wages during recession. Second, in this period anticivil representations hide the poverty of the groups they stigmatise. With the exception of the unemployed, target groups were not acknowledged as poor (nor were they uniformly so). Thus, the representations discussed largely maintained the illusion of the poverty free society, even as the groups represented as anticivil were more likely to experience material deprivation. Third, taken together, the anticivil representations constitute the basis for the more explicit representations of the undeserving poor in the neoliberal era (to be discussed momentarily). When the targeted groups are put together, a clear picture emerges in which the poor are comprehensively targeted, even if the targeting encourages different identification (as militant unionists, single mothers, and so on). As I proposed at the beginning of the chapter, we should see the representations and categorisations of the poor in this period as clearly aligned with the “beneficiary bashing” that would occur in the neoliberal era.

Welfare dependency and personal responsibility: The undeserving poor in the neoliberal era

Two significant changes in New Zealand altered the composition of those experiencing poverty beginning in the 1980s. First, unemployment became much more prevalent, and unemployment benefits lost value through taxation (in 1979), lack of increases against inflation, and direct cuts (initially in 1981) (Parliamentary Library 2000: 4, 8). Second, the working poor, even after the family benefit of 1976, suffered economically through the wage and price freeze of the early 1980s (Easton 1986: 25-26). In 1985, the composition of the poor changed once again as the fourth Labour government introduced increased family support for both low income wage earners and beneficiaries with dependent children (Ministerial Task Force on Income Maintenance 1986: 2). These changes improved the economic situation for poor families until benefit levels began to erode in 1987 and then were cut significantly in 1991. In the 1990s, both low waged and benefit dependent groups suffered economic hardship and significant falls in living standards, though the latter came to dominate poverty statistics due to the combination of lowered income maintenance and less social subsidies in other areas, such as housing.

Ideological changes also occurred during this period. Poverty was briefly acknowledged as existing in New Zealand and highlighted in media, though some qualified this admission with distinction between “relative” and “abject” or “real” poverty. For example, after a government announcement on December 19, 1990 that benefit levels would be cut significantly, *The Dominion* reported “outrage over [the] impact [on the] poor” and predicted that “people would be forced into abject poverty” (Dec 20, 1990: 1, 2). Chapter 4 contains a thorough treatment of the references to poverty within the media at this moment; here it is enough to note that New Zealand’s poverty-free myth was, at least momentarily, questioned.

At the same time, the anticivil representations of the unemployed noted in the previous section continued into the 1990s, however, the discourse of morality focused increasingly on “welfare dependency.” As I discuss below, this discourse encompasses not only the unemployed, but all beneficiaries deemed capable of work. The combination of benefit reductions and welfare dependency discourse marks a distinct shift in the understanding of

poverty in New Zealand since the 1970s, as anticivil representations quite explicitly reference groups believed to be the most materially deprived.

In the Fourth Labour Government's first term, Finance Minister Roger Douglas claimed that "help to those in need is much better delivered directly through the benefit and tax system rather than by subsidising particular goods and services" (Douglas 1984: 6): the state's role was in direct support rather than through micro-economic stimulation of markets. By 1987, government rhetoric about benefits had changed drastically. Far from the state providing "better delivered" assistance through the benefit system, "many of the systems that were meant help people get back on their feet have in fact had the opposite effect, and kept them dependent on the state" (Douglas 1987: 6). The articulation of welfare and "dependence" – still in its infancy within government discourse at this point – marks the most visible ideological battleground of poverty policy from that point to the present day.

By the time of the Fourth National Government, the rhetoric had developed. The government's Social Assistance manifesto, *Welfare that Works* opens:

The Government's social and economic objective is to provide an environment where New Zealand families are able to take control of their own lives, freed from the dependence on state welfare that currently traps so many of our people. (Shipley, Upton, Smith & Luxton 1991: 1)

Here the terms of welfare dependency are far more clearly articulated. In the first instance, the state "traps" individuals; in the second, the individual becomes infantilised, or "dependent." The first aspect is explicitly tied to the role of the state, and this will be addressed shortly. The second marks the terms of welfare debate from the second term of the Fourth Labour Government onward (from 1987 to the present day): dependency and its antithetical term, personal responsibility. The rhetoric effectively changes the representation of beneficiaries into a single group, but does not alter the connotations of moral bankruptcy noted in the last section.

In New Zealand the problem of "welfare dependency" can be found throughout the media from the late 1980s onward, although its uses in government discourse is more notable. The 1991 *Welfare that Works* document, the government sponsored 1997 *Beyond Dependency*

conference, the references to dependency and personal responsibility in the 1998 proposed *Code of Social and Family Responsibility*, and the 2010 Welfare Working Group, established to address and reduce “long-term dependency” (Welfare Working Group 2010; 2011) all establish a stable discourse that positions beneficiaries as psychologically disabled due to the nature of the state social welfare system. The Alternative Welfare Working Group interprets the moral overtones of “dependency” as follows:

The term itself has never been defined and has become a loose and imprecise phrase used to attack and criticise beneficiaries. Often it has been used to imply that all beneficiaries are unnecessarily and inappropriately relying on government assistance rather than being “independent” and self-reliant.

As such, benefit dependency becomes “an acceptable alternative to the more directly critical term, ‘bludgers’” (O’Brien and colleagues 2010: 36).

However, the discourse of dependency needs to be explained this way by critics precisely because it appears less degrading than other undeserving codes. The challenges in debating the dependency discourse are twofold: first because of its apparent critique of the system rather than the individual, and second in the psychological rather than sociological profile of beneficiaries. An analysis of comments made by Paula Rebstock, the chair of the 2010-2011 Welfare Working Group, brings these issues to the fore:

One of the big things that resonates with me, and you hear it from everyone, is that the way the benefit system is set up, it disables people rather than enables them to make transitions to independence. And their response to the incentives in the benefit system leads to a great deal of discouragement and disengagement and it reinforces that and undermines their sense of self-responsibility and of independence. (*The Listener* Nov 27 2010: 17)

In all aspects, this quotation is typical of dependency discourse. In the first instance, the discourse degrades welfare provision by the state because it “disables” what are presumably, and otherwise, independent individuals. In the second instance, individuals do not find themselves unable to leave, or even thrown into, the social welfare system for any structural reasons. Rather, they are psychologically profiled as “discouraged,” “disengaged,” lacking a

“sense of self-responsibility” and so on. The concern over the individual’s psychology seems paramount, though the article from which the quotation is taken from also notes that:

On top of the human cost is the financial one. Benefits cost taxpayers \$76 billion per year and... the fiscal, social and economic costs [are] unsustainable. (*The Listener* Nov 27 1970: 16).

Similar to the behavioural and motivational criteria of the 1970s anticivil codes, psychology determines the basis for exclusion and encourages a break of identification between those in paid employment and those without. In brief, the “problem” of welfare is a problem of welfare provision within the state rather than structural employment in the labour market. At the same time, it is an individual, rather than a structural economic, issue. This marks a paradigmatic shift in language from the 1938 Social Security era, where the state assumed responsibility for protecting individuals from the negative effects of the market.

From the early 1980s onward, however, the dependency narrative appears to come, contradictorily, from both those sympathetic to beneficiaries (particularly those sympathetic to the unemployed) as well as those who advocate that beneficiaries take more personal responsibility. For example, “In 1981 the Director for the Mental Health Foundation... issued a press release which stated that long-term unemployment could lead to suicide, depression, alcoholism and ill-health,” (Leitch 1987: 196) a message that was echoed in the Director of Lifeline when he stated:

the most serious thing arising from unemployment is the bitterness and despondency arising from people who have made multiple job attempts... Their self-esteem and confidence has been totally destroyed... (in Leitch 1986: 197)

In both of these cases, it is neither social welfare nor the psychological condition of the individual that is to blame, rather, psychological conditions are presented as “arising from unemployment.” However, sympathy for the unemployed in this way proved easily manipulated; in the 1984 election campaign of the Social Credit Party in *The Dominion* promised to address growing unemployment with “the encouragement of a self-help attitude rather than welfare dependence” (*The Dominion* July 6, 1984: 4). In this instance, the

economic conditions that lead to psychological distress fall away from the representation of unemployment – instead, the psychological condition stands in for the cause and psychology for the remedy of the problem. If we return to Rebstock’s comments quoted above, we see this articulation of psychology and unemployment more clearly, where, “the incentives in the benefit system leads to a great deal of discouragement and disengagement and it reinforces that and undermines [beneficiaries’] sense of self-responsibility and of independence.” In this articulation we see both concern for the psychological state of the beneficiary – even if this does not translate into policy – and criticism of the social welfare system.

I think it is important to note the effectiveness of the dependency discourse in incorporating criticism of unemployment and the social welfare. Before I address the theoretical implications of dependency discourse more thoroughly in the next chapter I want to point out two things here. First, the incorporation of concerns for the long-term unemployed into anti-welfare rhetoric complicates, I think, the idea that the discourse is imposed by powerful: as Hall (1988a) argues regarding the conservative discourses of Thatcherism, they speak to the everyday experiences of a range of people. To further this thought, in line with the analysis of capitalism undertaken by Boltanski and Chiapello (2006), we can say that social discourses develop through criticism as well as structures of domination. Second, and equally, political responses to “welfare dependency” – these include reductions to benefits, and reductions to housing and health subsidies (Shipley and colleagues 1991), and also recommendations that beneficiaries (including single mothers) be required to seek employment, and that people have a limited period over their lifetime during which they are eligible for social assistance (Welfare Working Group 2010) – cannot be said to reduce material deprivation or its ill effects. To put this point another way, the sympathetic sentiment for the unemployed that partly informs the dependency discourse does not result in outcomes that serve the interests of the unemployed.

It is possible to read the development of dependency discourse (those victimised by the system) as a softening of the anticivil representation of the “welfare bludger” (those taking advantage of the system). As Gans (1995) contends, however, the change in explicit representation does not challenge the underlying assumptions about deservingness and undeservingness. More derogatory terms continue to be used alongside “dependency” and

both contain much the same assumptions about beneficiaries. The notion of dependency that became central to government literature thus easily corresponds to overtly negative codes in everyday use. A salient example comes from the representations of the unemployed used by the majority National Government in this period. In 1995 National Whip John Carter called National MP John Banks's call-back radio show pretending to be an unemployed Māori man who had enjoyed "a free trip all my life." Carter's character asked "that treaty claims not to be settled, 'otherwise I won't have anything to moan about any more'" (*The Dominion* Mar 30, 1995). Here it might be tempting to view the representation of both Māori and the poor as individually perpetuated or unattached to dependency discourses, but actions in parliament point to more systemic attitudes that reflect the general assumptions about dependence. When opposition parties brought up the episode in parliament, "attempts to indicate Government disapproval of Mr Carter's comments [were] undermined by laughter from National's front-bench ministers including from Treaty Negotiations Minister Doug Graham and Māori Affairs Minister John Luxton" (*The Dominion* Mar 30, 1995: 1). Ample discussion of Māori dependency is found throughout the popular press, even from Māori MPs such as Peter Tapsell who complained that the welfare state "sapped family and individual responsibility and brought with it the deadly cocoon of dependence" (*The Dominion* Jun 19, 1995: 2). Here, the profile of the undeserving expands beyond psychological traits to ethnic groups – this will be taken up in more detail in Chapters 4 through 6.

Again, the underlying moral assumptions of dependency discourse and other representations of the undeserving poor are interchangeable. Thus, Donald Brash's argument that welfare dependency has resulted in "a culture in which, when people leave a relationship, too many take it for granted that the first port of call is not their own savings or their family but the WINZ [Work and Income New Zealand] office; on leaving a job, many don't look for another" (in *New Zealand Herald* Jan 26, 2005: 4), is only a short symbolic move from a letter writer's call for the Government to "wake up... all the dole-bludgers who sit at home happily ripping off the system with no intention of finding jobs" (*The Dominion* Mar 12, 1996: 6). At times the "soft" and "hard" representation of the poor coincide, as in National Member of Parliament John Banks call to end the Domestic Purposes Benefit because of the "incentive it provided" alongside his pseudo proverb: "We are our brother's keeper, not our bludger's keeper" (in *The Dominion* Oct 29, 1982).

The consistency and persistence of the dependency discourse alongside the reductions in all short term benefits in the post 1987 era again make it seem as though economic fortunes are tied to the representation of the poor. However, as with the pre-dependency era, the timing of state initiatives is important. The 1991 benefit reductions coincide with the impending financial crisis of the state due to the deficit on one hand (Treasury 1990) and the determination to lower wages through the implementation of the Employment Contracts Act (Easton 1994; Kelsey 1997). The next point at which dependency became politically salient (rather than publicly circulated) was with the proposed Code of Social and Family Responsibility in 1998, when there was another general downturn in the economy due to the Asian financial crisis. Finally, the latest attempt at “Reducing Long-Term Benefit Dependency” (Welfare Working Group 2010) came on the heels of a world economic recession. In other words, these significant policy moves to limit benefit rates through various measures coincide with periods of economic downturn, when reductions in real wages are believed to stimulate the economy or reductions in benefit levels are believed to discipline beneficiaries into work.

Conclusion

Although one can detect a change in ethos from a socially responsible state to an individually responsible state that roughly aligns with the institutionalisation of neoliberalism, this chapter has demonstrated the continuity of moral coordinates across macroeconomic periods. In both the Keynesian and post-Keynesian states we find a persistent myth of New Zealand as poverty free, and though the eras differ in how acknowledged poverty is addressed, in both eras the myth hides poverty. Similarly, in the Keynesian and post-Keynesian state undeserving codes are used to represent groups that are more likely to be poor. While the undeserving in the post-Keynesian era are explicitly beneficiaries, in both eras the representation of groups tends to obfuscate poverty and promotes, instead, social, psychological, and cultural identities.

The next chapter will use this discussion to consider how to approach the relationship between cultural understandings of poverty and political responses to poverty in New Zealand. The continuity of moral discourses complicates any simplistic alignment between

institutional eras and cultural understandings of poverty. At the same time, the uses of moral discourses alongside political conflict and change speak to the interconnections between the two.

Chapter 3:

Narrative, discourse, hegemony: meaning and politics

Thus far, I have argued that rather than a distinct break in the discourses of morality that relate to poverty, we find continuity between the Keynesian and neoliberal eras in the treatment of the materially deprived, whether or not they are recognised as poor. So while discourses of morality have material effects (such as the incarceration of Pacific Peoples, the condemnation of the long term unemployed, scrutiny of the sexual practices of single mothers, and so on) the direct links between these discourses and the political and economic treatment of groups is unclear. For example, why is it that the poverty-free myth in New Zealand is associated with raises of benefit levels in 1972, when in 1998 it is instead associated with the denial of poverty claims? On one level, discourses of morality influence how we perceive and should approach poverty. On another level, however, these discourses persist through different political eras with very different results. In this chapter I pursue a method for effectively examining the cultural understandings of poverty alongside the politics that largely determine material deprivation.

To accomplish this I use the accounts of poverty and morality in Chapter 2 to evaluate the effectiveness of sociological cultural studies in understanding the relationship between politics and cultural understandings of poverty in New Zealand. I consider questions that arise from the discussion in Chapter 2 using Marxian cultural studies, Durkheimian cultural studies and Discourse Theory (drawing on the work of the CCCS, New American Cultural Sociology, and Ernesto Laclau respectively). The first set of these questions addresses the inter-relationship between representation of poverty and the poor and political responses to material deprivation: To what extent do cultural understandings mystify or shape material deprivation? To what extent are these understandings distinct from material practices (such as the implementation of government policy)? These questions are at the heart of sociological cultural studies as, together, they go some way in querying the effect of cultural understandings on our social lives. The theories examined in this chapter provide little

consensus in addressing these questions, so I evaluate their different responses, again drawing on the discussion in Chapter 2.

From these questions concerning cultural meaning and political outcomes, three other questions arise that provide some direction in how to proceed. First, who should we look at to challenge the social structures that lead to poverty – or what political identities should we be examining? In Chapter 2, for example, the representations of anticivil groups often did not acknowledge material deprivation, and also often categorised larger groups (groups that were not uniformly deprived) such as “militant” workers. In this case, how are we to understand political identities, where the material deprivation does not align precisely with the social identities that are called upon? Related to this question, how do sociological cultural studies understand politics and to what extent can the politics of the theories address material deprivation? Third, culminating from the last two questions, what types institutions should be analysed to best understand the relationship between cultural understandings and material outcomes?

As I work through these questions I make four arguments that I will simplify up front. First, cultural meanings relating to poverty persistently hide both power and disadvantage, and thus we need to consider obfuscation as a potential function of cultural meanings, and a necessary part of cultural analysis. Second, sociological cultural studies generally assign too much power to cultural meaning; analytically, the examination of cultural meanings should be balanced with recognition of elements that may influence cultural meanings. For example, while the representation of the unemployed may be significant in determining policy outcomes for unemployed people, we must also consider the inverse possibility, that desired policy outcomes influence cultural representations. Third, as I elaborate below, the sociological cultural studies examined in this chapter have displaced class from a privileged position of analysis to a subordinate position. I argue that, without reducing all conflict to class conflict, we need some return to a concept of class if we are to effectively analyse poverty in New Zealand. Fourth, I argue that we need to differentiate between institutional types to mark general areas of analysis in the study. The tendency to overvalue cultural meaning in sociological cultural studies, as well as to dedifferentiate between material outcomes and symbolic representations, tends to flatten political institutions: differences in power and function remain under-theorised.

Later in the chapter, I use these arguments to develop a heuristic model of political spaces from which poverty (in both its cultural and material registers) can be fruitfully analysed. Here I argue that mediating and regulating institutions need to be differentiated, not only in their purpose but also in their relative power. At the same time, these institutions must be considered in tension with other social power, particularly that of critical actors (social movements and critical actors within government and business). These three sites – mediating institutions, regulatory institutions, and critical actors – shape the remainder of the project. Due to space, however, these sites are necessarily limited: to maintain a manageable scope I focus on newsprint media, the state, and anti-poverty movements as representative of the three sites.

Before addressing the questions that I set out above, I want to briefly clarify my use of sociological cultural studies so far. The three traditions that I examine in this chapter – the Western Marxist inspired cultural studies of the CCCS, poststructuralist Discourse Theory, and the Durkheimian inspired New American Cultural Sociology – all attempt to analyse the function of cultural meaning in relation to social stability and change. At the same time, they each have different methods of cultural analysis that can be separated from their sociological understandings of culture. In Chapter 2 I drew most explicitly on the methods of New American Cultural Sociology, where the categorisation of the deserving and undeserving poor translated very easily into Alexander's (2006a) typology of civil and anticivil behaviours and motives. The Western Marxist approach of the CCCS was also used in identifying the mystifying function of cultural meanings (for example, the way that the poverty-free myth obfuscated material deprivation); this approach, as I will discuss below, is theoretically at odds with the premises of Discourse Theory. However, I also used a Discourse Theory approach to analysing cultural meanings and political practices in that the two, at times, were presented as inseparable discourses (to use the same example, the poverty-free myth corresponded to material practices that allowed the myth to continue, such as a lack of data collection).

While I assesses the relative values of the sociological approach to culture that the theoretical traditions call upon in this chapter, I also points to the analytical value of the specific methods used by these traditions. For example, New American Cultural Sociology is found to be ill-equipped to provide a sociological understanding of the relationship between cultural

representations of the poor and material deprivation. However, the analytical methods that it uses are nevertheless very useful in reading cultural representations. In other words, in this chapter I set out my own framework for cultural sociology by drawing on the sociological cultural studies traditions, but also, explicitly, I use the methods of cultural analysis put forward by these theories in the chapters that follow.

The role and nature of culture within social life

The treatment of culture in sociological cultural studies centres on four questions: To what extent are culture understandings ‘true’ or an obfuscation of the truth? To what extent can it be differentiated from material practices? How autonomous is culture within social life generally? And to what extent does it affect other aspects of social life? For the purposes of my investigation, I reduce these questions to two main points of investigation: First, what is the role of cultural meaning in social causality (to what extent does culture determine or is culture determined by other features of social life)? And, to what extent does culture represent, misrepresent or correspond to social life? As these questions are examined, I will draw on examples from the discussion of Chapter 2: the political manipulation of civil and anticivil representations; the masking of economic crises; links between policy communities and representations of the poor; the extent to which discourses of morality corresponded to economic and social practices; and the persistence of morality across political eras. In this section, I provide brief overviews of the cultural sociological traditions individually before drawing conclusions.

Beginning in the early 1970s, the CCCS drew most extensively on the works of two theorists: Althusser and Gramsci. The centre’s focused its analysis on “ideology,” a term it spent considerable effort defining (CCCS 1978), but that has three distinct features throughout the CCCS writing between roughly 1970 and 1982. Ideology is material as well as symbolic (ideas and understandings are bound to practices and every-day experiences); ideology presents a coherent worldview; and ideology can be used to mask relations of domination and subordination. In this section I will focus on and simplify two prominent understandings of ideology in relation to social life generally. The first, which draws more on Althusserian theory, posits ideology as a superstructure to the economy. In this type of analysis, ideology

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has a conservative function that reproduces social life and social relations but that plays a subordinate role to politics. The second draws more comprehensively on Gramscian theory and is influenced by Laclau's theoretical developments (Hall 1988b). In this stage ideology is omnipresent as it becomes constitutive of all meaning in social life. Gramscian analyses in CCCS, as I argue below, posits ideology as the prime means of social contestation. The theories follow each other chronologically, with the Althusserian tradition waning around 1976, and Gramscian theory gaining prominence from that point until the mid 1980s.

From the beginning of the 1970s, CCCS analyses of culture promised two distinctions from previous sociological work: to break from functionalist models of culture on one hand and voluntaristic models of social organisation on the other (Hall 1980a; 1980b). Both of these breaks posit culture as a meaningful political site in social organisation. Yet the centre's analysis of media (Hall 1973), subcultures (Hall & Jefferson 1976), and crime (Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978) nevertheless reproduced epiphenomenal and functionalist understandings of culture. In the subcultural analysis, for example, working class youth displayed agency in their appropriation and subversion of various symbols (such as clothing) but their politics were ultimately ineffective as they remained cultural expressions: culture functioned as an area of ineffective contestation (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts 1976: 47). In media analysis, the "ideologies of the powerful" were ultimately reproduced because of news production practices. Here the producers of cultural mediation, regardless of their intentions, became "unwitting servants of the powerful" (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 68). In this case, ideology functioned to reproduce social relations regardless of the intentions of social agents. On the whole, in this era, social relations appeared fixed, in no small part due to the role of cultural meaning in social life.

The tendency towards functionalism was recognised within the CCCS and attributed to the use of Althusserian theory (Turner 1990: 29, 65-66). For Althusser, ideology is not simply a means of justifying capitalism, but also the reproduction of "conditions of exploitation" (McLennan, Molina & Peters 1978: 99), where social orders are stabilised. To achieve this conservative function, ideology creates "a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1971: 162). In other words, the role of individuals within the class system is "represented" in imaginary form, thus obfuscating the "real" basis of social conflict. Althusser makes this claim by noting that

ideology has two distinct functions – allusion and illusion – where the first attaches the individual to the real world and the second does so in a way that obfuscates class relations.

In this theory, “ideology is a system (with its own rigour) of representation... endowed with a historical existence and a role within a given society... it is a structure essential to the historical life of societies” (Althusser 1969: 234-235). As such, ideology has “relative autonomy” and considerable power that economic agents call upon, but that can also, at times, “overdetermine” economic and political structures (Althusser 1969: 101). But despite Althusser’s claim of “relative autonomy” a paradox becomes apparent as every conflict is ultimately class conflict (Althusser 1971: 164-165). To accommodate this difficulty, Althusser explains that “in the last instance” the economy determines social life, yet “from the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never comes” (1969: 113).

If the representations of “anticivil” groups of the 1970s are looked at together, allusions to social divisions are made through the promotion of social identities (single mothers, “red” unions, Pacific Peoples, and the unemployed). From an Althusserian perspective, these are illusory in that they correspond, in reality, to class positions. The further connections made between these identities and economic crises are also important when considering the determining role of the economy. Yet, in this same example, Althusserian theory can be easily criticised; the social scrutiny that single mothers suffered regardless of their reliance on state benefits requires us to question the extent to which their position can be ultimately reduced to class struggle, or what types of domination can be settled through class relations. Similarly, Pacific Peoples, who did not all belong to the working class, were threatened by police actions in ways that other members of the working class were not: reducing their experiences of domination to class conflict may be theoretically useful, but it may also gloss over the other dimensions of domination at work.

The other significant criticism of Althusserian theory addresses the conservative role of culture. The ways that state institutions continuously reproduce “conditions of exploitation” through a dominant ideology leaves little space for individual or group agency or social change that runs counter to the interests of the powerful. This aspect of Althusserian theory is also apparent in the early 1970s CCCS work and, for Althusser’s critics, is unavoidable given the ultimate relationship between culture, politics, and the economy (Hirst 1976;

Thompson 1978). As a result, the culture-as-tool, or as-function, model received pointed criticism from within the centre, leading to what Turner (1990: 183) describes as a compromise between structuralists and culturalists in the adoption of Gramsci, or what Hall (1980b) categorizes a necessary balance between two competing paradigms. The presence of Gramsci's terms can be found in the work up to 1976, but his complete analytical framework predominates later, as he becomes the central figure in Marxian analysis within the centre (cf. Hall 1988b; CCCS 1982; Turner 1990: 183). Before moving on to Gramsci's theory, I think it is important to point out that although the role of culture is given too functional a role in Althusser's theory, his conception of illusion/allusion has value. For example, the poverty-free myth operates, during the 1970s, as an allusion to egalitarianism that, against the historical record, is very real. At the same time, however, it acts as an illusion as well, as the masking of poverty among workers attests.

Gramsci's (1971) first theoretical development advances the concept of the Western democratic state from a strictly coercive entity that acts in the interests of the capitalist class to one that depends on a balance between violence and moral/intellectual leadership. Moral/intellectual leadership is attained not through political structures, but through civil society, or the realm distinguished as private and individual. Though consent and coercion (civil and political societies respectively) are in constant tension, consent gained through leadership has a primary role in the western state whereas coercion is the final defence of the capitalist system (Anderson 1976b). The unity of the state depends on the successful combination of moral (consent), political (coercion) and economic leadership, or the attainment of "hegemony" (Gramsci 1971). In this theory, culture has a primary role in determining social relations as the cultural realm is the first territory of contestation before ultimate control of the state can occur (Gramsci 1971: 168).

Because hegemony necessarily occurs on all levels of society, the class that gains leadership and control of the political and economic apparatuses of the state does so by first constructing the "national interest" out of its class interests in civil society. In British Cultural Studies Gramsci's theory was used repeatedly to explain the construction of Thatcher's "Authoritarian Populism" (Hall 1988a) as well as the creation of a "national popular" culture based on conservative and racist constructions of Britain (Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978; CCCS 1982). In brief, Gramscian theory is used to explain the historical development of a

general “social unease” (Wood 1998: 42) in Britain due to rapid social and economic changes beginning in the 1960s that culminates in Thatcher harnessing conservative ideology articulated alongside free market economics (Hall 1988a). In this argument, the successful construction of a national popular culture allows for political and economic leadership to ensue. The politics of Thatcherism is located not only in the narrow confines of political office but in numerous social sites where meaning circulates and common understandings of social life are made.

Alongside the use of Gramscian theory, the development of the theoretical use of culture – from a superstructure to an omnipresent feature of social life – informs analyses of the CCCS beginning in the late 1970s. Rather than culture operating in an orthodox Marxian fashion (as a separate realm of social life), it comes to be theorised as integral to the representation of all aspects of social life, or constitutive of “meaning” of all social phenomena (Hall 1988b). In this moment, any area of social life can take on political significance as contestation over meaning is central to the political process. To use an example from the last chapter, the articulation (or the connection constructed between) social welfare provision by the state and the psychological characteristics ascribed to welfare “dependents” becomes integral to a larger politics as it brings together the moral, political and economic in such a way as to construct an element of the “national interest.” In this case, the moral, political and economic cannot be neatly divided and assigned different amounts of power.

However, Mulhern (2000) criticises the relationship between politics and culture posited by the CCCS during this period as he finds that the symbolic is assumed to have too much importance: it becomes a substitute for politics. In his argument, meaning-making increasingly stands in for politics as the CCCS ages. Rather than, for example, the articulation of welfare dependency being part of the political process to secure consent, the contestation over the meaning of social welfare becomes the sum of politics. Mulhern’s (2000) selective reading of the CCCS (Simpson 2004) has engendered criticism, but his argument has affinities with Wood’s (1998) more subtle assessment of Stuart Hall’s work during this period. Wood (1998) argues that as culture is understood to permeate social life, political sites of contention become radically dispersed, except where the state is returned to as a site of ultimate control. In this way, the politics of social life are fragmented and plural on one hand, or reduced to a narrow statist approach on the other (Wood 1998). This critique

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of the CCCS relates, as I will later address, to a lack of institutional analysis, particularly in post-1980 CCCS work. The danger of locating politics in radically dispersed political sites through articulation, as Mulhern (2000) argues in different terms, leads to a practice where the production of meaning dominates politics.

In sum, the CCCS from 1970 to the early 1980s develops the understanding of culture in three distinct ways. First, culture changes from a conservative and fairly impotent realm of society to a productive area of contestation. Second, culture becomes constitutive of all social life. Third, culture becomes the primary means of contestation within society as it stands in for politics as a whole. Through these changes, however, culture maintains a connection between the lived experiences of individuals and how these experiences are understood. Cultural understandings necessarily allude to lived experiences, even as they represent them in illusory ways (Hall 1980a). To return to the two themes set out at the beginning of this section, cultural meaning increasingly determines social relations in the work of the CCCS, and it does so, in part, by masking the social relations that it represents.

The constructivist moment in cultural theory, where culture becomes constitutive rather than either reflective or separate from other social phenomena, underpins Discourse Theory. Central to Discourse Theory, meaning and the contestation of meaning in social life (both symbolically and through practices) determines social relations. Unlike the Marxian theories that Discourse Theory deconstructs, however, these social relations are not necessarily located in the economy, or the state, or any other privileged site: they are found and contested in any number of locations throughout “the social.” For the moment I will put aside the nature of society and its sites of contestation and will focus, instead, on two aspects of Discourse Theory that underlie its use of cultural meaning, both of which I find untenable for cultural analysis: the conflation of the symbolic and the material, and the related “surface” treatment of culture (Jameson 1984a: 62) that does not allow for designations of “truth” or “false representation.”

In the seminal Discourse Theory text, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (Laclau & Mouffe 2001), the authors argue that one cannot distinguish between a level of representation and a reality upon which it is based as there is “no possibility of fixing an ultimate literal sense for which the symbolic would be a second and derived plane of signification” (Laclau & Mouffe

2001: 98). As such, symbolic processes “overdetermine” the structuring of society at every turn, or present a symbolic code of what can be yet can never be achieved. This development can be traced to Foucault’s methodological turn to analyse historical discourses rather than ideology, which is equally a turn away from the demystification of signification (where the functions of illusion and allusion are revealed). It is worth briefly outlining Foucault’s criticism of the concept of ideology as it underpins the epistemological foundations of Discourse Theory. First, the concept of ideology requires a truth against which it is defined. As Foucault’s larger project questions the attribution of truth to any given discourse, the basis of truth against which criteria must be judged is unsound. Second, ideology stands in a secondary position to a material, or real, referent. As the quotation from Laclau and Mouffe above makes clear, there is “no possibility of fixing an ultimate literal sense for which the symbolic would be a second or derived plane of existence” – material referents have an essentially empty character until they are given meaning through symbolic representation. Third, ideology refers to a pre-constituted rather than constructed subject (Foucault 1984: 60). Here, too, Discourse Theory sides with Foucault as identities and interests are constructed rather than pre-given, or objectively identifiable. Aside from these epistemological underpinnings, however, Discourse Theory departs from Foucauldian concerns to focus on how discourses establish social identities that are then articulated politically. For Discourse Theory, discourses establish hierarchical social positions between identities, not just in formal politics but in all areas of social life; articulation is the attempt to challenge or reinforce these positions.

Just as CCCS began to overemphasise the role of meaning-making in political contests, I argue that Discourse Theory’s understanding of discourse and articulation also lead to an overestimation of the power of culture, particularly language. Where the symbolic constitutes, orders, and reorders social life, and where discourse and articulation construct political identities and interests, the power of the symbolic appears overwhelming. Laclau and Mouffe, sensitive to this criticism, argue that the symbolic cannot be considered in isolation – the theory is meant to encompass social life generally rather than symbolic practices alone (Laclau & Mouffe 1987; 2001). Even as the symbolic “overdetermines” social life, it cannot be considered in absence of material institutions and practices. Articulation, therefore,

cannot consist of a purely linguistic phenomena, but must instead pierce the entire material density of the multifarious institutions, rituals and practices through which a discursive formation is structured. (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 109)

This is meant to be a strength of Discourse Theory, as it should be capable of a broad analysis of institutionalised practices and political identities as intertwined (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000). But even proponents of Discourse Theory admit that this strength is not realised; instead, the analysis of politics is clearly focused on “the semantic, pragmatic, and rhetorical aspects” that contribute to the construction of social identities (Torring 2005: 23).

In Chapter 2 I referred to a number of discourses of morality, all of which had material as well as symbolic components. For example, the poverty-free myth can be seen as a discourse as it existed in the popular imagination and also had institutional underpinnings (such as full employment, a lack of statistical data for poverty measurement, a lack of will to measure poverty in state projects). At the same time, as critics of “discourse” methods would argue, the illusion/allusion aspect of the Althusserian concept of ideology cannot be easily replaced. For Jameson (1984a), the conflation of the symbolic and the practiced is flawed, as critical space is needed to analyse the lack of correlation between social life and how that life is symbolically rendered. To this end, Discourse Theory allows us to understand the link between the “poverty-free” discourse and the practices just noted, however it does not allow an understanding of how this discourse is used to obfuscate class, gender, or ethnic relations, in other words, how it may serve some groups to the detriment of others.

The inadequacy of the “surface” analysis – where deeper social structuring and any conception of a “reality” upon which representation is based is avoided – results in contradictory practices within Discourse Theory, where the need to decode symbolic practices against a “truth” is sometimes necessary. For example, Stavrakakis (2005: 81-89) notes the contrasting efforts to represent European union membership in Britain, where the European Community uses a “top down” approach to establish common European identities, and, in contrast, the British tabloids attempt to articulate anti-European sentiment. The “top down” nature of identity articulation by authorities implies a directed attempt to impose a symbolic-ideological structure on a population, a task one would likely describe as “purely linguistic.” Yet the effect of these attempts and the institutions that have grown from the

consciously imposed European identity cannot be described as anything other than discourse despite the “lack of pervasive popular identification with ‘Europe’” (Stavrakakis 2005: 89). The headlines of the British tabloids, on the other hand, appear as attempts to articulate already held beliefs. Here the symbolic expresses “libidinal desires” that are already opposed to European integration, and the symbolic occurs on the unconscious level rather than as a mode of manipulation (Stavrakakis, 2005: 75-77; Torfing, 2005: 24). One can argue – as Discourse Theory repeatedly does – that truth is constructed rather than naturally existing (Torfing 2005); however, in Stavrakakis’ (2005) work the intentional construction of identity by outside agents speaks of an ideological imposition against which the truth of the unconscious is certainly juxtaposed.

This need for a “deeper” analysis can be illustrated using the example of single mothers in the previous chapter. On a surface level, the anticivil representations of single mothers corresponded to the practices of social welfare officers who scrutinised their sex lives. At the same time, however, it is important to keep in mind that government representations of single mothers avoided economic categorisation to focus, instead, on morality. The economic situation of single mothers (which feminists tried to bring to the fore of the debate) became subordinated by moral characterisations and judgements that were largely framed through the language and practices of government officials. Regardless of cultural beliefs about sexual promiscuity, the articulation of morality and single mothers may be seen as a political manipulation, or a “top-down” approach to deciding the terms of debate. In this case, the displacement of ideology with discourse is untenable when analysing the culture and politics of poverty in New Zealand.

A constructivist position is certainly required to analyse cultural representations of poverty, but as I have argued here, the constructivist underpinnings of Discourse Theory allow for only a partial analysis of poverty in New Zealand, one that is sensitive to the construction of identities and the material practices that coincide with these constructions, but one that equally fails to account for mystification, manipulation, and normative interests. Given the influence on social welfare policy, industrial relations policy, and economic downturns on the incidence and structure of poverty, I believe that a materialist account is needed to supplement and compare with constructivist analysis.

New American Cultural Sociology distances itself from the constructivist position of Discourse Theory in two distinct ways. First, cultural valuation is based on a stable system of signs relating to Durkheim's distinctions between the 'sacred' and 'profane' (Alexander 1988b) and, in this way, New American Cultural Sociology maintains a structural framework for thinking about culture that is inconsistent with the constructivist rejection of essentialism (McLennan 1996). Second, actors enter into this system in battles over representation (Alexander 2003: 102; 2006a) where the correlation between the symbolic and the material is neither guaranteed nor necessarily evident. Rather, culture regains a place of "relative autonomy" – at least in an analytical sense – with complex relationships to other areas of social life (Alexander & Smith 2002).

The return to the "relative autonomy" of culture runs into problems when it is used in analysis. Alexander and Smith (2002) argue that culture needs be treated as a realm of "relative autonomy" so that it is given a proper place in sociological analysis. To achieve this, they champion a "strong program" of cultural analysis, one that draws on the "thick" descriptive practices of Geertz, yet that situates these practices more solidly within social life through an interpretative framework (Alexander & Smith 2002). With the exception of Alexander's *Civil Sphere* (2006a), however, this interpretative framework is lacking, so that cultural meaning is generally analysed without adequate reciprocity from other areas of social life (Steensland 2009: 930). Instead, the theoretical markers that would indicate the relationship of culture to social life generally are ambiguous if not contradictory. For example, in Alexander's writing we find that at one point "cultural structures do not *determine* but rather *inform* action" (Alexander 2008: 527, emphasis added). At another, culture acts as an "independent variable" in social life (Alexander & Smith 2002); indicating that it does, indeed, determine social outcomes. Finally, there is some ambiguity as to whether civil representations (such as those explored in the last chapter) are necessary in prompting or justifying political actions (if they precede or follow their political correlatives), even though the predominance of these representations throughout social life is well documented. If these instances are taken as a group, New American Cultural Sociology addresses, but does not convincingly decide, causal relationships between cultural meanings and social action.

Alexander explicitly defends this aspect of his work due to its attempts to grasp “a multidimensional and complex whole” (Alexander 2005a: 21), while others interpret it as contradictory, a weakness in epistemological underpinnings (McLennan 2005). To settle this question, it is fair to note that the more specifically Alexander’s work theorises social structures, the more it tends to find culture in the position of social determinant, particularly in his conception of the civil sphere, where the battle over civil and anticivil representations ultimately determine justice in social life (Alexander 2006a). And it is also fair to note that culture is given a “near-sacred interpretative and moral status” (McLennan 2005: 16) that tends to understate the importance of political and economic institutions. Thus, the symbolic implicitly overrides the material, except where the material is needed for causal interjection. At the same time, the rich representation of symbolic and cultural life as entwined with the political is undeniable.

The difficulties and strengths of this conception are evident in Chapter 2, where the morality of poverty continuously calls upon deep cultural codes, and the symbolic is obviously important in understanding both how and why the politics of poverty occurs and whom it affects. Yet, at the same time, the lack of correlation between civil/anticivil representations and economic fortunes (for example, how those represented as civil did not necessarily receive state assistance in the early 1900s, or how the real dollar value of the domestic purposes benefit was at its highest throughout the period in the mid 1970s when the morality of the benefit and its recipients was hotly contested) leads one to question how we should understand causality in relation to cultural representation. My argument here is that the “strong” programme leads to very good descriptive work, but it tends to lack a convincing social analysis.

The second aspect of New American Cultural Sociology that warrants attention in this section is the designation of truth versus representation. Alexander again departs from Discourse Theory in that he acknowledges the intentional manipulation (1988a; 2003; 2006a) of representation to serve personal or group ends. For example, business elites may represent segments of the workforce in anticivil terms in order to justify industrial relations practices. In these cases, access to economic resources and to elites in communicative and regulatory institutions allows for social power to translate into civil discourse (Alexander, 2003: 100, 102). But at the same time that wider power relations are theorised as influencing cultural

representations, New American Cultural Sociology promotes an analytical programme where “wider, non social relations” are “bracketed out” (Alexander & Smith, 2002: 136, 137). This double movement – to acknowledge and “bracket” other sources of power – reveals the crux of analysis: while cultural meanings can be manipulated, the real analysis focuses on the social interpretation of culture above any underlying social determination (el-Ojeili 2012). Explicitly, symbolic codes and their meanings are “true” to the extent that they circulate in social life and gain meaning (Alexander, 2003: 3-20). The question of putting forward “truth” against a false premise is secondary to questions about how cultural texts gain importance to the extent that they promote “voluntary” action. In New Zealand, such a strategy can be used explain popular attitudes towards the poor, but does little to elaborate the function of undeserving representations in relation to economic crises, let alone the groups that benefit from these representations.

New American Cultural Sociology, then, addresses some of the analytically troubling aspects of Discourse Theory (the conflation of the symbolic and material, and “surface” analysis). However, in doing so the proposed relationship between cultural representations and social life is weak, especially when used to explain the influence of other power (such as political or economic power). But the trepidation with which New American Cultural Sociology approaches the question of social causality speaks, I think, to the difficult terrain that sociological cultural studies attempts to map.

At the beginning of this section I proposed an examination of social causality and the relationship between the material and symbolic within Cultural Studies. Rather than decide on the correctness of one theory over the others here, I will draw together the discussion of social causality and the relationship between the symbolic and material to begin laying groundwork for the later discussion. In the sociological cultural studies analysed, social causality is, more often than not, attributed to cultural meaning above all else. This is done in response to the treatment of culture as epiphenomenal, but nevertheless attributes too much power to symbolic representation (whether representation itself is at stake, or whether it is constitutional in the development of discourse). As I have argued above, the power of the symbolic needs to be considered in relation to material life, and as such, also needs to be differentiated from material practices. This is not to deny that all material practices are

socially constructed through language, but to note that this construction may have other functions, such as masking the social relations determined through material practices.

The identities of the poor in sociological cultural studies

In this section, theoretical developments within sociological cultural studies mirror social changes with New Zealand. In particular, class identities are subordinated to other social and ethnic identities from the late 1970s onward. This section examines the understanding of identities in sociological cultural studies and relates these to the discussion in Chapter 2.

New Zealand, from 1970 through 2010, underwent significant change in its understanding of social division. Despite long-standing circulation of the ‘egalitarian myth’, New Zealand in the 1970s demonstrated high levels of class consciousness in the labour movement and, to lesser degree, in the New Social Movements (see Chapter 6). By the time of the election of Fourth Labour, however, this class consciousness had dissipated; identity politics among the New Social Movements took precedence while organised labour was weakened by growing unemployment and changes within industry (see Chapters 5 and 6). Identity politics also grew as a basis for understanding social subordination within sociological cultural studies from the mid 1970s onward. The displacement of class as a referent for social identities at this point of history is troubling when one considers the polarisation of wealth in New Zealand from 1980 onward. This section explains the near effacement of economic identities in sociological cultural studies examined. It argues for a reintroduction of class in a manner distinct from Marxian cultural studies.

Foundational CCCS texts reference class positions without any qualification (cf. Williams 1958; 1965; Hoggart 1958; Thompson 1968). In *Culture and Society*, for example, the historic development of the word “culture” is tied to the industrial revolution, the creation of the working class, fear over the newly created “masses” and the threat of democracy (Williams 1958). In this text the existence of an objectively determined working class is unquestioned, as is the assumption that cultural differences arise from class divisions (Williams 1958: 327). With the adoption of Western Marxist theoretical models in the early 1970s, the question of working class identity becomes central to the cultural studies project as

well. For example, working class subcultures are believed to react against their parent culture and the dominant culture but fail to recognise their working class character (Hall & Jefferson 1976). Political identities, in the CCCS work through the early 1970s, are thus posited in relation to class identities. Corrigan and Frith (1976: 238), for example, contend that “even if youth culture is not political in the sense of being a part of a class-conscious struggle for state power, it nevertheless, *does provide* a necessary pre-condition of such a struggle.” This “pre-condition” views the political spectrum, and political goals, in strictly class terms. In these examples, I want to draw attention to the rather uncomplicated assumption of class as the basis of social division and political action, even where consciousness of that division is not always present among those deemed working class.

Hall (1992b) describes the “ruptual” moment in the CCCS when class was challenged as the basis of social division and the economy as the basis of social power when feminism “broke in.” He recounts the invitation made to feminists by himself and other “good, transformed men” to apply feminist scholarship in the CCCS, only to find that the CCCS was not prepared for the challenges feminism would bring with it, such as the politicisation of the “personal,” and the “radical expansion of the notion of power” (Hall 1992b: 283). Before this “radical expansion” the legitimacy of feminism was not questioned, but it was made to fit into Marxian politics. For example, in the *May Day Manifesto, 1968*, left movements are generally presumed to strive for a common politics due to their position vis a vis authority (Williams 1968). At this point, the “working class” is not displaced, but expanded to encompass all subordinated people that could strive for a common political goal and yet retain their specific identities. Where the study of culture within the Marxian mode considered the reproduction of the relations of production, the addition of feminism presumed the expansion of study to include “the social reproduction... [of] patriarchal *and* productive relations” (Grimshaw, Hobson & Willis 1992:75, emphasis added).

However, as first feminists, then scholars of race, “broke into” the CCCS, the interconnections between class and other social identities challenged the economic foundation of the “material conditions” of existence (Hall 1980a: 38-39). The issue of race, for example, challenged the experience of oppression and the necessity of thinking of political identities in class terms. For example, in *Policing the Crisis*:

race has come to provide the objective correlative of crisis – the arena in which complex fears, tensions and anxieties, generated by the impact of the totality of the crisis as a whole on the social whole... (Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978: 333)

In other words, the experience of oppression within Britain was based in no small part on race, from the popular media practices of representing black youth as criminal to policing practices to court judgements. In the end, the “objective” designation of class was fractured by ideological structuring:

[although] the black and white poor find themselves, objectively, in the same position, they inhabit a world ideologically so structured that each can be made to provide the other with its negative reference group... (Hall Crichton and colleagues 1978: 333)

The question, in this quotation, becomes the extent to which the personal experience of oppression is legitimised in relation to the “objective” economic position of the groups.

The question over the legitimacy of personal experience is highlighted in feminist writings in the CCCS and point to epistemological contradictions within the centre; in *Policing the Crisis* personal experience is discounted as reproduction of the dominant ideology (Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978: 151-153), whereas in the CCCS Women’s Studies Group and ethnographic studies it is valued for its insight into social subordination (Grimshaw, Hobson & Willis 1980: 75, 77). This contradiction in epistemology can be seen as a general shift from the Marxian interpretative perspective to what Boltanski and Thevenot would later express as a refusal to submit to a “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Wagner 1999: 342). In other words, the social meaning ascribed to oppression by social actors begins to challenge the presumption of an unrecognised objective reality upon which cultural analysis should be based. In the CCCS, then, scholars of feminism and race challenged the very core of the theoretical/political project (Hall 1980a; 1992b). Increasingly, the CCCS project negotiated the relationships between subordinated subject positions rather reducing oppression to class or even assuming equivalence. In this way, the articulation of class, gender, and ethnicity becomes part of the political project of cultural studies (Jameson 1993), with varied success.

The CCCS continued to use class as a referent throughout the period examined (CCCS 1982; Hall 1988a; 1988b) but its position within social conflict as well as its use as a presumed basis of social division, is certainly reduced. Where I have linked the subordinated identities in the 1970s in Chapter 2, I conform to this kind of analysis. On one hand, a common class position can be found among many single mothers, Pacific Peoples, “red” unionists, and the unemployed. On the other hand, as I mentioned in the previous section, the specificity of domination loses some crucial importance when it is reduced to, or even made equivalent to, other forms of domination.

Discourse Theory begins its examination of identities from this position, where the specificities of domination challenge universal identities. Through a genealogical examination of predominantly Western Marxists texts, Laclau and Mouffe (2001) decouple political identities from a class basis. Rather than being historically constituted, political identities are the result of social antagonisms, and construction of political identities that challenge antagonisms. Discourse Theory distances itself from Marxian theory with two distinct theoretical breaks. First, “class” is shown to have two unrelated aspects: a subordinate position within production, and a culturally organised identity (that which thinks itself as a class). Second, the ‘interests’ of classes are detached from historical predetermination. Just as identity is socially constructed, so are its interests.

Discourse Theory generalises these aspects – subordination and identity – to incorporate the politics of any number of social groups. Institutional arrangements and practices establish differential positions between social identities whereas articulations clearly delineate and challenge these positions through the recognition of identity. For example, the practice of social welfare officials scrutinising single mothers constitutes a relationship of oppression. Yet politics requires the second aspect as well: the articulation of a different social relationship that calls upon the identity of single mothers and constructs an alternate social relationship. While the actions of social welfare agents indicated that sexual relations between a woman and man constituted the basis of economic relations (the reliance on a male breadwinner) feminists articulated a different social relationship between men and women, where sexual relations should not place women in a subordinate economic position to men.

Within this theory of identification, I want to stress two points. First, neither the economy nor the state structures politics nor determines social life generally. In the example of single mothers above, familial relations, the institution of marriage, social pressures to maintain a nuclear family, economic incentives provided to families through the state, and so on, constitute a plurality of discourses that, together, constitute the politics of single mothers. In this view, social life is fragmented, plural, ever-changing, and complex so that the term “society” is no longer used due to its presumption of coherence and durability (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 126). Second, the variety of political contests that arise in social life cannot be prioritised or reduced to one another. Logics of “equivalence” and “difference” operate to form or break “antagonistic frontiers” between dominated groups, yet each struggle exists in its own right due to the specific “ensemble of practices and discourses” that contribute to its specific social oppression (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 132).

Where the CCCS aimed to articulate the correspondence between class, gender, and ethnicity, Discourse Theory maintains the distinctiveness and non-reducibility of each. In this regard, *economic* equality is only one of many goals within the radical democratic project. The difficulty with this theory in relation to poverty in New Zealand is that its attempts to break with economic reductionism tends to efface economics altogether. For example, Discourse Theory attributes feminism a certain coherence, as, “the political space of feminism is constituted within the ensemble of practices and discourses which create the different forms of the subordination of women” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001: 132). In this quotation, differences between feminists are minimised, so that, presumably, feminists make some sort of coherent group. In New Zealand, Coney (1993: 62) points out that thinking of “sisterhood” as a common set of experiences for women is faulty given that “the movement had initially come from young, white, middle-class women.” In relation to poverty, we have to consider the extent that various identities reflect economic stratification. Poata-Smith (2004: 69-73) makes this argument regarding Māori Nationalism in New Zealand: it obscures class divisions and dissipates the previously strong critique of capitalism. On a material level, the adoption of a pan-class Māori identity corresponds to the exacerbation of economic disparity amongst Māori, while on a theoretical-ideological level, the disappearance of class from post-Marxist and neo-liberal lexicons refocuses political strategies in ways that are unable to disrupt (capitalist) economic patterns.

Laclau and Mouffe (2001) attempt to balance economic with presumably non-economic concerns as they assert that capitalism is one of many necessary struggles for “radical democracy.” Yet within Discourse Theory, there is a difference in the treatment of the relative coherence and fragmentation afforded to economic versus non-economic identities. For example, as already noted, the feminist struggle operates in a political space that assumes a significant level of agreement among political actors – a uniform feminist identity, or at least a broad agreement on women’s subordination. When it comes to class, Discourse Theory scrutinises the internal structuring of identities much more thoroughly. To this end, “workers struggles” are “arbitrarily” designated as such, because, for example, the culture of young workers may be “radically different” than that of their senior colleagues (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 167). Here we see how class identities are first removed from other forms of domination (as though feminism is free from class concerns) but also how reference to class identities results in far more scepticism and qualification than other political identities.

In Discourse Theory, then, economic identities are removed from a position of historical dominance and coherence (as in Marxism) while other social identities attain autonomy and coherence in and of themselves. This understanding of social divisions in Discourse Theory mirrors larger social trends where class loses its privileged position as a social referent (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006). For the purposes of this section, I simply want to point out the continued slide from economic to social identities beginning within the work of the CCCS and continuing in Discourse Theory.

For New American Cultural Sociology, this slide continues. In the work of Alexander (1988a; 1988b; 2006a), Durkheimian cultural codes that differentiate between civil and anticivil groups belong to the “civil sphere,” a universal, democratic, sphere of public life that is inherently inclined towards solidarity. In this sphere, “battles over representation” determine the groups that belong to, or are excluded from, civil life. Importantly, the civil sphere is distinct from the economic, political and religious spheres, which contain inherent prejudice and inequality. These non-civil spheres may translate their inequality into the civil sphere, but they remain outside intrusions. This understanding of social life promotes a “thick” descriptive cultural analysis that allows “wider, non social relations” to be “bracketed out” (Alexander & Smith, 2002: 136, 137).

Using this theory, we can consider the dichotomous references to the deserving and undeserving poor as an intrusion of the economic sphere into civil life. This idea of the economic sphere “intruding,” though, is misleading. Even if we heuristically differentiate between cultural representations and politics or the economy, individuals nevertheless live in all of these realms simultaneously. The civil sphere is populated by people that also have economic, political, and religious investments. Thus, whether or not there is a general inclination towards inclusion and democracy in the “civil sphere” the idea that one type of representation can be differentiated from others is troubling. For example, the anti-immigration rhetoric that focused on Pacific Peoples in 1975-1976 period had clearly racist overtones (“they don’t fit in”) but also contained economic fears (“one day there weren’t enough jobs”). Whether or not these representations are “intrusions” from another sphere of social life or merely part of the same cultural system of representation that occur in national life generally, the potential effects of the representations do not change.

But the heuristic differentiation between the spheres is important, in part because the idea of “intrusion” allows for economic forces to be “bracketed out.” Importantly, Alexander’s theory of the civil sphere provides no framework to consider how one might reintroduce the effects of civil discourse back into the realms in which they originated. This is particularly troubling given that representations of the poor always seem to translate economic identities into moral discourses. As Chapter 2 pointed out, for example, “the poor” in dependency discourses “lack motivation.” As Gans (1995) points out, the discourses that structure representations of the poor misrepresent material deprivation (both in the sense of who is considered poor as well as the causes for their poverty). If we take these representations as the basis for “battles” over acceptance into civil life, then material deprivation is sidelined to instead consider the morality, behaviour, and motivation of the affected groups. Quite simply, economic identities are presented in non-economic terms and – in Alexander’s theory – contested as such. In this case, even though Alexander notes that poor are vulnerable because the economic resources gained in the economic sphere can be used to “gain access to [civil] discourse and control over its institutions... [and] the material asymmetry inherent in economic life becomes translated into projections about civil competence” (2006a: 205, 207) we are given no interpretative framework to translate “projections about civil competence” back into economic terms.

As the last section pointed out, New American Cultural Sociology is concerned with the meanings attributed to social life above all else. In Steensland's (2008: 13) analysis of guaranteed income schemes in the United States, for example, poor people are assigned "categories of worth," which provide a deep "cultural foundation" that structures responses to the alleviation of poverty and that have "clear affinities with the functional requirements of capitalism." However, because the categorisation of the poor is not limited to the capitalist class, it is not considered in class terms; rather, the poor and rich alike have "competing identities and value commitments" and thus their interests cannot be reduced to economic interests alone (Steensland 2008: 235-236). Unlike Alexander, Steensland focuses on the structuring of economic identities; however his refusal to then consider the economic structuring of these identities is striking. Here, we see a return to a position similar to Discourse Theory, where economic identities become one of many social identities, but where any non-cultural structuring coherence is shied away from if not refuted outright. The economic structuring of the poor and their interests, in this case, takes a back seat to the more important coherence of identity determined through individuals' beliefs: the relative benefits to different classes all but falls away from the analysis.

The French cultural sociology of Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) strikes a similar position. Here, critique from social actors and responses from employers contribute to the "new spirit of capitalism." The development of capitalism appears somewhat organic, and the theory – in line with Steensland above – refutes any "dominant class" or "capitalist class" ideology because the spirit of capitalism permeates social life, acting as a cultural schema for the rich as well as the poor. Such a move once again privileges a cultural based analysis (where the meaning attributed to social life takes precedence) and the relative benefits that capitalism affords different classes become secondary.

Within the theoretical moments of sociological cultural studies noted above, some contradictions persist, yet taken together, the adoption of non-economic identities over class identities is evident. Where economic identities are reasserted, they are treated with caution. Alongside the displacement of class, the treatment of identity refutes structural determinations (such as especially economic structuring) unless they are cultural (how actors understand their situation of domination). Not surprisingly, the cultural basis of identities

becomes highlighted at the same moment that culture usurps politics as *the* realm of contestation.

Before arguing for a return to some understanding of class identity for the remainder of the project, I will first briefly survey the similar trajectory of politics within sociological cultural studies.

The critique of capitalism and the state in sociological cultural studies

Despite differences in assumed political identities, the CCCS and Discourse Theory claim similar Western Marxist theoretical underpinnings. And even though Alexander (2005b; 2008: 524) is best known for his Parsonian and Durkhemian orientations, he also claims to have been motivated by Marxism's concerns for equality and justice and to be theoretically aligned to cultural Marxism. The theories examined so far can thus be put into Therborn's (2006) categorisation of "post-Marxist" trajectories as they are all concerned with social justice for a range of subordinated groups. Therborn's gradient of capitalist critique seems especially important here as capitalist relations relates to the structural production of poverty (Chapter 1). Temporally, the theories examined thus far decrease in their critique of capitalism as well as their promotion of radical politics, or their end goal in relation to the capitalist state. These theories will be examined briefly before the cultural sociological work of Boltanski is introduced at the end of the section to provide an alternative narrative to the decline of importance for economic identities in the contemporary period.

Although the work of the CCCS through 1978 appears fairly entrenched in Marxist analysis, the end goal of cultural studies as a political project is not clearly the overthrow of the state. *The May Day Manifesto, 1968* (Williams 1968) expresses the political desires of Britain's "New Left" at the height of international popular protest, where rather than the communist overthrow of capital, a fundamental democratic politics is called for. In this text, the many actors and energies of the new social movements must retain autonomy even as they fight for a common anti-oppressive cause. Here the impetus and energy of the movements are juxtaposed with the tendency of central authorities to harness, appropriate, and incorporate.

The end goal of such politics is institutionally unspecified, but Hall's (1988a) supplementary work on the state, where the position of left governments within a capitalist state place it in contradictory relationship to the working class, and McLennan's (1984: 256) related claim that the British Labour Party has never advocated a comprehensive challenge of capitalism, are telling. Both authors maintain a critique of capitalism but without advocating a specific alternative political programme. Throughout the writing of the CCCS, instead, one finds both capitalism and the state as central carriers of domination; but despite the critique of the state, parliamentary alternatives are the most apparent political response (see Hall 1988a in particular). Politics, then, falls short of any longing for "total revolution" (Boltanski 2002). It is more accurately described as critical social democratic.

As already noted, Discourse Theory provides a theoretical explanation for expanding the Marxist conceptions of politics and hegemony to a politics based on social antagonisms that are neither reducible nor hierarchically ordered. In this way, the theory transposes Weberian concerns regarding social stratification into questions of politics. Using Therborn's classification, the capitalist critique remains, but in a degraded form. It is both an inevitable site of "radical democracy" but one that is given no more urgency than any of the other multitude of social antagonisms.

While the concept of social antagonism importantly expands the field of political sites and contests, it nevertheless attracts two related criticisms: first, Discourse Theory fails to differentiate between antagonisms that arise from less permanent social practices and those that necessarily result from the operation of the social system. This speaks to the longevity and inevitability of political contestation. Mouzelis (1990), for example, argues that while Marx demonstrates the necessary production of class antagonism in capitalism, Discourse Theory fails to similarly situate social antagonisms generally. Second, and related, Discourse Theory fails to distinguish between social identities that are more or less capable of accomplishing significant social change.

In relation to poverty, one can use the example of single mothers versus the unemployed to demonstrate the shortcomings of the theory. While single mothers suffer social discrimination in a variety of fields and thus can constitute a political identity, they are less likely to challenge social relations related to poverty generally. This is because antagonisms

related to single motherhood (inadequate income, the valuation of motherhood, violence against women, and so on) can be remedied in ways that do not affect the broader issue of poverty. However, unemployment is a structural feature of contemporary capitalism and, as such, requires radical social change to remedy. The exploitation faced by single mothers need not be underestimated, but the potential effectiveness of the identity in achieving broad social change should be recognised, something that Discourse Theory fails to do. At this point, one must question the end goal of politics: is it “radical” re-imagination or, more simply, reform?

Hegemony and Socialist Strategy treats the liberal democratic state with ambivalence. At the same time that the state disappears as a privileged site of politics it is also recognised as a prime site of antagonism. As such, “in all the domains in which the state has intervened, a politicization of social relations is at the base of new social antagonisms.” Where the state attempts to regulate social relations it transforms the private realm through the “creation of ‘public spaces’”; but this is “carried out not in the form of true democratisation, but through the imposition of new forms of subordination” (2001: 162-163). The paradox of the state occurs as it gives rise to “legitimacy [for] a whole new series of demands” even as it creates new antagonisms. Thus,

This proliferation of antagonisms and calling into question of relations of subordination should be considered as a moment of deepening of the democratic revolution. (2001: 163)

This tension between the democratising and antagonising features of the state gives way to a cautious utopianism where:

The task of the Left therefore cannot be to renounce liberal-democratic ideology, but on the contrary, to deepen and expand it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy. (2001: 176)

Here the classic understanding of revolution is dismissed because it re-establishes politics with a different power base rather than recognising “the plurality and the opening which a radical democracy requires” (2001: 178). But what this new political imaginary looks like

remains contradictory. Where the bureaucracy of the state is responsible for many social antagonisms, the democracy proposed lacks any positive attributes. In a paradoxical, if not contradictory, statement:

This moment of tension, of openness, which gives the social its essentially incomplete and precarious character, is what every project for radical democracy should set out to institutionalize. (2001: 190)

The purpose here is not to simply point out the short-comings in the theory (such as the seeming contradiction between openness, incompleteness, precariousness and institutionalisation) but the leanings away from any comprehensive institutional programme for enacting the “democratic revolution.” To this end, the call to treat capitalist relations of production as an inevitable goal of radical democracy fails to address the difficult connection between the state, economic power, and domination.

The difficulties found here mirror those within the CCCS, where political concerns focus on the autonomy of movements on one hand and the fear of a centrally organised political structure on the other. The maintenance of economic relations at the heart of the CCCS project compared to their intentional delimiting in Discourse Theory nevertheless marks significant political differences. Thus, while Discourse Theory, in its early stages, claimed a “socialist strategy” its politics leans towards liberal democratic values above all else. This is not only because of the identity politics it proposes, but also due to the institutional challenges that politics is imagined to take. Rather than the social democratic tendencies of the CCCS, the theory can best be termed critical liberal democratic.

New American Cultural Sociology does not have an explicit political programme, yet its politics are unmistakable. Steensland’s (2008) analysis of “categories of worth” in relation to guaranteed income schemes provides perhaps the best opportunity for a structural economic understanding of poverty as, indeed, throughout the text, the various correlatives of unemployment and poverty are touched upon: ethnicity, geography, and market performance, for example. At the same time, the symbolic and institutional are mutually informing features of social life. Thus, the project establishes the groundwork for a critique of capitalism, yet no systematic analysis ensues. To this end:

This classification pattern [of categories of worth] has clear affinities with the functional requirements of capitalism... Yet the influence of these cultural distinctions on the development of antipoverty policy cannot be reduced solely to the instrumental manoeuvrings of the business class... Their influence transcends direct class interests and is more accurately conceived as part of the nation's broader culture.... (Steensland 2008: 13-14)

In this quotation, the lack of coherent ideology among the business class is translated to the economic and political realms. Because the economic elite do not propose a coherent ideology, the benefits afforded capitalists through the maintenance of “categories of worth” disappear from the analysis and, instead, we find retreat from a critique of capitalism.

Where Steensland's work allows some entry into the critique of capitalism, Alexander's offers very little. For Alexander, the connection of civil society to properly operating democracies precludes economic analysis except where economic relations disrupt the natural solidarity of civic life. In Alexander's perspective:

To the degree that the hierarchies of social power also become the hierarchies of the state – directly and indirectly translating themselves into a ruling class or power elite – democracy does not exist. Such a translation can be blocked... The ability to effect such blockage, indeed to institutionalise it in a systemic manner, is how democracy should be defined. (2006a: 109)

As such, the functioning of civil society – of democracy – does not allow for the capture of power by any class or group.

Although some critical space is maintained to consider the role of media (Alexander 2003: 102) and the economic and political intrusions into civil society (Alexander 2006a: 204), any systematic critique of the political or economic apparatuses is minimised. Rather, specifically “undemocratic” moments (such as the Watergate scandal or the treatment of African Americans) are analysed as though they represent civic anomalies in need of repair. Thus, we see not only a retreat from the critique of capitalism, but the championing of liberal democracy, even if its pure form is only in the process of realisation. The difficulty with Alexander's conception of an inclusive “civil society” extends beyond considerations of what constitutes civic life. Equally importantly, groups aspiring entry into civil society must

appeal to specific codes of conduct: rationality, reasonableness, calmness, self control, realism, friendliness, and so on (Alexander 2006a: 57-59). Notably, these codes run counter to most contentious politics; the conservative standards that group behaviour must appropriate in order to become part of civil society thus extend beyond representation to behaviours and motives (Alexander 2006a: 275-286). For these reasons, it is not surprising that Alexander's civil society has distinct parallels with political projects meant to quash dissent.

For example, the post-war project of American political scientists in response to the threat of communism included the exportation of the state to developing regions. This project:

Sought to "codify" not just the formal institutional rules of the state but the "subtler components" that formed its "social psychological preconditions" – that combination of the democratic spirit and proper deference toward authority that was celebrated as "civic culture" (Mitchell 1991: 80, quoted portions from Almond & Verba 1963: 5)

Alexander's civil society is drawn from much the same admiration of "civic culture" that celebrates the "democratic spirit." Mitchell's quotation explicates the political conservatism – the "proper deference to authority" – that implicitly underpins *The Civil Sphere*.

Thus, the theories examined grow progressively favourable towards liberal democracy while the critique of capitalism declines. While the earliest of the theories contain explicit anti-state and anti-capital moments, the latter tend to minimise criticism and even champion the political structures of liberal democracy.

One final cultural study will be examined in brief as it both complicates and explains some of these trends. *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (NSC) (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006) uses a cultural sociological approach to critique and justification to explain the development of capitalism in the contemporary era. Rather than developing a coherent social theory, Boltanski and Chiapello examine the development of a capitalist ethos based on the critique of capitalism, attempts to respond to this critique, and structural limitations (Wagner 1999). Here the ethos of capitalism is detached from class actors as the practice of capitalism is "absurd" to both working and capitalist classes due to its general lack of benefits, requirements of competition, inherent insecurity, and so on (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006: 7).

Hence, even though the spirit of capitalism is a dominant ideology in that it permeates social life, it is divorced from any social class as both “the strong as well as the weak” rely upon it in order to “represent to themselves... the order in which they find themselves immersed” (2006: 11). Justifications of capitalism, then, are not reducible to an obfuscated class conflict; all actors find themselves in positions of limited options, but from which they may critique the ideology for failing to carry through with its promises (2006: 488).

As such, Boltanski and Chiapello assign an ambiguous position for class identities vis a vis challenges to capitalism. Initially in the 1960s and 1970s the working class is instrumental in putting forth a socialist critique of capitalism (demanding more even distribution of economic shares and security in the long-term access to those shares). At the same time, presumably middle class identities, such as the young and much more highly qualified students, present an ‘artistic’ or liberal critique of capitalism based on the desire for enhanced autonomy, freedom, and individualism (in opposition to automatisisation, authoritarianism, and a rigid division of labour) (2006: 169-170). While the socialist and artistic critiques run together, the second emerges as the dominant response to the “crisis of capitalism” in France in the 1970s, whereas the first, though initially taken to be more important, becomes subverted.

The responses to the critique of capitalism (both the socialist and artistic critiques) are not instituted by the capitalist class alone. Rather, the demands of workers, their institutional representatives, and labour specialists (such as sociologists of work) influence the acceptance of and responses to the artistic critique. In their analysis, Boltanski and Chiapello seem to fall in line with other contemporary cultural-social theories, where the theoretical importance of classes and economic identities are reduced in favour of identity politics. However, the authors of NSC provide a greater theoretical self-reflexivity than any of the above mentioned theories.

First, they note the radical change from “ubiquitous references to social class” that featured from 1968-1978 to a later “quasi-obliteration of reference to social class (including in sociological discourse), and especially the working class... to the extent that some famous social analysts can seriously assert that it no longer exists” (2006: 167-168). Rather than ascribing this shift in social and sociological understanding to the predominance of new antagonisms or decreasing importance of economics to various social identities, they find that

it occurs, instead, due to the cultural and institutional effacement of class. In short, these relate to increased competition in the labour force promoting differentiated social identities within the working class, the individualisation of employment conditions, discursive changes that promote the interests of firms – conceived as both employers and employees – rather than antagonistic interests of capital and workers, changes in the classifications of workers and managers, and the representation of groups within formal institutional structures such as unions (2006: 302-311).

The result of these processes has been the disestablishment of class as a social referent, but also “a world that is hard to interpret” from the perspective of the socialist critique, “one which it is difficult to oppose with the tools forged by oppositional movements over the previous century” (2006: 324). Further, the collapse of the communism and the problems of the welfare state further disoriented the left, so that many proponents of the traditional left became “keen to show that they had abandoned revolutionary violence, the project of radical social change, the future project of a new society” (2006: 324). Here, in short, the difficulty of the critique of capitalism from the socialist perspective emerges alongside the promotion of identity politics, retreat from economic identities, and the tempering of utopian political horizons.

Boltanski and Chiapello take us some way in understanding this movement in post-Marxist positions as a general movement of the left during a period of rapid economic displacements and the de-institutionalisation of economic identities. In this way, the dissipation in the critique of capitalism from the CCCS onward, the valorisation of non-economic identities, and the waning call for total revolution (Boltanski 2002) conform to a trend that informs the analysis in the remaining chapters. This is not to refute the importance of a variety of alternative social identities claiming significance from the 1960s onward, but simply to note the near obfuscation of a significant organising aspect of social life: economic structuring.

I want to point out three related phenomena that I argued in the last three sections: the privileging of cultural self-understanding in political analysis at the expense social structuring (by, for example, economics), the promotion of identity politics over class identities, and the retreat from systemic criticism of capitalism and the state. For analysing poverty in New Zealand, these trends pose a significant problem. Where material studies of poverty link

poverty most closely to the political-economic arrangements of the state and fluctuations in capitalist markets, sociological cultural studies seems ill-equipped to understand the relationship between cultural meaning and material deprivation. Rather, the stress falls too heavily on the former while the latter is neglected.

I am arguing, of course, that a critique of state and economy is necessary. And to accomplish this, I think, or to properly examine poverty in New Zealand, a reintroduction of the concept of class is also required, if cautiously. The transfer and polarisation of wealth from the 1980s onward speaks to vastly unequal benefits of the political economic system during the period. While this economic interest cannot stand in for all interests during the period, neither can it be effaced. There are problems in ascribing strictly Marxian or Weberian understandings of class to the material deprived: while market position, or access to economic resources (the Weberian mode) is generally how poverty is measured, relations between production, wages, and unemployment (significant determinants of poverty) are also notable. Rather than arguing a strict adherence to a particular understanding of class, I instead suggest a loose coupling of those with limited economic resources and those subject to precarious employment as an economically structured class.

Institutions in social analysis and actors' influences on institutions

My criticisms of sociological cultural studies above – the unresolved tension between the symbolic and practiced, the replacement of politics with culture, and the displacement of economic identities and radical politics – come together in the treatment of institutions within the studies. In sociological cultural studies, I argue, institutions are poorly differentiated and require further distinction, at least for heuristic purposes. In the discussion that follows, I make this distinction in terms of the understanding of institutional functions and the interrelations of institutions with actors. More specifically, I argue that a lack of institutional analysis in sociological cultural studies leads to an inability to analyse the relationship between the symbolic and the material. I also argue that the impermanence afforded to institutions (particularly in Discourse Theory) should, rather, be considered in the interrelation between actors and institutions.

Despite the general lack of distinction between types of institutions in Discourse Theory, Laclau and Mouffe note the importance of mass communication in “profoundly shak[ing] traditional identities” (2001: 163). Discourse Theory practitioners, such as Stavrakakis (2005) similarly note the importance of mass media in the promotion and resistance of constructed political identities. Yet, in Discourse Theory, the conflation of the symbolic and practiced (as coherent ‘discourses’) creates a problem expanded upon earlier: spaces where the symbolic and practiced do not align are beyond the framework of the theory (Torfing 2005: 24).

The CCCS initially attempt to bridge this difficult terrain through the term ‘ideology’ (parts allusion and illusion) where the material and symbolic do not correspond, and this, in turn, is coordinated through a dominant class. The state acts as the power centre for the class, the political site par excellence, that ultimately controls both regulative and ideological functions in society (Wood 1998). The difficulty with this conception is that “the state” is shorthand for a variety of institutional sites including media, schools, parliament, and the government of the day without sufficient acknowledgement of the contradictory functions or differences in power between them. As an example, many analyses feature mass media (Hall 1973; 1988a; Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978; Women’s Studies Group CCCS 1978; CCCS 1992) oftentimes attributing them direct correspondence to the regulating institutions of the state, state elites, or intentions of the powerful.

In the 1980s, the CCCS adopted a more Foucauldian framework (Barrett 1991, in McLennan 1997) where political sites multiplied and became decentred – a theoretical and analytical change that Discourse Theory made explicit. Although the potential sites of political analysis expanded to allow for a greater understanding of domination in society, at the same time a theoretical understanding of the institutions located within these political sites was lost. From a Discourse Theory position, for example, while the family may be a significant political site in producing discourses that differentiate the roles of men and women, the theory eschews any generalisation of institutions or their interrelationships. Thus, where Discourse Theory posits “the social” as plural, contingent, and open, its analytical framework results in an “institutional vacuum” where even relatively stable institutions are reduced to “discourse” (Mouzelis 1990: 31). The impetus behind this non-essentialism is well-founded in that all aspects of social life are susceptible to change, yet by not differentiating between stable and

unstable institutions, or by failing to allow for essential qualities of long-standing institutions, broader social analysis becomes less coherent.

Swanson (2005: 102) in her criticism of Fraser's description of capitalism "as a structure with a single and/or governing logic" exemplifies this type of analysis where "essentialism" is avoided at the cost of any understanding of social structures. In her criticism of Fraser she uses the example of capitalism in the United States to question its "single and/or governing logic":

By recognizing the wide variety of different economic practices throughout society, we are better able to understand and challenge economic injustice and the specific factors contributing to political, economic and cultural injustices. For instance, if one includes.... the household in the sphere of economic activity, the sum total of economic activities in... the United States appears far less capitalist. (Swanson 2005: 103).

While the political goal in Swanson's work (emancipation for subordinate groups) seems relatively unchanged from cultural studies of the CCCS in the 1970s, the assumed lack of coordination between institutions translates into a refusal to acknowledge the over-arching economic structuring of the state. The proposition, for example, that capitalism in the United States is not a "specific factor" that contributes to economic injustice because "the household in the sphere of economic activity" may point to more "specific" instances of domination requires challenge. After all, the economies of households in the United States are almost exclusively dependent on the capitalist economy in the first instance and the capitalist economy is premised on an exploitative relationship between workers and owners. That other types of domination or "injustice" occur in the household is undeniable, yet to claim that the "United States appears far less capitalist" because of other forms of exchange misses something of the big picture.

The tendency in this theoretical moment – to refuse privileged institutional sites and to questions any essential relationships within society – relates closely to the political movement of sociological cultural studies: away from radical political critique and the critique of capitalism. However, the problem extends beyond the state and economy and becomes, instead, difficulty in social analysis generally. Wøever (2005: 36-37), in an attempt to

overcome the problem of absent social structures in Discourse Theory, attempts to reintroduce ‘levels’ back into the analysis, a proposal in direct contradiction to the foundations of the theory (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 98). Wøever qualifies his use of levels so that they “do not imply that the deeper is truer or that the surface is caught eternally by some structures,” rather, levels refer “to degrees of sedimentation” (2005: 37). Here the shallow levels refer to areas where “manifest politics” can be contested, whereas deeper levels refer to more durable practices and beliefs. Granted, Wøever proclaims that all levels are socially constructed and thus “change is always possible” but his project, on the whole, mirrors Mouzelis’ critique. Where institutions are absent from theory, they must be brought back in for analytical purposes.

In the next section I will return to the question of institutions in relation to mediation, regulation and political contests. At this point, I simply want to point out, in extension of the last sections, that if the social construction of poverty is to be considered in relation material deprivation, a return to institutional analysis is required where, at the very least, the contours of state, mediating institutions, and economic institutions are recognised.

The impetus for proclaiming the fluidity of social life, as I mentioned above, derives from the need to recognise the changing nature of social structures over time. In New Zealand, for example, capitalism in the 1930s was markedly different from capitalism in the 1970s, not only because of changes in the world economy, but also because of class struggle that resulted in the adoption of Keynesian policies and led to far more stable employment for much more of the working class. The French cultural sociology associated with Luc Boltanski perhaps sets the standard for considering the interaction of actors and institutions as a series of challenges, or critiques, alongside institutional justification and change in response to criticism. Boltanski and Chiapello (2006), in their study of changes to French capitalism from 1960, document criticisms of capitalism that assist in the production of a new spirit of capitalism. In this analysis, capitalism is given essential features but is nevertheless capable of (and indeed requires) change. I feature this study here as it effectively separates institutions, ideologies, and actors, yet finds – even as they act in opposition to one another – that they mutually inform each others’ actions and responses.

In other strands of sociological cultural studies, this interaction between actors and structures of domination is notably absent. For Alexander, for example, entry into civil society is decided through a dynamic process, but the end result is all or nothing and, in either case, the basic characteristics of civil society remain unchanged. Laclau (2005), with greater emphasis on the construction of identities, notes the changing nature of identities through the process of antagonistic confrontation. However, the predominant focus on identities rather than social structures (Torring 2005: 23) leaves this area of analysis underdeveloped.

The early CCCS, because of its emphasis on institutions, has greater opportunity to explore this dynamic. However, through the majority of the studies, institutions appear static in relation to social actors. Where Willis' (2003) documents the production of the working class as an interrelation between "the lads" and social institutions, the "voluntary" reproduction of the class system can be understood as a combination of forces that ultimately favour the powerful (Turner 1990: 147-149) but that nevertheless posits social institutions as static. More often the CCCS posits the working class, or any subordinate identity, as diametrically opposed to the capitalist state (cf. Hall and colleagues 1976; Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978). For example, subcultural youth find themselves in tension with both dominant and parent cultures, yet rather than subcultural style influencing and altering popular culture (such as in the broad appropriation of subcultural styles) CCCS theorists instead posit the initial moment of rebellion against a later, fashion-based moment of incorporation. Corrigan and Frith (1976) make this point explicit when they argue that Marxist theorists fail to distinguish between ideological and institutional incorporation of the working class. Here, two possibilities exist, resistance and incorporation, without correspondence between them.

In later work, the adoption of Gramsci and his use of compromise (1971) suggests a critical space from which to consider the interaction of subordinate groups and institutions. But here, the CCCS continues in a similar oppositional vein: where Thatcherism succeeds in its programme of "popular authoritarianism" Hall (1988a) concedes that Thatcherism effectively appeals to the working class in a way that the left fails to. In line with Discourse Theory, interests in this case are constructed rather than predetermined. Regardless, subordinate groups still fail to actively engage in this process. Rather, Thatcher's popularity is more akin to the appeal of an advertisement than any form of dialogue, at least with the left.

In the first part of this section I argued against a conception of social life that privileged “fluidity” and “anti-essentialism” to the point where social institutions and social life disappeared from analysis. In the second section I pointed out that the interaction between institutions and social actors, as in the work of Boltanski, provided some insight into the ways in which fluidity can be grasped. With both of these points I am, once again, laying the groundwork for an analysis of poverty in New Zealand that takes account of cultural meanings and the incidence of material deprivation as interrelated. Even though the nature of institutions still needs to be elaborated, I have pointed out the need here for them to be considered in terms of their durability and in tension with actors.

Towards a study of political space, or the institutional coordinates of contestation

Despite my criticisms of Discourse Theory above, it nevertheless points to two related aspects of contestation that shed light on how to proceed with my analysis: antagonistic frontiers and political space. In this section I will analyse both concepts but focus on political space, or the social coordinates given to any political contest. I note the continued reliance on the state as a privileged space in which to consider politics and then confront this privileged space with two conceptions of polity, one based on mediation and the other on regulation.

The first of these is the occurrence of “antagonistic frontiers” and the subsequent need to analyse – as New American Cultural Sociology does not – the construction of “the civil sphere” or the dominant “us” that is constructed against the subordinate “them.” The second is the presumption of political space – a concept that is also ill-defined in Alexander’s work as the Civil Sphere tends to correspond to the geographic boundaries of the state in most analyses, but then reduces to smaller geographical boundaries where the former no longer seems applicable. The Western Marxist period of the CCCS similarly fails to adequately demarcate political space as it oscillates between state-determination of all social institutions and a plurality of political sites (Wood 1998). Boltanski and Chiapello do not specify political space, but mark it in relation to the geographical boundaries of the state on one hand and the space between left actors and capitalist firms on the other.

I will begin with Discourse Theory's understanding of political space as a point of departure for considering these issues. According to Discourse Theory, political space is defined in the relationship between social identities, it is located "within the ensemble of practices and discourses which create the different forms of subordination" (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 132). For the purposes of this investigation, we can specify that this ensemble creates the different forms of subordination of "the poor." Immediately, this is a daunting task as the "practices and discourses" that constitute the social treatment of single mothers, the determination of benefit levels, immigration policies for the foreign-born working class, and the structure of economic production and redistribution are all-encompassing and, frankly, beyond the scope of significant portions of the anti-poverty movement, even though all of these spaces have been the aim of segments of the movement at different points and from different quarters.

Instead, it is more feasible to begin by examining political space in relation to smaller ensembles and, empirically in New Zealand, this is how politics has been contested. For example, attempts to raise benefit levels have been, in and of themselves, political events that are temporally and spatially distinct from attempts to remove GST from foods, workers' disruptions of production, or the contestation of market rents for state houses. This is not to deny the larger political anti-poverty movement, but to acknowledge that movements change over time and that goals and demands are not only constructed, but continuously reconstructed, partly due to changes to the institutions they contest.

Even here, no matter how specific our focus – I will use the example of the contestation of market rents for state houses – there is already a multitude of political sites to consider. For example, the imposition of market rents in 1993 resulted in legal challenge, a rent strike, and challenges to state house evictions through picketing, mediation and blockading. Each of these actions draws on different political spaces: between renters and the legal apparatus and government policy formation; between renters and Housing New Zealand (HNZ); and between renters, and HNZ and police. The significance of these different sites may seem minimal in that government policy formation, HNZ, and the police are all directly related to the state and, more specifically, to the government of the day. Yet in each case, the identities of those antagonistic to the poor change. While the second action is explicitly between two parties – activists and HNZ – the others broaden the political constituents involved.

More importantly, not all constituents have yet been considered. Alexander (2003; 2006a) emphasises the role of communicative institutions in disseminating contests and representing actors. Similarly, the CCCS focuses on media for its role in encoding messages, or transmitting meaning (Hall 1973). If we take into account mediation, political spaces and political constituents expand considerably. For example, the state house eviction of the Asi family resulted in protest and received considerable attention in print media in Auckland (Chapter 4 details this event). The morning after the eviction of the Asi family, the Auckland Herald featured a photo of the family, and this was accompanied by a sympathetic account of the family's misfortunes. The same day the Ministers of Housing and Social Welfare – Luxton and Shipley – flew to Auckland, met with the family, reinstated them within the home, and provided them with an undisclosed benefit. One has to assume that the mediation of the conflict encouraged action from the government of the day. My point is that with mediation, the political constituents of the contest may increase dramatically – it may, for example, call upon a “general public” – however the constituency is theorised.

Here the question of polity emerges. Chapters 1 and 2 implicitly assign the politics of poverty to the nation state, as if the “the state” is a coherent cultural and political entity that can be mapped over a geographical space. This is very similar to the equation of politics (of both “ideological” and “coercive” institutions) with the state in CCCS work, an equation that should be criticised on two fronts. The first is that “the state” is an amorphous set of institutions and relationships rather than a coherent unity even though it retains primary functions such as the maintenance of capitalism. Second, the spatial delimitation of state institutions is not necessarily equivalent to the spatial delimitation of culture. For example, the contestation of a political leader may coincide with national media coverage, but smaller sites of political contestation, such as policing or health practices in local settings, pose the question of different levels of political activity. Here the boundaries of conflict and the distribution of media may be quite distinct. Although state institutions remain key sites of political contestation, empirical investigation challenges a predetermined polity.

New American Cultural Sociology, similarly to the CCCS, links the power of the civil sphere with the institutions of the state: the necessity of a properly functioning democracy for the maintenance of the civil sphere positions the state as the presumed geographical, political and cultural space in which contestation occurs (Alexander 2006a). For the most part, this

theoretical connection between cultural practices and state boundaries persists in empirical investigation. For example, in an investigation into the Watergate scandal (Alexander 1988a), the United States (as a uniform whole) is the site of contestation; similarly, Alexander's (2003) analysis of the Holocaust focuses on the meaning given to the event within the United States. At the same time, references to supra-state (2006c) and intra-state civil societies (Alexander 2006a: 295-302) open the possibility of different political spaces, even if these remain under-theorised.

Discourse Theory, too, despite its refusal to privilege any institutional sites, nevertheless finds the majority of its empirical work focused on the state. A seminal collection of empirical studies using Discourse Theory (Howarth, Norval & Stavrakakis 2000) consists of twelve essays, of which eight directly relate to state level politics, while two are at a sub-state level and two are not limited by specific political spaces but allude to political identities more broadly. Throughout Laclau's theoretical work as well, examples most commonly refer back to the state, though the institutions of the state and their differences are not examined. In these cases, the claim that politics does not reside in any privileged site comes across a three sided problem, namely the predominance of state institutions in the regulation of social relations, the mediation of politics within state boundaries, and the history of the state as an historic space of political contestation.

However, some practitioners of Discourse Theory move beyond the theoretical construction of political space to consider the operation of polity in empirical terms. Hansen and Sørensen (2005), for example, investigate the construction of local Danish polities over a ten year period. According to their research, polity should not be pre-determined as aligning with specific institutional spaces, but "by a relatively stable structure of meaning that regulates behaviour in governance processes." As a result, "A discursive polity might cross the borders of formally separated entities, but a formal organisation might also contain more than one discursive polity" (Hansen & Sørensen 2005: 95). The focus of the study is not solely on the formation of polity but on "the way a sedimented structure of meaning conditions battles for political power" (Hansen & Sørensen 2005: 97). Hence, political contestation is itself defined and regulated through the creation of polity.

A 'discursive' polity, then, is defined by common identity rather than by the legitimate boundaries of political institutions. Identity extends beyond the understanding of 'who we are' to 'who gets to decide' and 'through which channels'. Hansen and Sørensen effectively demonstrate how this works in the context of local Danish politics, where a hamlet within larger municipal boundaries asserts its own identity, thus splitting the institutional polity into multiple discursive polities. For the time being, it is useful to think of identity in geographical terms (as Hansen and Sørensen have) simply because formal polities operate in this manner.

If we apply discursive polities to Alexander's study of civil rights, where the presumed polity is the country as a whole, we see that a similar analysis may be fruitful. The divisions of northern and southern media alongside occasional references to northern and southern civil spheres denote a perceived division in polity, where the regulation of racial segregation/integration is locally, rather than nationally, enforced. The polities are more than symbolic: the violence unleashed on protesters demonstrates material effects resulting from differences in regulating the northern and southern polities. The polities also correspond, in Alexander's account, to geographical-political identities that remain from the American civil war.

However, the analysis of discursive polities has very specific limits that are not acknowledged by Hansen and Sørensen or Alexander. One might fruitfully query, for example, why, if polities are formed through political identities, those polities do not seem to have lasting regulatory power. For example, why did the civil rights battle not result in an American South and American North with differentiated media, differentiated integration/segregation laws, and so on? Here the role of discursive versus formal polities needs exploration. Or, as Mouzelis (1990) argues, the lack of institutional analysis makes empirical analysis difficult.

The answer to the question above is straightforward: The institutional power structure of the formal political apparatus allowed measures introduced by the president to override the decisions of the south, with the use of force when necessary. In other words, the discursively constructed polity of the south had power on its own, but this power was limited in formal ways. To return to Hansen and Sørensen, their discursively constructed Danish communities

found similar limitations. The municipality that had formal institutional legitimacy was in a position to include or exclude groups, provide or refuse funding, and so on. The hamlet without formal power, Hylke, pursued external funding and carried out local projects, but had no regulatory function of its own. In other words, the municipality with institutional legitimacy could not stop the other polity from existing, but it could severely limit its agency.

In the geographical examples considered so far, then, it is important to note the different levels of power attributable to institutionalised polities and ‘discursive’ polities.

The geographic explanation of polities, however, is not very useful if it is interrogated further. In the Hansen and Sørensen study, the authors acknowledge that actors in the discursive polity operate in the formal polity as well. The spaces of the polities are not geographically distinct, but find limits by different means: one through institutionally delimited authority, and the other through identification. Similarly, the ‘south’ and ‘north’ that Alexander refers to are distinct from each other but not from the formal polity of the United States. Rather, “south” and “north” correspond to political attitudes of racism and anti-racism as much as geography. In both cases, the “discursive polities” are precisely the kinds of political identities referred to by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) as the agents of social change. Both groups (those of Hylke and those of the south) can be seen as attempts to represent “the people” (Laclau 2005) in their respective social spaces.

If the formation of polity is equivalent to identification rather than prescribed boundaries, then the “politics” at stake is strictly the coherence and unification of the group. In Gramscian terms, it is equivalent to the ideological establishment of “party” rather than hegemony of the state (Gramsci 1971: 181-182). In other words, the identity of the group required for contestation becomes apparent. Group identification is, in itself, necessary for politics, but does not, in itself, determine or regulate social relations. To understand smaller configurations as “polities” seems, then, to subscribe to a toothless politics, one without institutional foundations.

However, the issue is not so clear cut. In the Danish example the discursive polity formed its own institution to represent the people of Hylke, despite its lack of legitimate political function (Hansen & Sørensen 2005: 108). In Alexander’s example, political groups (from the KKK to less formalised groups of southerners) acted on their own to maintain race-based

social relations. In these ways, informal politics are not necessarily ineffectual, despite their inferior hierarchical relationship to formal polities.

It is possible, once again, to see this hierarchy in terms of geography, where the larger polity trumps smaller polities and political identities. However, it is more fruitful to think of this hierarchy in terms of institutional sites. In the civil rights example, the state polity overrides other legitimate polities (such as the individual southern states, cities and towns) but also other discursive polities (such as “the south” as a whole). On one hand, then, empirical studies reveal the hierarchical structure of formal polities, and on the other they reveal a hierarchical relationship between formal polities and those based on common identities.

Unfortunately, nothing in Discourse Theory or Cultural Sociology explains the superior power of formal polities over “discursive polities” or sub-state “civil societies” respectively. On the other end of the spectrum, the CCCS seems unable to explain issues such the institutionalised racism except in the interest of an all-powerful state. All three theories, in the end, conflate two distinct forms of social power, the cultural and political, but only manage to do so by finding the limits of cultural contestation in political sites. I will come back to this argument shortly, after an analysis of the power of these sites.

Social power and differentiated institutions

For the CCCS, Cultural Sociology and Discourse Theory, the question of politics is not to distinguish between types of power, but focuses, rather, on the influence of ideology, narrative, and discourse on the political process generally. To this end, the earlier discussions of culture and politics noted the tendency to allow culture to stand in for politics due to three factors: the dedifferentiation of the symbolic and enacted; the problematisation of “truth” and a corresponding decline in acknowledging false representation; and over-simplified causal relationships between culture and social life generally. The above discussion responds to this by distinguishing, in terms of polity, between the discursive and the formal polity. These can be related quite specifically to the earlier discussion. The discursive polity, generated through identification, is an effect of mediation of common ideals and practices, whereas the formal polity is, more accurately, a set of regulatory institutions.

Here the terms can be related very literally to what Alexander (2006a) terms communicative and regulatory institutions, but their specific functions and differences should be made clear. Mediation involves the solidification of group identities and ideals through symbolic means. In the example of the Asi family eviction, the reaction of government officials indicates that they believed mediation would secure group identities in defence of the Asi family. The mediation of the conflict also expanded the polity of the conflict dramatically: the antagonistic frontier between state house tenants and housing New Zealand became a contest that called on a broader social group.

Regulating functions, in contrast, are spatially limited to institutions and the people they regulate. In the example used, state house tenants and HNZ are the immediate antagonistic parties in the conflict. In simple terms, regulating institutions prescribe modes of conduct that have specific spatial legitimacy. HNZ had legitimate institutional jurisdiction over the collection of rents, a legitimacy that was reflected in the use of police to enforce payment.

In this way, mediation is a second level of politics in relation to regulation – it has the capacity to bring about challenges to regulation, but does not have a one-to-one correlation with regulation. That said, mediation is not limited in the same way that regulation is. Whereas the regulation of rents has a relatively small scope (state house tenants), the mediation of politics is expansive. It has the ability to move beyond the socio-spatial limits of regulation to redefine the actors involved in dispute.

Here it should be noted that mediating and regulating institutions are ideal types. Every regulating institution has a mediating function; for example, in Chapter 2 many uses of the discourses of morality were initiated by regulating institutional elites (and even organisations that are secretive mediate to their membership to maintain group coherence, as Althusser (1971) points out). On the other hand, mediating institutions require their own internal regulation as well. For example, the mass media, although it operates in democratic societies under the premise of providing unbiased reportage, is restricted by political-economics, the necessity of maintaining reliable contacts within powerful groups such as state governments, the cost of reporting and production, and civil norms and expectations. These aspects may affect the content of mediation (and therefore the promotion of cohesion among groups or the promotion of alternative regulatory regimes).

With these ideal types in mind, it is necessary to undergo a deeper analysis before practical application. At this point a socio-spatial concept of politics is required. For this, Mann's (1986) differentiated sources of social power offer a conceptual framework. Here I want to draw some comparisons between ideological power and mediation, and state power and regulation.

Mann (1986) proposes four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and state. For the purpose of this analysis, ideological and state power will be focused upon. Importantly, state power is geographically determined, and the exercise of power is contingent upon the legitimacy of authority over a given territory. In Mann's theory there is a direct relationship between territory and power, where the institutions of the state can legitimately regulate. Ideologies, on the other hand, may become institutionalised in particular territories but are not limited or necessarily coexistent with them. In global terms, the movement of religions and economic ideologies supersedes the state, just as mediation of particular events is not limited to specific territories.

Where the institutionalisation of social relations and challenges to these relations are at stake, Mann's analysis is extremely useful. First, the state cannot be considered the sole site of political contestation despite its privileged position as a legitimate set of regulatory institutions within a given territory (there remain three other sources of power), nor can state power be considered a direct producer of ideological power, even as it maintains the authority to regulate ideological institutions. Neither can a broad conflation of the symbolic and material stand in for "power" without some spatial recognition of what power is at stake and what it means for social ordering. At the same time, the regulating features of state power correspond to the legitimacy of regulating institutions: these are the political spaces where antagonisms initially appear.

Second, Mann offers insight into the socio-spatial characteristics of ideological power. Ideologies are promiscuous (they coexist with other power sources even when they are not the prominent source), yet they are also "extensive" and "diffuse." Extensive power refers to the ability to "organise large numbers of people over far-flung territories in order to engage in minimally stable cooperation" whereas diffuse power "spreads in a more spontaneous, unconscious, decentred way throughout a population, resulting in similar social practices that

embody power relations but are not explicitly commanded” (Mann 1986: 7,8). In relation to other power sources, ideologies are less spatially bound but also less intensely regulative. In other words, the prescriptions of ideologies are not as binding, but they have a vast reach.

Two points of similarity can be noted between ideological power and mediation: first, they both have extensive geographical reach, and second, they both fail to regulate individuals, even though they may result “in similar social practices” (Mann 1986: 8). But some differences are also apparent. The “spontaneous, unconscious, decentred” movement of Mann’s ideologies does not correspond to the mediating institutions considered above, where the term ‘institution’ presumes some level of coordination, intent and centrality. Mann explains the general lack of institutional necessity for ideologies as resulting from the transmission of ideologies through “‘universal infrastructures’ such as literacy, coinage and markets” (Mann 1986: 23). There is definitely an element of unpredictable movement with mediation – in simplest form, the word of mouth phenomenon that is impossible to predict – and I do not wish to underestimate this occurrence. However, when analysing particular political contests in the contemporary era, institutional mediation reaches specific audiences very quickly and has the capacity to extend beyond this as well, to unspecified or unintended audiences. Mann’s ideologies correspond to more permanent and dominant sources of power; mediation in relation to political contests is more immediate and secondary to regulating institutions, yet they carry both longer-term ideologies (such as the work/poverty opposition) as well as shorter-term contests. Despite the differences, the similar socio-spatial characteristics of mediation and ideological power sources are important. They indicate that mediation has the potential for tremendous reach, even if the effects of that reach are not as prescribed as with other power sources.

However, Mann’s analysis is not as helpful in explaining the role of mediation in the political process. The role of mediation in promoting collective identity seems self-explanatory; in order to affect changes to social relations, social identities must be called upon. However, the role of mediation in moving beyond the socio-spatial boundaries of the initial conflict is not as straight forward. If contestation occurs between institutions and those affected by regulation, then mediation expands the constituency of the contest. At the same time, such broader mediation may or may not be desirable.

Here the relationship between mediation and regulation is complex. The mediation of *Welfare that Works* (Shipley and colleagues 1991) put forward the justification for benefit reductions to a broad public audience for the purpose of gaining consent. Similarly, the protesters of the state house eviction mentioned above notified *The Herald* in the hope that concerned citizens would become active political constituents in their cause. On the other hand, from 1984 through 1993 economic advice from Treasury to the caucus avoided mediation even to traditional economic advisors (Wallis & Dollery 2003). Similarly, accounts of the 1978 united women's convention note a lack of mediation for the purpose of promoting particular feminist politics over others, despite claims that the movement was non-hierarchical (*Broadsheet* Jun 1979). Thus, the mediation of contests is not necessarily sought, and, as Chapter 4 makes clear, neither mediation nor outcomes are guaranteed when it is.

The coordinates of political space for analysing poverty in New Zealand

The distinction between institutional functions – the regulations and mediation – can thus be specified with the help of Mann's socio-spatial description of power sources. Regulative institutions have recognised authority within a particular jurisdiction. The institutionalisation of social relations results, whether this is manifest in the eviction of tenants from state houses, the investigation into single mothers' personal lives by social welfare authorities, or the broader social relations determined by changes in industrial relations legislation. Mediating institutions, on the other hand, have extensive reach (socially-geographically) but diffuse power (and less direct correlation to action as a result). Regardless of the potential social functions of mediating institutions (to entertain, to inform, and so on) their primary *political* functions are to consolidate identities and to expand the parameters of political space.

Again these are ideal types with many institutions having an explicitly double function. For example, governments have a regulative function but a very privileged position vis a vis mediating institutions. Trade unions are directly involved in regulation but also mediation. In the former they act as representative bodies of regulated actors, whereas in the latter they actively seek to maintain common political identities and also mediate concerns to other

sympathetic groups and mass media. Similarly, mass media have a primarily mediative function, yet operate within a regulated space that is also contestable.

Before moving on, some points about this typology should be made. Although the concept of regulative institutions allows for micro or macro political struggles, the expansion or condensation of space through mediation allows for the involvement of fluctuating numbers of actors and institutions. In other words, one can examine the specific institutions involved in political contestation but must recognise that they have shifting importance as political events develop. The obvious example of this is where the local political action gains broad media coverage and is suddenly recognised as an issue for elected governments. For example, the movement of the foreshore and seabed debate in New Zealand from the courts to parliament significantly affected the shape of the political struggle from that point onward.

At the same time, although this heuristic distinction between institutional types for the analysis of political contestation responds to a blind spot in the sociological cultural studies that have been examined – namely it addresses institutional types and schematizes their relative power – it also focuses on the individual struggle at the expense of larger political movements and struggles. But this is one of the key problems I found in postmodern theory, where social life is fragmented, plural, and complex to the point that social coherence is refuted. In order to understand the more general movements and structuring of political movements, attention needs to be paid to the deeper structures that shape social relations and the politics of the day. In Chapters 1 and 2 the beginning of this type of analysis was begun with the differentiation between moral discourse, and social welfare and macroeconomic policy. The moral construction of poverty relates primarily to mediation; whereas the social welfare and macroeconomic policy correspond to changes within and changes to regulative institutions.

Thus, the basic sites of analysis need to include and distinguish between mediating and regulating institutions, but move from the local political to deeper structural determinations of social relations. At the same time, as I pointed out earlier and as Boltanski's body of work makes clear, the analysis cannot focus solely on institutional sites as antagonistic to critical actors. Rather than a clear line running between these "fronts," tensions form a social dialogue in which the shape and foundation of critique is constantly changing – these tensions

will be examined in relation to the state in Chapter 5. Just as mediating and regulating institutions need to be considered distinctly, the actions and responses of critics also needs to be considered vis a vis institutions. Thus, the basic sites of examination are mediation, regulation, and critique.

The spaces of critique will be elaborated in Chapter 6, but their precariousness should be noted. Social movement actors make demands and direct their critique in opposition to power structures. The power and opposition of the movements examined are drawn primarily from the spaces that appear to be operating “outside” of state control, such as local communities. Here, as already noted, a clear distinction between the powerful and the social movement actors marks the relationship of contestation. However, this distinction must be challenged due to their relational constitution. In a simplified example, the working class is constituted through capitalism, even where it opposes capitalism. Thus, spaces of critique have a precarious relationship to that which is criticised, and this will be explored through Gramsci’s (1971) concept of compromise.

The outlay of the project

The next three chapters will focus on regulation, mediation, and critique. They are heuristically differentiated (each ascribed its own chapter) but together contribute to an understanding of the politics and cultural understandings of poverty in New Zealand. In Chapter 4 I analyse representations of poverty and the contestation of poverty in newspaper media. My principle focus is on the construction of identities, both of the poor and the presumed readership. The constructed identity of the audience contributes to a structure that anti-poverty social movements later contend with.

Chapter 5 examines the broad shifts in the state from 1970-2010 in relation to established and emerging social powers. In this analysis the structures of the state are informed by social movements but also limit and structure demands. In particular, I argue that social and ethnic identities are institutionalised within the state as economic identities lose political channels through which demands can be made. Regulation, like mediation, structures social

movement responses. In Chapter 6, anti-poverty social movements are considered in relation to their demands as well as to the structures identified in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4:

Poverty in popular newsprint media

Media play a key role in developing and promoting common understandings about poverty while also constructing identities, both of “the poor” and media consumers. This chapter critically analyses newspaper media, to get a sense of how media shapes discussions of poverty in New Zealand. I focus primarily on the period from 1987 until 2004 for two reasons: first, poverty deepened and affected a greater number of people, resulting in greater social awareness of poverty; and second, social actors contested the social and economic policies of the New Right and the growing economic disparity in New Zealand. Where Chapter 2 provided a broad survey of moral discourses of poverty, this chapter instead focuses on particular media moments to provide a more exhaustive account of specific instances where moral discourses of poverty and economic discourses that shape material deprivation are rendered symbolically.

I put forward two arguments: first, the media examined promote cultural and psychological identities for “the poor” while they assume a common readership of “ordinary New Zealanders” or “taxpayers” that are represented as a homogenous group. In effect, the readership is constructed to stand in for “society” which “the poor” are largely excluded from. Second, media delineates proper, or legitimate, politics from illegitimate politics. The first of these appears bound to the structure of state institutions whereas the latter applies to those working outside of sanctioned channels, or, more simply, those engaged in contentious politics.

In the examination thus far, media representation of poverty has been treated fairly synonymously with official government statements. This conforms to a Discourse Theory approach where questions of representation are sidelined in order to examine emerging discourses, or the symbolic and material practices, in a given social space (Torfinn 2005: 24). However, as Chapter 3 discussed, the discourse theory approach does not provide insight into the role of mediation in the production and distribution of ideology, or its effect on political

space, let alone in the valuation of some group interests over others. This is intentional, as symbolic practices are either constitutive of material life (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 98) or at least inseparable (Laclau & Mouffe 1987: 82), and, according to discourse theory, group interests are constructed through discourse rather than pre-existing or standing outside of them. Yet, as Chapter 3 argued, this conception of discourse requires challenge.

Schudson's (2002) categorisation of media as "political institutions" provides a good starting point for considering the politics of media as a distinct institution. Schudson (2002) usefully categorises political media studies by delineating between political economic, news production, and cultural news studies. The first of these posits ownership and direct state control as primary influences, if not determinants, of news reporting. The second accentuates the role of news production – particularly the sourcing of stories and opinions – in its political alignment. The third, cultural studies of media, examine "the constraining force of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems, regardless of the structure of economic organisation or the character of occupational routines" (Schudson 2002: 251). The approach taken in this chapter addresses meaning, identity, and legitimacy through analysis of representation in newspapers, but also accounts for political economic and production critiques. In doing so, it attempts to balance cultural and sociological concerns, or what is broadly termed critical media studies.

Sociological cultural studies of news media

While Discourse Theory does not offer a general critique of media, it can be used to provide such a critique. Phelan (2009), for example, uses Discourse Theory to consider the role of newspaper editorials in the political debate about the 2004 foreshore and seabed legislation. Other sociological cultural studies place less emphasis on identity and more explicit emphasis on the processes of mediation and representation. New American Cultural Sociology focuses extensively on communicative institutions in what amounts to a critical pluralist approach to the media, where power elites have greater access to communicative institutions (Alexander 2003: 102), yet where all groups ultimately have "the ability to persuade the mass media to speak in their name" (Alexander, 2006a: 114). The specific analysis of coding provides an observable entry for researchers but generally fails to tie media with broader political

processes (Steensland 2009; see Barnett and colleagues 2007 for this type of analysis in New Zealand). The work of Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) allows for misrepresentation, ideologies that mask social relations, and influences of power generally, however they follow discourse theory in detaching ideologies from interests and powerful group control, instead focusing on the creation of discourse through both imposition from above and critique from below (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006).

In both of these cases, gestures towards the control and biases of mediating institutions is acknowledged, though how it is to be understood in empirical situations is not. For example, in Alexander's analysis of the civil rights movement in the United States, mediating institutions of the north were won over by the civil approach to disobedience (mainly through non-violent protest) in contrast to the uncivil violence of racist authorities, and thus promoted the civil rights message (Alexander 2006b). Here, little understanding of how power structures, including the political economy of the media in the north and the political orientation of political elites, may have either promoted or hindered such mediation. Morris (2007: 617) criticises Alexander's narrative by arguing, instead, that social power was required before mediation in the north was secured: "The black masses generated real economic and political leverage, and that power served as the primary direct force of social change." To put Morris' criticism another way, Alexander's account failed to situate media within a political economic context.

These theories, though they recognise the influence of power on mediation to varying degrees, all conform to contemporary pluralist models of media in two ways. First, they refuse any general relationship between media and power, and, second, "society" is generally conceived in democratic terms: a variety of groups have the ability to find representation within popular media (Hesmondhalgh 2007: 32). Rather than corresponding to regulating institutions and their elites, mediation corresponds to the discourses of society at large.

In contrast to the pluralist tradition, political economists note the increasingly narrow ownership of media, both within and across types, a trend that corresponds to the promotion of free market capitalism (see, for example, Herman & McChesney 2004). In this case, the effects of mediation are determined directly through its relationship to economic and structures: regulating institutions determine mediation.

CCCS engagement with popular media in the 1970s has more in common with the media determination model. In the work of Hall (1973), and Hall, Crichton and colleagues (1978), the processes of production and representation result in the reproduction of the ideologies of the powerful, despite the “relative autonomy” of those working within media industries. The production of dominant ideologies occurs, in part, due to the reliance on “primary definers” or those situated in established institutions, to provide “professional expertise” (Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978: 68). While the relationship between ideology, power, and media in these studies is more complex than in simple pluralist or political economic models, media professionals are nevertheless “unwitting servants of the powerful” (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 68).

The unity of “ideologies of the powerful” are overstated in this account, as Hall, Crichton and colleagues (1978) assign too much coherence to various social institutions (see Chapter 3). However, in the depiction of poverty and the economic and industrial relations policies that contributed to poverty in New Zealand the use of primary definers can be found throughout the examined period. Newspaper coverage of the “week of action” from April 3-10 following the implementation of the Employment Contracts Act (ECA) is notable in this regard. Despite the mass of protest action around the country that accounted for over 50 000 working days lost after the first week (*The Dominion* Apr 8, 1991), newspaper reporting in the *New Zealand Herald* and *The Dominion* relied almost exclusively on primary definers of the issues: in favour of the legislation were the Employers Federation, the Minister of Labour and the Manufacturers Federation, while in opposition, the Combined Trade Unions (CTU) and sector unions accounted for the vast majority of commentary. For example, after the first day of protests, reporting of protest in *The Dominion* relied on commentary CTU president Ken Douglas, a Northern Hotel and Hospitals Union representative, the Nurses Union national secretary, the Nurses Association president, and the Minister of Labour (*The Dominion* Apr 4, 1991: 2); after a week of protest *The Dominion* continued to present the contest through the same definers – CTU president and the Minister of Labour – each with “different predictions on the effects of the employment contracts bill” (Apr 11, 1991: 2). Similarly, the *New Zealand Herald* presented the contest over the ECA as a difference of predictions with headlines such as “Dire warnings or fear mongering?” (Apr 9, 1991). Alongside this presentation of the contest, *The Dominion* featured a front page article on the

first day of protest in which Finance Minister Ruth Richardson argued that New Zealand “was spending its way further into debt” and thus required “labour market law changes” (Apr 4, 1991: 1) and both papers ran articles on the opposition Labour Party’s response to the legislation⁸. As Scott (1997) argues, the coverage reduced the significance of the ECA to protest action on one hand and the politicking of unions and MPs on the other, without any coherent analysis of legislation and its effects on those protesting. In this account the use of primary definers was part of the policy strategy of the government of the time so that the debate would be interpreted in terms of unions and the government but not in terms of broader reductions in wages and employment conditions.

In relation to the poor more directly, Born notes other structural aspects of production that significantly reduce balanced media coverage, alerting us to the ambivalence and lack of correspondence between media producers and the poor (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 82-83). In this argument, the social disconnection between those in media industries and the far reaches of socio-economic groupings hinders representation (both in symbolic reproduction and in a literal sense). Further to this, concerns over New Zealand’s print media specificities cannot be ignored, where three companies owned the vast majority of print media throughout the country in 1984 and this was later reduced to two predominant ownership groups (with the exception of the *Otago Times*). As there is no “genuinely national paper” or regional paper competition, the traditional left-right political spectrum one finds in other countries is substituted with less diverse representations of events aimed at generically “mainstream” readers (Phelan 2009: 223). In Hope’s (1999) estimation, mounting economic pressures from the 1980s onward, combined with concentrated media ownership, created a professional atmosphere in which journalists were increasingly dependent on primary news sources. At the same time, post 1984 governments increasingly employed former journalists with media ties as public relations specialists (Scott 1995, in Hope 1999; Wood & Rudd 2004: 154).

Thus, the idea that media acts as a public watchdog or balances the interests of “ordinary” people with those of elites requires challenge that necessarily extends beyond the pluralist model. In response to the conception of the media as the “Fourth Estate”, Althusserian theory that posits media as an “ideological state apparatus” (Althusser 1971) requires

⁸ During the “week of action” only one article (*The Dominion* Apr 4, 1991) was found that did not rely on primary definers – this was by an academic trying to evaluate the legislation.

consideration of the way that media representations produce an understanding of conflict that misrepresents the basis of that conflict.

In the last chapter, I criticised Althusserian theory for the reducing all social conflict into class conflict, and for aligning “dominant interests” too coherently within the state.

However, aspects of the theory remain useful and have been employed in examination of New Zealand media. Wood (1984) attempts to detach Althusserian theory from its more deterministic features while maintaining the basic ideological function of the media: to represent the social world as a coherent totality that does not correspond to the “real” social landscape structured in inequality. Here media acts as a conservative social reproductive force that occludes recognition of inequality by positing the public as independent actors in a plural society. Wood’s argument corresponds to the second function of mediation in the political space discussion in the last chapter, where political constituents are identified and group identities are constructed. Where pluralist models find direct correspondence between social groups and media representation, Wood draws our attention to the consistent construction of groups. While my conclusions differ from Wood’s somewhat (partly due to the media examined), the construction of an “audience” with a consistent relationship to “the poor” finds affinity with his reading.

In the sections that follow I focus on particular moments of contestation that are central to the shaping of poverty in the neoliberal era (from 1987 onward). I focus on this period, as I mentioned above, because material deprivation became more prevalent (due largely to increased unemployment, reduced income replacement, and reduced indirect social welfare benefits to social services) and contestation of poverty addressed both the immediate policies that contributed to poverty and the political and economic institutions that promoted these policies (including successive elected governments, the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, and the Business Roundtable). The majority of the analysis below use a limited newspaper search, but the most extensive investigation (that analyses a four month period in which a march against poverty crossed the country and the leaders from the march met with government officials) was also conducted with the benefit of an electronic database search, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of the contest. I will indicate the newspapers and timeframes used for each analysis in the sections that follow.

Specifically, the events chosen do not rely on government elites as primary definers⁹. This is a conscious choice as the mediation of anticivil representations in Chapter 2 drew noticeably on the defining speeches of government elites. In the analyses that follow (aside from the analysis of the “week of action” and the contestation of reductions to superannuation in 1991) the moments chosen do not – at least explicitly – draw on government sources. Rather, the newspapers operate in as much autonomy as possible. To find moments of contestation that were not initially defined by government elites, I searched social movement literature to find protests and then used the dates from this literature (where dates were provided) to search popular media. This method required personal judgement and some episodes that were researched were later abandoned because, I felt, they did not add to the discussion below.

The method of analysis, in line with CCCS work on media (such as Hall, Crichton and colleagues 1978), Discourse Theory analysis of media (such as Stavrakakis 2005), and New American Cultural Sociology work generally (Steensland 2008; Alexander 1988a; 2003; 2006a) does not follow a strict method of textual analysis (such as in the linguistics traditions of discourse analysis). The data is not quantified, but instead traces broad patterns and shifts in discourses. To account for the potential bias in this type of work, I have focused on particular moments that I could examine comprehensively, and also tried to show where counter-tendencies occur. For example, the treatment of the poor and anti-poverty actors during the Hikoi of Hope is contradictory to the treatment of CPAG and Family Centre mediation within New Zealand newspapers. The media analysis was necessarily selective over an extended period; as such, the findings are presented in the spirit of the broader project: to note broad shifts rather than to comprehensively detail the entire period.

Mediation of the New Right in the pre-neoliberal period

In this section, I rely on my sampling of media from the coverage of government budgets in 1978, 1981, 1984, and of national elections in the same years. This sampling was done in *The Dominion* from May 25 to June 14 and November 4 to December 9, 1978, July 2 to 22

⁹ Aside from the 1991 “Week of Action” articles were not coded to determine primary definers – this is a subjective judgement based on whether or not government officials are acknowledged as providing significant discussion of events.

and November 7 to December 12, 1981, June 23 to July 28 and November 1 to 24, 1984; and in the *New Zealand Herald* from November 1 to 24, 1984.

In the pre-neoliberal era, ideas that would underpin later neoliberal policies began to circulate in popular media. This is not surprising given the documents such as *The Welfare State?* (New Zealand Planning Council 1979) that advocated neoliberal policies were published by government appointed groups. In *The Dominion*, for example, after the 1981 budget, a Christchurch group began to advocate “lower taxes through less government” due to their “anger” over the growing deficit (Jul 16, 1981: 10), and criticism of government expenditure (especially the National Government’s “Think Big” energy-development project) by the Treasury and the opposition Labour Party featured before the 1981 election (Nov 11, 1981: 2). Prior to the 1984 election, the opposition Labour Party leaked a document by the Reserve Bank of New Zealand critical of “interventionist” policies (*The Dominion* Jul 6, 1984) and the Treasury leaked documents from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that made the same criticism (*The Dominion* Jul 12, 1984). The Treasury and Reserve Bank of New Zealand were committed to neoliberal economics at this point (Roper 2005a), however, my sampling in *The Dominion* did not uncover many articles openly advocating neoliberal economic policies, nor that indicated a broad acceptance of neoliberal policy platforms, such as regressive taxation, state asset sales, and market liberalisation¹⁰.

For example, in 1981 Donald Brash, who would later become Reserve Bank Governor and Leader of the Opposition for the National Party, recommended a flat income tax of 22 percent, a regressive tax structure that subsequent neoliberal governments would move towards, but not adopt outright. His proposal came at a time when income tax restructuring was a hotly contested political topic, commented upon by the opposition party, editors, and union officials, and Brash’s proposal was made public at a seminar that was opened by the Deputy Minister of Finance and attended by the director general of the manufacturers association and a research officer for the Federation of Labour (*The Dominion* Jul 3: 11). According to Brash the income tax proposal, if adopted, would promote economic stimulus and “reduce disincentive to work,” although the tax would also “result in the poor paying more tax and the rich paying less” (*The Dominion* Jul 3: 11). Brash’s proposal was largely

¹⁰ Given the intervals of samples, this could have been missed, though the examination of election campaigns and budgets would presumably capture macro-economic discussions, even if they percolated at other times.

swept under carpet; three days after the initial article that aired his proposal, he claimed that his ideas were sound, but that “people fear the unknown” and this is why there was no general acceptance of his ideas (*The Dominion* Jul 6, 1981: 10). Rather than even spurring debate though, Brash’s proposal simply did not garner attention in the media sampled; the one article found that referenced Brash’s proposal explained the understanding of the time succinctly: “No one is expecting tax reform along the lines being vigorously promoted by the Planning Council, Dr Don Brash or others,” rather, “help is needed for people on low incomes being badly hit by the ravages of inflation” (*The Dominion* Jul 4, 1981: 13).

From my limited sample, it is difficult to argue that neoliberal policies broadly circulated in popular media. The range of groups from the left and the right commenting on income tax structures and tax burdens indicates, instead, that rather than a dominant economic ideology being established at this time, Prime Minister Muldoon’s economic policies were under attack from all sides. As a *Dominion* reporter opined, “Mr Muldoon’s strength is being eroded at both the right and liberal ends” (Jul 17, 1981: 6). At the same time, neoliberal advocates, including Brash and his colleagues at the New Zealand Planning Council, occupied elite roles within government institutions and committees and quite possibly received more detailed media coverage as a result.

For example, an extended article entitled “Remedies improve American economic outlook” (*The Dominion* Jul 14, 1981) details the assessments of the United States and New Zealand economy and required remedies by a Bank of New Zealand Chief economist, Mr Bayliss. In this article, the opinions of Mr Bayliss are given, often verbatim, after he completed a month-long visit to the United States to discuss with officials and economists the likely economic results from Reagan’s neoliberal policy initiatives. In the article, Bayliss first “predicts a sharp fall in United States inflation, a slackening in the growth of Government expenditure, increases in savings and productive investment and productivity growth.” This prediction is “not only based on the likely success of the administration’s economic policies, but also on the rapid pace of restructuring....” (*The Dominion* Jul 14, 1981: 13). “Prediction” is key at this point, as Reagan’s policies had not yet been enacted, but the distinction between prediction and effect is blurred throughout the article. At one point, “Mr Bayliss said it was heartening to *see it was possible to fight inflation effectively*” whereas at another, “inflation, which peaked at 14 per cent in the US, is *expected* to halve within 15 months” (emphasis

added). Where the second is admittedly conjecture, the first assumes that the policies will have a distinct and foreseeable impact. The article concludes with Bayliss' analysis:

Clearly, the [economic] improvement will take time, there will be slippages and alarms but overall the cumulative impact of the above changes will see a vastly improved US economic performance in the 1980s as compared with the previous decade – and quicker than is generally realised.

Again, there are slips between prediction and effect and a lack of critical engagement with those slippages by the reporter. I would like to make three further points that strike me as significant in this mediation. First, in continuation of my point above, the propagation of New Right ideology occurs through economic intellectual elites from within the public service. Although Mr Bayliss is not accredited with New Right radicalism to the same extent as other state and business elites, he nevertheless occupies a position of authority and influence within the public sector: he represents expert opinion. This is in line with the placement of actors of the neoliberal reforms as a whole (Goldfinch 2000a) and with critical media studies that locate the disruption of social consensus with high placed officials in the first instance (Hallin 1984).

Second, the United States is put forward as an appropriate economic model for effective control of inflation and improved economic performance. This model includes the simultaneous use of market liberalization and austerity measures “right across the board so that... the criticism of sectional inequity [can] not be sustained.” All of this had to occur within a “rapid pace of restructuring” in order to be effective. My point here is that the policy prescription of the New Right already had coherence and assumed the need for a radical change in the state. Again there is a lack of critical engagement with the ideas presented though, such as why, for example, New Zealand's small primary sector export based economy should follow the economic policy prescriptions of the largest manufacturing-based economy in the world.

Finally, and most importantly to an analysis of the media, though these ideas were not commented upon favorably in media surveyed at this time, they are nevertheless presented in their entirety. In the article noted here, one detects the use of professional communication practitioners (see also *The Dominion* Jul 16, 1981: 10). The article presents conjecture as

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established proof, and prescribes specific policies in response to the problems of the day without any commentary from the usual official sources – either party political, organized labor, or bureaucrats.

This use of media – to promote political programmes – foreshadows significant changes in government-media relations in the neoliberal era that followed. In the neoliberal era, the Fourth Labour Government from 1987-1990 spent \$120 million on advertising its policies; approximately two million was spent on public relations mediation of the 1990 benefit cuts and the ECA by the subsequent National Government; and a public relations firm was also used to “sell” the 1991 budget (Hope 1999). The goals of governments since 1984 have been explicit in this regard: “PR firms advised government on how to preempt potential conflict by appearing to address the fears, doubts, and desires of ordinary citizens” (Hope 1999: 100). This trend continued throughout the 1990s, with consistent increases for spending on professional communicators within the government (Wood & Rudd 2004: 154).

Despite this overwhelming political-economic context for news production in the neoliberal period (after 1984), the next section makes clear that contestation nevertheless persisted in the most socially disrupted period of my analysis (1987-1993), or from the first economic collapse following free market policies through the era of high employment, state asset sell-offs, state restructuring, benefit reductions, and industrial relations reconfiguration.

Mediation of the New Right and “the poor” 1984-1991

The use of media communication professionals from 1984 onward worked in direct contrast to Prime Minister Muldoon’s oppositional media relations from 1975-1984 (Scott 1997). The institutional restructuring of the neoliberal project was accompanied by government funded mediation to promote economic and social policy changes (Wood & Rudd 2004). But despite these mediating efforts, moments of contestation against the New Right arise in print media. My survey of media for this section and the next come from *The Dominion* and the *New Zealand Herald* November 1 to 24, 1984; December 15, 1990 to January 4, 1991; April 1 to 15, 1991; July 25 to August 13, 1991; and *The Dominion* only for June 2 to June 30, and July 17 to August 23, 1987. These media surveys include the sampling of budgets and elections in

1984, 1987, 1990 and 1991; the announcement of the benefits reductions and the ECA on December 19, 1990; and the “week of action” (April 3-10, 1990) that responded to the December 19 announcement.

The Dominion, during the lead-up to the 1987 budget and national election, generally proclaimed the neoliberal programme successful, though individual reporters such as W.P. Reeves were critical of monetarist policies from the outset of the neoliberal period. The most public proponent of the New Right, Labour Finance Minister Roger Douglas, attained something of a celebrity status in *The Dominion* as articles such as “Douglas tells of birth of Rogernomics” (Jun 27, 1987: 2) explained how Douglas “urged a change from the traditional party actions of endless promises, a style which [he] regarded as bribing voters with their own money.” In another article in *The Dominion*:

Finance Minister Roger Douglas’s coup this month clearly created the latest record [in the polls]. He cracked the whip at the Treasury to bring the Budget date forward... [to reveal] the first budget surplus in 35 years – even if it was largely created by the one-off sales of public assets... The Government is riding high... (Jun 29, 1987: 10)

The purported success of the neoliberal programme was notably also applied to aspects of the National Party platform. Even though, running up to the 1987 election, the National Party was declared “beaten in the opinions polls, beaten in the pre-election publicity and, with one or two exceptions... beaten in the policy area,” it nevertheless excelled in the polls due to its “pledge to carry out labour market reform... which is essential if the economic restructuring programme is to achieve its full potential” (*The Dominion* Jun 29, 1987: 10). Even dissenting voices agreed that neoliberalism was welcomed by the public: *The Dominion* writer W.P. Reeves, who argued that neoliberalism had amounted to “a flood of high interest rates, high inflation, high unemployment, nil growth, spirally overseas indebtedness and social imbalance” also noted that it was welcomed by “cheers of the speculator, the Business Roundtable, as well as a goodly representation of the public” (*The Dominion* Jun 12, 1987: 10).

The “honeymoon” claimed between the New Right and the electorate (*The Dominion* Oct 1, 1990: 5) may have been overstated in the media however, as *The Dominion*’s many articles critical of the New Right suggest. Even as *The Dominion* celebrated Douglas and, to a lesser

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extent, Prime Minister David Lange, it carried articles that contested the institutions and policies of the New Right. For example, a reporter for *The Dominion* appealed for social justice and noted the “deep cleavage” emerging between the rich and poor (Jun 11, 1987: 8); another detailed the increasing number of “kids relying on a Wellington soup kitchen” (Jul 20, 1987: 8); a third derided the Treasury for hypocritical overspending (Jun 17, 1987: 1; Jun 18, 1987: 1); the Dairy Board Chairman publicly expressed his concerns over the effectiveness of the New Right economic policy (*The Dominion* Jun 26, 1987: 6); the newspaper also noted complaints of superannuates regarding the pension surtax (*The Dominion* Jul 29, 1987: 14); and “condemned” the proposed market level rents for state houses (*The Dominion* Jul 30, 1987: 7); unions aired concerns over “hidden agendas” on health restructuring (*The Dominion* Aug 6, 1987: 6); Māori were said to be “reduced to beneficiaries” due to neoliberal policies (*The Dominion* Aug 7, 1987: 6), and letters to the editor complained of a lack of employment policy (*The Dominion* Jun 16, 1987: 10; Jun 27, 1987: 10).

By the time of Finance Minister Richardson’s first full budget in 1991, *The Dominion* clearly published against the New Right, whereas the *New Zealand Herald* remained much more positive of the economic changes. For example, during the 1990 election campaign, a reporter for *The Dominion* declared the “honeymoon” with the Labour Party and its accelerated economic restructuring was over (Oct 1, 1990). And in the period leading up to the benefit reduction announcements in December 1990, *The Dominion* pre-empted government announcements with articles entitled “Big welfare slice goes to top earners” (Dec 18, 1990: 1) and “DPB is most efficient welfare benefit – Report” (Dec 18, 1990: 2), both implicitly challenging the idea that means-tested beneficiaries were responsible for the economic woes of the country and that money spent on them was wasted. Following the announcement of benefit reductions on December 19, *The Dominion* ran stories on the cuts through the Christmas period, claiming that there was public “outrage over [the] impact on [the] poor” (Dec 20, 1990: 1) and predictions that “people would be forced into abject poverty” (Dec 20, 1990: 2). Reports of political upheaval within the National Party followed (*The Dominion* Dec 21, 1990: 1) and editorials criticized the tax freeze as the only promise National would end up keeping from its election campaign (*The Dominion* Dec 24, 1990: 7; Dec 28, 1990: 6). But most apparent in newspaper headlines was the explicit use of the terms

“poverty” and “the poor”: “Why did the Government single out the poor in its latest package?” (*The Dominion* Dec 24, 1990: 7). These articles highlighted the severity and extent of poverty in New Zealand: “250 000 reported living in poverty” (*The Dominion* Dec 27, 1990: 1); “Solo mums consider adopting out children” (Dec 27 1990: 1); “Welfare state in tatters” (Munro Dec 20, 1990: 1).

In contrast to this sympathy for the poor found in *The Dominion*, two days after the benefits reduction announcement the *New Zealand Herald* ran the headline “Brave agenda carries risk: Gospel according to Ruth won’t suit all” (Dec 22, 1990: 8). In this article, National’s caucus is depicted as pragmatic, in contrast to Thatcher’s notorious “repository of right-wing creeds.” Also on the same day, an article in the *New Zealand Herald* praised the government’s election campaign for:

show[ing] a glimpse of a bright future... where groups of happy people of mixed races were working in plant nurseries and forests... The idea was just one example of how people who were either on a benefit, or looking for a second income for their family, could be paid a wage. (*New Zealand Herald* Dec 22, 1990: 4)

At this point, the contestation of New Right in print media seems truly a contest between different publications.

The *New Zealand Herald* also categorized the poor negatively through their crime reporting during the week after the benefit reduction announcement¹¹: the practice of reporting employment status alongside criminal activity. In the day the benefit reduction announcement featured in the *Herald* were reports that, “an unemployed man was yesterday charged with murder”; “Paul Harris, also unemployed... admitted to having Molotov cocktails” (Dec 21, 1990: 10); “Two Auckland teenagers... both aged 18 and unemployed...” were charged with murder (Dec 21, 1990: 10); “Paul Stanley Johnson, aged 24, unemployed” was charged with assault (Dec 21, 1990: 13); and “a beneficiary” was arrested for possession of narcotics (Dec 21, 1990: 12).

¹¹ The *New Zealand Herald* was not sampled at regular intervals. The period from December 19 to January 4 was the only period that I noted the reporting of unemployment alongside criminal activity.

In one publication, then, the representation of the poor as victims of the government can be contrasted to the support of government policies and the depiction of poor people as criminals in the other, at least at this moment. *The Dominion* challenged social policy changes by focusing on economic identities. Its acknowledgement of the DPB as an effective benefit, for example, sidelined moral/ethical designations of solo parents and focused instead on economic need. This is a rare moment that has some affinities to the early-mid 1980s, where media recognised that the combined wage and price freeze and inflation led to the impoverishment of low-waged workers.

At the same time, “the poor” were represented as both victims and potential threats in *The Dominion*. As such, the concern over the cuts was posed as an ethical response by the media, but also in fear of a predicted social breakdown. Articles focused on crime, violence and suicide as probable results of the benefit cuts. The headline “Social warfare predicted” (*The Dominion* Dec 20, 1990: 2) gave explicit content to the fears underlying many others. This depiction in *The Dominion* does not amount to the linking of unemployment and crime in the *New Zealand Herald*, yet in the newsprint surveyed, the poor are represented as either potential or real threats.

The picture of the poor and social welfare policy that one is left with from the popular media is exceedingly ambiguous. No “dominant” message is clear: the poor should be protected from government policies; the poor may represent a threat to social stability; the poor engage in criminal activity; and the poor are absent in the analysis of the government’s “brave agenda.”

Successful contestation of benefit policy: The challenge to proposed superannuation changes in 1991

Perhaps the most unique case study in media from this period occurs in the overturning of social welfare policy for the aged. As Chapter 5 will detail, the neoliberal governments from 1984 through the 1990s imposed economic reform without election mandates and despite of considerable public opposition. The overturning of the proposed superannuation reform – to

effectively make superannuation means-tested rather than universal – stands in stark contrast to the political trends of the time.

The aged expressed considerable animosity towards the Fourth Labour Government for a surtax imposed upon state superannuation payments. Election promises by the following National Government to repeal the surtax seemed in danger, however, as ministers discussed the fiscal cost of superannuation at length from December 1990 onwards. The perception of superannuation as an unwieldy cost was hardly new. As early as 1975 the opposition's shadow Finance Minister Roger Douglas criticised universal superannuation for its cost to the state (Douglas Aug 1975), and successive free market policy papers made similar objections (New Zealand Planning Council 1979; 1980). In the months preceding the 1991 Budget, the "problem" of superannuation was discussed in a multi-party committee that Labour later withdrew from because it refused to be "part of a Government plan to defraud the elderly of their retirement income" (*The Dominion* Apr 8, 1991: 21).

The aged are one of the few groups consistently represented as deserving in welfare discourse, beginning before the introduction of the old-age pension (McClure 1998). However, the discussion of "dependency" in the document that justified the National Government's benefit cuts, *Welfare that Works* (Shipley and colleagues 1991), did not differentiate between types of state income supplement. Just as the document claimed that unemployed people must be moved out of dependency as soon as possible and could no longer rely on the taxpayer "contributing to the lifestyles of those who can work but are not prepared to do so" (33), the document argued that the aged must accept, "a fundamental shift in the way society views the balance between the state's obligations and the individual's responsibilities in providing retirement income" (36). The moral indictment of the unemployed seeking to maintain their "lifestyles" when they were "not prepared to work" was more severe than the "responsibility" of the aged to provide for themselves, yet economically there was little difference: both were affected by the same logic.

In both *The Dominion* and the *New Zealand Herald*, the financial and social welfare implications of the 1991 budget were foreshadowed by the promise of "the mother of all budgets" (Shipley, in *The Dominion* Jul 29, 1991: 1) and a "redesign of the welfare state" (Bolger, in *The Dominion* Jul 29, 1991: 8). However, the severity of cuts to social welfare

surpassed expectations (and fears) while failing to grasp central problems within the economy (*The Dominion* Jul 31, 1991: 1-2; Aug 1, 1991: 7; Aug 2, 1991: 8, 9). Criticism focused on both the role of the state according to neoliberalism and the treatment of “middle income earners” (*The Dominion* Jul 31, 1991: 1). But in the weeks that followed the 1991 budget, debate in the popular media focused most directly on pensioners, so that Labour Party MP Caygill’s claim that “modest income pensioners” were the “hardest hit” (*The Dominion* Aug 1, 1991: 2) seems to have had the most traction in the newspapers surveyed.

In articles and letters to the editor, the treatment of the aged took precedence through the next week, though this was cast in a number of ways: directly, as those who contributed to the economy in the past and are now unable to contribute (*The Dominion* Aug 3, 1991: 1), as a legitimate cause that threatens to overturn the National Party leadership – ie. a conscience vote (*The Dominion* Aug 7, 1991: 1; Aug 1, 1991: 1; *New Zealand Herald* Aug 1, 1991: 1; Aug 2, 1991: 1; Aug 3, 1991: 1, 5; Aug 5, 1991: 1; Aug 6, 1991: 1; Aug 8, 1991: 1, 3), and as a single issue that would lead to National to lose its bid for re-elected (*The Dominion* Aug 1, 1991: 1; Aug 8, 1991: 1; *New Zealand Herald* Aug 7, 1991: 1). With very few exceptions the aged continued to be represented as deserving. Despite government arguments that superannuation cost twice the annual deficit (*The Dominion* Apr 10, 1991: 1), a publicised poll determined that only ten percent of respondents supported an income-tested superannuation (*The Dominion* Apr 5, 1991). In this way, longstanding policy schemas that correspond to cultural codes of deservingness challenged the imposition of new “categories of worth.”

Three aspects of the reporting should be noted. First, contestation over superannuation resulted in increased focus on the unpopularity of economic restructuring. Unlike the contestation of neoliberalism noted earlier, both the *New Zealand Herald* and *The Dominion* ran critical articles, though the *New Zealand Herald* also ran positive articles in the first day after the budget announcement. The breadth of the criticism deserves note, as it came from varied social sectors. For example, in the business section of *The Dominion* an NZPA article reported that the “budget ignored central problems” and that “government policy has strongly discriminated against the poor, elderly and badly educated” (Aug 1, 1991: 13); on the front page of the same edition *The Dominion* claimed that the National Party “dived” in the ratings due to their policies. On the next day, one reporter for *The Dominion* warned that the budget

was an indication of “danger signs to our democracy” (Aug 2, 1991: 8); another questioned how the Treasury attracted such “wacky ideas” (Aug 2, 1991: 9); and a letter writer complained that “God’s sheep” had been “fleeced” (Aug 6, 1991: 8). The *New Zealand Herald* reported that rural areas feared the viability of their hospitals due to budget cuts (Aug 1, 1991: 1); others reported students, elderly persons, and “forties” protesting over the budget (Aug 2, 1991: 3; Aug 5, 1991: 1); and an article two weeks after the budget reported that the government “lack[ed] a mandate” to go through with the proposed changes (*New Zealand Herald* Aug 13, 1991: 4).

Second, the political fallout of the proposed superannuation changes and of the budget more generally featured throughout the articles. As cover of the budget progressed, the aged received less coverage even as superannuation dominated headlines; instead, the various MPs threatening to cross the floor or revolt against the party gained media attention. Third, although the *New Zealand Herald* raised the issue of poverty for the elderly early on (Aug 1, 1991: 9), no subsequent explanation of income differentials for pensioner groups followed.

The proposed changes for the aged were significant, but would have represented a relatively small increase in poverty compared to the more stringent changes made to unemployment (particularly for 20-25 year olds), DPB, and sickness beneficiaries (McClure 1998: 236-237). Whereas those dependent on these benefits correlated most strongly to poverty by the mid 1990s (Krishnan 1995: 15) those reliant on superannuation alone tended to hover around 60 percent of the median income, or on the cusp of some poverty measurements, and this was only due to further slides in the benefit rate (Stephens & Waldegrave 1998); the level of elderly who were living in poverty would not have changed under the proposed legislation. An increased number of superannuates would have approached that level, but the more significant change for the aged was in the reduction of earnings for middle income earners. The 29.8 percent of the aged living in poverty by 1998 (Stephens 2008: 34) would have been no worse off.

Continued negative reaction to the proposals, however, resulted in the retention of the former superannuation scheme with only minor increases in abatement and an increase in the age of eligibility (McClure 1998: 238-239). The resulting changes to superannuation affected primarily the unemployed poor between the ages of 60 and 65 (as the age requirement was

raised) who then had to survive on the much lower unemployment benefit level until 1994 when a further transitional benefit was established. The erosion of the level of assistance for superannuates throughout the 1990s was not signalled in the 1991 budget, nor affected by the repeal of most other proposals for superannuation.

Public pressure and media attention regarding superannuation cuts undoubtedly contributed to the government changing its policies. However, as already noted, the elderly who were already amongst the poor were no worse off under the new proposals; in fact, changes to rental rates in state houses were far more devastating than changes to state superannuation for the poor (Stephens, Waldegrave & Frater 1995). Rather, it was superannuates with additional income that would have suffered most – those in the lower middle and middle classes. As forty percent of aged New Zealanders rely solely on superannuation (Perry 2012) it is interesting that their economic interests were not given more mention. And at the same time that *The Dominion* and *New Zealand Herald* followed and developed the superannuation stories, the plight of other groups constituting the poor was comparatively ignored.

Media stories that focused on other elements of the budget similarly tended to highlight the plight of the middle classes. For example, the front page of *The Dominion* the day after the budget announcement focused on the “budget target[ing] middle income earners” (Jul 31, 1991: 1). Similarly, the paper reported that “GPs fear for health costs to ‘middle NZ’” where middle income families would “lack access to basic healthcare” (Aug 1, 1991: 2). With the three sided attack on the poor – the ECA, benefit cuts, and reductions in other social subsidies – it is surprising that the issue of poverty was not, at the very least, cast alongside reduced standards of living for the middle classes as stories of the budget progressed. The day following the budget announcement the *New Zealand Herald* also focused on the middle classes as front page coverage of the budget stated that a “shockwave has been sent across middle New Zealand” (Jul 31, 1991: 1). In the *New Zealand Herald*’s front page photos of protests in Auckland on August 2 and 7 signs read “Welfare cuts don’t heal” and “Jobs not cuts” but without any textual comment on these issues. An article that featured an anti-poverty activist’s criticism of the market-rent housing policy in *The Dominion* served as the only explicit mention of the poor (Aug 10, 1991: 3) aside from implicit concerns over poverty in reporting about unemployment in the *New Zealand Herald* (Aug 3, 1991: 5; Aug 14, 1991: 3).

Of all the groups negatively affected by economic policy, the aged were most effective in challenging government policy. In contrast, the benefit cuts that received note in December 1990, had very little coverage once the cuts were implemented. Given that superannuation accounted for, and continues to account for, more social expenditure than all of the other benefits combined, the successful challenging of the superannuation cuts is notable. Even more notable is the omission of superannuation from the welfare review in 2010 (Welfare Working Group 2010). Negatively coded benefit groups were not able to resist government attacks in 1990 or two decades later.

The representation of the aged is significant in their challenge of the budget. In *The Dominion* the day before the budget announcement, when cuts to universal superannuation were widely speculated, the paper featured a story of an elderly couple:

Mr Buick and his wife Ray, both 86, live in a modest Palmerston North home, drive a 12-year-old Hillman Avenger and have an extra income of about \$100 a week from superannuation schemes, though that incurs the super surtax.

They believe they don't have a lot to complain about because, while they don't live in luxury, they have good health and eat well enough.

Their main worry about the budget changes is the possibility of means testing, in case that means the amount of their private superannuation is deducted from their pension.

...[Mr Buick] says, "I would be very sorry for anyone limited entirely to the GRI [guaranteed retirement income]. (Jul 30, 1991: 8)

The sympathetic portrayal of the couple as modest, unassuming and, throughout the rest of the story, hardworking, is combined with their argument against the precise measures the budget would include. Their story also featured on the same page as the story of a three-child "middle class" family, the "middle NZ" featured in the reporting after the budget announcement. Ten days after the budget announcement, *The Dominion* ran a critical feature that denounced the "budget claw-backs":

The attack on middle New Zealanders is damaging politically, as any number of National wise-heads must know. But even more challenging to the government is the Budget's brutal assault on selected superannuates... Those being punished showed the thrift that National once championed, in order to enter retirement a little better off than their superannuation entitlement allowed. They designed their declining years

accordingly. Now, at this vulnerable point in their lives they will find their lifestyles unsustainable, and many... will drop into near penury. (*The Dominion* Aug 9, 1991: 10)

In this quotation, there is a repetition of the modest, in this case “thrifty,” hardworking elderly. The “deserving” or “civil” representations attempt to establish identification between the reader and the elderly. In short, the elderly are part of “us” and are “under attack” from a “brutal assault.”

As with the anticivil representations in Chapter 2, the terms of civility indicate a social, rather than economic, identity. With the focus on the middle classes throughout the newspaper coverage, the potential threat noted earlier in relation to the poor disappears. There is no fear of increases in crime or “social warfare” – rather the representations indicate the projected audience membership – “we” who constitute ‘middle NZ’. At the same time, even this acknowledgement of economic identities (middle income earners) is a far greater representation of class than in contestation later in the decade, as the next section explores.

Before moving on, it is important to note that the contestation of neoliberalism detailed in the last two sections occur over a period of immense change in which (as Chapter 5 details) governing parties did not follow their election manifestos, but, rather, oversaw the radical restructuring of New Zealand. Contestation within popular newsprint during this period is significant in that it challenged not only particular politicians but also the institutions of the state, most notably the Treasury. This contestation may be read as indicative of media autonomy in relation to the state, but equally, it may also be read as indicative of a breakdown in consensus among social elites.

In favour of this second reading, the macroeconomic changes in New Zealand constituted a shift within the capitalist class as well as redistributing economic shares between classes. Jesson (1999) notes the emergence of speculative capitalism and the resulting shift from primary and secondary production to financial industry production. Easton (1997) also notes competition within the capitalist class – what Gramsci would term the contestation of ideologies in the preparation of a coherent class politics. At the same time, the frequent reporting of politicians “crossing the floor” due to neoliberal policies speaks to the ambiguity

with which politicians apprehended the changing state society relationship. The drastic effects on much of the state bureaucracy also explain why key bureaucrats may have opposed government moves. In these two areas, the most significant sources for newsprint production – government officials – were not uniformly optimistic about the promises of the New Right. This corresponds to Hallin's (1984:21-22) expansion of the "sphere of legitimate controversy" that corresponds with a breakdown of consensus among political elites.

Significantly, while many in the business community welcomed the liberalisation project, others did not (Goldfinch 2000a). The massive restructuring of the economy – though it has been discussed in relation to the poor – also had significant effects on those with investments in secondary export production. Thus, media contestation of the New Right may not be in contrast to political economic trends, but may in fact correspond, to some degree, the turbulence within the capitalist class and political elites during the period.

This period of contestation needs to be considered within this broader context: the changing institutional arrangements of the state and economy, the changing social priorities in the state, and the financial deterioration of middle and lower income earners. In the reporting of the 1991 budget, unions were virtually absent from discussions (they feature in one article on August 13 in the *New Zealand Herald*) where in previous years in *The Dominion* both unions and the Federation of Labour discussed the impacts of the budget as well as key points of debate¹². My purpose here is not to quantify the volume of reporting, but to note a shift in the representation of class identities – it is interesting that the focus on middle class workers and the middle class elderly coincides with a reduction in union reporting after the 1991 budget. At the same time, profound ambiguity comes through in the reporting and editorialising of the time. Despite concerns over New Right policies and their undemocratic imposition by the government, media nevertheless focuses on party politics as *the* space for political contestation.

In this last point, we see what appears to be a trend in newsprint media that will be elaborated throughout the chapter: the acceptance of political contestation as long as it occurs within legitimate political channels. This focus on sanctioned political channels explains not only

¹² Not surprisingly, in the "week of action" unions were consulted daily on industrial relations policy. It is difficult to say if the lack of union commentary after the 1991 election is indicative of the recent marginalisation of unions through the ECA or whether it is anomalous for the period.

contestation within the state, but also the continuous shift of focus from political groups (such as the aged) to political parties and processes. The next media moment that I analyse exemplifies the way that politics is de-legitimised if it does not follow these sanctioned channels.

De-legitimisation of political claims: Hikoi of Hope

The “Hikoi of Hope” or march of hope, followed a tradition of marches in New Zealand as it sought to raise awareness of poverty and bring the issue to the government by marching simultaneously from the Northern and Southern tips of the country to meet in Wellington. In contrast to the positive representation of the aged in 1991, the Anglican Church, who organised the Hikoi, were represented in anticivil terms when they spoke out in favour of the poor. I will examine this representation shortly. First, it needs to be noted that the uneven contestation of the New Right discussed above persisted in the surveyed media to a lesser extent once the significant restructuring of the state was implemented; the media context of the next moment analysed is markedly different. By 1998, there was still some contestation of neoliberal policies by political parties, with the Labour Party and the Alliance Parties promising relief for the poor, but without any promises to comprehensively change the economic system. Market-based logic settled in popular media so that the common claim “there is no alternative” was no longer needed – media presented no real alternative to market logic. It is within this context that the longest sustained media coverage of the anti-poverty movement occurred in the contemporary period in New Zealand.

In 1998, the Hikoi of Hope sought to highlight the issue of poverty by marching from the north and the south of the country to convene on Wellington and present evidence of poverty alongside recommendations for poverty reduction to parliament. In its format and mission, the Hikoi of Hope followed historic hikoi, and more explicitly the unemployment march of October 1988, a march meant to raise awareness of unemployment as a structural rather than individual predicament. But the 1998 Hikoi of Hope sought sustained media attention to poverty where the 1988 March failed to receive significant coverage.

The Hikoi of Hope began through the coordinating efforts of the Anglican Church and had interdenominational support (*Waikato Times* Sep 28, 1998: 3), thus giving it a solid footing in social institutions with historic roles in providing poverty relief in New Zealand. Despite the overtly political implications of such a project, Hikoi organisers claimed that they were not trying to “run the government”, although they identified specific goals including the acknowledgement of “extreme hardship in New Zealand”, scrutiny of the social impacts of economic policy, establishment of adequate levels of income (both for workers and beneficiaries), and improved consultation between government and civil society groups (*The Dominion* Aug 25, 1998: 6). According to an Anglican Church representative: “we are awakening our nation to the erosion of our community caused by economic policy in which we have become trapped” (*Jobs Letter* Aug 27, 1998). The general goal was simply to force the issue of poverty into the public domain as a “real” issue that had been ignored in political circles.

The following analysis was conducted by retrieving articles through the Newztext Newspapers electronic database using the keywords “Hikoi” and “hope” for the period of September 1 to December 31, 1998. Articles from all editions of four daily newspapers were used, *The Dominion*, the *Evening Post*, the *Southland Times*, and the *Waikato Times* – these represented one South Island paper, two Wellington papers, and one paper from the upper North Island. The papers were chosen because of their extensive coverage of the Hikoi, because they contained editorials, and because they had full text coverage in the Newztext database in this time period. Within these papers, over 109 reports of the Hikoi appeared from late September through December, with over a third of these in letters (35). The volume of reporting equates to over two reports of the Hikoi per day over the thirty day period from its inception to its culmination at parliament on October 1, and a significant amount of reporting also occurred later in the year, particularly after ministers of the National Government met with religious leaders to discuss the demands of the movement. Given this broad coverage, the opportunity arose to challenge predominant symbolic and institutional discourses of poverty in New Zealand.

This analysis first focuses on editorial representations of the Hikoi and also opinion pieces in the *Waikato Times* that, I argue, influence much of the reporting of the Hikoi. The editorial representations will later be contrasted with opposing representations of poverty but are

significant, in the first instance, because of their influence in reporting. An initial editorial appeared in the *Waikato Times* on September 17th and then, also in the *Waikato Times*, a polemical opinion piece by Warwick Roger, a founding editor of *Metro* magazine and, at the time, editor-at-large for *North and South* magazine. Roger's piece appeared on September 18, after which much reporting and editorialising followed Roger's classification of people and events. The *Waikato Times* subsequently published two more opinion pieces by Roger, at which point the Hikoi reached parliament and news coverage again changed focus.

The analysis that follows has two initial foci: the editorials that frame the issue of the Hikoi and Roger's opinion pieces. Roger's pieces are significant not only because they extend the discourse of the first editorial, cast doubt on claims of poverty in New Zealand, and question the legitimacy of the church in leading the march for the poor, but also because they dictate the direction of reporting from that point onward, are reproduced in the *Evening Post* and *Southland Times*, and serve to affect the direction of other news articles as well. The other editorials are also significant in that they present "moderate" voices in juxtaposition to Roger's polemical views and also because they are – as editorials – "texts that are synonymous with a paper's institutional stance" (Phelan 2009: 222). The opinion pieces by Roger, as attributable to an individual author, do not represent the newspaper directly, but as my analysis demonstrates, the opinion pieces largely mirror the first editorial, though more explicitly and polemically. Once the editorials and opinion pieces are discussed, I address the significant number of letters commenting upon the Hikoi of Hope.

The first article about the Hikoi in the *Waikato Times* appeared on September 15; in it Anglican Church officials encouraged Waikato people to join the walk as it passed through the province (Sep 15, 1998: 2). Two days later the first editorial about the Hikoi appeared, providing the tone and foci of the debate that followed. The editorial, entitled "Just another protest march?" (*Waikato Times* Sep 17, 1998: 6) has three main symbolic movements: the questioning of poverty, the "anticivil" coding of the Church, and constructing opposition between "the poor" and the church.

The questioning of poverty begins in the first paragraph where the author states: "It's hard to get revved up [about poverty in New Zealand] when images of real poverty abroad – mass starvation, crippling disease and makeshift homes of cardboard – appear nightly on our

screen.” This sentiment is reinforced throughout the editorial, where “the problem is defining real needs” as “many people now expect a benefit as a natural right.” The severity of poverty is minimised in the first instance with the use of “real,” and those who are not “really” poor are represented as undeserving in the second, as they “expect... as a natural right.”

The Church is then represented in a number of contradictory ways. The Hikoi of Hope’s “manifesto” (summarised in the article as a quest for “real jobs”, a health care system that can be trusted, affordable housing and education, and wage and benefit levels above the poverty line) is summarily dismissed as “an unrealistic request and purely symbolic.” However, the demands “suit the Church whose congregations are mostly liberal, white and middle-class...” Here the Church is presented as idealistic rather than realistic. However, the Church is also portrayed as politically savvy: “the Hikoi organisers have demonstrated skill in getting coverage for their cause. A group of mainly Māori marchers, led by Bishops, is good copy for the media.... Turning one’s back on a bunch of Bishops is politically unwise.” The political-mindedness of the Church leadership even stands in contrast to the categorisation of its liberal, middle class congregation, because “the problem, as the Church knows, is much more complex than a catchy slogan and long hikes.” In sum, the church is represented in contradictory ways that indicate a lack of pragmatism, but also media and political manipulation, all of which signify, in Alexander’s (2006) terms, an anticivil organisation.

Once the poor and the Church are represented as such, the editorial establishes its assumed readership, one that is not opposed to helping the poor, yet that stands apart from the Hikoi. Note the juxtaposition of “must help” and “competing claims” in the following quotation:

Welfare in this country used to be about primary poverty, providing enough for those in the midst of desperate want. It was not about compensating people for the misfortunes of life.... Those in desperate need – whom the state must help – have got caught up in a morass of competing claims which the country (aka taxpayers) can’t afford.

At this point the truly needy are juxtaposed with those merely on benefits. The truly needy – which has already been established are not represented by the Hikoi – deserve help, yet their needs are indecipherable within the “morass of competing claims.” At the same time, the

readership is constructed as economically responsible “taxpayers” and equated with a broader national identity, “the country.”

In this last rhetorical movement, the positioning of “us” and “them” become clear. It is what Phelan (2009), using Discourse Theory, terms “an antagonistic discursive frontier” created through editorialising, where the identities of the undeserving poor and “taxpayers” or “the country” are constructed antagonistically. The attempt to draw political lines between those advocating poverty reduction and “the country” is thus established.

The first editorial is notable for its stance against claims of poverty and the political intentions of the church. Each of the themes noted above is then revived and expanded upon in the three opinion pieces by Roger that gained far more media coverage, undoubtedly due to its derision of specific groups. This first opinion piece begins its commentary on the Hikoi with the rhetorical question, “Is there poverty in New Zealand?”

Of course there is, but it’s nothing like... in the Third World, where there is real poverty, the poor live in shanty towns and scavenge for food in tips.... In New Zealand they are looked after by one of the world’s most generous welfare states, they live in subsidised government accommodation (sic), have access to foodbanks if they are short of food... (*Waikato Times* Sep 18, 1998: 6)

Once the concept of poverty is disputed, Roger goes on to outline a poverty cycle in which “Māori and Pacific Islanders seem to have a propensity for [creating]... too many children.” The cycle continues because parents do not provide “enough attention” and this problem “leads to higher school drop-out rates for the often brown-skinned children of the poor.”

The inflammatory tone in this quotation rejects structural explanations of poverty for cultural and behaviour explanations. Rather than poverty as structural-economic effect, it is cultural-psychological. Though the ethnic groups named are more specific than in the first editorial (where “mainly Māori marchers” are only noted), in its treatment of the poor it repeats much of the sentiment of the first editorial, if more bluntly. The antagonistic frontier between beneficiaries and the audience is reinforced with the juxtaposition of “they are looked after... they live in subsidised government accommodation” and the “generous welfare state.” Here “they” are the beneficiaries, whereas the as yet unnamed “we” are not. Later in the piece,

Roger claims that putting an end to “‘poverty’... would be quite simple really – just put up taxes to 60c in the dollar, or 80c or 90c.” But this solution is not advocated: “It’s not government money, it’s taxpayers’. In other words, it’s your and my hard-earned dosh.” As in dependency narratives generally, “we” are identified as hard-working taxpayers.

In case the crux of the narrative was missed, Roger finally announces that “the root cause of poverty in New Zealand is irresponsible parenting... it’s a moral problem” and the Anglican Church should conduct their “Sunday sermons on the subject of personal responsibility.” Although this appears as something of an unnecessary summation, the language is significant. Where the poor themselves are targeted throughout much of the piece, here anti-poverty movements are implicated as well. First, poverty is a moral rather than political issue, and second, anti-poverty actors (here the church) should retreat from the political realm, back to the personal/moral. Quite explicitly, the issue of poverty moves from one about the economic situation of the poor and political choices to the economic predicament of taxpayers, and the moral deficiencies of the poor. These deficiencies are, in part, given ethnic-cultural coordinates.

In his second opinion piece, Roger (*Waikato Times* 25 Sep, 1998: 6) focuses more directly on political legitimacy by categorically denouncing the moral base of the church’s anti-poverty stance. He begins by detailing controversies within the church that are summarised thus:

...when it comes to visiting poverty on their own employees the Anglicans are right up there with the most mean-minded member of the Business Roundtable.... The Dunedin imbroglio... is a horrible story of sexual shenanigans, seedy jealousies, louche parties and a level of drinking that would put a touring rugby team to shame....

The piece then points out the wealth of the church:

It’s now an industry... New Zealand’s biggest and richest Church. Make that mega-rich. The new (and absolutely unnecessary) Auckland cathedral cost enough to go a fair way towards alleviating poverty in the city.... [The Anglican Church] needs to take a good hard look at the institution and get back to Christian principles. That will probably mean spending less time ambling along SH1 and more time in the office.

The interesting thing about this opinion piece is the blatant attack on a group usually held in high esteem. The Anglican Church, despite the controversies that Roger alludes to in his piece, is not generally coded as anticivil, and there is a marked contrast between the attack in Roger's piece and the tone of the first *Waikato Times* editorial. More than this, the considerable role of the church, both historically and contemporarily, in poverty alleviation and anti-poverty movements is ignored (see Chapter 6). In the first quoted paragraph, the debasement of the church through the adjectives mean, horrible, seedy, and louche puts it on the level of the poor in the previous article. In the second, the depiction of wealth attempts to create distance between the poor and the church. Equating the church to "an industry" and "the Business Roundtable" widens this distance considerably. What occurs is not only anticivil representation, but the de-legitimisation of the church as a political voice for the poor.

The third opinion piece of Roger's trilogy (*Waikato Times* Oct 9, 1998: 6) complains of a Radio New Zealand (RNZ) Morning Report on poverty that interviewed a single mother with five children. His first sentence about media sets the tone for the rest of the article: "As usual with *this type of journalism*, the reporters never once asked why the poor woman kept on having children" (emphasis added). The sympathetic tone of the RNZ report and the chronicling of the woman's hardships without the desired context, are, in Roger's opinion, indicative of irresponsible journalism. Roger's piece then goes on to explain the attraction to "the life of the underclass" for young men through reference to a British journalist:

There are no responsibilities, no timetable to keep, they have no one's convenience to consult but their own. They can indulge in affairs, make a little money on the side and deal in and take drugs. Petty crime is thrilling by comparison with stacking boxes... (Dalrymple in *Waikato Times* Oct 9, 1998:6)

After this description of the "underclass", Roger returns to the issue of media in New Zealand: "Why, then, can't New Zealand journalists investigating poverty see that it isn't all the fault of the governments."

To summarise this third piece, media reporting that sympathises with poverty is criticised through the illustrative example of why youth "choose" to join the underclass. The link between the choice narrative and the personal responsibility narrative of Māori and Pacific

Peoples who produce too many children is apparent, especially as Roger encourages his reader to substitute "New Zealanders, particularly those of Māori and Pacific Islands descent" for "underclass." The claim against journalists also reverberates with the de-legitimisation of the church. In both cases, advocates for the poor are politically undermined.

Following Roger's second piece, letters appeared in the *Waikato Times*, the *Evening Post*, and the *Southland Times* to denounce his stance. Of the 28 letters published in these newspapers through October 1, ten referenced Roger directly and five more were critical of "anti-Hikoi" or "anti-Church" stances in popular media. The *Evening Post* then ran an editorial that discussed the church's wealth and called for the Church to "be realistic" (Sep 30, 1998: 4). *The Dominion's* (Oct 1 1998: 8) only editorial from this time mirrors Roger's points but in less inflammatory rhetoric, detailing the lack of poverty in New Zealand compared to "real" poverty elsewhere, and the hypocrisy of the church due to its financial position. Other articles detailed the difficulties and resolutions of the Anglican Church in its internal affairs while also referencing the Hikoi.

In this way, the Roger opinion pieces dominated the discussion of the Hikoi. In the print media examined, the *Evening Post* (Oct 2, 1998: 4) published an opinion piece by a Wellington parish priest to comment on the purpose and promise of the Hikoi, but only after the editorial in the same paper that called on the church to "be realistic." The *Southland Times* alone favoured "pro-church" and "pro-Hikoi" mediation by publishing three response pieces to Roger over three days, all from prominent church members (Sep 26, 1998: 8).

My point is that the terms of discussion were set during the Hikoi through editorials and opinion pieces. This was accomplished in two ways. The first was through the use of easily identifiable misrepresentations. In each of the opinion pieces, Roger sets out a basic premise that is not only contentious, but false. In the first article, there is no attempt to quantify poverty in New Zealand, no reference to the recent proliferation of poverty measurement, nor even a gesture towards the insufficient baseline of poverty used to determine benefit levels in 1990. Although an opinion piece is not required to adhere to journalistic standards the disregard for any reasonable measure of poverty sets out an argument that is easily contestable and that was subsequently addressed by letter writers. In the second piece, the categorisation of the Anglican Church as an illegitimate voice for the poor is equally

misrepresentative. For example, the Anglican Social Services' Family Centre, produced a significant body of work on poverty in New Zealand from 1980, and the church played a continuous role in providing welfare to the poor in various forms from the establishment of the state onwards (McClure 1998; Chile 2006). Again, this area of misrepresentation provided an area of contestation for letters, articles, and subsequent editorial choices (such as the *Southland Times* running three responses to Roger in the form of opinion pieces). The third opinion piece provided two similar arguments: the first explicitly posited poverty as a rational choice of youth, and the second derided journalists for covering poverty sympathetically. Given that other journalists were bound to report in an "unbiased" manner and Roger was not, the second of these marked a further area of potential contestation, even though Roger's terms in this piece were not followed in subsequent media.

Underlying this level of easily contestable (mis)representation, is the more persistent representation of political representatives of the poor. Where the poor are given voice, the carrier of that voice is de-legitimised. Of the papers examined, the *Southland Times* stands alone in not allowing this to occur, as prominent church members were given ample space to respond to Roger's opinion pieces. Again, though, the terms of discussion were already established.

Thus far in the Hikoi coverage, a clear antagonistic frontier is constructed between "taxpayers" or "the country" – the assumed readership – and Hikoi participants, or the "not really poor." But an internal division within New Zealand is also constructed between the Church and the "real poor" or "those in desperate need." The first construction speaks to social identities whereas the second speaks directly to the political legitimacy of those representing the poor. And while it may seem as though the church is an apt target due to its financial position, the similar (though less personal) treatment of sympathetic media in the third opinion piece speaks to the general negative categorisation of those advocating for the poor.

Reports on the Hikoi lulled after protesters reached parliament and Prime Minister Shipley refused to address them. However, later in year a meeting between church officials and Prime Minister Shipley prompted newsprint coverage to begin once again, this time predominantly ridiculing one of the demands from the Hikoi: the establishment of a Māori

political body to oversee government spending on Māori social welfare, health, and education (*Evening Post* Dec 17, 1998: 2).

The first editorial to follow the meeting, from the *Evening Post* (Dec 11, 1998: 4), presented the most moderate discussion of the submission. Regardless, key themes from earlier editorials are repeated: “Stories of hardship... are not necessarily factual”; “some ‘demands’ are idealistic”; “accepting personal responsibility” is more important than “trying to change policy direction, which will undoubtedly change over time through the ballot box.” More than these perceived problems with the Hikoi though, the editorial stated that the Hikoi had been “hijacked” by Māori extremists and that the church could no longer present itself as “credible.”

Other editorials reiterated many of these points while news articles charted the retreat of the church from the political arena. An opinion piece in the *Evening Post* (Dec 16, 1998: 6), for example, called the Anglican Church’s demands “woolly-headed.” In particular, the proposal that Māori control the money spent on Māori “conveniently overlooks the rights and interests of the predominantly non-Māori taxpayers who would be expected to cough up the funds.” *The Dominion’s* editorial (Dec 15, 1998: 10) also spoke of the Hikoi being “hijacked” but focused on a different issue, providing “solid answers... that would require the Anglican Church to make the same hard choices and the same trade-offs that politicians make when they seek to satisfy the infinite demands of interest groups....”

Thus, the Hikoi ended with what was depicted in the papers as a “hijacking” or an abrupt change of direction so that one letter writer accurately noted a sense of “relief” from the government as the issue of Māori sovereignty effectively overshadowed the initial purpose of the Hikoi – poverty was no longer on the agenda (*Sunday Star Times* Jan 10, 1999: 10). However, what is interesting in these final editorials is the consistency with earlier representation. The church still lacked “credibility” if not for its economic position then for its idealism. The “hijacking” of the initial intentions of the Hikoi had occurred long before in the newspapers examined, when the focus of the march shifted from the plight of the poor to the questioning of poverty to the legitimacy of the church in representing the poor.

The clearest contestation of the original anti-Hikoi editorial from the *Waikato Times* came in the four opinion pieces solicited from prominent church members and the publication of

letters from the public. Significantly, the newspapers surveyed published thirty five letters on the Hikoi in 1998, twenty six of which supported the march and only four that did not. For the poor, however, the direction set out in editorials and opinion pieces, where the boundaries of contestation were already established, overshadowed this means of self-representation.

Again, the rhetorical strategies used in the pieces analysed above warrant notice, but more significantly, two aspects of the reporting repeat throughout media reporting. The construction of identities clearly disregards economic differences. The audience is a group of “taxpayers” and this single commonality links individuals together. Economic stratification within this group does not enter into the discussion. The “not really poor,” on the other hand, are psychologically and culturally defined: their economic situation is second to their choices, motivations, and so on. Here, any construction of common class coordinates (again, using Marxian or Weberian coordinates) is minimal. Second, representatives of the poor are posited illegitimate, though the specificities of what constitutes legitimacy require further investigation.

De-legitimisation of anti-poverty actions

This section examines explicitly anti-poverty action to consider the differentiation of legitimate and illegitimate political advocacy for the poor in New Zealand. Rather than relying on media sampling for this section, the moments examined have been chosen due to the attention given to them in social movement or academic literature. For the longest event examined below, the unemployment march from October 11 to November 1 1988, I surveyed *The Dominion* but found only two articles that directly related to the march (October 11 and 13)¹³; for the protests against the Beyond Dependency Conference and for coverage of the alternative Beyond Poverty conference that happened concurrently, I used the Newztext Newspapers electronic database using the keywords “beyond” and “dependency or poverty” for the period February 1 to April 1, 1997 and used all editorials from the search: these were from the *Evening Post*, *The Press*, the *Waikato Times*, the *Daily News*, and *The Dominion*. News surrounding the event was attained using keywords “poverty”, “poor” and “beneficiaries” within the same period. For the protest of the State Housing Action Coalition

¹³ No database coverage was available for this period.

(SHAC) and Auckland Unemployed Workers Rights Centre (AUWRC) I searched *The Dominion* for protest actions in Wellington and the *New Zealand Herald* for protest actions in Auckland: for each of these actions I searched beginning on the day of the protest action until one week after. The dates and publications are as follows: *The Dominion* July 11 to 18, 1991; March 28 to April 4, 1994; the *New Zealand Herald* May 28 to June 7, 1991; June 23 to June 29, 1993. Finally, the direct mediation used by anti-poverty groups that I discuss at the end of this section were found through my sampling and, after 1996, through tracking press releases through the Newztext electronic database.

I argue, in this section, that direct mediation and government sanctioned politics in the media surveyed are accepted by media as legitimate, whereas protest, in the same media, often results in anti-poverty actors being ignored or de-legitimised. Again, this is not meant to be a quantitative claim; the accounts used below are not exhaustive of protest or mediation moments, and nor are they uniformly treated by media. As with the Hikoi of Hope, positive and engaged representations within the media occurred alongside negative categorisations of the poor and advocates for the poor. I do not mean to present media as overly uniform. Nevertheless, I argue that representations of anti-poverty activists who engage outside of “legitimate” political channels tend to be ignored or categorised in anticivil terms.

According to McClure (1998: 243-245), anti-poverty protest action against the state increased from 1988 onward. In response to the Fourth National Government’s economic and social policies, anti-poverty and beneficiary groups contested alongside other groups, such as the aged. Peaceful protest was most common, though the AUWRC engaged in a number of activities that resulted in direct police confrontation. Other anti-poverty groups, such as the Family Centre, Caritas, and the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), sought media attention directly through press releases and the release of reports on poverty. Though their strategies varied, I will point out some distinct commonalities and differences in media treatment of these actions.

In the early 1990s, the Auckland protest movement maintained sustained protest action over government policies, from rental increases in state houses by the State Housing Action Committee (SHAC), to benefit cuts rallies by the Poverty Action Committee (PAC) and the AUWRC, to hospital closures, to increases in utilities bills, to economic policy generally.

Many protest activities received little or no coverage. For example, protesters picketed the Business Roundtable, Treasury, Reserve Bank and Parliament from July 10 through 12, 1990, an action that attempted to draw attention to the links between poverty and economic policy. Two articles appeared in *The Dominion*, one reporting on the occupation of the Business Roundtable, and the other a demonstration at parliament. Significantly, the first focused on comments by passers-by who thought the protesters would have been better received had they improved their dress (Jul 11, 1990: 1) while the second focused on National MP John Banks confronting an unemployed worker with an offer to become a street cleaner (Jul 13, 1990: 2). Similarly, the occupation of the National Party headquarters in Auckland on May 30, 1991 appeared in a single article in the *New Zealand Herald* that focused, instead, on the plight of two teenage girls hiding in the office (May 31, 1991: 1). The article reported that the girls “were trapped in the building with the protesters but were not hurt... [Their colleague] Mrs Trafford said she was concerned rather than frightened.” In these cases, no substantive coverage of poverty or the reason for protest was found.

According to the AUWRC, the focus on trivia within popular media was not uncommon: in their publication *Mean Times*, they reprinted a response to an article on protests that similarly focused on their clothing:

Sir, Finally we know why the revolution isn't here yet: we haven't been dressed for it. It was considerate of Karl du Fresne (*The Post*, May 10) to point out protesters' sartorial shortcomings in his column, and so much more fun to read than any in-depth investigation into the boring old Asian Development Bank. (Don Franks in *Mean Times* Jul/Aug 1995: 10)

This response to *The Post* by the AUWRC is obviously critical of a lack of political analysis to accompany the reporting of the protest. But the interesting aspect about the focus on trivia in the reports above is that articles critical of the government appear at about the same time without reference to protest. So even though the July 10-12 campaign only netted two specific articles in *The Dominion*, related reporting can be found in the following period. Criticism of Treasury policies (Jul 11, 1990: 26), health risks related to unemployment (Jul 17, 1990: 13), and criticism of work tests (July 18, 1990: 8) followed in the week after the protest action in Wellington. Although the protests were not mentioned in these articles, the subject matter suggests an affinity in reporting. Similarly, the first three days the 1988

unemployment march, October 11-13, (that followed the same route as the Hikoi of Hope would a decade later) garnered minimal coverage in *The Dominion* and then failed to receive mention, even in relation to benefit cuts debates (featured on Oct 14, 1988: 6; Oct 20, 1988: 1; Oct 21, 1988: 2; Oct 28, 1988: 2), unemployment statistics (Oct 25, 1988: 1), or in relation to the political division in the Labour Party over intervention into the labour market (Oct 26, 1988: 2). In other words, protesters were not “primary definers” of poverty in the media sampled or, if they were successful in presenting definitions and claims for the poor, they were represented as anticivil, illegitimate political spokespersons.

Interestingly, we can find this treatment of anti-poverty protesters even in depictions of successful protests. For example, the attempted eviction of the Asi family from their state house on April 22, 1993 came under intense media scrutiny due to the protest efforts and media campaign of SHAC. Alternative media reported that “brute force” was used to evict the family of seven (*Workers Voice* Jul 1993: 2-3), and although the mainstream media did not judge police actions in words, the *New Zealand Herald* nevertheless printed two front page photos of the family looking forlorn through the window of their house while a large contingent of police congregated in front (Jun 23, 1993: 1). The *New Zealand Herald* also published the income of the family and the amounts meant to be paid in rent and rent arrears (the family of seven had less than \$40 remaining per week after rent and arrears from an income of \$340 due to the mother’s illness and the father subsequently leaving his job to look after her). Despite successful eviction by police, SHAC continued to mount pressure by setting up a tent on the state house property for the Asi family. By the next morning, the Social Welfare and Housing Ministers, Shipley and Luxton, intervened so that the family could stay in the house and receive an undisclosed benefit (Jun 24, 1993: 1). The Asi family appeared smiling in a photograph on the front page of the *New Zealand Herald* the next morning (Jun 24, 1993: 1).

Despite the positive outcome for the family and their positive representation in the *New Zealand Herald*, protesters were not mentioned in the first article covering the story except to note that they chanted “shame” (Jun 23, 1993: 1). Instead there were victims – the Asi family – and actors – the MPs. The day after Shipley and Luxton made their arrangement with the family, an article in the *New Zealand Herald* (June 25, 1993: 8) criticised the MPs’ intervention into the eviction as “undignified” and “a new low” because they contradicted

government policies. Protesters were equally criticised for not really caring about the Asi family, only “embarrassing the government” (Jun 25, 1993: 8). It is interesting that in the articles sympathetic to the Asi family, the protesters simply did not appear; in the article critical of the outcome, the protesters were represented as having anticivil – rather than socially-conscious – motives.

I will focus on one more example that of activism that attempted to directly confront the intellectual credibility of the New Right, or at least that questioned its authority and monopoly over decision making regarding the poor. In March 1997, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) sponsored a conference on welfare policy entitled “Beyond Dependency” at which “international New Right policy experts” advocated for compulsory workfare for low income mothers and the Wisconsin model of welfare provision (Baker 2008: 71; O’Brien 2008b: 180). Anti-poverty activists criticised the conference for having a predetermined agenda and because prominent speakers at the conference were sponsored by the New Zealand Business Roundtable. The activists held an alternative conference entitled “Beyond Poverty” and also picketed the DSW conference. Five newspapers editorials that commented upon the DSW conference were found.

Four of these editorials, in the *Evening Post* (Mar 19, 1997: 6), *Waikato Times* (Mar 21, 1997: 6), *Daily News* (Mar 21, 1997: 6), and *The Dominion* (Mar 24, 1997: 6), categorically undermined the legitimacy of anti-poverty protesters. The “mob” of protesters and “their predictable and futile protest” (*Waikato Times*) against the Beyond Dependency Conference provided evidence that they were “small-minded” (*Daily News*) with “hostility to new ideas” (*Evening Post*). In contrast to this depiction, the conference promoted “healthy debate” (*Daily News*), and “dare[d] explore the *reasonable* suggestion that unemployed people be given any *encouragement* to find a job” (*Waikato Times*, emphasis added). Though these four editorials castigated anti-poverty activists for not listening to other opinions, none mentioned the alternative Beyond Poverty conference that featured community-based and academic responses to the issues. *The Press* (Mar 20, 1997: 11) published the only editorial that mentioned the alternative conference and that was more even-handed; here protesters were not mentioned. The independent publication *Jobs Letter* (Mar 27, 1998) similarly noted that “while there was extensive coverage of the welfare debate in media, it was only radio that covered the content of the Beyond Poverty conference.” Importantly, editorials indicate

the institutional stance of popular print media. In the representation of the Beyond Dependency protesters, four of the five editorials examined undermined the legitimacy of protesters in speaking for the poor. Rather, their attempts to challenge the continued dominance of New Right ideology in the public debate over welfare policy was represented as “a desperate rearguard action” (*Evening Post*). As in the examples above, anti-poverty actors were de-legitimised and their political demands ignored if not ridiculed. Although there are certainly exceptions to this treatment, the language used in these instances – when the protests receive any considerable mention – is notably anticivil.

Legitimate anti-poverty advocates: The effectiveness of direct mediation

The only consistent exception I found to the negative coding of anti-poverty actors was from direct, proactive contact with media. To demonstrate this exception I will focus on a single example of direct mediation by CPAG alongside three editorials that followed the release of a CPAG report on child poverty in 2003. Following the release of *Our children: The priority for policy* in 2003, Susan St John, a CPAG member and academic, published an article in the *New Zealand Herald* that attempted to present the poor as deserving and appealed for political change. It began:

Imagine you're one of them: you're malnourished because your family cannot afford to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, so you're tired all the time and it is hard to concentrate at school. You're more likely to get sick, but you're less likely to go to the doctor because of the cost... Under these conditions, it is hard to grow up to become a healthy, able adult. (*New Zealand Herald* Apr 22, 2003)

The emotional appeal in this introduction to the article is clearly meant to invert representations of undeservingness and present poverty as real and material in New Zealand. The article then goes on to examine the political causes and possible solutions to child poverty:

If your family depends on government benefits, you're doubly disadvantaged. Only low-income families that receive no benefit income at all are eligible to receive the tax credit (\$15 a week a child)... Since 1986, the poorest one-child family has had a rise of only \$5 a week in family support. Taking inflation into account, their family

support should be about \$74 a week. Instead, it is only \$47.... In next month's Budget the child tax credit should be added to family support and then the whole amount properly adjusted for years of neglect. (*New Zealand Herald* Apr 22, 2003)

The increases in benefits for the poor advocated in this article are more precise but not substantively different than calls to increase welfare levels for single mothers and other beneficiaries in protest actions, such as the Hikoi of Hope, above. However, the amount of detail in St John's article can be contrasted to the quick categorisation of Anglican Church demands during the Hikoi of Hope (for good paying jobs and benefit levels above the poverty line, health and education systems that can be trusted, and affordable housing). Along with St John's article, three editorials also referenced the release of the CPAG report. The first one called for a national campaign to assist in providing improved education for children in families that, due to unaffordable housing costs, were prone to relocation (*New Zealand Herald* Feb 10, 2003). The second, in the *Daily News* (Mar 24, 2003: 8), provided more details about poverty:

Children's hospitals are now seeing significant increases in serious diseases caused by poverty and overcrowding. Rising property prices are making renting and home ownership more difficult. Even government reports acknowledge that almost a third of New Zealand children live in poverty.

The editorial does not advocate for the same policy prescriptions that CPAG prioritised, but the focus on poverty as well as the referencing on the CPAG report as factual indicate a very different treatment of anti-poverty activism. The third editorial, in the *Evening Standard* (Mar 21, 2003: 9) argued that there is "no excuse for poverty in Godzone [New Zealand]":

Compassionate New Zealanders should be horrified by the depth and extent of child poverty in Godzone. Children should [not] suffer preventable diseases, or go to school hungry, or miss out on preschool education for want of a raincoat. Both the social and economic costs of doing nothing to rescue our children far outweigh the costs of government policies that are starting to address the situation.

This editorial mirrors the sentiment and political assessment of the CPAG document. The editorials did not replicate the politics of CPAG as a whole, but the contrast between the

treatment of CPAG and other protest activities – including the establishment of the academic and community Beyond Poverty conference – are evident.

The success of CPAG in influencing the terms of welfare policy and debate is evident in their challenge to the Working For Families tax credit. As Chapter 1 explained, the tax credit for families with children excludes those that do not meet minimum work requires, regardless of family composition. Single mothers, for example, are required to work a minimum of 20 hours per week to receive the credit, regardless of the age of her children. CPAG challenged the Labour Government's policy through a critical report, *Cut Price Kids* (St John & Craig 2004) and also through direct mediation as St John published a critical article in the *New Zealand Herald* (May 28, 2004). Barnett and colleagues (2007) note the key position played by CPAG in the ensuing debate. The reporting of the resulting dispute featured commentary from the Labour Government and CPAG: both can be seen as primary definers in the issue of poverty release. For example, after the release of *Cut Price Kids*, the *Sunday Star Times* (Nov 14, 2004; Dec 5, 2004; Dec 12, 2004), the *Dominion Post* (Nov 15, 2004); *The Press* (Nov 15, 2004); the *New Zealand Herald* (Nov 17, 2004), and the *Waikato Times* (Dec 2, 2004) published articles or editorials that referenced the report and posited the debate between those advocating increased income support for the poor versus those reserving income support for those in work.

The ability of CPAG to influence the terms of debate did not result in unanimous support for the CPAG position, even amongst anti-poverty campaigners (*Sunday Star Times* Dec 5, 2004: 1). Regardless, the treatment of anti-poverty claims is undeniably less hostile. The reproduced criticism of “work first” social welfare policy (O’Brien 2008a) within popular media certainly challenged the government’s ability to dictate the terms of policy debate. Direct mediation appears central to this challenge. This technique has relied on the production of evidence (establishing an authoritative intellectual position) followed by mediation that criticises policy and prescribes remedies. The affinities between the method used by CPAG and that of the New Right in advocating for policy change are notable, with the exception that the New Right often promoted policies through government.

Conclusion: Poverty, advocacy and legitimacy

For the majority of anti-poverty protest examined in this chapter, including the Hikoi of Hope which attracted the longest sustained coverage of domestic poverty that I found in the 1970-2010 period, media construction of the poor and advocates for the poor undermined political legitimacy. The poor who protest were not “really” poor – they were beneficiaries with “competing claims” – and anti-poverty actors were represented in a variety of anticivil ways if they attracted representation at all: as politically savvy, media savvy, “small-minded,” self-interested, and hostile to “new ideas.” Where poverty was acknowledged as actually occurring, “the poor” deserved help, but also constituted a threat to social stability. Equally important, actors for the poor were susceptible to negative coding regardless of their coding prior to advocacy. Thus, SHAC, the Anglican Church, and AUWRC received similar treatment for their efforts. This contradicts the “depth” presupposed of longstanding “categories of worth” (Steensland 2006), as these categories proved easily manipulated where poverty was disputed. These depictions of the poor and anti-poverty advocates were contested, but they nevertheless established the terms of contestation.

In all of the media examined, those believed to be poor were beneficiaries. This was apparent in the benefit cut announcements of 1990, and the depiction of the poor during the Hikoi of Hope, but was also supported by activists as, for example, the Beyond Poverty conference referenced the MSW conference on welfare benefit policy. CPAG mediation from 2004 onward also supported this distinction, though this is understandable given that the policies they criticised increased the gap between working and non-working families (St John 2008). Importantly though, working poverty was beginning its upward trend at the time of the Hikoi of Hope, and one of the demands of the hikoi was for adequate income levels for the waged as well as for beneficiaries. Here we can say that economic identities throughout society were reduced to two antithetical groups in media representation: the equation of poverty with beneficiaries defined the first, and the construction of “us” as an undifferentiated group of “taxpayers” defined the second. More than other constructions of the poor (such as the “underclass,” “brown skinned children,” or single parents with the propensity to recklessly procreate) the consistent distinguishing feature of “the poor” is their unemployment, while “we” are uniformly the opposite.

I will return to the social and ethnic characteristics ascribed to “the poor” in Chapters 5 and 6; here it is enough to note that negative, and even sometimes positive, constructions of “the

poor” are psychological, cultural, and social, rather than economic. At this point I want to emphasise the homogenous construction of the audience. The audience is almost uniformly constructed in opposition to the poor, whether intentionally or unintentionally. The juxtaposition of “the poor” and “taxpayers” serves an obvious rhetorical purpose in Roger’s opinion pieces, but equally, the representation of the poor as a social threat is clearly juxtaposed with “middle New Zealand” that is, presumably, law abiding. In economic terms, the rhetorical alignment of “us” with the “taxpayers” who, in turn, represent “the country” presupposes an economic uniformity among taxpayers that is undeniably misleading. The threatening nature of the poor reinforces this division between us and them. The economic and social slight-of-hand deserves further analysis. One on hand, the tax intake since 1984 has favoured the wealthy at the expense of low waged workers and beneficiaries (Roper 2005a): “we” do not contribute equally. On the other, the vastly unequal distribution of wealth in the same period (Kelsey 1997, O’Dea 2000) also indicates that “we” do not earn equally or reap equal benefits from the country’s economy. For example, the proliferation of insecure and part-time work is particularly notable in the post 1984 period and contributes to the polarisation of wealth (Ongley 2011). Rather than economic homogeneity, the structuring of “taxpayers” indicates that “the country” is not economically homogenous at all. The implication that “we” have a common interest in reducing welfare assistance is absolutely misleading, not the least because “we” are at different risk within the economy and suffer grossly different levels of deprivation. The construction of “taxpayers” as homogenous, then, masks stratification, or contributes to the active and ongoing construction of a classless society. This is aided by the lack of identity between the low and insecure-waged and “the poor” because “they” are represented as beneficiaries. Commonalities between the working and unemployed are minimised while the economic stratification between those in paid employment is ignored.

However, the popular newsprint media has not been as uncritical of the New Right as some commentators have argued (cf Roper 2005a; Hope 1999). Differences between papers and even within the same papers are notable, and anti-New Right sentiment flourished for a time in *The Dominion*, even if it was carried unevenly in the *New Zealand Herald*. Significant events, such as the 1991 Budget, received extended criticism of government policies despite the government’s use of professional communicators. The newsprint media analysed also

directed criticism at the institutions widely believed to be behind New Right policies, such as the Treasury and the Business Roundtable. Nevertheless, this criticism had subsided by the time of the Hikoi of Hope and, as evidenced by the editorials analysed, New Right policies were considered “Hard” but necessary choices. The success of direct mediation from CPAG only a few years later thus marks a significant advancement for anti-poverty advocates.

The success of CPAG also indicates delineation, within media, between legitimate and illegitimate channels, where legitimacy (such as ‘through the ballot box’, state institutions, or through professional journalism) allow for positive media coverage. This notion of politics supports the legitimacy of elite groups, such as government and elected officials, and social groups that follow formal political channels. Here the Anglican Church is illegitimate when supporting the Hikoi of Hope, but Charles Waldegrave (an employee of Anglican Social Services) can advocate for the poor directly through the newspaper without the same criticism of his motives. Similarly, protesters of the Beyond Dependency conference are illegitimate whereas the contentious policies advocated within the conference “dared explore the reasonable suggestion that unemployed people be given any encouragement.” Although my analysis of contentious politics is only a sample of the period, there seems to be a clear distinction in much of the popular media between community activism and intellectual advocacy. To be explicit, community spaces, such as the church, or even the street, are deemed *politically* illegitimate.

Chapter 3 proposed a three sided analysis of culture and poverty through mediation, regulation, and critique. Although these are heuristically separated, they also inform each other, or act in tension. The analysis of media above demonstrated moments where the neoliberal reconstruction of the state was both challenged and supported in popular newspapers. But as Chapter 3 argued, mediation is more central in the construction and solidification of identities, as well as the dispersal of these identities to a broader public. The construction of the audience as a common group of “taxpayers” must be seen as an attempt to construct a common identity (and interests) throughout a stratified and diverse population. This construction of the audience as having a singular commonality and singular interest masks class differences and articulates class-specific interests as common to all “taxpayers.” This construction is important to the analysis of the state and social and economic identities within it that I examine in the next chapter. There I argue that there is an increasing reference

to a normative group – similar to the “taxpayers” here, that subordinate groups are meant to aspire to in terms of economic outcomes. Also similar to media representations, the normative group appears as uniformly wealthy, the inverse of “the poor.”

Chapter 5:

Politics within the state

Chapter 3 set out coordinates for analysing the material derivation in relation to the meanings attributed to poverty (what we understand it to refer to, who we understand to be poor, and what should be done about it) and the political decisions that shape material deprivation in society. Chapter 4 examined the mediation of poverty and New Right policies that resulted in deeper and more prevalent material deprivation. This chapter focuses instead on regulation; it draws on the CCCS use of Gramscian theory to provide an overview of social forces within the state. In particular, it examines the changing institutional arrangements of the state in relation to capital, organised labour, women, and Māori. These particular foci relate to the social movements that will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

In this chapter I argue that the state in New Zealand undergoes significant changes in relation to representation of social groups. In broad strokes, I argue that the state changes from the privileging of economic identities in the 1970s at the expense of other social identities to a near inversion post 1984. The 1970-1984 state in New Zealand has well defined institutional channels to maintain an illusion of a balance of power between organised labour and capital where both are recognised as legitimate social forces. In the same period Māori, women, and the New Right emerge as “new” social powers, the first two in grassroots movements, and the latter in the economic policy institutions of the state. From 1984 to 1993 the institutional recognition of labour diminishes while women and Māori gain greater recognition within state institutions. At the same time, the New Right gains near exclusive control over economic decision making so that neoliberal economic and social policy is imposed on the electorate rather than chosen. In this period, the diminishing recognition of economic identities in the state coincides with growing recognition of social and ethnic identities, though, at the same time, economic divisions within these identities are not as recognised. From 1993 to 2010 increasing channels for democratic participation alongside the continuation of the polarisation of wealth indicates that the neoliberal framework is embedded in New Zealand. Organised labour regains some institutional power, but the analysis of material deprivation is institutionally segmented to consider the relative

deprivation of social and ethnic identities rather than economic classes. Again, this marks an inversion from the pre 1984 period that acknowledged economic identities institutionally.

In this chapter I draw on Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony to categorise the shifts in social forces within New Zealand. According to Gramsci, political and civil societies together make the state. Political society refers to realm where regulation is decided and carried out within the state, such as policy formation and also policing. Civil society refers to the realm of political organisation, where consent is won: it includes schooling, trade unions, and political parties. Hegemony has three features: the winning of consent in civil society, the capture of the political apparatus in political society, and the related determination of the economy. As I explained in Chapter 3, Gramsci argues that consent must come before capturing political society (1971: 168). In my analysis of New Zealand below, I argue that this did not occur: the 1984-1993 period is characterised by disconnection between political and civil societies. After 1993, however, the embedding of neoliberalism in New Zealand is precisely the attainment of hegemony, and it is accomplished, in part, through the obfuscation of economic identities.

The focus in this chapter is on the broad political structuring of the state; in the next chapter I will expand the analysis of civil society by looking in detail at anti-poverty movements within New Zealand. This method has affinities with Boltanski's and Chiapello's (2006) analysis of capitalist practices as determined by social demands and structural limitations. I will outline the findings of Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) here briefly before beginning the analysis of the New Zealand state as they have informed my own approach to the analysis of regulation and critique.

In *The New Spirit of Capitalism* Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) argue that two discourses, the artistic and social, critique capitalism from 1968 onward. The first critical discourse focuses on the desire for increased personal autonomy and growth within a system that is highly regimented and bureaucratic, leading to the social and psychological alienation of workers; the second focuses on the desire for progressive remuneration, security, and other demands that aim to achieve increased economic shares for workers in relation to firms. French employers first respond to the socialist critique (into the mid 1970s) but then neglect that discourse in favour of addressing the artistic critique (from the late 1970s onward), in part because the socialist critique appears insatiable and threatens the viability of firms in an

era of declining productivity: continued social demands cannot be met while maintaining two of the basic premises of capitalism (surplus value and the accumulation of capital). Rather, addressing the artistic critique becomes the prominent strategy for firms, despite continued pressure for job security and wages. The response to the artistic critique is central in the “new spirit of capitalism” as it informs practices within capitalist firms (such as improved mobility and flexibility for workers in higher demand) and also the broader ideology upon which workers and employers understand their position within the world of work.

Boltanski and Chiapello (2006: 289), though they acknowledge the importance of the state in regulating economic relations, nevertheless focus their analysis almost completely on the interaction of firms and workers. Their analysis can be applied to New Zealand, but must be supplemented by an analysis of the state. This is because, as I have argued in previous chapters, state regulation remains central in determining poverty in New Zealand through industrial relations policy, macro-economic policy, and welfare provision. The approach I take in the next two chapters, then, provides a state-based account of structure and critique that compliments the type of analysis undertaken by Boltanski and Chiapello (2006).

The use of Gramscian theory as a basis of analysis, however, relies on social and economic identities, whereas Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) focus instead on commonalities within criticism that downplays political identities. I follow the CCCS use of Gramscian theory in this regard because, as I argue below, the state actively structures political identities and through this structuring it is able to promote particular types of complaints while minimising others. In Gramsci’s (1971: 161) terms, the hegemonic class is able to compromise with subordinate classes in ways that do not “touch the essential” interests of the dominant class. These classes need not be considered in strictly economic terms, although, also in line with Gramsci (1971: 263) I argue that the domination and subordination of classes has a necessarily economic component, regardless of how identity is articulated. To put my stance another way, the politics of groups such as women and Māori are read “as decidedly ‘material’, as connected to battles for power and resources” (el-Ojeili 2012: 119). This is not to minimise the specificity of domination, but to recognise that addressing demands without consideration of the distribution of economic resources within and across political identities does not “touch” an “essential” aspect of political contestation and social organisation (Gramsci 1971).

Consolidated and emergent social power in the New Zealand state, 1970-1984

In the 1970-1984 period, I argue below, the state recognized the competing interests of workers and capitalists and mediated these forces. The primary site of antagonism between these forces occurs in industrial relations, though it should be noted that industrial relations in key sectors, such as the meat-works and shipping industries, disrupted economic gains in the broader economy. I point out that although the role of the state in mediating between workers and employers remained virtually unchallenged in this period, the channels meant to contain dispute were found wanting by all sides, and the role of unions was questioned repeatedly. The conflict within industrial relations originated from prolonged economic recession and high inflation, where workers required significant pay increases to maintain standards of living, yet productivity levels fell. Emerging from this context of declining economic fortunes, I briefly examine the (re)emergence of the labour movement and the emergence of the New Right, both of which find opposition in the Prime Minister's office. Within the same period, I also note that Māori and women's movements equally find their causes undermined in the highest office of elected government, even as they push for greater institutional changes through protest and through sanctioned state channels. The social movements will not be discussed in length here, as they are examined in detail in Chapter 6; rather I point out the institutional and party-political structures meant to accommodate and minimize their influence.

In the 1970-1984 period economic decision making was highly centralized within the elected government, but economic policy nevertheless sought contribution from a range of left and right groups (Goldfinch 2000a: 58-61) in what has been described a corporatist state (Wood & Rudd 2004). So where decisions such as making superannuation a universal benefit were – much to the chagrin of state bureaucrats – confined to the Prime Minister's office (McClure 2010), budgets sought to balance the interests of manufacturers, merchants, farmers, and other economic actors. Without question, the state acted to protect and further capitalism through extensive management of micro economic initiatives and in its direct role in mediating wages through the arbitration system. Macro economic theory was institutionalised within key state areas that managed (un)employment, employment relations,

state control over international economic flows, and domestic demand: all can be located within a broadly Keynesian model, though the increasing focus on an export economy and the use of unemployment as an economic policy tool began to break away from the Keynesian model (Pearson & Thorns 1983: 20; Easton 1989). Pearson and Thorns (1983:20) argue that this shift away from Keynesian policy also restricted “freedom in the market place for private decision making” as the state became “more centrally involved in the investment planning and decision making within the economic sphere.”

The central involvement of the state in economic decision making relied on an industrial relations system that provided stability. As Gramsci (1971) argues, the interests of the dominant class – increasingly big business and farmers at the expense of small business (Pearson & Thorns 1983) – stood in for the “national interest,” but these interests were solidified through compromise with the subordinate working class. Chief among these compromises was the continuation of mandatory union membership, exclusive coverage of specific employee categories, and guaranteed bargaining rights, all of which meant to meet the demands of workers while maintaining profitable returns for industry (Barry 2003: para 203). But also importantly, the Federation of Labour played a recognised role within the state policy formulation (Goldfinch 2000a: 61); for example, it was represented on the National Development Council (National Development Council 1972), and the 1977 New Zealand Planning Council (Goldfinch 2000a: 61), and its submissions featured in the final wording of the 1973 Industrial Relations Act (Seidman 1974: 516). The stability of the compromise between the interests of labour and capital was considered central to the economic fortunes of the country. To this end, both the Federation of Labour and the Employers’ Federation appealed to the Remuneration authority for a general wage order following the nil General Wage Order of 1968 to quell industrial unrest. The Employers’ Federation also worried that abolishing mandatory unionism “would strengthen militant unions” and result in further unrest (Harbridge & Walsh 1985: 195). The government appointed National Development Council in 1972 similarly noted the need for improved industrial relations not only to “quell fears of layoffs” but also for “incentivising productivity” (1972: 48). For its part, the Federation of Labour recognized the institutional compromise as it “accepted its responsibilities in the interests of the country generally” (FOL Nov 1975). Although segments of the both the working and capitalist classes, as I will

discuss below, did not support the institutional compromise, in this era workers and employers were nevertheless recognized, institutionally, as economic and political forces that the state mediated (Boston 1984; Harbridge & Walsh 1985).

The opposing power of organised labour and capitalists appeared, though not accurately, to be mirrored in party politics, where the Labour Party was believed to represent union interests while the National Party was believed to represent the interests of business and farmers. Pearson and Thorns (1983: 142-143) argue that the Labour Party had difficulty in presenting itself as more than the political arm of the union movement despite the ambivalence between the two and the Labour Party's intentional distancing from the Federation of Labour. To support this argument, the rhetoric of National Party leader Robert Muldoon contributed to the appearance that the Labour party represented organized labour by accentuating the links between the two during election campaigns. In the lead-up to the 1975 election, for example, he accused the Labour Party of running the government from the "Trades Hall" rather than parliament (*The Dominion* Nov 14, 1975: 2) even though the changes made by the Labour Party to National's proposed industrial relations law were minimal (Geare 1976) and the Labour Party pursued "continued restraint of prices and incomes" (Tizard 1975: 3, emphasis added) – much as the National Party before it (Boston 1984). Even prior to the 1984 election, after which the Labour Party introduced neoliberal economic policies, Muldoon claimed that the Labour Party represented the "thug side" of the union movement – in other words, that they supported and contributed to the closure of businesses through prolonged industrial dispute (*The Dominion* Jul 3, 1984: 1). The liberalization of markets that devastated segments of the working class following the election (Roper 2005a) indicates the fallacy of such an assertion.

Rather than finding a neat alignment between the interests of labour movement to the policies of the Labour Party, it is more accurate to note that the National Party threatened the institutional privileges of unions. Beyond the negative categorisation of "red unionists" noted in Chapter 2, the National Party introduced punitive measures against strikers, effectively making all strike activity illegal in 1972 (Geare 1976); threatened to discontinue compulsory unionism in 1975 and did so in 1983; attempted to implement a wage and price freeze in 1976 and then successfully imposed it from 1982 until 1984 (Harbridge & Walsh 1985; Roper 2005a). As the periodical of New Zealand labourers, general workers and

related trades industrial union of workers, *The Manual*, noted, the National Party used legislation from 1976 to 1984 to “attack labour” (Jun 1984). But at the same time, the Federation of Labour did not establish strong ties to the Labour Party during the same period, resulting in a false assumption of a more sympathetic relationship (Bray & Walsh 1998: 366). The Federation of Labour’s assertion after the 1984 election that the “compromise” with the Labour Government (for continued wage restraint in return for the reinstitution of mandatory unionism) was “far better” than they could have hoped for with a National Government, speaks to the compromised position of the unions within both major political parties. So even though the institutional arrangements of the state continued to recognize the compromise between workers and employers as central to the functioning of the state and economy, organized labour had limited correspondence with elected governments.

The lack of direct correspondence between political parties and organized labour alongside the increasing centralization of power within the elected offices of the state – particularly in the 1976 to 1984 period (Pearson & Thorns 1983: 29; McClure 1998; Goldfinch 2000a) – needs to be contextualized within the deteriorating economic performance of the national economy. Increasing unemployment from 1973 onward, inflationary pressures, declining productivity, and worsening terms of trade contributed to restrictions on wage growth that threatened business profits and the standard of living for workers, and also that concerned economic policy makers. This led to record workplace disruptions throughout the 1970s (Turkington 1977) as well as breakdowns in the institutional mechanisms meant to provide economic stability. For example, the Federation of Labour argued that the Court of Arbitration and the Remuneration Authority – both intended to provide stability to industrial relations – were “illegitimate” as they undermined the wage bargaining process (FOL Jun 1972). Amendments made to the Industrial Relations Act (1973) spoke of reservations from both employers and workers to the state institutional channels meant to minimize class conflict (Seidman 1974), what Boxall (1990: 526) describes as a “growing loss of confidence” in the system. And the attempted wage and price freezes that the National Government finally implemented in 1982 were indicative of the persistent belief that wage demands were increasing unemployment and fueling inflation (see Chapter 2).

In sum, the 1970-1984 period is marked by government attempts to reduce industrial conflict through incremental changes to the institutional framework for industrial relations. Over the

same period, both unions and employers challenged the institutional framework. The legislation of compulsory union membership, and by extension, the role of unions in society, was “an extremely contentious and intensely political issue in New Zealand” (Bray & Walsh 1985: 191). Chapter 2 highlighted negative depictions of unions that acted against the “national interest.” These depictions focused on the early to mid 1970s, the period during which workers sought gains through industrial disruptions. From 1980 onward, when unemployment rose sharply and the terms of redundancies became a regular feature of union negotiations, negative depictions in media instead focused on union “intransigence” as “greedy” worker redundancy demands were blamed for unemployment (Leitch 1986: 232-262). As an example, *The Dominion* reported that the closure of a slaughterhouse in Petone was due to union actions, as the Meat Workers’ Union and the slaughterhouse management could not agree on mutually agreeable redundancy terms; according to the paper, the Prime Minister and “bitter staff” blamed the union for the closure of the slaughterhouse (*The Dominion* Nov 17, 1981: 1). As Leitch (1986: 259) points out in his broader survey of media from 1981-1983, other factors in the dispute, including the recent opening of “several” new slaughterhouses and a lack of investment in machinery needed to produce meat at export quality were “rarely” mentioned popular media. As in Chapter 2, I do not mean to claim that representations of the unions were uniformly negative. Rather, I want to point out that the nature and extent of the institutional compromise between workers and employers continued to be contested, even as the frequent revision of these arrangements indicates that they were, for the stability of the economy, considered necessary.

From within this context, two emerging political forces impact upon the structuring of poverty during the 1970-1984 period and in the decade that followed. The first of these is the labour movement that flourished at the beginning of the 1970s until roughly 1979, and the second is the New Right, which became a stronger political force from the late 1970s onward. I will discuss the labour movement in more detail in Chapter 6, but it should be noted that the level of industrial action throughout the 1970s amounted to what Roper (2010) terms a “working class offensive” characterized by increased militancy and demands to improve the economic shares of workers in a period when near full employment gave workers significant power in the workplace and inflation threatened living standards. From 1980 onward, the labour movement continued to exert pressure through work disruptions, but fell into a

“defensive” position that attempted to maintain previous gains and negotiate the best possible redundancy awards for workers losing their jobs (Leitch 1986; Roper 2005a). From 1970 to 1984, industrial action dwarfed other periods of industrial unrest in New Zealand (Roper 2010) and clearly demonstrated that the institutional structures meant to minimize disruptions to the economy could not contain emerging working class power. For example, changes to the industrial relations in 1973 attempted to limit direct action by acknowledging the complexity of industrial relations within New Zealand and “formally endorsing” direct bargaining (Boxall 1990: 526). However, the wage bargaining in the 1974 -1975 period resulted in an inflationary “spiral” that the government responded to with a wage and price freeze (Muldoon 1976: 26-27), an action that subsequently led to the highest level of strike activity in New Zealand history in 1976-1977 and the overturning of the freeze (Pearce 1986, in Roper 2005a: 99). The labour movement thus challenged the state in two distinct ways: through disruption of the economy, and through challenge of the state’s legitimacy in mediating between workers and employers.

The New Right emerged in a different context altogether. With the establishment of the National Development Council in 1970 to address the projected long-term downturn in the economy, the Treasury and Reserve Bank of New Zealand were given new structural roles within the state bureaucracy (Muldoon 1970a). Where the Development Council was appointed to address “the long-term structural changes that must gradually be made” to the economy, the Treasury and Reserve Bank acted as intermediaries or advisories to all social development (Muldoon 1970b: 6; Muldoon 1970a: 32). The organizations, then, addressed two sides of state development: the economic and the social. The Treasury, beginning just before the 1970s, began to hire economists rather than accountants, allowing it to take on this greater role in policy formulation rather than just accountancy (Goldfinch 2000b). Goldfinch (2000a) argues that this shift in focus for the Treasury, alongside the education of a number of Treasury officials in U.S. universities, led to the formation of a close-knit policy group with a relatively coherent New Right ideology. In an interview with Goldfinch, a former state department chief executive explains:

There was a cadre of us... a couple of dozen people and they exercised influence in a mighty way. We had been at university together, sometimes taught each other and were very compatible. Scott, Kerr, Cameron and Wilkinson in the Treasury, and [Deane] and one or two others in the Reserve Bank... So it was all a network of

twenty people who had been talking about these ideas for a long time. (in Goldfinch 2000a: 63)

Also noted in this interview are key people from business circles, such as Allan Gibbs, John Fernyhough, and Ron Trotter, the latter of whom would later head the Business Roundtable; the head of Federated Farmers, Peter Elworthy; and also Roger Douglas and Ruth Richardson, the Finance Ministers who oversaw radical restructuring and who represented the Labour and National parties respectively. In other words, instead of the mass protest of the labour movement through the 1970-1984 period, the New Right emerged from a core group of elites in power positions within the state bureaucracy and in business. As Easton (1989a; 1997a) points out, academics within New Zealand were also excluded from debate over policy direction, leaving the policy making group insulated from both the concerns of the electorate and opposing theoretical opinions (Easton 1988).

However, as with the labour movement, and the Māori and women's movements that will be discussed below, the New Right met with opposition from Prime Minister Muldoon. From 1978 onward, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand became more critical in its annual reports to government, noting "structural problems in the economy," "a reluctance to accept change," government spending increases of nine percent despite "a small decline in gross national income" (Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1978). In 1980, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (1980: 1, 6-7) argued that "in the field of structural economic policies, much remains to be done" as the problems of increasing deficits, inflation, unemployment, low productivity and worsening terms of trade "throw into sharp relief the need to pursue more vigorously... long term structural policies" such as "deregulation" and "a review of taxation to increase investment." From 1981 to 1983, similar criticism and pushes for change were called for: reduction in protectionist policies, reduced taxation and government spending, increased competition, and Reserve Bank control over interest rates (Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1981); "quicker change" towards market liberalization (Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1982b: 6); and liberalization of financial markets (Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1983). Prime Minister Muldoon made incremental changes towards liberalization, but investment projects such as the "Think Big" energy developments, and the wage and price fixing used to temper inflation were at odds with international trends towards liberalization (especially in the UK and US) and their related "tight monetary policies" (Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1983: 2). In the 1979 Budget, the Prime Minister explained that "Government has been

offered a great deal of advice on how to restructure the New Zealand economy... [as though it] can be transformed overnight by a simple radical programme” – a proposal he dismissed outright (Muldoon 1979: 3). In 1980, Muldoon blamed the UK recession on the “unprecedentedly tough” New Right policies of the Thatcher government (Muldoon 1980: 2), rather than seeing them as the eventual cure to the prolonged recession, as the New Right argued. So although Muldoon acknowledged that “market forces must be allowed to operate more freely” (Muldoon 1981: 3) he nevertheless maintained an interventionist approach to economic management that insulated himself from the economic policy community (Kelsey 1997). Because of Muldoon’s control over the economy and his double role of Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the institutional positioning of the New Right did not have the significant influence they would after 1984. Although the New Right was institutionally well positioned to advocate for change, they were nevertheless thwarted in their attempts to bring about significant policy restructuring.

Prime Minister Muldoon not only blocked the aspirations of the New Right and undermined the labour movement, but also stood in general opposition to the New Left social movements of the 1970s and 1980s. His opposition was not merely vocal, but also resulted in severe state repression of protest. For example, the Bastion Point protest to reclaim confiscated Māori land was disbanded after a lengthy occupation with the mobilization of 600 police, 60 soldiers, and army vehicles. According to *The Dominion*, the “heavy handed tactics” of the Muldoon Government in ordering the removal were “overkill” (*The Dominion* May 26, 1978: 1). More notably, the Springbok Tour protests of 1981 that Muldoon foresaw but did not avert, “generated the worst civil violence in New Zealand since the Depression riots in 1932” (Belich 2001: 478) and cost 7.2 million dollars in policing alone (*Listener* Jul 9, 2011: 14–20). Muldoon believed that he profited from his hard stance against left groups such as those opposed to the Springbok tour, as he predicted he would win the 1981 election on his stance to have the tour continue despite significant popular opposition (*The Dominion* Nov 27, 1981: 2). Muldoon’s antagonistic relationship with left groups is evidenced by protests of his election campaigns even before he was Prime Minister, from clergy members to feminist, Māori, and anti-racist protesters (Roberts 1976; *The Dominion* Nov 21, 1978: 1; Nov 22, 1978: 4; Nov 24, 1978: 1; Nov 7, 1981: 2; Nov 27, 1981: 2; Jul 7, 1984: 5).

Muldoon's position of authority and his outspokenness about issues important to the left appeared to narrow the state channels available to the New Social Movements. In respect to the women's movement, for example, Dann (1985: 43) quotes Muldoon as saying,

could we contemplate the situation where a woman getting equal pay is the breadwinner and the husband stays at home to look after the children? I don't think we could.

Muldoon's sentiments were mirrored in state groups such as the New Zealand Planning Council, where the increase of women participating in the labour force was considered a "stress" on the labour market and was blamed for increased male unemployment (New Zealand Planning Council 1980). In 1975, Aitken complained that the 1972 election featured only eight female candidates (four were elected) in a parliament of 87; the government appointed Housing Commission had no women representatives and the government appointed inquiry into equal pay had only one female member among five (Aitken 1975: 6-8). Similarly, McClure (1998; 2003) notes that the commission to determine accident compensation (ACC) lacked female representation (and women not in paid employment were initially excluded from its terms), as did the Cabinet Committee on Family Affairs that reviewed the Domestic Purposes Benefit. Although the Domestic Purposes Benefit was an almost exclusively a benefit used by women, the committee was "totally male, totally married, totally middle-aged" (Waring in McClure 1998: 184). A law prohibiting doctors from giving advice about contraception to patients under sixteen and another law amendment proposal making it illegal to tell anyone under twenty that homosexuality is "normal" (*The Dominion* May 28, 1975: 2) further cemented the impression that feminist issues found opposition within the state.

The narrow channels for expressing women's claims within the state were by no means blocked feminist demands entirely. The Labour Government of 1972-1975 initiated the Select Committee on Women's Rights to consider "discrimination and disadvantage" in paid employment and unpaid domestic labour with negative economic, social, or mental effects on women. The committee advocated for paid maternity leave, increased women in political office, improved educational opportunities for women, state payment for unpaid caregivers, increased security for women in the workforce, and initiatives to change social attitudes about

the role of women in society (Select Committee on Women's Rights 1975). This forum to voice demands was certainly related to the Labour Party's attempts to expand its core constituency (Nagel 1998), but the recommendations largely focused on social attitudes rather than structural changes to the state and economy.

Similarly, Māori concerns over the negative consequences of urbanization, socio-economic deprivation, the depletion of Māori resources, and the loss of Māori culture were received through improved political channels during the 1972-1975 Labour Government and resulted in programmes to educate children in Māori language and legislation to address contraventions to the Treaty of Waitangi that occurred after the passage of the 1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act (i.e. not historical grievances) (Walker 1990: 210-212). However, the institutional channels remained too narrow to account for continued concerns over land alienation (Walker 1990: 212-219) and worsening socio-economic disparity (Poata-Smith 1996). In 1980 a Māori Member of Parliament for the Labour Party left the party after a lengthy dispute over the party's Māori policy, which took "no account of [Māori] language, customs, and lifestyles" (Fleras 1985: 571). The MP's concern focused on Māori self-determination and historic land grievances (Fleras 1985) but speaks to the narrowed political channels for the Māori social movements regardless of the major party in office. It is important to distinguish between the types of demands being made. I will go into these demands in greater detail in the next chapter, but here I want to point out that three interrelated but distinguishable types are notable: those concerned with the cultural valuation of Māori, those concerned with land claims, and those relating to socio-economic disparity. All of these are linked to the practices and effects of colonialism, but they allow for differential treatment. The land claims issues will be addressed in the next section (with the extension of the Treaty of Waitangi to address historic claims in 1985); cultural valuation and socio-economic concerns will be addressed here briefly.

Changes promoting Māori culture within cultural institutions began to increase in the early 1980s; the collaboration of Māori and local museums to bring about the international *Te Māori* exhibition is both a "turning point" and a model of future bicultural principles (Butt 2002). The New Zealand Government oversaw the organization and logistics of the exhibition, but a Māori subcommittee "ensure[d] that Māoridom had a voice in all operations of the exhibition from the time of approval and agreement of the exhibition to the time of

return” (*Te Māori Management Committee*, cited in Butt 2002:228). Alongside advances in Māori language instruction (above) and demands for increased exposure in state-owned communication (Walker 1990: 268-270) one can conclude that demands for cultural valuation were increasingly regarded as legitimate, even if they were not met to the extent that Māori demanded. The worsening economic fortunes of Māori – much as for women – due to redundancies, reduced unemployment benefits, and low wage growth during high inflation, were addressed through different channels. On one front, unions attempted to negotiate the best possible redundancy packages and pressured for wage increases in line with inflation. On another front, unemployed workers unions provided another form of political organization, if little increased economic support. Finally, government funding for work trusts and alternative work schemes began in the late 1970s in response to the perceived social problems of unemployment, including the growth of gangs (Higgins 1997; Chill 2006). Economic demands had mixed results, yet institutional channels for addressing demands are evident.

In the 1970-1984 period, then, we can map the broad shifts in the political – civil society relationship. While the 1972-1975 Labour Government incorporates New Social Movement demands to a limited degree (Taylor 2008), and demands for Māori cultural revaluation gain currency, for the most part throughout the period the state institutional channels for receiving these demands are very narrow. These channels seem limited by the socially conservative agenda of the National Party under the leadership of Prime Minister Muldoon and, as such, the demands of the New Social Movements extend party politics beyond the economic concerns of the male, wage-earner state (Nagel 1998; Sherman 2006). As the next chapter will expand upon, social movement activities were not limited to formal state channels, yet the generally narrow state channels for meeting the concerns of the New Social Movements contrasts with the elaborate institutional mechanisms for workers in this period (regardless of their effectiveness) and of the channels that would be constructed with the imposition of neoliberal economic policy in 1984. Economic demands by workers and, to a lesser extent the unemployed, had clearly defined institutional channels meant to limit economic disruptions and political unpopularity respectively. In the proceeding era, these channels would be narrowed significantly.

1984-1993: The market-led state

Following the 1970-1984 period, the recognized political forces within the state and the political institutions of the state changed dramatically. As Chapter 1 pointed out, the neoliberal social and economic policies from 1984 through 1999 deepened poverty in New Zealand through the liberalization of the labour market, reduced income supplements, regressive taxation, and increased user costs for healthcare and housing. In this section I will discuss more explicitly changes within the state. In brief, both the Labour and National parties adopted the anti-statist rhetoric of neoliberalism alongside policies that subject state institutions to market discipline so that, by the 1990 election, the policies of the two major parties are considered virtually interchangeable within media with only slight variations regarding employment relations policy. At the same time, state institutions undergo three broad areas of change. First, the institution of elected officials goes through a period of unresponsiveness to political constituents: party promises and manifestos are merely ways of gaining power rather than programmes to be implemented once power is attained. Election promises are intentionally vague or misleading, and political parties, as a result, become detached from traditional support bases. Second, emerging powers are institutionalized while traditional powers (incorporated economic actors) lose their institutional footings. Third, a limited devolution of power from the state to communities in areas of social welfare occurs alongside a concentration of state power in economics and finance. All of these changes correspond to shifting power bases and the emerging political forces of the previous era. I will go through these changes one at a time to focus on the contradictions and outcomes of the representation of social power within the state.

The most striking change in electoral politics in the market-led state (1984 through 1993) that distinguishes it from the previous era is the lack of correspondence between election promises, constituent demands, and resulting policies. In the 1984 election, the Labour Party campaign under the leadership of David Lange won a clear majority on the promise of reconciliation between social groups that were alienated under Muldoon's leadership, but also on the promise of improved economic management, wages and employment. Yet despite the focus on economics, the Labour Party provided no precise policy measures to address the prolonged recession. One reporter for *The Dominion*, for example, declared Lange's campaign opening speech a "a mood speech" that contained no real manifesto; another noted

that the campaign “kept going back to the economy, wages and jobs” but that the “lack of detail” regarding how they planned to address economic management was worrisome (*The Dominion* Jul 2, 1984: 5). The assumed economics of the Labour Party were interventionist, and most likely more inflationary than the previous Muldoon Government, especially as unions considered economic stimulus the appropriate remedy for unemployment and for a stagnating economy. Up until the 1984 budget details were announced, *The Dominion* considered an inflationary budget likely (*The Dominion* Nov 5, 1984: 1-2), and there was some support for inflationary measures as they were recently effective for the newly appointed Labour Government in Australia (*The Dominion* Nov 2, 1984: 2). The economic policies that followed, despite the diverse views put forward in the government sponsored 1984 Economic Summit (Goldfinch 2000a: 18), moved in the direction opposite to union desires. In this way the Labour Party departed from representing its historic constituency. Lange admitted as much when he later spoke of the need to keep plans for liberalization secret from the party for fear that they would not be tolerated (*The Dominion* Jun 25, 1987: 2).

The 1987 election promised to increase the liberalization process by both major parties despite internal party disagreement (*The Dominion* Jul 24, 1987: 10; Jul 25, 1987: 7; Jul 28, 1987: 28). Despite the open acceptance of liberalization, public concerns remained over continued “hidden agendas,” especially in health care restructuring (*The Dominion* Aug 3, 1987: 6). Rather than the key features of liberalization that would follow in the second term, including moves towards limiting welfare by imposing compulsory work for beneficiaries, vastly increased restructuring of the public sector, and increased public asset sales, Lange’s plan to improve education underpinned the Labour Party election campaign (Barry 1996). Again, many in the electorate felt that government actions did not follow election mandates and were not in the best interest of the country. The sales of public assets, such as the forestry reserves, serve as a good example. According to Jim Anderton, a Labour member of parliament who later left the party to form the New Labour Party, the goal of public asset sales was not initially revealed to the Labour Party cabinet (Barry, 1996). Neither were the asset sales popular among the electorate, and Māori challenged the asset sales because they did not adhere to the Treaty of Waitangi (Walker 1990: 263-265; Kelsey 1997). Despite popular protest, the Labour Party proceeded with the sales.

The Fourth National Government, running its 1990 campaign on the promise of a “decent society” has been the subject of substantial criticism due to its changes in mandate after winning the election (cf. The Family Centre 1991; Boston & Dalziel 1992; Roper & Rudd 1993; Kelsey 1997; Boston, Dalziel & St. John 1999). Changes to superannuation represent the most noticeable contradiction in policy; however the punishment of beneficiaries, unions, and low-wage workers through benefit changes and the introduction of the ECA as well as the increases in middle class economic difficulties through changes to health care provision and education can all be considered contradictory to the spirit of the “decent society.” The changes to industrial relations and benefits were foreshadowed, but their extent was not. Here the continued redistribution of wealth – in this case from the poor and middle classes to the rich – did not go unnoticed, even in popular media, where, for example, reporters for *The Dominion* noted the tax benefits for the rich while the rest of the population suffered (Dec 24, 1990: 7; Dec 28, 1990: 6). The unemployed workers union publication, *Mean Times*, promoted a petition for the immediate resignation of the National Party, claiming that “if National had put their policies out to the voters they never would have been elected” (Anderton in *Mean Times* Jun/Jul 1991: 5). Threats from National Party MPs to “cross the floor” following the “mother of all budgets” (see Chapter 4) indicates that political deceit was keenly felt by politicians as well as the electorate. Significantly, by 1993 calls for parties to be accountable to the electorate – including being held legally responsible for following party manifestos – permeated alternative and mainstream media. In the lead up to the 1993 election, for example, a reporter for *The Dominion* remarked that the promise to “stick to its manifesto” resulted in the loudest applause for speech that opened the Labour Party campaign (Oct 11, 1993: 2).

Pushing through unpopular social and economic policy in the face of opposition amounts to authoritarianism (Wilkes & O’Brien 1993) or what Mann (1993: 59) terms “despotic power” in a manner quite distinct from the socially divisive approach taken by Muldoon. Rather than the heavy handed use of coercive force used in the Springbok Tour of 1981 and the Bastion Point occupation, the New Right relied on extensive mediation of its programme and its purported effects, through bodies such as the Business Roundtable, the cultivation of relationships with popular media, and the employment of media professionals (Scott 1997:

185). To use Althusser's terms, a noticeable shift from coercive to ideological state apparatuses occurs.

The "authoritarianism" of elected officials was not absolute. National elections provided some means for expressing dissatisfaction, even if newly elected parties were found equally uncommitted to maintaining election promises as their predecessors. And, as the discussion of changes to superannuation in Chapter 4 demonstrates, public pressure could be effective. Nevertheless, in this period there is a disconnection between what Gramsci terms political and civil societies, where consent for political change is not first won, but where political change is imposed and then consent sought. The disconnection with civil society, enacted by elected officials during this period, was enabled through New Zealand's "distinctive...lack of constitutional restraints on government" (Vowles 1995: 97). In particular, the single level of state government provided no checks to elected government, and the First Past the Post electoral system tended to produce majority governments (Vowles 1995). Mitchell (2005) provides another way of considering the state that is useful in the 1984-1993 period in particular. For Mitchell (2005), political society appears to have sharp boundaries that distinguish it from civil society. In reality, however, these "boundaries" are "porous" – their solidity an illusion – as civil society groups both penetrate the "boundaries" of political society and are also repelled by them. In the 1984 to 1993 period, the penetration of these boundaries by the institutions of the New Right was commented upon extensively in popular media (see Chapter 4). The domination of political society from the Treasury, the Reserve Bank, and the office of the Minister of Finance is matched by the dictation of policy from groups such as the Business Roundtable and Federated Farmers. In this period, the boundaries of the state appeared solid for some, and non-existent for others.

I want to point out that significant *political* dislocations also occur alongside the radical economic and social policy changes that – as the next chapter discusses in detail – disrupts and displaces the protest of the left within New Zealand. In relation to party support, the disconnection between party manifestos and post-election policies resulted in the realignment of party politics along economic axes. Most notable in this regard is the internal division within and between unions in response to the Labour Party. At the time of the 1987 election, the FOL still supported the Labour Party (*The Dominion* Jul 31, 1987: 7) while some of the Federation's member unions expressed concern over Labour Party policies (*The Dominion*

Aug 3, 1987: 6) and the PSA advocated “snubbing Labour” in the polls (*The Dominion* Aug 12, 1987: 2). Left alternative media at this time pointed out the lack of political clout and self-defeating tendencies of the conservative elements of the labour movement. For example, *Red Flag*, the Maoist magazine, expressed dismay at “some left groups and unions” still supporting the Labour Party that was “out-Thatchering Thatcher” (*Red Flag* Apr 1987: 11). *People’s Voice*, the Communist Party of New Zealand magazine, detailed the debate between unions continuing to support the Labour Party and those advocating a “mass-action campaign.” According to the magazine, continued support of the Labour Party had resulted in “mass resignations” from the union-based Socialist Unity Party and sent it “into crisis” (Jul 23, 1990; Jun 9, 1990). The magazine equated conservative unions with neoliberal capitalism due to their collaboration with the Labour Party (Aug 20, 1990) and reported that “30 000 Auckland workers who marched... were let down by ‘more collaboration’” (Jun 3, 1991). In all of this, the economic left appeared disorganized and without formal party representation, at least in the major parties.

The New Right shifted party support more comprehensively. That Labour was the party of the New Right seemed concretised in 1987 with Bob Jones’ backing of the party after his own political aspirations to liberalise the economy failed in 1984 (*The Dominion* Aug. 12, 1987: 7). In 1987, the business pages of *The Dominion* claimed that a National Party victory would result in a market “slump” (*The Dominion* Jun 16, 1987: 1). But by the end of the Fourth Labour Government’s second term, criticism over the party’s “failure to ‘deregulate’ the labour market” (Caygill 1989: 8) resulted in the New Right’s abandonment of the Labour Party in favour of the National Party. For example, the Business Roundtable argued:

the difficulties with the fiscal position [of New Zealand] are, to a large extent, the consequence of policy failure outside of the conventional... issues of financial policy.... If the government is serious about its economic goals, the outstanding areas of policy reform must be addressed. (New Zealand Business Roundtable 1990: 3-4).

To address these “outstanding areas of policy reform” the Business Roundtable recommended deregulating the labour market and significantly reducing social welfare payments (New Zealand Business Roundtable 1990), two policy prescriptions that the Labour party had rejected but that the National Party implemented within two months of taking office

in 1990. Far more than the unions, who largely maintained allegiance to the Labour Party in the 1990 election (*The Dominion* Oct 8, 1990: 4) – the New Right proved to be policy driven rather than party-loyal.

The New Social Movements that had largely supported the election of the Fourth Labour Government also experienced political dislocations. On one hand, the Labour and National parties maintained their traditional politics of social liberalism and social conservatism respectively, but on the other hand both adopted liberal economic policies that economically disadvantaged many NSM actors. For example, the Fourth Labour Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in 1986, incorporated gay rights into the mandate of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission in 1986, and established the Department of Conservation in 1987, while it undertook the radical economic restructuring of the state. The National Party represented women opposed to the principles of women's liberation (Dann 1985: 26), National Party supporters attacked peace protesters during the 1987 election campaign (*The Dominion* Aug 3, 1987: 6), and the party promised that Māori advancement would have to occur “without separate treatment” (*The Dominion* Oct 1, 1990: 2). This social conservatism was accompanied by the extension of neoliberal economic policies (Roper 2005a). So despite differences in social policy, *The Dominion* remarked before both the 1987 and 1990 elections that little separated the economic policies of the two major parties. In an opinion piece by W.P. Reeves, for example, the parties were nicknamed “Tweedledum and Dweedledee” (*The Dominion* Jun 12, 1987: 10) for their treatment of the economy. Three years later, a reporter for *The Dominion* would quip that, “most election policies appear[ed] to have been put through a blender” (Oct 8, 1990: 4).

The broad agreement between major parties on economic policy amounts to a relatively quick adoption of neoliberal consensus on core economic issues. Although neoliberal policy was disputed within the state bureaucracy and popular media (see Chapter 4) this dispute was not reflected in economic decision policy formation. Goldfinch (2000a: 77-78) explains, for example, that with the 1984 election of the Fourth Labour Government, the Federation of Labour had “some expectation” of contributing to policy but found themselves “largely excluded from consultation and policy formation.” The Economic Summit of September 1984 seemed to be eliciting a democratic approach to economic management as it sought

broad participation from business, unions, unemployed and beneficiaries groups, women, and Māori (New Zealand Government 1984). Yet in the 1984 Budget less than two months later, only pro-liberalisation opinions were represented in economic policy prescriptions (Douglas 1984). The National Government between 1990 and 1993 increased consultation within the caucus for budget preparation (Goldfinch 2000a: 72) but, according to cabinet member Michael Laws, policy prescriptions were determined beforehand by Treasury (in Barry 1996). During this period, unemployed groups considered state overtures at democratic decision making farcical. For example, the Auckland Unemployed Workers Union publication, *Mean Times* (May 1989: 5), argued that government consultation on industrial relations would mirror previous consultations:

The [proposed] compact [between unions and government] is about setting up a process for consultation. From an unemployed point of view, the problem is we have heaps of consultations with the government... the meetings often go OK, but afterwards they spew on us in terms of the policy they carry out.

A clear example of the disconnection between consultation and policy is found in aftermath of the 1987 Royal Commission on Social Policy. The Royal Commission received over 6000 submissions (Royal Commission on Social Policy 1988: 11), but was undermined by the Treasury, who opposed its establishment (Kelsey 1997) and “hindered” its “deliberations” (Castles & Shirley 1996: 99, Cheyne and colleagues 2005: 11-12, in Barnes & Harris 2011: 2). In the end, the commission failed to coherently advocate any particular policy path (Barnes & Harris 2011: 4) and was “easily ignored... leaving the way open for more powerful political attacks on traditional social security ideas” (McClure 1998: 228). Again, democratic inclinations towards economic policy making (or, in this case, social policy making that had economic ramifications) were thwarted and policy decisions were limited to a small policy group. Importantly, unions and unemployed groups were most active in representing the unemployed. Their exclusion from policy formation is conspicuous given that unemployment was a “burning social issue” (Higgins 1997) during the period. As *The Dominion* reported, a 1990 election poll indicated that unemployment was a “bigger concern among voters than the economy, law and order, [and] race relations” (*The Dominion* Oct 3, 1990: 5). Yet despite this concern, neither major party had policies to address unemployment

aside from National's plan to liberalise the labour market – a policy option that was vigorously pursued by the Treasury (1990) and the Business Roundtable (1990).

The lack of democratic decision making in economic policy resulted in segments of the capitalist class dominating economic policy making as a whole (Easton 1997; Kelsey 1997; Jessop 1999; Goldfinch 2000a; Roper 2005a) and this was reflected in the narrowing of the formerly wide institutional channels open to workers. Despite attempts to construct a compact by the Fourth Labour Government, union power weakened with changes to industrial relations law in 1987 and real wages fell (Walsh 1997). The 1991 Employment Contracts Act further compromised organized labour through the abolition of the reigning system of trade union registration, trade union monopolies on membership and bargaining rights, blanket award coverage, and the right to negotiate compulsory union membership (Walsh 1997). In effect, the previous system of union negotiation, stressing collective bargaining power, was replaced by a system focused on individual contracts, and individuals within the labour market. In addition, the Employment Contracts Act “deliberately... exclude[d] important remedies for exploitation” (Walsh, 1997: 195). On the macro-institutional level, the Employment Contracts Act extensively curtailed the power of organized labour as it “effectively meant the removal of all forms of external legitimacy” for unions (Harbridge & Honeybone 1996), thus undermining unions in the labour negotiation process (Anderson, Brosnan & Walsh 1994). The ECA also resulted in significant increases in union ‘free-riding’ (Harbridge & Wilkinson 2001). Added to the already weak union organization within workplaces and among represented employees (Walsh 1991), the ECA decimated institutionalised labour movement power in a very short period (Kelsey 1997). The two related results that I wish to point out here are the diminishing of collective worker power and the resulting unfavourable treatment of marginalized workers (Kelsey 1997; Roper 2005a).

Similarly, funding for alternative work schemes and work cooperatives was all but eliminated shortly after the 1984 election, as the Labour Government considered the free market a better regulator of employment than the state:

Since an overall increase in employment is the ultimate goal, and this is best achieved by an efficient and growing economy, it is important that subsidies do not unduly

interfere with the normal functioning of the economy, and in particular the labour market. (New Zealand Government 1984, cited in Higgins 1987: 146)

In this short 1984-1993 period, then, substantial state institutional channels for addressing economic demands, particularly for the working class, were narrowed or removed.

Social movement and popular media pointed out that the weakening of economic channels disproportionately affected those already marginalized. For example, the feminist magazine *Broadsheet* published articles on how the Employment Contracts Act negatively impacted on working women (Spring 1992: 39-42) and furthered this report with another that detailed its detrimental effects on women's wages within the service industry (Summer 1993: 26-27). *Mean Times* argued that youth, already over-represented among the unemployed, especially among Māori, were open to exploitation under the provisions of industrial relations legislation (Jun/Jul 1991: 5). And *The Dominion* (Aug 7 1990: 8) reported before the 1990 election that Māori had been "reduced to beneficiaries" under the New Right economic policies of the Labour party. These commentaries in media were substantiated with academic research on the subject of women, Māori, and the working class generally (Boston & Dalziel 1992; Roper & Rudd 1993; Rudd & Roper 1997).

For both the women's movement and Māori movements, though, state institutions underwent significant changes that opened channels for social movement demands even as economic channels narrowed for the low waged. According to the Fourth Labour Government, the establishment of Ministry of Women's Affairs (in 1985) provided "the political means for ensuring the full development and advancement of women" (New Zealand Government 1986: 6). In the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, a specific Māori policy unit was also established, and other state advisory groups, such as the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women and the Equal Opportunities Unit in the State Services Sector indicated commitment to some women's issues by the government (New Zealand Government 1986: 6). For Māori, the extension of the Treaty of Waitangi to address historical claims presented perhaps the most significant institutional channel for Māori grievances as, in the words of Māori historian Ranganui Walker (1990: 254), it "cast New Zealand firmly in the post-colonial era" as it threatened to uncover "the history of colonial violence and injustice perpetuated by the Government itself." Within government policy,

social service provision, and within the state bureaucracy, biculturalism was also firmly instituted (Fitzgerald 2004: 44) resulting in broad recognition of Māori culture and values. And beyond these advances for Māori, Walker (1990: 255-161) also identifies the “search for economic power” by Māori in the same period. This search led to independent Māori and state-sponsored attempts to achieve greater independence through Māori economic development, and what Fitzgerald (2004: 46) calls the “decade of Māori development.” The focus, for Māori, on self-determination and raising the economic and social position of Māori is articulated in the report of the first Māori Economic Development summit, the 1984 Hui Taumata, which “declared that Māori economic future would henceforth be driven by Māori initiatives and a commitment towards Māori self-reliance” (Fitzgerald 2004: 43). In this way, the concept of “development” spoke to economic concerns beyond treaty claims. At the same time, Durie notes that the concept:

Fitted quite comfortably with the free market philosophy of a minimal state, non-governmental provision of services, economic self-sufficiency and privatisation... there was... concern that the Hui Taumata itself had been captured by the architects of a free market economy and the monetarist theories of the ‘New’ Right. (Durie, 1998: 11)

I will not go into Māori development in any detail here except to note that its goals in a period of deepening Māori poverty and unemployment indicate that it was not an effective channel for the economic wellbeing of those poorly positioned in the labour market (I will return to this in Chapter 6). Here I want to point out that state institutional changes spoke to a range of demands presented by the New Social Movements of the previous era. These demands have economic components, but, as I will address in Chapter 6, they were not effective channels for addressing poverty. Rather, the already-established state channels for doing so, through the institutional arm of labour movement and through consultation with disadvantaged groups, were significantly narrowed or simply ignored in economic policy making. So while sections of the New Social Movements had improved access to the state, the poor – beneficiaries and low-waged earners who were more likely to be women and Māori – lost significant means of representation.

The argument that I am putting forward, that the working class become increasingly marginalized and social and cultural identities gain power at the expense of differentiated

economic identities amongst those groups, does not translate into a coherent ideological break from one period to the next within the state or social movements. So although we see, for example, in the Government's first *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Report* the claim that class identities are diminishing while other political identities (such as those of women) are gaining prominence (New Zealand Government 1986), this does not mean that the objectives of the Ministry of Women's Affairs were necessarily aligned to neoliberal objectives. Similarly, Māori desires to break from "a cycle of deprivation" and "dependency on welfare" through greater self-determination (Dr Ralph Love in New Zealand Government 1984) did not automatically align Māori state institutions with the neoliberal policy objectives. The new institutional arrangements, instead, can be seen as contradictions between economic and social policy (Kelsey 1991), and they led to conflict within the state. For example, state asset sales compromised gains for Māori through the Treaty of Waitangi claims tribunal and thus resulted in protest and legal action by Māori. In this case, the neoliberal policy objective (privatization) came into conflict with the Treaty of Waitangi tribunal process because of the historic extension of Treaty claims. Similarly, the push for labour market flexibility by the New Right compromised feminist demands for equal pay and led to the repeal of the Employment Equity Act in 1990. The new institutional arrangements remain in tension with social and economic policies of the New Right, and in this way can be seen as "compromises" between the dominant and subordinate classes within a Gramscian framework, similar to the institutional arrangements for unions in the 1970s and early 1980s. The state at once acknowledged and promoted claims from social and cultural identities through the institutional recognition of collective identities, but also sought to limit conflict through the same means so that they could not "touch the essential" (Gramsci 1971: 161).

Before moving on, I will supplement this description of the central state bureaucracy with an overview of changes resulting from the market restructuring of the state through the institution of New Public Management and the devolution of social services from the state bureaucracy to external providers. In the next chapter, I will argue that anti-poverty movements in New Zealand attempt to wrestle power from the central state bureaucracy for local communities, and in the post 1984 era, the tension between state and community changes significantly as the state attempts to shed some responsibility for social welfare

provision. In the simplest of narratives, the anti-state inclinations of the New Right advocated for reduced government, and resulted in the devolution of state functions to communities. At this point the state moved away from the community development model of the 1970s as market logic was applied to the community (Higgins 1997). Regardless, left rhetoric of community self-determination from the Keynesian era was articulated in the neoliberal project, and here the devolution of state institutions held promise to some left groups, at least initially, as Māori won increased control of service provision at the tribal or community level, contributing to the Māori development discourse (Durie 2003: 172-173). Similarly, feminist critics, such as Dann (1985), found promise in the policies of the Fourth Labour Government. State institutions transferred the provision of services from the centralized bureaucracy to “service-producing” agencies (Christensen & Lægreid 2007: 1060), allowing competition between NGO service providers on “a level playing field” (Chapman & Duncan 2007: 2). Of these agencies, “single-purpose organisations” were preferred as they precluded contradictory goals and oversized bureaucratic structures (Christensen & Lægreid 2007: 1060). The relationship between the state and service providing institutions became explicitly contractual as government institutions attempted to “specify as precisely as possible the resources that [they would] provide and the performance the other side [would] produce” (Wallis & Dollery 2001: 254). In all of this, the state retracted from direct service provision but maintained tight control over funding and output objectives (Steane 1999: 140) leading to criticism that the state transferred risk and responsibility onto service providers but left them with no autonomous decision making power (Milbourne & Murray 2011). On another level, the mandates of state institutions themselves became contradictory: they had the double function of satisfying citizen needs but also minimizing costs (O’Donnell, O’Brien & Junor 2011: 2377). I will leave, for the moment, the contradictions and criticisms of this New Public Management to note, more generally, that the retraction of the state in terms of its bureaucratic reach did not amount to reduced control over economic decision making within its central institutions.

In the 1984-1993 period, the rapid restructuring of the state, the lack of correlation between party manifestos and policies, and the particularities of new institutional arrangements contributed to the destabilization of New Zealand politics. During this period previously marginalized political identities gained institutional footholds while the working class

became largely disenfranchised. Control of state institutions by the New Right resulted in the institutionalization of market policies throughout the state, a project carried out by both major parties despite a lack of election mandate for significant changes and despite significant protest (see, for example, contestation the New Right in media in Chapter 4).

Theorising the state and politics in Gramscian terms throughout this period is extremely difficult. Most importantly for the discussion here, the incorporation of left movements into the state differs from the conservatism of neoliberal institution in the US and Britain. In this way, rather than a coherent political era, the 1984-1993 period needs to be considered as both an outcome and a process of contestation. As I have argued above, the New Social Movements of the previous era gain while the labour movement loses institutional footholds. Within the core state institutions, New Right economic actors achieved a complete victory to the benefit of a portion of the capitalist class (Easton 1997a; Jesson 1999). But the control of economic policy extended to the New Public Management of the state and community service provision as well. Because of this, anti-state rhetoric and claimed reductions in state reach and power require scrutiny. First, the core economic institutions of the state do not relinquish power and the areas of state intervention into the economy remain fairly consistent (international trade, employment relations, taxation, and so on), yet, the nature of those interventions changes. On one hand, it becomes more consistent, less subject to changes in elected government and more embedded in state structures, such as the Reserve Bank Act (1989) that requires the Reserve Bank of New Zealand to act autonomously in its primary goal of meeting inflation targets (Reserve Bank of New Zealand 1998). On the other hand, changes within state institutions consistently favour private accumulation over public ownership. Here the central economic preoccupations of the state (productivity, inflation, accumulation, and investment) do not change, though the benefits of economic activity are distributed in favour of a smaller group.

1993-2010: The establishment of the market-based hegemony

As with the political periods above, the periodisation of the state after 1993 is a loose marker. Some significant legislation of the neoliberal era fall after 1993, such as the 1995 amendment to the Overseas Investment Act that allowed for greater foreign ownership of land (Kelsey

2000: 127-131). Yet 1993 marks a significant turning point, I believe, in the state politics of New Zealand for two reasons. First, the majority of the radical restructuring of the state was accomplished by this point. As the 1993 election almost ended in a hung parliament, Ruth Richardson, the National Finance Minister that spearheaded neoliberal economic and social policy from 1990-1993, was removed from her ministerial post, and Prime Minister Jim Bolger announced that the “big changes” were “behind us” (Roper 2005a: 201). Second, and related, the adoption of the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system in 1993 resulted in significant changes to the relationship between political parties and the electorate. With increased direct representation in the electoral system and much more power given to minor parties, civil and political societies became reconnected to a greater degree than in the previous era.

In the 1993-2010 era, I argue, there is an increase in democratic institutional channels that soften some of the rigid boundaries constructed between political and civil societies in the previous era. At the same time, the basic architecture of the previous era remains, so that the economic system and its relative benefits to different classes remain fairly constant. The secured economic system in favour of a particular class alongside improved democratic channels amounts to “hegemony” (Gramsci 1971) as the market-oriented state is no longer imposed, but reproduced through consent and compromise. The concept of hegemony does not preclude contestation, but, rather, can be seen as a term that explains why contestation does not amount to radical change, either through democratic or revolutionary means. To explain this hegemony, I will first discuss two ways in which democratic institutional structures are expanded, through electoral reform and changes to public management. I will then examine a few key areas where compromise between civil and political society indicate the range of debate that stands in for the formal politics of the state. Again, this does not mean that contestation from social movements necessarily adhere to these limits (see Chapter 6) but indicates an informal “consensus” on the nature and extent of changes allowable within political society.

The MMP referendum is the most visible expansion of democratic institutional channels in the 1993-2010 period. The issue of electoral reform arose strongly in the previous era as a corrective to the manner in which the New Right agenda was implemented (Vowles 1995; Nagel 1998). In this regard, the success of the first referendum on electoral reform (1992)

signaled the overwhelming support for improved representation and accountability. In the second and final referendum that coincided with the 1993 national election, MMP was chosen as the new electoral system from a list of four alternatives despite opposition from both major parties and significant financial opposition from the economic elite (Barry 1996; Kelsey 2000: 171). Thus, it is not surprising that commentators interpreted the victory of MMP as a corrective not only to political accountability, but to the policies of the New Right generally (Vowles 1995). Directly before the referendum, for example, the cover of *Mean Times* read, “If the rich and powerful are opposed to MMP it’s a good enough reason to get out and vote for change – VOTE MMP – let’s break the two –party dictatorship!” (Oct/Nov 1993). Breaking the “two-party dictatorship” was also advocated by the Combined Beneficiaries Union in its publication *Fair Deal*, where it expressed its “earnest hope that the General Election 1993 [would] produce a great number of ‘independent’ MPs and... depart from the ‘Party’ system” (Mar 1993).

The adoption of MMP, however, did not displace the institutional arrangements or neoliberal economic and social policy from the previous era. Rather, the more extreme end of the New Right – advocating for strictly private schooling, incarceration, and health care, further deregulation of the labour market and more a regressive tax structure – came to be represented through the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers (ACT) Party, a minor party that was started by Roger Douglas, the former Finance Minister for the Labour Party credited with the first wave of neoliberal reform, and that has attracted MPs from both the Labour and National Parties. The more extreme end of neoliberal advocacy within the party system was thus pushed to minor parties where, arguably, before MMP it was manifest in the major parties. At the same time, this shift of the far right to minor party representation did not result in a significant shift to the left for major parties. The National and Labour Parties have continued to hold the strongest positions in parliament (combining for a minimum of 62 percent of the popular vote since the inception of MMP) and neither of these parties has challenged the fundamental changes to the state that began in 1984, in either economic or social institutions (Roper 2005a; Kelsey 2002). I will examine the differences between political parties momentarily, but here I want to emphasize that the redistribution of economic power initiated in the market-driven era remained fairly consistent, with contestation in mainstream party politics limited to the degree that those initiatives were

pursued rather than any fundamental contestation of the system from within political society. At the same time, the political power from the previous era, where economic and social policy decision making was reserved for a small policy community, came under pressure.

The context of the era, then, cannot be separated from the dominance of the New Right in the previous era, nor opposition to that dominance. The next chapter examines opposition in greater detail, for the rest of this chapter I will focus on two elements that structure opposition. The first of these is the continued development of New Public Management that “embeds” the state/society relationship of the earlier neoliberal era by promoting governance structures through “partnership” to replace strict contractualism (Larner & Craig 2005). The second examines the continued “compromise” with the former NSMs alongside the continued polarization of wealth.

A significant expansion of democratic institutional channels within the state came from challenges and changes to New Public Management (NPM). The NPM system adopted by the state beginning in the 1984-1993 era was characterized by specific financial and social goals for state institutions, increased outsourcing of services previously delivered directly by the state based on competitive contracting, institutional devolution to avoid ‘policy capture’ by interest groups and state elites, and bureaucratic managerialism to monitor activities and assess outcomes (Chapman & Duncan 2007; Duncan & Chapman 2010). This system, proposed by the Treasury with the overall goal of reducing public service expenditure while improving outcomes, was criticised due to the sometimes contradictory objectives for state social institutions and the tendency towards “policy silos” where different agencies pursued policy in similar areas with no coherent, multi-lateral approach (Duncan & Chapman 2010). For example, Craig and Porter (2006: 389-440) detail the volunteer community activism required in the Auckland suburb of Waitekere to gain positive community outcomes from the overly specific delivery outputs required through state – service provider contracts. Such coordination was required, in part, due to the insecurity of funding in which, “many community groups struggled... to maintain stable organizational bases in the context of contractualism” (Larner & Craig 2002: 10). As Larner and Craig (2002: 10-11; 2005) argue, the unfulfilled needs within communities resulted in activism that emphasized “the importance of local knowledges and local accountabilities” and that also “learned new ways of contesting policy agendas.” The Labour Government, in its 1998 pre-election manifesto,

focused on this discontent as it criticized NPM's lack of responsiveness to communities (Labour 1998). The Labour Party's resulting "whole of government" approach, implemented in its three terms in government from 1999-2008, stands as a corrective to the earlier NPM model in that state sector agencies pursue goals with extensive stakeholder consultation, including other state agencies, to improve both services and policy outcomes (Advisory Group on the Review of the Centre 2001). These changes are codified in government publications and supported with significant resources to promote and ensure intergovernmental dialogue and stakeholder liaison (Larner & Craig 2005). Although the whole of government approach was only introduced at the turn of the century, it now, nevertheless, seems to be a stable feature of the era (Chapman & Duncan 2010).

With the adoption of the "whole of government" approach, the state ceased to focus strictly on contractual responsibilities and instead took a management role in "partnership" with communities (Larner & Craig 2005). This partnership, according to Duffield, underpins governance discourse, in that it "forces conflicting actors onto discursive common ground" (2001, in De Angelis 2003: 21). It also requires, at least in theory, "self-regulation and co-regulation" (De Angelis 2003: 20) rather than compliance in a contractual sense. For social movements intent on greater community consultation from government (this was one of the demands of the Hiko of Hope – see Chapter 4) changes to NPM offered greater institutional means to make demands and influence policy. In this way, the democratic institutional channels broadened considerably.

As with the institutional arrangements for Māori and women in the previous era, however, significant limits to those institutional channels remained. Critics of the 'new New Zealand model' (Chapman & Duncan 2007) and its overseas third way equivalents note a range of problems that persist with "partnership" models: uneven power relationships between state and community groups resulting in a top-down approach to development; continued competition between community groups for limited resources; a lack of community direction due to funding priorities and reporting requirements; contract risks transferred from the state to the community; overbearing performance measurements; and a deterrence of innovative practices due to "the funding environment" (Milbourne & Murray 2011; Grey 2007). These problems all mirror criticism of the previous competitive contract era, supporting the argument that discussions of "new" or "post" NPM lack empirical validation (Lodge & Hill

2011). Rather, the appeal to “partnership” attempts to soften the least popular aspects of NPM, or the “fallout from an earlier phase of neoliberalism” but “has barely had [neoliberalism’s] core tendencies reined in” (Larner & Craig 2005: 27). So although the community marks the space “where the public sector, private sector, and voluntary sector meet and interact” (Loomis 2006: 6, cited in Larner & Craig 2005: 20) the power balance between groups requires scrutiny.

With the adoption of MMP and changes to NPM, the state no longer seems dominated by political society alone, in that groups in civil society are given increased means of participation and representation. The lack of correspondence between election manifestos and policies characteristic of the 1984-1993 period is tempered significantly with the adoption of MMP. Later, beginning particularly after 2000, contractual service provision “characterised by bruising and repetitive negotiations”, “narrowly specified outputs,” and “reporting frameworks [service providers] found objectionable and alien” equally gives way to “partnerships” – however power between partners is distributed (Larner & Craig 2005: 16). Because of these two features, the terms of compromise between political and civil society are undeniably redrawn. At the same time, regardless of the degree of difference between the contractual neoliberal and “whole of government” approaches, or the changes to electoral processes, market-based principles remain. The state paradoxically appears more democratic as the economic system that serves a dominant class becomes less contestable. This is precisely where the political identities and political spaces of neoliberalism become “embedded” (Kelsey 2002: 51; Larner & Craig 2005). In the previous section I argued that working class identities (the low-waged and beneficiaries) were displaced from their formal privileged position in the state while NSM identities (that were treated as economically undifferentiated) gained prominence through newly created institutional channels. I continue that argument here, but first with some qualification.

Differences between political parties are significant in this period, just as they were in the pre 1984 period. As Chapter 1 explained, from 2004 onward income inequality was reduced with the introduction of the Labour Government’s Working For Families (2004), though it seems likely to increase again with the Fifth National Government’s reductions in taxes to high earners in 2009 and with increased unemployment since 2008. Income relief for beneficiaries was also slightly improved from 2000 with the Fifth Labour Government’s increase in

subsidies for health and housing (Waldegrave, Stephens & King 2003). These increases in social subsidies are easily contrasted with the Fifth National Government's policies that "stigmatise" beneficiaries (CPAG 2012). I do not argue that different political parties have equivalent policies, but rather look at the range of what has been considered contestable options within the state. To do this, I examine a few of the key features that contributed to poverty and economic polarization in the previous era: taxation, industrial relations policy, and income maintenance.

Taxation from 1993 onward remains regressive, with only the precise levels of regression under contestation. The Fifth Labour Government (1999-2008) increased taxation on high earners to 39 percent; this was reduced by the Fifth National Government to 33 percent, but the Labour Party in 2011 promised to increase it again if it returns to power (Swire Jul 18 2011). One of the pillars of the tax structure since 1986, the Goods and Services Tax, is no longer disputed, except in its applicability on essential items (such as foods). Income supplement (in the form of direct payment through welfare) was not increased by the Fifth Labour Government, and with the election of the Fifth National Government and the appointment of the Welfare Working Group in 2010, it is hard to foresee a rise in income for beneficiaries. Rather, with the sole aim of "reducing long-term dependency" on welfare, the recommendations of the Welfare Working Group (2011) considered reductions to the duration of income supplement and advocated paid employment as the sole means for reducing welfare. Paid employment was further incentivized in 2004 using tax relief for low and middle income families, but this redistribution has not reduced the polarization of wealth to its level in 1990, let alone 1970 (MSD 2010).

Industrial relations policy, although made more amenable to unions by the Employment Relations Act (ERA) in 2000, nevertheless maintains the core structure of the ECA that emphasized individual contracts (Roper 2005a), and it has retained many of the problems for unions associated with the ECA (Barry 2004; Blackwood, Feinberg-Danieli & Lafferty 2006). According to Barry (2004), for example, the ERA has resulted in some increase in union membership, but much of this has been to pursue "very narrow" interests rather than to strengthen the base of the labour movement; in fact, some employee groups registered under the ERA as unions to block larger unions from entering the workplace. The erosion of union power in New Zealand mirrored the position of organized labour throughout many of the

advanced world economies since 1980 (Visser 2006). Despite recent gains in union membership due to the ERA, the overall union density among wage and salary earners beginning 2006 remained at roughly half of 1991 levels (21.9 percent and 43 percent respectively), indicating continued weak organised labour power in comparison to earlier periods. The basic features of the ECA, as outlined earlier, effectively “exposed the weakness of those unions that lacked the resources and organisational strength in the workplace to cope with the rapid decentralisation of bargaining in the absence of official sponsorship” (Charlwood 2008: 103). This occurred not only through the lack of legal recognition given to unions in bargaining processes (Anderson 2006) but also because of corporate rather than sector-wide bargaining that severely taxed diminishing union resources (Charlwood 2008). The ERA re-established legal recognition within bargaining and procedural matters, but did not reinstitute sector-wide bargaining; instead it relies on ‘good faith’ for any attempts at pan-corporate bargaining (Anderson 2006). Possibly as a result, union power has continued to diminish in the private sector to the extent that it exerts influence almost exclusively in public sector workplaces (Anderson 2006).

But even though the ERA has not resulted in a dramatic revitalization of union power, one can argue that institutional channels for unions nevertheless re-opened with the election of the Fifth Labour Government in 1999. In 2008 the President for the Council of Trade Unions, for example, detailed the “sea change” the Fifth Labour Government accomplished “for working people” and contrasted it to the “major negative impact on working people” that the National Government would have if elected (CTU 13 Apr, 2008). She mentions, for example, tripartite agreements between unions, employers and government – a distinct advancement for unions in terms of institutional channels since 2000. Reference to tripartite agreements is found in the Labour Government’s review of the state sector that justified much of the changes to NPM noted above. The Advisory Group on Review of the Centre (2001: 29) recommended that the State Services develop a “tripartite forum” involving the union for Public Servants (PSA), Ministers and Public Service Chief Executives to foster staff and leadership development. The same document recommended that “employees are enabled to participate collectively in the management of their workplaces through the PSA.” Given that, by 2005, 52 percent of unionised workers were in the public and community services (Blackwood and colleagues 2006: 81), such recommendations appear significant.

Yet the market logic that was instituted in the public sector through the State Service Act (1988) was not mitigated as a result. For example, the organisational restructuring that featured in the 1988-2002 era continued, and became “a continuous feature in New Zealand” (Lodge & Hill 2011: 161). According to a survey commissioned for the State Service Commission in 2007, “57 percent of departmental staff had experienced restructuring over the previous two years” (Lodge & Hill 2011: 161). Significantly, unemployment levels during the survey period were at their lowest levels in New Zealand since state restructuring began in 1984 (MSD 2010), and the Labour Government increased public sector spending throughout the period as well, indicating that the conditions for stable, secure employment were ripe.

Importantly, the lack of significant change to industrial relations has allowed advances made by the labour movement to be pared back. Institutional channels have again narrowed with the election of the Fifth National Government (2008-present). For example, in 2008 the National Government passed amendments to employment law to remove the right to appeal unfair dismissal in the first 90 days of unemployment for small business employees (*Unionist* Dec 2008). In 2009, minimum wage protection for seasonal workers was removed as employers could make deductions to reduce pay rates below minimum wage (*NZCTU News* Jun 4, 2009). Perhaps more significant for economic and social policy, the Fifth National Government sought economic policy advice through the appointment of a 2025 Taskforce with the aim of “closing the income gap with Australia and by 2025” (2025 Taskforce 2010: 4). The taskforce consisted of two members of the (economic far-right) ACT Party, a Treasury official credited with significant influence in neoliberal reform, and an Australian labour market economist. Unsurprisingly, given its composition, the Taskforce recommended making the Resource Management Act (RMA) more “permissive,” increasing labour market flexibility through the re-establishment of a minimum wage for youth and a reduction in the general minimum wage relative to median incomes, reductions in government expenditure, and further sales of state assets, with the overall goal of “the creation of an environment in New Zealand that is more conducive to wealth creation” (2025 Taskforce 2010: 29). According to the *New Zealand Herald* (Dec 1, 2009) the Taskforce recommendations amounted to a “Business Roundtable wish list” that would fail to spark public debate as the Prime Minister, John Key, made it “patently clear” that he would not follow such a radical agenda. However, since that time, youth rates have been reintroduced,

the RMA made more permissive, and the government has promised to pursue state asset sales.

While the differences between the major parties are significant, the ability of the Fifth National Government to implement aspects of “Business Roundtable wish list” speak to the extent that the market logic espoused in the 1984-1993 period continues to underpin not just the policies, but the structures and ideological coordinates of political society. For example, the gains for low-waged workers resulting from the Labour Party’s Working For Families (2004) is undeniable. Yet the intentional gap in wealth created between the employed and unemployed as a result of the legislation speaks to the same market logic that has underpinned welfare policy since 1980.

The market in this era also structures responses to the institutional channels for NSMs. The revaluation of political identities that became institutionalised in the 1984-1993 era (where social identities predominated and economic identities became marginalised) continued with the minimal advances for the labour movement noted above. Social identities and demands related to poverty will be addressed in detail in the next chapter, here I will provide a brief survey of key institutionalized identities. The institutionalization of “women’s issues” through the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MWA) proved durable but precarious. Anti-feminist rhetoric of the National-led Governments of the 1990s threatened to disestablish the ministry, and the repeal of the Employment Equity Act in 1990 dealt a blow to advances towards equality for women in the workplace. The lifespan of the ministry and its advances must be contextualized within this atmosphere, where, as late as 2011, the ACT Party called for its closure, mimicking rhetoric of the National Party earlier in the year (Hill Nov 20, 2011). Despite these threats to the MWA, improvements for women in other areas were notable: dramatic increases in female MPs in all political parties, women in more powerful roles within the state bureaucracy, and increased educational opportunities for women (MWA 2008). Other social state institutions also met demands of women’s groups; the introduction of midwives as primary health providers in the birthing process serves as a significant example here, as the male dominance of the health sector met feminist resistance. Yet the institutionalization of midwives as alternatives to birthing doctors needs also to be seen as an attempt to introduce competition within the ‘health market’ – a market-based policy meant to minimize state costs (Tully & Mortlock 2005: 195). And at the same time that Pakeha

women recorded the greatest earnings increases among all social groups between 1986 and 1996, both Māori and Pacific women faced the most extensive reductions in earnings among all social groups (Statistics New Zealand 1999), indicating that already higher levels of income disparity among women (Chartejee & Srivastav 1992) were further exacerbated. The disconnection between the institutionalization of women's demands and anti-poverty demands can be seen in the appointment of Jenny Shipley, the National Government Minister that oversaw the drastic welfare reductions in 1991, to the role of Minister of Women's Affairs from 1990-1996. In other words, the institutionalization of women and women's concerns into state institutions was made to fit into the market logic that also promoted increased economic disparity.

Māori demands during this period undergo a similar trajectory. State asset sales, the National Party's 1995 "fiscal envelope" that proposed a cap on Treaty of Waitangi Claims settlements, the divisive rhetoric of the National Party led by Donald Brash in 2004, and the Fifth Labour Government's rushed Foreshore and Seabed legislation (2004) threatened the Treaty of Waitangi Claims process. But while aspects of the hard-won acknowledgement of historical land alienation were threatened, Māori cultural protocols became institutionalized throughout the public sector and social state institutions. More than this, Te Puni Kokiri, the Ministry for Māori Development, was briefly granted the role of financial overseer of other departments in 2000, to provide a "Māori perspective" on all government expenditure (Humpage 2008: 416-417). TPK ceased to have this function when it became politically unpopular, but the exercise nevertheless speaks to the commitment to biculturalism, a discourse that has run "parallel" to neoliberalism (Humpage 2008: 418, 416). Yet regardless of advances or retreats in institutional power and representation since 1984, Māori economic fortunes have decreased markedly vis a vis Pakeha in New Zealand in comparison to the pre 1984 period (MSD 2010). Treaty of Waitangi settlements – due to institutional processes – are negotiated between corporate iwi entities and the state with the result that the majority of Māori do not receive benefits of successful claims, even if a minority of Māori profit from them greatly (Poata-Smith 2004). Claims made for de-tribalised Māori, or for strengthening the urban Māori social base, have had minimal success (Lashley 2000). Despite the recognition of economic disparity aligned with ethnicity, attempts to improve Māori outcomes, or to "narrow the gaps" between Māori and Pakeha, have not produced positive results (Poata-

Smith 2008). As with women's claims and concerns, the institutionalization of Māori interests has not resulted in improved outcomes for those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale (Stephens 2008). Rather, the fate of Māori since the widespread institutionalization of Māori culture is ideal-typical of what Fraser (1995) terms the politics of recognition rather than redistribution: the economic fate of Māori has mirrored the economic disparity of all groups in the market-led state, though in a more extreme fashion.

Both women and Māori NSMs experienced dispute over the legitimacy of the institutions designed to address their demands (particularly the Treaty of Waitangi Claims Tribunal and the MWA). Institutional precariousness was coupled with limited ability to affect change in economic disparity through institutional channels. The use of these identities within the state correspond to a logic of social division in New Zealand that obfuscates economic structuring within groups. For example, the Treasury briefing to the Māori Development forum, Hui Taumata, in 2005, articulates economic development (measured as per capita GDP) as a Māori aspiration to achieve independence; at the same time, it makes broad recommendations for achieving improved outcomes so that "Māori and non-Māori outcomes converge in the longer term" (Whitehead & Annesley 2005: 10). In this document, "defining the aspirations to be achieved through Māori economic development is a task that is primarily for Māori to lead" but the outcome of development is clear: "development is freedom – freedom for people to lead the kind of life they value" (Whitehead & Annesley 2005: 3, 2). Given that the document is authored by the Treasury, it is not surprising that the road to economic development is through increased per capita GDP. It is interesting, however, that the attainment of "freedom" is implicitly tied to achieving the outcomes enjoyed by non-Māori. In this case, the stratification of both Māori and non-Māori is overlooked, despite the recognition in the same document that "ethnicity in itself is not a significant driver of inequality" (Whitehead & Annesley 2005: 10). My point is simply that the extent to which "freedom" can be gained for any group by reproducing the economic stratification of the status quo is woefully unconsidered. Similarly, the MWA publication *Māori women: Mapping inequalities and pointing ways forward* (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2001) compares the outcomes for Māori women, Māori men, and non-Māori women and non-Māori men to "identify where concrete action is required" in education, employment, health, income, and housing. Here, although there is no promise of utopian outcomes in eliminating

ethnic and gender disparity, ethnicity and gender stand in for disparity generally. Again, economic identities within groups are relatively absent as disparity between groups stands in for inequality more generally.

If we look back to the negative categorizations of the poor during the Hikoi of Hope in Chapter 4, as brown-skinned single mothers who procreate irresponsibly, we see, here, similar social and ethnic categorizations standing in for economic identities. The institutionalization of social and ethnic identities, although this institutionalization is meant to address disadvantage, nevertheless organizes social identities in terms of relative advantages and disadvantages. With these social and ethnic divisions, one can map relative material deprivation, but understanding differing levels of deprivation between groups does little to account for economic structuring across society. For example, the promotion of education to reduce disparities between Māori and non-Māori men (Whitehead & Annesley 2005) fits well with the market logic that promotes individual achievement and competition for resources. However, it does little to address the general rise in poverty across society since the early 1980s, not just in Māori communities. In other words, the institutional promotion of social and ethnic identities diffuses the politics of economic structuring and promotes, instead, a politics of relative social and ethnic equality: a politics of competition between groups. I think it is extremely important that the politics of competition occurs between groups that are economically stratified, and it is equally important that institutional recognition of Māori and women coincides with the growing economic stratification within and between ethnic and social groups: Māori, women, and Pakeha men alike.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the compromise between social classes changes with the imposition of the neoliberal period and becomes solidified with improved democratic institutions in the post 1993 period. In the pre-1984 state, institutional channels recognized the power of organized labour and capitalists and sought to maintain compromise between these powers. New Social Movement identities gained power in this period, but were also frustrated by the state, particularly the centralized power of the Muldoon government that disparaged some workers and unions, women's aspirations for equality, Pacific immigrants,

Māori appeals to the Treaty of Waitangi, and so on. In the 1984-1993 period of neoliberal economic and social restructuring, the institutional channels set out for organized labour narrowed markedly while Māori and feminist identities of the New Social Movements were institutionalized within the core state bureaucracy. These changes occurred through successive governments which, in many respects, implemented policy and institutional changes without the consent of the electorate. After 1993 democratic channels increased in the state with changes to the electoral system and, later, with changes to public management. The maintenance of the market-oriented economic system alongside increases in democratic channels amounts to the establishment of “hegemony” or the exercise of power with the consent of subordinate classes. In line with Gramsci’s (1971) contention, hegemony is economic, political, and moral/intellectual. Although class identities are not readily recognized in the post 1993 state, I have argued that the market logic is articulated alongside ethnic and social identities at the expense of the working class.

In the last section, I pointed out that the institutionalization of Māori and feminist identities in the post 1993 era promoted competition between groups rather than an acknowledgement of structuring within groups as income disparity was considered in relation to ethnicity and gender. The relative incomes of women, Māori, and men, for example, are set alongside each other to note the relative disparity between men and women, and Māori and Pakeha. Such an examination does little to account for increases in disparity that accompanied liberalization policies in New Zealand. Neither does it address the extent to which income disparity is a structured feature of the economy.

For Gramsci (1971: 161) hegemony always refers to class relations as the state is economically structured. In the pre 1984 period, class interests – even if class was not a term widely used – were visible in the compromise between organized labour and capital. In the 1984-1993 period, the class compromise was ostensibly ended in favour of capital accumulation – and the state redistributed wealth faster than any other country in the OECD in the period (Roper 2005a). The reorganization of the state allowed for the redistribution of wealth, but also for the prioritization of non-economic identities. The hegemony of the market state from 1993 onward must, I think, be seen in relation to identities and economic fortunes. The institutions of the state do not appear to be structured by classes, but by ethnic and social identities. As the next chapter makes clear, this structuring is contested, just as the

Keynesian compromise was also contested. Yet I think it is a dominant feature of the state until 2011, the end of this investigation. This is not to minimise the specificity of domination, or the non-economic domination suffered by ethnic and social groups, but to recognise that addressing demands without consideration of the distribution of economic resources within and across political identities does not “touch” an “essential” aspect of political contestation.

In Chapter 3 I argued that spaces of mediation and regulation were differentiated by the constituents they called upon and their construction of identities. In the post 1984 we see a disconnection between the structures of economic oppression (the structural creation of poverty) and the articulation of identities that are called upon to respond to this oppression. I have shown, in this Chapter, that the identities called upon correspond to the New Social Movements of the pre 1984 period, but that they are promoted and constrained through institutional arrangements in the post 1984 period. A lack of correspondence occurs, however, in that the social identities meant to stand in for economic identities lack economic homogeneity, and the channels for the poor within state institutions for Maori and women are extremely narrow.

The structuring of the state and the recognized conflicts within political society do not, of course, mark impenetrable boundaries of contestation for social movements. But at the same time, as the next chapter elaborates, the structuring of the state is both in response to and a constraint on the demands of social movements. In this chapter I have set up the general features that the social movements contest and operate within, to make both political and economic advances. In the next chapter I look at explicitly anti-poverty movements, those that attempt to expose the economic structuring of society both within and against the practices of popular media and state institutions.

Chapter 6:

Politics from below: demands, actors, structures

In Chapter 5 I argued, using Gramscian theory, that the hegemonic compromise in New Zealand shifted with the institution of neoliberalism. Whereas the Keynesian state had well-defined institutional mechanisms to mediate compromise between capital and organised labour, the post-Keynesian state reduced these mechanisms and, at the same time, instituted channels to address the demands of the New Social Movements. This analysis included only minimal consideration of social movements, their demands, limitations and consequences. Politics, in this conception, is primarily a top-down affair. Left on its own, it is a politics too determined by structures without adequate consideration of the energies that challenge and even lead to the formation of these structures.

In this chapter I focus on social movements that challenge poverty directly and indirectly through their demands. At the same time, I consider these movements in tension with the structures already discussed: popular representations of poverty, and the changing institutional architecture of the state. The social movements contest the designation of legitimate and illegitimate politics where they find themselves excluded from political power. They also contribute to the dominant cultural logic of the era – in favour of social over economic identities – even as they resist it. I argue that actor demands are partially structured by social forces that shape and change social movements, but at the same time, I accredit social movements with influencing the shape and changes to structuring institutions.

The anti-poverty movement features in this discussion, and I also briefly outline the trajectory of the Māori, women's and labour movements, as they have all contributed anti-poverty demands. The anti-poverty movement is not bound to a single identity, but calls upon different actors at different times, and its institutional base spans a wide range of groups. Nevertheless, its initial power comes from community organisation and the movement attempts to build the community sector in opposition to the state and formal economy with the advent of neoliberalism. Post 1990, the lack of correspondence between the state and

anti-poverty groups opens spaces for contestation even as the poor are economically punished and politically ignored. The anti-poverty movement, however, is structured by the dominant cultural logic of the post 1984 era. While it continues to focus on economic identities, it increasingly does so with reference to social and cultural disparity. As such, it oftentimes fails to articulate the political-economic structuring of poverty.

The role of critical social actors

As mentioned above, sociological cultural studies generally fails to consider critical social actors as constituted by *and* contributing to social structures. Boltanski's body of work is particularly useful in drawing attention to such deficiencies by concentrating simultaneously on social critique and structural limitations. In his conception, actors are able to critique, but the range of choices available to them, the ways that critique are incorporated and altered, and subsequent changes to actor groups, all provide insight into social change generally. Such considerations are meant to balance the institutionally dominated politics of Marxian cultural studies, and the institutionally absent focus on identity of post-Marxism. However, French Cultural Sociology offers little analysis of the state and its role as social mediator. Also, where it most closely addresses the issue of poverty, it dedifferentiates between class interests and differing investments in "the spirit of capitalism" (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006) – a position that is untenable when the risks of capitalism are very high for the poor compared to the wealthy.

As the previous chapter argued, such dedifferentiation underpins the institutional arrangements within the market-based hegemony. To ignore economically differentiated actors, demands and political spaces is thus to ignore structural limitations of critique. Where Boltanski and Chiapello (2006: 168) acknowledge the marked disappearance of class from social commentary, they nevertheless fail to adequately locate this disappearance within state institutions. Rather, the disappearance is attributable primarily to the treatment, by both employers and employee representatives, of the "artistic" rather than the "social" critique of capitalism. While the different political sites of inquiry (France versus New Zealand) may be significant, the French analysis nevertheless diminishes state limitations to all economic actors.

In this chapter I undertake a deeper examination of the actor movements, their demands, and the institutional constraints that shape their expressions and outcomes. Constraints come in the form of enablement, compromise, and limitation. I begin with a broad re-periodisation of the decades from 1970 in terms of protest and actor demands: the representation of protest periods, the broad shift from radical to inclusionary demands, and socio-cultural theoretical affinities. It then examines specific actor movements, but is limited, due to space, to a brief discussion of the Māori, women's, and labour movements before examining the broader anti-poverty movement.

Periodisation of social movement politics

Thus far, changes to poverty in New Zealand have been considered in relation to macro-economic periods and individual governments. These correspond to the inflationary low-unemployment period of the 1970s; the period of rising unemployment, restructuring and acknowledgement of economic hardship from the late 1970s to mid 1980s; the first term of the Fourth Labour Government with improved redistribution for the poor but neoliberal economic policies that increase the incidence of unemployment and wage gaps generally; the reduction to welfare benefits, liberalisation of the labour market and other neoliberal initiatives; and the adoption of the social development or Third Way state that followed. Such periodisation acts as a convenient shorthand to identify groups affected by poverty and correlations between policy and outcomes for the poor. It does little to account for larger social change, however. For example, the economic fortunes of part-time and under-skilled workers has been considered in relation to poverty, but the decentering of the male wage-earner in policy circles and its potential effects on feminist responses to poverty has not.

Another type of mapping will now be attempted to take account of broader social changes. To use Jameson's (1984b) term, this "periodising" attempts to address the cultural-political ethos of the time. In brief, we can distinguish between periods of utopian, defensive, and pragmatic politics, where the utopian allows for social re-imagination, and the latter two represent pushes against or within the established social system without this re-imagination. Periodisation provides the necessary context for understanding the demands of actor movements and their limitations. As the chapter argues, the adoption of inclusionary (rather

than radical) politics – that which acknowledges inequality between social identities but that does not challenge the basis of inequality more generally – has been institutionalised into something of a “cultural logic.”

In popular historical narratives, political unrest due to a number of social movements characterised New Zealand beginning in the latter half of the 1960s. Roper (2010) notes the prevalence of class conflict: strike action from 1969 through 1985 dwarfed previous periods of industrial unrest (Roper 2010: 18), and thus featured daily in popular media, largely outstripping the other social movements except at times of sensationalised contestation. According to King (2003) social movements elicited protest supporting environmental causes, the anti-Vietnam movement, anti-apartheid movement, Māori rights, women’s rights and homosexual rights. Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand adds religious social movements to this list (Stenhouse Mar 23, 2011). In both economic and non-economic terms, political challenges dominate discussions of the time.

Just as popular international narratives focus on the abundance of protest in the 1970s, they also find the end of the protest era some time later. Jameson (1984b) positions the end of the “everything was possible” moment between 1972 and 1974, in his analysis of America and, to a lesser extent, France. Wallerstein (1991) similarly argues that a crisis emerges for anti-systemic movements after the seventies as the movements become incorporated into the formal state-political system. The end of the utopian ethos is not strictly a comment on protest, but also of the political and economic shift to the right in this period. The deep recession throughout the nations of the OECD in the 1970s and its increasing unemployment, the adoption or imposition of neo-liberalism throughout most of the world (Harvey 2005), and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc all speak to the changing context of the post 1968 period.

The New Zealand situation does not fit well with the exact timeframes of international narratives, and should lead us to challenge the adoption of periodisation from other jurisdictions. For example, the most violent of contemporary New Zealand protests – against the Springbok Tour of 1981 – comes well after the height of American and French protest. Similarly, the Bastion Point occupation and the “heavy-handed” state response (*The Dominion* May 26, 1978) also followed the height of overseas protest, leading one to wonder if the protest movement either temporally lagged behind other countries, or if other factors

were at play. In support of the latter thesis, it should be noted that both of the actions above gained notoriety in part because of state reaction, where predominantly coercive means were used to quell protest, and both occurred in election years. As the previous chapter indicated, the use of the repressive state apparatus is a defining feature of the period and Muldoon's tenure as Prime Minister. It certainly sensationalised dissident action. It is important to keep this in mind when considering both the extent and nature of contentious politics across political eras.

Importantly, New Zealand researchers such as Roper and Grey note the persistence of protest in New Zealand into the early 1990s (Roper 2010) at which point it declines until a steep drop off around 1995 (Grey 2008; 2010). Roper makes a further distinction in regards to the labour movement, where, until 1978 labour mounted an offensive and from 1978 onwards, its politics defended previous gains. To extend this typology to the political trends of the NSMs, we see effective pushes for gains until roughly 1987¹⁴, when the politics of NSMs begin to defend against the threats of neoliberalism.

The decline in contentious politics does not mark the end of the anti-poverty movement. Instead, anti-poverty groups actively engaged in contentious politics in the early 1990s and become more academically driven and focused on mediation and direct lobbying through research from the mid 1990s onward. This activity is most notable in groups such as CPAG and the Family Centre and various other church groups. Also, significant protest moments, such as the Hikoi of Hope detailed in Chapter 4, continued to raise the issue of poverty within New Zealand.

More recently still, the declined protest period seems to be coming to an end. Anti-globalisation and anti-capitalist protesters have been active in recent years around the world including within New Zealand. This protest challenges structural inequalities of the international economic-state system and also the structural inequalities within states. A detailed analysis of this protest remains outside of the scope of this project, yet it should be noted that in this protest we see the re-emergence of oppositional economic identities

¹⁴ 1987 is something of an arbitrary date, but at this point contestation of New Right policies appear more readily in newsprint (see Chapter 4), Māori protest state asset sales, and the largest feminist periodical, *Broadsheet*, mounts a sustained critique of neoliberalism.

demanding systemic change. From an optimistic left perspective, this is the re-emergence of a utopian politics that confronts the logic of the market.

What we see then, in New Zealand, is a period of intense protest that is first on the offensive and then the defensive, followed by a period of relatively little contentious politics that instead moves towards mediation and direct lobbying, or a pragmatic politics. This, in turn, seems to be giving way to reduced, yet more oppositional, contestation in the economic realm in the present day.

Types of demands: The transformation of the radical into the inclusionary

More striking than the level of protest in different moments are the types of demands that accompany them. In an oversimplified typology, one would note the prominence of radical demands, or those that re-imagine society, in the era of contentious politics, whereas in the later era these give way to defensive and inclusionary demands, or those that defend the social system against dismantling and that allow specific groups access to the current social system respectively. In New Zealand, this typology needs to be contextualised against institutional arrangements as well as a wider understanding of protest.

Jameson's categorisation of the 1968 moment as a period when "everything was possible" is apt in that demands actively challenged the basis of social organisation. For example, from the women's movement in New Zealand came demands to restructure the state and social life so that sexual differentiation no longer constituted a basis of labour division and social value (Dann 1985). Similarly, Māori demands challenged the legitimacy of the state and of capitalist relations, and anti-apartheid demands challenged ethnic differentiation as the basis of state, economic and social life (Walker 1990; Poata-Smith 1996). As a whole these demands constitute a radical re-imagination of social order.

The striking feature about these demands is their utopian quality; they go beyond minor revisions to attempt to pattern social life in markedly different ways. Also important is the heterogeneity of demands, even within coherent movements. Conflicting demands of the women's movement (Gillespie 1980; Coney 1993), or the contestation of tino rangatiratanga within Māoridom (Poata-Smith 1996), are apt examples. To this end, the method(s) of

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attaining radical change or any coherent political programme is ambiguous at best. Rather than programmatic, the protest era represents the utopian “dreams of popular culture” that “point to alternative social orders even if they do not define them” (Alexander 2005: 37, 38).

From the late 1990s such demands appear out of place as groups tend to argue for inclusion rather than “total revolution” (Boltanski 2002). For example, the Fifth Labour Government’s “closing the gaps” strategy (begun in 2000) aimed to “reduce the relative socioeconomic disparities that exist between Māori and Pacific Peoples and other New Zealanders” (Poata-Smith 2008: 102)¹⁵. As Humpage (2004) argues, the premise for inclusion in this instance “deflected” the radical re-imagination of social life through *tino rangatiratanga*. Equally, demands for inclusion into the labour market, schooling, and so on, overrode feminist demands for greater economic valuation of domestic labour – particularly important for the high rate of single mothers among Māori and Pacific Peoples. A pragmatic, rather than radical, approach is perhaps not surprising given that “closing the gaps” was initiated by the Labour Government, but here a further link between demands and protest eras becomes evident. By 1995 contentious protest activity largely gave way to political activity through sanctioned political channels (Grey 2008; 2010); as argued below, state institutions effectively scaled down political demands so that radical demands either became inclusionary or were, literally, edited out of departmental documents.

A further feature also changes the nature of demands: the institution of market principles within the state. The radical optimism of the new social movements gives way with the dismantling of the welfare state. In the 1987-1993 period in particular, demands become defensive, to save what was left of the social system, in health, education, social welfare, housing, and union power within the state. The effects of neoliberalism cannot be overstated in this regard. The rapid restructuring begun by “Rogernomics” and pursued through 1993 eclipses the previous utopian moment. The adoption of MMP marks the approximate end of radical restructuring but protest at this point remains mainly defensive. Even large-scale protest such as the Hiko of Hope draws on pre 1984 ideals (a quest for “real jobs”, a health care system that can be trusted, affordable housing and education, and wage and benefit levels above the poverty line) without extending into radical demands.

¹⁵ The government strategy is not synonymous with social movement demands, but contentious politics are more limited in this period, making a direct statement about non-institutional claims difficult (see below).

The broad shift from radical to inclusionary demands is also institutionalised in other ways. As Chapter 3 argued, sociological cultural studies increasingly focused on inclusion at the expense of systemic critique beginning in the 1980s. And even theories that first seemed radical became represented as inclusionary. For example, the radical politics of Laclau and Mouffe (2001) envisions broad political change in which society eliminates oppression and domination through new institutional forms. Later prominent users of Discourse Theory shift this understanding of what radical means. Glynos and Howarth, for example, explain that in a university setting, lecturers' demands for wages would not be radical, but their demands to include some previously excluded minority into the lecturer role would (Glynos & Howarth 2007: 115-116). Inclusion stands in for the radical project.

In popular culture, as well, the radical demands of the past have undergone something of a transformation. An example from Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum, is pertinent here as it attempts to establish kiwi identity in an era that "present[s] challenges to the representation of national culture" (Neill 2004: 181). The Slice of Heaven exhibition offers an explicit representation of the country and its self-understanding. As with other Te Papa exhibitions, protest and political unrest are given a prominent space in the development of contemporary New Zealand. Here, protest issues include Māori, women, gay and lesbian, anti-racism, and anti-nuclear demands, all of which contribute to who "we" (as a country) have become. Viewers are asked to "discover what united and divided us, and shaped our lives today" ("Slice of Heaven" 2011), and, as such, the nation is presented as a psychological coherent individual – "we" have "grown" through our collective past into our mature, present, day. The exhibition imbues these demands with significance then, not only in what they meant to people of the past, but also to how they have created the country of the present.

In "Slice of Heaven" the nation is presented as turbulent and split in the past but unified in the present – a construction of national identity that posits the present as a completed political project. To this end, the demands of women and homosexuals in the 1970s and 1980s are no longer urgent because "by the century's end... New Zealand had become more inclusive. 'They' had become part of 'us'" ("Diversity and civil rights", N.D.). Rather than a radical past that seems beyond representation today, museum patrons are urged to commemorate the fashion of the era as they are told to "Get Shopping!" ("Slice of heaven" 2011). The

political-cultural spirit of the past is lost as it is embraced (rather than understood as oppositional) and sold (literally) as part of the narrative of “now.” The radical challenges of the past, such as the disavowal of the institution of marriage, let alone the market, are not grasped on any level.

The point here is to note that moves from radical to inclusionary demands are found in empirical evidence and commentary. They are further reinforced by mythologizing (in Barthes’ (1993) sense) contestation in New Zealand, and supported by socio-cultural theory that has progressively tamed utopian aspirations for “alternative social orders” (Alexander 2005: 38). Again, it needs to be noted that recent protest globally seems to break from this trend even though it is not considered in any depth here.

The women’s, Māori and labour movements in New Zealand

The women’s, Māori, and Labour movements are treated very briefly in the following section to provide a basic overview of the trajectory of demands within the movements. A more thorough examination of the movements is included in Appendix A. This is not required for the coherence of the project, but includes additional information that I find fascinating.

Although the women’s movement challenged poverty in New Zealand, by the late 1970s the movement was “splintered and depleted” due to the cultural fragmentation of feminists along sexual and ethnic lines (Gillespie 1980: 99; Coney 1993: 57-58). The fracturing of the women’s movement threatened as early as 1973, as Māori, Pasifika, and working class women challenged gender as the primary means of domination (*Broadsheet* Mar 1973: 2; Aug 1973: 2-5, 7-12; Dann 1985: 72). With the institutionalisation of women’s demands through the Ministry of Women’s Affairs in 1984, the economic fracturing of identities became more apparent. Those committed to formal institutional channels tended to also focus on liberal feminist demands for access to and equality within labour markets, whereas socialist feminists tended to focus on poverty and other negative social outcomes that resulted from neoliberal restructuring (Kedgley 1993; Bradford 1993). Many feminists “retreated” from the spaces of neoliberalism in this period (Larner & Craig 2005). At the same time, state institutional channels edited out economic demands except where they conformed to

market values. For example, calls for improved support of single mothers and the introduction of a Universal Basic Income in the consultation report for the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women* (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2004a: 16) were undermined in the final action plan (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2004b). In the final document, references to single mothers and the Universal Basic Income disappeared altogether, and "support" through social assistance would focus on "reduc[ing] long-term social assistance dependency" and "encourage[ing] participation in the paid workforce" (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2004b). State institutional channels designed specifically for feminists thus proved ineffective in addressing poverty. The efforts of feminists to address poverty within local communities is detailed in the anti-poverty movement section below.

Unlike the women's movement, the Māori movement became less fragmented in the late 1970s as Māori Nationalism became the primary interpretation of tino rangatiratanga in Māoridom (Poata-Smith 2005: 214). This nationalism corresponds to Pearson's (2002) assertion that Māori assert their position as "mana whenua" or people of land in post-settler societies in the 1970s. Importantly, Pearson's (2002) argument notes this development in relation to cultural identities more generally: the distinction between Māori, white "indigenised" New Zealanders, and other ethnic groups. Importantly, these cultural identities become the basis for understanding disparity in New Zealand and are perpetuated by Māori, even as they threaten Māori political aspirations for self-governance. For example, in relation to poverty, Durie writes:

Māori participation in... the economy is best conceptualised as a population issue rather than one which is necessarily linked to Māori as indigenous people or as people with a distinctive culture and society. It goes without saying that in modern democracy, inequalities between populations – Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asians – should not be tolerated. The task is to ensure that all citizens are treated equitably and have genuine opportunities that will lead to fair outcomes. Disparities between populations are not acceptable in a nation that aspires to high standards of living for all its members. (Durie 2003: 96)

In this quotation, poverty (a result of participation in the economy) should not be linked to the distinctive culture of Māori. At the same time, however, disparity is articulated as differences between ethnicities ("populations") rather than people in a structural relation to

the economy. Such understandings of ethnicity and disparity are also structured through media. As Chapter 4 pointed out repeatedly, “the poor” were often conflated with Māori. The “brown-skinned children” and “mainly Māori marchers” were highlighted as representing the “moral issue” of poverty. Despite the enormous power of Māori social movements that continue to the present day, anti-poverty claims are unlikely to be effective unless economic disparity can be more clearly articulated as political-economic structuring that has uneven results for different ethnic populations.

The labour movement attempts to bridge cultural and gender divisions to make exactly this sort of claim. From the late 1980s onward, the union movement in particular has effectively incorporated and better represented women, Māori and Pacific Peoples (Franks, in CTU Oct 15, 2007). At the same time, the institutional power lost after 1990 coupled with the decision among the central union bureaucracy to pursue strategic unionism severely threatened union power (Bramble & Heal 1997). After the election of the Fifth Labour Government in 1999, the institutional arrangements for unions improved, but the moderate increases in union numbers did not increase union density significantly (Blackwood and colleagues 2006). More importantly, the CTU uncritically supported the advancements for workers resulting from the Fifth Labour Government’s policies (Kelly in CTU Apr 13, 2008) despite the maintenance of market-based policies in industrial relations (Nicholls 2002; Barry 2004), in positing work as the sole solution for poverty (Humpage & Craig 2008; O’Brien 2008; St John 2008), and in the continuation of insecure unemployment, such as through the continued restructuring of the public sector (Lodge & Hill 2011: 161). As such, the union movement has continued to operate predominantly within institutional confines despite the ineffectiveness of these confines for those excluded from employment or susceptible to market fluctuations due to insecure employment. The strategy of operating within the system was not new, but carried over from the conservative tendencies of the central union bureaucracy even in the militant 1970s (*Paperclip* Aug/Sep 1975; FOL Nov 1975). There are exceptions to this within the union movement, such as in Unite, a union specifically for “vulnerable workers” (*Mean Times* Nov 1987) that, according to the *Dominion Post*, has put “industrial militancy is back in style” (*Dominion Post* May 6 2006: 1). Regardless, the labour movement as a whole has not utilised radical tactics in recent years. Once again,

institutionally-sanctioned channels for addressing poverty have not resulted in significant advances, except for workers with families in relatively secure employment.

The anti-poverty movement

The social movements above have a number of commonalities. The Māori movement and the women's movement made radical demands capable of undermining the systemic creation and reproduction of poverty. Though not all anti-capitalist, and though some encapsulated middle as well as working class concerns, these demands nevertheless contained an element of class consciousness and attributed poverty to market forces alongside other forms of social domination. The mainstream labour movement wielded considerable power in its ability to undermine economic gains. The explicit demands of these groups against poverty can be collected together to form a significant part of what can be called "the anti-poverty movement" though, even combined, they do not exhaust that movement. A distinction needs to be made in that the anti-poverty movement is directly structured through the economic regulation of the state (employment policy, industrial relations, taxation and social welfare, for example), even as it is also influenced by cultural logic that promotes social and ethnic identities over economic identities.

The anti-poverty movement experienced similar waves of radical energy as other NSMs before taking a defensive stance against neoliberalism. But there are also differences between the anti-poverty movement and the movements discussed above. I argue that the anti-poverty movement grew out of community needs and, due to its lack of institutional footing, retreated into communities with the advent of neoliberalism to affect broader social change. This retreat secured the traditional base of the movement and allowed for contentious politics that were not strictly defensive. The focus on community and action from a community base in turn influenced changes to the state by the Fifth Labour Government. With improved institutional channels made available by the Fifth Labour Government the anti-poverty movement made gains for the poor but also lost space from which to make critique. Through all of this, the anti-poverty movement both capitulated to

and resisted the cultural logic that promoted social identities at the expense of economic identities. At the same time, the movement needs to once again articulate the structural production of poverty to effectively overcome the understanding of poverty as an individual or cultural issue.

The roots of a somewhat autonomous anti-poverty movement are most traceable through churches, as religious institutions in New Zealand provided historical means of poverty alleviation (McClure 1998) and an infrastructure to conduct charitable work. In more contemporary times, influenced by the New Social Movements from the 1970s onward, social justice concerns of church groups explicitly stood against poverty as well as other pressing political issues of the day. For example, the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ) contemplated issues such as poverty, employment, and the care of the aged alongside birth control and sexuality (PCANZ 2010); the Catholic Church focused on poverty, justice and international development (Caritas 2010); the Anglican Church – particularly through the Family Centre – advocated for social change, an end to poverty from the early 1980s onward. It later appraised political parties based on their policies in employment, health, incomes, and housing (Social Justice Commission of the Anglican Church 1999). The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, on top of other social work, began advocating for the poor through the production of counter New Right literature beginning in the early 1990s, such as in a 1993 report on child poverty that claimed “children are being victimised by government policies” (Jackman 1993). At the same time, churches and community groups conducted small scale research on poverty in New Zealand (Stephens and colleagues 1995) and ran social services such as public housing and food banks, thus working in the front line of poverty reduction.

Despite these roots, the anti-poverty movement is not limited to religious groups. Rather, at the beginning of the 1970s, when poverty was still largely unacknowledged in popular discourse, the groups and individuals that represented the poor seemed to lack coherent structure. “The poor” in the early 1970s were represented by individuals affected by insufficient superannuation, church groups that provided services for the poor, women’s groups advocating for single mothers, and so on. The anti-poverty movement appears fragmented, dispersed, and unable to move beyond local communities except where it is attached to institutions such as churches. Although the social movements discussed above

also suffered from fragmentation, the popular representations of poverty (Chapters 2 & 4) further divide the movement. This occurs through the lack of recognition of worker poverty and the moral distinctions made between the employed and unemployed. Further, the lack of official poverty measure in New Zealand and recurring claims that New Zealand does not have “real” poverty, allows the identification of poverty to seem subjective.

The 1972 Royal Commission sought to define poverty and give a voice for the poor, but it nevertheless failed to quantify poverty (Easton 1995), leaving the composition of the poor assumed and unqualified. Added to this, no state institution claimed responsibility for ‘the poor’. Rather, benefits seemed to be changed in an ad hoc manner during the 1970s and early 1980s, generally announced at Budget readings, the working poor sought redress through arbitration and industrial action, the elderly pressured politicians directly through lobby as did their representatives, the alternative labour movement of the community found financial support through the Department of Labour (Higgins 1997), and Pacific Peoples under threat of deportation found some support in unions (Task Force on Trade Union Education 1987: 18) but nevertheless encountered the institutions of police and immigration officials. The anti-poverty movement, then, consisted of a number of different groups and individuals that encountered varied forms of oppression and regulation.

The fragmentation of identities for the poor is equalled to their fragmented demands. On the inclusionary end, higher benefit rates to alleviate the strains of financial hardship have been a constant demand from 1968 onward: these can be accommodated without any changes to the more persistent discourses that link paid work to value and wealth. On the radical side, the UBI and other calls to end the wage system, radical Māori demands for an end to colonial-capitalist working relationships, and even the promotion of alternative work schemes to supplant the predominant wage system (Higgins 1997) are all significant, though it should be noted that the anti-poverty movement has never been uniformly behind any of these demands. Rather, its demands are heterogeneous, similar to the movements already discussed.

Despite the fragmentation of the movement, the implementation of key recommendations of the 1972 Royal Commission resulted in poverty reduction for a number of groups (McClure 1998). However, with increasing unemployment, restructuring and manufacturing closures during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the issue of poverty appeared to be urgent once again.

On one front, groups attempted to make poverty a political issue. The Wellington Unemployed Workers' Union publication, *Doledrums*, as an example, ran a slogan on the front page of its August 1983 magazine: "blame the system not the victim." On another front, demands calling for the "radical restructuring of the entire system of income support" (Grocott 1985: 2) altered previously class-ambiguous demands into explicit calls to end poverty. Importantly, the Grocott publication, commissioned by Presbyterian Support Services, serves as an indication of the increasingly radical role the church would take in regards to advocacy for the poor. Also importantly, the articulation of the UBI in anti-poverty terms (rather than against the male control of economic resources and for the valuation of female work as it stood in the Women's Rights Committee Report, 1975) effectively changed the nature of the claim, so that where it resurfaces in state literature such as the Benefit Reform document of the Ministerial Taskforce on Income Maintenance (1986) the guaranteed minimum income is neither universal nor targeting women in domestic work. Rather, it is considered for the maintenance of adequate income levels throughout society.

Alongside demands for the government to pursue job creation more vigorously (*Doledrums* Oct 1982), government and academic reports documented the negative social outcomes of redundancies and closures (Houghton 1982; Melser 1982; Nicholls and Piesse 1982; Peck 1985; Houghton, Wilson & Dixon 1987). These reports provided evidence of increases in poverty, although they were generally limited to specific communities. Government publications did not make radical demands or advocate for specific politics, but they nevertheless maintained a record of poverty that would later be taken up by church and community groups. For instance, "the rising tide of South Auckland redundancies" (Housing Official cited in Nicholls & Piesse 1982: 130) meant "increasing debts, defaults on mortgages and rents... [and] a constant worry over how to feed and clothe dependents" (Peck 1985: 25). These changes in the community were later noted as factors leading to the introduction of food banks over "feeding programmes" (MacKaye 1995: 1).

The explicit anti-poverty literature produced into the 1980s was predominantly class based. It focused on the inability of welfare capitalism to apportion financial shares for those in low paying and redundancy-stricken industries (i.e. the working class), and also on the growing unemployment affecting the same people. For example, the *People's Voice* noted the rise in unemployment affecting "over 12% of the working class," increases in working class

poverty, the lack of job creation through the wage and price freeze (of 1982-1984), the need for the jobless to organise into a “political force,” and the tendency for layoffs to “follow profits” (*People’s Voice* Jan 1984: 1; May 1984: 3; Jun 1984: 9; Jul 1984: 2). Publications such as *Doledrums* used less explicit class-based language, but nevertheless replicated the same type of message:

1982 started with a recession hanging dangerously round our necks. The Government told us to put another notch in our belts for the good of the economy, and at the same time handed out great fistfuls of “NZ dollar extinctus” to companies like Fletcher Challenge for making a fortune out of export incentives... it just gets worse.
(*Doledrums* Dec 1982: 1)

Women’s groups protesting and raising awareness over issues such as female redundancies, discrimination against female workers in times of recession, reductions in unemployment benefits, and threats to education and health similarly focused on the insufficiencies of the political economic system (Dann 1985: 23-25). Easton’s (1976) influential estimations of poverty similarly focused on the structuring of the employment and wages, although others that followed, such as Cuttance (1980) instead analysed poverty in relation to family size¹⁶. In all of this, a critique of political economic arrangements extends beyond the relative shares for beneficiaries to the structuring of economic relationships.

With the promise of relief for those most severely affected by the economic problems of the country, the anti-poverty movement had reason to be hopeful with the election of the Fourth Labour Government. But where the Māori and women’s movements were incorporated into the state and the union had an institutional investment in the Labour Party, there was no similar incorporation of the poor. To this end, child benefits were initially raised for low income families, but other benefits remained largely unchanged, the alternative labour movement shortly lost funding for its programmes, and the prospects for increased employment through liberalisation policies were treated sceptically by those within the movement (Higgins 1997). At the 1984 Economic Conference, an Unemployed and Beneficiaries Movement representative argued: “If to have growth and low inflation means

¹⁶ Poverty measurement trends in this period are hard to determine as the few researchers tended to have different foci. For example, Easton was far more concerned with wages and macroeconomics than Stephens and Waldegrave, not only in poverty measurement, but in other academic writing as well.

high unemployment and poverty, surely there is something wrong with the planning and decisions being made... both the unemployment benefit and wage rates need lifting considerably” (New Zealand Government 1984: 63-64). This contentious stance to the economic wisdom provided by key institutions from the middle of the 1970s onward also contrasts to the Federation of Labour’s response to Labour Party economic policy at the time (FOL Nov 1984). The lack of institutional home for the anti-poverty movement contrasts with the social movements discussed above.

Rather than institutionalisation of anti-poverty groups, the New Right appropriated some language of the movement but little else. In the first instance, radical demands such as the UBI were translated and transformed in government literature, so that rather than abolishing poverty by undermining the wage system (Grocott 1985) the UBI was presented alongside negative income tax as a solution to low earners, a proposal requiring paid employment for eligibility (Ministerial Taskforce on Income Maintenance 1986). Already in the 1985, the government conflated these very different proposals, using the language of the UBI proposal but not its content, as in the 1985 budget a “guaranteed minimum family income” applied strictly to “full time earners” (Douglas 1985: 14). Shortly after the Ministerial Taskforce on Income Maintenance was published, even this use of language disappeared in favour of the rhetoric of “freedom” and “responsibility” for “the people directly involved” in the welfare system (cf. Douglas 1987: 23).

A period of explicitly anti-poverty contentious politics ensued and continued strongly through the first years of the 1990s, both in defence of the social institutions that were built up during the post war era and in demands for poverty alleviation through employment. This contestation took three forms: mediation, direct action, and services for the poor. Amongst the many issues for the movement were housing, power costs, health care, benefit levels, benefit eligibility, legal advocacy for beneficiaries, labour rights and low cost essential services for the poor, the unemployed, and beneficiaries (*Fair Deal* 1994). Particular sects of the movement, such as Te Roopu Rawakare o Aotearoa – the Unemployed Workers Rights Centre (both nationally and the Auckland group in particular), focused on national-level politics and the influence of the economic elite on New Zealand policy. Targeted protest actions, such as unemployment marches in 1983 (*Doledrums* Aug 1983) and 1988 (*People’s Voice* Dec 1990: 35), a hunger strike in response to benefit cuts in 1991 (*Doledrums* Feb

1991), and the attempted occupation of the Business Roundtable alongside the picketing of the Treasury and the Reserve Bank in July 1990 (*People's Voice* Jul 1990: 23), accompanied these political aims.

According to Dannin (1997: 138), anti-poverty groups and those of the grassroots social movements filled a void left open by a lack of union leadership in the actions against the implementation of the ECA:

The Otago Coalition Against Benefit Cuts gradually moved its focus from public protests against Labour Government policies to opposing the December 19 [benefit reductions and the ECA] legislative package. Unions became one of the community groups that participated in the Coalition's work rather than being at the forefront of the opposition.

Similarly, in Palmerston North:

60 people from various groups met on December 18 to form the Peoples Alliance, a coalition of community and union groups. Its members included significant numbers of women, church groups, community aid agencies, [and] individual unionists and unions. (Dannin 1997: 138)

In both of these quotations, the power base of these groups stands out: they are community rather than institutionally based, a feature that informed anti-poverty action throughout the neoliberal period.

Here we see the extension and coming together of an explicitly anti-poverty movement focused on economic rather than other social identities that had been gaining force since the early 1970s. This coalescence of anti-poverty groups occurs in a period when traditional grassroots political spaces are under attack on two fronts. First, funding provided by the state is significantly reduced: social services and funding are cut, alternative work schemes have disappeared (Higgins 1997), and beneficiaries are held responsible for their plight. Added to this, the political power of organized labour is reduced, Māori demands for restitution are funneled through the Treaty of Waitangi Claims process, and the women's movement is destabilized through the incorporation of some demands, increased internal economic division (Statistics New Zealand 1998), fragmented feminist identities, and changing

workforce participation for women (Ongley 2011). As a result, two key political changes for anti-poverty groups occur. Alongside contentious politics aimed at a variety of state institutions, organizations intentionally devolve into smaller community-centered entities that mediate between the organizations and the state, and, simultaneously, organizations become explicitly political in attempts to create social spaces outside of the mainstream economy.

An example of this was the establishment of People's Centres in Auckland and Wellington. These provided the poor with low cost medical and dental services and, along with other advocacy centres throughout the country, provided mediation between those in vulnerable positions and the state institutions with whom they came into contact (*Mean Times* Nov 1989; *PAC* Jul 1991; *Fair Deal* Mar 1993; *Declaration* (1) 1994). This mediation also resulted in legal action. For example, the Auckland People's Centre took the Ministry of Social Welfare to court for restricting the discretionary benefit and won (*Mean Times* Feb/Mar 1995: 5; Apr/May 1995: 6). Direct actions against specific policies and changes within the state were supplemented with calls for personal statements from the poor to be used in lobbying members of parliament and in media publicity (*PAC* Jul 1991: 3; *Mean Times* Feb 1992: 3). Mediation (mainly in the form of newsletters) also becomes more prominent at this time. Within the alternative media of the anti-poverty movement, a number of goals arise: serving a "politically disenfranchised" community and drawing it together (*Doledrums* Oct 1982; *PAC* Jul 1991: 2-3), broadening the base of support for the poor (*Fair Deal* Mar 1993: 6, 18; Summer 1994: 7, 13), at times with state-level aspirations (*Fair Deal* Mar 1993: 44; *Te Roopa Rawakere*, all issues), and providing coherent political direction. In some of these publications, the language of economic classes is prominent. For example, in the *Poverty Action Committee Newsletter* (July 1991: 2), "the pattern emerging from the bi-partisan [electoral] process cements in a class structure." In even more blatant terms, the penultimate issue of *Declaration* (Jun 1996: 3) explained the economic system in an article entitled "The class struggle."

Drawing on the strength of grassroots foundations for the social movements of the previous decades, the anti-poverty movement localizes at the same time that it mounts state opposition. To this end, the Auckland Poverty Action Coalition outlines the disbursement of larger "Auckland" groups to the smaller regions: Beachhaven/Birkdale, Glenfield, New Lynn, Onehunga, Otahuhu, Orakei, Henderson, Glen Innes, Roskill, and Panmure (*PAC* Jul 1991).

But with little movement within the state to better the lives of the poor – for example, with the state retroactively changing the law to allow for rent increases to state houses that were deemed illegal (Murphy 2003) – community-based politics predominated. This can be seen not only in the regional identification of protest groups in archival photographs but also in explicit calls for social organization that bypass the state and operate on the level of community.

Here we have one of the most interesting political developments of the period that reaches back into the new social movements: attempts to circumvent the state and its institutional representation (such as party-political organization or state-sanctioned wage negotiation processes). From the 1970s, the women's movement showed "political preference for... a reduction in state power and control" (Aitken 1980: 11), and thus used political pressure groups that were community rather than party based (*Paperclip* Aug/Sep 1975: 5) even if official political parties had to be won over on specific issues (Dann 1985: 46). Further, initiatives for women "on the ground" tended to remain outside of mainstream channels (Dann 1985: 40-41), just as labour demands from the 1970s bypassed sanctioned channels to negotiate awards. Similarly, the anti-poverty movement aspired to "create a wide ranging array of positive centres" as alternatives to the mainstream, with the aim of "building *outside* the existing 'structures' and *transforming* them" (*Fair Deal* Mar 1993, emphasis added). *Mean Times* similarly advocated community ownership of business (Jun 1993), "concrete economic and political self-determining alternatives" (Oct/Nov 1993: 12), and "the potential to develop a bank, credit union or bonds scheme to support infrastructure in the community economic sector" (Apr/May 1994: 6). Such sentiment did not preclude applying political pressure through formal channels or addressing the issue of macroeconomic policy – these also featured prominently in anti-poverty literature. However, the movements "on the ground," based in services for the poor, aimed to redistribute political power from the central system to the social capillaries.

The use of Foucauldian terminology is apt here as there is a sense in the alternative media for a short time that power resides outside of the state and within the social practices of the people. But the desire to operate outside of the mainstream to circumvent and challenge what are traditionally considered essential sites of politics does not constitute a shift in power. The retreat from neoliberalism into the community spaces "outside" of it (Larner & Craig 2005)

marks an attempt to privilege discursive politics over formal politics. The spaces provide a vantage point from which oppositional politics can be launched, yet the extension of the state into communities in this period was significant, not in the least because the “reduction” in service provision by the state meant increasing economic discipline of communities and those that served them through contractualism. In effect, this discipline thwarted links between and within communities (Craig & Porter 2006: 226). In other words, the anti-poverty movement drew oppositional political power from communities in the 1990s, but without greater economic and infrastructural resources, this power could not achieve the desired social transformation. More problematic for the movement, the establishment of services for the poor both satisfied the needs of the community but also the needs of the government as they reduced state support of the poor. Recognition of this compromised position for anti-poverty groups can be found in social movement literature where, for example, *Doledrums* (Jun/Feb1991: 3) noted:

It’s a really sad statement when unemployed workers unions are having to provide things like access to haircuts... let alone needs like medical attention.

This grudging acceptance of responsibility for the poor while simultaneously advocating for significant political and economic changes within the country seems contradictory, but both speak to the earnest desire to alleviate strain on the poor. Similarly, the publication of tips for job interviews (*Doledrums* Jun/Feb 1991: 3) addresses an individual approach to poverty reduction. The contradictions within the service provision model resulted in the AUWRC advocating a “foodbank strike” by foodbanks to push the issue of food insecurity back onto government (*Mean Times* Sep 1994: 4).

Two outcomes resulted from the retreat into spaces left open by neoliberalism. The literal retreat to geographical communities was accompanied by the establishment of intellectual communities with more access to resources. The geographical communities allowed for mobilization in actions such as the Hikoi of Hope while the intellectual communities, as will be discussed shortly, began an extensive moral/intellectual critique of the New Right through mediation. Because there were no incorporating state institutions through which contestation could be channeled, contentious responses were necessary and available to anti-poverty campaigners. The generation of severe inequality (poverty and affluence) through economic

and state mechanisms corresponded to a lack of mechanism for *political* disciplining, even if economic discipline was still determined through state infrastructure as well as wage and welfare structures. Political spaces were both created and limited by the disavowal of state institutional responsibility. The lack of institutional representation, in some senses, “liberated” anti-poverty actors even as other social movements became mired in institutional paths for airing claims. For example, *Mean Times* (Apr/May 2004: 6) advocated “taking back control of strategic assets” to improve “people-based wealth and job creation.” Such demands needed to be met because “we believe that democracy isn’t worth anything unless we have economic democracy.” Although these demands could not be made through state-institutional channels, neither could they be reduced to calls for targeting employment policies.

While newsletters from the movement waned by the middle of the 1990s, the movement itself did not desist or lose power. Rather, where other social movements remained primarily defensive, the anti-poverty movement began an offensive with direct appeal to the national electorate to reduce poverty in the 1996 election. The 1999 election followed on the heels of the much publicized Hikoi of Hope from the year earlier. While the newspaper editorial coverage of the Hikoi was predominantly negative and its demands ridiculed (see Chapter 4) it continued to promote the issue of poverty and provoked response (rather than responding to) state authorities. As a response, the Labour Party released an assessment of inequality in New Zealand in 1998 that prefigured their evidence based policy approach employed when they next governed. Important to the anti-poverty movement were three key acknowledgements: that benefit levels were “inadequate”; that government needed to be more active in improving employment conditions; and that the voluntary sector needed further economic resources so that NGOs would not be “forced into contracts... [where] they have to carry out government defined priorities” (New Zealand Labour Party 1998: loose leaf). Regardless of the carry-through of these statements, the direction taken here is markedly different from the proposed code of social and family responsibility (the corresponding National coalition approach to poverty) where beneficiaries, rather than market conditions, were held responsible for poverty (CPAG 1998b).

The anti-poverty movement also made gains during this period through an increasing confrontation with the intellectual authority of the New Right. On one front, activist-

academics such as Brian Easton, Charles Waldegrave, and Robert Stephens continued to promote poverty measurement projects and advance primary research into poverty identification in New Zealand (cf. Easton 1995; 1997; Stephens and colleagues 1995; Waldegrave and colleagues 1997). On another, concerns over child poverty began to take precedence in popular media through the efforts of church groups (see Jackman 1993) and the establishment of the Child Poverty Action Group. Combined, the two fronts began to present an intellectual and moral argument against poverty.

This challenge to intellectual authority followed the New Right's techniques and adhered to the spaces reserved for "proper" political dialogue. First, it relied very strongly on mediation, and, second, it aligned to policy rather than party. CPAG, for example, made use of press releases critical of government policy to bring to light issues of poverty. These focused on housing, healthcare, inequality resulting from changes to taxation, and child poverty generally in 1996 (CPAG 1996a; 1996b; 1996c); government required savings proposals, healthcare, housing, policies generally addressing child poverty, and discrimination against beneficiaries in tax credits in 1997 (CPAG 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 1997d); and the need for a universal child benefit, concerns over changes to the social security bill, housing, and misleading IRD advertisements in 1998 (CPAG 1998a; 1998c; 1998d; 1998e).

In 1999 the focus of mediation changed considerably with the election of the Fifth Labour Government. At this point the critical dimension of the mediation was maintained with continued "backgrounders" on health, incomes policy, and so on, but the relationship posited between anti-poverty groups and the Labour-led Government was hopeful rather than hostile. To this end, the incoming government was given more leeway than the National Governments and coalitions of the 1990s, but with the explicit condition that poverty reduction be addressed:

While no government can reverse the damage of the past decade overnight, the impact of policies on children must now be at the forefront of the minds of policymakers. CPAG reminds the government that New Zealand is less generous in giving financial assistance to families than almost every other developed country.... As a result we have evident and alarming child poverty and its consequences, such as many preventable childhood diseases, on a scale unimaginable twenty years ago. (CPAG 1999: 1)

In this initial document to the government, CPAG outlined the areas most urgent in addressing poverty, but also, significantly, praised the government for key promises made during the election campaign including “independence of the Commissioner for Children” and “wide consultation on policy development and evaluation” (CPAG 1999: 1-2).

Here we see political response to critique, both in policy and governance, and a reciprocal temporary cessation of critique. However, the anti-poverty movement differed from earlier periods in that it did not align itself strictly to the Labour Party. Importantly, and in line with New Right techniques, the anti-poverty movement became more policy and less party focused. This is evident in the mediated critique of the WFF package in popular press and academic writing (see St John & Craig 2004; St John 2005; CPAG 2006a; St John 2006; Wynd 2006) but also in initial challenges to the Fifth Labour Government (St John 2001) and the legal challenge to the WFF working tax credit by CPAG (CPAG 2011). While some anti-poverty actors maintained a less critical tone, focusing instead on the gains made from 2000 onward (Waldegrave, Stephens & King 2003; Schouten Nov 15, 2004), there is a definite shift from the pre-market era (and later for other some social movement groups) where left social movements generally put their hopes in the Labour Government and limited contestation during periods of Labour rule. For example, the *Mean Times* (Feb/Mar 1994: 7) published Alliance and Labour Party policies meant to appeal to the unemployed, but explicitly refused to align with any political party. Similarly, the critical position taken to WFF working tax credit by CPAG did not preclude contribution to further policy initiatives and general government goals in housing, health (CPAG 2006b), budget priorities (CPAG 2006c), and a range of specific policy issues, just as advances in housing, health and education throughout Labour’s term did not limit CPAG’s critique of its income redistribution through WFF.

Rather than party-based, anti-poverty mediation (and here we can extend beyond CPAG, the Alternative Welfare Working Group, and the Family Centre to also include academics commenting on social policy who are not affiliated with these groups, such as Jane Kelsey, Brian Easton, Maureen Baker, Louise Humpage, and others) is generally critical of initiatives that exacerbate income inequality and that redistribute wealth to the middle and upper classes at the expense of the poor. In all of this work, persistent focus on economic equality, negative social outcomes, and poverty mark a growing body of literature to rival the New

Right. Here we see the attempt to maintain political independence in spaces that were generally found to be weak during the radical market shifts of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Rather than see this movement as directly contesting state power, it is more useful to note the critical tensions between the formal state apparatus and anti-poverty groups. As already mentioned, the Labour Party promised to rebalance social and economic priorities so that social outcomes improved for the poor. The Fifth Labour Government's promise of consultation and community engagement had significant material effects including the institution of community workers into the formal machinery of government and broad-based consultation on policy (Larner & Craig 2005; CPAG 1999). Further, significant critical research that was previously independent of government – performed by community groups and academics – became a government function, directed by the Ministry of Social Development. As an example, the previously oppositional work of Stephens and Bradshaw (1995), pointing out the lack of family support in New Zealand compared to other OECD countries, was updated (Stephens 2003) and became foundational in the WFF package. Appeals for poor children – most closely associated with CPAG and church demands – gained institutional priority through the Agenda for Children (MSD 2002). Titles of research produced by the MSD such as 'New Zealand Living Standards: Their Measurement and Variation, with an Application to Policy' (Jensen, Krishnan, Spittal, & Sathiyandra 2003) and 'Working for Families: The Impact on Child Poverty' (Perry 2004), mirror those produced by those previously and currently oppositional to market led initiatives.

Added to these changes in promoting an alternative intellectual authority, community development in the social development state, with its tensions between promoting subaltern needs and quelling contestation (see the section on the women's movement, above), acts as a similar extension of the state into 'oppositional' territory. These shifts can be seen in positive or pejorative terms, as incorporation or compromise, but this tends to undervalue the differences between moments of state extension. Unlike other institutional arrangements that correspond to declining advocacy, the anti-poverty movement has maintained distance from the state due to two factors. Intellectual advocacy has not subsided despite state extension into this area. At the same time, the political spaces of poverty contention have not been thoroughly incorporated by the state due the continuation of market-based prescriptions. However, since the election of Labour in 1999, advocacy from these spaces has been

primarily through sanctioned channels (popular media and government processes) rather than visibly contentious methods. This continues to the present day, where the intellectual output of the Alternative Welfare Working Group was very active and much more visible in popular press. At the same time, a number of groups published literature to highlight the continuing problems of poverty to the incoming National Government in 2008 (Caritas 2008; Presbyterian Support Otago 2008; New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services 2008). Whether this tendency towards mediation speaks to broader declining trends in protest or reflects a fundamental shift in the state's response to poverty is, at this point, difficult to ascertain.

Despite intentional moves to communities to escape the neoliberal state and despite continued concerns over the economic situation of the poor, the anti-poverty movement was also influenced by the cultural logic of the period. This influence is evident in two significant ways: first, the poverty research tends to remove class from its analysis, and, related to this trend, social identities in the post 1990 era gain more prominence.

The first of these movements begins with a more comprehensive poverty research programme in the 1990s. The attribution of poverty to class position disappears in favour of attribution to social identities. As an example, where Easton (1976; 1985) notes the incidence of poverty in low wage workers that affect Māori to a much greater degree than Pakeha, Stephens (2000: 83) later argues that “the real issue for social exclusion in New Zealand is ethnic disparities.” The shift is empirically grounded – ethnic divisions in income grew rapidly from the 1980s onward – but at the same time, the decimation of working class occupations due to restructuring coupled with reduced stability for working class jobs during periods of economic fluctuation are minimised (Ongley 2011). Poverty research follows broader trends of writing out class from accounts of poverty in favour of identifying specific groups that need to be targeted. The literature produced within the state bureaucracy (see MWA 2002; 2004b; 2005; Jensen and colleagues 2003) is similar to critical academic literature where “some of this difference [in the ethnic composition of poverty] can be explained by age structure of the population, [but] most is explained by the larger family size, poorer educational attainments and higher unemployment rates among Māori and Pacific Peoples” (Stephens 2008: 36-37). While the literature is accurate in noting the high levels of poverty among ethnic groups, it nevertheless fails to note the structural commonalities across groups

which amount, in large part, to positions within the labour force and the structure of the labour market.

The equally significant rhetorical move in anti-poverty advocacy – from “poverty” to “child poverty” – similarly follows the cultural logic of the era. On one level “child poverty” removes the discussion of poverty from the psychological and pathological terms used by the New Right and, instead, appeals to a general (non-poor) population by pointing out that children suffer through no fault of their own. This appeal is evident in CPAG’s website home page:

A child's potential is a terrible thing to waste.

Child Poverty Action Group is an independent charity working to eliminate child poverty in New Zealand. CPAG works on behalf of the 230,000 New Zealand children whose well-being and future is compromised by their meagre standard of living. (CPAG 2011)

The difficult and likely fruitless battle over categories of worth is superseded. But on another level, the class structure that underpins poverty and that is articulated in anti-systemic terms in the earlier period gives way: adult poverty tends to disappear from view. For example, in its “core objectives” CPAG aims to “promote better policies for children and young people... to promote awareness of the causes and consequences of child poverty...” (CPAG 2011). As McKeen (2004) argues, other identities (such as feminists) that suffer poverty tend to be excluded from poverty talks as a result. Rather than a re-articulation of economic identities, the focus is on a specific group. This fits into the market logic of the social development state where improving outcomes is a targeted rather than a genuinely universal project.

In this regard, the language of “rights” and “inclusion” trump more radical claims, even as groups such as CPAG attribute increases in poverty to market-based policies. For example, CPAG demanded that the working tax credit to be extended to beneficiaries on the basis that children of beneficiaries were being discriminated against (CPAG 2011). St. John’s explanation of CPAG’s mission makes this position clear:

The rise of the children’s movement in New Zealand and overseas reflects not only the increased awareness that children have unalienable rights as citizens but also a

growing appreciation that a failure to invest adequately in children carries long term social and economic costs. (St. John 2006)

The language of social investment in this quotation mirrors Third Way policy discourse generally (Lunt, O'Brien & Stephens 2008: 4) and lacks any radical transformative demand. This shift in discourse is mirrored by Presbyterian Support Otago, where a central problem in poverty reduction remains “significant barriers to entering or returning to the workforce” (2008: 3). Again, and significantly, class identities and demands are reduced. A paradox ensues: the anti-poverty movement after 1990 speaks about economic issues, but largely follows rather than challenges the market-oriented hegemony of post 1984 New Zealand politics.

However, this adoption of market-oriented explanations for poverty are not absolute. The Structural Poverty Group in Christchurch (2011) argues that targeted approaches to reducing poverty are ineffective:

Poverty has been compared to a game of musical chairs, in which there are ten players but only eight chairs. Many scholars, politicians and social service providers focus on the two players left out when the music stops, and try to help them be better players... We see this as a useful metaphor for life in a context of structural poverty, where there are always losers. Our aim is to suggest options for fairer systems.

In this articulation of poverty as systemic, we see a similar approach to anti-globalisation protests and, more recently, occupy protests. The former of these has links to anti-poverty concerns over wealth distribution, and the use of political and economic power, but – at least at the level of representation – remains detached from domestic poverty issues even as it contests the structuring of wealth and poverty. The latter more directly challenges domestic structures that determine distributions of wealth and power. Its development, demands, and outcomes remain open at this time.

Conclusion

The anti-poverty movement arose out of community-based action and political organisation. Like the Māori and women's movements, the anti-poverty movement at times promoted, but also contested the cultural logic of the period: the prioritisation of social over economic identities. This is in part because of the uneven distribution of poverty amongst social groups, but also due to the promotion of social identities for thinking about poverty in newsprint media and state institutions. However, critique that understands poverty as systemically produced through political-economic arrangements persists. This indicates that the cultural logic of the period – or at least its institutionalisation in popular media and the state – is an area of contestation rather than a permanent feature of the political landscape.

In particular, continued attempts to articulate the capitalist structuring of poverty work against articulations of poverty as an issue based primarily on ethnicity, gender, or age. These articulations challenge the translation of economic demands into market logic, where groups need help to “catch up,” but where gross inequality among all groups in society remains untouched. At the same time, the displacement of economic identities since the early 1980s remains prominent in much academic poverty measurement literature, where measurement projects compare groups. In these projects, one gets a sense of social stratification, but not of the systemic production of disadvantage or the limited outcomes of targeted policies for poverty in society as a whole.

The way that non-economic identities were institutionalised within the state also reduced the possibility for articulating radical economic demands. As the 1990s progressed, the social movements of the previous decades generally followed more sanctioned channels of political contestation. Not only did radical demands appear increasingly out of place after the 1980s, but, in popular accounts, they became transformed into demands for inclusion. This transformation is connected to both the cultural logic of the period and the institutional arrangements that channel demands. The explicit anti-poverty movement varied significantly from the other movements analysed, however, as it lacked popular representation in electoral politics and withdrew to the community during the most stringent period of neoliberalism. Its re-emergence as a political force contributed to the Fifth Labour Government's reappraisal of public management and social policy. Despite these changes to the state, however, the anti-poverty movement did not become fully incorporated by the state, nor attached to any one party. Rather, the movement has remained critical, partly due to the continued promotion –

by major parties – of market solutions for the problem of poverty. More recently still, a newly emerging protest movement explicitly combats the cultural logic of the period by relying on economic identities and systemic critique while refusing to limit its engagement to prescribed channels of political dissent.

At the end of Chapter 3 I argued that class had to be reintroduced into the analysis of poverty if we are to understand the functioning of the state and the relative benefits and risks to different social groups. In this chapter I have tried to make clear that the cultural logic that promotes cultural over economic identities weakened anti-poverty criticism of the political-economic system, both internally within social movements, and as demands travel through formal political channels. Beyond the systemic production of class, the anti-poverty movement also requires a reintroduction of economic identities into the lexicon of critique.

Conclusion

In critical state and social movement literature commentators note that the political acceptance of poverty coincides with a shift in cultural understandings of poverty in New Zealand, much as it has in other parts of the developed world (Easton 1996; Wood & Rudd 2004: 120; Roper 2005a: 142; O'Brien 2008b:81; O'Brien and colleagues 2010). Most obviously, "dependency" and "personal responsibility" feature in both government and popular discourse at the moment when the state no longer pursues full employment and, instead, becomes oriented to individual accumulation at the expense of the majority. Shifts in discourse occur alongside the redistribution of wealth in New Zealand due to the liberalisation of the economy, regressive taxation, reduced benefit levels, and decreased labour protection. On the surface, the connection between cultural understandings of poverty and macroeconomic eras is undeniable, and yet this connection is too easily read as indicative of a causal relationship between cultural understandings and political change.

In this dissertation, I have complicated the above narrative to re-evaluate the interaction of culture and politics in relation to poverty in New Zealand, and to critically engage with cultural studies. I did this in three stages. First, I demonstrated that the equation of shifts in the discourses of morality with neoliberalism oversimplifies the relationship between cultural meanings and political outcomes. Two discourses – the poverty-free myth and the use of deserving and undeserving codes – occurred through both Keynesian and neoliberal eras, and in both eras obscured poverty, or, at least the causes of poverty. Both discourses demonstrated, in different ways, that the neoliberal use of moral codes was not new, even though the political responses to poverty changed. These also elucidated points where the Keynesian welfare state, though often mythologised for its generosity, failed to acknowledge material deprivation among certain groups.

The purpose here was not to vilify the Keynesian state or minimise the differences between state eras. Rather, it questioned the links between the cultural understandings of poverty and material outcomes. From this starting point I then critiqued sociological cultural studies to come to an appropriate analytical strategy for considering politics and culture in relation to poverty in New Zealand. I put forward three different sites, or spaces, of analysis: mediation,

regulation, and critique. To operationalise this analysis, these sites were reduced in scope to consider print media, the institutional compromises of the state, and anti-poverty movements. I will return, in a moment, to the arguments that led me here in more detail.

The third stage of the dissertation analysed these sites. In this section I argued that due to the emerging power of New Social Movements in the 1970s, the state institutionalised social movement identities. At the same time, class and economic identities were marginalised both within the NSMs and state institutions. Print media supported this shift in identities by promoting psychological and ethnic identities for the poor and simultaneously constructing its audience as an undifferentiated group with common interests. The three sites together resulted in a “cultural logic” where, despite economic polarisation to the detriment of the lower and middle classes from 1980-2004, economic identities continued to be marginalised (in state institutions, popular representations, and, to some extent, in the social movements examined) in favour of social and ethnic identities. The persistence of this cultural logic is notable in Chapters 5 and 6, where today it continues to structure critique and state responses to poverty.

Alongside this cultural logic, I demonstrated that the compromise between capital and social groups within the state changed significantly. Using Gramsci’s (1971) terms, I argued that after 1993 New Zealand entered a new hegemonic era – an era where the distribution of wealth continues to favour the economic elite at the expense of lower income earners. Politics in this era is made more stable through consent from subordinate classes. Equally, this period can be described using Mitchell’s (2005) understanding of the state in that the “porous” boundaries between political and civil society appear, once again, to be solid after a period in which groups such as the Business Roundtable seemed to have undue access to government processes. Using either Gramsci and Mitchell, I wish to point out that the organisation of the state became more democratic, and contestation within political society narrowed. We can describe the post 1993 period as a market-oriented hegemony, as the regulation of the political economy favours private accumulation and the polarisation of wealth to the benefit of the upper class.

In the transition period from 1984-1993 and the hegemonic period that followed, the newspapers I examined distinguished between legitimate and illegitimate political action.

Direct mediation and state channels (through formal representation, for example) were legitimate, whereas protest over poverty was generally ignored, or advocates for the poor were represented as illegitimate representative of the poor. Within state institutions during the same period, economic demands that challenged the valuation of work or the market structuring of wages were either ignored or transformed into demands for greater market opportunities. Anti-poverty movements struggled against sanctioned politics in all eras, but in the post 1984 period sanctioned state channels effectively rearticulated economic demands into demands for inclusion within the market system. This re-articulation was a key feature of state institutions regardless of the party in power. In this we see a disconnection between regulation within the state (the production of income disparity) and the mediation of identities (the promotion of non-economic identities).

Sociological cultural studies and the return of ideology as a critical concept

In addition to empirical findings, the investigation into poverty allows for some comment on sociological cultural studies, and in particular, the critique I put forward in Chapter 3. I return to this critique here by identifying three trends in sociological cultural studies that, I argue, hinder the analysis of poverty. First, the dedifferentiation of institutional types alongside the overvaluation of culture. Second, the treatment of culture as inseparable from the material alongside “shallow” and “deep” cultural analyses. Third, the politics of sociological cultural studies.

The dedifferentiation of institutional types and the overvaluation of culture both point towards the tendency of cultural determinism in cultural studies. The sites of examination in this dissertation (the state, newspaper media, and critical actors) aimed to balance this tendency by considering various aspects of cultural, political, and economic influences on poverty. Throughout, ideological, state, economic, and social power remained in tension rather than strictly determined or determining. The institutional structuring of the state, for example, corresponds to critique on one level, but excludes aspects of that critique on another in order to pursue conditions for capitalist accumulation. The incorporation of Māori through the Treaty of Waitangi settlements process stands out as a good example of this. Although the extension of Treaty of Waitangi settlements marks undeniable advances for Māori, the

institutional arrangement of the claims process neglects the vast majority of Māori in a time of growing economic disparity between and within ethnic groups. The channelling of Māori protest through the Treaty Claims process demonstrates the effective dampening of opposition from the previous (pre-1984) era and the limits of using institutional means of redress alone. At the same time, the rhetoric of Māori development and the importance ascribed to Treaty claims cannot be attributed to a one-sided influence of an economic elite.

Again, different forms of power were considered in tension, and, to continue the example of Māori critique of the state, ideological power was also shown to be important, in the structuring of state institutions, the consolidation of Māori nationalism (the *tangata whenua* that emerged alongside the “indigenisation” of Pakeha) and, also, as an identity that both resisted labels of impoverishment and made claims based on the disparity between Māori and other ethnic groups. The consistent cultural categorisation of the undeserving poor as “brown-skinned” reinforced the attribution of disparity to ethnicity. At the same time, it challenged the establishment of class identities *within* Māoridom by presenting Māori as beneficiaries (the undeserving poor), in opposition to “taxpayers” both of whom were presented as economically undifferentiated.

In all of this, regulation, ideology, and critique are in tension: no single aspect strictly determines outcomes. Rather, for the state as a whole, capital accumulation remains the primary goal. But individual state institutions respond to and attempt to incorporate emerging social power, with sometimes contradictory effects. Mediating institutions – through the determination of legitimate politics – align with the state in periods of institutional stability, but contest the state in periods of instability; and social movements operate in tension between sanctioned politics and developing spaces “outside” of sanctioned politics. In all of these, I have demonstrated that cultural meaning and political processes contribute to, challenge, and disrupt one another.

My second area of argument concerns the extent to which cultural meaning should be analysed as synonymous with material life. In brief, the “depth” model of Western Marxism allows culture to be structured by other aspects of social life, such as politics or the economy. As such, analysis of the material could reveal interests and power structures that benefit from the (mis)representation of social life. In the poststructuralist moment these concerns become

displaced with the analysis of discourses, in which there can be “no possibility of fixing an ultimate literal sense for which the symbolic would be a second and derived plane of signification” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 98). This “shallow” model does not allow for analysis of intentional misrepresentation, or the concealment of interests. New American and French cultural sociologies retreat from the “shallow” model, but their respective analyses nevertheless focus on the importance of actor interpretation over a “depth” model of culture. Structuring that runs counter to actor interpretation (economic or political structuring rather than cultural structuring) is refuted. I have argued throughout this dissertation that surface analysis is not, on its own, sufficient to gain a sociological perspective of cultural meaning, at least in relation to poverty in New Zealand.

As an example, the economic crises that underpin political attacks on single mothers, the unemployed, radical unionists, and Pacific Peoples indicate that the underlying structuring of these identities cannot be considered in relation to the cultural representation of conflict surrounding the identities. Specifically, the racist representation of Pacific Peoples in the National Party’s immigration rhetoric (1975-1976 in particular) cannot be divorced from economic recession. Such an assertion does not deny the specificity of domination, or the importance of the contest over deportation, but refuses to allow this specificity to stand in for the sum of cultural sociological analysis. The depth model is also useful in Chapters 4 through 6 of the dissertation, where I draw attention to the cultural logic that effaces class identities in favor of social identities. My work here does not amount to hand-wringing over the ineptitude of the working class to understand its interests. Rather, it points out that the dominant cultural logic – that informs institutional structures within the state, media reporting, and the identities of various social movements – also permits the transformation of radical claims into inclusionary claims, particularly where these claims are economic. Again, the purpose here is not to diminish the importance of non-economic identities, but to note that, in tension with state and media, these have become detrimental to addressing poverty in any systemic manner. The crux of the issue is that poverty is always presented in social and ethnic guises: as a problem of single parenthood, of Māori, of educational attainment, of family size, and so on. If we continue to examine social division from a “shallow” perspective, the question of poverty remains divorced from the economic structuring of society.

My third argument corresponds to the politics of cultural studies. In Chapter 3 I argued that sociological cultural studies increasingly distanced itself from capitalist critique, and also increasingly valued liberal democratic norms over more radical political projects. The affinities between sociological cultural studies and the cultural logic noted in this project are undeniable, as are the affinities between the decline in radical politics and the political positions of the theories. But I would like to do more than simply point out cultural-temporal influences on these theories. I will return to sociological cultural theory for a moment, in particular to class analysis and the concept of ideology.

In recent academic literature, the work of Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) and Steensland (2006; 2009) stand out as potential revivals of capitalist critique and a political critique of structurally determined poverty in cultural studies. Boltanski and Chiapello detail how the “new spirit of capitalism” compromises previous gains to the working class, particularly through reduction in employment security; Steensland, on the other hand, argues that “categories of worth” discourage help for the poor as well as serve the necessities of capitalism. In both, ideological structures punish the poor compared to the rich, yet the authors refuse the “dominant” or “capitalist class” ideology hypothesis. For Boltanski and Chiapello this is because capitalism is “absurd” for both classes, and because “the strong as well as the weak” rely on the New Spirit of Capitalism to understand their position in the world (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006: 11). Steensland similarly refuses the dominant ideology thesis because “people of all ideological stripes” invoked the same categories of worth; moreover, economic interests are not the only “real” interests of people (Steensland 2008: 235-236).

Both of these positions miss something of the value of a western Marxian understanding of ideology. First, ideology permeates social life. As both Gramsci and Althusser contend, ideology presents the world as a coherent and understandable place, and to do so, it cannot belong to some actors and not others. In this sense it acts as something of a world-view that allows people to make sense of their life situations. This does not mean that it is uncontested, but that it sets out coordinates that allow us to interpret the world. In this view, the “new spirit of capitalism” and “categories of worth” are already operating in the realm of ideology.

But equally important to the world-view aspect of ideology is its ability to mask social relations, the exploitative nature of social arrangements, and power (Jameson 1984a; 1993; el-Ojeili 2012). The relative benefits of the “new spirit of capitalism” or “categories of worth” require scrutiny. In the former, the new arrangements of capitalism have benefited a few to a great extent (the mobile upper classes) and had the reverse effect on many (those now prone to insecure employment and lower wages). Similarly, categories of worth have a consistent function in capitalist relations in that they limit the extent of welfare and thus ensure the availability of low-waged workers (Piven and Cloward 1972). In each of these cases, the cultural beliefs that are consistent for “people of all ideological stripes” are, nevertheless, ideologies that serve the powerful at the expense of the weak. Economic interests may not be the only interests at stake, yet where it comes to poverty, the reduction of the economic to one of many interests is untenable.

The cultural logic that emerges at the end of the Keynesian period needs to be considered in relation to the relative benefits it affords various groups. It derives in part from the New Social Movements, where women and Māori, among others, assert particular identities that correspond to domination. However, it is also used to promote an understanding of disparity as particular to, and caused by, social differentiation. That is how the institutionalisation of social and ethnic identities effectively hides the economic structuring of inequality to instead consider inequality in terms of disparity between groups. As such, the economic demands previously made by the New Social Movements are limited. In state institutions – where the types and nature of demands change noticeably, and where particularistic identities obfuscate domination suffered by significant numbers of those claiming the identity – we have to say that the cultural logic is working as something of an ideology, in that it obfuscates power and allows it to continue operating.

The role of sociological cultural studies, as I have tried to exemplify in this dissertation, is to illuminate this obfuscation, determine how it occurs, whom it serves, and those that suffer as a result. The obfuscation of material deprivation occurs on a number of levels. Most obviously, political discourse hides the economic underpinning of demands to focus instead on socially “anticivil” behaviour. As Chapters 2 and 4 pointed out, this discourse can be manipulated by “primary definers” in media (such as prominent politicians) and also by media institutions themselves (as in editorials). On a deeper level, the obfuscation of material

deprivation has occurred through the reorganisation of state institutions that correspond to the proliferation of cultural over economic identities. I have called the shift from economic to cultural identities a cultural logic in that it permeates media representations, the state and social movements. Significantly, this cultural logic corresponds to the radical redistribution of wealth from the lower and middle classes to the upper classes. Although the logic is called upon “by people of all ideological stripes” its institutionalisation within popular media and the state has benefited a very limited class.

It is surprising that the displacement of class from sociological cultural studies has continued despite the renewed critique of capitalism in works such as *New Spirit of Capitalism* (Boltanski & Chiapello 2006). The disappearance of class was a response to the economic “reductionism” and over-coherence of Marxian theory (McLennan 1996). In this line of criticism, the reduction of all social conflict to “class conflict” undervalued the specificity of domination and at the same time oversimplified the relations of domination in society. As I have argued above, though, the disappearance of class, or even the reduction of class to one of many antagonisms, has precipitated compromises with segments of feminists and smaller segments of Māori while failing to address the polarisation of wealth that has severely affected many women and the majority of Māori. This is because the specificity of domination promotes a comparative and competitive understanding of economic stratification at the expense of economic structural analysis.

I argued in Chapter 3 that “class” needs to be reintroduced for analytic purposes, and I will expand on this argument here. In the post 1980 period, the economic distinction between those in paid employment and unemployment is considerable due to the redistributive efforts of the state. At the same time, material deprivation threatens those in precarious and casualised employment as well as those that rely on income from the state alone. If we are to look at the materially-deprived as a class, then, it must take into account the market position of individuals as well as the position of the individual within production. This position is in line with Ongley’s (2011) designation of the working class in New Zealand. “Class” in this sense, is a descriptive term – a structural location – rather than a coherent identity. Its value is not in naming a political group, but in providing an analytical category necessary to consider material deprivation across social and ethnic identities.

Political strategy for anti-poverty movements

The concept of class allows for an analysis of the relative economic benefits of ideology across society rather than between cultural groups. At the same time, it is still susceptible to re-articulation within market logic. For example, the problem of the poor as a class can be construed in terms of educational attainment, family structure, broader group culture, and so on, much as it is now. Such constructions of “the poverty problem” lend themselves to individual (psychological and cultural) explanations of deprivation. As such, they translate easily into contestation over categories of worth. To address material deprivation ideologically, the recognition of class must be accompanied by recognition of the systemic production of class. Such an articulation would accentuate economic policy that prescribes unemployment, flexible labour markets, the effects of regressive taxation, and the ubiquitous use of tactics such as restructuring to circumvent labour laws. In other words, it needs to recognise the production of the poor for the maintenance of the economic elite. Demands that address poverty, must therefore be radical in that they question the basis of wealth distribution in society.

Although systemic-economic articulations about poverty continue to be voiced – by the musical chairs analogy of poverty, for example – the anti-poverty movements are structured by conflicting tendencies. Attempts to supersede categories of worth – by appealing to child poverty, for example – do not effectively articulate the structural production of poverty. Similarly, despite the gains that can be achieved by working within state institutional channels, such channels do not challenge the structural production of poverty. Finally, community attempts to alleviate poverty are absolutely necessary for improving the lives of the poor, but nevertheless also alleviate the political repercussions of poverty. As anti-poverty groups focus on communities in need, the state absolves itself from addressing poverty.

Despite these limitations, I wish to focus on three effective means of struggling against poverty. Direct mediation has been successful for anti-poverty groups such as CPAG and the Family Centre. Such mediation to a large polity promotes broader identification with the poor, even if the proposed politics remain inclusionary rather than radical. At the same time,

the political promiscuity shown by anti-poverty groups also puts continued pressure on political parties. In the tenure of Fifth Labour, this pressure informed some policy making and avoided cooption as it continued to exert pressure at the same time. Interestingly, both of these tactics mirror effective politicking from the New Right in the post 1984 era. Third, despite negative representations of the poor and the Anglican Church in media, the Hikoi of Hope effectively brought attention to the problem of poverty in communities across the country. The correspondence between the demands of the Hikoi and the Labour Party's (1998) publication *The real issues: Towards social justice* speak to the potential effectiveness of protest in state-institutional politics, regardless of the outcomes. In addition to these effective means of addressing poverty, it is also important to recognise the continued dominance of the "cultural logic" in the understanding of social division. The union movement's incorporation of various identities (through, for example, the CTU women's council, Runanga, and Komiti Pasifika) alongside its continued focus on economic issues can be seen as a model for organisation. The structural production of economic classes does not need to reduce all domination to class conflict, but equally it must maintain a focus on the economic production of material deprivation.

In all of this, I am advocating an anti-poverty politics that mirrors the proposed sociological cultural studies of poverty. It must recognise the economic structuring of poverty within the political economic system of the period, incorporate rather than reduce the cultural identities of the current cultural logic, maintain commitment to local communities as well as political society, remain unattached to political parties, and continue to exert pressure beyond the confined channels of the state. Finally, anti-poverty demands have to regain their radical edge. It will only be with a broad shift in understanding from what is possible (the pragmatic) to what should be possible (the utopian) that the logic of the market can be challenged. While this may seem a wish-list of sorts, I believe that pockets of this type of political movement are evidenced in contemporary challenges to global capitalism and its manifestation in countries such as New Zealand.

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Appendix A:

The women's, Māori, and labour movements

The women's movement

From the 1970s until the mid 1980s, the women's movement in New Zealand seemed capable of spurring social changes that would drastically reduce poverty. Despite concerns that the movement represented the middle class at the expense of the working class, calls to re-evaluate work and the distribution of wealth threatened the basis of capitalist relations. But despite this promise, the movement suffered three shocks that significantly weakened its voice in the contestation of poverty: internal identity politics, social changes that threatened the commonality of women's experiences, and pressure to pursue demands through sanctioned political channels.

This section briefly looks at the extent to which poverty reduction can and cannot be considered a women's issue, particularly leading up to the institution of market-based policies and institutional organisation. It then considers the meaning of neo-liberalism to women's demands, taking into account the types of compromises and regressions that it marks. Finally, it maps the movement's increasing role in sanctioned rather than contentious politics in order to consider the political spaces open to the women's movement in the present day. I argue that although feminists remain prominent in the anti-poverty movement, the women's movement is ineffective in addressing poverty. I argue that this occurs because the identity fragmentation within the movement focuses on relative advantages of groups and

because the increased incorporation of women into the workforce promotes liberal economic demands.

Taken as a whole, the demands of the women's movement from the late 1960s onward were radical in nature. First and foremost, they challenged the institutionalisation of social relations between the sexes that posited women in subordinate roles to men through the division of labour, and subsequently through the distribution of political, economic, and social power. The subordination of women was written into the male, wage-earner Keynesian state (Humpage & Craig 2008; Davey & Grey 2009) but the era only institutionalised former inequality in new ways: a similarity of demands of women from the 19th century and their later counterparts are telling in this regards (Aitken 1980: 11). The radical demands of the 1960s women's movement sought to extinguish this basis for social differentiation altogether through challenges to the institution of marriage, the predominance of heterosexuality, the distribution of economic resources determined by designations of work, access to education, varied employment, political positions of power, and so on (see, for example, Dann 1985: 12-15, for the proposals and resolutions of the 1973 Women's Liberation Conference; Roster 1992 for the selection of feminist issues published in *Broadsheet*).

The totality of demands linked to the struggle to re-imagine and recreate social life is precisely the radical politics that Laclau and Mouffe (2001: 132) imagine when they describe political space as incorporating the discourses, institutions, and practices that determine social relations. The difficulty with this conception of space becomes apparent in mapping the trajectory of the women's movement, its goals and outcomes. As Chapter 1 makes clear, some of the specific demands listed above – particularly those that aim to reduce poverty and

the differentiation between paid and unpaid work – have not been successful and seem to have been eradicated from what remains of the women's movement. On the other hand, access to and improved outcomes within education, paid work, and political representation have all achieved some levels of success and continue to be promoted by a broadly defined feminist base (MWA 2010).

The institutional realignment of politics noted in the last chapter, away from income and class towards gender and ethnic identities, is extremely important here. For example, one can note that the income levels of women as a whole decreased less than men in real terms between 1986 and 1996 (1.5 percent versus 13.7 percent for men). However, such a statistic masks the increase in real income for Pakeha women (2.1 percent) and the decline in income for other ethnic identities (a 10.3 percent decrease for Māori women and 17.5 percent decrease for Pacific Islands women) (Statistics New Zealand 1998: 108). Such differentiated incomes speak to the increases in inequality amongst women that, prior to the 1984 macro-economic changes, was already three times that of men (Chartejee & Srivastav 1992). Perhaps this is why analyses on the effects of labour market changes on women have come to very different conclusions (see Walsh 1999 in contrast to Hyman 1997). Such data draws attention to the economic stratification of women and raises the question of the real connections between the women's movement and the anti-poverty movement.

Historic evidence indicates that poverty has long been articulated as a women's issue.

Women's organisations led charitable work in the early days of settlement (Sutch 1974: 109); long standing groups such as the Māori Women's Welfare League (begun in 1951) positioned social welfare within the women's realm; and the many community-based initiatives led by women into the 1990s (Bradford 1993; Lerner & Craig 2005) are evidence that this work is

still carried out, to some degree, by feminists if not formally recognised women's groups.

Concern over equity from the Ministry of Women's Affairs in repeated documents (see MWA 1996; 2002; 2005) points to the institutionalisation of claims for women in marginal situations specifically. However, since the 1970s, the nature of claims made and their importance to the women's movement are varied, just as the umbrella term "the women's movement" is itself problematic due to the many political claims and stances of women's groups and individual feminists.

Initial women's groups demands, such as those by the 1899 National Council of Women for equal pay, equal opportunity, economic independence of married women and an "objective examination" of the economic system (Sutch 1974: 118-119) address the issues of economic disparity systemically. Given the high rates of unemployment and poverty in the late 19th century, these demands can also be understood as addressing poverty directly. Similarly, the 1934 conference of working women, "concentrated on starvation, food depots, free milk for the unemployed and unemployment relief for women" (Sutch 1974: 124). These issues were women's issues in particular because women were often fired from jobs to make way for men in times of economic hardship, just as they would be at the end of the 1970s (Sutch 1974: 124; Gillespie 1980: 108). As such, the adoption of a domestic anti-poverty campaign into the women's movement from the mid 1970s onward has an historic basis.

The radicalisation of the women's movement from the late 1960s and early 1970s focused on a range of demands to address inequality in New Zealand as well as social justice domestically and internationally. Those demands that relate most closely to domestic (NZ) poverty centre on work, equal pay, educational and vocational opportunities for women, the provision of childcare to allow participation in employment, the need for parental leave (both

paid and then a guaranteed return to work), recognition of maternal years as productive (rather than career-inhibiting) and so on. More radical proposals to address access to economic resources include payment for domestic work, later to be proposed as the Universal Basic Income (UBI) (see Royal Commission on Social Security 1972; Grocott 1985).

However, the economic fortunes of the country were ample during the expansionary period of the women's movement from 1965-1975, at the tail of the long, post-war boom, whereas previous historical radicalisation occurred during or at the end of prolonged financial hardship (Sutch 1974: 119, 121). Much of the 1970s and 1980s literature fails to address poverty directly, and this may be one reason that the women's movement was accused of ignoring the concerns of working class women (Dann 1985: 72; Bradford 1993). To this end, references from within the movement in the period indicate that women's work constituted a choice rather than necessity; these assumptions mirror the general understanding of women's work within welfare states overseas. For example, Aitken's (1975: 41) *A Women's Place?* notes that the "experience of many solo parents... is a bitter one" but fails to mention economic hardship as one of the causes for this bitterness. Similarly, married couples enjoy "a higher standard of living" but the time generated is non-productive and may lead to depression (Aitken 1975: 43). In both instances, work is given psychological rather than economic functions. Barrington & Gray (1981: 52) pay more heed to class, yet write that out of the one hundred women interviewed, only "two women we talked with... never really had a choice whether to work or not"; out of these two, one required work for income, the other so that she wouldn't be "terribly lonely." In these cases, the plight of poorer women seems to be ignored at the expense of middle class concerns. As Christine Bird (1992: 47) lamented in *Broadsheet* in 1983: "I've listened in vain for the voice of working class women in both the

feminist movement and among socialists... working class women at present have no legitimacy in the feminist movement.”

For Bird, the designation of working class should not be concealed as the problems of poverty are very real. As she recounts:

The children of my family were brought up to accept without question that sometimes there wasn't enough money for food, clothing, school books and uniforms, and outings. Evictions and reposessions were unsurprising facts of life... we learnt to narrow our expectations. (Bird 1992: 48)

Positive responses to Bird's article within Broadsheet indicate that her experience was not unique (Rosier 1992: 48-49). Similarly, Blank (1980: 43) claims that for Māori families, “both parents are forced into occupations outside the house in order to maintain an adequate standard of living,” and a New Zealand Women's Studies Handbook for tutors (Craven, McCurdy, Rosier & Roth 1985: 41) explains that earnings of about half of women in New Zealand are the primary source of family income. In other words, evidence indicates that poverty was an issue for women, but may not have been taken on by the women's movement to the same extent as in previous periods of radicalisation. Rather, the acknowledgement of poverty – gaining force in the early 1980s – matches the cultural trend of the popular press rather than pushing it to the fore. In Bradford's (1993: 97) estimation, “the slick, power-dressed feminism of the 1980s” is only a symptom: “the heart of the matter is that most active feminists come from the middle class... they have been unwilling and unable to come to terms with the real lives of working class women.”

The persistence of middle class interests in demands for economic relief add credence to Bradford's argument. For example, in 1975 government appointed the Women's Rights Committee wrote that it,

Emphatically supports the large number of submissions which advocated that any kind of allowance should be granted to persons caring full-time... [however] we would be strongly opposed to any suggestion of it being a means-tested allowance. (Women's Rights Committee 1975: 67)

Within demands for a UBI, in this case a carer's benefit, access to economic resources is at stake, both for those restricted due to men controlling the distribution of wages, and for those whose overall income is simply inadequate. Importantly, though, the lack of differentiation between the two suggests – as do many of the quotations above – that poverty was not the primary issue at stake.

Thus, the extent that poverty was considered a broadly feminist issue from within the movement during the 1970s and into the 1980s is debateable, despite “the catchcry” of the women's movement that “every issue is a feminist issue” (Coney 1992: 33). From early on, however, the movement seems aware of its class position and how it might be perceived. For example, in 1973, the acknowledgement of class was noticeable in *Broadsheet*, where the women's struggle was recognised as an historically upper-class struggle that did not alter the fate of the lower classes (Hingley Mar 1973) and Coney (Mar 1973) reported on the financial struggles of a single mother. A letter-writer worried that the women's movement would be reformist unless it could break free of the middle classes (Else & Else Jul 1973) and a Polynesian interviewee noted that the women's liberation movement remained “a white, middle-class movement” (Penfold in Alston Aug 1973). At the same time, predominantly

middle class concerns continued to dominate the publication while repeated concerns over the breakdown and sterility of the women's movement speaks to the difficulty of multiple identity positions and political inclinations (see Thompson Jan 1975; Shawyer Jun 1979), leading to a "splintered and depleted" movement by the late 1970s (Gillespie 1980).

The issues of class and identity are significant in the women's movement in New Zealand as it underpins the question of the types of claims being made. The 1973 Women's Liberation Conference proposals and resolutions (Dann 1985: 12-15) offers some insight into the varied concerns and demands of the movement. Three basic types of demands are made: those promoting independence for women; those facilitating participation in the workforce alongside economic equality; and those proposing the revaluation and redistribution of resources, both symbolic and economic. The first type of claim, advocating for the freedom of choice for abortion, sexual education for students, and the recognition of lesbian lifestyles, will be set aside for the moment. The second type makes varied demands: improved education for women, quality childcare, inexpensive food and laundry outlets, maternity leave, training for at-home mothers, and greater participation in trade unions. The third type demands pay for at-home mothers, questions the sanctity of the nuclear family, and, by extension, the economic and political systems that establish gender roles and gender economic outcomes.

Of those addressing economic inequality, the second type of demand predominates. For example, Gillespie's assessment of economic concerns for the women's movement, though comprehensive, focuses on evening the playing field within the economic system rather than remodelling it. Unequal earnings, job discrimination based on sex, the lack of services needed for caregivers to work, traditional (chauvinist) understanding of 'a women's place',

discrimination against the female work cycle, and the use of women as a reserve labour force all contribute to the economic position of women, and unless remedied, will increasingly see women “reduced to poverty” as “the [economic] crisis deepens” (Gillespie 1980: 101-109).

Remedies to the issues would, combined, result in the improved economic position of women to men, but questionable changes to poverty. The overall potential to challenge poverty is even more suspect in the period directly after the neoliberal policy changes, when the women’s movement continued to focus on equal pay during the era when unemployment was increasing dramatically and welfare benefits were being cut (Bradford 1993). But perhaps such political decisions are not surprising: the National Council of Women’s submission to the Royal Commission on Social Policy recommended reduced benefit levels for the unemployed (to encourage self-sufficiency) even as it showed concern over “the feminisation of poverty” (1987: 5-6, 4); and the research of Levine and Robinson indicates that New Zealand women were unsympathetic to wage demands and industrial action (in Aitken 1980: 19). On the other hand, the women’s movement cannot be considered as overly coherent: demands for increased benefit levels, the UBI, and reductions in economic disparity also persisted. And as poverty became widely acknowledged in the early 1980s, the women’s movement protested for poverty alleviation (Dann 1985: 23, 25, 40, 76). Also, as Dann (1985: 72) and Bradford (1993) claim, and Lerner and Craig (2005) historicise, many women in this period retreated from one level of politics to return to the community – a feature of the anti-poverty movement during this period. In other words, feminists of different political orientations may have sought different spaces to most effectively live and promote their politics.

In sum, the women's movement throughout the era was neither consistent in addressing poverty nor disavowing the importance of class and income. The movement demanded greater equality, but whether this would be accomplished by insinuating women into the labour market on equal terms with men or by changing economic distribution and the valuation of work is unclear. As Aitken (1980: 20-21) argues, such ambiguity is the nature of all political movements, and where feminism purportedly 'had no leaders' but instead operated in a truly democratic fashion, the imposition of some demands at the expense of others would appear contradictory. Rather than determining, therefore, whether the movement was *truly* liberal, radical, or socialist feminist (see Coney 1993), one must accept the presence of a variety of demands from different traditions.

However, the expression of these differing demands becomes significant as identity politics set the movement "on a path of self-destruction" (Coney 1993: 58). The assumption of "sisterhood" that assumed "common interests" between women came apart as divisions appeared first between lesbian and heterosexual feminists and later, when the movement was "split by the politics of race" (Coney 2003: 62, 57-58; Lerner & Spoonley 1995: 54; Gillespie 1980: 100). Importantly, though economic issues underpinned some of this later division in particular, the movement expressed identities in non-economic terms. Self-identity within the movement undoubtedly contributed to the institutional arrangement of feminism within the state. To this end, an early Ministry of Women's Affairs document that explains the progress of women's issues to an international audience ("First CEDAW Report" 1986: 2, 6) notes the breakdown in class within the country alongside the establishment of a Māori unit within the ministry.

There were attempts to incorporate women from various social backgrounds for the majority of the 1970s into a common feminist identity, but by the end of the decade, instead, the movement is structured, or splintered, by politics of difference. For example, Awatere's *Māori Sovereignty* (1984) challenged the "individual" feminist issues promoted by Pakeha culture for the collective Māori goal of sovereignty. Where Pakeha protest operated "within the boundary of the western capitalist culture," Māori protest operated "within and against that very culture which has denied us *our* heritage and our rights" (Awatere 1984: 35). The idea that ethnicity structured life experience to a greater degree than gender was not new. In 1973 when *Broadsheet* interviewed Polynesian women on their understanding of feminism, Ngahuia Volkering argued that gender was secondary to ethnicity in her experience, in part because ethnicity fractured the working class. Similarly, the July and August issues of *Broadsheet* in 1973 discussed "Māori women in Pakeha society" where oppression was "encoded" in a number of cultural practices. Within the splintered identities of the women's movement, social and cultural rather than economic identities feature, and these are carried into the institutional arrangements of the state at the expense of economic actors and demands.

Alongside (and contributing to) fractures in feminist identities, neoliberalism accelerated social changes that markedly contributed to the dislocation of women's experiences. Increasingly in the neoliberal era (from 1984 onward), advancements for women began on a number of fronts (increased women in positions of political power, improved wages vis a vis men, an expanded labour market) while other fronts suffered regression (increased severity and incidence of poverty among single mothers, lower wages for part time labour, economically rationalised health, education and housing, and so on). Three broad areas – the role of the state, the economic positioning of women in relation to the labour market and due

to childrearing, and political and state bureaucratic positioning of women – mark significant areas of contestation and compromise. This is not a comprehensive list, but it nevertheless concerns the economic position of women and their political representation.

While commentators such as James overemphasise the affinities between the anti-statism of the New Right and radical left groups (O'Brien & Wilkes 1993), the women's movement nevertheless sought "a reduction in state power and control" (Aitken 1980: 11; Else 2006: 168-176). Such calls are not surprising given that the state acted as a financial and social mediator at the time. Policies meant to maintain full male employment came at the expense of women as they continued to disproportionately represent the part time work force (Prue 1994). At the same time, government campaigns with "the explicit aim of maintaining the institution of marriage in the setting of the nuclear family" (Aitken 1980: 18) not only promised to reduce single parenthood and re-establish the male wage earner but also, implicitly, to reinforce the social structures that the feminist movement sought to challenge.

In addition to the power of "the state" Prime Minister Robert Muldoon became a central figure in the feminist struggle, as he did for many on the left as well as the economic right. Given feminist misgivings about the benevolence of the nuclear family, it is understandable that Muldoon's image as a "tough-talking father-figure" (Pugh 1984) would be less than appealing. From the outset, Muldoon patronised women and openly provoked feminists. Leading into the 1981 Budget announcement, for example, Muldoon was awarded a mention as a "naked ape" – a mock-award to expose chauvinism – due to his quip that a female member of parliament could teach him how to make tea, but that he was not interested in her economic ideas ("Muldoon a mention" Jul 2, 1981). More directly still, Muldoon's refusal to consider equal pay on the grounds that it may reverse gender roles within the home (Dann

1985: 43) ran counter to feminist concerns dating over a century. Because the state was headed by Muldoon from 1975-1984, the equivalence of Muldoon and state policy is understandable. The argument here is that Muldoon came to have a metonymic quality, not only with the feminist movement but for left movements generally, where he stood in for many of the wrongs of the state. As such, his removal from office marked a political opening in real terms, even though the limits of those terms were also significant.

For all of this, the state held an ambiguous role for many feminists who sought to re-regulate rather than deregulate (Else 2006), and, indeed, many initiatives for women's equality in the workplace were instituted in the state first (cf. "First CEDAW Report" 1986). In feminist literature from New Zealand prior to 1984, one finds support for redistributed power from the state to communities where the basis of feminist power resided, but no outright rejection of the state, especially in the manner taken by the New Right (Else 2006). For example, even as Aitken (1980: 11, 28-30) notes the feminist "preference for... a reduction in state power" she also identifies political objectives for women: housing and community development, better representations of citizens interests, improved resources for single mothers, and improved social policy for Pacific women immigrants in health, welfare and social services. These require state support. Rather, one would have to agree with Hyman (1994), that the process of devolution and the institution of the Ministry of Women's affairs spoke to the desires of the women's movement but were compromised gains due to "the general trend to deregulation and emphasis on the market."

In the post 1984 era, greater gains for women were found in access to economic resources through the labour market that had previously been limited not only through social custom such as limiting female employment in times of declining male employment, but also through

uneven taxation (Prue 1994), and deliberate restrictions on pay equity (Dann 1985).

Although the fortunes of women varied due to market liberalisation, on the whole women were more able to compete in the previously male labour market, partly due to changes in the structural economy where the previously domestic sphere (including child care, midwifery, and health associate professionals) became marketised and professionalised (Ongly 2011: 196). The structural changes to the economy affected the sexes unevenly:

women were under-represented in most of the industries decimated by restructuring and over-represented in most growth industries, so that they were on the whole better placed to benefit from structural shift. (Ongley 2011: 201)

Importantly, liberalisation of the economy and the labour market did not automatically stand to allow better access for women to the labour market. In the New Zealand Planning Council's (1980) estimation, female participation in the labour force was a stress that exacerbated economic problems in the country. The role of the Planning Council in criticising the welfare state and promoting market-based macroeconomic policies is significant: the adoption of market-led policies could have also promoted a more socially conservative institutional treatment of women (as it did in other states). Hence, the "level playing field" of the neoliberal labour market – though certainly not level for all women – marked a significant advance towards inclusion. Victories for feminists, such as the increased status and pay for early childhood teachers (May 2007) and the institution of midwives into the medical system as professional alternatives to medicalised childbirth, mark real social compromises. Added to advances in the labour market, increased representation of women in tertiary education and in formal politics, and more powerful positions for women within the public sector (MWA 2010) speak to the changing social experiences of women, and an altered social basis from which the idea of feminism must be considered.

This narrative of “progress” (though, again, economic division for women increased as a result) also had significant effects on women’s demands. Bradford’s (1993) complaint that feminists ignored poverty to protect middle class concerns must be considered in the context of increasing employment for women relative to men in the post 1984 era. From 1986 to 2010, women’s participation in the labour market increased by over 50 percent (MWA 2010: 2), thus, market based incentives for female employment, such as paid parental leave and subsidised childcare, appealed directly to the lived experience of a greater proportion of women. At the same time, social changes such as access to employment, the professionalization of formerly domestic duties, and increased tertiary education participation exacerbated already significant disparities between groups of women.

The dependency discourse (see Chapter 2) that became more prevalent in the neoliberal era also reshaped demands. Public discourse in the 1990s no longer sustained the 1970s idea that the DPB represented independence for women (Bunkle 1993: 90). Instead, the benefit represented a symptom of dependence (Segal 2000). This shift is not merely a rhetorical change, but represents a significant social change, even as it reflects the already-present understanding of single mothers as uncivil or undeserving.

However, the sum of these social changes does not exhaust feminist demands for equality. From both photographs of protest and accounts in social movement literature, women were instrumental in contesting policies that hurt the poor, from housing and power costs to the shift from public to private spending on health and education. The extent to which the internal coherence of women’s groups were maintained after the early 1990s is less clear. During this period we may see the continuation of those identifying as feminists advocating for greater social equality even as the women’s movement falls increasingly into a period of

abeyance. Some feminists concerned with poverty – while not giving up feminist identities – nevertheless retreated to spaces that worked “outside” of neoliberalism. The People’s Centre (Bradford 1993) is a good example, as are Lerner and Craig’s (2005) feminist and Māori activists who move into informal community development roles in order to engage against neoliberalism from a local political base.

The point here is not to say that feminist actors all “went the way of the market” or adopted liberal over social politics, nor that they did the opposite. For example, the Women’s Information Network launched an anti-poverty campaign that culminated in an “anti-poverty election kit” (Women’s Information Network 1999). At the same time, throughout the 1984–2010 period other feminists continued to pursue pay equity while benefit reform threatened the poor – mirroring Bradford’s (1993) criticism of liberal feminists from the early 1990s (see CTU Jul 1, 2009). It is, instead, to note that the already fragmented women’s movement went through a period of structural changes that destabilised much of the foundation for the common women’s identity in the 1960s and 1970s. The outcome of this destabilisation is, in part, the question of the movement as a whole. Here, in addition to the fragmentation of feminist identities (Coney 1993), it is also important to see the identity of ‘women’ undergoing a significant change that is marked by a degree of removal of exclusion from key areas of social life. Or, to return to the term used in the last chapter, the means of domination applied less to women as a whole and more to specific pockets of women in this period. The link between the (less) common experiences of women and the (in)ability to summon community action in the name of women are linked: the movement loses some of its community power.

Finally, both the changing access to political power for women and the institution of women's demands within the state act, to some degree, as mechanisms that promote sanctioned political responses rather than the "direct action tactics" favoured by the previous era of the Women's Liberation Movement (Dann 1985: 42). As Coney expressed in relation to institutionalisation:

we feared this committee, [which was] government-selected and deliberately 'tame', would become the legitimate channel through which the needs of New Zealand women would be filtered, blunting the radical edge of grassroots feminism. (in Rosier 1992: 51)

Similarly, for Grey (2008: 73) an increase in bureaucratic institutions (such as the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs) alongside increased roles for women within public bureaucracies (from the government of the day to state departments, trade unions and tertiary education institutions) may give the impression that women's activism is no longer needed. Equally importantly, the public roles of prominent women may make activism more risky.

Once political demands are effectively channelled, the constraints within those channels limit their scope. Whereas Dann (1985: 26) claimed that the election of Labour "opened new doors" Hyman (1994) points out the contradictory nature of institutionalisation:

With a new Ministry of Women's Affairs there was the possibility of at least some interventionist policies... Nevertheless, token policies aimed at women were largely contradictory to, and overwhelmed by, the general trend to deregulation and emphasis on the market...

Such institutional sites may have become even more important within Third Way politics. As Larner and Craig (2005) argue, the political spaces left open by neoliberalism (at the community level, by those excluded from decision making) are colonised by the social development state. Again, this colonisation can be considered in positive or negative terms – it is a compromise between positions, incorporation of an oppositional politics, or representation of a formerly excluded group. Larner and Craig (2005) find reasons for both optimism and scepticism in the roles demanded of those engaged in the work, where even though workers are conscientious of the contradictory role they play, they are nevertheless “required to make their political claims technical”, “turn their contests into collaboration” and thus provide a necessary “legitimation and embedding” of neoliberalism from an oppositional standpoint. In both positive and negative renditions, one must note the diminished space for radicalism.

Segal (2000) notes a similar lack of institutional space for addressing poverty in the British context due to neoliberal delimitations on the state. Similarly, McKeen (2004: 89) explains of Canadian poverty politics that “feminists seemed to abandon altogether the more mainstream causes of promoting income security and targeting the poor” in the late 1980s to mid 1990s. On one front women against poverty redirected their opposition towards neoliberalism, while on another they were “forced to take their leave of the debate on social policy, especially changes to the child benefit debate.” The individualisation of social problems through neoliberal ideology categorised poor women as undeserving and thus excluded their voices, but policy circles also contributed to the silencing of women:

The project of [the left-liberal policy] sector to rework and refocus the topic of poverty to highlight the issue of so-called child poverty... played into a process that undermined feminist credibility in social policy debates and in many ways facilitated a move towards a new gender-blind approach to social policy. (McKeen 2004: 89)

While the comparison between New Zealand and other liberal democratic states is moot, Elizabeth and Larner (2009) argue that New Zealand policy circles tend to disadvantage the poor due to ethnicity-based policy constraints of the social development state. In other words, the closure of political space within state institutions represents a significant constraint for feminists since the institutionalisation of the market-led state, whether in its strict neoliberal or social development manifestation. To this end, concerns over poverty and women in poverty has not subsided, but policy – even from the institution meant to represent women’s interests – has consistently turned to paid employment and increased capability within (labour) market competition as remedy. Despite the growing protest nationally and internationally over economic relations, the current (Fifth National) government’s priority areas for the MWA – leadership, violence, and employment – do not challenge this trend.

Within the MWA, the already noted territory of different feminist groups and the positions from which poverty can be spoken is also significant. Throughout MWA publications Māori and Pacific women are given spaces in which poverty issues are sounded. This ethnic categorisation of poverty is not surprising given the divergent economic paths of Pakeha and non-Pakeha women immediately following liberalisation, and also mirrors the fragmentation of the women’s movement. Here, the tendency for comparative analysis that I noted in the last chapter has to be seen as resulting from the women’s movement but also limiting the basis of criticism within it. In other words, the movement from universal to particularistic identities – a consistent threat to the coherence of the women’s movement – reduces the space in which one can imagine a radical politics. At the same time, market-oriented state objectives cannot be underestimated in the reduction of radical critique. For example, calls

for improved support of single mothers and the introduction of a Universal Basic Income in the consultation report for the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women* (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2004a: 16) were undermined in the final action plan (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2004b). In the final document, references to single mothers and the Universal Basic Income disappeared altogether, and "support" through social assistance would focus on "reduc[ing] long-term social assistance dependency" and "encourage[ing] participation in the paid workforce" (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2004b).

The women's movement has undergone and continues to undergo three significant structuring factors that limit its effectiveness in anti-poverty movement. The first is, broadly, the splintering of feminist identities that reduces the effectiveness of a universal feminist identity. This mirrors and accentuates the changes within the state, and, indeed, this cultural logic must be seen as inseparable from the women's movement. Second, social changes that coincide with and were accelerated by neoliberalism destabilise the commonality of women's experiences and alter demands. Third, the women's movement is encouraged to use sanctioned political channels that rearticulate demands to fit into market logic. Here the fracturing of identity is again important as the end goal of Māori or Pacific women is articulated as disparity versus other ethnicities rather than as a systemic problem in the labour market. The radical systemic demands of the past rarely enter into the discussion. Thus, the women's movement, as a whole, appears unequipped to play a significant role in contesting poverty, even as individuals with feminist orientations (those who still identify as feminists) make significant contributions.

The Māori movement

The foundation and trajectory of the Māori movement varies considerably with the women's movement, despite crossover between them from the 1970s onward. First, the ties between Māori and anti-poverty demands are evident throughout; second, rather than the splintering that occurred within the women's movement, the Māori movement began from different political positions but then became increasingly expressed as Māori nationalism from the 1980s; and finally, the institutional mechanisms for Māori economic demands have limited attempts to redistribute wealth more equitably to the poor. I argue that the effect of mediation is has a profound impact on the trajectory of Māori identity and helps maintain inequitable distribution of resources within Māoridom. And at the same time that the institutional arrangements of the treaty settlements process continues to exacerbate Māori inequality, threats to that process are effectively articulated as threats to Māori. In this section I argue that despite the considerable political power of Māori, anti-poverty advocacy meets significant constraints in the articulation of culture.

With the mass urbanisation of Māori in the post-war period, and aided by the assimilation policies of the time, urban Māori constituted a politicised social force, along with other social movements from the late 1960s onward, that launched a critique of capitalist relations alongside colonial practices that extend to the present day (Poata-Smith 2004). Rather than breaking strictly from political claims of the past, urban Māori continued the critique of land alienation and structural racism, but also advocated for cultural valuation to rival the Pakeha dominance of the post-war period and increased working class power. The rising political power of Māori during this time is evidenced in resistance to the Māori Affairs Amendment Act of 1967, the land march of 1975, the occupation of Bastion Point, Treaty of Waitangi protests, industrial action in predominantly Māori occupations, and other forms of civil disobedience. Alongside these acts of contentious politics, more conservative Māori

organisations exerted political pressure through official channels. In both forms of politics, the redress of land alienation and the encouragement of Māori culture stand out as noticeable threads that tie together the heterogeneous claims of Māoridom (Walker 1990). Yet the extent to which the entirety of Māori claims can be tied together is disputed.

Walker (1990: 243) distinguishes between radical and conservative Māori political movements, both of which struggle to achieve the same goals: “justice, resolution of Māori grievances under the Treaty of Waitangi, recognition of rangatiratanga and mana whenua, and an equal say with the Pakeha.” In this case the demands remain consistent, whereas the means of achieving them is distinct (Poata-Smith 2005). Poata-Smith (2005: 214) identifies four interpretations of tino rangatiratanga that emerge from the beginnings of the 1970s: “as Māori capitalism (on tribal or individual form)”, “as Māori electoral power”, “as cultural nationalism”, and “as involving more radical far-reaching strategies for change.” According to this argument, Walker not only mistakes the uniformity of Māori protest, but does so in a way that advocates the Māori cultural nationalist position.

Importantly, the interpretation of cultural nationalism that Poata-Smith identifies as a distinct and increasingly dominant interpretation of tino rangatiratanga begins to have another social function. Whereas capitalist and ‘radical far-reaching strategies’ accentuate social and economic differences within Māoridom, cultural nationalism attempts to efface these as cultural differences between Māori and Pakeha stand in for the sum of politics, and, thus, political goals. Significant differences within Māoridom – not only between classes, but also between detribalised urban Māori and their tribal counterparts – are overlooked due to common opposition to Pakeha values and practices (Poata Smith 1996; see also Lashley 2000). Here Māori nationalism operates as the inverse of what Pearson (2002) calls the

“indigenisation” of formerly “British” inhabitants. While Māori politics and a common Māori identity predate this period, Pearson argues that, in the 1970s, the liberalisation of formerly restricted immigration into New Zealand (the increase of ‘ethnic’ identities), the assertion of Māori identity as *mana whenua*, and the political distancing of Britain from the antipodes resulted in the construction of white indigenous identity.

What I am proposing here is that Māori Nationalism differs from other political positions in that it fits into the emerging identity schema, where Pakeha, Māori, and ethnic minorities makes up the three poles of identification within New Zealand. As Pearson (2002: 1005-1006) argues, this ideology can be interpreted and used in a number of political ways, and can equally be interpreted apolitically, as a social psychological shift in the understanding of “home”. However, as a common operation within media (Chapter 4), in government manipulation (Chapter 2), as a basis for the organisation of state institutions (Chapter 5), and even within social movements opposed to the dominant majority (as here), the ethnic logic of the period tends to posit cultural distinctions as the ultimate basis for social division. As Poata-Smith contends, this cultural grouping effaces economic identities within Māori, Pakeha, and other ethnicities and, instead, asserts these economic differences in cultural terms.

Despite class divisions within Māoridom and differentiated economic outcomes of individuals, hapu and iwi, poverty issues underlie claims relating to the long-term effects of colonial policies: the alienation of land, disregard for Māori culture, discrimination against the use of Māori language, and unequal opportunities for present day Māori that result in poor health outcomes, inflated incarceration rates, lower income levels, and lower school achievement (Maaka & Fleras 2005: 97). Historical research further situates these

occurrences, where poverty rates among rural Māori communities in the pre- and post-war periods manifested in housing and health issues not common among the urban or rural white communities (these are well documented in tribunal reports of the Orakei Claim 0009 (1987), Ngai Tahu Report 0027 (1991), Te Roroa Report 0038 (1992), Ngati Awa Raupatu Report 0046 (1999), Mohaka River Report 0119 (1992), Mohaka Ki Ahurir Report 0201 (2004), Kaipara Interim Report 0674 (2002), Te Tau Ihu o te Waka a Maui Report on North South Island Claims 0758 (2008)). For example, the Mohaka Ki Ahurir Report (2004: introduction) links the appropriation of land by the state to “poor health, housing and general welfare of Māori in our inquiry district in the twentieth century (and still today in many places).” And in urban Māori populations, income discrepancies and employment opportunities in comparison with Pakeha figure into the sociological research of the 1960s, before their political ramifications were taken note of (cf Forster & Ramsey 1971). Added to this, a critique of capitalism operated as a primary understanding of urban Māori oppression presented in both print newsletters and contentious politics into the 1970s (Walker 1990: 209-210), and Māori were also central in the alternative labour movement (Chile 2006). In the last decade, Māori activists concerned about community impoverishment due to economic and social policy have been instrumental in bridging government and community (Larner & Craig 2005). Thus, in contrast to the women’s movement, there is little question as to class exclusion from Māori protest, even if the institutionalisation of demands has resulted in the privileging of capitalist class over working class Māori (Kelsey 1997; Poata-Smith 2004).

But at the same time that evidence of poverty seems overwhelming, there are indications of stigma attached to poverty within Māoridom, as the outcry in 1964 over the depiction of poverty in *Wash Day at the Pa* attests. In this instance the Māori Women’s Welfare League objected to the publication due to the depiction of rural Māori poverty, a portrayal they

described as “inaccurate” and “atypical” despite widespread poverty among the group (Tai Awatea, n.d.). In more contemporary times, Durie questions the validity of measuring Māori social indicators against Pakeha, noting instead the vast improvements for Māori over the last century (Fitzgerald 2004) and the problems with using a “deficit model” of assessing Māori development (Durie 2003: 97). Humpage (2004), in a more critical political analysis, attributes thwarted aspirations for self determination to the deficit model of social policy. The Māori Women’s Welfare League, Durie, and Humpage all unequivocally advocate for improvements to Māori lives, but all, nevertheless, seem to shy away from representations of Māori as impoverished.

Two simultaneous issues seem to be at play in these appeals to downplay disparity. In the last chapter I noted that the politics of comparison led to a competitive model between groups rather than a thorough investigation of disparity across society. Both Durie and Humpage write from within this moment of politics, where the radical critique of capitalism is displaced by inclusionary demands. They are both concerned with greater Māori control of objectives and processes: the predetermined model of development that aspires to Pakeha is overly limiting in this regard (Humpage 2004). As such, the refusal to submit to the politics of comparison and competition challenges the dominant state model. At the same time, this challenge is unconvincing when articulated from a perspective that continues to attribute disparity to ethnicity. For example, Durie (2003: 96) writes:

Māori participation in... the economy is best conceptualised as a population issue rather than one which is necessarily linked to Māori as indigenous people or as people with a distinctive culture and society. It goes without saying that in modern democracy, inequalities between populations – Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asians – should not be tolerated. The task is to ensure that all citizens are treated equitably and have genuine opportunities that will lead to fair outcomes. Disparities between populations are not acceptable in a nation that aspires to high standards of living for all its members.

In this quotation, poverty (a result of participation in the economy) should not be linked to the distinctive culture of Māori. At the same time, however, disparity is articulated as differences between ethnicities rather than people in a structural relation to the economy.

It is hard to imagine a politics of redistribution resulting, except between ethnicities. Rather, the problem of the deficit model in this case is that disparity threatens to stand in for the “deficit” of Māori culture as a whole.

The other at play – and this speaks more directly to the reaction to *Washday at the Pa* – is the threat of individual depictions of Māori standing in for the cultural group as a whole. The negative representations of Māori in popular media speak to this symbolic equivalence between particular instances of poverty and the broader group. Media representation, in this instance, must be seen as an element that structures critique. For example, the categorisation of the poor as “mainly Māori” during the Hikoi of Hope presents poverty as a cultural phenomenon. More generally, psychological and cultural explanations of poverty oftentimes attribute the “culture of welfare dependency” to Māori culture as a whole (Brash 2004: 2).

In other words, denial of economic destitution may result from representation of Māori, from the “lazy, happy-go-lucky and slovenly” of the pre-depression era (Harris 2004: 17, in Chile 2006: 410) to the stereotyped “Hone” who enjoyed a “free-trip all my life” (Carter, cited in Laugesen Mar 30, 1995) during the 1990s era of benefit reductions and high unemployment. It is important, in this regard, to note the many references to Māori – or the “brown skinned children of the poor” (Roger Sep 18, 1998) – in editorials about the Hikoi of Hope. Here, again, the depiction of poverty as choice is important, not least because up until 1987 (before major restructuring of the economy) Māori had the highest workforce participation of any measured group for both men and women (Statistics New Zealand 1998, in Lashley 2000).

Pointing out negative representations of Māori is not new, but here the issue is also how these representations affect self-representation from within Māoridom. As the dominant ideological construct (the indigenous Pakeha versus mana whenua) presents homogenous oppositional groups, economic differences are effaced by those working within Māoridom – not just the capitalist class – as well those constructing it in negative terms.

Alongside cultural attitudes towards poverty, institutional responses to Māori protest and the resulting inclusion and exclusion of identities is important. Here the centrality of the Waitangi Tribunal to both Pakeha and Māori understandings of historical grievances requires note. For both those who find fault in the distribution of resources from the tribunal process (Poata-Smith 2004: 28) and those less critical of its benefits to Māori (Walker 1990: 255) much contentious protest became redirected to the task of preparing claims. According to McLeay, state developments such as the Runanga Iwi Act (though later repealed) and Resource Management Act reduced the effectiveness of pantribal organisations (in Lashley 2000), thus further reducing some of the more effective strategies of the pre 1984 era. Since that time, significant Māori politics has relied upon the legal address through the Treaty (such as in the attempt to block public asset sales); or been in defence of the Tribunal process and outcomes (such as protest over Bolger's 'fiscal envelope' and Labour's foreshore and seabed legislation); or has been in reaction to state action that has threatened Māori (such as the protest over the treatment of Ruatoki residents during the 2007 'Terror Raids'). The first two of these types of politics have been defensive, and although the third is reminiscent of earlier protests against institutional racism, it has not, to date, had significant carry-on effect in terms of either institutionally sanctioned or contentious politics. Rather, the more significant political outcomes have been state-institutional with the emergence of the Māori Party in response to the Foreshore and Seabed Act (2004).

The difficulty, in terms of anti-poverty politics, with Treaty of Waitangi settlements, is the lack of correlation between the redistribution from the state to Māori and redistribution within Māoridom. Rather than implicating larger political collectives of Māoridom, Treaty settlements are negotiated and managed through tribal corporations with little to no effect for the vast majority of Māori (Poata-Smith 2004). Rather, Māori elites support the institutional mechanisms of the claims process because it benefits their economic positions specifically (Maaka & Fleras 2005: 104). Contestation over this inequality has been pursued by those representing ‘de-tribalised’ Māori in the hope of distributing economic resources among the urban poor, but has met with negligible success. Here, advocates for detribalised, urban Māori argue that the processes of migration in the post war era have led to many urban Māori to no longer identify with their iwi or marae, and, thus, that redistribution through tribal organisations limits the possibility for redress. On the other side, “leaders of Māori tribal organisations vigorously refute these allegations and arguments” (Lashley 2000: 8). So far, these debates have been settled in favour of tribal authorities. According to a former tribunal member:

Providing social justice and equity is the responsibility of Government, *not* tribal authorities. If welfare organisations... need further resources, funds ought to be provided by Government, not taken from private or tribal collective estates. This of course does not rule out the possibility... that iwi collectives might very well decide to make donations in that direction... (Nov 11, 1997, as cited in Lashley 2000)

Instead, the economic fortunes gained from treaty settlements have very few beneficiaries, exacerbating income inequality in Māoridom in a more extreme manner than the market-led system has accomplished in society as a whole (Poata-Smith 2008), thus generating “inter-

tribal factions with needless competition over power and property” (Maaka & Fleras 2005: 104).

Despite intertribal factions and competition, and despite the inequitable distribution of resources within Māoridom from the Treaty of Waitangi claims process, protest against Treaty breaches have marked some of the most significant contemporary political actions. The ability to mobilise in contentious politics appears much more achievable for Māori than other social groups in the post 1995 era where, for example, the foreshore and seabed attracted around 15,000 protesters in the final march on parliament (Spoonly & Pearson 2004: xiii). The formation of the Māori Party from the event is also significant. The salience of the issue speaks to the symbolic significance of land claims for Māori, but, again, cultural nationalism must also play a significant role. To understand the construction of this nationalism, one needs not only look within Māoridom but without as well. As Phelan (2009) argues, the discursive construction of the foreshore and seabed debate within popular newsprint posited Māori in opposition to “New Zealanders.” But also, and equally importantly, negative representations of the “Treaty industry” is made equivalent to the legitimacy of the Treaty of Waitangi itself. In this discourse, the legitimacy of the Treaty is polluted, as it privileges “them” at the expense of “New Zealanders” (Phelan 2009).

It is not surprising that wide-ranging Māori energies come together to take part in the debate as the interests of “Māori” are at stake, but such protest also highlights the difficulty in redressing economic disparity through treaty mechanisms: in a mediational climate where challenges to the treaty process threaten the legitimacy of the treaty as a whole, challenges from within Māoridom are ideologically discouraged. Thus, contestation within state mechanisms (such as claims for detribalised Māori) does not challenge the institutional basis

of redistribution. At the same time, this contestation is also safer for Māori as it does not question the legitimacy of the treaty as a whole. Here the mediation of “Māori issues” such as the foreshore and seabed is significant as treaty claims are quickly and broadly mediated to defend “indigenised Pakeha.”

The mediational constraints on Māori can also be found in state institutions. For example, in the 1990s the National Government began to institute programmes to address low social outcomes and economic levels among Māori, and gave Te Puni Kokiri a policy function that assessed and sought improvement in the delivery of social services to Māori, with the aim of reducing inequity (Humpage 2004: 31-32). Widening social and economic disparity between Māori and Pakeha persisted, but National found the targeting of Māori to be politically unpopular, even once the tabulation of Māori outcomes across a range of indicators clearly showed high levels of impoverishment. Attempts to “close the gaps” continued with the election of Labour, but by “building capacity”, a strategy that “reworked, rather than reformed” policies from earlier in the market-led era (Humpage 2004: 34, 38). The Fifth National Government, in conjunction with the Māori Party, has further promised devolution of social services into Māori control with Whanau Ora, a holistic approach to social services that better accommodates Māori cultural practices, but thus far combined attempts to re-elevate Māori across social and economic indicators has met little success and the larger structural changes required to address poverty and unequal access to resources are unexamined.

In terms of mediation, the targeting of social welfare proved to be unpopular because it “generated ongoing political controversy amid claims that Māori were receiving privileged treatment” (Poata-Smith 2008: 104). Interestingly, the model of social policy used to define

and meet objectives was “correlated with the domestic, dependent and universal *rights of citizenship*” (Humpage 2004: 32, emphasis added). Here, despite the inclusionary basis of the policy, the ‘political controversy’ mediated claims as corporate and thus, undemocratic. The persistence of ‘anticivil’ coding is significant in its ability to pollute not only the group, but the nature of demands being made. In all cases examined, from the Hikoi of Hope to social policy to the foreshore and seabed debate, the demands are mediated as radical, unrealistic and undemocratic.

In summation, three points need to be made. First, the emergence of Māori nationalism coincides with the indigenisation of Pakeha, and contributes to a deep cultural structure that posits both ethnic groups as internally homogenous, or without economic stratification. Second, this deep cultural structure extends into media coverage and is also used intentionally in politics, drawing together not only a ‘homogenous’ group of ‘kiwis’ but also ‘Māori’ and ‘Māori interests’. Third, the construction of Māori interests is neither consistent with inter-iwi competition through the tribunal process, nor the inequitable distribution of resources within Māoridom, yet is nevertheless symbolically salient at moments when the deinstitutionalisation of Māori is proposed or when ‘Māori interests’ are at stake.

In all of this, working class claims have fallen by the wayside to privilege cultural claims. But for sociologists, some essential connections between the historical development of the working class and the Māori economic experience in the post war era cannot be denied. Urban Māori of the post-war era have affinities to the 19th century British working class who were forced, through land enclosures, to migrate into cities. Here the issue of detribalisation amounts to historic loss of economic power through land ownership. While this does not represent the sum of Māori claims, it nevertheless underscores the essentially economic and

class basis of detribalised Māori claims. Again, the effacement of these claims is not merely cultural nor merely state-imposed. It is both, with ideological roots and institutional underpinnings.

In terms of anti-poverty initiatives, the strength of Māori protest is immense, yet the symbolic understanding of ‘Māori’ requires broader challenge in order for redistribution to the poor – to become a more significant issue. The “deficit model” does not need to be challenged due to its limitations to Māori self-government, but ethnicity needs to be challenged as the basis for this disparity. This would not deny the over-representation of Māori (or other ethnic groups) among the material deprived, but would challenge ethnicity as the category of comparison as well as the independent variable in determining deprivation.

The labour movement

As Chapter 5 detailed, the labour movement became largely disenfranchised with the introduction of neoliberalism, a position from which it has not yet recovered. It differs from the social movements considered above in that its power diminished significantly due to economic recession, workplace changes, and state interventions into the economy. This loss of power undoubtedly contributed to the cultural logic of the period, where economic identities lost salience on an ideological level as well. In this section, I argue that the labour movement maintained an uneasy relationship with its institutional representation and this, in part, allowed for the disenfranchisement of the unions. In the era of high worker demands, the power of the labour movement came from workers in local sites while centralised union bureaucracies, for the most part, remained distant, providing some level of organisation and

protection. The disconnection between workers and their representatives became unmistakable during the term of the Fourth Labour Government. At this point, the institutional basis of the unions effectively blunted worker critique, a position that hindered popular protest over the ECA and subsequently reduced union membership. But due to the exclusion of economic identities from the market-oriented state, the labour movement is beginning, again, to contest poverty amongst the marginalised.

As with the women's and Māori movements, the labour movement has a history of addressing poverty in New Zealand (Roth 1973; Bradley 1974). During the 1970s and early 1980s this continued, largely in response to inflation and downward pressure on wages through government attempts to stop the 'wage-price spiral'. However, as in earlier periods, the union tended to see the problem of poverty in terms of unemployment, even as other structural causes of poverty gained recognition (Davis 1991). This understanding of poverty was not unique to the workplace unions, but to unemployed and beneficiary groups, such as the Auckland Unemployed Workers Rights Centre and the Wellington Unemployed Workers Union as well.

The "compromise" of the welfare state satisfied some of the more pressing concerns for the working class following from the great depression, namely employment security and a larger share of the economic resources, at least for those who benefited from the arrangement (disproportionately Pakeha men). An increase in formal union power followed as unions represented the institutional arm of the labour movement, backed by state legislation: particularly mandatory union membership and sector awards. This power was economic, due to mandatory union membership, and political, due to the unions' monopoly on representation of employees. Despite this increased power, the institutions of the welfare

state also decreased the power of the unions on specific fronts, for example in outlawing union provision of unemployment benefits (Roth 1973: 126).

As Roper (2005; 2010) argues, class conflict escalated from 1969 through the early 1990s, though it underwent two distinct phases. The first seeking gains and the second defending against threats to workers' incomes, job security, and union power. Regardless of the institutionalisation of the labour movement through unions and their role in the state bureaucracy, the extensive contentious politics of the labour movement during this time supports the argument that activity had support from "the rank and file" (Roper 2010).

Indeed, the drive from below is more notable still given the lack of correspondence between workers and the union bureaucracies (Walsh 1991). In this period, the labour movement seems to be caught in the general protest ethos of the period; and, significantly, the labour movement had synergies with other social movements as well (Roper 2010).

Contrary to Māori and the women's movement, however, claims and demands put forward by the labour movement tend not to be radical except in small group segments (such as those for whom Red Flag and The People's Voice/The Workers' Voice served). Rather, the label of radical socialism that Muldoon frequently applied to deny the legitimacy of workers is not because of union literature or demands in the popular press. Instead, worker demands, either because of the institutional structures they passed through or because more moderate demands were needed to satisfy broad union membership, remained corporate and inclusionary: corporate because they focused on individual sectors or employers, and inclusionary because they demanded a share of economic resources that had dwindled through the highly productive period of 1957 onward (Roper, 2010). For example, in 1976 the Federation of Labour "lectured unionists on the limits of 'confrontation with a

democratically elected government” (Levine 1977: 110), indicating the institutional dampening of contestation. At the same time, protest effectively disabled segments of the economy and supported broader labour demands through stop-work actions, and thus threatened the economic system to a far greater extent than the other movements.

From the 1970s, the labour movement began to challenge the legitimacy of the arbitration court in favour of direct negotiation with employers (see, for example, *Clarion* Apr 1972: 1). This was in response to the improved outcomes that direct negotiations could secure, the sense that the court favoured employers over workers, and also because they no longer wanted to be “misrepresented by the conservative trade union officials who appeared to be more concerned with maintaining their own privileged position in that system” (Roper 2010: 11). Paradoxically, the increased power of negotiation through “second-tier” negotiations in the era of minimal unemployment also served to weaken sector ties, a process that was legislatively secured in the market-led era (as the second-tier became the only tier) and then deemed anti-union (Walsh 2001).

Union literature during this period demonstrates the strains that competing labour movement and government demands created within labour’s institutional arm. In reaction to the threat of voluntary unionism and disgruntled union members, union publications spent significant resources justifying the value of the union to workers through the publication of awards, articles detailing the benefits of membership to both the employed and the dismissed, and articles focused on high levels of unemployment. For example, the Clerical Workers Union publication, *Paperclip* (Jun 1975: 13), focused in one issue on the 262 unemployed people in Hamilton, difficulties applying for social welfare benefits, and the assistance the union provided in protecting workers and advocating for them if they had lost their jobs. But

despite increased industrial action, the sense of declining identification with the union is palpable in print. One unionist contrasted the diminished sense of union camaraderie to an earlier era of the “post-depression, post-war years, when the principles of trade union solidarity were a reality” (Armstrong Dec 1975: 4), and the popular press reported extensively on cases where the union and its membership were at odds (*Manual* Oct 1978: 1; Leitch 1986).

At the same time, some union publications also aimed to justify their methods to government rather than workers, as the editor of *Paperclip* made clear when he claimed that, “unions have worked within the framework and guidelines set down by the government” (Aug/Sep 1975: 2). The president of the FOL made similar overtures in claiming that it “played its part and accepted its responsibilities in the interests of the country” (*FOL* Nov 1975: 1). In these instances the contradictory character of the union, as representative of the working class but supporting the legitimacy of the state, becomes clear.

During the pre 1984 period, then, the most visible force in the labour movement exerted considerable power through economic disruption that challenged both the unequal economic power of employers and also the institutional arrangements that contributed to the stability of the state, namely the “balance” between labour and employers. However, it proposed no radical programme, even though it pursued political goals, for example, in pursuing a nuclear free New Zealand (*FOL* Jun 1972: 1). Rather, it pushed for greater economic shares for the employed.

The party politics of the labour movement is also significant during this period. Not surprisingly, the Labour Party, as the historic representative of labour (Roth 1973: 56), received more support in union publications than the National Party. Due to this, market

initiatives undertaken by the Fourth Labour Government initially received less contestation than they would have if implemented by the National Party (Nicholls 2002). But even before 1984, Labour Party policy statements that ran counter to union policies were sometimes given credence in union publications. As an example, the *Clarion* (Aug 1975: 6) published Roger Douglas' critique of National superannuation on the grounds that it was too costly and "discourages older people from using their skills [and] giving to the community." In contrast, the Federation of Labour had criticised the National Party prior to the Superannuation announcement for "starving the old" and conspiring with a "Super tax pensions plot" (Jun 1972; Sept 1975).

The contradictions between labour movement goals and its support of the Labour Party continued throughout the Fourth Labour Government's two terms in power. In this period there is a consistent feeling from those who remain in support of the Labour Party that despite disappointments, workers are better off than they would have been under National Party leadership. For example, after the 1984 Economic Summit, the FOL agreed "upon the principles" of the Labour Party's economic policy and believed that "the compromise with Labour" was far superior to a National Government (FOL Nov 1984: 4, 1). In 1987, after the liberalisation of the economy had begun in earnest, a leading union official, Bill Andersen, opined that "Labour [was] still the best choice" (*The Dominion* Jun 20, 1987: 2). Others, such as the editors of *Manual* (Mar 1987: cover) attempted to use their support as leverage in party policy as, they claimed, "the Labour Party will only be returned to the treasury benches with workers votes." Others still, such as the Public Service Alliance withheld their support or placed it elsewhere (*The Dominion* Aug 12, 1987). For the most part, though, conservative union leadership advocated for continued support of Labour while attempting to rearrange the

institutional structure of unions in response to what they perceived as inevitable changes in the economy (Roper 2010, NZCTU 1988; 1999b).

The alternative labour movement, born from community development in the 1970s (Chile 2006), had a far shorter honeymoon period with the Fourth Labour Government. After initial excitement over the change in government, the Labour Government's 1985 employment assistance model severely reduced funding for alternative work models and set off a period of contentious politics (Higgins 1997). Contestation over the adoption of Treasury proposals to deal with unemployment without regard for other stakeholder contributions resulted in the government threatening funding altogether, and Higgins (1997) marks the decline of the alternative labour movement progressively through the following decade.

The effect of the separation between the Labour Party and its traditional support base had ramifications that remained throughout the period in which unions and workers suffered the bulk of negative change. Unions responded with attempts to change their organisation to work better within the system, but also to challenge inequities from that system, and this led to increased emphasis on working with marginalised identities, although these were ultimately limited to those in standard employment. This is illustrated in the companion publications of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU), *The Need for Change* (1988), and *Strategies for Change* (1999b). In the first publication, beneficiaries and their organisations are put alongside women's groups, Māori groups, and social movement actors from other ethnic minorities as natural allies to the unions, whereas in the second, those excluded from the labour market are no longer mentioned. Rather than indicating that unions were no longer concerned with poverty and social equality, these publications follow social trends in calling upon social rather than economic identities.

For unions, the new rules of engagement meant significant directional and structural change in the form of strategic unionism with central coherence, centrally negotiated incomes policy, and an active voice in economic policy formation (Walsh 1991). The impetus of this proposal had historical precedence. According to Anderson:

The main achievement of the unions has been to get themselves to a position where they are able to affect the whole course of the economic and political development of society. (in Bradley 1974: 17)

This historic achievement waned from 1949, even during periods of Labour Party rule (Walsh 1991). Regardless, directives to work within the system (rather than in opposition) were also historically consistent, especially where the Labour Party was concerned. For example, at the beginning of the depression, political ties to the communist party were severed so that the labour movement would be unified in their support of the Labour Party (Roth 1973: 50). Once in power, the Labour Party then requested, “a strong but disciplined union movement whose leaders could be relied upon not to endanger the Labour Party’s political prospects” (Roth 1973: 56). The lack of government critique during the 1972-1975 period of Labour Party rule despite continued government policies to depress wages (see Chapter 2) speaks to the continuation of institutionalised Labour “discipline.” In short, the historical institutional arrangement of unions within the state ensured a “de-radicalised” organisation of labour – this behaviour continued into the 1990s (Nicholls 2002).

After the failure of a proposed industry-government-union compact during the Fourth Labour Government’s second term, the energy put into new union organisation was effectively limited to a two percent general wage increase in 1990, an agreement that found opposition within the labour movement (Walsh 1991). Following shortly after, the ECA was announced

with the election of the Fourth National Government. Upon the implementation of the ECA, wildcat strikes broke out across the country, but these were not supported by the CTU leadership, which declined to call a general strike in favour of political lobbying (Nicholls 2002: 14), much to the disappointment of the rank and file of the labour movement (Roper 2005). In Nicholls' (2002) estimation, the institutional arm of the labour movement not only hindered effective protest, but facilitated the adoption of the market-oriented state.

Here it is necessary to note that changes in the economy also hindered union attempts to represent their historic constituency. Though Boltanski and Chiapello (2006) write about the French experience, their insights are useful here. The wide-spread restructuring from the late 1970s alongside increased unemployment challenged the position of the union in negotiating positive outcomes. Added to this, the new managerialism of the "New Zealand model" ideologically undermines the coherence of the working class, even where lower level managers are closer to the working class in wages (Ongley 2011) and are also susceptible to income insecurity due to restructuring. Finally, the transience of workers due to the institutionalisation of the "new spirit of capitalism" (with a focus on "projects" rather than life-long jobs and thus prone to insecurity) undermines worker cohesion, especially to specific work sites.

At this point the precarious position of the labour movement becomes apparent. Historically institutionalised in both unions and the Labour Party, the former lacked institutional strength to promote an independent political position and also lacked organisational connections between centralised authorities and workers (Walsh 1991) while the latter's representation of the labour movement faltered due to its more pressing priority of managing the capitalist economy. In contrast to the Māori and women's movements that became institutionally

secure within the market-oriented state, labour's deinstitutionalisation occurred even as unions readily adhered to the demands of incorporation.

The implementation of the Employment Contracts Act in 1991 further crippled the legitimacy of unions by excluding them from the Act itself (Harbridge & Honeybone, 1996), encouraging union free-riding (Harbridge & Wilkinson, 2001), leaving some sectors of non-unionised workers vulnerable and lacking potential coverage, and decimating union membership and union density throughout the 1990s (Nicholls 2002: 11). According to Nicholls (2002: 15), left responses to the ECA calling for "good faith bargaining" are consistent with weakened state institutional power of labour. Barry (2004: 212, 214) concurs, as the ERA follows the ECA in promoting enterprise bargaining and promoting free-riding. As the last chapter argued, union gains since the replacement of the ECA with the ERA have been minimal (Blackwood and colleagues 2006). In other words, the strength of the labour movement – in direct confrontation at the work site – was displaced by a number of economic, legal and state initiatives that began in the late 1970s and became concretised in the 1990s. The political space that proved so effective in the 1970s thus required new constitution, or reorganisation.

As I mentioned in the last chapter, the CTU's assessment of Fifth Labour Government (1999-2008) contradicts my assessment that minimal gains have been made since the introduction of the ERA. CTU President Helen Kelly, for example, argued that advances during the tenure of the Fifth Labour Government included seventy percent increases in minimum wage, twenty hours of free early childhood education, guaranteed time and a half for public holidays, fourteen weeks of paid parental leave, and "change that is rolling out pay equity in the state sector" (Kelly Apr 13, 2008). The increases in minimum wage coupled with in-

work payments from the Working for Families legislation indeed increase the real net pay of low-waged workers after 2004. This does mark a significant advance for workers. At the same time, however, the casualisation of the workforce has not abated and the gap between working and non-working incomes puts those in insecure employment at risk. The casualisation of the workforce has been a point of criticism for groups such as the Women's Information Network (1999) publications such as *Jobs Letter* (Mar 6, 1995), as well as unions generally (see Unite n.d.). The introduction of indexed paid maternity leave and free childcare, as with WFF legislation, encourage workforce participation again do little to mitigate economic risk for the low-waged. Finally, the repeal of the Pay Equity Unit in the Department of Labour in 2009 (CTU Jul 1, 2009) indicates that the areas of contestation for organised labour have not changed significantly since the 1989-1990 period, when pay equity legislation was first implemented and then repealed.

But even as institutional arrangements for the labour movement seem fixed within the determining logic of the market-led era, there are indications of shifting political spaces within the labour movement. Even though state institutional channels for workers narrowed with the ECA, industrial action could still be successful. For example, *Worker's Voice* in 1993 reported that the Government Select Committee to determine the effects of the ECA was “a sham” as it did not provide adequate time to hear workers' stories (May 1993: 29). The same issue of the magazine reported that union officials had been evicted from workplaces by police due to the ECA restrictions on union entry (May 1993: 14-15). However, the *Worker's Voice* also reported on successful industrial action at New Zealand Steel (May 1993: 21), Hurricane Wire Products (Jun 1993: 4), and KFC workers who fought against the casualisation of their employment in Levin (Mar 1993: 8). Barry (2004: 205) argues that while unions may approach employers in partnership models as a result of

enterprise bargaining in the ERA, they may, contrarily, adopt an “organising approach” that posits the union in opposition to management. Such occurrences are not new, but have recently featured in areas of the economy that were historically deemed difficult to unionise due to employer tactics, high employee turnover, and the use of casual workers. According to the *Mean Times* (Nov 1987) Unite is a union specifically for “marginalised workers.” For the *Dominion Post*, similarly, Unite Union has been particularly successful at organising and representing workers in these areas, invoking claims that “industrial militancy is back in style” (Ventnor May 6 2006: 1).

While such claims are overstated, the labour movement has made progress in three significant areas. The first of these is in the extension of union benefits to low-waged, insecure workers (Unite n.d.). The second is in the incorporation of economically marginalised identities. As early as 1973, Roth declared that the union movement may be “the major agency of social change in New Zealand” (Pearson & Thorns 1983: 154). However, as *Broadsheet* (Jul/Aug 1979: 11) would point out in 1979, the union movement was still very “male dominated” as it rejected the “Working Women’s Charter.” Importantly, the FOL endorsed the charter in 1980 (*Broadsheet* Jul/Aug 1980: 10). Other marginalised identities also became represented and incorporated over time. For example, a CTU publication in 1987 argued that unions had a duty to act on behalf of Pacific immigrant “overstayers” in the workplace and in dealings with the government (Task Force on Trade Union Education 1987: 17-18). Similarly, the CTU Review Committee (1998: 11) expressed concern over the representation of marginalised youth, especially Māori and Pacific Peoples, who risked becoming an “underclass” in New Zealand. Union support of unemployed workers (*Doledrums* Oct 1982: 4) indicates that concern resulted in the provision of financial resources. So even though Peter Franks (CTU Oct 15, 2007) noted that, “the FOL conferences in the 1980s were

overwhelmingly male. There were few Māori, even fewer Pacifica people,” the base of representation was changing. Franks (CTU Oct 15, 2007) contrasts the predominantly white, male union movement of the 1980s to “a very different” union movement today.

In both of these advances, there is the possibility for a broad-based movement for greater economic equality that incorporates the low-waged, if not more casual workers and the unemployed. But at the same time, the lack of radical demand from the union movement makes its overall potential for effects questionable at present. Again, the CTU assessment of the Fifth Labour Government policies is notable in this regard. Advancements for the union movement were notable, but the continued market dominance of the state – that including the structural production of unemployment and disciplining the unemployed into work through inadequate income replacement – cannot seriously challenge poverty except for those in relatively stable employment.

Finally, the emerging grassroots organisation against international capitalism, which cannot be accredited to the union movement alone, nevertheless implicates and gives power to the labour movement internationally. For example, according to the *Dominion Post* some people accused in the October 2007 “Terror Raids” promoted anti-globalisation protest in New Zealand and some had participated at anti-globalisation protests in other parts of the world (the *Dominion Post* Oct 17, 2007). Worldwide “occupy” protests also took place in New Zealand where they received support from Church leaders belonging to the New Zealand Christian Network (*Scoop* Nov 16, 2011). In this prolonged protest, “a dialogue aimed at reducing inequality in our society” was articulated with “approximately a third of the world’s population [going] to be hungry” (*Scoop* Nov 16, 2011; *Dominion Post* Dec 2, 2011: 4).

Although this development remains outside of the scope of this dissertation, it speaks to the re-emergence of economic identities and the critique of capitalism.