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ARE WE DOING GOOD?

**Catholic Social Teaching
and the ethics of public policy outcomes
in New Zealand**

**A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN PUBLIC POLICY**

**MASSEY UNIVERSITY
ALBANY**

**BRENDA MARGARET RADFORD
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Dedicated to my father

John Robert Fittes
1920 – 2005

His calm guidance shaped my ethical perspective
and sense of fair play
in the light of our rich spiritual heritage

Requiescat in pace

ABSTRACT

From the perspective that avoidable social and environmental injustices exist in New Zealand, this research examines the ethics of public policy. It suggests that our society would be more justly sustainable if the ethics of policy outcomes were to supersede political expediency as the dominant influence in government's decision-making. An Appreciative Inquiry with expert interviewees is applied to the two-part proposition that: (a) a greater focus on ethics and social morality is required for effective policy-making; and (b) the application of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching would enhance the ethical coherence of government policy, programme and service development.

The research has found that the public policy system in New Zealand enables its workers to 'do well,' but often prevents them from 'doing good,' in policy domains such as housing and employment. Erroneous assumptions by policy actors that their work is morally neutral limit their appreciation of the effects that government decisions have on society and the natural environment. The research suggests that government should insist on ethical analysis of policy proposals and impacts as a pre-requisite for its decisions. Since Catholic Social Teaching is congruent with our accepted standards of social morality, it could helpfully be applied to policy design and implementation in this country. The best way to position CST as a moral signpost for policy-making would be to apply it to specific policies and services.

This project has been oriented from the outset towards applicability in the public policy environment. Accordingly, the research includes three new policy-making frameworks which combine the principles of Catholic Social Teaching with the methodology of Appreciative Inquiry. Use of these analytical frameworks would enable all policy actors to assess the ethics of recommendations and decisions in terms of their impacts on people and the earth.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
ALMP	Active labour market programme
ARGF	Auckland Regional Growth Forum
AS	Accommodation Supplement
CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i> (social encyclical 1991)
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CBEW	Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CELAM	Conference of Latin American Bishops
CIV	<i>Caritas in Veritate</i> (social encyclical 2009)
CPAG	Child Poverty Action Group
CST	Catholic Social Teaching
DCE	<i>Deus Caritas Est</i> (encyclical 2005)
DOL	Department of Labour
EA	<i>Ecclesia in America</i> (apostolic exhortation 1999)
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> (apostolic exhortation 1995)
EO	<i>Ecclesia in Oceania</i> (apostolic exhortation 2000)
ES	<i>Ecclesiam Suam</i> (encyclical 1964)
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (pastoral constitution 1965)
HNZC	Housing New Zealand Corporation
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IM	<i>Iustitia in Mundo</i> (World Synod of Bishops' Statement 1971)
IRD	Inland Revenue Department
IRR	Income-related rents
LE	<i>Laborem Exercens</i> (social encyclical 1981)
MM	<i>Mater et Magistra</i> (social encyclical 1961)
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
MUHEC	Massey University Human Ethics Committee

NAIRU	Non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment
NGO	Non-government organisation
NPM	New public management
NZCCB	New Zealand Conference of Catholic Bishops
NZCCSS	New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services
NZCEO	New Zealand Catholic Education Office
OA	<i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> (apostolic letter 1971)
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
PCJP	Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
PMTFE	Prime Ministerial Task Force for Employment
PP	<i>Populorum Progressio</i> (social encyclical 1967)
PSCIA	Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975
PT	<i>Pacem in Terris</i> (social encyclical 1963)
QA	<i>Quadragesimo Anno</i> (social encyclical 1931)
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
RN	<i>Rerum Novarum</i> (social encyclical 1891)
SANZ	Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand (Inc)
SAS	Social Allocation System
SCCE	Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education
SRS	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> (social encyclical 1987)
SS	<i>Spe Salvi</i> (encyclical 2007)
SSC	State Services Commission
TOP	Training Opportunities Programme
TPK	Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Maori Development
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
UN	United Nations
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992)
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development