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*ACCESS:*  
*The limits and capacity of the state*

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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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August 1989

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1096001831

## Abstract

This is a study of a process of educational policy-making, and the subsequent implementation of policy. It is theoretically embedded within the neo-marxist analyses of the sociology of education, but much of the study is concerned with developing a more adequate framework for the investigation of policy and processes within the state than that provided by relative autonomy theories. It begins, therefore, with an overview and critique of various approaches to education from a sociological perspective, and goes on to develop an analytical framework, based on the concepts of the limits and capacity of the state, with which policy processes can be more fully analysed. The development and implementation of the ACCESS post-school training scheme for the unemployed forms the central policy study of the latter part of this thesis.

## Acknowledgements

We live in disturbing but exciting times of change, many aspects of which are documented in this study. The process of writing about these issues has underlined for me how important it is to be involved in them, rather than merely observing them. The process of thesis-writing, I think, removes us from the very real-world activities that we seek to study. Because of my consequent lack of enthusiasm for this task, there are a number of people without whom I could not have continued to work in this way. These people have supported me, and sometimes even inspired me, to get it finished.

My supervisors have been endlessly patient. Richard Harker as my chief supervisor, and Ivan Snook, my boss, have given me a lot of support in many ways. John Codd has been more than a support. I have had endless fascinating discussions about policy with him, and have learned much from his wisdom and academic scholarship.

In the inspiration field Roger Dale is definitely ahead of all others. He has challenged me constantly to lift the level of my analysis and, moreover, simply to keep going when I definitely didn't feel like doing so.

It has been my women friends, however, who have provided the warmth and support that has kept me going, particularly over the last few months. Head of the list is my dear friend Wendy Craig, who now expects similar support from me as she starts her PhD thesis. As well, my friends and colleagues Jan McPherson, Judith Loveridge, Anne-Marie O'Neill, Kathy Irwin and Nancy Bell have always helped me in diverse ways. Other people in the Education Department and the Social Sciences Tower at

Massey, too, have given me periodic assistance and support. I thank them all. Thanks also to Toni Snowball who assisted me with typing "above and beyond the call of duty".

My daughter Sonya is also to be thanked. She shares my opinion of this work, often asking "*when* will it be finished?". It is her age group who will be the next to be affected by governmental unemployment policies. It is my sincere hope that, by the time she leaves school, she faces much better circumstances than those described in the latter part of this study.

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## Abbreviations

<b>ACCESS</b>	This is not an acronym
<b>ALS</b>	ACCESS Liaison Service
<b>APTEP</b>	Advisory Panel on Training and Employment Programmes
<b>COGS</b>	Community Organisation Grants Scheme
<b>DETAC</b>	District Employment and Training Advisory Committee
<b>EPC</b>	Employment Promotion Conference (March 1985)
<b>JOS</b>	Job Opportunities Scheme
<b>MSC</b>	Manpower Services Commission (U.K.)
<b>NACTSWL</b>	National Advisory Committee on Transition from School to Working Life
<b>OTF</b>	Occupational Training Family (U.K.)
<b>PEP</b>	Project Employment Programme
<b>STEPS</b>	School Leavers Training and Employment Preparation Scheme
<b>TAP</b>	Training Assistance Programme
<b>WSDP</b>	Work Skills Development Programme
<b>YLC</b>	Youth Learning Centre
<b>YPTP</b>	Young Persons Training Programme
<b>YOP</b>	Youth Opportunities Programme (U.K.)
<b>YTS</b>	Youth Training Scheme (U.K.)

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## Introduction

The rise of post-school training as a state-led response to unemployment, and in particular youth unemployment, is a relatively recent phenomenon, specific to the late 1970s and the 1980s. In New Zealand this type of response was first made in 1978, with the development of the Young Persons Training Programme (Khan 1986; Korndorffer 1987a). With the election of a Labour Government in 1984, a process was initiated to develop a more coherent training policy, in recognition of the long-term nature of the unemployment situation. The result of this policy process was the ACCESS training programme, which was implemented in April 1987 after a long period of policy development. The process of the development and implementation of ACCESS forms the basis of this study.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the policy processes within the state which led to the formation of the ACCESS programme. Although there is a large amount of literature on post-school training within the sociology of education, the analytical tools that have generally been employed have led to a neglect of intra-state processes. It has been necessary, in this study, to find new approaches to the analysis of policy-making within the state, which take as problematic the whole range of state processes, and the relationship of the state to capital and civil society.

The starting point of this thesis is that structural unemployment is a major crisis to which the state must respond; the particular responses having as much to do with the internal structure of state agencies themselves as with the demands from other spheres for state-led solutions.

ACCESS constitutes only one kind of response to the crisis of unemployment; that of post-school pre-vocational preparation and social and life-skills courses, predominantly for the young. Such programmes aim to manage the 'broken transition' (Clarke and Willis 1984) between schooling and the youth labour market, and are focused, in particular on the disadvantaged young: women, Maori, Pacific Island people and the working class.

There are other kinds of educational responses that can be made to the problem of youth unemployment (Thomas 1985). Raising the school leaving age is one that New Zealand has not taken up, preferring instead to 'encourage' young people who have no job to return to school<sup>1</sup>. Pre-vocational courses in schools, links between schools and Polytechnics and work experience programmes have all been implemented, in one form or another, in New Zealand, although these have tended to be small and relatively *ad hoc*.

The state may also, however, intervene by making places for unemployed people in the labour market. Policies such as early retirement, a shorter working week and voluntary redundancy have not been adopted wholesale by the state in New Zealand. On the other hand, job creation programmes, subsidies for certain industries and fiscal policies to encourage investment in industry were, up until the period under study here, a central part of New Zealand's employment and industrial policies. However, there has been a mass withdrawal of state funding in these areas, consistent with the Government's monetarist philosophy which insists that intervention, if necessary at all, is to be concentrated on supply rather than demand factors.

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<sup>1</sup>This 'encouragement' has, however, been exceptionally widespread over the past two years. Young people have received a letter, enclosed with School Certificate results, urging them to return to school. In 1988 this was reinforced with a high-profile advertising campaign, including 'trendy' TV adverts aimed specifically at teenagers, which offered persuasive reasons for returning to school. These campaigns have been exceptionally successful, leaving secondary schools to cope with large non-academic populations in the 6th form (see chapter five).

ACCESS has developed, then, as the central state response to the crisis of unemployment in the late 1980s. In order to understand why and how the policy was developed, and its mechanisms of implementation, this thesis lays out a detailed theoretical framework for the examination of ACCESS policy and, more generally, of the role of the state in capitalist society. This is necessary because existing accounts of the role of the state within the sociology of education tend to leave unexamined the nature of the state and its connections to capital and to civil society or, alternatively, to assume a functionalist, determinist relationship between the state and other spheres.

Chapter one critiques three approaches to the analysis of the state, which form the central strands of analysis within the sociology of education, and reviews the British literature on policies of post-school training. The field of 'policy analysis' has been dominated by various models deriving from structural functionalist theory, in particular those which can be described as 'systems theories' (Prunty 1984). These models all hold in common a number of assumptions about the state which describe it as a neutral arbiter of societal interests. Margaret Archer's (1984) theories of change in educational systems, which offer a relatively sophisticated version of systems theory, are outlined and critiqued first.

The various strands of neo-Marxist theory provide a much more fertile ground for an analysis of the state. In recent years, the sociology of education has become very preoccupied with education policy, particularly in relation to class, gender and ethnic inequalities. However, this literature, too, has its shortcomings. The state is usually portrayed as the servant or proponent of capital, working through policies and processes to reproduce the structural inequalities of society. Moreover, whilst systems theories at least recognise the diverse nature of state structures, neo-Marxist theories tend to see the state as monolithic, working intentionally and relatively efficiently towards well-defined ends. Whilst these theories recognise the complexity and power relations of a capitalist society, they tend to view the state largely as a 'black box'; one

which although fraught with (and driven by<sup>2</sup>) contradictions, remains subservient to the needs of capital. The work of Althusser (1972) is discussed and critiqued as such a 'capital-centred' theory.

A third strand, which differs in focus rather than necessarily in theoretical approach from those above, can also be identified in the literature of the sociology of education. This is the work undertaken on the role of particular policy-making agencies within the state (Kogan 1979; Salter and Tapper 1981; McPherson and Raab 1988). Such work is potentially far more useful than the structural theories for the study undertaken in this thesis. The aim of such work is to document the power relationships within the state. However, one looks in vain in this literature for a coherent theoretical analysis of the state. These studies tend to remain at a general level of description. More importantly, they offer an 'insider' view of the workings of the state which cannot be considered objective. Whilst these studies do not exhibit the high level of abstraction of the structural theories, at the same time they tend to shed any notion of state agencies as relational to civil society and capital. In chapter one, Salter and Tapper's work is reviewed as an example of this strand.

The second part of chapter one focuses on the British literature on post-school training. This literature uses three concepts in particular - legitimisation, accumulation and social control - to explain state involvement in these policies. The arguments and evidence for each of these three concepts will be discussed.

The focus of chapter two is the development of an adequate theoretical framework for a non-reductionist analysis of the state in education. It is argued that the preoccupation of most neo-Marxist analyses with the state/capital relation has led to a neglect of the role of the state, through the adoption of ill-defined and under-theorised accounts of

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<sup>2</sup>See Dale 1982, who outlines the case for contradictions to be seen as the driving force of state action.

'relative autonomy'. What is required, for the purposes of the present study, is a theoretical framework that deals adequately with the power relations between the state, capital and civil society, whilst at the same time making all those relationships problematic and opening them up for investigation.

The chapter begins with an outline of a theoretical and conceptual framework, derived from the work of Gramsci, which allows for the examination of intra-state and state/civil society relationships, as well as those between the state and capital. These terms will be defined during the course of the discussion of the theoretical propositions. The substantive part of chapter two discusses recent applications of analyses of the state within the sociology of education. It will focus on relative autonomy theories, noting that whilst they appear to open up the state for investigation, they in fact reify the role of the state through an assumption that, in the last instance, state action is determined by the economic structures of society. Out of this analysis a new approach, based on the concepts of the *limits* and *capacity* of the state, are developed as a framework for the examination of policy processes.

One of the central points that Gramsci (1971) makes is that any action by the state must be seen within its historical context. Post-school training policies are state responses to unemployment that are historically unique to the period under study here. However, the problem that framed this response, that is the transition from school to work, has been articulated throughout the history of state schooling in New Zealand. Part of the basis for understanding the specific responses of the 1980s is to locate these within the larger historical context, and chapter three uses education policy documents from throughout this century to examine how the school to work relation has been viewed at various points. The opposing strands of 'schooling for life' and 'schooling for work' can be seen to permeate these reports in a number of specific ways that relate to the particular social and economic conditions within which they were developed. The final section of chapter three takes a somewhat different approach to the same issue,

examining recent academic debates within New Zealand over the relationship between school and work and, more specifically, in relation to post-school training.

These first three chapters, then, offer a theoretical and historical context for this study, and thus a framework for the analysis of the research undertaken here. The following two chapters present the findings of the research on the development and implementation of the ACCESS training programme.

Chapter four examines the context and development of the ACCESS training programme. This development centred around the election of the fourth Labour Government, and the 'consultative' structure which it brought to the policy process. Hence, many of the documents that are analysed were actually part of a dialogue between civil society and Government. The second level of analysis in this chapter is a pilot project, under the auspices of the Department of Education, put in place to 'test' aspects of the proposed ACCESS structure. This chapter, then, focuses on both vertical and horizontal levels of relations within the state, during a period of policy development.

The next chapter, five, looks at the period of implementation of ACCESS. The analysis of this programme is based upon the claim that the implementation of ACCESS and the breakdown of this policy occurred simultaneously, due to a set of material and ideological conditions which permeated not only the context of the policy but also its shape, condemning the policy to fail at the same time as it was being put into place. This chapter returns to the concepts of legitimation, accumulation and social control that were analysed in chapter one, and concludes that ACCESS in practice served no useful purpose for either the state, capital or civil society.

The concluding chapter has two foci. The first is a consideration of the usefulness of the framework of *limits* and *capacity* for the analysis of state policy processes. The



framework, it is noted, provides a basis for examining how the state works, in particular in relation to the other spheres of society. Most importantly, the framework allows the state to be considered independently of both capital and civil society, without ruling out the possibility, in any instance, that the state may be working for either of these spheres. Finally, the internal structures, predispositions and contradictions of state agencies are opened up for analysis.

The second focus is the future of state policies of post-school training as a response to structural unemployment in New Zealand. The structural reformation of the state is leading to a redefinition of the role of post-school training, which is to be met by an institutional shift between agencies of the state. It seems clear that the lifespan of labour market training responses to unemployment will be short; and that educational responses are likely to become predominant in the future. The implications of this ideological and institutional shift will be briefly discussed.

## Chapter one

### The state and educational policy: sociological considerations

The sociology of education developed as a separate discipline during the 1950s. Coinciding "with a period of enormous growth of public expenditure on schools and universities" (Karabel and Halsey 1977 p. 10), this discipline quickly became concerned with the issue of the state's provision of education. Despite this, early sociological theories of schooling failed largely to consider as problematic the state's role and the whole range of political issues in education<sup>1</sup>. Schooling processes and state policies were perceived as neutral, and outcomes dependent on individual and familial factors independent of organisational function<sup>2</sup>. Within these functionalist analyses the state was perceived to be the rational embodiment of democratic will. This was reinforced by the apparent consensus over the aims and processes of education in society since the second world war<sup>3</sup>. Education policies, therefore, were seen as neutral in that they reflected mainstream social and political thought.

By the 1960s, "educational systems everywhere had become arenas of political and social conflict" (Karabel and Halsey 1977 p.10), and it became clear that structural functionalist theories did not provide an adequate framework for the analysis of schooling structures and processes. The work of the 'new' sociologists (Young 1971) focused attention on the processes of schooling. At the same time, however, Marxist

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<sup>1</sup>This was, of course, a central claim of the 'new' sociologists in the early 1970s. See, in particular, the introduction to Young (1971).

<sup>2</sup>See Bernstein's paper in Young (1971) for an example of how the 'new' sociology of education began to develop arguments against this position. He argues that it is the organisation, pedagogy and evaluation processes of schooling that shape the outcomes of schooling along cultural lines, by privileging certain values above others.

<sup>3</sup>See CCCS (1981) for an account of this in the British context, and Beeby's introduction to Renwick (1986) for the New Zealand context.

analyses of schooling structures and the role of the state were being developed (Althusser 1972). Education policy became a central focus of the sociology of education. The publication of *Schooling in Capitalist America* (Bowles and Gintis 1976) marked the beginning of a decade in which the state's role in education was to become a central preoccupation in the field.

Bowles and Gintis argued that the purposes of education were being fulfilled exactly as intended by the state, whose role was to provide for the reproduction of the mode of production and the maintenance of ruling class dominance and thus the capitalist mode of production. Their study, and those that followed it, unfortunately had a rather perverse effect on the sociology of education. Instead of stimulating analysis of the role of the state in education, the argument developed by Bowles and Gintis tended to quash it at birth<sup>4</sup>. If the state, and by implication the state schooling system, *necessarily* reproduces the unequal structures of capitalist society, then there is little point in studying its nature and role any further (Jessop 1982 p.143). Whilst the determinist nature of these theoretical approaches has been recognised and discussed in depth within the sociology of education, the legacy remains in a seeming reluctance by many sociologists of education to examine the role of the state in education. There is little research that does more than merely describe, using *a priori* theoretical assumptions, state structures and policies.

## 1. Unidimensional theories of education and the state

The first part of this chapter examines the essentially unidimensional analyses of education that have been dominant within the sociology of education. There are three major theoretical strands represented here, each explored through a theorist whose work is central to the particular approach. The first is what I have called 'society-

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<sup>4</sup>The only exception within a Marxist framework was, perhaps, the CCCS's 'Unpopular Education' (1981). However, even this study tended to situate its analysis of struggle away from the state.

centred' theories, represented here by the work of Margaret Archer (1984). Her major comparative study of education systems examines the development of state education in a number of countries. Her central thesis is that the particular form of state education provision can be explained by two factors: the historical preconditions of schooling and the representations of particular interest groups.

The second approach, which I have called 'capital-centred theories', is represented here by the work of Louis Althusser (1972). This approach sees schooling as having replaced the family and the church, in recent years, as the central mediator of class reproduction in society. Schools process young people, he claims, according to their class background, representing what is a process of strict reproduction as a meritocracy. Althusser may seem a strange choice to exemplify the state/capital relation, as his work has been heavily criticised for its determinism. However, it is argued in chapter two that those theories that claim to move beyond Althusser's work, specifically through the adoption of 'relative autonomy' theories of the state/capital relation, are in the end bound to the same assumptions that characterise Althusser's work.

The third approach to be examined here focuses fairly narrowly on the state's role in policy formation and implementation. The works of Kogan (1979) and of Salter and Tapper (1981) are the best known within the field, and it is the latter which is represented here. Although these state-centred theories open up state processes for analysis, at the same time they tend to ignore the relationship of the State to capital and civil society<sup>5</sup>. While a state-centred view is necessary for an analysis of policy, it is not sufficient.

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<sup>5</sup>These concepts, and their inter-relationships, will be discussed in more depth in the conclusion to chapter one and at the beginning of chapter two.

## 1.1 Society-centred theory

Those theories that centre on society as the central determinant of state activity range from Archer to most of the work of 1960s sociology of education. These approaches stress the role of the state in responding to social demands; in a sense as the mediator of democratic aspirations. Archer focuses centrally on the interest group as the unit of change, although her work also recognises that the historical preconditions of the system: the shape of the educational bureaucracy; the nature of state schooling institutions; and the expectations that existing educational provision engenders; ensure that the state in education is a significant agent in determining educational provision. Her excellent analysis of the role of teachers and their developing professional autonomy is an example of this. It is precisely because state educational provision has developed in particular ways, she states, that teachers can develop their professional autonomy as they have; concomitantly, that development is limited by the shape of the system. Archer's weakness is that her analysis is largely limited to this state/society dimension, and the analysis she gives of society is based on the pluralist 'interest group' theory that reduces 'capital' to society and thus ignores the power relationships, inequalities and contradictions of a capitalist society.

Archer's major, ambitious project has been to trace 'the social origins of education systems', examining in particular the effects that existing structures have had on the development of new policies and practices. The basic problematic of her approach is that:

*...to understand the nature of education at any time we need to know not only who won the struggle for control, but also how; not merely who lost, but how badly they lost out (1984 p.2).*

Archer's work takes a macro-sociological, or 'systemic' approach to the question of how education systems develop, and hence is centrally concerned with processes of educational policy making and implementation. Her central argument is that education

systems develop out of a particular set of social conditions, the particular interests of those groups dominant in educational resources at the time and the pressures, or assertion, of other groups who lack educational resources but want them. However, the development of a state education system inevitably involves some concomitant development of autonomy to the educational level which ensures that other interests than those the system was created to meet would be developed:

*Once private ownership had given way to state systems..... educational interaction was immediately conditioned in a completely different manner. The context in which people found themselves educationally, the problems they experienced and what they could do about them altered radically. They reacted and interacted differently and this gave rise to educational change through processes other than the competitive conflict of earlier times (Archer 1984 p.89).*

Whilst the first section of Archer's book describes the emergence of state education systems in Britain and France, the second section examines the effects these 'publicly provided' systems were to have on the "new linkages established between education and society" (p.90). Her analysis focuses on the political level, as the education system is a state system and thus, at least theoretically, accessible to influence by all through representation and political manipulation.

This second part focuses on the *interest group* as the main unit of educational change. She identifies that the relations between various groups in the educational field alter quite considerably with the development of state education. Two changes are important. First, more groups have a say in educational provision:

*From being completely without influence over formal education in the antecedent period, the position of the mass of the population has improved because of the pressures it can exert over public spending (1984 p.90).*

Second, those working within the enlarged state system, who respond to the expansion by increased specialisation, develop a vested interest in the system:

*This [process of specialisation] has the important effect of creating educational interest groups for the first time - that is, people whose vested interests lie in the improvement of their educational positions because of their full-time employment in them (1984 p.92).*

Archer recognises that, despite the apparent democratisation of education systems through the state, not every group has equal access nor equal power to change the system:

*The lower classes, immigrant groups and ethnic minorities cannot engage in external transactions on a significant scale because they lack the resources. Generally, too, the nature of their sub-cultures does not harmonise spontaneously with prevailing academic values and they do not gain much advantage from internal initiation.*

However, the lack of power that these groups have to make internal and external transactions does not preclude them from changing education; they must do it through a third avenue - political manipulation, which is open to every person and group. All people have, according to Archer, the avenues by which to alter the education system by influencing the formation of policies. However, her account lacks coherence at this point due to two factors. Firstly, she does not investigate the differential power of people who belong to various class, gender and ethnic groups to influence these processes. Secondly, she has a simplistic analysis of where policies are formed and the processes they go through. Archer's analysis, in brief, does not recognise that power relations in society actually shape not only the way systems are organised but also the channels through which changes and representations can be made. She adheres to a strict pluralism that translates what is essentially a problem of *lack of power*, into one of *lack of resources*. Thus she fails to recognise that not only are education systems not neutral, in that they reflect the assumptions and aims of dominant groups, but also the channels through which change could take place are biased towards powerful groups, because they are developed and formed by the actions of such groups.

Archer envisages a battlefield on which opposing groups fight out differences in more or less similar conditions (if it rains on one, it rains on both). Unfortunately, she does not take into account that the dominant group have got there first, claimed all the high ground for themselves, are better armed, and make decisions about when and on what

terms the battle will be fought. Moreover, the opposing 'groups' live within particular social contexts that work for or against them. Interest groups are never just 'mildly' interested; they have 'vested' interests.

The very notion of 'interest groups', that is, of non-aligned groups of people who assemble over a particular issue of social concern, has a number of theoretical inadequacies. Firstly, it is generally ahistorical, presuming rather a crude evolutionary notion of a society formed by the pressures of individuals. Archer's notion of the freedom of all classes to bring about change at the political level simply because they have a nominal political involvement falls into this category; the historical evidence would suggest otherwise<sup>6</sup>. Secondly, it is idealist, rejecting materialist notions of the development of ideas in favour of the much weaker notion of interest. Archer begins to recognise that power derives from one's place in the structure of institutions, for example that teachers may become a pressure group by their important role in the education system, but she fails to make links between power in institutions and the power structures of society<sup>7</sup>. Thirdly, 'interest groups' theory tends not to examine connections between various issues (e.g. opposition to sex education in schools and negative beliefs about homosexuality) in which people are 'interested'. Thus the profound social underpinnings of issues, which cause the struggle in the first place, lie unexamined. In particular, she fails to recognise the nature of the state as more than a collection of interest groups, or that power emanates not only from people but also from the state itself.

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<sup>6</sup>This is an area that has been examined in some depth by contemporary feminists (e.g. Spender 1984), in order to understand why the winning of universal suffrage did not bring about the immediate emancipation of women. It is an area far more complex than Archer seems to suggest, as women and other groups seem clearly able to vote against their political interests. The role of ideology in civil society - or what Gramsci calls 'common sense' - is important here, and totally absent from Archer's analysis.

<sup>7</sup>However, it is important in rejecting this argument not to become lured into its opposite: that the power relations between institutions and the social formation are firmly bonded as a 'correspondence' for all time. The task of the political historian is to demonstrate empirically and contextually the precise relations between power in civil society and political society at a particular point.



The second criticism that must be made of Archer's work is its extreme functionalism.

In a telling passage (1984 pp.5-6) she notes:

*...conflicting institutional relationships are transmitted to actors by shaping the situations in which they find themselves. It consists of structural relations of contradiction or complementarity distributing frustrating or rewarding experiences to the situations which actors have to confront because of the institutional positions they hold. Where contradiction characterises relations between social institutions, these strains are experienced as exigencies by groups.....*

*On the other hand, where operational complementarity prevails, this is transmitted to the relevant action situations as a series of rewarding experiences.*

Archer thus posits a correspondence, a direct structural relationship, between contradiction and complementarity at the level of structure and the experience of frustration or facilitation by persons within these structures.

Her emphasis on the determinacy of institutional structures also leaves out the differential effects of such contradictions or complementarities on different groups of people. What may be frustrating for one group can reward another; moreover, differing groups have more or less alternative choices depending on their position within the social structure; their economic, political and cultural resources within a particular historical period.

The third criticism of Archer is that her whole method and basic assumptions are positivist. She links into a traditional model of sociology as a social *science*, which is based on an attempt to discover "an objectively true account of how the world functions" in order to provide "an intersubjectively verifiable (or at least falsifiable) account of how the social world operates" (Fay 1975 p.21). The study of sociology may in this way be conceptualised as *independent from*, although able to inform, social policies. Social theory, free from the anarchy of opinion that clutters our daily lives, this approach claims, can be based on *technical* rules that analyse, but do not necessarily reflect, societal assumptions. However, social theory and political practice

are intimately related<sup>8</sup>, and such an attempt to view the political world as a technicist domain leads to:

*... the sublimation of politics. For what these political changes amount to is an attempt to eliminate politics as we know it, overcoming its limitations and uncertainties by replacing it with a form of social engineering analogous to the applied physical sciences (Fay 1975 p.27).*

There are two issues here that need to be addressed. The first is Archer's claim that, once developed, an education system structures interaction in particular ways; different systems lead to different responses. This, of course, is true; were it not, there would be no point in developing a particular form of education system - any would do. The second issue is far more complex, and addresses the relationship between the *objectives* of the system and its *outcomes*. The positivist model, in Archer's case a systems approach, posits a *technical* relationship between aims and effect. This model effectively reduces political questions to those of technique and postulates outcomes in terms of *rational behaviour* (of actors and institutions) rather than in terms of domination or political struggle between groups in society. Any gap between projected and actual outcomes is put down to stresses, strains and weaknesses in the system rather than to a failure in the model to account for certain social, cultural, historical or political circumstances that impinge upon the function of the institution.

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<sup>8</sup>Of course, it is possible to reject this assertion as incorrect, or as not necessarily correct. There are various arguments, however, that support this view: that the choice of research subject in the social sciences is itself extra-scientific (indeed, a social act); that the form of research approach is conditioned by certain values and assumptions that invariably influence, and often determine, outcomes; that research itself resides within and creates particular social outcomes; that, as Fay (1975) painstakingly argues, in positivist social science the notion of explanation becomes homologically linked to the notion of prediction (so that an explanation is only adequate if it is also predictive), and that prediction in science is intimately related to the further notions of control and manipulation which, in a societal sense, are acts of the political sphere. In Marxist terms positivist social science is clearly seen as political in its equation with 'bourgeois social science' - social science that works for the dominant groups in its analyses of society. The alternative form is also political (see in particular Freire 1972), as 'theory' is only useful for its ability to transform practice, in particular to liberate the oppressed from their chains. Gramsci's (1971) position is somewhat different. He describes the 'traditional' and the 'organic' intellectual, who act quite differently from each other. The traditional intellectual upholds the status quo, and thus the existing social relations, through the acceptance of the existing order as 'right'. The 'organic' intellectual, however, belongs to particular, working class interests. The social scientist in this category aims to pierce the common sense of the masses in order to unveil reality. The organic intellectual is 'for' the oppressed. Whether or not such an approach leads to a counter-hegemony or revolution is an empirical, not just a conceptual, question, that depends on other social and historical conditions beyond the act of research itself.

Whilst claiming to work within a neo-Weberian framework, Archer has surprisingly little insight into the nature of the relationship between social structure and individual agency in society. She frequently recognises that not all groups have the same 'life-chances', but at the same time reifies the determinacy of social relations to the level of institutions and then never explores such institutions in relation to their role in the reproduction of an unequal social structure. Particularly, her claim that all have access to the development of a state education system because all partake in it seems a crude misrepresentation of the actual conditions under which education provision is negotiated. In Dale's (1983a) terms, the state is collapsed theoretically into society, so that no distinction is made between democratic demands and state action.

In many places Archer's work is sensitive and insightful. Its tendency to historicism<sup>9</sup>, positivism and functionalism, however, make it an inadequate approach to the examination of the real, concrete, relationship between schooling and society. Some of the problems outlined in relation to Archer's work appear not only in structural-functional but also in structural Marxist approaches.

## 1.2 Capital-centred theories

Capital-centred theories tend to stress the role of the state in mediating capital's demands for a trained and socialised workforce, favourable conditions for the accumulation of capital, and legitimation. These can be summarised, in Althusser's terms, as the conditions for the *legitimation* and the *reproduction* of the capitalist mode of production. Whilst there have been a number of alternative formulations of the role of the state within these theories (e.g. Miliband 1969, Poulantzas 1978; see Jessop 1982 and Carnoy 1984 for summaries of the various positions), their central similarity is that they all adhere to the notion of 'determination in the last instance' by the

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<sup>9</sup>Historicism is the tendency to reify historical processes, so that they become determinant in the activities of persons at a particular historical conjuncture.

economic base (Laclau and Mouffe 1987). Hence, whilst the actions of the state may be conceptualised as contradictory, or as subject to unintended effects and outcomes, in the end the state in these theories exists to serve the needs of capital.

Structuralist Marxist approaches to education policy tend to see the state as unproblematically upholding existing relations of domination. According to Dale (1983a), capital centred theories make no distinction between the work of the state and the work of capital. Althusser's (1972) approach illustrates this clearly.

The question raised centrally by Louis Althusser relates to the role that education plays in the reproduction of the social and economic conditions of a capitalist society. He states that the reproduction of a capitalist society involves reproducing both the "productive forces" and the "existing relations" of society (1972 p.243). The reproduction of the forces of production requires not only the continued availability of raw materials, factories and consumers, but also, centrally, the reproduction of labour power. This labour power must be able to be trained in the techniques of the production of commodities, must be available for production and must be willing to produce.

However, the role of the schooling system must also be to make finer distinctions. Labour is not equal and homogeneous, but must be differentiated into various job specialities at various 'levels' of production, and the particular relations of domination and subordination (of capitalist over foreperson; manager over clerk; senior over junior) must be maintained. Althusser notes that the capitalist system (i.e. the means and forces of production) cannot alone provide all the conditions for its own reproduction. The economic base is geared to the development of production and the extraction of surplus value, and does not have the resources to provide for raising, educating and socialising a new generation of workers. Therefore, in advanced capitalist societies the state is *necessary*, and has developed a series of superstructures that ensure the reproduction of the conditions of production:

*It is easy to see that this representation of the structure of every society as an edifice containing a base (infrastructure) on which are erected the two 'floors' of the superstructure, is a metaphor..... like every metaphor, this metaphor suggests something, makes something visible. What? Precisely this: that the upper floors could not 'stay up' (in the air) alone, if they did not rest precisely on their base.*

*Thus the object of the metaphor of the edifice is to represent above all the 'determination in the last instance' by the economic base (Althusser 1972 p.247).*

According to this approach, the functions of the economic base determine the activities of the superstructure. The 'final' purpose of all activity within the superstructure is the reproduction of the base. The superstructure, according to Althusser (ibid), is made up of two 'levels': "the politico-legal (law and the state) and ideology (the different ideologies, religious, ethical, legal, political etc)". The state provides the major, but not the only, superstructures in a capitalist society. Althusser notes that there are two types of state apparatus - the 'repressive' state apparatuses (such as the Police, Judges, Courts, Army) and what he calls the ideological state apparatuses. Of these, education is said to be the most important apparatus in the reproduction of the conditions of production and, ultimately, capitalist society.

Althusser notes that schools not only provide educated workers for production, but also a differentiated workforce through the credentialling system. Such differentiations are legitimated through the ideologies of 'intelligence' and 'effort', but in reality schools produce and reproduce existing class inequalities:

*[The school] takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most 'vulnerable', squeezed between the family state apparatus and the educational state apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology (French, arithmetic, natural history, the sciences, literature) or simply the ruling ideology in its pure state (ethics, civic instruction, philosophy). Somewhere around the age of sixteen, a huge mass of children are ejected 'into production'; these are the workers or small peasants. Another portion of scholastically adapted youth carries on: and, for better or worse, it goes somewhat further, until it falls by the wayside and fills the posts of small and middle technicians, white-collar workers, small and middle executives, petty bourgeois of all kinds. A last portion reaches the summit, either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide...the agents of exploitation (capitalists, managers) the agents of repression (soldiers, policemen, politicians, administrators, etc.) and the professional ideologists (1972 p.260).*

This structuralist Marxist approach provides a series of analytical problems for the study of the state. Firstly, the reductionist-essentialist framework (i.e. base/superstructure) assumes that the state, including the ideological state apparatuses such as schools, are simply instruments of the ruling class (Jessop 1982 p.143). Every educational initiative, then, is identified as a tool of the bourgeoisie to lure, incorporate or repress the masses. The role of the theorist has been simply to show the mechanisms by which domination is, in a particular instance, effected.

Secondly, the state is conceived purely in class terms that simply do not allow for the existence of other structures such as gender and ethnicity, nor of other, non-class or inter-class, movements such as pacifism, feminism and nationalism, or even of new capitalist structures such as the shift from industrial to finance capital as the basis of production. Thus all relations within education are seen by structuralists as stemming from the 'basic' exploitation of the masses by the owners of the means of production; all other exploitative forms are seen to derive from this relationship (Laclau and Mouffe 1981 p.21).

Thirdly, the ideological functions of education are viewed by structuralists as a direct intervention by the state which works 'on behalf' of capitalism. This formulation presents two problems. The first is that it is not clear how the state can anticipate the 'needs' of the capitalist class in advance, and how it can unproblematically implement appropriate ideological formulations (Willis 1983a). The second difficulty is that the structuralist analysis totally omits the possibility of counter-ideologies being produced at the level of schooling and exported 'upwards' (Willis 1977). It is fairly clear that although school pupils (and indeed teachers) may be alienated from the products of their labour, they are not totally passive recipients of dominant ideology.

Capital-centred theories, in essence, allow little theoretical space within which the state can be analysed independently of capital. As a result, these theories tend to be

deterministic and functionalist in their application. In the next chapter these issues will be explored further.

### 1.3 State-centred theories

State-centred theory is relatively rare within the sociology of education, but is represented by the work of Maurice Kogan (1979) and of Salter and Tapper (1981). Their work focuses on the (British) Department of Education and Science as the central, and increasing, power in determining education policies. Their eclecticism and lack of argument or empirical evidence to back up this claim makes it difficult to refute their assertions. Their work does have importance in making problematic the policy processes of the state, but at the same time this approach is centred so closely on the state that its relations with other sectors of society are not clearly connected.

The approach signalled by this conceptual model avoids the determinism of both Marxist and functionalist formulations by asserting the autonomous although inter-related relationship of the state to other sectors. The critique of determinisms that has dominated this chapter so far makes it plain that many of the prestructuring effects of those theories actively preclude an adequate analysis of policy issues, by rendering unproblematic a host of questions central to policy analysis. Salter and Tapper's work begins from the claim that the sociology of education has failed to develop adequate frameworks to address the problems of educational policy. Salter and Tapper put the problem in a slightly different way:

*In developing this theory, we are seeking to remedy the failure of educational sociologists to take educational change, that is change in the way all or part of the education system is organised and administered, as their central concern. Instead, they have either been obsessed with one parochial part of that system (e.g. the curriculum) and neglected to relate it to the rest of education, or they have been concerned with broader social issues (e.g. social mobility, cultural reproduction) where the dynamics of educational change are of secondary importance. This does not deny that, properly orchestrated, each can contribute towards an understanding of why and how educational change occurs in the form that it does. But to assume that their disparate interests will*

*harmonize of their own free will to produce such an effect is to indulge in an unjustifiable act of faith...(1981 p.2).*

Sociology, they note, is itself pervaded by cracks and divisions, both in disciplinary terms: "academics have a mutual interest in maintaining the boundaries between different areas of knowledge" (p.2); and also in terms of internal theoretical divisions, or "schools of thought" (p.3). A rejection of this divisiveness leads them to espouse an eclecticism, believing that theoretical purity can only lead to a closure caused largely, they claim, by the political commitment of theorists which is seen to be the driving force of theory<sup>10</sup>. They note with some cynicism:

*Indeed, in the current climate of educational theory building the announcement of political commitment to change appears to be the sine qua non of theory construction. If you do not wear your political heart on your sleeve then why are you bothering? (1981 p.3)*

Given their own claim, in their introduction, to be not Marxists and not feminists (which the sexist language of the book makes quite plain), this is rather an ironic statement. If feminism and Marxism are political positions, then non-feminism and non-Marxism, too, must be political; if only in the sense that they uphold the status quo.

Part one of the book is entitled 'Developing the Theory'. It is, in fact, an attempt to work out those components of a sociology of education that can explain educational change. The first chapter critiques three sociological approaches, leaving its most vehement critique for Marxist theories, although this critique, as Dale (1983b p.187) notes in a review essay, is:

*.....little more than a caricature whose main outlines are provided by Bowles and Gintis, and which takes no account at all of recent Marxist theories of the state. In this they are unfortunately representative of the tendency..... to embrace a gratuitous and opportunistic anti-Marxism which fashionably disowns the label Marxist whilst making often very good use of the Marxist corpus of ideas".*

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<sup>10</sup> Thus they assume that eclecticism is, by definition, apolitical (or perhaps pan-political). This, of course, is itself a theoretical and political position, one shared by most positivist researchers.



Educational change is the focus of the book. Chapter two traces briefly and in general terms the determinants and boundaries of educational change. The chapter has some use in specifying limits but it is too much to hope that such a project can be developed fully within one chapter. It is at this point that Salter and Tapper introduce their main claim: that increasingly the Department of Education and Science is taking the lead in developing educational change in England. They note that this claim will be backed up by the case studies in the second part of the book, but in fact the case studies work on the assumption that the claim is correct.

The following chapter deals with the ideological development that must accompany educational change for the purposes of legitimation. The authors claim that most Marxist theories of ideology are too narrow, with the exception of Gramsci, whom they use, with varying degrees of accuracy, to explain ideological development in line with educational change. Their search for the mechanisms of ideological change, however, rejects materialist notions of the development of ideas<sup>11</sup>, and rests heavily on a muted Gramscian notion of intellectuals. In line with their central argument about the role of the Department of Education and Science, they picture a group of 'intellectual' state servants searching for the right set of ideas to uphold their favoured practices:

*The emergence of ideas to legitimize either particular group interests or sets of group interests arranged in a hierarchy of prestige is here construed as an uncertain process with no built-in guarantee of success. It may be that a group will, in the first instance, select ideas that do not adequately suit its interests. However, if the group is to survive as a political entity, reselection will necessarily have to occur"*

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<sup>11</sup> There are a variety of approaches to the notion of ideology within Marxist thought, reflecting particular epistemological positions. The central tenet of such theories is that ideas arise from and are subject to the material conditions in which they exist. Salter and Tapper, however, see the Department of Education and Science, because of its privileged role and the position it has carved out for itself, as the dynamic of all educational change. There is little evidence offered for this position, and no analysis is offered of the particular material conditions that allow this site to become 'the' engine of educational change. The analysis is essentially idealist. Given the abolition of the NZ Department of Education, and its replacement in October 1989 with a Ministry, it seems clear that state agencies may themselves be subject to change which is driven externally; hence a single state institution cannot be seen as the driving force of all political change.

Such a view is overly mechanistic, and ignores the reality that intellectuals (or state servants) do not dream up programmes and then think about ways to legitimate them in society; programmes come from ideas and Salter and Tapper leave completely unexplored where these ideas come from. Their rejection of a narrow *class interests* thesis of traditional Marxism is in line with recent developments within the sociology of education, but the authors' alternative view gives no specification at all of where ideas do come from and how they are developed into policies. Work such as *Unpopular Education* (CCCS 1981) offers a far more detailed and persuasive series of arguments than Salter and Tapper on these questions of ideology and legitimation. This adherence to a structuralist Marxist notion of a 'central organising committee' for the dissemination of ideologies is all the more ironic given their rejection of every other aspect of that structuralism<sup>12</sup>.

The next chapter aims to show that control over the organisation of knowledge is central to control over the "experience of schooling" (p.72). It critiques four approaches to the organisation of knowledge, and then claims:

*It is our contention that for changes in the organisation of knowledge to have any prolonged or general social significance they must be politically negotiated (p.82)*

This is in no way an outcome of the critique of existing theories that the chapter undertakes, and it is hard to see how the rejection of the 'social' basis of the organisation of knowledge can logically lead to this faith in the political sphere to bring about change. It backs up their claims of increasing Department of Education and Science control over the change process without offering evidence to support that view. Hence the theoretical construction of all the opening chapters of their book

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<sup>12</sup> See Willis (1981 p.50): "it is absurd... to think that something called capital could coherently think out its list of tight social conditions - these and no other; still less could it imprint them on a malleable class".

inevitably leads to a framework that supports the thesis of increasing Department of Education and Science control.

It is not my purpose here to interrogate Salter and Tapper's application of their theory in practice, as the focus here is on the ability of theoretical approaches to provide an adequate basis for the analysis of the role of the state in education. This second section is, anyway, thoroughly discussed in Dale's (1983b) review essay. Of their attempt to develop a theoretical approach, Dale concludes:

*What their theoretical approach comes down to is a combination of a scepticism amounting almost to cynicism about existing theories, empiricism - following where the facts lead - and eclecticism - choosing the bits of theory that best explain the problem at hand. In this way their perception of events is not, they would contend, distorted by any fetishistic theoretical preconceptions; but it does, we should note, confine them to providing post factum and essentially ad hoc explanations (pp.187-88).*

The apparent preoccupation of this book with what often amounts to personal attacks on sociological researchers leads it to neglect, except in a most fragmented way, the need for an adequate understanding of the social context in which schooling occurs. Whilst they claim to follow Archer to a great extent, their approach is somewhat less pluralistic but at the same time less coherent than hers.

#### 1.4 Summary

The central problem of both Archer's structural functionalism and Althusser's structural Marxism is that they render unproblematic, through processes of predetermination, a whole range of areas that are subject to political influence and transformation. This weakness shows particularly in their respective treatments of the state. For Archer, the over-riding determination is that stage of evolution, and the particular type of system, that characterises the education system. Within these, processes of policy development are seen as democratically determined.

For Althusser, state education always rests firmly on the economic base, its functions, both structural and ideological, determined by the forces of capital accumulation. Whilst considerations of historical causation and economic constraint must be seen as central aspects of educational policy analysis, both these approaches close off the possibility that other factors, and contradictory influences and unintended effects, may also impinge centrally on policy processes. The economic or historical structures may be causal factors in a given policy development. Whether they are or not is an empirical question to be interrogated in particular instances; such preconditions are not fixed and immutable.

Salter and Tapper do manage to address the state and its role in education in relatively non-determinist terms, but their theory of the state and its relation to social, political and economic structures is inadequately developed. This is not only a state-centred theory but one which centres on aspects of the state so closely that societal and economic factors are largely ignored.

These three approaches differ significantly from each other in both theoretical assumptions and institutional focus. What they have in common is that each focuses on only one part of a complex inter-relationship. Either the state becomes subsumed to the mechanisms of capital or society, or it is seen to stand alone in splendid isolation. What is missing from these accounts is a theoretical conceptualisation of the state that recognises its relation to other spheres and yet provides a basis for the examination of 'political society' in its own right. The next chapter will offer a more detailed critique of sociological theories of the state, based on a rejection of the concept of 'relative autonomy'.

The problems of educational policy analysis described here do not, however, reside merely in the domain of grand state theory. The issue of the role of the state in society is exemplified in the issue of the state's role in transition education and training. The

second section of this chapter examines how the state has been conceptualised, either implicitly or explicitly, in the substantial British literature in this area.

## 2. The state and transition education

This section reviews the British literature on transition education in order to examine the conceptions of the state that are either implicit or explicit in these analyses. Britain developed large-scale post-school training for the young unemployed quite a long time before New Zealand moved beyond a small-scale, ad hoc, provision, and hence the literature is much larger and better developed than comparable New Zealand material<sup>13</sup>.

As well, the role of the state became very visible in the British context because the first major scheme, the Youth Opportunities Scheme (YOP), was run by a semi-autonomous state agency, the Manpower Services Commission, rather than by the Department of Employment. In New Zealand, such schemes have always been administered, up until the present, by the Department of Labour through existing training institutions. This move by the Thatcher Government opened up a whole new field of investigation to British sociologists of education (see, for example, Dale *et al* 1986).

A central claim, recurring in the literature, is that the growth in youth unemployment has "radically altered the conventional relationship between schooling and work" (Gleeson 1986 p.46). The beginnings of this change could be seen in the 'Great Debate' of 1976, which raised a number of issues about the role of schooling. The inappropriateness of schooling for the kinds of work that young people would enter, the progressive ideology of teachers which, it was claimed, led "to a neglect of, or

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<sup>13</sup>The huge rise in youth unemployment in Britain in the late 1970s, particularly in the North and Midlands, precipitated much of the literature that is examined here. For example, in 1983 Willis estimated that 90% of that year's school leavers in Wolverhampton would not be able to find work. Willis, (1983b).

even contempt for, rigour and standards and produces pupils with attitudes inimical to the disciplinary and moral requirements of many employers" (Dale 1985 p.47) and the neglect of teaching about the world of work and the economic importance of industry, were all charges laid against the school. This critique was added to a more widespread charge that educational standards were falling badly, although there was "no evidence of a decline in educational standards; in formal terms, as measured by qualifications, these have risen " (Raffe 1987 p.237).

Willis (1986 p.156) notes that all these charges have led to "a state ideological and institutional offensive [which] tries to recouple them (education and production) in the most biased, bankrupt and disingenuous ways which jettison entirely and without shame the whole rubric of equality and mobility". This offensive by the state has been undertaken partially within schools, by the development of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (see Dale *et al* 1986), but its central focus has been on the 'transition' from school to work or, increasingly, to unemployment.

Youth unemployment began to increase in Britain at precisely the same time as schools were being subjected to prolonged ideological attacks. There is little doubt that some causal relationship existed between these two sets of events (see Apple 1986), although an investigation of such a relationship is beyond the bounds of this study. The growth in youth unemployment in the 1970s focused attention on the role played by schools in preparing young people for adult life. In Britain, "as the scale of youth unemployment escalated the employment problems of young people, their inability to get jobs came to be interpreted as an educational problem" (Finn 1985 p.112).

Apart from the critiques of what schooling did (or rather what schooling did not do), a further criticism, which was to have ongoing repercussions for state schooling, centred on the effects of state investment in education (Brown 1987 p.18). The economic argument for widespread state education had always hinged on the belief that an

educated workforce would contribute to massive ongoing improvements in production. However, the new 'free market' approach argued that educational expenditure actually hindered production by channeling money into education that would otherwise be used for investment. Furthermore, the new economists argued that education benefitted the individuals concerned far more than it benefitted the society, and thus the costs of education itself should properly be privatised.

Despite these arguments for a non-interventionist state, the rise in youth unemployment required a response from a state that had "always taken an interest in surplus labour" (Clarke and Willis 1984 p.8). Indeed, "the state's commitment to managing this broken transition has not only continued but been expanded" (ibid). Essentially, the state continued to uphold the notion of the 'transition' from schooling to adulthood, and this required that young people be given "somewhere to go to" (ibid p.4). Thus the growth of youth unemployment in the mid-1970s forced a response from the state, which involved a massive investment in post-school training for the young. The transition to work became redefined as a transition to 'training for job creation'. The state, according to these accounts, has played a crucial role in acting to maintain the 'transition'.

However, the transition was no longer to be managed through the application of traditional liberal-democratic methods. Whilst unemployment was considered too important and too dangerous to be left to the uncertain attentions of the free market (Dale 1985 p.48), a new approach, based on a broad preparation of young people to be "good employees" (Dale 1985 p.4) was necessary. As youth unemployment was clearly a problem of an over-demand, not an inadequate supply, of labour (Raffe 1984c p.191), the problem for the state was "essentially one of keeping the unemployed employable, of keeping them available for employment when employment is not available for them". As a result of these imperatives, state-funded post-school

training programmes were developed<sup>14</sup>, under the auspices of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), to provide much closer links between young people and the needs of industry.

The relationship between schooling and work, and the introduction of training programmes for the young unemployed by the state, is interpreted in the literature in at least three ways. Firstly, transition programmes are considered to socialise the costs of work training for capital<sup>15</sup>, and thus act to improve capital *accumulation*. Second, these programmes are said to legitimate high levels of unemployment through the process of 'blaming the victim', shifting attention away from the structural crises of capital that caused the unemployment. Third, training programmes are thought to act, as do schools, as a form of *social control*. These three inter-related arguments are not theoretically neutral, but derive essentially from a 'capital-centred' theory of the state. Each of these arguments is outlined below, and it is suggested that each is constrained by the theory of the state on which it is based.

## 2.1 The capital accumulation thesis.

The capital accumulation thesis rests centrally on the belief that the state works to support the continued development of capital in times of economic crisis. Such crises are seen as endemic to a capitalist mode of production, and it is up to the state to mitigate their effects (Apple 1982). The state, then, is bound, it is argued, to respond to such crises in a number of ways; specifically, in the context of this study, by providing vocational training for workers and potential workers. The rise in youth

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<sup>14</sup>This, of course, was not the only response in Britain. In particular, the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (TVEI), which provided a four year 'alternative' vocational course in schools, was developed as a further response. However, youth training programmes have provided the central plank of the British management of youth unemployment since 1978 (Dale et al 1986).

<sup>15</sup>Gleeson (1985 p.57) calls this process the "privatization of industry and the nationalization of youth".



unemployment in the 1970s brought with it strong forces to make schools more responsive to the 'needs' of the economy: "Schools were accused of failing to equip their pupils with the necessary basic skills and attitudes to enter work" (Clarke and Willis 1984 p.3). It was argued that "schools should emphasise the contribution of the economy to national life and prepare pupils to take their place in that economy" (Dale 1985 p.3). Further, the curricula and processes of schooling were seen to be positively antagonistic to the labour market (Finn 1985 p.112).

These attacks on schooling encompassed not only the curriculum, which was seen to lack a firm grounding in the basics, but also the organisation of schooling, and in particular the ability of teachers (see Apple 1986 for an account of this in the American context). These ideological constructions of schooling, which were fuelled further by both attacks from the Right and the increase in youth unemployment, led inevitably to the development of vocational training as the central response to youth unemployment; first in the post-school sector and, later on, within schools (Dale 1986a p.32). Hence, in Britain in the 1970s "the stimulus to broaden the FE [further education] base arose in relation to dramatic changes in the youth labour market; in this case its almost total collapse" (Gleeson 1985 p.60). As the problems of unemployment were 'blamed' on inadequate schooling, it became clear that the state response would need to be in the direction of further education and training.

According to the accumulation thesis, the central role of training programmes is to provide trained workers for various industries. This removes the necessity for basic training from the struggling industries themselves (and socialises the costs of training), and provides them with a pool of trained workers to assist in their economic recovery. This has been a basic aim of MSC schemes in Britain, and there is little doubt that these schemes have attempted to assist with capital accumulation. What is less clear is whether the Youth Opportunities Programme and especially the Youth Training

Scheme (YTS)<sup>16</sup> actually met this goal, and, more importantly, what other, related, effects the pursuit of improved capital accumulation have had.

There is little evidence that post-school training programmes that have been set up by the state in Britain have acted to aid the process of accumulation in this period of capitalist crisis. There are several reasons for this. First, the YOP and YTS have catered largely for the low-skilled segment of the labour market; those heading for highly skilled work tend to 'skip' the youth labour market altogether, by attending institutions of higher education for a number of years. Therefore, these training programmes are, in fact, offering skills for essentially unskilled work (Clarke and Willis 1984). Second, the YOP courses were of too short a duration to provide 'real' skills, although this was corrected somewhat by the introduction of year-long courses

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<sup>16</sup>See Raffe 1984a,b and c. The Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), ran from 1978 to 1983, and was then replaced by the Youth Training Programme (YTS). In 1976, the MSC had commissioned a working party to examine the proposition that "all those in the age bracket 16-18 who have left school and are not engaged in full-time education and are unable to get a job should have the opportunity of training or of participating in programmes such as the Job Creation and Work Experience programmes" (quoted in Raffe 1984c p.195). The Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) was the direct outcome of this report. It was to offer co-ordinated programmes, with opportunities for progression, a single allowance and it was to serve different groups more evenly (Raffe 1984c p.196; Farley 1985 p.78). Raffe notes that the report of the working party (the Holland Report) dealt with the technical and administrative aspects of youth schemes, and did not examine in depth any underlying rationale for such provision. It was particularly lacking in a strategy that clearly defined the purposes of YOP as a training scheme. In effect, the YOP was simply a stop-gap programme to deal with what was seen as a temporary problem of cyclical unemployment (Raffe 1984c p.188). The Report based the need for training very heavily on a belief that it was the qualities and attitudes of young people which prevented them from being unemployed. The YOP scheme ran from 1978 to 1983, when it was replaced by the YTS, as a result of widespread criticism of its mode of operation (Farley 1985 p.79). One criticism of the scheme was that it, in effect, displaced permanent workers in many industries with youth on training allowances. Given the large numbers of young people on YOP (Raffe estimates that at the end of 1982 about 30,000 were on this scheme at any one time; 1984c p.200), the scheme had a significant effect on patterns of youth employment. The second major criticism of the YOP was that, from 1981 onwards, there was a deterioration in the proportion of trainees who subsequently gained work. This was probably due more to the general economic situation rather than any inherent qualities of the scheme, but it still required a state response (Raffe 1984c p.201). The third area of criticism was that YOP was exploitative, and provided on average only low quality education and training. Some training was of high quality, however. Thus the problem became "to raise the standards of the whole programme to the level of the best" (Raffe 1984c p.204). The process by which YOP was replaced by YTS was a long and acrimonious one, the details of which lie outside the scope of this review. However, Raffe (1984c p.188) notes that YTS constituted a policy not of short-term provision for the unemployed, but of providing training for young people: "it is not about youth unemployment". He notes that this switch in policy emphasis, occurring as levels of youth unemployment had reached unprecedented levels, constituted a paradox. This re-emphasis allowed the state to concentrate not on the failure of industry to provide work but on the inadequacies of young people themselves.

under YTS; however, as Raffe pointed out (1984b p.13), most young people tend to leave these schemes early. Third, there appears to be a declining tendency for these schemes to lead to full time work in the area in which the training has taken place. This has been countered in Britain through an emphasis on occupational training families (OTFs), which claim to offer families of skills that can be transferred from industry to industry, but there is no evidence available that those skills which are learned can be transferred from one context to another.

The development of OTFs are based on particular definitions of 'skill' as a series of components that can be developed discretely and taught in isolation from one another. The families are linked by their putative relationship to particular work practices (Moore 1987 p.230). In turn, these skills are said to lead to transferability within particular job 'families'.

A number of criticisms of OTFs have been made in the literature. Gleeson (1985 p.64) notes that "there is no clear evidence what transferable skills are, how they are transmitted and how they are transferred". As well, OTFs assume a causal connection to exist between work and the curriculum, the assumption being that one can unambiguously work backwards from work to the type of training required for that work". The use of OTFs, too, "is thought to reinforce gender segregation" (Wickham 1985 p.106), by discouraging girls from entering unfamiliar or non-traditional types of experience. Moore (1987 p.232) sees OTFs as reflecting the notion of "possessive individualism", defining the person as "a consumer of work whose purchasing power reflects the values of the skills 'owned' within a free market for labour". This view of skills detached from any context thus carries powerful and highly specific messages concerning the nature of society and the individual and the relation between them - its own *hidden curriculum* (Moore 1987 p.231).

Central to critiques of OTFs is a challenge to the technicist notion of skill. Skill, notes Dale (1985 p.2) is actually a political construction:

*... skill is used to differentiate the workforce for managerial purposes as much as to designate the capacity of individual workers, That industry has a pressing need for more skills is based on an opposite assumption, that the sum of work to be done is broken down into the skills people require, and the jobs they actually do in the most rational, technically efficient way; their content and specification being thus technically determined, it follows that the requirements of those to hold the jobs can be exactly determined in terms of skill, knowledge etc.*

On a similar note, Cohen (1984 p.115) states that: "the MSC has developed training forms in which knowledge is radically disconnected from the power of social combination". This isolation of skill is based on the notion that certain acts can be transferred to different contexts. The sheer absurdity of this approach can be seen in an example that Cohen provides (1984 p.115):

*Yet when a girl who is using a pair of scissors to cut her nails can be described as learning how to 'put together two metal blades unpowered', then we are clearly living in a universe of discourse in which anything goes!*

A particular extension of this approach has been its application in the area of social and life-skills. In this field the ideological nature of the curriculum is most clearly exposed. Gleeson (1985 pp.65-66; 1986 pp.56-57) gives a number of examples. The MSC unit "the world outside employment" requires evidence of the following skills: keeping clean, using a bank, planning money, asking about staff discounts, being loyal to the workplace, what people expect of one another, applying for a job and using a telephone (1985 p.65). Again, 'personal effectiveness' is measured in terms of the trainees' ability to talk to strangers, be polite and helpful, behave in the right way and so forth (1986 p.57). Gleeson concludes that the curriculum "represents little more than a crude attempt at colonizing everyday life, linked with filling in forms, opening accounts and generally 'being good'" (1985 pp.65-66).

It is, though, perhaps what is left out of these units, even more than what is included, that reveals the ideological agenda. The MSC, in declaring that nothing political or controversial will be tolerated in the curriculum (quoted in Gleeson 1985 p.67), requires that the young person shall develop a relationship only with a putative work environment (from which they are, by definition, excluded by their status as 'trainees'), and not with the wider structures of society (Finn 1985 pp.119-120). "From this position", Gleeson (1985 p.67) notes, "questions regarding how industry is organised and managed, how wealth is accumulated, how wages, skills and allowances are legitimated and sustained, can be conveniently edited out of training as politically extraneous". Specifically, too, such training omits any examination of the young person in relation to unemployment, whilst implicitly reinforcing the view that such unemployment is caused by a lack of skills. As Cohen (1984 p.127) notes: "it is in their claim to be purely factual or practical that these materials reveal themselves as ideological through and through". The content of these programmes has seen what Moore (1984 p.66) calls "a shift from a liberal-humanist educational paradigm to a technicist training paradigm" (see also Moore 1983 p.16). The technicist model stresses skills development to compensate for deficit in the individual, hence YTS is essentially a remedial course for the unemployable (Raffe 1984b p.18). This model is based on what Finn calls the myth of "a 'mismatch' between young workers' capacities and the characteristics required by employees" (1984 p.118). However, most of those characteristics do not in fact relate to workplace skills, but to a group of "attitudinal and behavioural dispositions" (Raffe 1984c p.192); thus the notion of skill relates, in reality, to lifestyle characteristics of young people (Moore 1983 p.25). Hence, then, the emphasis on social and life-skills courses and the so-called vocational preparation courses which, Moore (1983 p.18) claims, are for "low-achievers whose jobs have such a low skill content that they cannot provide the content for a curriculum".

It seems likely, then, that OTFs have less to do with providing the conditions for capital accumulation through work skills training, than with legitimating unemployment by giving a distorted, depoliticised view of the world to young people. However, the emphasis on life-skills training does attempt to socialise people into being obedient, prompt, polite and passive servants in the workforce. The capitalist ideology of the 'good' worker is undoubtedly a device to capture workers who will cause no trouble, whether of an individual or a collective (i.e. union) type.

The capital accumulation thesis, then, does explain some of the ideological content of life-skills courses. However, it lacks an analysis of why a state which is more interested in cutting back its own expenditure than in providing training programmes (as evidenced by the little real work training available on such courses and the emphasis on life-skills) puts resources into this kind of training. The economic determinism that is implicit in capital accumulation arguments tends to exclude other possible explanations for state action in providing training.

Whilst there is little evidence, therefore, that the provision of training *per se* can provide the conditions for improved capital accumulation, the particular training structures that the MSC has put in place may contribute indirectly to capital accumulation. Finn (1985 p.112) argues that post-school training in Britain "removes young people from the collective bargaining process and places them in a new twilight dependent status suspended midway between school and wage labour". The high levels of youth unemployment, and the large numbers on the low 'trainee' rates, tends to bring down the average pay rates of young people. Therefore, employers can 'pick up' a young worker either on training rates (Raffe 1984c p.211) or on rates of pay not much above these. The sheer scope of the YTS and youth employment disempowers young people in the labour market, providing a tendency for wages to fall, for working conditions to deteriorate, and thus for exploitation to increase.

Moore (1987) argues that the 'new vocationalism' in the British educational context, which overtly attempts to bring closer together the processes of work and schooling, is in fact an ideological strategy for blocking attempts to critically examine the real context of work relations in contemporary capitalist society. Strategies that appear to be directed to alleviating the accumulation crisis of capitalism may, therefore, in fact conceal ideological agendas which are directed more at solving crises of legitimation. The claim that training aids in the process of capital accumulation, then, has been seized upon by the state as a form of legitimation for state provision of training programmes, but it is one for which there is no direct evidence, although the existence of mass training programmes does have potential effects on the wages, conditions and potential for exploitation of workers.

## **2.2 The legitimation thesis**

The need for the state to legitimate capital (Clarke and Willis 1984), and itself (Moos 1983 p.256) are central themes running through the literature on transition education. Under this thesis, the provision of training for unemployed people distracts attention from the structural nature of youth unemployment and focuses it on the abilities and characteristics of the pool of labour. Thus the provision of training plays an ideological role in constructing the nature of youth unemployment. Moreover, MSC-sponsored training, which offers only low-level training on a minimal allowance, acts to define such vocational training as 'low-status' and thus "represents an attempt to maintain existing patterns of educational and social inequalities" (Brown 1987 pp.8, 23).

The very basis of 'training programmes' for youth is predicated on what has become known as the 'deficit' model of the individuals. Moore (1984 p.67) notes that this deficit model assumes that young people are "socially incompetent and unable to 'cope' with life in general and the transition to work in particular". This claim, he notes, is

often used to explain why young people are suffering high levels of unemployment. Moreover, the deficit model is most frequently used to describe the working class, and, as Cohen (1984 p.126) notes, is "used to provide a rationale for social and life skills training as a form of compensatory education".

Finn notes that the deficit model of working class youth is essentially misleading: "it is very important to grasp that the problem [of transition] is not one about their adjustment to working life. Instead the problem is about how that transition has been arbitrarily extended by employers' refusal to employ the young" (1984 p.59). Similarly, Moore (1984 p.83) points out that "the world of work is the experiential core of class culture". Young people, he notes, learn about work not only through their own experiences but through those of parents, relatives and friends. Willis (1984 p.225) suggests that the irony of the provision of training for the young unemployed is that "the group who, in fact, know most about the real cultural, social and economic dimensions of work and who are most ready to accept its most boring and exploited forms, are the ones who get most preparation for basic work as if they were entirely ignorant of such things".

Despite the shortcomings of the deficit model of the individual, Clarke and Willis (1984 p.3) notes that: "this explanation has shaped the state's initiatives to 'solve' this problem". The ideology of individual deficit has, inevitably, accomplished "the apparently difficult task of blaming the young for the position they are in". Cohen (1984 p.105) argues that, in fact, youth training "is primarily about the inculcation of social discipline" which "represents an attempt to construct a more mobile form of self-discipline, adapted to changing technologies of production and consumption". Whatever the reasons for the focus on youth training (these will be examined below), Willis makes it clear that the crisis can only be solved at the level of production and the economy (1984 p.226).



It is frequently argued in the literature that employers and state agencies tend to talk about young people as if they were a homogeneous group. Such an approach is seen to have ideological effects, assuming similar social conditions and destinations for all young people. This masks the real material effects of unemployment, which falls differentially on youth according to class, gender, ethnic and regional differences. The characterisation of youth as a homogeneous category legitimates unemployment by conceptualising it as a misfortune that falls on the least prepared, worst equipped or unskilled. The provision of training programmes underlines the 'skills deficit' explanation of unemployment, and serves to mask the real, social and economic, causes of unemployment.

Moore (1983 p.19) states that the notion of homogeneous youth in the official accounts tends to be based on simplistic biological ('maturation') and psychosocial ('developmental need') explanations of the position of young people. This is also noted by Clarke and Willis (1984 p.5):

*This conception of youth as a homogeneous group is one which rests on deeply rooted biological and psychological assumptions. They are assumptions about universal patterns of human development and growth to maturity... Youth is distinguished by all sorts of biological changes, and a variety of psychological changes and adjustment - the 'Acne and Valderma' syndrome. Youth, then, is natural, universal (a 'phase' that we all go through) and inherently unstable (a period of difficult adjustment).*

This positioning of young people according to 'age' or 'stage' necessarily omits the social practices that form youth and cut across their lives. Differentiation between youth, when it takes place in these official accounts, tends to be constructed according to deterministic notions of 'ability'. The 'academic' and 'non-academic', the 'high' and 'low' achiever, form comparisons which provide "the basis for a negotiated personal programme and contract" (Moore 1983 p.19). This has the further effect of legitimating the existing formal state structures of differentiation, particularly the schooling system and the youth labour market.

The three structures of class, gender and race cut across the transition in terms of entry points, processes and destinations. The institutions of youth (in particular the family, schooling, leisure and training) as well as the processes of differentiation within these institutions (such as streaming, sex stereotyping, racial discrimination and cultural processes) have direct and significant effects on the outcomes of youth. Unemployment and state training programmes exacerbate, but do not fundamentally alter, existing differentiations, although they may alter the processes and experiences of youth.

Unemployment does not fall haphazardly onto youth. In the United States, Apple (1986 p.178) notes that in 1982 the unemployment rate for white youth was approximately 25 percent, but topped 50 percent for black youth. In Britain, Willis (1986 p.155) notes that "mass youth long term unemployment is an overwhelmingly working class and black working class phenomenon". Horne (1986 p.24) expands on this, with British figures surprisingly similar to those from the United States: "50 per cent 16-19-year-old blacks unemployed; about a quarter of all 16-19 year old unemployed".

Gleeson (1985 p.63) examined the activity of 16 year olds in Britain in 1983/4. Approximately 43 percent were in full time education, either schooling or further education. YTS accounted for a further 22 percent of this age group, 21 percent were in employment and 14 percent unemployed. Whilst he offers no breakdown of the social basis of these differentiations, it must be assumed that they are based on real social divisions between youth.

As well as the rate of unemployment, the experience of unemployment falls differentially onto different groups. For women, it has been noted by several sources that unemployment tends "to draw young women into the home, bringing added

burdens of housework and childcare" (Griffin 1985 p.186). Wallace (1987b p.97) notes that, in her study, "boys were expected to mow the lawn and girls were expected to do housework or babysitting... however, girls were expected to do a great deal more housework than boys".

Class-based differentiations cut across those of both race and gender. Principally, the middle class, having appropriated the education system as the central mechanism for class reproduction and mobility, use further education, in established institutions through recognised courses, as a means both of avoiding youth unemployment 'in the present' and of enhancing work opportunities 'for the future'.

Within the workforce, two types of differentiation of youth are evident. First, youth continues to be internally differentiated according to class, race and gender, although these factors become dispersed within broader labour market demarcations. Second, youth as a category is treated as distinct from adulthood in the labour market. In reality a number of distinctions are made. The first is the nature of the skills (or attitudes) that young people are perceived by employers to hold (or to lack). The second distinction is differences in jobs within particular occupations and workplaces, where youth are congregated amongst the lowest paid and lowest skilled work. The third distinction is at the macro level, where the work in general that young people do is of lower status than that of the workforce as a whole. Youth tend to be barred from certain categories of work, in particular professional occupations and skilled 'craft' work, by the educational and other barriers that prevent membership of such occupations (Ashton, Maguire and Spilsbury 1987 p.167). The other implication of this is that the youth labour force itself does not have the same characteristics as the whole workforce. Those who are white and middle class tend to be removed totally from the youth labour market through their pursuit of further qualifications in higher education institutions.

Gender differentiations within the labour market can be seen to exist both vertically (across the hierarchy) and horizontally (across particular occupational classes). Such differentiations tend to be explained by sex-role stereotyping, in particular in job choice. Finn (1984 p.26) notes that girls make job choices "within a longer term context of their future roles as home makers and child rearers". It is also fairly evident from ethnographic research work that women, in particular from the working class, choose work on the basis of "the relative possibility it offers for meeting eligible men" (Finn 1984 p.27; see also Gordon 1989a). However, it must be noted that openings in such 'glamour' jobs as secretary or receptionist are few and far between for young women.

According to Blackman (1987 pp.44-45), "the pull of traditional female adult work roles is the major influence which guides the girls' stereotypical selection of employment opportunities". This selection is within a narrow range of occupations. A New Zealand study has shown that women tend to be concentrated in a narrow range of occupations - one study showed that 45 percent of women worked in seven narrow categories of work (Craven *et al* 1986). In Blackman's study the most frequently mentioned jobs amongst a group of working class girls were, in order of popularity: Secretary, Nurse, Hairdresser, Bank Clerk, Air Hostess, Nanny and Beautician. Boys not only have a wider range of job choices, but they have also "monopolised... new technology", with computing occupations being their most popular choice (1987 p.45). Ashton, Maguire and Spilsbury (1987) note that sex-stereotyping in work is evident at all levels, from white collar work to unskilled manual work. However, more competition for jobs is evident between the sexes in white collar work, although even there: "clerical and secretarial jobs tend to be a female preserve" (1987 p.164). Within certain manual industries, strict sex segregation is preserved, whilst in skilled manual work, craft occupations are "almost exclusively male and hairdressing almost exclusively female" (*ibid*).

The inequalities resulting from these factors, and other structural constraints, are evident in the shape of the workforce. Women's work tends to be lower paid than men's work, and, as a result, women on average earn far less than men, no matter what their level of qualification (see Apple 1986).

Ethnic factors also affect the distribution of the workforce, although Ashton, Maguire and Spilsbury suggest that such factors work only to *restrict* entry to occupations, rather than preventing entry altogether: "thus the proportion of jobs actually open to [blacks] at all levels of the labour market is much smaller than that available for whites" (1987 p.164).

Between school and work, however, for many youth in Britain now, lies a long period of joblessness. The effects of state intervention, in particular the development of YOP and later YTS, have been studied by a number of researchers. It is argued that these training programmes aim to legitimate inequalities of schooling by defining success and failure in individual terms, but even structures of training, 'in between' schooling and work, are hierarchically defined. Such programmes, however, could not possibly legitimate the pervasive inequalities that are manifested in every sector of post-compulsory education and training. Gleeson (1983 p.38), for example, notes that further education can broadly be divided into three areas: 'academic-technical', 'craft' and 'tertiary modern'. He notes that traditionally, the academic and craft routes "offered relatively good prospects of employment" (1983 p.39), but more recently economic recession has closed off some opportunities through these routes. The 'tertiary modern' sector, then, has become relatively more important to young people. He describes this as "incorporating the unqualified, unemployed and unemployable. Curricular emphasis is on 'generic skills' via remedial vocational education, 'voc prep', work experience and 'social and life skills'" (ibid p.38).

Even within this sector, there is evident differentiation between youth. There is evidence that black youth "are consistently more likely to be allocated to schemes offering inferior opportunities of subsequent employment", while, for girls, "vocational training represents little more than a reinforcement of gender roles and an apprenticeship in home crafts" (Gleeson 1986 p.53; 1985 p.62).

These findings are backed up by Cohen's (1984) study, where he found that traditional, craft-based courses were "overwhelmingly dominated by white male trainees", while the new social and life skills approaches, which provided fewer chances of gaining subsequent work, were "equally over-populated with black youths and girls" (1984 p.116). Finn notes also that youth from ethnic minorities were less likely to be found in the high status 'Mode A' YTS courses, or to have employee status (1985 p.121).

Wickham (1985 p.102) notes that training does provide a vehicle whereby some women may "move into male-dominated occupations where there are still employment opportunities or open paths to promotion". She goes on to note, however: "The MSC continues to stress the importance of opening up new opportunities to women but there is little evidence to suggest that, as yet, the YTS is doing other than to perpetuate pre-existing stereotypes and divisions". Brown (1987 p.23) goes further, arguing that "efforts to find vocational solutions to social and economic problems are part of an attempt... to maintain the existing patterns of social and educational inequalities". In schools, too, the MSC-funded "TVEI is encouraging both gender divisions in the choice of subjects studied in school, and the earlier establishment of gender specific occupational identities" (Brown and Ashton 1987 p.3).

Finn (1985 p.121) notes that a recent analysis of YTS showed that 65 percent of girls were being trained in administrative, clerical and sales areas, compared with 16 percent of boys; and 45 percent of boys were in maintenance, repair and manufacturing areas,

compared with only 7 percent of girls. Raffe (1984b) notes that, for women, YTS has not achieved its promise to be a serious training programme. In fact, it has functioned merely as an unemployment scheme, and young women have tended to leave it on obtaining employment. In an earlier study, Raffe (1984c p.201) found that the YOP did however tend to increase young women's chances of gaining work, by about 14 percent.

We can conclude from the literature that training programmes act to some extent to legitimate schooling and labour market differences in outcomes, by mirroring broader inequalities in the structures of schooling, work and society. It appears that such schemes, despite their overt aims, do not in fact interrupt the cycle of gender, race and class reproduction. The notion of homogeneous youth, so evident in official reports, is an ideological category that denies social inequalities in order to identify unemployed youth as deficient in skills and abilities. This ideology can be seen as an intentional attempt by the state to legitimate youth unemployment, but it is certainly not the only political imperative behind policies of transition education.

In summary, although youth unemployment is demonstrably a problem of the inability of the economy to generate enough work, it tends to be misrepresented by the state, employers and others as an individual or institutional failure. Finn (1984 p.17) sees this process as "focusing on the capacities and qualities of young workers, as against the ability of employers to provide *any*, let alone meaningful, work". He argues that such a focus misrepresents the actual processes of the transition. There is, he claims, "a fundamental assumption that the young unemployed are both ignorant about, and lack experience of, work and working life". This basic assumption, he notes, is false; young people, and in particular young working class people, have a very clear

knowledge of working life and of their place in the workforce. His claims are backed up by Willis (1977) and by his own research.

The forms of legitimation that these schemes provide goes further than merely the support of the economic and political status quo. They implicitly provide, through the adoption of training methods that separate 'work' from its social context<sup>17</sup>, a redefinition of the ideal nature of the economic system: "it is the ideological arguments in favour of how private enterprise *ought* to work that is important for understanding the essential curricular ingredients of the new vocationalism" (Gleeson 1985 p.64). Gleeson goes on to note, however, that these ideologies do not work in fact to "inspire much confidence or public support", as they contradict the everyday experience of both trainees on schemes and workers in the workplace (ibid p.69).

Whilst the legitimation thesis is widely used in the literature as an explanation for state investment in training, there is also evidence that this strategy has failed rather badly for a number of reasons. First, as Gleeson notes above, the ideologies of work that the schemes aim to create actually contradict the received experience of participants. Second, the Thatcher Government has had little commitment to state expenditure in this area: "Government reluctance to incur substantial public spending has been a constant feature of British training policy" (Raffe 1984c p.211). Thirdly, Finn (1985 p.124) suggests that "the persistence of mass unemployment is undermining the MSC". While training schemes were developed in part to legitimate the capitalist mode of production in a period of economic crisis, the persistence of and deterioration in that crisis tends to undermine the very mechanisms that are trying to solve it at the ideological level. The 'crisis' of unemployment, then, is partly deflected onto the MSC and its schemes, which then face the same legitimation crisis as the system as a

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<sup>17</sup>This is particularly apparent in the use of occupational training families (OTFs) as the basis for skill acquisition (see Cohen 1984; Moore 1987).



whole. Despite these continuing failures of legitimation, however, the state continues to promote policies in this area.

Whilst the legitimation thesis is an attractive explanation for state commitment to post-school training provision for the young unemployed, there is in fact little evidence, whether such a strategy was intended or not, that these schemes actually legitimate anything. The YOP, in particular, suffered widespread and bitter public criticism which led to its demise (Raffe 1984c). Since most young people appear to see the YTS as the same as YOP, it is reasonable to suggest that this scheme, too, has little real legitimatory power (ibid). This 'explanation' of state action, then, in fact does not explain the continuing British state support of these schemes through the mid-1980s. The problem is that the explanation rests upon too close an identification of the state with the ideological agendas of capital.

### 2.3 The social control thesis

The social control purposes of state-provided training for unemployed youth are clearly articulated in the literature. Finn (1985 p.115) explains this:

*The extent and speed of state intervention was to signal the very real fears of the social unrest that could have been precipitated [by youth unemployment]. Equally, it was also feared that a lengthy period of post-school unemployment would deny the exposure of the young to the work socialization, habituation and dependency which binds the mature worker to the labour process.*

If post-school training does not provide the conditions for improved capital accumulation or the legitimation of unemployment, then perhaps the central role of such programmes is as a form of social control:

*What the research evidence documents here only too clearly is that the swelling number of unemployed young people in FE at the present time is not due to the shortage of workers with particular skills. Nor is it due to a mismatch between technical qualifications and jobs indicated in Jim Callaghan's controversial Ruskin speech (1976). Rather, it concerns the excess supply of young adult*

*labour in the economy, a factor noted elsewhere as not entirely disconnected from 'trouble' on our streets (Gleeson 1983 p.2).*

Gleeson is here emphasising the state's role in keeping young unemployed people off the streets through the provision of training programmes. This, plus the point raised by Finn about the need to socialise young people into the work ethic, even when no work is available, form the basis of the social control arguments of state intervention in post-school training provision.

Cohen (1984 p.108) argues that programmes for the unemployed are based on the notion that "the devil makes work for idle hands". Thus training schemes are seen by the state, he notes, to at least keep a potentially dangerous class 'out of trouble'. State provision of training, then, has "become a means of providing safe activities for dangerous groups (such as the young, black, unemployed etc) rather than a leg up the social ladder" (1984 p.121). Horne agrees that the social control function of the state has been an integral part of employment policies since the 1930s (1986 p.22): "unless you give jobless youth a shovel, sports or even a gun (under proper supervision), then indiscipline and lawlessness will result". However, he goes on to argue that apathy is a stronger feature than anarchy in the young unemployed, and that state responses based on the need for social control are unnecessary.

Social and life-skills courses, in particular, provide a kind of socialisation into work discipline that normally comes with the experience of being employed; what Cohen (1984 p.114) calls "the discipline of impression management". Raffe (1984c p.193) goes further, stating that training is in fact a substitute for employment, its purpose being to retain the long-term employability of those without work. Two terms often used by the MSC to describe the ideal worker are 'flexibility' and 'adaptability'. Church and Ainley (1987 p.77) note that these terms refer less to intrinsic capacities of individuals that to the demands of restructured industry: "collapsed round a core group of permanent employees and with a large periphery of 'hire and fire' short-term

contracts, agency 'temps', outsources, self-employed and subcontractors that can be expanded or contracted according to demand". Raffe (1984c p.213) notes also that 'flexibility' was also compatible with the government's desire to encourage "wages - and especially youth wages - to fall".

In summary, then, the content of social and life-skills courses, while appearing to offer skills to young people, gives "a nice liberal gloss to an otherwise all too crude utilitarian philosophy" (Cohen 1984 p.122). The content is brutally cut off from its basis in the real world, and orientated towards some ideal of 'production', from which the young people are necessarily excluded by their status as trainees. The contradiction is maintained by a technicist emphasis on skill deficit, whereas this concept is actually political and has more to do with the maintenance of social inequalities, signifying "to students their particular place in the inevitable order of things" (Gleeson 1983 p.12), than with offering real educational (or work) opportunities. It is this distinction that separates trainees on courses from the real freedom of other students in further education (Church and Ainley 1987 p.77). Indeed, training programmes cut young people off from "bodies of abstract theoretical knowledge through which they could elaborate structural and collective understandings of their situation" (Moore 1983 p.30). In the end, then, such schemes maintain existing forms and structures of disadvantage, through their structure and content, and at the same time keep young people off the streets.

The social control thesis rests upon a monolithic conception of the state, by ascribing to it particular, united, political purposes. There may be times when such an explanation is credible, but it cannot be generalised to all areas of state policy in every historical period. The main problem with the social control thesis is that it rests upon an identification of state power with a single set of political interests (consistent with, if not identical to, those of capital). It requires, theoretically, some notion that the state

works for dominant interests against those of other groups; specifically, it needs the accumulation and legitimation theses to underpin it.

The response by the Thatcher Government to the inner city youth riots in the early 1980s was to provide more funds for youth training (Dale 1985). Arguably, then, in the British context social control did constitute a reason for the development and continuation of these schemes in a single instance; certainly, too, the content of courses has acted to socialise young people into those work habits they had no opportunity to develop through the workforce. However, this is not enough, in itself, to conceive of transition training as always an issue of social control. I will argue in chapter five that little evidence exists for such an explanation of state provision of post-school training in New Zealand.

### 3. Conclusion

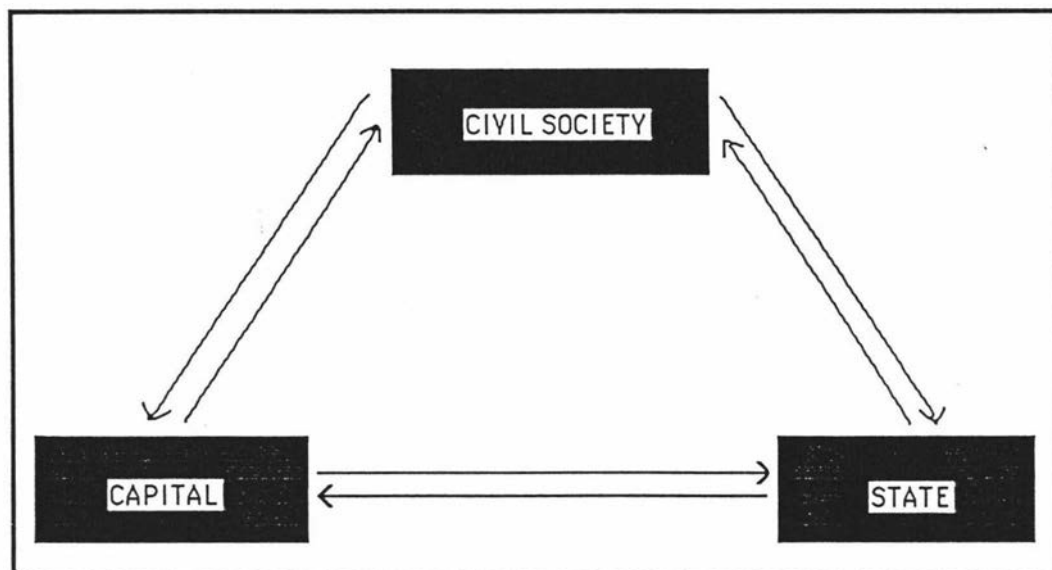
This chapter commenced by arguing that the three dominant sociological theories of the state in education offered essentially unidimensional accounts of the role of the state. Archer's (1984) approach focused on the state/society relation, Althusser's (1972) on the state/capital relation, and Salter and Tapper's (1981) on the state in isolation from other spheres. These approaches, it was noted, have implications for the analysis of the state's role in transition education and the formation of policy in this area.

The second part of this chapter demonstrated that the British literature, on the whole, analysed transition education in terms of the state's need to provide for the accumulation and legitimation of capital, and for social control. These analysis fall largely within a structuralist conception of the state as a superstructure which, though relatively autonomous from capital, in fact works to uphold the interests of the economic sphere.

This review of the literature has demonstrated that the concepts of accumulation and legitimation in particular do not fully explain the state's role in transition education. Such analyses tend to limit and distort our understanding of how the state works, by largely tying its actions to capital's needs. The unidimensional nature of such analyses precludes a full and detailed analysis of the role of the state in the formation and implementation of educational policy.

To conclude this chapter, I will present a conceptual model developed by Roger Dale (1983a) which offers a schematic representation of a more integrated approach to the analysis of the state.

**Figure 1.1: The relationship between state, capital and civil society**



Dale notes that the collapsing of the state into other spheres has two central effects. First, it either subsumes state processes within some other arena of society, so that the state is totally a servant of civil society or capital, or sees the state as absolutely autonomous. Secondly, it fails to take into account the quite specific and often contradictory and opposed demands by sectors of capital and of civil society, and the

shaping effects such demands have on the development of state policies. Dale, in contrast, conceptualises the state, civil society and capital as a triangle of forces (1983a).

There are a number of points to be made about this model. First, it opens out for investigation each of the three sites as specific areas of study in themselves, whilst at the same time not neglecting the inter-relationship of the three. Thus, for example, the role of successive governments and their influence on state policy and institutions can be examined in itself, as well as in its relationship to capital and civil society. Secondly, Dale specifically warns against the model being viewed as conceptualising an equality of the three forces (1983a p.4):

*...the triangle is equilateral only for the purpose of expositional clarity. There is no suggestion of an equilibrium of forces, or indeed of any unchanging balance between them (my emphasis)*

This conceptual model suggests a theoretical and investigative basis for examining the changing historical relationship between the forces, and for analysing the precise nature of the inter-relationships between the forces existing at a given time.

This model, although theoretically incomplete at this stage, suggests an approach to educational policy analysis that will be developed in subsequent chapters. Chapter two begins this process by reconceptualising theories of the state in a way that provides a theoretical underpinning to this model.

## Chapter two

### Reconceptualising the state: beyond relative autonomy theories

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a theoretical framework for the analysis of the role of the state in modern capitalist societies that will overcome the problems discussed in chapter one. Such a framework is a prerequisite to the study of the development of the ACCESS training programme. Existing theoretical accounts, such as those described in chapter one and the more recent theories based on the 'relative autonomy' of the state do not, I will argue in this chapter, offer the conceptual tools and the analytical detail necessary for an analysis of policy. Dale's (1983a) conceptual framework, which sees the state as one sphere of society, linked to, guided by, but formally independent of, the spheres of capital and civil society, forms the basis of the arguments in this chapter.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part offers a tentative analysis of the nature of the state based on, but not confined to, the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971) and various theorists who have extended his ideas. It must be recognised that no *neutral* or *value free* analysis of the nature of the state is possible; this analysis, therefore, is highly theoretical and develops a number of conceptual points that guide the subsequent study of transition policy. It is important to note that Gramsci's ideas are not in themselves completely adequate for an analysis of the state and policy. Nor are the *relative autonomy* theories of the state, which have become the dominant basis of state analysis over the past decade within the political sociology of education. A critique of these forms the second part of this chapter. The arguments presented are essentially between two groups of theorists, both of whom claim Gramsci as their central theoretical influence.

The final section uses this critique to develop an alternative theoretical basis for the analysis of the state and policy. In later chapters the conceptual framework is used to interrogate the policy development and implementation of the ACCESS training programme.

## 1. Gramsci and the state

Central to Gramsci's theory of the state is the concept of hegemony, which provides a basis for the examination of the relationship between political power and social structure. He describes hegemony as:

*The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group (1971 p52)*

Hegemony is the mechanism by which dominant groups are able to rule through consent rather than coercion. Ruling groups maintain political dominance only inasmuch as they can *win* the struggle over ideas; a struggle that takes place in the sphere of what Gramsci calls *civil society*. Hegemony, then, is not something that ruling groups have, but something they must attempt to win. Political domination can only be achieved by gaining the active consent of the masses, through hegemony, and not, in the long run, by employing the force of the state. Whereas Althusser believes this consent is gained from the pressure of an over-riding and impenetrable dominant ideology, Gramsci sees civil society as consisting of sites in which struggles over ideologies constantly take place. The outcomes of political struggle are never assured, although dominant groups have a number of advantages over other groups attempting to seize political power.

Whereas the state is an apparatus developed "not in order to change [civil society] into something else, but to keep it as it is" (Bobbio 1979 p23), civil society represents the sphere of ideological and cultural relations, "the ensemble of organisms commonly



called 'private'" (Gramsci 1971 p12), and thus forms the terrain of struggle over ideas as well as material life.

Gramsci reveals himself as a materialist, but there is evidence he does break away from the materialist determinism of the later Marx. Using an analysis more reminiscent of the early Marx (Larrain 1983), Gramsci believes that within the limits of societal development and economic base, there is a great deal of space for the promotion of various sets of ideas, and no guarantee that the ruling class will maintain its ascendancy. Jessop states clearly the Gramscian relationship between hegemony and the power of the dominant (economic) group: "one cannot reduce questions of political practice to those concerned with the mode of production or fundamental economic relations" (1982 p.145). Hence, in a capitalist society, the political dominance of capitalist interests are never assured, even though the shape of economic and social relations provides a basis on which this power can be pursued<sup>1</sup>.

The identification in this thesis of capital as a separate sphere of society stems from Gramsci's theory. Capital is understood as a more or less coherent conglomerate of forces within civil society, which is privileged in struggles over hegemony by its existing control over material, and, to a large extent intellectual, life. The relations of capital to the state and civil society are historically variant.

The basis of the pursuit of political power by any social group is ideology. Once more reflecting an early Marxian approach, Gramsci (1971 p181) sees ideologies as arising from the contradictions formed by the development of economic and social structures. However, because ideologies tend to lag behind real material changes, he sees a political role for intellectuals in leading the masses (1971 p166). Ideologies do not

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<sup>1</sup>There is always a danger, in moving away from determinist views of the development of ideas, for a theorist to adopt a relativist stance. Gramsci avoids this by emphasising that ideas are grounded within material practices, and are "historically organic" (Simon 1982 p58); that is, they exist within a given social formation.

exist 'in the interests of' capitalist classes, and are not formed by them, but arise from the real material conditions of the people. Hence, hegemony is not reducible to ideology (Buci-Gluckman, in Sassoon p119), as the former is a *political principle* whilst the latter exists primarily in civil society. The central implication of this is that the political arena is not a sphere 'necessarily' dominated by capitalist (dominant class) interests, but is a site of struggle in which competing ideologies contest each other for dominance.

Ideology exists in two forms. The first is at the level of 'common sense', where ideas are produced and reproduced through a set of specific historical and material circumstances. The second form is at the institutional level where ideologies are organised in particular ways through the struggle for hegemony by a political group and its associated interests, as well as through the struggle, or counter-hegemony, of subordinate groups. This struggle exists not only in the 'central state', but throughout the institutions of civil society, which are set up in particular ways to maintain the ascendancy of ruling groups. Central to this system is the maintenance of political domination by the ruling groups.

To understand the relationship between ideology (the formation of ideas) and hegemony (the process of developing and maintaining consent for particular sets of ideas), it is thus necessary to examine the relationship between what Gramsci calls *political society* and *civil society*. Political society is the arena in which the mechanisms for winning the consent of the masses are shaped, marshalled and implemented through the apparatus of the state. Power, according to this view, is not centrally the ability to force a particular response, but to be able to shape political processes so that consent is gained for the particular political direction. In the political sphere, class interests cannot gain political dominance simply by pursuing their own, narrow, corporate goals. It is only when a class transcends its own interests and begins to *incorporate* those of other classes and popular movements that it can become

dominant. Thus there is no necessary, automatic, relationship between class position and political position.

Political society is also the sphere of juridical power, which Gramsci (1971 p12) defines as:

*The apparatus of state coercive power which "legally" enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed.*

However, the coercive power of the state must be reserved for crises; it cannot be exercised to maintain control on a day to day basis. Thus the struggle over political dominance, eventually, has to take place at the cultural level, the level of *common sense*. It is within civil society that these cultural processes must take place. At this level, hegemony is contested by an attempt to define common sense in the interests of the dominant political grouping. Gramsci defines common sense as "the uncritical and largely unconscious way in which a person perceives the world" (Simon 1982). Common sense ideas exist in every society, and are a mixture of historically formed myths, social and political ideologies, and particular interpretations of influences and structures. They are received by subjects uncritically, and no attempt is made to test these ideas against other views, or to examine the relationship between ideas and subjective life. The process of winning hegemony requires the formation of "an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, morality, etc, that is in one way or another supportive of the established order and the class interests that dominate it" (Boggs 1976 p39), which must be permeated throughout civil society.

At times, Gramsci *contrasts* civil society with the state and political forces, yet he recognises that the state has increasingly penetrated civil society as a result of advanced capitalist development (i.e. state = political society + civil society; 1971 p.263). Thus, while it is clearly incorrect to view every aspect of private life as occurring within,

resulting from or contained by the state, it is equally clear that the boundaries between state and civil society are often blurred and subject to immense historical variation<sup>2</sup>.

Gramsci sees the state as a condensation of a variety of forces, specifiable only within particular historical circumstances. He develops a particular term to apply to the coercive and hegemonic impulses of the state - the 'integral state' (Mouffe 1979 p10).

This is defined as:

*...the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules (1971 p244).*

To summarise characteristics of the integral state :

1. Political society is the central organisation of the state. It comprises political parties, state bureaucracies and the coercive apparatus (Law, Army, Police) of the state.
2. The state also reaches into every area of people's lives, through the political/civil relationship, where political society, in order to hold effective power, must gain the consent of the masses for particular directions. Political society, by itself, cannot 'rule'.
3. The state is not totally the servant of capitalist reproduction. The state serves firstly its own reproduction, through the processes of incorporation of the

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<sup>2</sup>This can be seen most clearly in the development of the welfare state. The move by Thatcher in Britain towards privatization shows that the state is not, once and for all, the single element of ideological reproduction (through control of the family etc). There has been a recent reversal of the Marxist view of the welfare state; once viewed as a necessary mechanism for the continuance of advanced capitalism, it is now recognised that the welfare state was a particular form of ideological structure that was subject to historical change.

interests of diverse groups and through laying the groundwork to ensure the consent of civil society for its rule.

The state can thus be conceptualised in terms of Dale's model, wherein each of the three spheres, state, capital and civil society have their own particular ethos. The relationship between the three is changing and can only be understood by reference to specific historical conditions. The state is the sphere of coercion and hegemony, capital the sphere of material and technical relations and civil society the sphere in which struggles over dominance take place at the cultural and ideological levels.

Central to Gramsci's approach is an analysis of the power relations of the state in society. His work constitutes a major break with traditional Marxism, where state power, politics and policy are seen to mirror the economic relations of society, because the state is seen solely as the servant of capitalist interests (Althusser's analysis, presented in chapter one, constitutes such a view). Gramsci rejects the Marxian view that political development necessarily parallels economic development. To him, there is no necessary connection between economic structures and political dominance. As Femia (1975 pp30-33) notes in a discussion of hegemony, this formulation signifies a profound break from Marx's view that: "the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas". Class politics are seen by Gramsci not as a necessary outcome of capitalist development, where the owners of the means of production rule not only economic but also political life, but as a function of the level of recognition a class has of the production process and its social relations.

This analytical shift does not, however, break with the Marxist philosophy of historical materialism. Rather, Gramsci relies heavily on the early Marxian notion that the economic base determines, or sets limits on, what ideas and political approaches are possible, as Femia (1975 p38) notes:

*The economic base sets, in a strict manner, the range of possible outcomes, but free political and ideological activity is ultimately decisive in determining which*

*alternative prevails. There is no automatic determination; only the creation of a more or less favourable atmosphere for the diffusion of a new ethos.*

This approach, then, removes the determinacy of the economic from the political sphere. There are two implications here for this thesis. The first is that it is necessary to specify the conditions of the economic base and of state power; i.e. the limits of 'free' activity; which are themselves historically variant. The second is to examine the nature of political activity within these limits, and what I have called the *capacity* of the state to alter those limits.

The notion of the 'specificity of the political', that is that political structures cannot be reduced to class structures, has not only opened up a whole new area of study within neo-marxist social theory - that of policy analysis - but it also offers a challenge to the bourgeois 'interest groups' theory of politics<sup>3</sup>. Specifically, this new approach claims that people do not develop politically simply on the basis of their class position and consciousness; nor do classes gravitate to political positions as a result of their place in processes of production. Rather, people choose their political responses on the basis of *cultural forms*; that is partly determined and partly autonomous values, beliefs and lived experiences that develop from the specificity of the whole situation in which they live. These cultural forms are not merely class forms, but develop from a complex set of circumstances that, in a particular 'moment'<sup>4</sup>, may lead to the adherence to any of a number of political positions<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>Represented in chapter one by the work of Margaret Archer (1984).

<sup>4</sup>The 'moment' in Gramsci's theory refers to the relations of forces (of, for example, classes, races and genders) within a specific set of historical and political circumstances. The use of the term moment is important both for policy analysis and for political struggle; it reminds us that a particular settlement constitutes only a moment in existence.

<sup>5</sup>A political position is here seen as not merely voting patterns or even party affiliations, but rather as a cluster of beliefs that surrounds an articulating principle; that is a particular set of values are held as most important (e.g. the notion of 'individual freedom').

This outline of Gramsci's position inevitably reflects a particular interpretation of his work. One of the problems with Gramsci's theory is that, through the fragmented nature of his writing, it is open to a number of differing interpretations, each of which may receive support from his writings. However, in the text from which the above analysis has been developed, there are numerous examples of his adherence to a non-determinist view of politics. In the essay 'The Modern Prince', Gramsci (1971 p167ff) rejects at length what he calls 'historical economism', clearly and carefully separating politics ('hegemony') from either immediate and transitory or long-term and structural economic factors.

Some in-depth understanding of the role and nature of the state is essential to the project of this thesis, and a consideration of how the state works in education is necessary precisely because this area is relatively unexplored. Skocpol (1985 p5) notes that:

*...at the theoretical level, virtually all neo-Marxist writers on the state have retained deeply embedded society centred assumptions, not allowing themselves to doubt that, at base, states are inherently shaped by classes or class struggles and function to preserve and expand modes of production. Many possible forms of autonomous state action are thus ruled out by definitional fiat. Furthermore, neo-Marxist theorists have too often sought to generalise - often in extremely abstract ways - about features or functions shared by all states within a mode of production, a phase of capital accumulation, or a position in the world capitalist system.*

Skocpol's critique gets to the heart of the issue addressed in this section; that the sociology of education does not adequately address the role that the state plays in education. These problems lie unexamined because the dominant paradigms lead to an assumption that states are reproductive mechanisms either for civil society or for capital, and therefore require no close-in examination 'in themselves'. There has, indeed, been very little work done recently by sociologists of education that seeks to specify the conditions within which the state operates; that work which has been undertaken (e.g. Fritzell 1987) tends to deal with issues of the state in education at

high levels of abstraction and without reference to particular research investigation. Thus the state, and hence policy development, has largely been ignored by sociological theorists of education, and as a result left to those (usually) who are concerned about the system because they work within it<sup>6</sup>.

Much of the sociological literature of education avowedly eschews the extremes of structuralist theories (i.e. the complete subordination of the state to capitalist agendas), but it can be shown that it does so whilst, often implicitly, upholding the economic structures of society as determinant of state policies and practices. This is despite the widespread adoption of the potentially non-determinist theories of Gramsci and others. Gramsci's conception of the state as autonomous from economic structures, in the sense that political struggle (the drive to gain hegemony) is not guided by the economic, is often ignored even by those who use a centrally Gramscian analysis. Thus the critique of 'relative autonomy' theories of the state in this section refers to those neo-marxist theories that, implicitly or explicitly, maintain that the role of the state in education is determined, usually 'in the last instance', by the economic; and where that determination is not demonstrated by empirical research but is merely derived from the theory.

Prunty (1984) was quoted in the introduction as noting that most traditional policy analysis proceeds from structural functionalist assumptions. In his detailed monograph, he notes that the most pervasive investigative approach is the use of systems theory. Developing from structural functionalism, systems theory assumes that the system under consideration has essentially developed to best fit the needs of society, and that any flaws within the system are caused by 'stresses and strains' in the inter-relating parts that can be identified and then overcome. This view derives from

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<sup>6</sup>Salter and Tapper's (1981) 'internal' analysis (see chapter one), which is further developed in McPherson and Raab (1988; see Gordon 1989c for a critique), demonstrate the weaknesses of these accounts.



two theoretical propositions. The first is that the system-society relationship is basically benign, and that any malfunctions are intra-system. The second is that systems such as state bureaucracies are essentially harmonious and subject only to periodic stresses which, through analysis, diagnosis and cure, can be overcome.

The state itself and its relationships to other sectors of society is not overtly a concern of systems theorists. The state appears only as a group of inter-related agencies and bureaucracies (that is, organisations) which represent the policy process as a largely internal and essentially logical and unproblematic one. The role of the state, inasmuch as it is defined at all, is confined to ensuring that policies are expedited from Government to public through state agencies. Thus, whilst systems theory is state-centred it has curiously little to say about the political role of the state at all, confining its analysis largely to organisational factors.

In much the same way as structuralist marxists conceptualise 'capital' as the controlling agent of state practices, those who develop educational policies conceptualise 'the Minister', or his/her agent, as the person 'who pulls the strings'. The Westminster system of Government, adopted by New Zealand, works on the principle that 'the Minister' is and can be responsible for the effective implementation of a whole system. However, these lines of accountability cannot be sustained in practice unless there is a high level of consent amongst the agents who must daily implement political decisions. In this sense, the Minister does not 'control' policies (in practice) at all. Such 'control' as exists is based largely on the consent of the implementing agents. Where such consent breaks down, it would be virtually impossible for any state system to continue functioning. In the schooling system, for example, all practices are based on the assumption that teachers can be left alone for a certain number of hours in the day to teach certain things to pupils. It is difficult to imagine the coercive measures that would be necessary to enforce this function if teachers refused to undertake, i.e. did not consent to, certain practices.

Thus the Minister is accountable for a system that he/she does not ultimately control, and could probably not control at all were consent to break down. This illustrates Gramsci's point that a coercive state, a state that relied on force to bring about certain ends, could not work effectively. The only effective form of control is consent; the political goal is always to win that consent, both from the agents of the state who implement policies as well as from a majority of groups in society. This sets political agendas that are necessarily removed from, and sometimes opposed to, the 'needs' of both civil society and capital. The state, then, has a clearly autonomous relationship, in practice, to the other spheres of society. Equally, the need to gain consent links the state in a definitive, though historically variant, relationship with these spheres.

The reality that educational policy development and implementation relies on the consent of those within the schooling system thus lies in sharp contrast to the 'systems' model with its lines of responsibility back to the Minister. The accepted models of educational policy analysis are permeated with the assumption that *those who hold political power* (the Minister and senior civil servants) also hold the power of implementation, whereas Gramsci's approach makes it clear that such power (interpreted as 'consent' - both to listen and to obey) actually lies more in the hands of those who have little overt political power. Unless the schooling system were to work solely on a coercive model, with a highly elaborated system of control, accountability and censure, this must necessarily be true.

I wish to argue here, then, that the power of consent to educational policies, held both by interest groups and by all social groups, is actually far more important than the overt exercise of political power. A Minister's statement of policy will get the media coverage, the place in historical record, and will be used as the yardstick of 'success' and 'failure'; yet it is the political will of all those who must consent to the policy that really counts.

Whilst the notion of consent is conceptually a passive one, then, the term as used here is one of great political power, and is linked to the notion of struggle. However, it is essential to recognise that those with political power have a further weapon that makes them strong; the ability to 'make people consent'; not through coercion but through the ability to develop and manage economic and social conditions/relations, and the discourses that explain/accompany such conditions, so as to win and to keep winning the consent of various groups. In the next section these impulses are developed as the notion of state *capacity*.

This concludes the analysis of basic Gramscian concepts and their application to the subject of this thesis. The theme of the changing relationships between state, capital and civil society, and the need for consent by the state, forms the conceptual basis of the framework outlined at the end of this chapter. However, the continued adherence by the sociology of education to more determinist conceptions of the state must first be addressed.

## 2. Beyond relative autonomy theories of the state<sup>7</sup>

The discussion in chapter one contended that two conceptions in particular, the determination of social life by economic and historical forces, and the largely functional conception of systems, classes, institutions and political forces, each prevent the development of an adequate sociological analysis of the state and educational policy. The proposition that underpins this analysis is that many of the conceptual analyses of determinisms that pervade the literature of the sociology of education are actually empirical questions that can be explained with reference to particular historical, social, political and economic circumstances. For example, the

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<sup>7</sup>This section, and the one following it, draw heavily on Gordon 1989b

marxist notion of the determinacy of the economic 'in the last instance' should be seen as an hypothesis; a way to interrogate particular instances of policy.

Relative autonomy theories of the state underpin, either explicitly or implicitly, most of the analyses undertaken by neo-marxist sociologists of education. The interest in relative autonomy within this field was sparked off largely as a reaction to Bowles and Gintis' *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), and in particular by a partial rejection of their notion of a direct correspondence between the structures of schooling and those of the workplace. The 'problem of reproduction' became aligned, for many, to the 'promise of transformation' (e.g. Willis, 1977, Apple, 1982). The concept of relative autonomy provided a theoretical rationale for much of this work, through the conception of the state, and thus the education system, as capitalist in the last instance, but a site of struggle and contradictory practices on a day to day basis.

The theoretical underpinnings of relative autonomy theories have been thoroughly discussed in relation to the sociology of education by Fritzell (1987). It is noted by him that attempts to apply this concept to education have been less than successful. Much of the literature, in particular that of the curriculum, tends to be "reductionist" (p.28), whilst there is little discussion, let alone agreement, amongst theorists about what the concept of relative autonomy actually means in the education system (p.24).

I will argue that the analytical problems that Fritzell identifies are not caused by an inadequate application of the concept of relative autonomy, but are inherent in the concept itself. Whilst this concept draws attention to the state/capital relation and its effects on education, it simultaneously closes off investigation in this area by identifying the state as 'capitalist' and as determined, in the last instance, by the economic structures of society. It further draws attention away from the state/civil society relation, relegating this couplet to the forces of legitimation. This monist view has two major implications. First, while the sociology of education does a lot of

talking about the state, it does so from a vantage point that almost inevitably sees the state as a monolith, if a contradictory one, working towards a single goal: the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. The state is thus viewed as a functional apparatus, not as a set of institutions which may or may not work in harmony with one another. Second, these approaches almost inevitably view teachers, parents and students as pawns, albeit creative, active, even transformative pawns, in the master plan of the state.

Hargreaves (1982) has claimed that the shortcomings of relative autonomy theories could be overcome only by the adoption of 'value free' analyses of the state/society relation; what Fritzell calls 'idealist' analyses. In contrast, I will argue that what is required is a further specification of the nature of the relationships between the state and other structures of a capitalist society; a specification lacking in relative autonomy theories.

Fritzell (1987) offers a clear summary of the theoretical rationale behind the notion of relative autonomy. He actually offers only one version, using Offe's (1984) account of the state, and other accounts of this concept differ in certain respects (e.g. Poulantzas, 1978), but not in the basic assumptions. This section will therefore stay with the arguments that Fritzell uses.

First, the concept of relative autonomy is basically a "structural concept referring to different sectors of society *and primarily to the relationships between state structures on the one hand and the capitalist economy on the other hand* " (1987, p. 26; my emphasis). This relationship can be defined as contradictory because the economy "is structured according to the commodity form while the state in capitalist society is basically *not* " (1987, p. 26). The state acts in two ways; first to provide the conditions for the accumulation of capital and secondly to legitimate the social and economic relations of society under capitalism.

Second, the state, because it is not structured by the commodity form, "is both dependent on and conditional for" the reproduction of capitalism. The state owes its existence to the capitalist mode of production, and at the same time is a necessary condition for capitalist reproduction. This is the famous formulation of 'determination in the last instance by the economic', and is an essential feature of relative autonomy theory.

Finally, the state is thus a capitalist state, tied inevitably, in the long run, to the demands of the capitalist classes. The potentiality of autonomy within the state derives from its distance from the commodity form, and in particular from its need to be identified as a 'popular democratic' state. This potential is limited by the necessary functions of accumulation and legitimation that the state must, as a capitalist state, undertake.

This formulation, or other variations of it, is all too familiar to neo-marxists working within the sociology of education. It is now orthodoxy that the field has moved far beyond the constraints of structural marxism to a much broader and more adequate view of the role of the state in education. Yet there has been almost no work that attempts to analyse *how* the state works 'relatively autonomously' in its role as provider of education. Most analyses of the state jump too quickly, from looking at autonomy to pointing to the determinations of the 'last instance'.

An example of the confusing views that are put forward is Apple's (1986) analysis of the reconstruction of educational discourse. He begins by noting that, under the influence of New Right discourse, the "state itself is losing legitimacy" (1986, p. 172). Whilst state officials and minority groups had previously "acted together to propose social democratic programmes for schools" (ibid), these alliances had been fractured. On the next page, however, he notes that the New Right "tendencies are crystallised in

official documents and reports sponsored by the state" (1986, p. 173). Further on, he argues that "schools and educational reports and policies do have relative autonomy" (1986, p. 176). However:

*...the United states' economy is in the midst of one of the most powerful structural crises it has experienced since the Depression. In order to solve it on terms acceptable to dominant interests as many aspects of the society as possible need to be pressured to conform to the.... needs of capital accumulation... Thus, the power of the state - through legislation, persuasion, administrative, legal and ideological pressure, and so on - must be employed to create the conditions believed necessary to meet these requirements (1986, p. 177).*

There is a strong tendency here, and this work is fairly typical of recent writings in the sociology of education, to reduce the state to a single structure that must 'totally' respond to pressures from the economy. Hence, Apple describes a confusing mix of impulses which provide little evidence for any kind of state autonomy. He makes no attempt to link the discourses of the New Right to particular structural arrangements within the state. Such an analysis would provide evidence of the forms of autonomy within the state and between state, capital and civil society.

Another kind of analysis defines relative autonomy as referring to *levels* of the state, wherein policymakers are seen largely as capitalist agents, while teachers 'at the chalkface', and pupils, use their limited autonomy to subvert, re-interpret and transform, within strict limits, the reproductive messages from above. This kind of approach characterises Willis' (1977) work, and has been further developed by Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), who define relative autonomy as the product of oppositional discourses which themselves merely obscure the reality that "the state's short-term policies are firmly committed to maintaining the underlying economic and ideological structures of society" (1985, p. 90). In response to this "domination" by the state, teachers, parents and students, through the exercise of human agency that exploits the contradictions evident in the ideological domination of the state (pp. 98-99), engage in strategies of resistance. In turn, these strategies may lead to

transformative action (p. 107), though resistance is not in itself a sufficient condition for transformation.

Relative autonomy theories vary tremendously in their particular conceptions of the state. But they all have certain features in common. The first is that the state is in some way a 'condensation of class relations' (Poulantzas, 1978), which is essentially controlled by the ruling classes (Althusser, 1972) but may also be a site of struggle over contradictions (Offe, 1984). The second is that the central role of the state is to ensure the conditions for the expansion and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production (Dale 1982). The final common feature, and one of particular importance in the discussion of education policies, is that the state is an ideological apparatus for the legitimation of inequalities caused by capitalism, for example through the development of welfarism and the promotion of beliefs about meritocracy (Apple 1982).

I do not wish to argue against the possibility that the state does all these things; the point here is that relative autonomy theories do not, in practice, leave open the possibility that the state can act in other ways. More particularly for the arguments made here, the state viewed in this way is seen as monolithic, homogeneous and historically invariant, having a united and more or less automatic responsiveness to capital's needs. This view, however implicit, leads to the situation where any instance of state policy or practice tends to be discussed as an example of the capitalist role of the state (i.e. the functions of accumulation and legitimation). Such analyses, then, tend to leave out the social and political forces, autonomous from the economic, that also impinge on state policies. It is not so much that the political and social are denied; rather that they are ignored.

The three features of relative autonomy theory outlined above have generally been taken as unproblematic in investigations of the state education system. My argument is



simply that these features cannot be seen as always determined in advance; and, more particularly, the specific institutional forms of class domination, class reproduction and ideology should themselves provide the subject matter of critical analyses of state policy, and not merely be asserted as an eternal and depressing truth.

The class nature of the state can be argued against in a number of ways. Therborn (1984, p. 25) argues that it is misleading to talk about the state as being classed, as classes exist as social relations in civil society and not as political bodies:

*Classes are not decision-making bodies, which is a fundamental reason why policy-making is inherently irreducible to class conflict and class power.*

Thus, in the state bureaucracies (and Government itself) classes cease to exist as such; although these bodies may hold class interests. Recent studies in the sociology of education have adopted the term 'hegemony' (Gramsci, 1971) to describe the struggles over ideas within the state. However, too often hegemony is presented in the literature as a *fait accompli*, not as a process or a continuing struggle. The paper by Apple (1986) referred to above is a good example of this. He argues persuasively that the hegemonic project of the New Right in America misrepresents the nature and causes of inequality, and puts certain solutions to perceived 'problems' of the education system. He demonstrates clearly that these ideas constitute a major attack on the working class and other minority groups. Yet he makes no attempt to examine how this hegemonic project has permeated the state apparatus of education.

The second feature of relative autonomy theories is that they stress the role of the state in reproducing the conditions for the continuation and reproduction of a capitalist mode of production. Whilst it cannot be denied that the state has always played this role, for example in the building of roads to allow for the movement of commodities, two factors are important here. The first is that the state, any more than capital itself, cannot know in advance what the expansionary and reproductive 'needs' of capitalism

will be, nor how the conditions for such reproduction will be met. Moreover, there is a tendency to slip from model to determination, so that the fact that we know that capitalism continues becomes the justification for calling a state capitalist, without ever analysing the processes and struggles that brought about this reproduction (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1981, pp. 19-20). The second factor is that, even to the extent that the state does play this reproductive role for capitalism, this is by no means all that it does. Laclau and Mouffe note that the power of the state:

*...does not derive from a place in the relations of production, but is the outcome of a form of organisation characteristic of the present society. This society is indeed capitalist, but this is not its only characteristic; it is sexist and patriarchal as well, not to mention racist (Laclau and Mouffe, 1981).*

Laclau and Mouffe go on to argue that all these factors lead to specific political forms of organisation that do not privilege capitalist 'needs' over those of other groups in the state. The stress on the reproductive nature of the state under-emphasises its role in ameliorating the adverse effects of capital accumulation.

Carnoy and Levin make similar arguments in relation to schooling and work in the United States (1985). They note that the demands of what they call 'democracy' for social justice, equality and better working conditions are at least as strident as those of capital in the modern state. This leads, they argue, to at least three types of contradiction:

*...all of which result directly or indirectly from the tension that exists between the democratic thrust of schools and their role in reproducing the class and work structure (p.145).*

Carnoy and Levin's recognition of the role of democratic impulses within the state does not lead them to abandon what is at least implicitly a theory of relative autonomy. Democratic goals are given the status of mere demands, however strident, whereas capital's goals retain the precedence of determinations. The point here is that there is no evidence that class struggles in the modern state do, in reality, always take

precedence over the struggles for gender and ethnic equality nor a whole range of other demands that are external to, or can at least be differentiated from, the capital/labour struggles. In this case, then, the evidence for the determination in the last instance of the economic base cannot easily be upheld; it is clear that these other factors alter at least the form of the relations of production, and the conditions of production too.

The third feature of relative autonomy theories, and one which very commonly appears in analyses of education policies, is that the state plays a central role in legitimating the inequalities that are caused by a capitalist mode of production (Fritzell, 1987, p.31). There are numerous formulations of this view in the literature. One of the most interesting of these is the 'cultural studies' approach, which stresses that though institutions may act to legitimate capitalist inequalities, working class (Willis, 1977) and female (Griffin, 1985) students may subvert the dominant meanings of schooling. Yet, for all their complexity and hopefulness, these approaches still see the state as essentially the servant and apologist for capitalism, leaving all possibilities for change to those working or learning 'at the chalkface'. These approaches have little to say about the struggle that may take place within the state, even within the very processes of policy-making that are supposed to produce these legitimations for capital.

There are many aspects of schooling that can be construed as legitimating capitalist inequalities. The selective credentialling system, the dominance of the *habitus* (Harker 1984) of middle class groups that so works against those of other cultures, the emphasis on factors such as punctuality, neatness and politeness to one's superiors; all these factors undoubtedly point to a close relationship between schooling and the workplace. But the concepts of relative autonomy and the determination in the last instance of the base are not of much help in specifying the particular ways that the state works through schooling to legitimate capitalism, and instead draws attention away from the other things that schools do that have little relationship with, or even actively oppose, these legitimating impulses.

Fritzell (1987, p. 27) notes that:

*...the essential question is not if the state is relatively autonomous, but how a formally democratic state is autonomously related to a society which involves undemocratic social relations of production.*

As Fritzell's paper is a defence of the use of relative autonomy theories in the investigation of education, he should be able to show how such approaches can undertake this form of investigation. Unfortunately, he does not, and, I believe, cannot do this. Certainly, those using the term within the sociology of education tend not to investigate precisely what the limits and nature of this relative autonomy might look like, and although there is evidence that in times of economic recession state expenditure on schooling is likely to be reduced, the complexity of the political and social forces that bring about such effects cannot be captured by references to the economic as determinant 'in the last instance'. In effect, the concept of relative autonomy does not, except at the highest level of abstraction, offer anything like a useful conceptual apparatus for examining educational policy or even practices 'at the chalkface'.

Laclau and Mouffe (1987), in a defence of their previous arguments for post-Marxism (1985), summarise arguments against relative autonomy theories. They argue that, in an attempt to avoid the crude economism of the vulgar Marxist position (i.e. that the base determines the superstructure), the new Marxists had developed the notion of relative autonomy, and stretched the notion of the determinacy of the base to a determination 'in the last instance'. However, Laclau and Mouffe argue that these two concepts, intimately entwined in the theory, are actually incompatible:

*Thus, if it is an **apriori** truth that the limits of autonomy are always fixed by the economy, then such limitation is not external to that entity but is part of its essence. The autonomous entity is an internal moment of the same totality in which the determination in the last instance is constituted - and hence there is no autonomy (1987, p. 94).*

Mouzelis (1988) offers a detailed critique of Laclau and Mouffe's arguments, and yet concedes that in their analysis of relative autonomy: "it seems to me that Laclau and Mouffe are right" (p.117). Mouzelis argues that the clear *qualitative* distinctions between the political and the economic spheres have not been matched in Marxist theory by "the creation of specific conceptual tools for the study of the political sphere proper" (p.118). The neglect of the political, he claims, is because Marxism "builds the alleged primacy of the economic into the definition of the political. In that sense it is unable to study the complex and *varying* relationships between economy and polity, in a theoretically coherent and at the same time *empirically open-ended* manner" (p.119).

### 3. The limits and capacity of the state

What is proposed here is an approach that moves beyond the determinism which is inherent in relative autonomy theories of the state, by abandoning the notion of relative autonomy and concentrating instead on the *limits* and *capacity* of the state in education. Such an approach allows for the examination of the political, economic and social spheres and how they interact with each other and within and between levels of the education system. To open up the whole system to investigation in this way will have marked effects on our study of policy within the sociology of education.

First, it allows for movement beyond the crude 'state-as-capitalist'/ 'classroom-as-autonomous' distinction, which is not only a misleading and ahistorical view of education, but also leads back to the gloomy conclusion that little can be done to change education structures.

Second, it provides the basis for a real examination of the relationship of capital to the state in education, a relation that is both variant and complex, and which needs to be

understood not in the abstract but as a series of concrete struggles that can be identified and analysed.

Third, this approach focuses attention on the state as political beyond its role as the servant of capital; it is, too, the servant (however unwillingly) of civil society in a democracy, and as such has a real life of its own. Gramsci lays out the agenda of the state in terms of the winning of the struggle for hegemony, that is the forced, but apparently free, consent of the masses to the rule of dominant groups. In the modern state it is important not to ignore also the demands of bureaucratic state agencies. However withered these may be by the ravages of monetarist administrations, there is no doubt that they carry with them internal agendas that may conflict with politically dominant views. These agencies also employ socialists, feminists, anti-racists; they cannot easily be conceptualised as servants of the dominant order. Although the state-centred theories of Salter and Tapper (1981) fail to adequately conceptualise the relations between the political sphere and other spheres (Dale, 1983b), they at least breathe life into the structure of the Department of Education and Science which otherwise tends to be ignored in political analysis. As well, the role of political parties in Government should also be seen as problematic. They are not all the same and their practices do make a difference to the state.

Finally, with the exception of *Unpopular Education* (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1981), neo-Marxist sociologists of education have failed to come to terms with the historical preconditions of, and limits on, educational policy. Margaret Archer (1984), writing within an essentially functionalist 'systems' analysis, has examined the historical development of the education system in a way that makes it clear how the system today is substantially limited by its political and institutional forebears. Although her analysis is overly determinist, there is a lesson for materialists in her work. Policies for education must, and do, take into account what is already there; whether that be schools themselves, the training and interests of teachers, the

curriculum and organisation of education, or the status, scope and traditions of the universities. Whilst the amount of 'what is there' has been reduced significantly in most societies dominated by monetarist policies in recent years, the infrastructure remains standing in its original order, if in rather reduced circumstances.

Mouzelis (1988) has provided a tentative analytic approach to overcoming the economistic limitations of Marxist theories of the state. He suggests, as an example:

*...the notion of a mode of production, consisting of an articulation of specific political technologies (forces of domination) and specific ways of appropriating such technologies (relations of domination) (p.121).*

Rather than dismissing the basic concept of the economic as developed by Marx, he suggests, a similar theoretical edifice might be developed 'alongside' to distinguish the economic from the political and allow for autonomy between them. Whilst this solves the reductionism problem it raises problems of dualism that are not compatible with Marxist theory. As well, the notion of the political as a form of domination would have to be very carefully discussed and an adequate reconceptualisation of the notion of domination developed. Mouzelis' solution is an interesting possibility for dealing with the formal problems associated with the analysis of the political. However, whilst these formal issues are of great importance, the aim here is to develop an approach that allows for the opening up of the 'political' in terms of a research agenda for the sociology of education. As Jessop (1988, p. 155) notes:

*[This approach] remained fruitful because it opened up a space for a sui generis dynamic of political struggles and a specific institutional logic in policymaking. This has provided the theoretical means to avoid functionalism in so far as the activities of the state are determined in the first instance by political considerations and need not coincide (even in the last instance) with the needs of the economy. A further consequence of this approach is to deconstruct the concept of 'needs' of the economy: if the economy is not self-sufficient, self-reproducing and self-steering ... there can be no unambiguous economic needs. The needs of capital must be assessed strategically in relation to complex conjunctures rather than formally in terms of the abstract, purely economic, circuit of capital.*

It is important to develop a theory of the state that goes beyond economic formulations of the *determination in the last instance* of the base (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 1987). Whilst recognising that economic factors, along with historical, social and ideological ones, limit the role of the state, these same factors also enable and encourage development in certain directions, and are also subject to what Offe (1984) calls *contradictions*, having effects that are unintended in their application. The framework outlined here focuses on the *limits* and what Skocpol (1985) calls the *capacity* of the state. Gramsci developed this term to define the relationship of the state to civil society more clearly:

*The maximum of legislative capacity can be inferred when a perfect formulation of directives is matched by a perfect arrangement of the organisms of execution and verification, and by a perfect preparation of the "spontaneous" consent of the masses who must live these directives, modifying their own habits, their own will, their own convictions to conform with those directives and with the objectives which they propose to achieve (1971 p266).*

The concepts of *limits* and *capacity* provide the basis for an examination of the plural pressures that arise from the state's location in a contradictory and unstable mode of production, a social context of conflicting cultural forms resulting both from the relations of production and the demands of non-dominant groups, and its own political sphere with agendas that are often blatantly 'political' and which may bear little resemblance to capital's 'needs' (Jessop 1983 p. 106).

The notion of *limits* refers to all those aspects of the state that prevent it from acting autonomously; that is, in its 'own interests'. The central causes of limits on the state are its relations to both capital and civil society; it is *limited* by its very position in that society. The central contradiction for the state is that, whilst it must work for its own growth and reproduction, it must at the same time appear to be working as a popular-democratic state, that is in the interests of the 'people' (however these are defined); and also for the reproduction of the mode of production (Carnoy and Levin, 1985).



An example of the contradictions in meeting these goals is the issue of unemployment in New Zealand. The high levels of unemployment have been caused by a crisis of capitalism; a major recession caused by an increasing inability to sell primary products overseas. Capital's attempts to restructure through technological change and geographical relocation in order to maintain its accumulative capacity has led to severe and yet regionalised problems of unemployment. In effect, the state, and in particular the Government, was expected by capital to help with its attempts to restructure and increase accumulation, and by civil society to mitigate the effects of this. In the educational area, the contradictions between capital and civil society have been magnified by the adoption of monetarist "free market" solutions to economic problems. These solutions have been extended, at least in terms of ideology (for example, 'user pays') into the sphere of state agencies. Attacks on the education system<sup>8</sup> (Treasury, 1987) and on its systems of delivery (Picot 1988) have been at least partially accepted by the Government and some state agencies, although rejected by others. The Department of Education, in particular, has been singled out for criticism; particularly of its relationship with teacher organisations (Picot 1988 p24). Thus to separate the state from capital and civil society is not to consider it as a unified organism. There are at least four other limits on the state that must be examined in concrete analyses. These are: scope, resources, policy processes and the relations between agencies of the state.

At the institutional level, the *limits* appear as "the fit (or lack thereof) between the *scope* of an autonomous state organisation's authority and the scale and depth of action appropriate for addressing a particular kind of problem" (Skocpol, 1985, p.15). We

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<sup>8</sup>The Treasury document contains not only a thorough economic critique of the state schooling system, but also not a little of the moral right critique. The views of women expressed in this document reflect in part the moral right agenda of women's role in childrearing and the family, as combining paid work with childrearing is seen to jeopardise the child's well-being. However, Treasury also express puzzlement about why women reduce their freedom and choice (i.e. to enter the marketplace) by having children; they conclude that the provision of state subsidised education and childcare is the central reason: 'the provision of state subsidised education will, reduce the costs to parents of child rearing, hence encouraging child bearing and affecting the birth rate'. The difference between the economic right and the moral right is in their 'God'. The God of the economists is the hidden hand of the free market, not of the christian faith (see Middleton 1989).

are reminded here that state organisation is not neutral; it is set up to deal with certain kinds of problems rather than others, reflecting the 'political' role of the state. The massive restructuring of the state that has resulted from 'New Right' policies, including the privatisation of state agencies, the realignment of priorities (see Apple, 1986), and the growth of certain agencies at the expense of others, can be seen as attempts to alter the relations within the state to fit the new policy demands.

From 1984 onwards, the Labour Government largely found that existing state organisations had no adequate responses to the growth in unemployment. Firstly, Treasury was strongly advocating supply-side responses to the problems of the economy which, by increasing interest rates and decreasing inflation was bound to make the problem worse. Second, the Government itself initially proposed educational responses to the problem of unemployment (see the Scott Report, 1985), but the mechanisms did not exist for a full realignment of educative agencies. Third, the Labour Department, as it existed, was not adequately set up to deal with the problem of unemployment, and, further, was tending itself to supply side responses in line with Treasury's thrust. The organisational capabilities of the state were (and still are) inadequate to deal with the problem of unemployment.

A further *limit* is the finite amount of resources available to the state, or to agencies within the state. The historical accumulation of resources, the prioritizing of state services within Government budgets, the perceived importance of the service (which relates to particular hegemonic interpretations of the 'state of the nation') are all factors here. Related to this is the shape of the agency itself. In a large organisation with numerous 'levels' of service, strong central/regional boundaries and widely differing social and political contexts, failure to agree over policy directions, or even what the problems are, can act as limiting factors. This is particularly true in education agencies where the only contact between central and regional, upper and lower levels may be through an Inspectorate, which has a coercive rather than a consensual basis.

Resource allocation has been strongly affected by both the ideological and material legacies of monetarism. Expenditure on education has fallen in real terms for a number of years, mainly due to the increased expenditure needed to service accumulated debt (Treasury 1987). The tightening of fiscal expenditure as part of the monetarist policy has affected all the state services, with funds being demanded to pay off overseas debt. Resource allocation is justified in ideological terms by the Government as a reflection of 'the way the world is', when in fact it represents particular political strategies. It is one area in which, at every level of the state, institutions and organisations are thrown into conflict with one another; a conflict that is exacerbated at times of reduced state expenditure.

Another broad *limit* that will be considered here is the 'policy process' itself. State agencies must mediate their demands through a series of channels to the elected Government, in a process designed more for 'top down' than 'bottom up' communication. The relationship between these agencies and Government is problematic, and must be examined closely as a *limit* on the autonomy of parts of the state. Whilst systems theorists have made the formal structures of this process the whole domain of their study (see Prunty, 1984, for a critique), it can be reconceptualised in more adequate theoretical terms as a form of the 'war of position'<sup>9</sup> (Gramsci, 1971, p.232). Policy can be seen as a site of struggle over the level of autonomy of the state, fought on their home ground (the policy process) but with the central players always having to demonstrate their apparent neutrality.

Finally, the relations between various state agencies act as a *limit* on the state as a whole. These relationships are not merely functional, but are structurally formed in

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<sup>9</sup>The 'war of position' in Gramsci's analysis relates to the process of "passive revolution" (1971 p. 206). In the sense used here, it is the process by which part of the state prepares the ground for a series of political changes that will fundamentally alter relations within the state as a whole (ibid pp239-233)..

two ways. The first method is the essentially competitive nature of the funding process, whereby control over resources is given to certain agencies and not to others. This is a central method by which Government can permeate its policies downwards into agencies of the state. The second method is the nature of the agency; the social and ideological assumptions in which it is embedded. Agencies of education and employment may clash over the proper direction for 'transition' education; those of social welfare and policing over the correct solution to high rates of youth offending.

All these *limits* form real barriers to the autonomy of the state, hindering its own development and its relation to capital and civil society. However, the existence of the state also reshapes the social, political and economic relations of society in a number of ways. These impulses I have called the *capacity* of the state.

To understand what the state does, it is first essential to understand what the state *can* do. This is a question that quite clearly goes beyond economic imperatives. It relates to specific government policies, the ability of institutions to initiate and respond, the amount of popular support for particular proposals, the shape of the institutions that are being asked to implement policies, the historical preconditions of the state and, of course, economic conditions. The *capacity* of the state, then, refers to what the state can do at a particular historical conjuncture; in particular, its ability to shape its relationship to other structures of society. Five areas for examination are laid out below.

The first and most important influence on state *capacity* in a given period is the particular hegemonic settlements, or lack of such settlements, that exist. Two things are important to consider here. One is the level of consent, or the mandate, for the state to act. This may have less to do with agreement about particular policies than with the overall (hegemonic) perception of the state as 'popular-democratic' and working in the interests of 'society as a whole' (however this is conceived). State

*capacity*, under such circumstances, is greatly increased *whatever it does*. The other issue is that the basis on which the hegemony has been built has certain implications for relations within the state. Thus, at times, 'state as educator' may be a basic building block of the hegemonic settlement (under a liberal-democratic regime), and this will privilege the state structures of education above those of, say, policing. The construction of New Right ideologies, on the other hand, may lead to Government action 'against' state agencies, to make them smaller, more efficient, or even redundant. The particular hegemonic settlement must be considered as of prime importance, even over economic factors, in the determination of the capacity of the state; although this is not to say that the economic structures of society do not themselves help shape and form the hegemony that allows the state to act in particular ways.

It is fairly clear that the election of the fourth Labour Government in 1984 provided a firm mandate for the state to act to reduce unemployment or, indeed, in those days it was termed the restoration of full employment. Full employment was seen to be in the interests of society as a whole. However, very quickly the countervailing economic claims of Treasury<sup>10</sup> and certain groups of capital, in particular for a non-interventionist state, were making themselves heard. This can be conceptualised as a struggle between large sectors of capital and civil society. By the time of the Employment Summit (March 1985), the demands for economic recovery to precede full employment were being heard strongly. They can be seen in policy documents of the time (Catherwood, March 1985; New Zealand Government, November 1984). In theoretical terms, this can be conceptualised as a shift from *conjunctural* to *structural* policies (Offe 1984; for a description see Dale 1988 and Codd, Gordon and Harker 1989). This also led to the escalation of the struggle between the Departments of Education and Labour within the state. By 1986 the hegemonic settlement was firmly

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<sup>10</sup>Treasury, Economic Management, 1984. See Lauder 1987 for a discussion of these processes.

located within supply-side discourse, and the redistributive policies, on whose basis the Labour Government was elected, were in disarray. The 1987 election, held after the passing of the key Labour Relations Act, was won largely on the economic successes of supply-side policies, although the Prime Minister frequently promised that the next term would concentrate on social policies, implicitly of a traditional, *conjunctural*, kind. This whole series of events is a classic example of a struggle for hegemony within the state, and is reflected in the changing status of ACCESS schemes (see chapter 5). The *capacity* of the state to act, then, is constrained and enabled by the specific hegemonic settlements that it helps to create and maintain.

The second factor determining state *capacity* is the historical development of state agencies, their relations to each other and the roles that they play in society. Archer's work (1984), though perceiving the society/state relation in purely functionalist terms, shows clearly how the political preconditions of the state as educator have important implications for state policies and provision in the present. The physical, organisational and political history of state practices cannot be ignored in considering the capacity of the state, because it forms the agenda, *limits* (as discussed above) and habits of each agency, and their inter-relations. In New Zealand, a major commitment by successive Governments to full employment, and the success in achieving this until as late as 1978, itself generated a major crisis of legitimation for the state when unemployment began to rise. Since 1984, when a Labour Government was elected partly on a promise of a return to full employment a major shift has occurred. The Government ceased to promise full employment, but promoted instead 'free market' conditions where, unhampered (according to New Right ideology) by crippling taxes, the distorting effects of subsidies and tariffs, and Government intervention, conditions for investment and growth would thrive. The Government thus shaped its discourse to relieve the state of the responsibility for employment (although this strategy was certainly not totally successful) through claiming that this can only be achieved in a free, non-interventionist, market (Lauder, 1987).

The Labour Department was ideologically more suited than Education to adapt to the new monetarist environment (see chapter four), and did so very quickly. The Education Department had been involved in forging, maintaining and promoting consensus over educational aims since the late 1930's. It is a Department steeped in 'redistributive' rhetoric, and simply had no way of adapting to the new circumstances. Education's fight for the control over 'transition education' was as much over ideology and approach as of wanting a share of resources. The new Ministry of Education is being set up to enable a move away from traditional policies within the Department, and ironically it is at precisely this time that transition education is to be 'given' to Education (see chapter five).

The third factor is the *capacity* of the state to put forward certain ideas; ones that seem 'neutral' but in fact work 'in the interests of' the particular state agency that formed them:

*...autonomous state actions will regularly take forms that attempt to reinforce the authority, political longevity, and social control of the state organisations whose incumbents generated the relevant policies or policy ideas (Skocpol, 1984, p.15).*

The power of the state to alter relations between the various spheres of society is also a power to act 'for itself', by shaping the ground so that 'needs' will be defined in such a way as to enhance the power of the agency. Thus the state (or parts of it), relatively independent of other spheres, can exert impulses towards political and intellectual hegemony. A fascinating example of this in New Zealand over the past few years has been the Treasury, home of the beginnings of the New Right policies (see Lauder, 1987, for a full account). Treasury has been the major advocate of 'free market' ideologies, and has played a central role in the reduction of the size and scope of state activities. Yet, as part itself of the state, its own power and scope has increased markedly as a direct result of its advocacy of these policies.

The *capacity* of agencies within the state to work in their own interests must be seen as historically variable. This is most accepted under conditions of apparent consensus, and least so under conditions of conflict. The new monetarism carried with it an ideological imperative of 'sector neutrality', which was both a recognition that groups work for themselves and also a requirement that, essentially, they not be allowed to. The position of teacher unions is the best example of the changed conditions. Previously, it was recognised that teachers as 'professionals' had a lot to offer state policy processes; under the new conditions they are to be barred from such involvement (Gordon 1989e).

The final aspect of *capacity* to be considered here is the cumulative effect of the shaping factors of state agencies on the nature and aspirations of the society. This is particularly evident in education. Compulsory state schooling has completely altered the nature of childhood, and is irreversibly ensconced in most Western nations. It has altered gender relations, by freeing women to enter the workforce. It has provided the basis for the technological developments that are changing the form and relations of production in capitalist societies. The capacity of the state is derived at least partially from the dependence of both capital and civil society on it to continue to operate those structures (in some form) that allow the society to continue more or less as at present.

These shaping effects should not be underestimated in any analysis of state structures and policies. The role of the state in shaping 'the nation' in turn places pressure back on the state to continue to maintain the position it has carved out for itself. This makes the state both resistant to change (e.g. the monetarist demands for reduced involvement) and provides the *capacity* for action when state provision comes under threat.



The framework developed in this section links clearly to the Gramscian conception of state, capital and civil society developed at the beginning of this chapter. Beyond the theoretical and analytical strictures of 'relative autonomy theory' lies an approach that emphasises the need for close-in empirical analysis of state structures and policies.

The next chapter examines aspects of the historical context of the development and implementation of ACCESS policy. The framework developed here will be used to examine the historical material, with the proviso that the material discussed in that chapter is not considered in adequate depth for a full analysis. The history of transition policy is not the primary focus of the present study. The historical analysis provides a context for the analysis of ACCESS policy in chapters four and five, and, considered within the framework of *limits* and *capacity*, provides a useful reformulation of the development of aspects of education policy in New Zealand over this century.

## Chapter three

### The relationship between school and work: an historical overview

This chapter reviews a number of major Reports on aspects of education policy in twentieth century New Zealand. The theme of this historical examination is the construction of the school to work relationship, and specifically of the perceived role of the state in this relationship. A central aim is to advance the concepts of *limits* and *capacity* of the state beyond the abstract form in which they were developed in chapter two, to a more concrete level of analysis. However, the central reason for including this historical chapter is to provide a context and add a historical dimension to the policy study of chapters four and five. Particularly important for this study are issues of the historical specificity of the state's response to prevailing social and economic circumstances.

The further impetus arises from Dale's conceptual model which was introduced at the end of chapter one, which counterposes the forces or spheres of the state, capital and civil society. The particular positioning of these forces, it was noted, is subject to historical change, and thus can only be uncovered by historical (or comparative) methods. The purpose of this historical chapter, then, is not only to provide a context for the policy study, but also to explain the present with reference to the past (See Shuker 1987 pp.9-11). For example, the development of the ACCESS training programme needs to be understood as a particular form of state response to unemployment; one which had a heritage reaching back only to the 1970s. Before that, job creation schemes and public works programmes were the major Governmental responses to unemployment. Vocational preparation, such as it was (and only, as Sutch (1966) points out, for the lower classes and less wealthy) was seen to be catered for first by the secondary technical schools and, second, by the

introduction of manual teaching into mainstream academic schools. This shift in state responses effected, and perhaps was partially caused by, changes in the relationships of certain state agencies (those of Education and Labour in particular) within the state. While education has always been conceived of as (partially) the means to prepare people for their roles as workers in New Zealand society, the period since the 1960s has seen an increasing emphasis on educational means to regulate the workforce.

The task of this chapter, then, is to ascertain dominant beliefs about the role of schooling and its relation to work and to 'life' in specific historical periods, and the political, economic and cultural influences that created these beliefs. There are many ways in which this can be done: through a social history of working class groups (CCCS 1981); an analysis of schooling practices at certain periods; through reports in the media; with reference to the claims of employer groups and representatives; by analysing policies, parliamentary debates and legislation. All these processes are legitimate and would provide a picture of specific school-to-work effects, but as this thesis is centrally concerned with the level of policy-making, and in particular policy documents, it is the final approach, the examination of the beliefs and values that led to the development of educational policies, that will be pursued. The most fertile ground for investigation here is the numerous reports of Commissions, Committees and educational policy groups that have been produced throughout the history of state schooling in New Zealand. It must be recognised that this approach by no means gives the whole picture of educational thought at a given period. However, it does provide a sketch of dominant (and some minority) educational beliefs and rationale for how policies were developed.

The Reports that follow commence in 1925 with that of Frank Tate, and end in 1984 with the somewhat notorious (and discredited) *Review of the Core Curriculum for Schools*, released by Merv Wellington, then Minister of Education, only months before his Government was ousted from power; education having been a major

election issue. All the Reports included in this chapter were official, in the sense that they were commissioned by the Government of the day. Whilst they cover a broad range of issues, they are united in that each develops an articulate view or philosophy about the school to work relationship; one Report, in fact, encompasses two distinct positions.

The policy debates in this chapter are all undertaken within a period of what Offe (1985) calls conjunctural policy. These are policies that, in an incremental way, add on to existing policies without changing their underlying aims. Conjunctural policies are demand-led and expansionary of the system as a whole. He contrasts these policies with structural policies, which are supply-led, aiming to structure people's needs to fit state provision, rather than vice-versa. The system of education in New Zealand has been dominated by conjunctural policies since at least 1877. Education policy development has been characterised by incremental growth, except for a short period in the 1930s when many education services were cut back in the depression. New policies have added on to the existing system, for example through the growth of secondary education, polytechnics, universities and early childhood provision, leaving the basic structure in place.

The recognition that all the policy debates presented here are framed within a conjunctural mode is important for the study that follows. The debates, Reports and Commissions outlined in this chapter share certain assumptions about education that, in the period of the development of ACCESS, have been heavily questioned. Codd (1989) notes that the restructuring of the schooling system and the central apparatus of education clearly signals a move towards structural policy. It is important for this chapter, therefore, to note that the basic policy trend towards growth and expansion, which remained unquestioned over the whole of this century up to 1984, has become problematic in the period studied in chapters four and five, and is itself a basic source of educational change.

The final part of this chapter uses various New Zealand publications to examine the recent context of transition education from a number of perspectives.

## **1. The context: schooling and work in New Zealand**

The birth of universal state education in New Zealand, with the passing of the Education Act of 1877, was heralded by nearly all political groups in the country. Two distinct justifications for this provision were prominent in the debates surrounding the Act; and remain prominent to this day. The first justification was that schooling would provide an educated, well-informed democracy, and a wide range of opportunities for all New Zealanders. The second justification was that schooling would give the nation the impetus needed for industrial and technological advancement in the world, and provide skills needed in the workplace. These two aims have remained prominent in the educational discourse to this day, although the relationship between them has altered in different periods.

These aims can be placed within the theoretical context of this thesis. The first aim sees schooling as working 'for' civil society, while the second is clearly education for capitalist development. Thus the state structures set up under the 1877 Act were required to serve two, mostly contradictory, masters<sup>1</sup>.

To look more broadly at this issue, it is important to recognise that the 1877 Act was passed at the beginning of a period of marked economic decline, which led to over a decade of recession (Easton and Thomson 1982 p.31). Despite this recession, the Government of the day continued to invest in a range of services, such as health,

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<sup>1</sup>The nature of the contradictions between these aims are well documented, and stem essentially from the reality that the type of work undertaken by the masses is anything but self-fulfilling, that most people work for wages and not to maximise their broad capabilities and that the fate of most (working class) people is as 'factory fodder' in mindless jobs that deny human abilities.

railways and a variety of banking, finance and insurance groups, until the development of refrigeration and a rise in exports brought about an economic recovery. The relationship between the state and the economy can thus not be conceptualised as an unproblematic correspondence at the economic level; a cutback in one does not signal necessarily a cutback in the other.

There is a sense in which the development of the state in that period could be seen as a *compensation* for capital's inability to produce profits; after all, education and health services do promise an intelligent and energetic workforce, and the other development of that period certainly developed a financial infrastructure for capitalist expansion. But this in turn raises a number of questions about the political and ideological processes by which these goals were effected. In other circumstances, as the events of the 1930s and the late 1980s have shown, the response to economic recession by the state is as likely to be a retrenchment of state services as it is to be a compensatory expansion.

The reason for the expansion of state services from the 1870s, in fact, can be found in official Government publications of the time. Prichard (1970 p.153) notes that, from 1892, the same explanatory note appeared in official year books for some time. She comments:

*The Year Books consistently judged the expenditure to be valuable. Much of it on railways, telegraphs, waterworks on goldfields, land that was directly reproductive and that on immigration, roads, bridges and lighthouses indirectly so. The general effect of the policy was to develop the settlement of the country, they argued (ibid).*

The period of the development of universal state education can thus be seen as one in which the *limits* of the state were vastly expanded in the field of education, although not to the extent that would become evident in the twentieth century, due to the economic recession and to the inability of the small central Department of Education to

continually initiate new activities and monitor existing developments. The *capacity* of the state to act, too, was greatly enhanced by the social consensus that the infrastructure of a 'civilised' society needed to be developed as quickly as possible, although there were increasing concerns about the level of international debt that this expansion was causing (Prichard 1970).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, expansion of the schooling system began in earnest. The innovations of secondary technical schooling, the free place regulations that ensured at least two years of secondary schooling for all those who had passed the Proficiency examination, the increased centralisation of schooling through a huge increase in the influence, and the staffing, of the central Department of Education and new funding procedures all strengthened central control of the state over education, at the same time increasing the *capacity* of the state to develop education further.

However, the marked expansion of the education system of that time brought its own problems, and one particular *limit* which Skocpol (1985, quoted in chapter two) referred to as the relationship between the scope of an agency and the action it was expected to take. In short, the expansion at the centre had led to a bureaucratic nightmare. This led to such concern that a Commission, headed by Mark Cohen (and hereinafter referred to as the Cohen Commission) was set up to examine the administration of the education system (Cohen 1912). The terms of reference of this Commission included investigating the costs of education, its central administration, the balance of powers and rights in the system, overlapping and duplication and:

*...generally, in what respects improvements can be made to secure higher efficiency, better administration, and co-ordination and the securing of greater value for the annual expenditure on the branches of education above referred to (1912 p.5).*

The broad scope of this report is fascinating, but largely beyond the boundaries of the issues considered here. However, it should be noted that a brief minority report was

appended to the major report, which argued "that no genuine reform is possible in the administration of education unless there is real control by the people from the official head of the Department down to the School Committees" (Cohen 1912 p.24). Increasing the central control of the state, then, certainly increased its *capacity*; but it also held dangers that the centre would lose communication with the periphery.

The post-war period brought about, once again, an economic recession, but once again, according to Shuker (1987 p.57) neither the war itself nor its aftermath caused any substantial reduction in educational expenditure. He puts this down to increasing urbanization and the enlargement of the middle classes for whom education was a primary aim. This also explains the huge expansion in secondary education that took place during this period.

By the early 1920s the effects of the post-war recession were being felt severely. There were cutbacks in teachers salaries, expenditure on school buildings and a number of subsidies were discontinued. The liberal spirit that had pervaded the early development of the schooling system had dissipated, and was replaced with a fairly narrow emphasis on nationalism and conformity. It is within this context that the Tate Report was undertaken.

### 1.1 The Tate Report

In 1925, the Minister of Education (Parr) invited Frank Tate, Director of Education in Victoria, Australia, to investigate "certain aspects of post-primary education in New Zealand" (Tate 1925). These aspects included: whether the proficiency examination could be seen as "sufficient qualification for free secondary education"<sup>2</sup>; the relationship between the curriculum of high schools and technical colleges; the

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<sup>2</sup>This referred to the free place scheme, instituted in the Secondary Schools Act 1903, whereby any person who had passed the Proficiency examination in Standard Six of the primary school became eligible for free secondary education.



matriculation examination and its effects on the course of work in secondary schools; and various questions relating to the function of technical high schools, district high schools and local governing authorities. A concern noted by the Cohen Commission (1912) that the matriculation examination dominated the curriculum of the secondary schools became the major concern of the Tate Report:

*It is unfortunate, however, that no serious attempt appears to have been made from the inception of the [free place] scheme in 1905 to provide different types of post-primary education suited to the future occupational needs of the youngsters. Schools carrying on the traditional course of secondary work based largely upon the requirements of the Matriculation Examination of the university were there in readiness, and the easy path of advance was along this well-beaten road (1925 pp 9-10).*

The report at no time advocated 'vocational training' within the schools, rather a curriculum that developed:

*...an efficient system of technical and industrial training on the superstructure of a liberal, but definitely planned, pre-vocational course of preparatory training in post-primary schools (1925 p 10).*

The central tenet of this new curriculum was believed to be 'relevance' to life outside the schools:

*The more school-work is related to life outside the school the more interesting and effective it becomes. Knowledge so gained is the knowledge that is power. For the student has not only knowledge, which is good, but a wealth of ideas, which is better, and ability to apply his knowledge, which is best (1925 p 11).*

The report did not challenge the traditional, university oriented, curriculum of the schools, but suggested there should be further, vocationally oriented, curricula offered to those young people, the vast majority of students, who would not proceed to the university. This tacit acceptance of the university curriculum as valuable (i.e. there is certainly no suggestion to abandon such a curriculum, despite its severely limited application to the future of most school pupils) demonstrates the deep-seated cultural value placed on such a curriculum at the time. In fact, such a curriculum enshrined the values of the dominant class, gender and ethnic groupings within the society, and thus was highly sought after as a way, the only way for most, to gain the cultural capital

necessary to enter the top professions of the Dominion. Any vocationally oriented curriculum, as with the domestic curriculum offered to young women, could only confirm the class position of the students; the 'classical' curriculum opened the door to the possibility of class mobility<sup>3</sup>.

The concern of La Trobe, the Director of Technical Education of the time, was stated as being that:

*The [school] courses are far too much influenced by the preparation for examinations of one kind and another. We should remember also that in New Zealand the professions are somewhat overcrowded, while the demands of industry and commerce are by no means satisfied, which would indicate that the education system tends to guide the pupils towards the learned professions rather than in directions giving greater promise of reward and offering far greater scope for service in the country (1925 p.12).*

This is an indication that the schooling system was perceived as not playing an adequate role in selection for the reproduction of economic relations in society. The liberal tone of 'variety' of futures does not take into account the *differential* opportunities, lifestyles and power offered to those entering the 'professions' vis-a-vis those entering industry or commerce.

The Report assumed, although implicitly, that people have inherent abilities, or at least tendencies, towards certain academic or vocational areas<sup>4</sup>. This was very much in line with the notion of fixed 'mental ability' that was so prevalent during this period. The

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<sup>3</sup>It is this tension that underpinned the resistance to the development of rural technical schools. As Beeby notes: A quarter of a century ago I sat in a Maori village in a remote corner of New Zealand, trying to persuade the chiefs and elders to accept for their district a secondary school providing the technical courses the area so clearly needed rather than the academic course on which they had set their hearts.... I retired defeated, when an old chief, having shrewdly elicited that I had taken Latin, clinched the argument, with 'And look where you got to!' The proper reply still eludes me (Quoted in Nash 1983 pp 16-17). The issue here, of course, is the tension between what the 'area' (or the society for that matter) 'needs', and what individuals or groups aspire to. One may confidently assume that the tensions and conflicts in such choices fall selectively onto working class people, as those who already have the power and control of resources ensure the continuing importance (or construction of need) of their own positions; thus not only creating, but also recreating, the 'need' for their profession. Why is it that so many lawyers, or law-interpreters, become politicians, or law-makers?

<sup>4</sup>See Kamin (1974) *The Science and Politics of IQ*. This book clearly links the development of the IQ testing movement, based on the notion of fixed mental ability, to the eugenics claims of primacy for the 'superior' white male over all other groups in society. This movement was at its height in the 1920s and 1930s; its effects are still evident, albeit in politically more acceptable terms (see Nash 1983 pp 189-198).

overwhelming evidence is that schooling offered futures to people based very much on their class/gender/ethnic position<sup>5</sup>. The vocation of Maori males was to be a farmer; that of Maori females a farmer's wife<sup>6</sup>. Women in general were trained primarily to be teachers, nurses, clerks and, above all, wives and mothers<sup>7</sup>. The 'professions' were to be reserved largely for the sons of professional men (as the Report noted, the group of aspiring professionals was becoming rather too large - perhaps as a result of the increase in numbers of female teachers which led eventually to legislation to limit this growth?)<sup>8</sup>; whilst 'honest workmen', the children of the respectable white working classes, were to take up the trade and commerce positions.

This Report was written in a period of recession just before unemployment began to rise very heavily. In 1926 there were 3397 requests to the Labour Department for unemployment assistance (in that time consisting solely of relief work); this number trebled to 10,268 in 1927 (Condliffe 1959 p.51). However, Tate appeared to be responding to some real structural imbalances within the workforce, wherein the professions were somewhat over-populated and there were not enough people to fill manual positions.

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<sup>5</sup>That this is still the case in the late 1980s has been the over-arching concern of the sociology of education (see Apple 1982).

<sup>6</sup>According to Harker (1981 p.9), the Native school service during this period was based on the philosophy that "the primary education of the Maori should have what may be called an agricultural bias".

<sup>7</sup>For example, the Cohen Commission (1912) suggested that young women at teachers colleges should undertake a compulsory home economics course.

<sup>8</sup>An increasingly depressed economic situation, the redevelopment of strong patriarchal ideologies about the role of women as the 'mothers of the race' (Openshaw 1980), the associated emphasis on 'patriotism', and a great increase in the number of women teachers together led to legislation to limit the role of women in teaching. This legislation focussed on married women. In 1931 an Education Amendment Act made it legal for Education Boards to refuse to employ any woman teacher on the grounds that she was married; the 1934-35 Education Amendment Act allowed for Boards to 'terminate the engagement' of any married women teacher (see Gordon 1984).

Part of the blame for this was placed on the academic bias of secondary schools. Sutch (1966) records that the secondary schools, having been forced to admit state pupils under the 1903 Secondary Schools Act, were very reluctant to also extend their curriculum beyond the narrow academic 'classical' curriculum. However, although the secondary schools may have been partly to blame, the real problem lay in the increasing number of students attending secondary schools who, having had their aspirations raised, were being forced into manual work. Sutch (1966 p.158) notes that the proportion of the population receiving secondary education rose from 41 per 10,000 in 1898, to 200 per 10,000 in 1928, and continued on its upward trend.

Tate's response was to suggest a two-tier secondary system; academic for those who would continue to university, and technical for those who would not. This recommendation, however, was never implemented, although further expansion of secondary technical education did take place. The reason for this was that civil society, and in particular the aspiring middle class, saw secondary schooling of an academic nature as the key to social advancement for their children. The value placed on the academic curriculum was so great, no matter how irrelevant it may have been, that they were not prepared to relinquish it.

The lack of action on this Report confirmed the direction of the education system towards providing a broad, general, liberal, academic education for all; whilst the problem of what today is called a 'mismatch' between educational qualifications and workforce skills continued to be largely ignored outside of the technical schools which, too, were beginning to provide a general academic curriculum (See Gordon 1984).

The period after this Report was released saw only a minor improvement in the economic situation. The issues with which Tate was concerned remained unresolved, but were raised again by the Syllabus Revision Committee, which arrived at very

different conclusions from Tate; ones which would continue to strengthen the existing directions of the state system of education. However, the split that occurred within that Committee reflected very clearly the diversity of opinion between different sectors of society over the direction that education should take.

## 1.2 The Syllabus Revision Committee: 1928<sup>9</sup>

The central concern of the Syllabus Revision Committee was the issue of the provision of appropriate curricula to each child. The committee reported to the Minister of Education in 1928 after three years of deliberation. This committee was notable in that it produced both a majority and a minority report, both of which were published together. The order of reference related to the suitability of the whole primary school syllabus to the needs of New Zealand society, in particular at Standards V and VI:

*To report whether it is possible without additional expenditure to provide exploratory courses in the Standard V and Standard VI curricula in order to ascertain the pupils' aptitudes for, or natural bent towards, different types of occupations (1928 p.6).*

The very terms of reference, then, refer to aspects of what I have called the *limits* of the state. Whilst funding was not to increase (indeed within a very short time it was to decrease markedly), the Committee was to explore ways in which extra, or alternative educational means could be found to more adequately serve the perceived needs of pupils. That much of the impetus for this approach stemmed from the kinds of concerns raised by Tate about the relationship between schooling and work shows that those issues were still very much alive.

The majority report argued that the existing primary school curriculum was far too narrow to undertake what should be its main task: to unveil the hidden capabilities of pupils:

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<sup>9</sup>Contained in Appendices to Journals of the House of Representatives, E1, 1928.

*Pupils of 12 years of age, when opportunities are offered them, very soon reveal those special aptitudes which under the traditional curriculum too often lie hidden. Lack of diversified courses has frequently caused much waste of time in the later years of education, and..... has sent out into the world of work a multitude of boys and girls who had never proved to themselves what kind of work they were best suited to. It is impossible to estimate the ultimate economic gain to the community from this process of discovery of capacity (1928 p.13).*

This report was far more aware than Tate's document of the socio-economic differentiation that follows on from the provision of differential curricula. Indeed, the committee objected very strongly to the mental/manual distinction of the workplace:

*Society in New Zealand today definitely rejects as fundamentally wrong the Greek view that the ordinary work of the artisan is essentially banalistic or vulgar. The committee is unanimous in declaring not only that handwork should be given a more definite place in the school scheme, but also that teachers should endeavour to inculcate in the pupils an equal respect for all kinds of work (1928 p.12).*

Of course, "society in New Zealand" was perfectly aware of the lowly place of the artisan; otherwise why would teachers have to work so hard to overcome such beliefs?

The majority report went on to declare:

*No system of education can be satisfactory if one section of pupils is led, even subconsciously, to assume an air of superiority over other sections (1928 p.12).*

The idealist tenor of this Report has huge parallels with some of the arguments used to defend and promote programmes of post-school training in the 1980s (see chapter four). It also led to quite different proposals than those which Tate put forward; the committee proposed a far broader and more differentiated syllabus for primary schools. The aim of this was to:

*...develop a curriculum and a system which up to the age of 14 or 15 will offer to all the same educational opportunity and so help onwards the cause of democracy (1928 p.15).*

They proposed a syllabus based on four different courses of instruction for those aged between 12 and 15 years, although 60 percent of the work was to be common to all four courses:

- (a) *The present academic courses for those proceeding to university work and entering professional life*

- (b) *A commercial or general course*
- (c) *A course for those specially skilful in handicrafts and construction work*
- (d) *A course, where possible, for those interested in*
  - (i) *agriculture (boys)*
  - (ii) *domestic science (girls)*

(1928 p.19).

However, the committee declared themselves "emphatically opposed to any definite vocational training till the pupil has completed his fifteenth year" (1928 p.23).

The contradictions between the liberal-democratic aims of equality of educational opportunity with the realities of the workplace are, in retrospect, very clear. The committee was concerned to broaden opportunities by providing wider educational experiences for pupils, however it failed to take into account (or at least underestimated) the close relationship between educational experience, class background and opportunities in the workforce. The insistence on individual aptitude once again masked the class, gender and ethnic inequalities that pervaded school and society.

The minority report of the Syllabus Revision Committee was of a totally different nature to the majority report. It claimed that the main report was written merely to promote the interests of teachers. The minority group focused closely on the school/society relationship:

*The question is not "Are we better or worse than our fathers were supposed to be?" but here is the child and there is adult society as it is, plus what we desire it to be; then provide a bridge (the curriculum) to reach the desired goal (1928 p.36).*

Whilst the majority report centred on the need to increase opportunity, including access to secondary schooling, the minority members opposed an increase in higher schooling. They used evidence from other countries to suggest that mass secondary schooling was large, inefficient, undifferentiated, disorganised and run under

impossible conditions. They upheld the "value of selection", noting that many children do not have the 'mental capacity' to undertake secondary schooling.

The curriculum advocated by the minority report rested centrally on the 'child life/adult society' relation<sup>10</sup>. For example:

*Civic duty as an obligation for the privileges of citizenship should be stressed.*

*Cultivation of the aesthetic side of education should have a definite place in the scheme of work - love of music, art, literature and the sciences as a means to promote social happiness and betterment. The whole scheme of school work should be designed with a view to moulding the plastic material of youth into sociable and useful citizens.*

*Constitutional authority should be upheld, and the menace of disruptive elements and forces pointed out.*

*Pride in handicraft and the dignity of working to produce something tangible should be stressed.*

*Instruction in personal hygiene and clean living must not be neglected.*

*Orderliness, method, accuracy in detail, punctuality, courtesy and strict integrity are invaluable qualities in ordinary business life; training which inculcates systematic and methodical working should be given in the upper classes (1928 p.61).*

As well, the minority report stressed the basic retention of the academic primary curriculum, promotion on ability rather than age, a more careful selection of teachers, the need to keep education costs down and the retention of technical/academic distinctions and the proficiency examination.

From 1928 unemployment in New Zealand began to rise rapidly. The Labour movement, both industrially and politically, was making its demands known throughout New Zealand. The minority report outlined a curriculum aimed at *controlling* the working classes and *elevating* the middle classes. The values, or habitus, enshrined in their proposed curriculum were those of white middle class Britain. Moreover, these values are reified as *universally*, not merely *culturally*, important. Patriotism, cleanliness, love of high art and music, duty, punctuality and

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<sup>10</sup>It is interesting to note the links between this Report and the 1984 'Review of the Core Curriculum in Schools', which is discussed later in this chapter.



orderliness were values which the minority report believed were good in themselves, rather than for a particular class.

The Report also stressed the notions of individual freedom and individual advancement, which in the context of rising unemployment were conservative ideological forms that ignored the structural bases of joblessness. Moreover, the academic/technical educational distinctions which the majority report sought to destroy were upheld by the minority as important. Finally, the minority report favoured a modified curriculum based on existing practices rather than the broad changes envisaged by the majority.

It is interesting to note the political response to the varying views within the Syllabus Revision Committee report. In his 1928 report to Parliament<sup>11</sup>, the Minister of Education, Wright, noted that the report was being closely studied to improve the articulation between primary and post-primary schools. The Minister suggested that the traditional academic curriculum may no longer be appropriate:

*Indeed there is a growing conviction that a constructive piece of handwork may have a more potent influence on the development of character and on the formation of high cultural ideals than has the translation of a perfectly good piece of English prose into somewhat indifferent Latin*<sup>12</sup>.

At the end of 1928, primarily as a reaction against the Reform Government under Coates, and the increasingly gloomy economic picture, the reformed Liberal 'United' Party was elected to Government, and Harry Atmore became Minister of Education.

Atmore shared many of the concerns of his predecessor over the relationship between primary and post-primary schooling. As a result of the Syllabus Revision Committee Report he had a new syllabus developed. Interestingly, it incorporated ideas from both sections of the report, and did not introduce the broad-ranging curricula changes

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<sup>11</sup>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, E1, 1928, p.2

<sup>12</sup>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, E1, 1928, p.3.

suggested by the majority committee. The main thrust of the changes were: to allow 'bright' pupils to start senior classes earlier (from the minority report); to teach more English literature, music and drawing; and that courses were to be made of "living interest" to the students.

Atmore proposed dealing immediately with the major issues that the Syllabus Revision Committee addressed, and formed his own Parliamentary Recess Committee on Education at the end of 1929, which reported back in 1930:

*There is urgent need in the school system for what may be called a 'trying-out ground' where pupils can have an opportunity at as early a stage as possible to discover their aptitudes, and subsequently embark on advanced courses that are congenial to them, and which will enable them to reach a type of employment that will be of benefit both to themselves and to the community as a whole<sup>13</sup>.*

However, by this stage the world depression had begun to set in. After falling in 1928, the numbers of unemployed men had risen to 6,264<sup>14</sup> in 1929 and in 1930 almost doubled again to 11,442. This was still only the beginning of the depression - unemployment was to rise to 51,408 in 1931 and reach a peak of 79,587 in 1933 (Condliffe 1959 p.54). The Government was, by 1930, preoccupied with the rising unemployment, and its implications for the economy and for Government expenditure:

*In the 1930 budget there was a shrinkage in revenue of nearly £5 million; the next year there was a further shrinkage of over £8 million (equal to one-third of the normal revenue). The Government considered that there was only one way out - to cut costs and cut them again (Sutch 1966 p.129).*

Poised on the brink of the depression, its full impact yet to be felt, the energetic Minister of Education set out to tackle the problems of education.

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<sup>13</sup>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, E1, 1930, p.2

<sup>14</sup>These figures relate only to those registered as unemployed. By the year ending 31.3.29, the Labour Department had some 16,383 requests for relief work assistance (Condliffe 1959 p.52)

### 1.3 The Atmore Report: 1930

The *Report of the Parliamentary Recess Education Committee on Educational Reorganization in New Zealand* (Atmore 1930) expressed, and offered solutions to, many problems that the education system was posing. As well as the concerns of Tate (1925) and the Syllabus Revision Committee (1928), plus a concern that a review of the whole system had not taken place since 1914 and that New Zealand had slipped behind in educational provision, many pressure groups within the system were making demands. For example, the President of the New Zealand Women Teachers Association noted:

*Our request is that in the event of a new salary scheme being introduced the basis shall be non-differentiation as between women and unmarried men. We contend that living is exactly as expensive for the one sex as for the other, and that the work done by women is of exactly the same value as that done by men (1930 p.57)<sup>15</sup>.*

The four university colleges claimed to be excessively short of equipment and unable to attract staff from overseas due to low wages and very high teacher/student ratios. School classrooms, built to British models, were unsuitable to New Zealand needs and needed to be replaced by open-air schools; the scholarships system was not working adequately and the examination system at primary, secondary and university levels was in need of major overhaul.

All these concerns, and others that were expressed, led the Report to focus very narrowly on the administrative systems of education. Indeed, this administrative focus was so narrow that, beyond passing mention of the "objectionable social distinctions that have hitherto tended to divide those who have received a secondary education from those who have not, as well as those who have received an academic education from those taught in the technical schools" (1930 p.14), little consideration is given to the

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<sup>15</sup>In the event, women teachers were to wait until 1962 for their claim for equal pay to be recognised. In the interim, equal pay for equal work in all sectors was to become one of the major political issues that women fought for. Equal pay in all sectors was not made compulsory until 1974; in 1986 women earned only approximately 75 percent of the male wage (Ministry of Women's Affairs 1986).

social or economic effects of schooling at all. Administrative changes would anyway, it was proposed, remove such distinctions from schooling.

The disconnection by the Report of schooling from society gives it an almost apolitical tenor. Yet the questions that were being addressed: the raising of the school leaving age; the further development of universities; an increase in technical and manual classes; a system of accrediting for university entrance; a rescaling of teachers salaries; and a reduction in class sizes are all issues that raised political storms at other times in New Zealand. Moreover, given the escalating unemployment taking place at the time, the collapse of many industries and the associated social problems it is almost incredible that the Report fails to address education within its social context.

In hindsight, the cutbacks that were to take place within education made a mockery of Atmore's recommendations. Instead of 9000 extra 14 and 15 year olds being required to stay on at school, several thousand five year olds were summarily excluded. The recommendation for equal pay for all teachers was not implemented; indeed further barriers to the employment of women teachers were raised. Expansion of post-secondary education was abruptly curtailed and many other cutbacks took place.

This is not to criticise the scope of the Report. The Committee took a bold approach and made a large number of valuable recommendations, aiming to extend the *limits* and increase the scope of schooling. The fact that this Governmental review could take place at all during a period in which the Government faced a major drop in its revenue is an indication of the *capacity* of the state in education. There was a huge and uncritical demand for more education at the secondary, technical and tertiary level. However, the economic situation, and its effects on the income of the state and of working people was largely ignored, and, as a result of Government policy to deal with the depression, the reverse of the expansionist recommendations of the Atmore Report actually happened. As Condliffe, notes, the Coalition Government (United and

Reform parties, from September 1931 onwards) refused to finance their loss in revenue from deficit and Government borrowing, and in fact aimed to balance the budget no matter how little revenue was received. As a result:

*The Coalition government met the decline by measures of retrenchment that accentuated the decline (Condliffe 1959 p.51).*

Education was hard hit by the depression. A year after the Atmore Report, the first retrenchment measures in education were put into place. The Proficiency examination was made harder, in order that fewer people would qualify for free places in secondary schools (Sutch 1966 p. 162). Sutch summarises the main cuts:

*In October 1932 the Minister of Education could say, 'at the end of the present year New Zealand would be spending on education £1,200,000 less than was spent last year and the same results would be achieved'. Some of the results may be gathered from the list of economy measures adopted by the Education Department in the years 1930 to 1932. Apart from the civil service wages reduction ranging from over 16 percent to over 22 percent, savings were made by excluding children under six from public schools, by 'postponing' the appointments of assistants for large classes, by not appointing probationers in 1932, by closing two training colleges, by reducing the expenditure on school buildings and maintenance, and on grants to education boards and other educational agencies, and by wholly withdrawing payments or grants from kindergartens and the Workers' Educational Association, public libraries, chairs of education, midwifery and forestry in university colleges (Sutch 1966 pp.162-163).*

An analysis of state strategies in the Depression may superficially be built on a 'relative autonomy' case; that 'in the last instance' the state is merely the agent of capital. However, it must be recognised that it was the Governmental response to the Depression, rather than the crisis of capitalism itself, that determined the shrinkage of state involvement in education. The state response was driven more by politics than by economics. Sutch reports that "New Zealand came through the depression with less national debt than it entered it; each year of the depression saw the Unemployment Fund in credit"(1966 p. 136).

This brief analysis raises more issues than it answers about the *limits* and *capacity* of the state, although it provides some insight into the political agenda that underpin shifts in state power. The capacity of state education agencies was severely limited by two factors. First, the ideological imperative of the 'balanced budget' which, in the end, was rejected by civil society but which held sway for over three years. Second, the understandable shift in political focus in civil society from social advancement through education to social survival through unemployment relief. There is no record of massive resistance to the education cutbacks, except those related to teachers salaries and conditions of work by teacher representatives, but rallies, marches, riots and civil disobedience marked the general resistance to the unemployment policies.

The period between the depression and the second world war saw a huge expansion in the state, brought about by the first Labour Government which stressed the state's role in providing social security 'from the cradle to the grave'. The cutbacks restored, education moved into a period of huge growth and expansion at all levels.

#### **1.4 The Thomas Report: 1943**

One of the first acts of the Labour Government was to abolish the Proficiency examination in 1936, thus opening the way for universal secondary schooling. By this stage, some 60 percent of pupils were already attending secondary school (Sutch 1966 pp.274-275). This number continued to increase, and by the middle of the second world war most children had some secondary schooling. This growth in secondary education had not been matched by a growth in education policy; the issue of what should be taught, and to whom, remained unresolved from the Reports of earlier years; the Thomas Committee's task was to provide a blueprint for the secondary curriculum for a nation undecided about what role such education should play in society.

The report of the committee on the post-primary school curriculum (The Thomas Report 1943; cited as Department of Education 1959), encapsulated many of the ideas

of its time of the relationship between schooling and the workforce. The thinking behind the Report, encapsulated by Sutch (1966 p.268) shows that there was little advancement in thinking from the earlier Reports described above:

*At this time there was an idea abroad, which Fraser to some extent shared, that there was some one thing that each person could do reasonably well and that such subjects as dressmaking should receive just as much recognition as excellence in English or science: each child should be entitled to credit for what he was good at and not feel inferior because he was not good at 'academic' subjects.*

The decision to bring in accrediting for University Entrance, thus in effect making assessment internal, had already been made; the Committee's role was to examine possible curricula options opened up by such a move.

The central reason for the establishment of an accrediting system for UE was that the examination had come to be used, in its old form, as a standard not just for the University but for society in general:

*It is a commonplace that this examination has come to serve a dual purpose - besides being used for the purpose for which it was designed, the assessment of fitness for University studies, it has been used also by parents and employers as a general measure of a reasonably complete post-primary course. Consequently many thousands of pupils have taken the course of studies leading to the examination without any thought of afterwards entering the University; and the University, willy-nilly, has dominated most of the work of the secondary schools, the district high schools and the country technical high schools, i.e. those which must attempt to meet all the post-primary needs in their areas.*

The Thomas Report is famous both for its articulation of broad liberal educational objectives for the post-primary curriculum, and also for the wide level of acceptance these views engendered in New Zealand society. In an Appendix to the 1959 reprint of the report (and it is itself significant that it was reprinted more than 15 years after the original), the Department of Education noted that, as a result of the Report:

*Comments, criticisms and suggestions were received from groups and from individuals. These were carefully studied, and as a result of the discussion that followed many modifications were made in the original proposals. It is a tribute to the work of the Committee that these modifications were generally of*

*a minor nature; the main proposals proved acceptable to the great body of teachers and others interested in education (1959 p.79).*

The Thomas Committee almost completely ignored the role of the school in preparing young people for work. In terms of their general aims, the Committee argue for a:

*... generous and well-balanced education. Such an education would aim, firstly, at the full preparation of the adolescent as a person; and, secondly, at preparing him for an active place in our New Zealand society as worker, neighbour, homemaker and citizen. Up to a point one aim implies the other; and such qualities as strength and stability of character are fundamental to both (1959 p.5)*

The Thomas Committee put 'education for work' clearly second to 'education for life'. The emphasis in the Report is on education as the fostering of 'human values' and the building of a democratic society. The Report is notably different in that respect from the other Reports already considered in this chapter.

One exception to this should be noted. The Thomas Committee clearly gave much importance to training women for their futures as homemakers. This was in line with official Government policy, which aimed to increase the population of New Zealand to five million by 1960. In many emotive speeches, Government members implored women to get ready, when the war ended, to have children and increase the population (although this message was not universally accepted<sup>16</sup>). Girls were to be encouraged to learn Clothing and Homecraft, part of the prescription of the latter being:

*We have in mind a course that is very closely related to the life of the home and its members, and that conceives of home-making as an art that calls not only for practical efficiency but also for taste and an understanding of non-material needs (1959 p.70).*

In a period of massive educational expansion, the role of the Thomas Committee was to provide some consolidation of schooling practices. The Report, by emphasising a

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<sup>16</sup>See Guy 1943. Her small book argues that, if women were to do the Government's work by having lots of children, the Government should pay them.



common core and national examination prescriptions, in essence brought the secondary schools under national (Education Department) control as firmly as were the primary schools, and limited the previous university domination of the secondary school curriculum to the 6th and 7th form years.

The Report reflects, and extends, the *capacity* of the state in education at this time. Given the previous preoccupation of education reports with the needs of the workforce, the ability of the Thomas Committee to almost totally ignore this aspect (to the extent that employers are berated for using academic examination results as an index of the capability of potential workers) is fairly remarkable. Even more remarkable, though, was the unproblematic and indeed enthusiastic acceptance of Thomas's proposals. In effect, the Report won for education a huge level of autonomy from other structures of the state and society.<sup>16b</sup>

The state had been *limited* in educational expansion by its own levels of disorganisation caused by the continued expansion of educational demand. The Thomas Committee acted to consolidate changes through the curriculum, whilst other, complementary, changes (such as the raising of the school leaving age to 15 and the accreditation system for University Entrance examinations) brought about increasing stability of educational organisation and functions.

This Report also reaffirmed the central importance of education in society; reaffirmed because most groups in civil society had now, for years, been 'voting with their feet' to demonstrate its importance in their lives. This acted to reinforce the priority of educational expenditure within the state over other agencies, thus further extending the *limits* of state involvement in this area.

This period, and the two decades that followed it, was one of unprecedented educational expansion. As services increased, demand increased even further. Not

<sup>16b</sup> In fact, the Report was merely a concrete instance of 'broader economic and political impulses relating to full employment and the Labour Government's process of liberal educational reform.'

only the proposals but also the spirit of the Thomas Committee were carried into practice. The economic expansion of the post-war period allowed the state to fund this educational expansion and meet the educational needs of the baby boom.

The catchwords of this period were full employment, further development of the economic infrastructure and continued expansion of the economy. However, by the 1950s there was increasing concern expressed in all spheres about the role of education in society. Liberal teaching methods (such as the 'playway') were seen as contributing to lack of discipline in youth; this was accentuated by a number of media-driven 'moral panics' over youth in the 1950s (Soler 1988). Moreover, at this stage too there was a return to the nineteenth century anxieties over New Zealand's ability to keep up with the rest of the world in industrial development; this time the concern was related to the launching of 'Sputnik' and the technological age this heralded.

### 1.5 The Currie Commission: 1962

The Currie Commission was formed by the second Labour Government a few months before they lost the 1960 general election. The 'Commission on Education in New Zealand' was, however, welcomed by the new National Government and allowed to continue its work. The Currie Commission Report, as it was popularly called, was released in July 1962; a document of some 886 pages, which reflected the broad terms of reference the Commission were given.

The historical context of the re-examination of education in New Zealand is set out at the beginning of the Report:

*At the present moment... in all countries of the world, there broods a new urgency regarding education. It is felt most strongly in the newly developing nations whose spectacular advances, political and economic, all find themselves ultimately dependent on advances in the education of their peoples (1962 p.3).*

The Report noted a wide number of "present discontents" around education, listing a number of factors which had raised "public doubts and uneasiness" (ibid p. 4) in that period. These included the teacher shortage, caused by rapidly increasing school rolls, the rapid increases in the total costs of education, criticism of "modern methods of education", and in particular the lack of emphasis on discipline and "the austere emphasis on the production of a sound character and a trained intelligence", and a number of special problems such as state aid to private schools and the secular/religious education debate (ibid. pp. 4-5).

Most importantly, however, and running through the whole Report, was a revived interest in the pupil as future 'human capital' for the workforce. This view is summarised in a quote from Professor F. W. Holmes, contained in the Report. There is, he stated (1962 p. 139):

*...an increasing recognition that expenditures on developing the capacities of human beings are at least as important from a purely economic point of view, as those expenditures on buildings, plant and equipment, which are classed as investment, or capital formation, in the official statistics of income and expenditure (my emphasis).*

This came to be used, in the Report, as a central justification for an increasing commitment to educational expenditure by the state. Noting that from 1950-51 to 1960-61 state educational expenditure had increased from 7.43 percent to 9.45 percent of total government expenditure (1962 p. 136), the Report argued for a further massive expansion of state expenditure on education. The main argument used to justify this was that, eventually, the increased expenditure would turn a profit to the nation in terms of technological development in the workforce.

The areas in which the Currie Commission Report requested an increase in expenditure are far too numerous to mention. As an official Report, however, it must class as one of the most expansionist blueprints for state expenditure ever seen in New Zealand.

The fact that nowhere did it question the ability of the state to pay for this expansion is enlightening; during that period of full employment and huge economic expansion there was no question that the state could afford the proposed changes.

The Commission recommended the continuation of the system and curriculum in largely unchanged terms, although arguing for more teachers, more control over pupils (e.g. regular homework from Form II), more community involvement in the management of schools and the establishment of official 'careers guidance/ counsellor' positions in secondary schools.

The Currie Commission Report came as a challenge to the *capacity* of the state agencies of education, from both civil society and capital. Although educational expansion was to inevitably take place, this expansion was to be more closely linked with community concerns about adolescent delinquency and capital's demands for a more productive workforce. The emphasis on human capital views in the Report overturned Thomas's (Department of Education, 1959) claims that education was important in itself, not for any other sector of society.

However, there were countervailing forces operating to maintain that state's *capacity* to act over education. Teacher numbers were to be vastly increased, teacher training to be extended and more funding to be given over a wide range of areas. Tertiary education, in particular, was to be further expanded. The emphasis on the importance of human capital, aimed to remind the schools of the need for work-relevant education, was also a reaffirmation of the central place that education played in the society.

The ideological and material *limits* to the provision and structure of state education appeared to be broadening. The Commission's recommendation for more community input into schooling, and some further decentralisation, appear to have been ignored. The central state kept the power over education firmly in its own hands, whilst

implementing many of the recommendations that would keep individual schools and teachers happy. The institutional framework of state education was thus strengthened markedly by the Currie Commission's Report.

The Currie Commission Report prophesied that the growth in education would slow down in the 1960s. Figures provided by Treasury show that, in fact, educational expenditure continued to increase at an alarming rate, rising from 11.2 percent of net Government expenditure in 1961 to 16.2 percent in 1971<sup>17</sup>. The decade of the 1960s saw the biggest growth in education of any decade this century. From 1971 the proportion of Government expenditure on education began to fall gradually.

The two oil shocks of the early 1970s plunged much of the western world into a major recession. New Zealand was insulated from this for a number of years by high levels of Government borrowing, but by 1976 unemployment had become a structural problem in New Zealand. By this time careers guidance counsellors were well established in secondary schools, although there was little attempt by schools to be more relevant to the workforce, as Currie recommended. Credential inflation was rife, as more and more young people passed the School Certificate examination and stayed on into the sixth form.

The Government's first response to unemployment was to provide 'work relief' programmes; temporary programmes on full award rates of pay, usually in local authorities or community organisations. However, a central concern that arose by 1977 was the high number of young people leaving school and unable to gain work. In that year, the Department of Labour commenced a new type of programme for unemployed young people. The Young Persons Training Programme (YPTP)

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<sup>17</sup>Treasury (1987) *Government Management* volume II p.14. The 1961 figure differs from that quoted above by the Currie Commission because that one relates to percentage of **total** government expenditure, whereas the Treasury figure relates to **net** government expenditure.

provided short, pre-vocational or life skills, courses in established educational institutions (usually polytechnics) for young people aged 17 to 18 who were unable to gain work. Shortly afterwards, this was joined by a further scheme for younger school leavers, aged 15-16, called the School Leavers Training and Employment Preparation Scheme (or, more often, STEPS).

As unemployment rose, these schemes were expanded. As well, a new position was created in the schools; a 'Transition Teacher'. Usually part time, the task of this person was to make links between schools and local industry, in order to assist pupils in making the 'transition from school to work'. New curriculum areas, usually limited to 'non-achieving' students, were developed.

The temporary employment schemes remained the central governmental response to unemployment at this time. The training programmes were administered by the Department of Labour and controlled by them, although usually undertaken in Education Department facilities. The gap between training and education was accentuated by this administrative division.

The growth in youth unemployment caused school retention rates beyond Form 5 to increase markedly. A number of questions began to be raised about the ways secondary schools were functioning, given that so many young people now appeared to be unemployable. This was accentuated by the approach of Merv Wellington, Minister of Education at the time, who argued for more discipline and a return to the 'old values' of schools (Gordon and Openshaw, 1984). In his last year as Minister, Mr Wellington ordered a full review of the secondary school curriculum.

## 1.6 The 1984 Core Curriculum Review

The *Review of the Core Curriculum for Schools*<sup>18</sup> was the first public document supported by a Government to promote conservative rather than liberal views of the curriculum since the early 1930s. It stands out as a document that failed to win consent in many areas of the state and civil society. The context, content and conclusions of the report were all subject to repeated attacks in the media and in academic and political spheres.

The failure to win consent for the aims of the document was strongest at the political and ideological levels. The strongest support for the document came from the representatives of traditional industrial capital<sup>19</sup> and from the ideological adherents of fundamentalist christianity. The process of the construction of the document came in for particular attack (see Massey University Policy Group, 1984), as the recommendations of two broadly representative working parties were changed markedly by a group of elite educational representatives at a closed workshop.

At the political level three central factors contributed to the rejection of the Review. Firstly, it was published only four months prior to the General Election that replaced the National Government, which had been operating on a majority of only one seat, by a Labour Government with a clear majority. The election was fought on the basis of

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<sup>18</sup> Department of Education, 1984. Whilst published in the name of the Department, there is little evidence that this report was in any way a Departmental initiative in the sense used by Salter and Tapper (1981) to describe increasing Department of Education and Science control of educational change in Britain. Indeed, subsequent (i.e. post-election) events demonstrate clearly that the Department of Education in New Zealand is very much more a policy-processing body than a policy-making body, amenable to the ideas of two very different Ministerial approaches. This does not mean that the Department is 'neutral'; indeed it is likely (but beyond the scope of this investigation) that there are strongly conflicting views about the constitution of education existing within the Department. But the Department clearly does not control in any strong sense the direction that education takes in New Zealand at present.

<sup>19</sup> See Spoonley (1987) for a discussion of the relationship between the agenda of right-wing fundamentalist groups and the petty bourgeoisie; this link is clear here, particularly as the Review fails to address clearly the concerns of finance capital, inasmuch as they have been articulated clearly. This is most obvious in the rejection by the Review of a central role for the new technologies in the Curriculum, which is a central demand of the new capitals.

the failure of National to address social issues such as schooling and unemployment, as well as in the breakdown of the economy (i.e. high inflation and a growing external deficit). Thus the discrediting of the Government *as a whole* was partially caused by its treatment of education<sup>20</sup>.

Secondly, the Minister's open and avowed support for fundamentalist christian pressure groups became a source of strong criticism both in the media (for example Ian Fraser's exemplary television interview with Wellington<sup>21</sup>), and a far from popular Education Minister became very discredited indeed. This was coupled with campaigns by educational groups, in particular the New Zealand University Students Association, against all the cutbacks in expenditure on education that had taken place during Wellington's period as Minister. In short, the biases of the Minister were well-known and well-publicised and the Review merely confirmed these. Thirdly, the processes of consultation that preceded the Report were bitterly and publicly contested by its critics.

The Review hardly mentions work, although it takes as a central aim the "balance between personal freedoms and civic and national responsibilities" (1984 p.17).

Furthermore:

*Throughout the process of learning, knowledge should be gained, skills should be acquired, initiative and enterprise promoted and attitudes developed which will lead to independence and to the ability to adapt readily to changing circumstances with intelligence and with confidence (ibid).*

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<sup>20</sup> The National Government continually got criticism from press and educators for its conservative handling of schooling. A good example of this is the emphasis in the Review on patriotism: "the preparation of young people.... to take pride in their identity as members of the New Zealand community" (1984 p.17). In the same month that the Review was released, the Minister announced that "the daily raising of the flag" was to become compulsory (again) in New Zealand schools (Gordon and Openshaw 1984 p.55). There was little support for this anachronistic proposal, and more than a little resistance to it. One of the more flamboyant and historically interesting protests that sprang up around the country in 1984 was the chopping down of wooden flagpoles by young Maori people, which had not only a concrete effect in preventing flag-raising but also mimicked the symbolic protest against British colonial rule by Hone Heke, a Maori leader, in the last century. The Minister responded by ensuring that all replacement flagpoles would be made of metal.

<sup>21</sup> See Snook 1985.



Developed in a time of major strife over educational goals, the Review emphasises traditional cultural values and an increased emphasis on core, or common, subjects, particularly at the secondary levels. There is surprisingly little reference in the document to the social context of unemployment in which the Review was written, and the emphasis is on 'values' rather than 'skills'<sup>22</sup>.

## **2. Education, training and unemployment: New Zealand academic responses in the 1980s**

This section links up with the review of British analyses of education, training and unemployment undertaken in chapter one. However, it differs both in scope and in content from the British literature. There are a number of reasons for this, the main one being that the crisis of youth unemployment did not begin to grip here until the late 1970s, at least five years after Britain, and has still not reached its peak, whereas in Britain unemployment has been falling for about two years.

There are also certain similarities with the British situation. In both countries the rise of post-school training provision paralleled the increase in unemployment, and especially youth unemployment. The provision of training schemes in New Zealand, administered by the Department of Labour but often offered through institutions under the control of the Department of Education, has paralleled in type, if not in scope, the British programmes. Schools in New Zealand, too, have come under attack from both the state itself and also private groups such as the Employers Federation, for not adequately preparing young people for work. Finally, as in Britain, the brunt of unemployment, at least until recently, has fallen most heavily on the young; those under 25 years of age<sup>23</sup>; hence policies have been targeted at this group.

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<sup>22</sup>Of course, each is an equally political concept. See Dale 1985.

<sup>23</sup>The sharemarket crash of October 1987, on top of high interest rates, high exchange rates and deepening recession, led to altered patterns of unemployment in New Zealand. In January 1984, 62.9

The beginnings of the academic debate in the early 1980s focused on the issue of the relationship between schooling and work, receiving attention from two researchers in particular - John Freeman-Moir (1981a, 1981b, 1982) and Roy Nash (1983, 1985). Not absent from the debate, either, was the then Director-General of Education, Bill Renwick, whose (1981) paper in the PPTA Journal, a response to one of Nash's earlier papers, received critical attention.

Freeman-Moir (1981a) discusses the liberal assumptions made in official reports about the nature of the school to work relationship. Many of the documents of the 1970s, he states, were framed purely in terms of the 'opportunities' available to young people through education and work. He notes:

*The idea that there is a range of job opportunities if only school leavers would go out and look is little short of fantastic when related to three other considerations. First, the likelihood that the labour market in New Zealand is segmented by race such that minority groups in this country enter a market in which jobs are 'race-typed', segregated by racism and the institutional arrangements of the market itself. Second, the fact that jobs are content differentiated (e.g. being a freezing worker is different from being a shop employee) overlooks the way in which they are similarly related to capital. Members of minority groups have little option beyond being employed in unskilled and semi-skilled work or being unemployed. Third, an economic crisis and its attendant unemployment hits minority groups and the powerless faster and harder (1981a p.19).*

The effect of rising unemployment, Freeman-Moir notes, is that "the formerly unproblematic transition from school to work" begins to break down. Credential inflation, questions about the usefulness and relevance of schooling and a breakdown in the ideology of 'personal development' are inevitable consequences. Freeman-Moir discusses the recent introduction of 'careers education' as a response to the breakdown between schooling and work (1981a p.21). However, he notes that the crisis of youth

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percent of the registered unemployed (excluding vacation workers) were under 25 years of age. By January 1989 the corresponding percentage was only 49.2 percent, although in terms of actual numbers youth unemployment had risen by 50 percent (Monthly Employment Operations and Employment Management Information Services, Department of Labour). This will be discussed further in chapters five and six.

unemployment has not been caused by the schools, but by the society that surrounds them, and therefore cannot be cured by the schools. The best that careers education can hope to achieve, then, is the 'cooling out' of the unemployed, thereby "deflecting the aim of their anger away from social structure and on to the self" (1981a p.21).

Freeman-Moir develops these themes further in a paper which responded to Renwick's (1981) *Education and Working Life*. Freeman-Moir argues against Renwick's claim that "the relationships between education and work are fundamentally important in an advanced or capitalist economy" (1981b p.17). He notes that studies have demonstrated that technological change has led to a progressive deskilling of basic manual work, so that less, not more, schooling is necessary for most young people (ibid p.19). The claim that education needs to be further adapted, or made more relevant, to work, therefore, he argues, does not hold up. The importance of schooling for work lies fundamentally in inculcating a set of individualistic ideologies that "will accept without question as 'natural', as 'the way the world is', 'that's life isn't it?'" (1981b p.21).

Freeman-Moir argues that schools exist essentially to meet the imperatives of capitalist society, in particular for the inculcation of appropriate ideologies and of productive skills (1981a p.16; 1981b p.21; 1982). Whilst rejecting theories of direct correspondence as "too straightforwardly functional and hence static" (1981a p.16), Freeman-Moir adopts, in essence, a view of the education system as a servant of capitalist structures. In particular, his analysis of the state is deterministic, focusing on the ideological role that, he claims, schools play for capital. In his 1982 paper, for example, he argues that the crisis of capitalism has led to a crisis of state expenditure which directly affected spending on education, thereby causing a new educational emphasis on the relationship between schooling and work which he calls "ideology based on an implicit technological determinism". To string together such a series of

events into a causal chain demonstrates the worst aspects of the 'relative autonomy' thesis. This type of analysis actually leaves state processes completely unexamined.

As a result, in Freeman-Moir's analysis, the education system *is* the state, in the sense that there is no distinction between the state as a whole and the institutions (and agents) of schooling. He maintains a formal distance from correspondence theories but, in effect, does theorise a correspondence between the economy and the state. He includes the family, culture and values as part of his analysis, but it becomes clear that these factors in no way intervene in the final state/capital alliance that produces workers with the 'right' skills and attitudes. He adheres to a view of the state as providing for the basis of capital accumulation and, more particularly, providing legitimation for the capitalist mode of production.

At a basic level it is enough to say that Freeman-Moir largely ignores the state. More seriously, though, he ignores the state *because* his analysis deems it essentially to be merely a minion of capital. The conceptual framework of *limits* and *capacity* sets up as problematic those relationships that Freeman-Moir theorises as determined and automatic. The state/capital relationship, for example, needs to be considered within the context of the state/civil society relationship, and with recognition that the state is not a monolithic agent of any other sphere. Further, the processes of state action, and of the effects of rising unemployment on the demands of civil society for more schooling, need to be taken into account. The pursuit of more and better credentials at just the time when youth unemployment made work out of reach of increasing numbers of young people, was neither an accident nor the result of some impenetrable capitalist ideology; it was an understandable response<sup>24</sup> by civil society (and frustrated

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<sup>24</sup>However, Snook (1988b), using mainly Australian figures, claims that this response was, in fact, misguided. He demonstrates that higher levels of qualifications do not automatically increase the chances of obtaining work.

teachers) to a situation of shrinking work opportunities in a society where work is the central determinant of both economic and social relations.

The work of Roy Nash was carried out in the same period as Freeman-Moir's work. His collected papers were published in 1983, in a book entitled *Schools Can't Make Jobs*. Nash takes a somewhat different approach to Freeman-Moir, arguing that families pursue social reproduction and social mobility, and that schooling: "is crucial to the social reproduction of the majority sector of the middle class and offers the most certain avenue of mobility for working class individuals" (1983 p.16). Nash sees the family/school relationship as being crucial to an understanding of social reproduction. The intrusion of growing levels of structural unemployment has led, he notes to a number of responses in schools related partly to family aspirations and partly to government pressures. However, schools can't make jobs; they may "only redistribute the opportunities available" (1983 p.25).

Nash's work is characterised by his analysis of civil society and its relationship to structural features such as credentials and unemployment (see also Nash 1985). He is, however, largely silent on state structures and processes. In contrast to Freeman-Moir, Nash does not view schools as capitalist agents, but as structures unable to respond effectively to crises that lie in the economic sphere. He thus concentrates on the capital/civil society relation, examining how economic structures impinge differentially on class and ethnic groups in civil society. Nash does not appear to see the state as having much capacity to act on its own account at all<sup>25</sup>, and he is not concerned with state *limits*. Nash's contribution to this study lies in his analysis of the importance of civil society, and his non-deterministic analysis of schooling processes.

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<sup>25</sup>However, in a later paper (1987) he does argue for the raising of the school leaving age to 16.

The first consistent attempt to map policies of the 'transition from school to work' in New Zealand was undertaken by Khan, whose findings were summarised in a (1986) monograph of the same name, and it is this paper that is discussed here.

Khan begins by describing the nature of structural unemployment in New Zealand, and its particular effects on youth. He notes that the large number of young unemployed people, coupled with a shrinkage in the labour market and expansion of new technology has focused attention on 'transition'. This term, he notes, "carries with it assumptions about the nature of work and solutions to the youth (and school-leaver) unemployment problem" (1986 p.1).

Khan notes that: "total unemployment never exceeded 7,000 in any quarter for the years between 1946 and 1970" (1986 p.2). Hence what he calls the 'liberal view' of education, saw its role as providing workers for a hierarchical job market, and socialisation into the values of the capitalist society, and particularly the workplace. The rise of unemployment hence caused a crisis of legitimation around schooling, for no longer was there a direct functional correspondence between school qualifications and job status. Thus, he argues, "the main effort to solve the increasing youth (school-leaver) unemployment transferred to the education sector, in the development of transition programmes" (p. 24).

Khan notes that the rise of youth unemployment has caused some critique of schools in New Zealand, particularly in two areas. The first, led by the New Zealand Employers Federation (1983), is over the relevance of schooling to employment, and in particular the apparently 'bad' work attitudes of young people leaving school. Their prescription for schools includes: "Placing more emphasis on generic job skills", "encouraging a greater interest in manual work and handicrafts", "widening the experience of those teachers whose background is predominantly academic" and "taking full advantage of work exploration schemes and the like, and encouraging an

entrepreneurial spirit in young people" (1983, pages unnumbered). These claims revisit the debates raised earlier in this chapter and constitute a new attempt to link schooling more closely to capital. It is a debate, centrally, over what the *limits* of the state should be.

The second critique, generated within both the state and civil society, is over the apparently high levels of illiteracy among young people joining post-school training programmes (Khan 1986). These attacks focus on the *limits* of the state in providing a good, sound, basic education for all. However, they appear along with attacks on the *capacity* of education institutions to decide for themselves what should be taught. The 'back to basics' movement works to *limit* the self-defining nature of the schooling system. In particular, the social role of schooling, which developed through the liberal programmes laid down in the Thomas and Currie Reports, is pointed to as the enemy of good educational (i.e. instructional) practice, and attempts are made to force the schools to look after the 'basics' and forget the 'frills' (Snook 1985). The notion that schools are not doing their job, then, is firmly entrenched in certain sectors in New Zealand, but this has not led to the level of ideological attacks, nor the kinds of in-school responses, that have been generated in Britain and the United States<sup>26</sup>, largely because the 'opportunity' basis of schooling has widespread support in civil society.

Of the policies of school-based transition of the 1970s and into the 1980s, Khan (1986 p.25) notes that the Department of Education continued to see youth unemployment as a temporary, cyclical phenomenon. Hence programmes were *ad hoc* and funding was short-term. In 1983 a major shift occurred with the introduction, under the auspices of the Department of Labour, of STEPS, which "directly encroached on the transition education of the DOE [Department of Education]" (p.27). Khan notes that STEPS funding was nearly 3 times more than in-school transition funding, and that this

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<sup>26</sup>See Clarke and Willis 1984; Apple 1986.

programme represented a major shift within the state in control over the 'transition'. Khan, however, never extends this analysis to question his implicit view of the monolithic state. The implications of this shift will be outlined in chapters four and five of this thesis, which discuss the power struggles that continued between the Department of Education and the Department of Labour. The political (but not necessarily the ideological) roots of this struggle can be seen to lie in this 1983 power shift.

Khan identifies the role of post-school training as providing a legitimisation function for capital, through the implicit emphasis on 'blaming the victim'. He also claims that these programmes were developed partially to offer training for employers - the accumulation function. It cannot be denied that such an imperative is part of the 'official ideology' of many such programmes; in New Zealand a stated aim of ACCESS is the provision of trained and flexible workers for the changing technological needs of industry (Ministers of Employment, Education and Maori Affairs, 1985). Yet, there is little evidence that the types of training provision being offered in New Zealand (Gordon 1985) or in Britain (Moos 1983) are in fact able to provide anything like a set of skills that would meet this goal. In Britain, the obvious inability of the Youth Opportunities Programmes to provide significant skills required by industry, led to the introduction of the Youth Training Scheme, which would offer longer, job-based courses in particular industries. New Zealand has never introduced such a scheme; the closest to it was the Work Skills Development Programme, which was a fully-subsidised temporary employment scheme where the workers were paid award wages. Continued resistance by New Zealand unions to 'on the job' training on an allowance rather than award rates of pay, coupled with the huge cost of setting up a comprehensive scheme along these lines, were probably the central reasons why a clone of the Youth Training Scheme was never developed here.



Khan outlines what he essentially sees as a shift by both arms of the state further into civil society at about this time. This section will be quoted at length here, as the developments it outlines form the major basis of the study of ACCESS:

*Organisationally, the DOL increasingly took over many of the previous functions of the DOE. Previously in 1982 the DOE had established a National Advisory Committee on TSW (NACTSW) under the chair of the Assistant Director of Education to 'provide a communicating base to assist schools with career and transition development activities'. This NACTSW included representatives from the Secondary School Board's Association, the PPTA, the New Zealand Employers Federation, the New Zealand Federation of Labour, the State Services Co-ordinating Committee, the Combined State Unions, the Vocational Training Council, the New Zealand Parent Teachers Association, the Federated Farmers and DOL. However, with the development of STEPS, the DOL reduced the function to the District Advisory Committee on TSW to that of a sub-committee of the newly created DETAC (District Employment Training Advisory Committees). The new DETAC took over many of the functions of the NACTSW however with the DOL doing all the liaison. In recognition of the new powers of DOL, the DETAC's terms of reference were to 'advise the Government through the Minister of Labour'.....Transition education was taken over effectively by DETAC under the terms of power'....the role of the committee will be to consider and co-ordinate all aspects of the local labour market including transition from school...(1986 p.27).*

Unfortunately, Khan fails to develop this evidence of struggle within the state, and between the state, capital and civil society, into a broad understanding of power relations. In his analysis, he falls back into a determinist formula of a monolithic state, working towards a single goal: "the legitimization of the capitalist economy" (1986 p.32). His analysis of DETACs, for example, as essentially agents of the Department of Labour whose aim was to keep the more radical NACTSWL under control is misleading and wrong. NACTSWL nationally remained an independent body, and NACTSWL District Councils, under DETAC, continued their liaison role with the national Council. DETACs themselves frequently struggled against Department of Labour control.<sup>26b</sup> These struggles demonstrate not only a measure of autonomy within the state, but also that the state cannot unproblematically work for capital.

Khan's study of the state identifies a number of areas in which it is clearly not a monolithic structure, but he makes no attempt to analyse the relationships between

<sup>26b</sup> See, for example, Manawatu DETAC, meeting of 26/6/85 (ref 52/20/11), private file, E.A. Gordon

various state agencies. As a result, he is unable to explain the shift of transition programmes from the Department of Education to the Department of Labour in terms other than the needs of capital for legitimation and assistance in accumulation. He provides detailed arguments showing that the drop in educational expenditure, the take-over by the Department of Labour of transition schemes, the State's advocacy of youth rates and the practice of unpaid work exploration were all attempts to legitimate the (mythical) 'free market' for labour at a time of a crisis of accumulation.

It is not my purpose here to deny that parts of the state, at times, provided legitimation for capital. Nor do I want to challenge the view that the concept of 'transition' is essentially ideological. It is the extent to which these analyses are taken, and their determinism which often leads to somewhat ridiculous oversimplifications, that need to be challenged. Consider the following statement:

*Both the Employers Federation and the State (DOL and DOE) put a great deal of emphasis on training in numeracy and literacy as an indication of raising the standard (Khan 1986 p.34).*

The rather understandable concern that the Department of Education has with these issues is here converted into a capitalist plot to, as Khan goes on to say, 'sell' the need for higher qualifications in a technologically changing society. It would be hard to find any group in New Zealand that does not endorse the need for numeracy and literacy! Khan's analysis provides an excellent account of the relationship between economic change and political change, but is badly flawed by his determinist view of the state.

The publication of *Transition: perspectives on school to work in New Zealand* (Korndorffer 1987a) was the first, and still the only<sup>27</sup>, attempt to bring together a New

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<sup>27</sup>Corson (1988) has edited a book in New Zealand on the topic 'Education and Work'. However, this text cannot be seen as a New Zealand text, as only three of the papers study the New Zealand context.

Zealand collection of work on this issue. A number of the papers discuss issues relevant to this chapter, and these will be discussed here.

Nash's (1987) paper tackles head-on the structural nature of unemployment (a theme echoed also by Shuker 1987 and Gordon 1987a). He argues that:

*Young people are in this new transition education because they are not wanted by employers and because they have finished with school. They would like to be in work but it is cheaper for the state to provide these programmes than it is to provide work (1987 p.34).*

Why does the state intervene at all? Nash's answer is "the imperative of social control" (ibid p.34). He advocates labour market responses to youth unemployment, mediated by the state through subsidised work, but does not rule out educational responses, so long as it is an 'honest' education. Nash offers no evidence for his claim that training programmes are forms of social control. This is one of the issues that are explored in chapter five of this study.

Shuker's paper uses a typology developed by Codd (1985) to identify 'images' of the school to work transition. The four images: technocratic, personalistic, reproductive and transformative are used to describe various impulses within current debates over transition. Not surprisingly, Shuker finds each of the four images are found to exist within current debates, with the technocratic image of training for work contested by the other images. Shuker's analysis, however, does little to identify how each image relates to positions within the state, or between the state and other spheres of society. This typology is useful, however, in breaking down the notion of the state as monolithic, and could be developed further into an analysis of struggle over hegemony.

In a further paper in this collection, Diorio (1987) once again takes Codd's (1985) typology, using it to demonstrate that, not surprisingly, transition education is almost

universally viewed in instrumentalist terms; that is, it is rarely considered useful in itself, but as a means to some other end. He argues that transition education, to have some chance of success, should not be instrumental. His argument, in fact, parallels that of Nash (1987) and his concept of 'honest' education. Training is, by definition, instrumental.

Gordon's paper (1987a), an amended version of an earlier piece (1985), argues that transition programmes are essentially based on deficit theories of the individual (see also Korndorffer 1987c). The emphasis on life-skills training, she argues, obscures the reality of structural unemployment. These points are taken up by Korndorffer (1987c) and extended into her later work.

Korndorffer's central thesis is that the contradictions between the 'official discourse' of transition programmes, and the reality of tutors and students on these courses, leads to an important split between the 'central state' and 'local practice'. She argues that this is essentially a subversive relationship, where the official meanings are turned round 'at the chalkface' to provide knowledge which is relevant to the students. For her, relative autonomy exists largely in the ability of practice to be able to subvert official policy. The state, then, is always the 'enemy' of the students, and the teacher sometimes the friend. This position is reminiscent of Cohen's (1984) arguments. In chapter two it was argued that the classroom or tutorial room must be seen as much a part of the state as the Minister's office. The central problem for the state is to develop and maintain consent within civil society. If its 'arms' are constantly subversive, then there is little chance of gaining a wider consent. It is not legitimate to see the state as a monolith working "in the interests of capital" (which Korndorffer asserts, 1987c, 1988), and then to identify its outposts, those who put policy into practice, as subversives. It is the whole unity of the state, struggle within it and the driving force of the development of hegemony that must be considered.

Korndorffer's view of the 'central' state working for capital and against the interests of young people has particular consequences for her analysis. In particular, she adheres to an explanation of state action that identifies it as working centrally for legitimization and social control. For example, she explains the state's adherence to training programmes in the following way:

*Built into social and life skills training, therefore, is a notion that these students have special needs and individual pathologies that require extraordinary educational and training measures in order both to make them competitive in the labour market and to enable them to make 'successful' transitions to adult life (with or without employment). If they were 'normal' students, these young people would have picked up the necessary social and life skills on their voyage through the education system (Korndorffer 1987c p.222).*

This analysis stems from the view that these training programmes act as a legitimization for capital and as a form of social control. Such analyses were critiqued in chapter one as providing a monist, narrow view of state action. Post-school training programmes do, however, reinforce notions of meritocracy: that those who try hardest and have the ability will get jobs. However, it was noted above that demands for this type of system come from civil society as much as from capital, and therefore that the state should be conceptualised as responding to *contradictory* demands, not from those of only one sphere. The legitimacy power of post-school training programmes for the unemployed will be examined in chapter five.

As with the British literature reviewed in chapter one, the New Zealand literature tends to focus on the assumed accumulation, legitimization and social control functions of the state in transition education. Yet, as in Britain, little evidence is presented to demonstrate how the state works in these ways. These three concepts will be analysed further in chapter five, in an evaluation of the role of the ACCESS training programme in practice.

The increase of academic work on policies of education, training and unemployment during the 1980s reflects both the crisis that structural unemployment brought for the state, capital and civil society and also the contested nature of state solutions. The main focus of the New Zealand academic literature has been on uncovering the essentially ideological nature of official discourse. However, this focus has obscured the struggle and contestation that had taken place not only in civil society, but throughout the state. Little attention has been paid to the struggles within the state, and in its relations with capital and civil society, that brought about current responses. The analyses provided of state action are invariably inadequate and often internally contradictory.

The existing literature on transition training programmes is badly flawed by its untested assumption that the state is rather closely tied to the 'needs' of capital, however these are defined. The next two chapters use the concepts of the *limits* and *capacity* of the state to provide a more specific analysis of the structure and role of state policy-making and implementation, which focuses on the development of the ACCESS training programme from mid-1984 onwards. This study investigates the precise nature of the relationship at each point in time between state action and the spheres of capital and civil society.

## Chapter four

### ACCESS for education or work? Policy development

This chapter examines the first phase of the development of the ACCESS training scheme. The period covered is from July 1984, when the fourth Labour Government came to power in a snap election, until the end of March 1987, when the ACCESS pilot projects described here were completed and the new system implemented. The sources of the data, the methods of data collection and the context in which this study was carried out are described in appendix one.

The analysis will concentrate on both the *limits* and the *capacity* of the state during this period of policy development. Two particular aspects are dealt with in this chapter. The first is the relationship between the Departments of Education and Labour, and to a lesser extent the Department of Maori Affairs; the shift from job creation to training as the central state response to unemployment; the distribution of resources and fiscal policies of the state; these are collectively the intra-state and inter-state factors. The second aspect relates to the processes that occurred between state and capital, in particular the levels of unemployment during the period, and state and civil society, focusing on the consultative process by which ACCESS was developed. The processes that are examined relate centrally to the production and distribution of ideas and meanings, and the ideological struggles entailed in the pursuit of hegemony. These processes are summed up very clearly by Gramsci:

*In general, it may be said that the distinction between ordinary men and those who are more specifically legislators is provided by the fact that this group not only formulates directives which will become a norm of conduct for the others, but at the same time creates the instruments by means of which the directives*

*themselves will be 'imposed', and by means of which it will verify their execution<sup>1</sup>.*

This chapter offers an essentially chronological account of the period of policy development that was to culminate in the ACCESS training programme. The focus is on the *pakeha*<sup>2</sup> 'side' of this development. Throughout the period the Department of Maori Affairs was engaged in a process of policy debate with the *tangata whenua*<sup>3</sup>, which, in terms of training policy, culminated in a separate Maori system of ACCESS, euphemistically called MACCESS, which was funded and provided through Iwi Authorities<sup>4</sup>.

## 1. The fourth Labour Government and responses to unemployment

Until 1978, total unemployment in New Zealand had not exceeded 7,000 persons since the depression of the 1930s (Khan 1986 p.2). The National Government, at both the 1978 and 1981 elections, had argued that the higher levels of unemployment being experienced were simply cyclical, and that new policy initiatives, in particular the so-called 'think big' projects<sup>5</sup>, would eventually absorb the unemployed into productive work. In the meantime the National Government had put a lot of resources into the traditional area of temporary work schemes, but little into training. In January 1984,

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<sup>1</sup>Gramsci 1971 p.266. For men, of course, read men. At the time Gramsci was writing, women had little say in legislative processes. Whether they have much more in 1989 is an important issue that is, however, beyond the boundaries of this study.

<sup>2</sup>Non-Maori people; or *manuhiri*, the outsiders.

<sup>3</sup>Maori people; literally 'people of the land'.

<sup>4</sup>Iwi means tribe. These authorities were themselves developed in consultation with the state - they were not existing bodies. The whole MACCESS process, in particular the frequent 'scandals' that have erupted in the Press over the expenditure of ACCESS monies, would make a fascinating case study of race relations and dominant cultural imposition in New Zealand. It is, however, far beyond the scope of this present study.

<sup>5</sup>These were a series of large, mostly energy-based projects initiated by the National Government in the late 1970s. They had a dual aim - to provide ongoing employment and to make the country more self-sufficient in resources. This latter aim was a direct reaction to the two 'oil shocks' of the 1970s.



after a year of exceptionally high levels of unemployment, the number of registered unemployed reached a peak of 80,000, with a further 30,000 people on temporary work schemes or special training programmes. These levels were unprecedented at the time. In June 1984 the Government called a snap election. The Labour Party campaigned on the promise of achieving full employment, which was a major plank of its manifesto<sup>6</sup>, and gained a decisive majority at the polls.

Dissatisfaction had been expressed not only at the high levels of unemployment, but also at the various work schemes available for unemployed people. At the time of the election, Labour had promised a review of these. The major complaints came from community groups representing the unemployed, who argued that the cycle of unemployment followed by temporary subsidised employment and then back to unemployment was disheartening, and unions, who were concerned that temporary staff had replaced permanent staff in certain industries, notably local authorities. Most of these groups recommended a liberalisation of schemes, plus a tightening of criteria so that Government funded temporary work would add to, and not replace, permanent work.

The review of these schemes was commenced almost immediately after, or even before<sup>7</sup>, the Labour Government was elected. Kerry Burke, the Minister of Employment, a new position in Cabinet set up in recognition of the problem of unemployment, called for a review of these schemes, to be undertaken by the Department of Labour, although submissions were also invited from the community. Submissions on this issue, and others, were to be put forward for consideration at an

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<sup>6</sup>Of course, the ideology of full employment was so strong that no political party in New Zealand could afford not to have it there. The crisis for the National Party was one of legitimisation, that is, an inability to deliver full employment, rather than one of policy.

<sup>7</sup>The speed with which the Grey Booklet (see below) was written, published and released indicates that certain civil servants had been tackling this issue for some time.

Employment Promotion Conference, to be held in Wellington in March 1985<sup>8</sup>. This conference was called as part of the Government's stated policy to encourage discussion, consultation and joint decision-making from all sectors of the community on crucial issues of policy. It followed on from similar economic and Maori economic conferences that had been held late in 1984.

Submissions on employment subsidies closed around the end of October 1984. A wide variety of groups put in submissions (Employment Promotion Conference 1985a). The Manawatu DETAC<sup>9</sup> had consulted widely and submitted that temporary employment schemes should be broadened: "greater involvement of community organisations in a much wider variety of fully subsidised, permanent public sector work and training schemes, which are available without lengthy delays to all who are unable to find permanent work", that temporary work should not replace, but should increase, permanent work, and that "raising the level of skills and education of the most disadvantaged unemployed... does little to help the overall situation"<sup>10</sup>. Less than a fortnight after submissions closed, however, and certainly before they could have been considered in depth, the Government released a Report called 'A Review of Employment Subsidy Programmes: A Framework for Consultation' (New Zealand Government 1984); known as the 'Grey Booklet'.

The appearance of this booklet at this time provoked a lot of anger towards the Government, particularly as the Minister, in his introduction, noted that "this paper outlines the basis of the Government's approach to developing a new structure of assistance" (Ibid p.4); an approach which had been open for consultation up until only

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<sup>8</sup>Letter to DETAC calling for submissions from community groups, Kerry Burke, September 1984.

<sup>9</sup>See appendix one for my role in relation to this organisation. As noted in chapter three, DETACs were regional consultative groups set up in 1983 by the National Government.

<sup>10</sup>Manawatu DETAC, Submission to the Minister of Employment, October 1984.

two weeks before<sup>11</sup>. The message was softened by a call for submissions on the paper, but, as well, several of the proposals outlined in the booklet were presented as *faits accomplis*.

The paper had been prepared by officials within the Department of Labour. This was significant in explaining a marked disjuncture with Labour's manifesto policy on employment. It bore little or no relation to "the Government's stated election policy, little relevance to reality as the community sees it, and no reference to community views"<sup>12</sup>. Specifically, the Report constituted the first step (in the employment area) towards the monetarist philosophy that was to become the hallmark of this Government. As such, it came as a shock to many of those working in the field who had been pressing for more effective job creation programmes (ibid), rather than the 'Grey Booklet's' proposal of the abolition of all fully subsidised, community sector, programmes in favour of partially subsidised private sector schemes.

The paper outlined a number of themes that were to become familiar in all sectors of the state. If the Government was to work to bring down unemployment, it was argued, they could not do so by merely putting money into temporary schemes. Instead, the Government must "establish an environment" where economic growth can take place, "reduce the Government deficit", "unravel the system of industrial protection and subsidies" and improve "flexibility" in the labour market (ibid, p.5).

This process, however, would take time. In the meantime, it was noted (ibid p. 6):

*...one of this Government's most urgent priorities is to help those who are unlikely to be able to find work. Employment programmes are one of the means by which this can be done. It is often thought that employment programmes can increase the total number of jobs in the economy, and ideally*

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<sup>11</sup>Released at lunchtime on Tuesday 13 November 1984.

<sup>12</sup>Manawatu DETAC; submission dated 3.12.1984

*we would like to be able to set up programmes in times of unemployment that would guarantee jobs for everyone. Unfortunately, this is not possible. Evidence both in New Zealand and overseas indicates that many jobs apparently created by subsidised employment programmes would have existed without the subsidy.*

The issue of job creation subsidies is peripheral to this thesis; it is important only for two reasons. Firstly, the eventual abolition of all fully-subsidised schemes, and the reduction in partially-subsidised ones, left ACCESS as the only option for many unemployed people. Secondly, the 'Grey Booklet' signalled the new adherence to free market philosophy, within the Labour Department, the Treasury and the Government. In a discussion on funding of employment subsidies, the paper notes that there are only three ways that they could be funded: through an increase in taxation, a rise in the Government deficit or through internal borrowing. All of these approaches were rejected, on the grounds that each would lead to a reduction, in the longer term of 'real' jobs. It was also noted, in a telling paragraph, that:

*it is important that subsidies do not unduly interfere with the normal functioning of the economy, and in particular the labour market. They should be applied in a simple and flexible way, which neither establishes new rigid rules which might reduce an individual's chances of finding a job, nor prevents the removal of existing rigidities" (ibid p.15).*

The birth of a supply-side approach to fiscal management was clearly signalled by this document. The amount of expenditure would be strictly controlled to cause as little disruption to 'free' labour market mechanisms as possible. The arguments of the 'Grey Booklet' were strongly contested at the time, particularly at the Employment Promotion Conference. They were, however, to constitute the basis of the reforms which, stemming from the Treasury/Department of Labour<sup>13</sup> sector of the state, the

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<sup>13</sup>The Labour Department/Treasury links that are claimed here rest, it must be noted on little more than rumour. Specifically, it was widely said at the time that the author of the Grey Booklet was one Mark Prebble, who was a Treasury Economist and one of the central defenders of the Government's monetarist fiscal strategy. Even leaving aside the rumours, however, the influence of a supply-side strategy, which broke quickly and clearly from the traditional liberal-democratic discourse of employment programmes, is obvious here.

Government was to adopt. The 'Grey Booklet', then, formed the beginnings of the application of this kind of approach to employment issues.

At this early stage, however, there was also movement from the 'Education' sector, which was putting forward quite different views from those described above. A committee of the Government caucus, consisting of three Members of Parliament, Noel Scott, Margaret Austin and Trevor Mallard, was charged to investigate the implementation of the 1984 Labour manifesto policy on transition education:

*Labour will ensure that all school leavers who fail to find employment in their first year after leaving school will have access to further education and vocational training (quoted in Scott et al 1985 p. 2)*

The 'Government Transition Education Committee' released its interim Report on the 16th January 1985. It was distributed widely amongst community groups and state organisations, the aim being to put forward a series of ideas and suggestions for consideration at the Employment Promotion Conference.

The Report (Scott *et al* 1985) began by defining transition education as "concerned with the transition from school to a constructive adult life which includes traditional and non-traditional forms of employment" (p.3). Such education was said to involve:

1. *those still at school;*
2. *school-leavers seeking employment or further education and training;*
3. *school-leavers who have obtained employment but have limited opportunities for further education and training and who have low job satisfaction.*

It was noted that, whilst transition policies deal with the school to work relationship, "the traditional definition of 'work' needs to be widened beyond the limits of paid employment and the formal economic structure to include a wide range of non-traditional alternatives" (p.4).

The Report noted that there were far fewer work opportunities for young people, and school leavers in particular, than had been the case. Marked declines in

apprenticeships and the restructuring effects of new technologies were seen as primary causes of youth unemployment. It was also noted that some groups were particularly disadvantaged - Maori, female and rural young people.

Existing educational and training provision for young people both within and beyond school was criticised as "piecemeal in structure and patchy in its results" (p.15). The Report went on to state:

*It is a firm conclusion of this committee that the present system of transition education does not meet the needs of large numbers of disadvantaged young New Zealanders. Many of those most at risk receive little or no assistance (emphasis in original).*

Most of the criticism of existing provision that followed this statement fell into one of three categories:

1. *procedures are inadequate, ad hoc, uneven or inconsistent;*
2. *the system is too narrow and centralised;*
3. *provision is being targeted incorrectly. Resources are thus being wasted.*

The Report went on to argue for regional control of transition programmes, universal coverage of further education and training for school leavers and a specialist service within each region, called a Community Training Centre, to co-ordinate programmes, allocate resources and act as a focal point for transition activities.

The central recommendations of the Report were:

- \* *That unemployed school leavers proceed to further education and training rather than to registered unemployment.*
- \* *That a network of regional Community Training Centres be set up to meet the needs of individual school leavers.*
- \* *That a unified system of training allowances be introduced.*
- \* *That regional pilot programmes be set up.*
- \* *That a working party, responsible to the Ministers of Education and Employment be formed to detail and monitor these recommendations.*

The major themes, then, were the regionalisation, co-ordination and expansion of training opportunities for young people. This Report was widely distributed and groups were asked for feedback through the Employment Promotion Conference and direct submissions.

The central contradiction in this Report was that, whilst it emphasised that the breakdown of the school to work transition had been caused by "high unemployment and long term changes in the labour market" (p.8), which impacted particularly on certain groups of young people wishing to enter the paid workforce, it at the same time emphasised further education and training as the primary solution to the problem. Indeed, the focal point for transition activity in each region was not to be a community centre but a *training* centre; young people were to congregate both physically and ideologically around training.

The issue of job creation was not taken up by the Scott Committee, apart from the following, non-committal statement:

*The committee.... is confident that other government policies will ensure that work, as widely defined, is available for the great majority of trainees when they complete training programmes (p.7).*

The Scott Committee Report thus stood apart from the free market philosophy of the 'Grey Booklet'. Indeed, the expenditure concerns expressed in that document sit very uneasily next to the expansionist approach adopted by Scott and his colleagues. Although the ideological differences cannot easily be substantiated from the documents themselves, the specific situation of the various state agencies provides further evidence of the difference in approaches.

The Department of Labour was suffering major expenditure problems because of the increased demand for subsidised employment. In October 1983, the number of registered unemployed had stood at 74656. A year later, as the 'Grey Booklet' was being prepared, that number had dropped to 58390. However, the numbers of people

on fully or partially subsidised work had risen during the same period from 40266 to 42558, or from 35 percent to 42 percent, and appeared to be on an upward trend. The need for controls in expenditure was thus becoming crucial, even though unemployment was dropping quickly at that time. The ideological logic of monetarism and the constraints of the fiscal situation came together in a particular type of approach that focused on limiting the supply of services. The particular *limit* of funding constraints was developed, in an ideological move that was to become commonplace in New Zealand over the next few years, in such a way as to override the countervailing interests of civil society for the provision of subsidised work. The need for a reduction in Government expenditure provided the necessary ideological basis for the abolition of work schemes which had, in various forms, been the central Government response to structural unemployment for most of the century.

The problems for education were somewhat different. The major effect of the growth in youth unemployment in that sector was an increase in retention rates to the 6th and 7th forms<sup>14</sup>, a trend that was also on the increase. For a political party in Government that saw education as a high priority, the problem was not how to limit these numbers, but how to deal with them. The increased retention rates were causing some disruption in 6th and 7th form examination classes, as young people who had little chance of (or interest in) passing higher examinations remained at school. Scott's proposals, in the context of this problem, offered a way to increase education's *capacity* to respond to youth unemployment educationally by the provision of post-school training. As a result, this would require increased funding and new administrative structures.

One part of the Scott Committee Report was taken up very strongly by the Minister of Employment who:

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<sup>14</sup>Between 1976 and 1983 the retention rate to the 6th form increased from 48 percent to nearly 60 percent, and to the 7th form from 13 percent to 17 percent (Research and Statistics Dept., Department of Education, unpublished).



*...used his opening speech [to the Employment Promotion Conference] to push.... the argument for putting people into training schemes to acquire work and life skills rather than paying them the dole or keeping them busy in low priority jobs<sup>15</sup>.*

The Scott Committee Report (p.18) argued for equality of status between unemployed people on training courses and those who opt for further education and training after leaving schools - i.e. full-time university, teachers college or technical institute students:

*No-one refers to students at university or technical institutes as being unemployed, yet young people who do not proceed to conventional forms of employment and training are required to register as unemployed to receive assistance. They should not both summarily be labelled as unemployed and treated as second-class citizens (p.i.)*

It was argued by Scott that "equality of status is denied by the requirement that [young people] register as unemployed in order to receive assistance". This ideological argument was to prove important to the development of ACCESS. If these training programmes were to have the same status as the high-status programmes undertaken by more privileged school leavers, then the strongest argument against them - that they were merely a ghetto for the unskilled unemployed - would be demolished.

The argument of the Scott Report that the primary cause of youth unemployment was the labour market itself was taken up with some enthusiasm by the Minister of Employment (and other cabinet ministers), who claimed on numerous occasions during this period that there was a major mismatch between the jobs available and the skills of the unemployed, and that training would solve the problem<sup>16</sup>.

The impact of the Scott Committee Report on subsequent arguments and policy developments cannot be over-emphasised. By developing the 'transition education and

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<sup>15</sup>Reported in Manawatu Evening Standard 17.3.85 p.1

<sup>16</sup>Some examples of this are given later in this chapter. The Minister of Employment made reference to the mismatch on numerous occasions, including before and after the Employment Promotion Conference (1985c), in press releases and in speeches.

training' arguments this Report laid the groundwork for the policy changes that followed. However, it should not be assumed that the Report was written from a monetarist philosophy. Rather, it became incorporated into a total approach to unemployment that reflected this philosophy. The Report itself was constructed within a clearly liberal-democratic framework.

This can be seen in the contrast with another Report, released in March 1985, some two months after the release of the Government Transition Education Committee report. The New Zealand Planning Council released a document called: *Young People, Education and Employment*. This Report had been researched and written by Vince Catherwood, who was seconded from the Department of Education for this purpose. In the Foreword, written by I.G. Douglas, Chairman of the Council, it is noted that:

*1985 is International Youth Year. It is therefore appropriate that the New Zealand Planning Council addresses one of the major concerns facing youth today: the transition to adulthood. The focus of this Report is on the links between young people, education, training and employment opportunities. The study has concentrated particularly on how young people make the transition from school to adult working life (p.1).*

However, the very next paragraph unveiled a much narrower *political* agenda that brought the concerns of the New Zealand Planning Council into sharp focus:

*The aim of the project was to explore ways in which all young people in the 15-19 age group could be provided with options in education, training or employment, or any combination of these, either full-time or part-time, so that unemployment among the young could be reduced or eliminated. It is hoped developments which will assist all young people in making the transition from school to adult working life will arise out of this project and that in the longer term, the education system as a whole will become better geared to meeting the needs of all young people in the 1980s (p.1).*

This statement at once held as problematic all those institutions involved in 'transition', and insinuated that these institutions, *particularly the education system*, were somehow to blame for youth unemployment. Significantly, within the first few pages the argument was set up that the provision of *more and better* training and education

would ensure a smooth transition to adult life for young people coupled with, of course, the "creation of permanent job opportunities for young people" (p.13). However, training or education were seen to be of value even if there are no associated jobs: education leads to greater life satisfaction and training provides better opportunities for young people. However, given the changing needs of the labour market, no total match between training and work is possible (p. 3).

The Catherwood Report, along with the Scott Committee Report, the 'Grey Booklet' and a large number of other submissions (Employment Promotion Conference 1985a) were considered jointly at the Employment Promotion Conference, which was held in Parliament Buildings on March 10-12 1985.

This conference was billed as "a first step in a process of ongoing consultation as we collectively determine our priorities" (Minister of Employment, Employment Promotion Conference 1985a p.54). Those attending the Conference were representatives of trade unions, employers, community organisations, DETACs, Government Departments (Employment Promotion Conference 1985b) and many other organisations. Carrying on the tradition of the Economic Summit, which had been held a few months earlier, the aim of the Employment Promotion Conference was to bring numerous groups, who may in the past have had opposing interests, together to consider crucial issues of employment.

There was no attempt to force agreement between participants to any agenda; indeed, no agenda was presented to them. The task was simply to work through a variety of issues and provide ideas and options for the Government. Members of minority groups, particularly Maori people, were given a major say in each of the areas considered (Employment Promotion Conference 1985c).

The Job Creation working group of the Employment Promotion Conference argued against the 'Grey Booklet', noting that job creation programmes did serve many useful purposes and should be kept, although in an amended form (Employment Promotion Conference 1985c pp. 16-17). The transition training group argued for the "right to obtain post-school education and training and that such education and training should not be compulsory" (Employment Promotion Conference 1985c p. 23).

The Employment Promotion Conference was a forum where a wide range of views on employment could be expressed, and apparently were. However, the effect of such a wide range of views impacted negatively on subsequent policy development processes. The very diversity of ideas put forward, it seems, worked in favour of an agenda for employment policy that was being prepared elsewhere within the state. Moreover, the pressure on the Government to 'do something' about unemployment had waned slightly, as unemployment had continued to fall throughout 1984 and into 1985. At the conclusion of the Employment Promotion Conference, the Minister of Employment was able to say:

*Already the balanced economic strategy that the Government is implementing and the consistent path ahead that it has foreshadowed is having a beneficial impact on jobs.*

*In the year to November 1984, the latest figures available, the number of full-time jobs, part-time jobs and working proprietors surveyed by the Department of Labour increased by more than 38,000 or 3.5 percent.*

*In the year to February 1985 (and using annual data eliminates seasonal influences) the number of registered unemployed declined by almost 20,000 or 25 percent while the number of unemployed school leavers at the end of February 1985 was one-third less than at the same time last year.*

*Of the 63,417 people who were registered as unemployed at the time of the Economic Summit Conference in September, all but 9,309 have left the register at some time since that date (Employment Promotion Conference 1985c p.63).*

I have quoted this at length because it is important to show the influence that the monetarist economic policy was having at that time on the perception of the unemployment situation. This apparent success of the Government's economic policy

(and unemployment was still on a downward trend at this stage) in bringing unemployment down was to provide the background for employment policy for the next four years, based on the belief that if only the economy could be fixed (by free-market, non-interventionist means), unemployment would disappear. The best way to describe the Employment Promotion Conference was that, whilst it engendered a lot of activity, and appeared to be the centre of policy action, the 'engine' of policy development was actually far away from the forum itself; located much closer to the broad economic policy strategy being developed in Treasury and other agencies of the state<sup>17</sup>.

## 2. The Levin initiative, stage one<sup>18</sup>

In Levin a small group of WSDP supervisors and workers at the Youth Learning Centre got together to discuss the Scott Committee Report and the proceedings of the Employment Promotion Conference. This group took the central ideas of the Reports, in particular those relating to the regionalisation of training and local co-ordination of the transition from school to work, and developed a discussion paper on the possibility of establishing a Community Training Centre in Levin for the Horowhenua region. This paper was widely distributed amongst various community groups (from Levin, Foxton, Shannon and Otaki), and a meeting was held on 2 May 1985 to discuss the proposal. At this meeting it was decided that Horowhenua should be the site of one of the pilot projects recommended by the Scott Committee. Annette King, MP for Horowhenua, agreed to make representations on behalf of the groups present to the Ministers of Employment and Education. She noted, however, that only a small

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<sup>17</sup>This is, of course, a process of 'being wise after the event'. But the point needs to be made clearly that this spectacular event, whilst marking an important point in the processes described here, had little or no effect on subsequent policy development.

<sup>18</sup>See Appendix one for details of the methodological background of this study.

number of pilot projects would be run, and that it was unlikely that the Horowhenua would be chosen<sup>19</sup>.

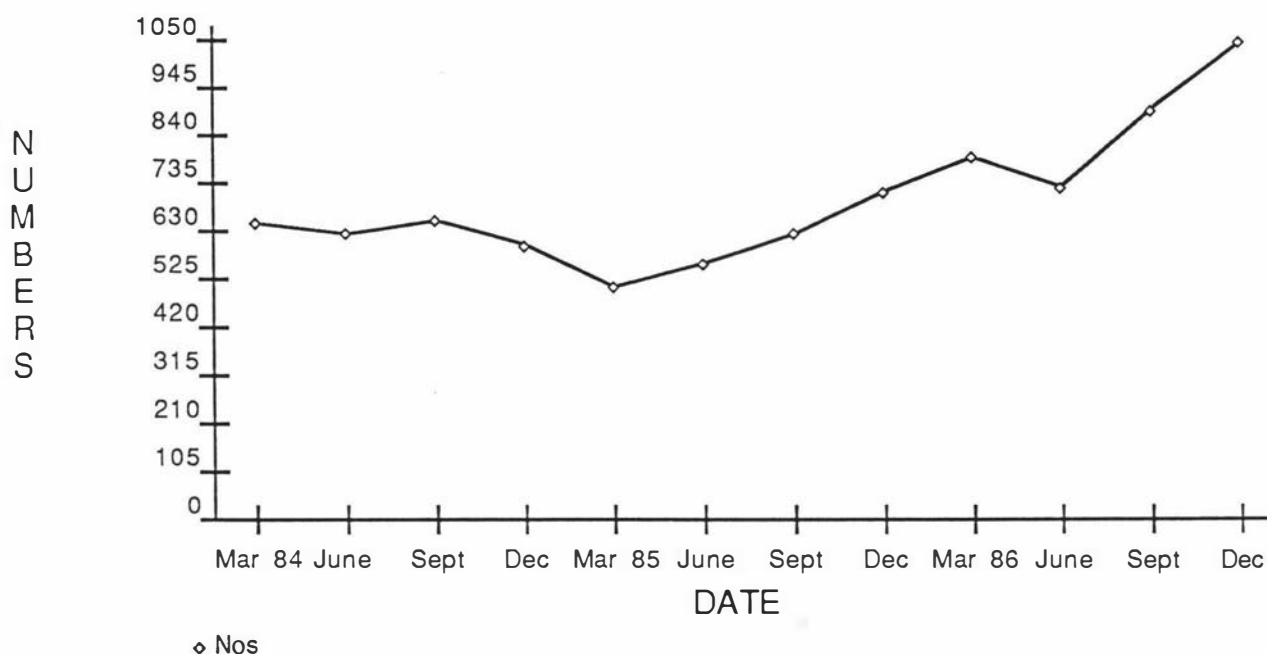
Initially there had been some urgency in making a submission to Government, as an announcement on the pilot projects was expected in May. However, this was deferred in the meantime, which gave the opportunity for the local groups to discuss and refine some aspects of the proposed structure of the Community Training Centre. Three further meetings were held on various issues, including the local employment, education and training situation. At the first of these meetings, Maori groups who were involved objected to the presence of representatives of the Department of Labour and Department of Education, stating that they could not work effectively with Departmental representatives. After this meeting, then, these official representatives were excluded from the discussions. This determination to be free from control by the state was to have implications for the project at a later date.

In June a steering committee for the pilot proposal was formally set up out of the groups who had been meeting, its function being to develop the Community Training Centre, define its role and tasks and investigate the co-ordination of local resources. At this meeting there was a long discussion of issues relating to the local employment situation. The timing of these initiatives and discussions was ironic in view of the levels of unemployment at that time in the Horowhenua region. In March 1985 total unemployment had hit its lowest number, 509, for several years, and was to rise only slightly by June to 559. From there, it was to rise steeply into 1986.

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<sup>19</sup>Minutes of meeting, 2.5.85.

Figure 4.1: Registered unemployed in the Horowhenua region, March 1984 to December 1986<sup>20</sup>



The implication of these figures for the planning of the local pilot project was that the project was conceived under particular social and economic conditions that were to alter markedly over the period in which the pilot project ran. The conception of what the local pilot project would look like in fact bore little relationship to the reality.

### 3. ACCESS: The policy conception

In July 1985 the Ministers of Education, Employment and Maori Affairs jointly released a booklet, *Skills for Young People*, which outlined "changes of major social significance in the way we cater for young people in transition to adult life" (p.i.). The pink paper, so called because of the colour of its cover rather than because of particular political leanings, claimed to be the product of the Scott Committee Report plus the deliberations of the Employment Promotion Conference. The Report also continues to locate itself within the consultative process:

<sup>20</sup>Source: Department of Labour, Palmerston North regional office.

*While the Government is clear about its direction and goals for school leavers, this is a discussion paper and we seek the community's response to its contents (p.2).*

The pink paper was a document that specified the practical. Like the Scott Committee report, it wasted little time in specifying the causes of youth unemployment. Its central claim was that there was a mismatch between job seekers and the type of work that was available:

*The figures tell the story. Just under 73 percent of unemployed people are looking for less skilled work, but only 44 percent of the vacancies are for the less skilled. Conversely, more than half of the vacancies are for more highly skilled jobs, but only about one quarter of unemployed people feel qualified for them (ibid p. 4).*

This argument had been developed throughout the year and by this time had become the catch-cry of the Government's approach to unemployment. As an argument it can be understood as ideology in the classical Marxist sense; a form of discourse that disguises the real social and economic relations of society. It disguised at least three social and economic realities of New Zealand at the time. The first reality was that there were still far more people out of work than there were jobs. The trend of falling unemployment, which was to continue for another eighteen months, and which signalled an expanding economy<sup>21</sup>, no doubt helped the construction of this ideology. The second reality was that, whilst unskilled jobs were experiencing little turnover, as people stayed in these positions for fear of unemployment, many skilled jobs were facing a boom (particularly in the information technology areas) and job mobility in this sector may have partially accounted for the high level of vacancies. Finally, the unspoken assumption that such skilled jobs could be filled by people taking short

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<sup>21</sup>The figures I am talking about here are national figures, and contrast markedly with the Horowhenua figures given above. This is because strong economic growth continued to occur in the main cities - Auckland and Wellington in particular, whilst regional and rural areas began to experience recession from the middle of 1985 onwards, although the effect was not homogeneous. Levin, a small town tied heavily to agriculture and horticulture, felt the effects earlier than most, although not as severely as areas such as Northland and Gisborne.



ACCESS training schemes, or conversely that such schemes would alleviate shortages in skilled areas, masked the reality of the years of training and work experience needed for filling such positions.

The theme that the central 'problem' in the labour market is not simply that there are too few jobs, but that the jobs are in fields in which there are no trained workers, was often repeated by the Minister of Employment, Kerry Burke, during 1985. It became, in fact, the central political justification for the Government's 'strategy' of providing training rather than job creation as a solution to unemployment. The political justification for ACCESS, then, right from the start, was ideological; based on vocational rather than equity considerations. It was the need to train young people for the workforce that lay at the heart of the pink paper, although it is couched quite clearly within a liberal-egalitarian discourse of 'opportunity':

*We need to break the cycle in which the lack of skills closes off job opportunities and the lack of a job means no opportunity to acquire skills (p.4).*

*In the past the best that has been done is to help them tread water; the Government intends to teach them to swim <sup>22</sup>.*

The pink paper outlined the concept of ACCESS. It developed the main proposals of the Scott Committee, where there was to be a co-ordinated, regionally-based provision, both within and beyond school, to maximise the opportunities of all young people. Again there was recognition that certain groups - Maori, Pacific Islander, women, disabled, rural people and those from "economically deprived backgrounds" (p.6) - may "face particular difficulties in securing access to high quality education and training opportunities" (p.6).

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<sup>22</sup>Source: New Transition Education and Training: A Bold Initiative. Press release, office of the Minister of Employment, 10 July 1985.

The cornerstone of ACCESS was that, in the face of continued unemployment for young people, there should be a broadened availability of training and education options:

*We are firmly of the view that young people leaving school should select one of two options: employment or further education and vocational training. We do not mean by this that either of those options should be compulsory, for that would be counterproductive in all sorts of ways. What we want to see is a sufficient array of attractive and relevant possibilities that young people will participate in by choice" (pp.12-13).*

The notion that the requirement to register as unemployed with the Department of Labour was unnecessarily restrictive, claimed in the Scott Committee report, was reiterated in the pink paper. Registration requirements were to be abolished and replaced with the ACCESS liaison service, to be developed out of existing vocational guidance services. The role of this service would be to guide young people into appropriate training areas, to ensure that all young people leaving schools were adequately catered for and to liaise with other groups in the community.

A series of hypothetical 'case-studies' were presented to "illustrate some of the possibilities which might be available under ACCESS". For example:

*Mary has seen the ACCESS trainees based at her local marae, and with two of her friends, asks if she can join the group. All three start on a programme to learn the techniques of traditional weaving, and they find their self-confidence growing as the course progresses. She talks about her future with one of the trainers, and together they work out a programme for Mary to learn about horticultural occupations. She spends most of her time on the horticultural scheme on the marae but intersperses that with work experience training provided by local horticulturalists (p.21).*

An issue that the pink paper addressed is that under the old schemes some young people were doing 'job creation' projects at award wages whilst other groups were getting only an allowance for undertaking training courses in practically the same skills. The pink paper noted that certain anomalies existed within this system and proposed a 'unified' system of training allowances. As well, the Report discussed

how much, in relation to existing levels of unemployment benefit, young people on training programmes should be paid - less, the same or more. A significant factor is that it was on these issues that community submissions were specifically requested; the general shape of ACCESS was already determined. These issues were considered in a depth quite out of proportion to their importance within the overall framework, the main consideration apparently being a concern that the unemployment benefit should not act as a disincentive to training (p.23).

The abolition of fully subsidised 'job creation' programmes - Work Skills Development, Project Employment and Voluntary Organisation Training - had been foreshadowed in the 'Grey Booklet'. The central argument in this document had been that job creation did not, in fact, produce (permanent) new jobs and that the emphasis should therefore be switched to promoting growth in the economy that would eventually lead to full employment. This had, as noted above, been argued against at the Employment Promotion Conference; nevertheless, the pink paper announced a new focus on integrated training rather than job creation. The abolition of full-subsidised programmes, however, was not to be formally announced for another six months.

The whole argument of the pink paper rested on the claim that young people lack work and life skills. However there was no attempt to specify precisely what skills were actually required. In Britain, research on this topic has shown that employers tend to look not so much for specific vocational skills, but rather for a set of "attitudes" (CCCS 1981 pp.234-235). The existence of school qualifications was frequently seen by employers as an indication of the existence of these attitudes. A recent study in New Zealand, although of limited value due to the small numbers of employers interviewed, tends to back up this view:

*However, qualifications were generally taken as an indication that a young person could 'stick to a task'. Many of the skills required by employers seemed to be the same as those required to pass School Certificate and University Entrance..... several employers wanted employees who were not*

*over qualified for their job - especially in less skilled jobs and jobs requiring a narrow, specialised range of skills (DETAC 1986 p.24).*

The pink paper constantly talked of opening out opportunities for groups of people who, in practice, were experiencing a *decreasing* range of options. Catherwood's (1985) Report, in which he showed real changes in the structure of the youth employment market, demonstrated clearly the material nature of the foreclosure of work opportunities through the decreasing avenues of entry to the labour market.

At the same time that the pink paper was released, the Minister of Employment announced the setting up of several pilot programmes to test in practice the ideas contained in the report. Two types of programmes were identified. The first involved testing various transition education and training programmes, whilst the second concentrated on developing aspects of the regional structures that would meet the ACCESS requirement that all young people, on leaving school, would receive appropriate help and opportunities, including further education and training. The Levin Youth Learning Centre was identified as being a site for a 'phase 2' pilot programme, concentrating in particular on community liaison and funded by the Department of Education.

#### **4. Levin stage two: the ACCESS Liaison Service**

At this time, no details were provided to the ACCESS steering committee about their role or how the pilot project was to be implemented. The steering committee, however, went ahead and constituted itself as the interim ACCESS committee to oversee the development of the ACCESS Liaison Centre in the Horowhenua.

Ann Hinch, as Director of the Youth Learning Centre, was invited to a meeting in Wellington hosted jointly by the Departments of Education and Labour on 1 August 1985. The purpose of this meeting was expected to be a discussion of the

implementation of the pilot project, in particular of how much money had been allocated and when it could begin. Ann Hinch, however, discovered that:

- (a) no clear guidelines had been set up about the purpose and functions of the ACCESS Liaison Centre
- (b) no extra funding or resources were to be made available for the pilot projects
- (c) no date for implementation had been developed but pilots were to finish by mid-1986
- (d) the Department of Labour was clearly concerned to maintain its 'gatekeeping' role in relation to training and job creation schemes. About 25 Department of Labour representatives attended the meeting<sup>23</sup>.

The relative roles of the Departments of Labour and Education at this time require further analysis. The pink paper was a joint discussion paper, with both a labour market and an educative focus. The pilot programmes were to be split into two; those relating to transition training structures and procedures, to be funded by the Department of Labour, and those relating to community liaison on education and training (a new area for the state), to be funded by the Department of Education.

The 1 August meeting was intended to be a briefing by the Departments of Labour and Education to the 'phase 2' pilot project convenors, but was totally dominated by the 25 Department of Labour officials, who outnumbered the 13 Department of Education officials (and the ACCESS participants). The meeting turned out to be an exercise in control by the Department of Labour, who kept emphasising that "as far as financial

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<sup>23</sup>Copy of letter written by Ann Hinch to Annette King M.P., 7.8.85, kindly given to me by AH.

structure was concerned, nothing changed; the Department of Labour to continue to retain full control, status quo to continue"<sup>24</sup>. No indication of how the ACCESS Liaison Service pilot projects would be funded were given to the participants. They were "sent home and told to come back again in three weeks [to Lopdell House] to consult further"<sup>25</sup>. Back in Levin, local groups urgently sought clarification from the Minister of Employment:

*It is indeed apparent that there have been misunderstandings and there still exists much confusion about just what is involved in at least some of the pilot schemes. There is also considerable concern on a number of other fronts...<sup>26</sup>.*

A week-long workshop was held from August 26-30 at Lopdell House in Auckland. Again, Ann Hinch was to represent the Horowhenua ACCESS pilot. It was decided by the steering committee that a specific plan should be developed for the Horowhenua and taken to the workshop. The plan<sup>27</sup> listed the objectives of the ACCESS Liaison Centre as:

- a) *to increase the training and work options for our young people, with particular emphasis on those groups who are at present at a disadvantage;*
- b) *to enable those responsible for the training programmes to better share their knowledge and resources.*

The plan considered how the Centre could meet these objectives, the resources that would be required and how funding could be allocated.

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<sup>24</sup>ibid. In a meeting with the CTC group, Paul Swain, a member of the APTEP implementation Committee, noted that there was a continuing battle taking place between the Depts. of Education and Labour.

<sup>25</sup>G. de Schots, notes on meeting of 1.8.85.

<sup>26</sup>Letter from N.E. Harris, Chairman, Levin Youth Learning Centre Advisory Committee, to Minister of Employment, 23.8.85

<sup>27</sup>Plan for the operation of an ACCESS Centre (pilot programme) in the Horowhenua; unsourced, August 1985.

Prior to the Lopdell House meeting a letter was received from the Ministers of Employment and Education, clarifying the issue of the funding of pilot projects. The Ministers noted that pilot projects had only been set up where "they could be implemented quickly this year" and "funds reallocated from existing programmes". In response to this letter, the Chairperson of the Levin Youth Learning Centre advisory committee noted with concern the apparent intention of the Ministers to try out certain new programmes with the provision of no new resources at all. He also took the opportunity to point out that an interim ACCESS committee, separate from but in contact with the Youth Learning Centre, already existed in Levin and it was this body that should be administering the pilot project. He finished by asserting the minimum need for office facilities, a co-ordinator and clerical staff in order to run the pilot effectively<sup>28</sup>.

The aims of the Lopdell course were:

- \* to outline pilot ACCESS programme initiatives and clarify any difficulties with implementation;
- \* to confirm and finalise implementation guidelines;
- \* to examine the implications of ACCESS for technical institutes and the school/post-school link<sup>29</sup>.

Much of the content of the course reiterated the previous meeting and work that had gone on locally, and there was still no clarification of funding, resources and date of implementation: "it proved to be a difficult task given that people are being asked to

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<sup>28</sup>Source: files, ACCESS Liaison Service.

<sup>29</sup>Course Report, Lopdell House Meeting, 26-30 August 1985 p.2

pilot a future structure but within existing systems and with no increase in resources" (ibid, p. 3).

At the end of September the Ministers of Education and Employment issued a series of guidelines for the implementation of the ACCESS Liaison Centres. The objectives of the pilot programmes and their functions were clarified, and were in line with those developed at the Lopdell workshop. It was noted that projects based at the Youth Learning Centres would require additional resources, but it was not made clear where these would come from. Various conditions of operation, staffing, monitoring and evaluation were outlined.

The five ACCESS Liaison Service regions, therefore, found that no funding had been allocated for their projects, and it was not until November 15 that the Minister of Education announced that he had taken on the funding of these projects:

*I have now.... approved that the five Youth Learning Centres concerned will be provided with two additional staff positions each together with a clerical assistant position and additional funding for travel and expenses<sup>30</sup>.*

On November 18 there was a joint meeting in Levin between the Youth Learning Centre advisory committee and the interim ACCESS committee, where the responsibility for the running of the ACCESS Liaison Centre was formally handed over to the interim ACCESS committee, although the Youth Learning Centre would service the project. There were a variety of reasons why it was felt that the interim ACCESS committee was the more appropriate body to run the centre, including:

- (a) *the interim ACCESS committee had taken responsibility for the proposals and submission to Government on transition education and training for Horowhenua ;*
- (b) *the interim ACCESS committee was more representative of local community educators and training providers than the Youth Learning Centre;*

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<sup>30</sup>Press Release, Minister of Education, 15/11/85.



- (c) *the interim ACCESS committee had 50 percent Maori representation, acknowledging the high rate of Maori young people without jobs who would be likely to come into contact with the service*<sup>31</sup>.

As a result of the Minister's announcement of November 15, the interim ACCESS committee developed a new proposal, outlining the functions and objectives of the Access Liaison Service in Levin and providing job descriptions for the workers<sup>32</sup>. It is important to note that there had been few real changes in the conception of the project from the initial meeting in May. The only major difference was that, at first, the Centre was expected to act as a training provider, whereas the final plan specifically excluded this function. At the time, the ACCESS Liaison Committee were both upset and confused by this, particularly as no reasons were given<sup>33</sup>. It proved to be, in effect, an early version of what came to be a common feature of the state: the separation of policy development and policy administration for policy implementation and practice<sup>34</sup>.

On December 4th the interim ACCESS committee received confirmation of funding; however, due to problems in inserting job vacancy advertisements in all the necessary outlets, the positions were not filled immediately. A house was obtained across the road from the Youth Learning Centre and necessary alterations made, and the Centre was officially opened by Annette King MP for Horowhenua, on 24 February 1986.

## 5. The Department of Labour takes control

There is evidence that the whole series of delays that characterised the latter part of 1985 were the result of inter-Departmental wrangling between Education and Labour. The problems that arose between the two Departments (see also Khan's points in

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<sup>31</sup>Notes of meeting, 18.11.85, ALS files.

<sup>32</sup>ALS Pilot Scheme, Horowhenua, Outline of Proposal 26.11.85.

<sup>33</sup>Letter from Ann Hinch to Annette King, 7.8.85; also came out strongly in my interviews with Ann Hinch.

<sup>34</sup>The argument was most clearly made for this approach in Picot (1988).

chapter three) appeared to stem from the lines of control over the new ACCESS programme, and was probably as much to do with the approach and emphasis of the programme as with the institutional structure. The pink paper had left the question of administrative control open:

*Apart from the concept of ACCESS Committees it does not touch on institutional arrangements at the national and regional levels for securing tripartite involvement in employment and training issues, nor with the links between these activities and regional planning and development (Ministers of Employment, Education and Maori Affairs, 1985 p. 29).*

Thus the problems of implementation of the pilot programmes faced by the Levin ACCESS Committee were, in fact, problems of unresolved issues between these two central agencies of the state. There were a number of factors at stake for the two agencies.

ACCESS opened up a space for control that lay between existing structures. On the one hand, the Department of Education had traditionally had control over transition education and careers education in schools, and in the implementation of most of the STEPS and YPTP courses through polytechnics (see chapter three). The Department of Labour, on the other hand, administered STEPS and YPTP, acted as gatekeeper to them through the requirement that all trainees be registered as unemployed, and managed to exert a fair amount of control over training programmes in the polytechnics<sup>35</sup>. They also controlled the DETACs.

The ACCESS structure offered the opportunity for both Departments to extend their *limits* and *capacity* in a number of ways. Both would, by 'winning' ACCESS, extend

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<sup>35</sup>See Robinson (1987) and Johnston (1987): "The tutors in one YPTP social and life skills training block decided that the students needed contraceptive education... The local Department of Labour office, however, claimed that contraception was a pre-employment skill which should have been learned before a skills development course; that, in this particular course, the student needs were for those social and life skills related directly to job-seeking and retention. Initially, the tutors argued against the Departmental stance. When it became apparent that the local official would not shift his position, they went 'underground'" (Johnston, p. 225).

their control further into local communities - for the Department of Labour, downwards into schools, for the Department of Education, upwards into the post-school area and presumably, control of the Department of Labour's vocational guidance structure. It would provide the chance to extend the winning agency's *limits*, in particular in relation to resource allocation. ACCESS, as the central strategy for job creation, would provide a high funding priority at a time when state funding was becoming tight in a number of areas. The additional liaison functions would also benefit both agencies in a number of ways.

The Department of Labour had, in effect, more to lose than the Department of Education, as it would be likely that ACCESS would continue functioning largely through existing training and educational institution. This may explain, to a certain extent, the determined effort by the Department of Labour, for example in sending a force of 25 people to the initial briefing session for ACCESS pilots, to maintain their control. The idea that young people could enter ACCESS courses without first registering with the Department of Labour was, for them, purely a threat of loss of control over an important area.

Issues of state *capacity*, too, were at stake over this issue. To win ACCESS was to win control over the definition of a major part of post-school education and training. At the time of the publication of the pink paper, and the announcement of the ACCESS pilots, there is no doubt that these definitions still hung very much in the air; both the labour market and the educative arguments for post-school training were very evident in the paper. The extent of the institutional differentiation over this issue can be seen in the nomination of two advisory groups, one (APTEP) to focus on Department of Labour issues and one (NACTSWL) on Department of Education issues, to accept submissions and write reports on the proposal.

The Report of the APTEP Committee in relation to submissions on the pink paper was, in the end, not released until mid-1986, although the Committee's recommendations were released on 13 March 1986<sup>36</sup>. This again delayed movements on the development of the new schemes. In December 1985, however, approximately one year after the release of the 'Grey Booklet', came a document that pre-empted, once again, the consultative process.

*A New Deal in Training and Employment Opportunities* was released by the Minister of Employment on 19 December 1985. This document, whilst not dealing only with transition programmes but with all schemes, constituted a major break with the policy of ACCESS and, at the same time, ensured institutional control for the Department of Labour of the ACCESS structure. The central proposal of the 'New Deal' was a new, large-scale, training programme called the Training Assistance Programme. It was to be seen as "the first step in the introduction of a new training system which will include the ACCESS concept and new institutions" (p.5). However, this programme cut across the broad notion of ACCESS contained in the earlier reports. The 'New Deal' added a new dimension to the institutional fights over control of ACCESS; it set up a series of *limits* that shaped the ACCESS programme towards a particular set of outcomes, which themselves rested on a particular fiscal strategy.

The Report however, carefully locates itself as "the first of two major Government announcements concerning employment and training measures":

*The second announcement will be made following consideration of reports from the Advisory Panel on Training and Employment Programmes, the National Advisory Committee on Transition from School to Working Life, and*

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<sup>36</sup>The possible reason for this delay in the release of the report was that much of it criticised current Government moves, particularly the abolition of WSDP and PEP without regional consultation. Moreover, it was becoming clear that the implementation of ACCESS in its original form was being replaced by the narrow, and much cheaper, TAP scheme. Those programmes recommended by the APTEP report sat uncomfortably with the Government's stated intention to lower the funding of unemployment schemes without lowering their quality. In short, ACCESS as originally conceived was beginning to look horrendously expensive.

*submissions on a Green Paper on vocational training to be published early next year. This second set of decisions will concern ACCESS transition education and training, wider training arrangements and new institutions for advice on, and management of, labour market policy and programmes (p.3).*

Whereas the second set of policies was thus located firmly within the broad consultative framework of the Scott Committee Report/pink paper channel, the origins of the 'New Deal' were firmly within Department of Labour policy guidelines. Essentially, this Report carries on the work of the 'Grey Booklet', which had foreshadowed the abolition of fully-subsidised work schemes, the increase in employer subsidised schemes and an increased emphasis on training and worker 'preparedness'. It also, however, set up a framework for ACCESS that guaranteed its control by the Department of Labour.

The central plank of the 'New Deal' policy package was the replacement of all existing training and fully subsidised work schemes with a single scheme - the Training Assistance Programme. The rationale for such a move was made in the now familiar language of opportunity, mixed in with a 'Grey Booklet' argument for increasing workforce productivity:

*Labour market assistance will move towards an approach which more actively emphasises the importance of work oriented skill acquisition. While the general state of the economy determines the overall level of employment, the importance of vocational training, both in helping unemployed individuals gain employment and in raising the productivity of the workforce is now clearly recognised (p.5).*

The 'New Deal' differed in a number of respects from the previous documents on this issue. First, it was dressed up in the trappings of a white paper, and clearly signalled that it was Government policy, not a consultative paper. Second, it made no attempts to locate itself within the tripartite (Education, Employment, Maori Affairs) structure that had characterised earlier documents; this was, it signalled, Department of Labour policy. Lastly, it justified itself by creating a separation from the upcoming ACCESS structure, claiming to be largely an administrative document dealing with changes

within the existing domain of Department of Labour policy. It was, in fact, far more than that; it constituted, in all but the regional ACCESS structure, the takeover of training programmes by the Department of Labour, placing ACCESS, however it was to be conceived, firmly within the Department of Labour domain. It set up, in effect, the *limits* of the state in the area of post-school training policies, and negated many of the arguments over state *capacity* contained, in particular, in the Scott Report and the pink booklet.

The document developed and further refined the pink paper argument about a mismatch between skills that people have and jobs that are available:

*The need for this approach is underlined by a curious anomaly: while unemployment still remains high by longer term historical standards, employers are currently reporting difficulty in filling many positions through a lack of appropriate skills in job seekers (p.5).*

In the document it is claimed that training programmes offer an 'active' approach to the problem of unemployment, whilst job creation programmes and unemployment benefits were 'passive'. This theme had been pushed by the Minister of Employment at the opening of the Employment Promotion Conference:

*Yesterday he said the welfare approach of paying people to do nothing was a hangover from the pre-1975 days of full employment, and he called for a more positive approach to training to lift work skills <sup>37</sup>.*

It was also reiterated in press releases that accompanied the pink paper:

*The Government believes that we need to move from a passive approach where school leavers are allowed to drift, to an active one offering education, guidance and training in skills for life and work. The new concept proposes that this new system be based on the employment and education community <sup>38</sup>.*

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<sup>37</sup> Manawatu Evening Standard 12/3/85 p.1.

<sup>38</sup> Press Release, 10/7/85.

On another issue, too, the Minister of Labour claimed the ideological high ground. The image of the hopeless, drifting reality of the skill-bereft person struggling to cope with the dead end of unemployment is clearly contrasted with that of the purposeful, trained, work-ready coping product of the Training Assistance Programme. This ideology responded to many concerns and fears that were being expressed in the media during this period, in particular about rising crime, glue-sniffing and young people who appeared to be unemployable, good only for spraying graffiti all over the central cities of New Zealand. Whilst based on an element of truth, as many young unemployed people were clearly without help, support or access to jobs, the dichotomy was misleading because the situation of unemployment, rather than of lack of training provision, caused the problems of hopelessness and alienation. As well, it was not made clear how the intervention of a Training Assistance Programme could remedy this problem.

The basic parameters of the proposed Training Assistance Programme were outlined as follows:

1. Eligibility would be based on registration at the Department of Labour plus an assessment that the person needs training "in order to move towards employment" (p.9).
2. Schemes were to be of flexible length, depending on "the type of skills being taught and the needs of individual trainees" (p.9). Training in work-based activities was to be limited to 20 weeks.
3. Age limits would be between school-leaving and 60.

4. Remuneration would be by training allowance set at a rate of 10 percent above the benefit. Those aged 15 would receive \$25.

During 1985 it had become very clear that all fully-subsidised job creation schemes, including those that took place within community and social service agencies, were to be phased out. Yet at the same time there was recognition, acknowledged by the Minister of Social Welfare, that many voluntary organisations had become dependent on such programmes, and that services would suffer greatly were there to be a cut-off of funding for salaries (see Marshall 1987 for an insider account of these processes). The 'New Deal' announced:

*As a result of the switch from fully subsidised programmes to a training orientation a number of community social services which have become essential may experience funding problems (p.7).*

Thus the Government pledged \$20 million for alternative funding, to be distributed through a series of regional committees. This scheme was called 'Community Organisation Grants Scheme' (COGS). Although on the surface this move seems fairly unproblematic - the central criticism of it being only that it represented a 33 percent cutback in organisation funding - an ideological shift underpinned this approach. Whilst previously community organisations had to show that they had worthwhile projects to receive staffing, and were able to offer some training, the new criterion was *essentiality*. What is an essential social service?

*Services which if no state funding were available, would be likely to be reduced to the extent that a significant proportion of clients would become a charge on the state services, at greater cost or with less efficiency, or new more expensive government funded services would be required (memorandum from Officials Committee to Cabinet Social Equity Committee, 13/12/85).*

This approach represented a major philosophical shift for the Labour Government, who have always previously elevated social need over economic cost. It signalled, in particular, the extension of dominant monetarist economic policies into the arena of



social services, and a new focus on cutting state involvement that was to increase over subsequent years<sup>39</sup>.

The 'New Deal' also announced funding for Maori and Pacific Islander "development schemes", aimed at allowing a certain amount of self-determination amongst those cultural minorities: "towards attaining the employment policy objective of equalising opportunities through the development of viable, unsubsidised employment" (p.12). This move once more pre-empted the development of separate delivery systems that had been promised in the ACCESS scheme. In a sense this move gave the Department of Labour 'squatters rights' over this aspect of ACCESS; having moved into the house, it would be hard to budge them.

The paper also extended the Job Opportunities Scheme, to cater to the needs of 'special' and 'severely disadvantaged' unemployed people. The *development* scheme:

*offers a flat rate subsidy of \$250 per week for up to twelve months, reducing to \$150 for up to a further twelve months, to employers in all sectors who engage on a full-time basis job seekers who are referred by the Department of Labour to the scheme (p. 14).*

No details were given in the paper of the criteria for determining the 'severely disadvantaged'. In the 'Grey Booklet', disadvantage had been determined solely by length of time spent on the Department of Labour's register of job seekers. The second new Job Opportunities Scheme was in the area of 'special groups'. It:

*aims to provide assistance to severely disadvantaged job seekers who are assessed by the Employment and Vocational Guidance Service as likely to benefit most from group forms of employment..... a subsidy of \$100 per*

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<sup>39</sup>As well, a struggle appears to have taken place over the amount of funding that would be available. The amount previously available through Department of Labour schemes (total, 1985) was \$31.5 million. The amount recommended by the Officials Committee memorandum was \$15.2 million (based on the \$31.5 m plus "adjustments to reflect non-essentiality and cost-effectiveness considerations"; 13/12/85 p.1), which was amended by the Social Equity Committee to \$22 m, and then came out in the 'New Deal' report at \$20 m. In May 1986 the Minister of Social Welfare announced the composition and terms of reference of the steering committee of the COG scheme and stated that they would have \$8.6 million to distribute in the half-year September 1986 - March 1987.

*week for up to two years is available for each member of a work group..... groups applying for assistance under the scheme must present a serious business proposal. There are no restrictions on the type of commercial activity that may be undertaken, but group members must expect to be working on their enterprise on a full-time basis" (p.14).*

These partially subsidised programmes were to provide the only assistance for unemployed people into full-time work, as all fully-subsidised programmes were to be abolished. Finally, the 'New Deal' paper detailed a timetable for the phasing out of the various fully subsidised programmes and the development of new ones. The Training Assistance Programme would begin almost at once, in January 1986. The new Job Opportunities Scheme would commence in May 1986, and all fully subsidised programmes would be phased out by April 1987, making way for the new ACCESS programme.

The 'New Deal' paper provided a culmination of the 'new talk' and the 'new action' over employment schemes during 1985. Whilst the language of disadvantage and inequality pervaded the discourse, so too did the language of the market economy, including the 'flexible labour market'. Indeed, at this stage the Labour Government's monetarist economic policies were shouldering their way very clearly into employment policies, and this was to have a marked effect on the theory and practice of ACCESS, not to mention the broad aim of offering special support to unemployed school leavers.

Up until the beginning of 1986 there were two training schemes available to young people without work - STEPS and YPTP. The former scheme was aimed at providing graded courses to move school leavers progressively towards 'work readiness', whilst the latter was available to those of 17 or over who had a 'poor' work record. A wide variety of programmes were offered under both schemes. The aim of the Training Assistance Programme was to broaden these existing schemes, plus the adult retraining scheme, into one, much enlarged, framework. The central purpose of the Training Assistance Programme, as the manual made clear, was to train and provide workers:

*The end goal of training is employment. However for some trainees it will be necessary to provide intermediate steps towards the end goal; for other trainees progress towards employment will be more straightforward and direct<sup>40</sup>.*

Those who were providing training must never forget the end goal, stated in the Training Assistance Programme manual (p. 3):

*In approving and reviewing training, the overriding concern should be whether the training content meets the needs of trainees in their preparation for work (emphasis added).*

The development of the Training Assistance Programme involved more than simply a restructuring of existing training courses. The implementation of the Training Assistance Programme during 1986 was to involve not only replacement of Department of Labour training schemes, but also the abolition of all fully-subsidised 'work' or 'job creation' programmes. So, for example, those schemes run by the Salvation Army that offered work skills training to young people at award rates of pay, could now only be offered at a training allowance of 10 percent above the unemployment benefit. Schemes would have to emphasise training, and any 'work' undertaken would be done only as a practical component of a training programme. This requirement met with a lot of resistance from various sectors of the community, which at this point became more evident. The resistance focused on the issues of 'regional control' and the timetable for phasing-out the 'old' schemes<sup>41</sup>.

Unemployment remained relatively low during 1985, although rising by a steep 12,000 between September and December. By this stage it was clear, however, that

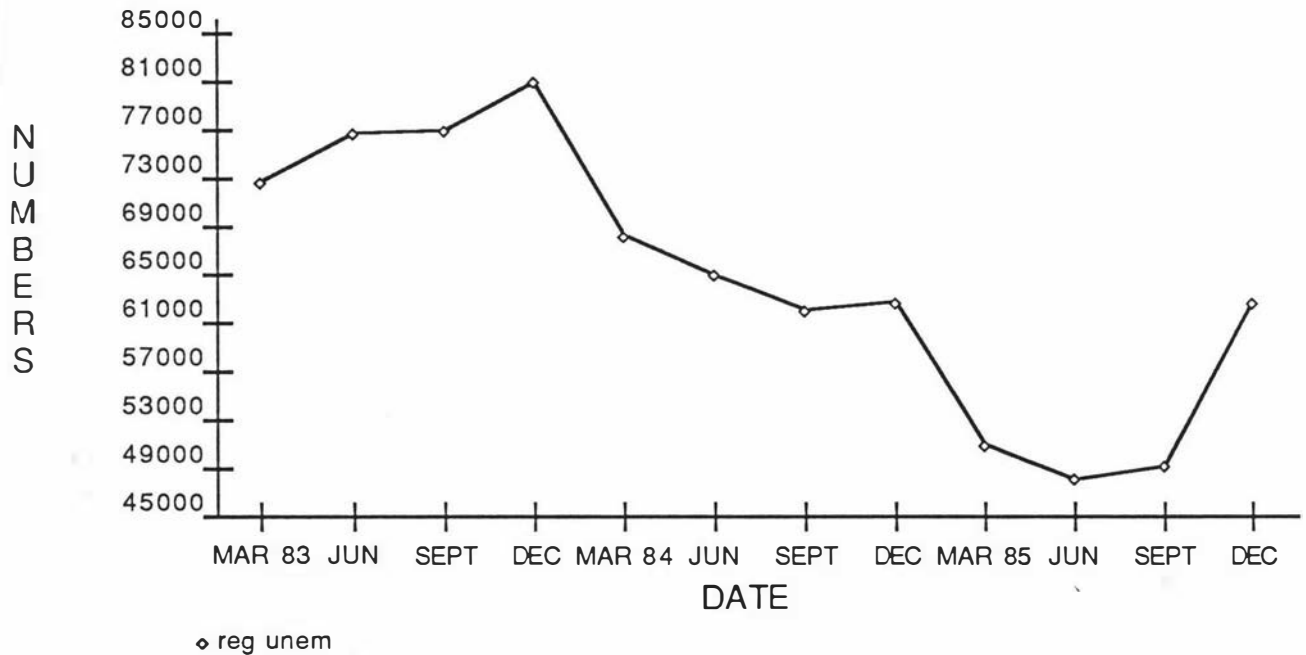
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<sup>40</sup>Department of Labour, Head Office, 1986. Circular No. 488 (o). Training Assistance Programme Manual. p.2.

<sup>41</sup>At a public rally organised by the Workers Unemployed Rights Centre on behalf of the Manawatu Trades Council in April 1986, a letter was read out from Fran Wilde MP, junior whip of the Labour Caucus. Ms Wilde noted that: Caucus members were anxious that there should be sufficient flexibility and overlapping to ensure that there were new schemes available to cater for the unemployed prior to the cessation of the old schemes. The caucus also took the view that there should be a regional approach rather than a scheme by scheme approach.

the recession was going to deepen as the effects of what was called the 'restructuring of the economy' along monetarist lines, in particular the pursuit of low inflation, were beginning to be felt<sup>42</sup>. The pattern of unemployment during the period up to the end of 1986 can be seen below.

Figure 4.2 Quarterly numbers of registered unemployed, March 1983 to December 1985<sup>43</sup>.



The numbers of people on job creation programmes, however, had not fallen significantly throughout this period. At the peak of unemployment in December 1983 there had been 24,519 people on fully subsidised programmes and 22,959 on partially subsidised ones; the comparative figures for December 1985 were 16,054 and 18,034. With the introduction of the 'New Deal', this pattern was to alter dramatically.

<sup>42</sup>See, for example, the 1985 and 1986 budgets. The primary effects of the so-called restructuring at this stage were the rural recession, falling rural land prices, high interest rates and the beginnings of a decline in manufacturing which had already hit retail sales.

<sup>43</sup>Source, Monthly Employment Operations, Department of Labour.

In the first instance, therefore, district staff were to negotiate the winding down of the existing programmes, scheme by scheme, in accordance with the timetable established by the Government. There was no discretion for officials to amend this timetable. Any 'individual scheme' that could not fit with the published timetable was to be the subject of a report to be sent to the Minister for his approval.

Thus, the question of regional control and determination was fixed within very stringent limits, which contradicted the regional control notion of ACCESS, and indicated that the commitment to this approach was heavily constrained by the determination to terminate job-creation schemes. Whether this determination stemmed from financial constraints (training programmes were significantly cheaper than fully subsidised work) or ideological reasons (i.e. anti-labour market intervention), or some combination of the two, is unclear.

## **6. The Horowhenua ACCESS Liaison Service**

The Horowhenua Access Liaison Service was opened on 3 February 1986, with a staff of three headed by Ann Hinch who had played such a key role in setting up the interim committee. The Service saw itself as providing four functions: liaison with young people, liaison with existing training providers, collecting and disseminating information, in particular with (and to) Government Departments and, lastly, a large number of other related tasks<sup>44</sup>.

The project was administered from the Manawatu Polytechnic, an institution some 50 kilometres away that had little understanding of the nature of the Access Liaison Service. Apart from some basic administrative problems that arose from this, the

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<sup>44</sup>Missing from this list, of course, was the key role of the earlier policy drafts to act as a training provider. As noted earlier, this role had been specifically excluded, on DOL initiative, from the functions of pilot programmes.

Access Liaison Service appeared to have little contact with Department of Education officials beyond the liaison with teachers in schools. Therefore the autonomy of the project was firmly assured from the beginning.

The first and most important task undertaken by the Access Liaison Service was an attempt to trace all school leavers from the four secondary schools in the area who had left since 1983. Despite schools having very incomplete records, this proved to be very successful. The young people were asked to fill out a detailed form, and many were also directed into work experience positions, jobs, WSDP or training courses:

*However, as the Department of Labour made it clear that they would consider recommendations only (no direct referrals allowed), and those to be confined to programmes run by the Youth Learning Centre, this service was severely limited [and] ...became an exercise in frustration (Horowhenua Access Liaison Service, 1986).*

The relationship between the Access Liaison Service and the Department of Labour remained strained (Cooper and Steele 1986) throughout 1986, although it apparently began to improve after that (Horowhenua Access Liaison Service 1987). The reasons for these problems were laid out by the Access Liaison Service in their interim Report. Of the Department of Labour Head Office they stated:

*The overt conflict between Head Office personnel of both Department of Labour and Department of Education has had a ripple effect right down to grass roots level, to the detriment of all, and particularly the youngsters who are the ultimate casualties in inter-departmental conflicts (1986 p.19).*

The problems, they noted, were mirrored at the regional and local levels. The regional office had "a lack of clear direction" (ibid) over the role of the Access Liaison Service, whilst the local office viewed the Access Liaison Service "with extreme caution, no commitment and a marked reluctance to share information" (ibid p. 20).

The role of the Access Liaison Service developed as one of broker between young people and the Department of Labour (and some other Government Departments, at times). It became clear that the state bureaucracies at local level often hindered rather than aided young people, whether they sought training programmes, the unemployment benefit, or advice and assistance. The Access Liaison Service itself, whilst at one level an arm of the state, had a certain autonomy which led to two central effects. First, the agency had little or no power to influence the policies and practices of the state, and when it attempted to do so, was rejected. Second, the autonomy allowed the Access Liaison Service to work very clearly *for* the young people it represented.

One task of the Access Liaison Service, which became a central role of the regional committees once ACCESS was formed, was to examine local labour market conditions. They undertook a major survey of employers in the Horowhenua region, aiming to uncover blocks to the employment of young people and other groups such as Maori and women. The surveys (Gordon 1987b; Gordon *et al* 1988) demonstrated that the employment situation was very tight. As well, employers were looking not so much for skills training in young people, but more clearly for the 'right attitudes'. The implications of these survey findings for the ACCESS programme were very clear, but by the time these Reports were written ACCESS was already underway.

The Access Liaison Service was not able to respond effectively to growing rates of youth unemployment, except to keep a record of who was unemployed and what could be offered to them. Suspended between the state and civil society, they played an unusual role as observer of both worlds but, in terms of the action they were able to take, member of neither. The documentation that accrued during the fifteen month period in which the scheme operated is a testimony to the energetic pursuit of its goals, and serves also as a useful record of a small provincial region at a time of increasing unemployment.

In one way the Access Liaison Service did constitute an agency of the state, opening up a new space for state regulation. For the first time, a coherent and detailed method was developed to map the 'transition from school to work' of young people. Previously, such records stopped at the time that the young people left school. However, having gained that information the state's agents were, in a sense, unable to deal with it effectively. It merely showed, very clearly, that there was an increasing gap between schooling and work that was not being adequately catered for; one of the *limits* of the state and one for which no solution could be found in current circumstances.

The ACCESS Liaison Service continued to operate until March 1987, when the new Horowhenua REAC was set up to replace the pilot project. The REACs role, however, was substantially different from that of the pilot project, concerned centrally with liaison with 'training providers', approval of courses and oversight of ACCESS programmes<sup>45</sup>. The close links that the Access Liaison Service had developed with young people, and the functions that had entailed, were completely lost in the final shape of the regional structure that was to be developed.

## 7. The ACCESS training programme

Between the 'New Deal' of December 1985 and the announcement of ACCESS in June 1986, a number of changes took place in unemployment. First, unemployment itself had fallen once again, but was now beginning to rise. By December 1986 it was to reach nearly 90000, and was to decline only slightly by April 1987, which was set as the implementation date for ACCESS.

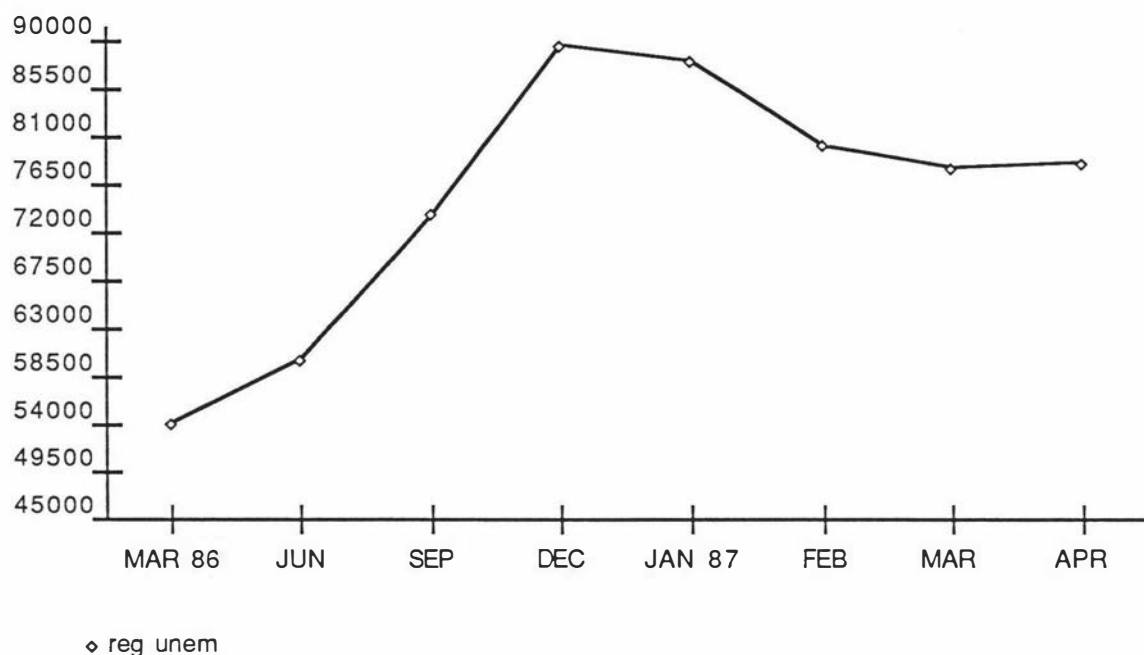
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<sup>45</sup>The functions of REACs are described in chapter five.



Figure 4.3

Numbers registered as unemployed between March 1986 and April 1987<sup>46</sup>.

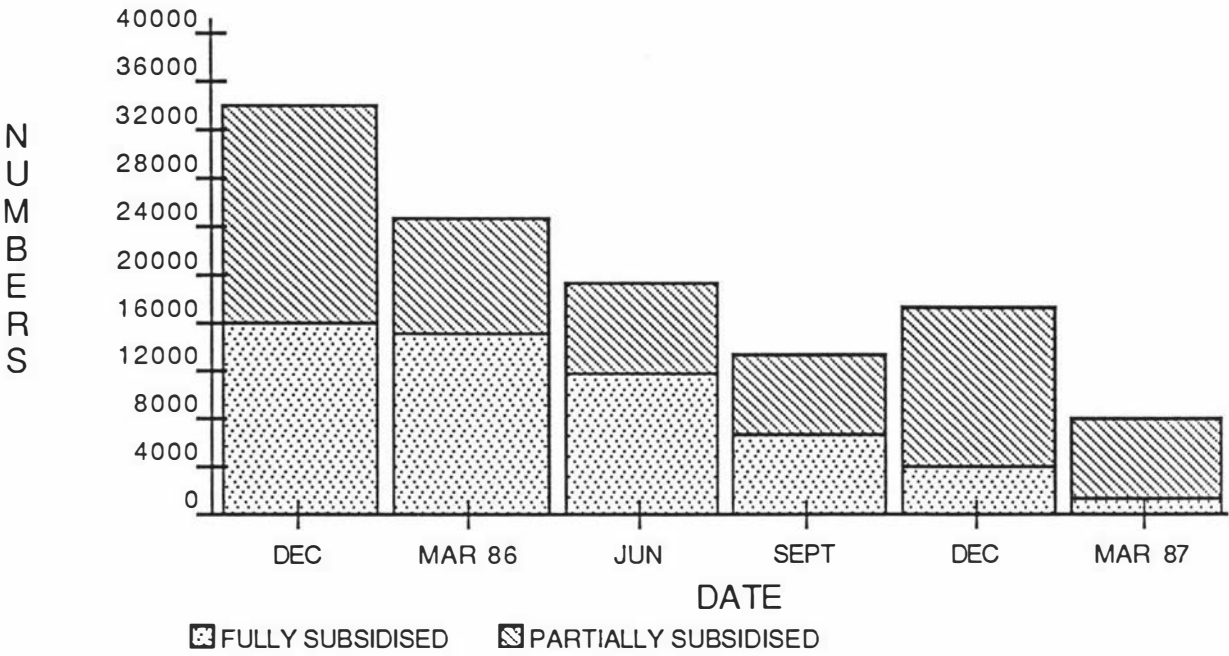


In addition, however, the changes announced in the 'New Deal' had already caused a major reduction in both fully and partially subsidised work programmes. The numbers of participants on these schemes fell by nearly fifty percent between December 1985 and June 1986, and numbers were to decline much further.

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<sup>46</sup>Source: Monthly Employment Operations, Department of Labour.

Figure 4.4                      Numbers on fully and partially subsidised work schemes, December 1985 to March 1987<sup>47</sup>.

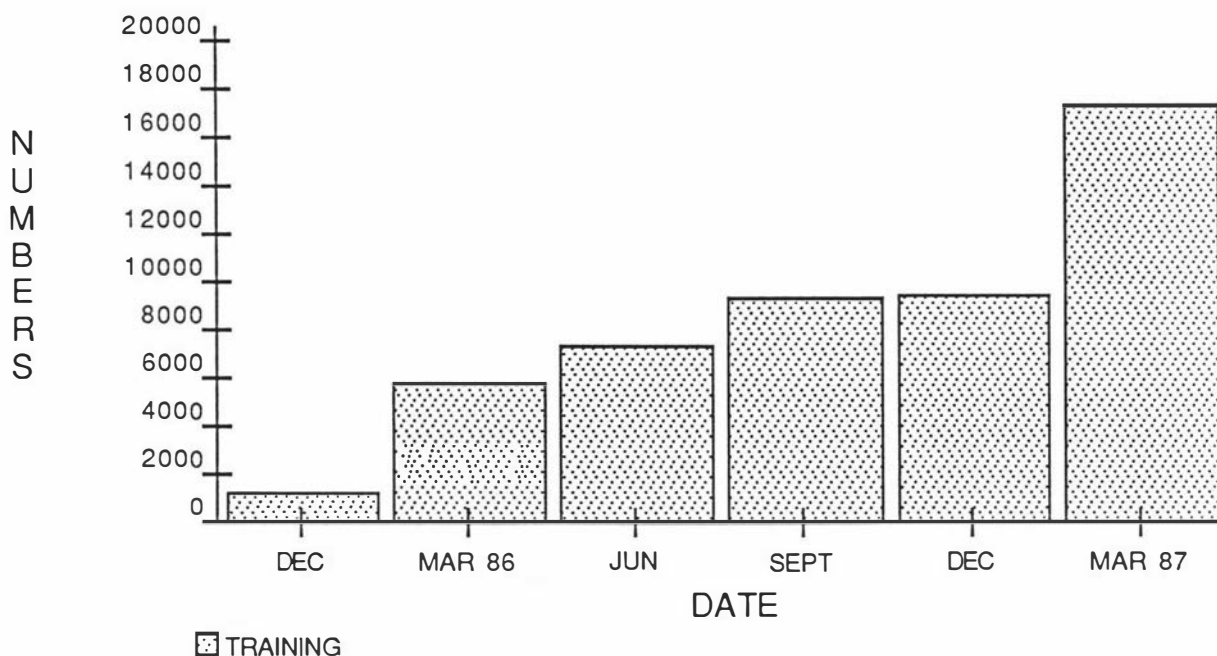


The Training Assistance Programme was also by this stage taking growing numbers of trainees<sup>48</sup>, although by no means absorbing all those who would previously have participated in job creation programmes. Ironically, numbers on this programme peaked at 17278 in the month before the ACCESS programme was introduced; it was to be two years later, under conditions of much higher unemployment, before ACCESS was to cater for that many trainees.

<sup>47</sup>Source: Monthly Employment Operations, Department of Labour

<sup>48</sup>The term 'trainees' is not the one of my choice, but that adopted by the Department of Labour to describe the status of these young people. It serves ideologically to separate young people on these schemes from 'students', which is interesting given earlier claims for equality of status.

Figure 4.5 Numbers of trainees on the Training Assistance Programme, March 1986 to April 1987, quarterly figures<sup>49</sup>.



The ACCESS training policy was announced on 4 June 1986, jointly by the Ministers of Employment, Education and Maori Affairs. However, the joint approach to the policy announcement belied the very obvious divisions of responsibility that had emerged since the pink paper a year before. In essence, the Department of Education had won control over only those parts of ACCESS dealing directly with school activities, and these were not to be announced until July (Marshall 1987 p.23). The part of the policy dealing with post-school training programmes was to be administered solely by the Department of Labour; and in fact had largely already been determined by the form of the 'New Deal'; there were few programme changes between the Training Assistance Programme and ACCESS.

It is unclear whether the Training Assistance Programme had been a vehicle by which to limit the scope of ACCESS and to 'win' it for the Department of Labour, or whether

<sup>49</sup>Source: Monthly Employment Operations, Department of Labour.

the concept of a narrow vocational training orientation<sup>50</sup> had been won at the ideological level within the state before the Training Assistance Programme was started, with ACCESS merely carrying on the tradition. Marshall (1987 p. 22) indicates that the latter was probably the case:

*From the beginning there had been an acknowledged limit on the funds available for transition education and training programmes. In these circumstances, Cabinet felt it wise that Treasury should be involved from the outset of the final decision-making stage. However Treasury participation enabled its officials to bring presently fashionable theories of market forces into the formulation of this policy. Thus, what is professionally advisable in education and training terms had constantly to compete with these views.*

ACCESS, then, had been doomed for some time to be a long way from the visions of expanding opportunities outlined in the pink paper. Quite clearly, vocationalist arguments had won out over 'opportunity' arguments; the Department of Labour over the Department of Education; state *limits* over state *capacity*. Opportunity itself became redefined as the ability to find a decent job:

*With ACCESS the Government recognises the need for a sound and efficient training structure to help people who are disadvantaged in the labour market and in particular young school leavers needing to improve their prospects of finding a decent job<sup>51</sup>.*

The final shape of ACCESS differed little from the Training Assistance Programme. The focus was to be, initially, on young school leavers (aged 15 to 19) who were unemployed and had a history of joblessness. There would be no need for young people to be registered as unemployed in order to enrol for courses. Funding and control were to be in the hands of the Minister of Employment. However, the regional issues were also addressed. Twenty two committees, called Regional Employment and ACCESS Councils (REACs) were to be set up to control all aspects of training in

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<sup>50</sup>"ACCESS - oriented to labour market skills". Title of press release from the Minister of Employment, June 1986.

<sup>51</sup>Minister of Employment (1986) ACCESS Transition Education and Training: The Right Way to Work. Pamphlet, Government Print, Wellington.

their regions. As well, a complementary system of Maori committees would administer Maori ACCESS, although would still be controlled by the Minister of Employment<sup>52</sup>.

No regional Liaison Councils, having direct contact with young people, such as the pilot project in Levin, would be set up. The REACs would centrally be involved in liaison with funding bodies and training providers, and would not directly take on the function of liaison with unemployed people<sup>53</sup>.

The scheme had very clearly a much narrower focus than previous training programmes. Emphasising the labour market orientation, the objectives read:

- \* *easing individuals' entry or re-entry into the labour market by enabling them to acquire vocational skills;*
- \* *enhancing the individuals' ability to enter, re-enter, or remain in the workforce by promoting the acquisition of the skills and competencies necessary for working life (e.g. functional literacy and numeracy, the ability to manage their own lives in relation to unemployment, and the ability to co-operate with others);*
- \* *providing a skill base for further vocational development which will enhance the long run employment and earnings potential of participants* <sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup>Sources: Marshall (1987) and ACCESS publicity material, Minister of Employment, 1986.

<sup>53</sup>The list of duties of REACs is contained in "ACCESS: The Right Way to Work", *op cit*.

<sup>54</sup>From press release, ACCESS information kit.

The process of the development of the ACCESS programme involved a struggle over ideology, played out in particular by two agencies of the state; the Department of Education and the Department of Labour. The period of policy development saw a shift in the ideological domain, of the kind noted by Gramsci in the quote that introduced this chapter, whereby the rules governing the process shifted markedly away from the Department of Education objectives towards those favoured by the Department of Labour and Treasury. A number of factors both within the state (notably the increasing power of Treasury) and between the state and the sectors of civil society and capital (in particular the relatively stable rate of unemployment and growth in service-sector jobs at the expense of unskilled labouring work), increased the likelihood of the final shape of the ACCESS programme.

The strength of the free market ideology referred to above by Marshall was its ability to address those conditions within which ACCESS was formed. It was the combination of the material and ideological forces that led to the particular outcomes described here. However, three sets of factors were to have a severe impact on the operation of the programme almost from the time it commenced. These were to provide real *limits* on the state; in particular, to overturn arguments for equity and opportunity, which the Department of Education had the *capacity* to work towards, in favour of a vocational slant that allowed for a supply-side approach which enabled control over the resource *limits* of the state.

First, the changing material conditions led to an undermining of the ideological basis of the vocationally oriented programme; the massive growth in unemployment exposed ever more clearly the real structural basis of unemployment. Over the next nine months, between the ACCESS announcement and its implementation, unemployment was to rise markedly but then to fall again slightly, bottoming out at 53000 in March and April 1987; at exactly the point at which the new scheme commenced. From there, it began to increase again at an unprecedented rate.

Second, the new structures that ACCESS put in place, in particular relating to the increasing regionalisation of the programme, set up a new site of struggle based on the tension between the central state and its periphery. Those ideological arguments that had proved so persuasive within the policy making process were exposed as meaningless in practice<sup>55</sup>.

The final factor was the issue of funding for ACCESS. Initially under-funded to the extent that, within fifteen months, the Minister of Employment had to announce a huge increase in support for ACCESS<sup>56</sup>, the gap between training provision and numbers of registered unemployed grew enormously during 1987 and into 1988, as the overall economic situation deteriorated and unemployment rose. In terms of expenditure on training and employment, the Minister of Employment noted in February 1989:

*Total spending in real terms, in the areas covered by this strategy, including the personnel involved in the New Zealand Employment Service, have been falling lately. Indeed between 1984-85 and 1987-88 real expenditure dropped 34 percent<sup>57</sup>.*

The reluctance to fund ACCESS, which stemmed from the same free market ideology which had determined its shape, was a major factor in leading to the breakdown of the programme. These three factors are considered in chapter five.

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<sup>55</sup>Korndorffer (1987) discusses this issue in relation to YPTP courses.

<sup>56</sup>In July 1988 there was a \$41 million boost to the employment package, announced by Phil Goff, Minister of Employment, in a press release. He also noted that this was despite constraints on the budget caused by the need to bring down the deficit; which is itself indication of Government ideology.

<sup>57</sup>Minister of Employment (1989) The Employment Strategy (Briefing papers to Ministerial meeting on economic and employment growth, 8.2.89. p.8).

## Chapter five

### The implementation and breakdown of ACCESS

The previous chapter described and discussed many aspects of the development of ACCESS policy, concluding with the programme of winding down all existing programmes and their replacement, from April 1987, with the ACCESS policy as the central governmental response to youth unemployment; a response which was described by the Minister of Employment as offering 'vocational skills' training. This chapter will discuss the implementation and the breakdown of the ACCESS policy. It will be argued that, due to a wide variety of factors, the breakdown of the ACCESS training policy began to occur simultaneously with its implementation. Two sets of factors account for this. The first is aspects of the policy itself, or 'internal' factors; in particular, I will argue, the regionalised structure of ACCESS. The second set of factors relate to the social and economic policy context within which ACCESS was established, which led to certain material and ideological conditions inimical to the development of ACCESS *as it was conceived in the policy formation stage*.

My analysis of the 'breakdown' of ACCESS may seem to be premature. The policy of ACCESS, at the time of writing, is still in existence, and there are no public documents in circulation that argue for its demise. I will base my case for the breakdown of ACCESS on the premise that it no longer serves *any useful purpose* for any significant sector of civil society, of capital, or of the state itself. This chapter will focus in particular on the state and its management of the continuing crisis of unemployment. The central argument will be that the *limits* of the state, both institutional and ideological, have severely circumscribed the ability of ACCESS to function as it was intended. As well, there has been a marked reduction, stemming from the monetarist doctrines of Treasury which have been forced on (or appropriated by) all agencies of



the state, in the *capacity* for state action, either to retrieve the ACCESS policy or to offer effective alternatives.

In chapter one it was argued that dominant theories of state action over unemployment focus on the needs for capital accumulation, legitimation of both capital and state forms and the need for social control. This chapter will demonstrate that, in reality, the ACCESS policy serves none of these functions. In questioning what role it does play, I will demonstrate that the breakdown of ACCESS can be explained by its ideological and material failure to adequately address the needs of any sphere of society, or any necessary functions of the state.

## 1. The structure of ACCESS

In the previous chapter, it was argued that the struggle for control over the ACCESS programme was won by "free-market" monetarists, through the Department of Labour/Minister of Employment, at the level of policy. However, it would be misleading to argue that this policy agenda was then unproblematically transmitted into practice. The main reason for this is that the implementation of ACCESS depended on the Regional Employment and ACCESS Councils (REACs) and on numerous individual trainers. This section will examine the structure within which ACCESS was implemented, noting that the shape of what was called the "delivery system"<sup>1</sup> exercised particular constraints on the policy implementation process; understood in the terms of this thesis as aspects of state *limits*.

The structure of ACCESS was to be as follows. The Minister of Employment would "determine the bulk funding for each regional ACCESS committee" (Press Release 4.6.86 p.7). The Minister would take into account the number of unemployed people

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<sup>1</sup>Ministers of Employment, Education and Maori Affairs, press releases, 'Notes for Editors III' p.6., 4 June 1986.

in the area, the 'socio-economic status' of the young people and "a judgement of the relative requirement for ACCESS training in the District" in determining the funding (ibid pp.7-8).

The purpose of the REACs, according to the Government, would be to provide "the best understanding of prevailing and anticipated local labour market conditions and knowledge of the needs of local unemployed people" (ibid p.6). Each REAC would be made up of half union and employer representation and half community representation. It would be the task of each Council to determine priorities for funding and then disburse the funding, gain additional information as required and oversee the schemes. The knowledge of local conditions that REACs brought to the policy process formed the basis, it is argued here, for both the implementation and the breakdown of ACCESS.

This policy had all the trappings of a liberal democratic approach that gives real power to local communities; in Gramsci's terms (see chapter two), it appears as a retreat of the state back to the centre, and an increase in control by local communities. In contrast, however, I wish to argue that the structure of ACCESS actually formed an extension of the state into local communities and a concomitantly increased central control. In particular, the struggles between state agencies that were outlined in chapter four extended out from the central to the local level. Within the analytical framework of this thesis, I will argue that the structure of ACCESS placed severe *limits* on state action, but partially enhanced, and also partially constrained, the *capacity* of the state, as the hegemonic settlement of supply-side discourse was exported downwards to the regional level.

The central reason for arguing that this policy signals an extension into, rather than a withdrawal from, civil society lies in the power relations inherent in the policy structure. In essence, the REACs would do all the work and the Minister would

determine the resources. This, in fact, opened up a whole new site of struggle, of the periphery against the centre. However, it confirmed the nature of the policy as a 'structural' supply-side intervention. The policy expectations of REACs, however, were very much more in line with demand-side or 'conjunctural' policy approaches. This meant, for example, that their specific knowledge of local labour market conditions would allow them to argue for more or different resources.

The structure of the policy had a further effect, again linked to the power relations. It attempted to export downwards not only the work of implementing ACCESS, but also the responsibility for ACCESS and, in a strategic ideological move that linked the success of ACCESS to the level of unemployment, implied that REACs held the responsibility for unemployment in the regions. This allowed the Government to express concern about unemployment without taking any responsibility for correcting it<sup>2</sup>.

The structure of the ACCESS policy, on one level, forced local communities to become, in effect, arms of the state. The policy allowed for fairly close oversight and accountability of "training providers" to the REACs; much closer than could have been achieved by existing agencies such as the Department of Labour. It also brought both employers and unions into the ACCESS structure, forcing some measure of consent for the policy<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup>This is a complex issue and I have only recounted here one part of it. The other side of this equation was the Government's continued adherence to the process of 'restructuring' the economy, and their claim that only by going through this 'process of change' could employment be assured in the future (and not full employment). Hence the Minister of Employment expressed ever greater concern about the rising unemployment levels in 1988, without in any way acting upon this concern. Similarly, as this chapter will argue, the same ideologies were used to constrain the funding and resources of REACs.

<sup>3</sup>It could be argued, on the other hand, that bringing these groups in provided the basis for new policy settlements. However, the supply-side nature of this policy totally prevented the kind of demand-led negotiation characteristic of liberal democratic policies (see Offe 1984, 1985). What the structure in fact achieved was the importing of ideological struggle into the state that normally occurs only within civil society. This had the effect, largely, of paralysing action against the policy. As *participants*, unions and employers had no basis on which to oppose the policy.

This is not to say that REACs merely became an extension of the central state, accepting and acting in concert with dominant ideologies. REACs were constrained by their role and the funding they received, but there was nothing to stop them siding 'with' the unemployed, 'against' the discourse of the policy makers.

The creation of REACs opened up a structurally-legitimated site where opposition to the Government's employment and training policies could be disputed. In order for the REACs to be seen as the 'expression of community views', the Government was forced to both allow for and appear to accommodate (at the least) their opinions. Hence the Government needed to construct a hegemony around its policies, which, optimally, would be supported by the REACs and conveyed by them into the community. However, even if this hegemony failed (and I would argue that it did, from the outset) the REACs, in order to continue operating, were still forced to undertake pro-ACCESS practices. The only other option open to the REACs was to dissent completely from the policy and, in effect, to disestablish themselves. The ideology of community participation was a central constraint against this type of action, as to reject the Government's policy was to reject 'community participation'. If they were to take such action, the REACs would then lose the small amount of real power that they held.

In summary, then, the REACs were severely constrained by their structural and ideological place in the ACCESS policy. This constraint expressed itself differently in different areas and at different times. The usual form of dissent was to do not with the policy itself, but with the level of resources committed by Government<sup>4</sup>, and the structural supply-side nature of the policy, which removed from the REACs any opportunity to successfully plead for more resources. The REACs, by continuing to

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<sup>4</sup>Given the nature of the policy, as a supply-side intervention, the two aspects are absolutely integral to one another. Hence attempts to separate them were doomed to failure immediately.

implement ACCESS, demonstrated a material commitment to this policy and, by formally upholding it, constituted an extension of the state 'reaching out' into civil society.

The second 'level' of the state to be considered here is the Department of Labour, which, the last chapter argued, 'won' the ACCESS policy at both ideological and material levels. The announcement of ACCESS, though clearly heralded as a joint effort between the Ministers of Employment, Education and Maori Affairs, in effect sealed the victory for the Department of Labour. They ended up with total administrative control over the policy and close links with the REAC committees. The educative arguments for ACCESS became totally subsumed to the labour market arguments, as the following policy goals suggest:

*ACCESS training is targeted to the needs of people identified as being at a disadvantage in the labour market. Its broad goal is to improve the prospects of such disadvantaged individuals and groups in the labour market while making best use of resources. Within the overall goal, the Government has identified a number of more specific goals:*

- (a) *to ease individuals' entry or re-entry into the labour market by enabling them to acquire vocational skills;*
- (b) *to enhance individuals' ability to enter or re-enter the workforce by promoting the acquisition of skills necessary for working life, for example, functional literacy and numeracy, the ability to co-operate with others, and the ability to manage their own lives in relation to employment;*
- (c) *to provide a skill-base for further vocational development which will enhance the long-run employment and earnings potential of trainees.<sup>5</sup>*

The total control won by the Department of Labour over the ACCESS training policy enhanced its *limits* in a number of ways. First, the policy required an extension of the Department of Labour's administrative role, both in the central state (with the creation of a new agency to monitor and further develop the ACCESS programme), and

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<sup>5</sup>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (A to J), 1987, Annual Report of the Department of Labour, G I, p.44.

regionally, with new ACCESS training support groups to service the work of REACs and disperse funds<sup>6</sup>.

Second, the control of ACCESS gave the Department of Labour a mandate to become involved in education and training in ways that it had never before been able to do, for example, in 1987: "A departmental response to the Fargher-Probine Report on management, funding and organisation of continuing education and training was produced"<sup>7</sup>. This constituted an extension of the scope of the Department of Labour which gave a structural impetus to the 'education for work' debates which were discussed in chapter three.

Third, the policy provided *resources* in the area of training that allowed for huge extensions to the Department of Labour in this field. However, it does appear that the increase in this area more than matched a decrease in the job creation area. Due to changes in accounting procedures, it is difficult to assess the funding impact of these policies. However, in the 1985-86 year funding for grants and subsidies in the employment and training area<sup>8</sup> were listed as \$332,560,000; the same area for 1987-88, the first year of the ACCESS scheme, the comparable figure was \$318,380,000.<sup>9</sup> As the bulk of the 1986 money was made up of fully subsidised employment costs, it is clear that training was cheaper<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>In fact these agencies did more than this. Hence, for example, the irony of ACCESS courses being advertised in 'situations vacant' columns of newspapers, as if they were 'jobs'.

<sup>7</sup>Source: Report of the Department of Labour for the year ended 31 March 1988, E1, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives, p.34.

<sup>8</sup>Includes: employment of disabled, employment preparation and training, industrial relations training incentives, trade training incentives, apprentice allowances, partly and fully subsidised employment assistance, pilot schemes for Maori and Pacific Islanders, training development assistance and the vocational training council. Source: DOL Annual Report 1986, G1, A to J.

<sup>9</sup>The areas covered by this are not listed but must be comparable to the above. Source DOL Annual Report 1988, G1, A to J.

<sup>10</sup>Indeed, cheaper than it appears from these figures, which have not been adjusted to allow for the effects of inflation on the value of money.

Fourth, the Department of Labour extended its control into civil society, with the formation of the REACs. At the time these were set up, the Department of Labour 'advisor' role was left very undefined. As the 'experts' who provided administrative guidance and support, however, it is likely this agency had a lot of control over REACs. This is an empirical question and beyond the boundaries of the present study, but there is little doubt that the *limits* of the Department of Labour were broadened with the introduction of REACs.

The fifth area of increasing *limits* was the relationship with capital. The offer of vocational training was designed to provide support to industrial development, especially through training workers for specific industries. However, the particular economic conditions under which the ACCESS programme was introduced meant that employers, who were largely involved in redundancy rather than recruitment at the time, were seemingly not very interested in the programme. The Employers Federation who had consistently advocated training to lift employment skills, particularly in the young (1983), were not at that stage able to make use of the products of such a programme.

Finally, the winning of ACCESS had given the Department of Labour a certain priority over other Government Departments in terms of expenditure; this priority increased, ironically, as the levels of unemployment grew. For example, in its first year in operation, ACCESS received \$260 million funding through the Department of Labour, whereas the Department of Education received only \$2.6 million for its new 'in-school' initiatives (Lauder et al 1988 p.20). These differences in funding represented real power differences between the two Departments. Further, in July, 1988 the Minister of Employment, Phil Goff, announced \$41 million in increased funding for the "employment package". This increase was allocated despite the fiscal constraints under which the state was operating:

*Announcing the employment package at a press conference at the Beehive, Mr Goff said the amount of money available for new policy measures in the forthcoming budget was tightly constrained by the need to keep the deficit in check<sup>11</sup>.*

The ideological role of the Department of Labour and the ACCESS programme was further outlined:

*Fundamental to a sustainable improvement in employment is our ability to turn around a 20-year record of poor growth, low productivity and high inflation.*

*Low inflation, falling interest rates, a reduced rate of company and individual taxation and a more favourable exchange rate for exporters will all contribute positively to this goal, he said.*

*The Government's macro-economic policies are the key to reduced levels of unemployment. They must, however, be complemented by education and active labour market policies to help individuals adjust to change (press release 21.7.88).*

The monetarist project, and the key role of the Department of Labour in it, were clearly laid out by the Minister in this statement. Absolved from the *blame* for unemployment, which lay in a sluggish economy, the role of the Government, primarily through the Department of Labour, was to provide a complementary programme of education and training to assist economic development, although not to intervene to such an extent that the self-regulating economic mechanisms were disturbed. The Department of Labour had won for itself a position second only to Treasury in steering the internal economy towards its projected future.

The capacity of the Department of Labour in this period is somewhat more difficult to pin down. On the one hand, there was an increased demand for Department of Labour services across most of its areas, and in particular for the re-institution of fully subsidised employment programmes. On the other hand, the Department of Labour itself acted as little more than a pawn of the Government's monetarist policies, playing

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<sup>11</sup>Press release "Employment and training policy package announced" 21/7/88.



an active role in processes which, given their logical outcome, would lead to the minimisation of Department of Labour's role. The Department of Labour, then, worked to uphold the Minister's view of training that was quoted above. The agency's historical role in the job-creation field was abandoned for the 'new vision' of society as a self-regulating economic market. It cannot be said that the Department of Labour worked in its own broad interests; in the pursuit of narrow interests, in particular the control of ACCESS, it abandoned its central historical role in the employment area: the creation of subsidised work programmes for the unemployed. Along with other agencies of the state, notably the Government and Treasury, the Department of Labour worked to extend the new hegemonic settlement of monetarism. In chapter two it was noted that the state "can exert impulses towards political and intellectual hegemony." This the Department of Labour, in concert with others, attempted to do through the development of ACCESS. However, it seems clear that the material conditions, of unemployment in particular, worked against these hegemonic impulses. Hence, in acting 'on its own behalf' to increase its power, by abandoning its historical role in job creation and through aligning itself with monetarist aims, the Department of Labour, in effect, had decreased its *capacity*.

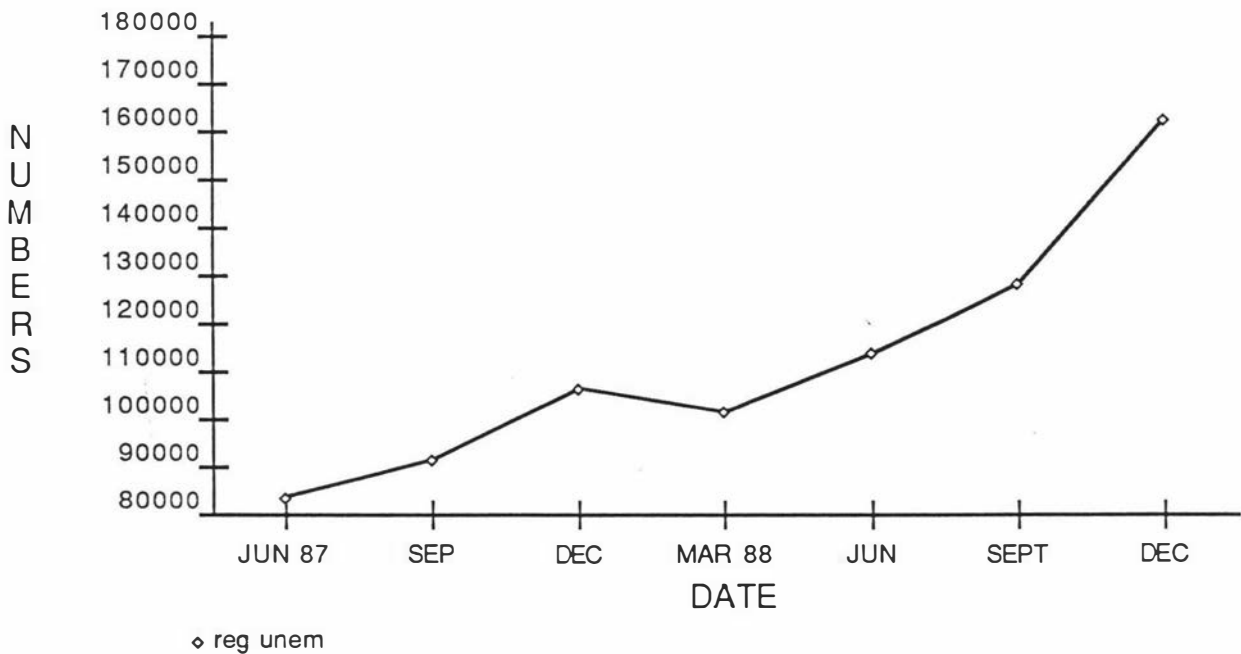
This section has outlined the institutional effects of the ACCESS programme within the state. The next three sections go further, discussing the effects of ACCESS in terms of the accumulation, legitimation and social control functions of the state.

## **2. ACCESS and unemployment (legitimation)**

One of the central claims that have been made about post-school training schemes is that they legitimate unemployment (and thus the existing structures of society) by placing the blame on the individuals concerned, who are said to lack the skills, training, education, qualifications or other characteristics needed for participation in the workplace (see chapter one). This legitimation function of state provision is, as

chapter one noted, a central claim of the literature within the sociology of education; not just for post-school training, but for all state education systems. In the New Zealand context, both Freeman-Moir (1981a) and Khan (1986), and, to a lesser extent Korndorffer (1987a), have used the notion of legitimation to explain state action over unemployment. This section will examine whether the ACCESS programme can be characterised as an attempt by the state to legitimate either the crisis of capitalism or, more generally, its own role in society<sup>12</sup>.

Figure 5.1                      Numbers of registered unemployed,  
June 1987 to December 1988<sup>13</sup>.



From April 1987 unemployment began to rise again, slowly at first and then

<sup>12</sup>There is often a confusion amongst sociologists as to whether the notion of legitimation refers to the economic structures or to the state itself. This confusion is heightened by a frequent inability to distinguish between the two sets of structures. I am interested, here, in legitimation in both the senses in which it has been used.

<sup>13</sup>Source: Monthly Employment Operations and New Zealand Employment Management Information Systems (EMIS), Department of Labour

increasingly fast. Hitting nearly 106,000 in December 1987, the total number of registered unemployed was to reach 162,000 by December 1988<sup>14</sup>.

By March 1988 the Department of Labour was stating that "changes in employment and unemployment were the major issues external to the department which arose over 1987/88"<sup>15</sup>. At this stage, the ACCESS programme had been running for one year. As the central Governmental response to unemployment, it had proved in its first year to be particularly ineffective in its primary aim, to ease entry or re-entry into the labour market.

The central reason for this was that the increasing unemployment was not met by any increase in job creation schemes. Indeed, by the end of 1987 fully subsidised job creation programmes had fallen away dramatically from previous years. In December 1985 there had been 16054 people on such schemes; comparative figures for December 1986 and 1987 were 13,331 and 316 respectively. Partially subsidised schemes had fallen dramatically, too, from 12662 in November 1985<sup>16</sup> to 6756 in 1986 and 5660 in 1987. Despite the promise of widespread training available to all unemployed people, government funding for ACCESS remained fairly constant from its implementation in April 1987. Furthermore, ACCESS offered less training places each month over the

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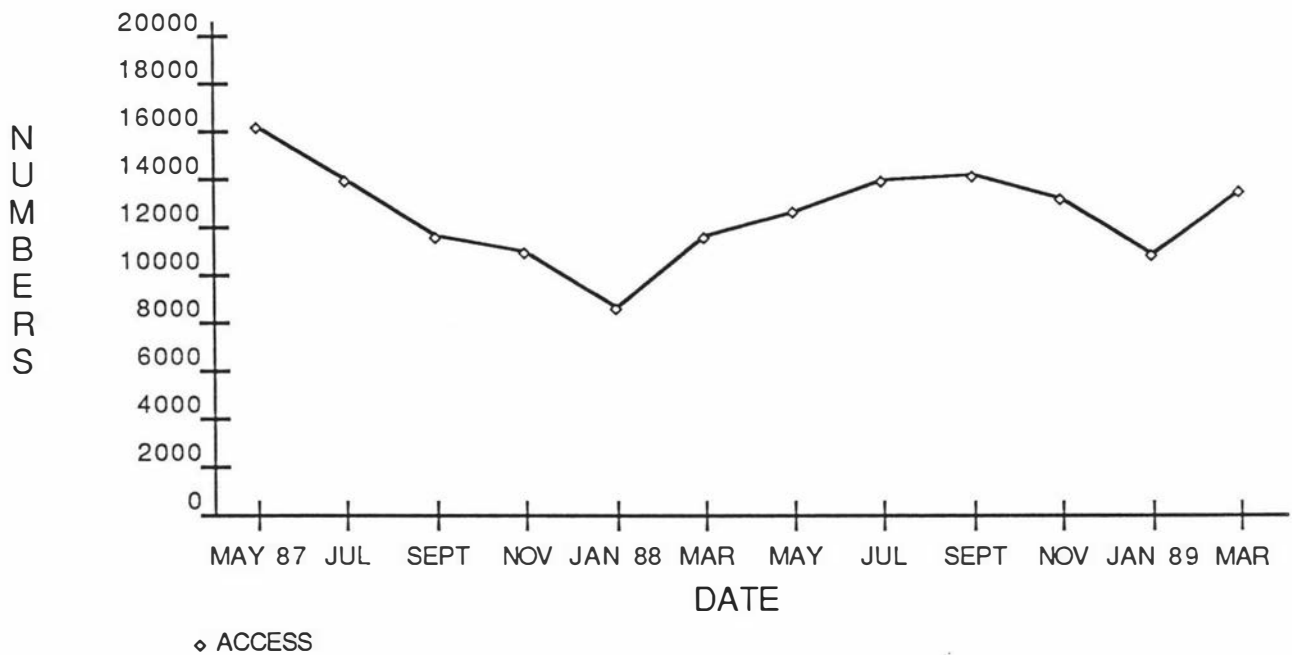
<sup>14</sup>The actual number of registered unemployed at the end of December 1988 was 162,821. In a response to an opposition question (May 1988), the Minister of Employment erroneously put this figure at 149,640. He noted: "At the end of June 1984... registered unemployment stood at 65,055 or 4.9 percent of the labour force. This figure, however, does not include those who were on fully-subsidised work programmes. At the end of December 1988 the comparable figure was 149,640 or 11.16 percent of the labour force" (Source: Hansard supplement - Questions and Answers 20.4.89 to 11.5.89 p. 469).

<sup>15</sup>DOL Annual Report 1987 p. 37.

<sup>16</sup>Figures from November are used here instead of December because of the distorting effects of the partially subsidised student job creation programme, which, however, was phased out completely in 1988.

first two years than its predecessor, the Training Assistance Programme, had in its last month, when 17,688 places were made available<sup>17</sup>.

Figure 5.2 Numbers on ACCESS training programme, May 1987 to March 1989<sup>18</sup>

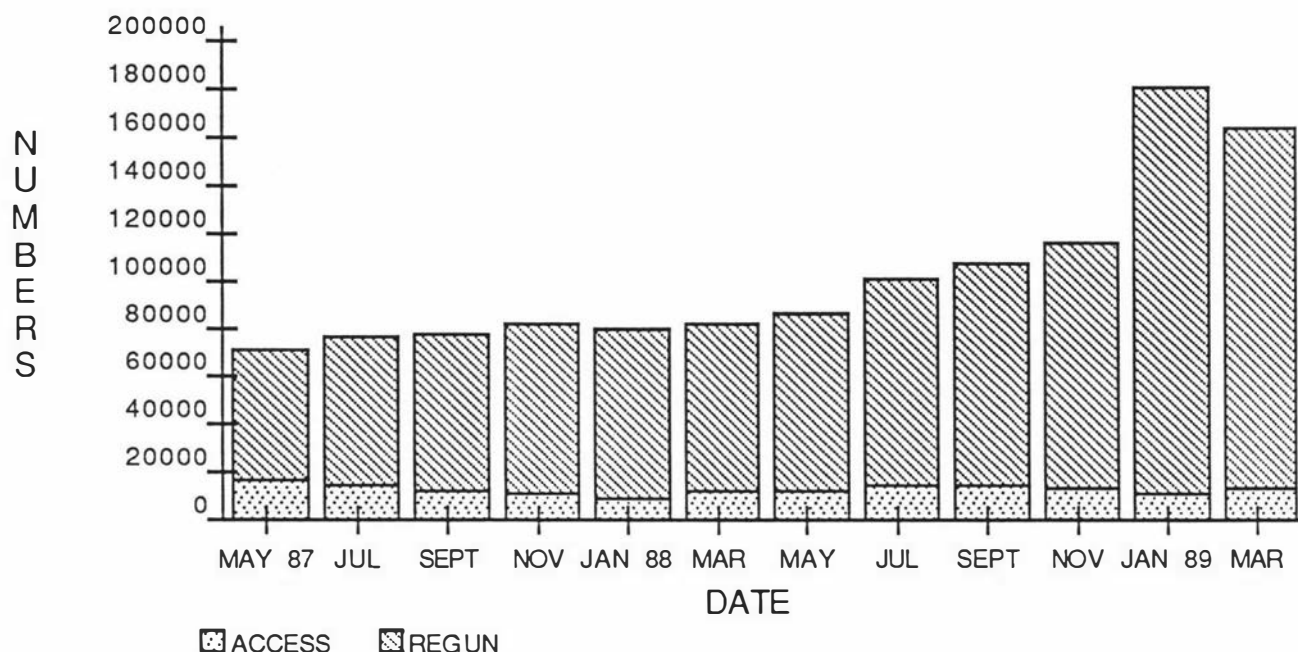


In what is probably the prime indicator of the supply side nature of this policy, it can be demonstrated that the rising levels of unemployment during the first two years of ACCESS had little or no effect on the numbers undertaking training during this period. In other words, either the level of unemployment made no difference to the demand for ACCESS (which is unlikely), or the programme itself was determined not by demand for the service but by the supply of resources. The controlling function of the Minister over funding is very evident in the comparison of numbers of people on ACCESS programmes with the numbers of registered unemployed.

<sup>17</sup>Source: Monthly Employment Operations, Department of Labour.

<sup>18</sup>Source: ACCESS Training Support, Wellington

Figure 5.3 Numbers on ACCESS and numbers of registered unemployed May 1987 to March 1989<sup>19</sup>



The central question of this section is whether ACCESS provided legitimization for these high, and increasing levels of unemployment. Legitimation, as noted earlier, can take one of two forms. It may either provide a reasonable ideological explanation for the workings of capital, or it may legitimate the state itself as working in the interests of civil society.

The case for the legitimization of capital by the state rests on the ideological impact of the view that people are unemployed because of their own deficiencies rather than because of shortcomings in the economic structures of society (i.e. an inability to provide enough work for all those who want it). As noted in chapters one and three, the provision of training as a response to unemployment is seen to assist ideologies of individual deficiencies ('blaming the victim'), by setting in place an institutional structure aimed at overcoming these putative shortcomings.

<sup>19</sup>Sources: Monthly Employment Operations and EMIS, Department of Labour, and ACCESS Training Support, Wellington.

There are four clear reasons why, beyond the mere provision of ACCESS training, the state has been unable to sustain an ideology of individual deficit in relation to unemployment. The first is that it is reasonably clear that the Government did not itself (at least to begin with) hold to such an ideology. The Scott Report and the Minister of Employment at the EPC both argued against such a view, claiming that training programmes aimed only to provide skills needed to meet the challenge of technological change, not that the unemployed were without work because they lacked skills<sup>20</sup>.

The second reason that ACCESS could not legitimate unemployment was because of the changing patterns of unemployment during 1987 and 1988 in particular, where a major shift took place. Previously, unemployment had grown most substantially amongst the young; those entering the workforce for the first time. However, at this stage older workers began to be much more heavily affected by unemployment, largely through the high number of redundancies that took place. In December 1983, 62 percent of the total unemployed were under 25 years of age; by February 1989 this had fallen to just 42 percent<sup>21</sup>. The high number of relatively skilled workers who were now unemployed mitigated against any 'individual deficit' explanations of unemployment; the older people who became newly unemployed were very clearly victims of structural economic factors<sup>22</sup>. State *capacity* had been reduced to such an

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<sup>20</sup>This, in itself, may be seen as a kind of individual deficit model. It can be argued that any programme offering skills requires participants who either need or want such skills. But the ideology of individual deficit requires a much broader view of deficiency. This is, however, a grey area (one which could usefully be taken up by a philosopher). The point here is that the Labour Government did not unproblematically accept and put forward a view of unemployment being caused by a lack of individual skills in the unemployed.

<sup>21</sup>Taken from Monthly Employment Operations and EMIS, Department of Labour.

<sup>22</sup>However, another kind of 'victim blaming' became evident at this time, coming in particular from the Minister of Finance and Treasury. The firms that were forced to close down were, it was claimed, inefficient and therefore did not deserve to continue operating. They had 'hidden' under grants and subsidies and were unable to withstand the icy blast of true competition. The words are mine; the sentiment familiar to anyone living in New Zealand during this period (New Zealand Business Roundtable 1987).

extent that it became impossible for an adequate response to be made to the growth in unemployment.

The third reason why ACCESS failed to legitimate unemployment was inherent in the supply-side nature of the policy itself. ACCESS programmes were not allowed to increase along with unemployment. If they had done so, a case could have been made that unemployed people *needed* training; and that increased levels of unemployment required increased training input. The constant level of supply of funding for ACCESS programmes reinforced the reality that ACCESS was a small programme offering a few options to a decreasing percentage of unemployed people.

Finally, in order to uphold the legitimisation ideology the state would have needed to demonstrate a high level of success in placing ACCESS graduates into work. The actual figures for the first year of the programme are laid out in Table 5.1. On average over the whole country, the 'success' rate of ACCESS was only just over 20 percent<sup>23</sup>, and was worst in those areas experiencing the highest levels of unemployment. Such an outcome merely reinforces the structural nature of the unemployment situation and argues against any 'individual deficit' in gaining work.

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<sup>23</sup>Unfortunately no study is available comparing the employment rates of ACCESS trainees with those who were in a comparable situation but who had not entered an ACCESS programme.

Table 5.1                      Unsubsidised employment outcomes for each REAC  
April 1987 to April 1989<sup>24</sup>

	Unsubsidised Employment	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Northland	934	19.6
Auckland/Takapuna	1992	29.6
Manukau	1390	23.3
Waikato/Thames Valley	1507	20.3
Bay of Plenty	1201	21.1
Tongariro	283	14.0
East Coast	311	18.6
Hawkes Bay	1560	33.2
Taranaki	758	18.5
Wanganui	238	17.0
Manawatu	629	23.9
Horowhenua	122	13.8
Wairarapa	215	17.7
Wellington	929	18.8
Marlborough	252	24.2
Nelson Bays	462	24.0
Canterbury	1846	28.6
West Coast	143	21.2
Aorangi	376	16.8
Otago	697	16.4
Southland	612	16.4
Total	16457	22.4

The other side of legitimisation is whether the state legitimated its own actions over unemployment by introducing an ACCESS training programme. This is rather a complex issue. On the one hand, the Minister of Employment, as noted above, clearly upheld the view that unemployment could only be solved through an economic recovery, which required that the state minimise its own spending<sup>25</sup>. On the other hand, the unemployment situation became so bad in 1987 and 1988 that politically, the Government was required to do something; and ACCESS was frequently held up as something productive for the state to do to overcome the problem. However, ACCESS did not adequately address the high rate of unemployment at all. Therefore,

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<sup>24</sup>Source: Hansard supplement, questions and answers, op cit p. 593.

<sup>25</sup>Press release, 20 July 1988.



although this policy would probably not have harmed the Government, it did little to place any faith in the state either.

Where the policy clearly failed to legitimate state actions was in its outcomes. In terms of the Government's criteria, stated in the policy document, the assessment of ACCESS "will focus on outcomes of training". The policy stated that:

*This will be measured on the basis of:*

- *an individual trainee's readiness for referral to employment or his/her readiness to undertake further training;*
- *the ability of a trainee to undertake additional education; or*
- *the ability of a trainee to obtain and keep employment both in the short term and the longer term<sup>26</sup>.*

The only unequivocal measure of these qualities is the third factor; the ability to get and keep a job. It was further noted that "assessment of the quality of training given will be based on results"<sup>27</sup>. According to the results presented above (Table 5.1), the ACCESS programme must clearly be seen to have failed.

This section has concluded that ACCESS cannot be understood as a form of legitimisation for either capital or the state itself. In terms of capital, the material conditions exposed any ideological intent in the ACCESS programme as clearly false, as more and more skilled people registered as unemployed and those trained on ACCESS programmes failed to get work. The ACCESS programme, too, failed by its own criteria, thus undermining any ideological impetus by the state to legitimate its own role.

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<sup>26</sup>Minister of Employment (1986) ACCESS Transition Education and Training: The right way to work. Pamphlet, pages unnumbered.

<sup>27</sup>ibid. The absurdity of such a position is discussed in Gordon 1985.

### 3. ACCESS, jobs and employers needs (accumulation)

There is some evidence that the aim of the ACCESS training policy was to assist capital accumulation during a period in which this was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. The bulk of the evidence, however, suggests that ACCESS was totally unable to achieve this aim, due to a number of factors that will be discussed below.

The announcement of ACCESS as a vocational training scheme included a number of references to the need to increase capital accumulation:

*Training today is more than just a worthwhile objective, it has become an essential requirement if we are to compete on equal terms with our trading partners and keep up with the increasing rate of change that is occurring in the workplace (Minister of Employment 1986).*

In order to remedy this problem, what was needed was good quality training, aimed at and suited to the "clearly identified needs of the local labour market". People were to be trained to fit into those industries that needed trained staff; the role of REACs would be to identify what, in each area, those needs were, and to see them fulfilled.

The notion of the state attempting to fulfil the needs of capitalism is one of the most common Marxist claims (e.g. Althusser 1972; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Freeman-Moir 1981b, 1982). It has been argued against in a number of ways within sociology, one of the most common lines of argument being the inability of the state (or capital itself) to know, at a given historical conjuncture, what those needs are:

*In any specific historical situation industry's needs for labour power are themselves extremely complex: these are not so much a question of the 'requirements of capital' as the needs of different, coexisting capitals... There is therefore a problem, of satisfying or approximating to different demands, which is resolved only by political means. State agencies, where these conflicts are condensed, become a site of struggles between different sections of capital (CCCS 1981 p.21).*

In other words, any specification of the needs of capital by a state agency is a political strategy to maintain that agency's position, and may not be also an accurate assessment of capital's position; indeed, given the complexities of capital and the conflicts of interest that exist within that sphere (for example between small local businesses and multi-national corporations), such an assessment may not ever be possible. Claims for accumulation strategies may owe more, then, to the needs of the state agency making that claim, or to the way the agency perceives capital's needs, than to any actual and unified 'needs' that capital may have.

There is little evidence that the ACCESS training programme in any way assisted capital's need to keep abreast of technological and industrial development on a worldwide basis. Given the duration of the courses, which were mostly between 6 and 26 weeks long<sup>28</sup>, and the low level of skills taught in such courses, most of which had no pre-requisites and required no prior experience<sup>29</sup>, it is difficult to imagine how ACCESS could assist in the 'technology explosion' mentioned by the Minister. As well, the kinds of skills that were in demand were not the same as those that could be taught in ACCESS courses. Catherwood (1985) argues that labour force expansion was needed particularly in the skilled trades area and those industries associated with new technology, whether these be in the manufacturing or the service sectors. He notes:

*The impact of the information revolution has had a very significant effect on employment, both with reference to the work content of specific jobs, and in relation to the pattern of employment... It is in the information sector that new jobs are being created, and where existing jobs are being transformed. These changes are a direct result of the impact of new technology upon the workplace (1985 p. 42).*

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<sup>28</sup>ACCESS Training Support, Wellington

<sup>29</sup>See Lauder et al's (1988) evaluation of ACCESS programmes in Canterbury.

The need for training in skilled work underpins Catherwood's arguments; this contrasts greatly with the form of ACCESS as it was implemented, which was unable to offer such skills training. In the analysis of the British YTS in chapter one, it was argued that training based on occupational training families (OTFs) were more a political strategy to define individuals as deficient than an attempt to provide real skills. In New Zealand as well as in Britain, post-school training courses have tended to focus on behavioural and attitudinal factors rather than work skills (Raffe 1984c; Korndorffer 1987a).

It is likely, then, that the 'needs of capital' arguments put forward in the ACCESS documents owed little or nothing to the real needs of diverse capitals and a lot to the need to provide an attractive political rationale for the ACCESS programme. There is another reason, too, why the Government was unlikely to support real technological development (beyond a small amount of aid to help economic recovery; see below), which lies in the dominant economic approach that was being promoted by Treasury and the Minister of Finance and, as argued above, supported by the Minister of Labour.

The accumulation strategy adopted by the Labour Government, and put into place throughout the state and civil society, was a strict adherence to free-market monetarism. This involved removing all subsidies and other forms of industrial intervention, minimising as far as possible state intervention and expenditure on the state, and relying on the forces of the free market to develop an efficient and productive industrial sector (Treasury 1987; Lauder 1987).

The state strategy put in place to complement this broad approach was, as noted above, a 'structural' supply side approach to state services. Whilst on the one hand aiding this broader vision of capitalist expansion, the same policy ensured that the actual training demands of capital and/or civil society could not be met; as structural policy responds

only to supply signals, not demand signals. That is, ACCESS in practice was predicated on state priorities and what the state allowed to be spent, not at all on 'needs'. Thus the *policy of ACCESS cannot be considered as an accumulation strategy in itself*.

The particular definition of accumulation within the monetarist theory thus meant that the less state action or intervention took place, the more likely it would be that an increase in capital accumulation would take place. In ensuring that ACCESS could not, in fact, be an accumulative strategy, the larger state strove to achieve those conditions defined by monetarist theory for a broader increase in capital accumulation, through a reduction in both state services and controls on the 'market'.

The *capacity* of the state to promote capital accumulation thus depended, according to this theory, on its own inverse development into a minimal interventionist unit. State *capacity*, defined earlier as the ability of the state to intervene in the other sectors of society and to shape needs, becomes redefined under monetarism as the ability to retract from these other spheres.

State *limits*, then, also become redefined. Advancing *limits*, better resources and more state power cause, inversely, a reduction in the ability of capital to work for itself. In a significant reversal of Marxist critique, monetarist theory sees the state superstructures not as enabling capitalist development but as a heavy load that capital cannot bear and which must limit its development. This view of the state received some support from various sections of capital; most notably from the NZ Business Roundtable who represented large-scale, multi-national, capital<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup>NZ Business Roundtable (1987) Better Value for Public Money (NZBR, Wellington).

It must be concluded that ACCESS cannot be viewed as a policy to aid capital accumulation. Whichever way it is viewed, ACCESS did not achieve this goal. The claims of the Minister that a central aim of ACCESS was to aid such accumulation must be seen as a strategy to gain support for the policy, rather than an expression of the actual or achievable goals of ACCESS.

#### 4. ACCESS and society (social control and ideology)

The third claim for post-school training programmes in the literature of the sociology of education (see chapter one) is that they are a form of social control. There are two sub-arguments attached to these claims. The first is that the aim of such programmes is to keep unemployed people 'off the streets'; the assumption being that 'on the streets' they could disrupt social order in some way. Thus, of the YTS in Britain, Dale (1985) states that this programme was a political response to the Brixton riots. The second argument relates to the provision of conventional attitudes towards work, which are seen as necessary (it is claimed) whether or not people actually have work. Thus, in the absence of work, individuals must continue to be kept 'work-ready'. This section deals with each of these arguments in turn.

The first meaning of social control is clearly spelled out by Nash (1987 p. 34):

*Young people in this new transition education are there because they are not wanted by employers and because school has finished with them and because they have finished with school. They would like to be in work but it is cheaper for the state to provide these programmes than it is to provide work. Some provision has to be made if only because thousands of unemployed young adults cannot possibly be allowed to become an uncontrollable and potentially riotous group. The essential reason why there is this transition provision at all is thus not the technical necessity of training (still less a commitment to education) but the imperative of social control (my emphasis).*

The view that such programmes exist essentially for this purpose appears to be widespread, not only among academics but also among practitioners and young people themselves. Robinson (1987 p. 59), a transition tutor, remarks:

*I think the real reason behind the courses was to keep a few kids off the streets. Although they weren't on the streets. Maybe the real reason was a genuine wish by the Government; I really don't know.*

In fact, there is little evidence at all that social control in the 'keeping them off the streets' sense was considered as either necessary or desirable during the process of the formation of the ACCESS training programme, nor in its implementation. Although the effects of unemployment on crime rates and levels of mental illness (Furnham 1988 p.134) was well-documented and well-accepted, it was left to the 'agents of coercion', the police and the courts, to deal with criminal behaviour arising from unemployment. Neither the Government nor the media seemed terribly concerned that unemployment would bring a revolution. As Robinson notes, the kids, on the whole, were not in great evidence 'on the streets' anyway.

As well, at the structural level the ACCESS training programme was incapable in practice of fulfilling this function. The programme, simply, was not big enough to accommodate all potential troublemakers, were these to be defined as all the unemployed or even all the young unemployed. Most of the time, particularly as unemployment rose, less than 10 percent of the unemployed at any one point attended an ACCESS course, and, as attendance was voluntary, there was little of the 'coercive' social control apparatus in evidence. Further, there is doubt that the ACCESS courses were long enough (in either hours per day, days per week or number of weeks) or effective enough to prevent 'trouble', should this arise.

There is some evidence to support the claim of social control in the second sense described above; that of teaching young people work attitudes in the absence of work.

Korndorffer (1987c p.217) outlines clearly the logic behind this view:

*It is claimed that, by promoting the acquisition by students of personal attributes such as discipline, reliability and adaptability, tutors in social and life skills programmes are... ensuring that young people accept uncritically the definitions of how they should live and what they should value.*

Certainly, in relation to the vocationally-oriented ACCESS course, there is evidence of this approach:

*ACCESS will provide a wide range of both work related skills and personal skills including basic literacy and numeracy, job search techniques, life skills, self confidence, etc<sup>31</sup>.*

All of which, as Korndorffer notes, basically reinforces a view of the jobless young person as deficient in skills. However, she goes on to note that this kind of social control strategy is subverted at the level of practice where the reality of unemployment comes into collision with the official discourse in the classroom:

*Unless the Department of Labour placed an officer in every social and life skills training classroom, there is no way that they could completely control what goes on in that classroom. The tutors in these classrooms are not 'structural dopes' who simply reproduce a given official curriculum of social and life skills. They are agents who are able to challenge official discourse that defines the students as lacking the attributes and attitudes that will get them jobs, and are able to construct a curriculum in practice that enables the students to gain some control over their lives (1987c p. 226).*

In other words, in the framework of this study, the state is *limited* in its ability to construct a hegemony and project it downwards into civil society. Civil society has its own sets of common sense, and its own understandings of material conditions, and the state is often unable to alter these. A central reason for this is that the state is clearly not united in its ideologies; the agents at the periphery may challenge the dominant

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<sup>31</sup>ACCESS pamphlet, op cit.



understandings, what Korndorffer calls the 'official discourse', stemming from the centre.

Korndorffer's work was based on a study of YPTP courses. By the time ACCESS was instituted, it was already plain that post-school training could not, and did not, turn out lots of well-motivated, work-ready, skilled young people. It is hard to see, then, that this could be the central reason for the ACCESS training programme.

Although the provision of work related attitudes and basic skills was a strong official argument for the ACCESS training programme, there is much evidence that state policy-makers were aware that, under the limited conditions in which ACCESS would operate, this form of social control was unlikely to be very effective. Therefore, as for the notions of accumulation and legitimation, social control is not a convincing argument for state support of the ACCESS training programme.

## 5. What role has ACCESS played for the state?

The breakdown of the ACCESS training policy has occurred, I have argued, because the policy in practice has not played any useful role for either the state, capital or civil society since it was implemented. This is partially because of the huge gap between the conception of ACCESS and its execution, and partially because of the particular material and ideological conditions within which the programme operated.

The provision of ACCESS training proved to be a long way from the conception of Scott and his colleagues of a broad range of educational and vocational training choices available to all who wanted them. Indeed, as Lauder, Khan and McGlinn (1988, p.35) note:

*There is little evidence that ACCESS courses provide any kind of education, if we take education to mean developing systematically. Similarly, it has to be*

*doubted that ACCESS provides more than a token training for specific work skills. Indeed, there are a number of systems organisational factors in-built into ACCESS that suggest that even training for specific work skills at the semi-skilled level is not a major purpose of the programme.*

At the institutional level, we can understand this as an outcome of the seizing of control of ACCESS by the Department of Labour, and the consequent narrow emphasis on work skills, coupled with an inability of ACCESS training courses to, in fact, offer the kind of work skills that were in high demand in the workforce. The tying of the success of these programmes to the ability of 'trainees' to gain work further undermined any educative potential for these programmes. As Lauder *et al* (1988, p.35) note:

*... if courses do not achieve the negotiated outcome criteria they are liable to be dropped and since the outcome criteria do not require direct judgements about the skills learned on a course to be made we can assume that ACCESS is not, primarily, about the development of skills.*

Placed within the material conditions of increasing unemployment, and within the ideological agenda of the retreat of the state from the 'market', the reasons for the continuation of ACCESS, when it appears to play no useful role, becomes a puzzle. The rest of this section will provide a sketch of suggested reasons why the State has continued to support this programme. Three possible reasons, all of which have some evidence to back them up, are considered here: the ideological role of ACCESS in meeting the needs of the state to be seen to respond to unemployment; the crisis of senior schooling brought about by youth unemployment; and, last but not least, the possible, although minimal, role of ACCESS, under particular material conditions, in aiding the monetarist vision of a perfect free market and economic growth.

The first role that ACCESS played was essentially opportunist. It *replaced* the large structure of fully subsidised (and most partially subsidised) job creation programmes, offering not only a new focus for state intervention in unemployment but also a new rationale. The Minister of Employment led a scathing ideological attack on what he

called 'make-work' schemes<sup>32</sup>, attacking them as propping up inefficient industries, putting 'real' workers out of a job and being far too expensive. The replacement of these schemes by ACCESS would, it was claimed, address the real causes of unemployment; a lack of skills in the workforce. Whether or not ACCESS was able to play its assigned role, then, it certainly fulfilled the political purpose of helping to demolish the ideological basis of the State's traditional interventionist role, of creating jobs at times of high unemployment.

As an opportunist vehicle ACCESS was mildly successful. Although opposition to the rationale for the training scheme was widespread amongst community groups and the unemployed, this became focused on the *form* that state provision would take. Had no alternative to job creation programmes been developed, the reaction would have been much worse. As well, the regionalised structure of ACCESS allowed for a process of *incorporation*, whereby significant community groups and unions were nominated to participate in the ACCESS structure<sup>33</sup>. As I have discussed above, this then ensured at least formal acceptance of the policy.

As an opportunist policy, then, ACCESS helped to defuse mass opposition to what was a huge withdrawal of resources by the state from the area of employment policies, put into place at a time when unemployment was the most pressing political concern of New Zealanders. It was something of an ideological coup under those conditions. However, this use of ACCESS is not enough to explain the Government's continued adherence to the policy.

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<sup>32</sup>For example, Manawatu Evening Standard, 25.1.88 p. 1: "But Mr. Goff said make-work schemes would not help reduce unemployment". This term, essentially one of abuse, actually replaced 'job creation' schemes in official discourse at this time.

<sup>33</sup> Two good examples of this process of incorporation were the election of Mike O'Brien and Paul Swain to, respectively, the chairs of the Manawatu & Wellington REACs. Both of these people were Labour Party activists with strong ties to local unemployment organisations. Various union activists, too, were put into the same position.

The second role of the ACCESS policy was, in effect, to provide some post-school activity for the young unemployed. This needs to be examined in light of the situation within schools. Until a decade ago, the sixth and seventh forms had been almost solely the preserve of those 'academic' young people heading for tertiary education or training in specific industry areas that required a higher school qualification. The crisis of youth unemployment from 1978 onwards, however, brought young people under increasing pressure to gain higher school qualifications to get any job at all<sup>34</sup>; thus causing what has been called 'credential inflation' (Nash, 1985). This process led to an inability of schools to cope with the high numbers of 'non-academic' young people entering the sixth and seventh forms.

In the terms of this analysis, the *capacity* of the schools had been forged on their role as a selective device, progressively shedding groups of young people so that the higher levels of the institutions remained quite small; their purposes quite specific. The growth in retention rates between 1978 and 1988, from 50.5 percent to 63.0 percent of third formers reaching form six<sup>35</sup> triggered a crisis of the schools' capacity to cope effectively<sup>36</sup>.

As ACCESS was a supply-side policy, which would not extend according to demand for its use, it does appear that the schools during this period were used to take the 'overflow' of young people wishing to enter work but unable to find it. Although in

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<sup>34</sup>Snook (1988b) has recently attacked the assumption that higher qualifications increase the chances of young people getting work.

<sup>35</sup> The retention rate for young Maori people into the sixth form is much lower than the overall figure. This can partially be explained by the higher levels of attrition of Maori pupils "prior to entry into the senior school ... while only 8 percent of non-Maori students left school prior to form 5 in 1987, there was a loss of 30 percent of all Maori secondary school students. This gap is further extended beyond the fifth form, with half as many Maori as non-Maori students remaining at school to form 6" (Pole 1989 p.78). Retention rate figures come from the Research and Statistics Department, Department of Education, Wellington (unpublished).

<sup>36</sup> This did not prevent the State from actively encouraging this process, however. See footnote 1, in the Introduction to this thesis.

numerical terms youth unemployment continued to increase, this number was partly offset by the higher school retention rates. As well, extra funding was given to the burgeoning in-school transition programmes. At the time ACCESS was announced, transition education in schools had been allocated only \$2.6 million, just one percent of ACCESS funding. By 1989 this had been increased to \$13.7 million.

Despite the attempts to keep young people at school, probably because it had been cheaper to do so, then Government had acknowledged the plight of so-called 'disadvantaged' young people in the labour market, and ACCESS was primarily geared towards this group. The majority of ACCESS trainees, in practice, were under 20 years of age, with low or no school qualifications and little chance of gaining full-time work in a shrinking labour market.

The ACCESS programme thus incorporated a populist appeal to aid the disadvantaged into work. However, this discourse soon became incorporated into one of individual deficit, and the justification for the low success rate of ACCESS was based on the low entry skills of trainees. In fact, the capacity of ACCESS to overcome disadvantage was virtually non-existent; as Lauder *et al* (1988, p.38) note:

*... the present structure of provision of post-compulsory education and training merely serves to reinforce current inequalities and does little or nothing to upgrade the skills of the workforce.*

Thus ACCESS played an important role in offering an alternative destination for some groups of school leavers; notably those who had very little chance of gaining work. The high Maori participation rates on ACCESS were particularly significant in this respect. Nevertheless, ACCESS had, as can be expected, little impact on the unemployment levels of these groups; it simply offered them a place to go, which was important in maintaining a broad based ideology of opportunity for young people.

To take this analysis further, it seems likely that ACCESS replaced work for a significant proportion of young 'disadvantaged' school leavers. ACCESS may have acted in some cases as a form of peripheral labour market, providing a 'training allowance' as a substitute for a wage<sup>37</sup>, and training as a substitute for work (see Gordon 1989d). The collapse of the youth labour market, which has traditionally consisted of those young people not entering further education, left a big hole that has partially been filled by ACCESS. However, whereas the advantaged middle class enter higher education in order to increase their later job opportunities (whether or not this strategy is successful, see Snook 1988b), the disadvantaged young, it appears, gained little or nothing in terms of future opportunities from ACCESS.

This is a complex area that requires further research on school retention rates, unemployment and ACCESS participation in relation to the level of 'disadvantage' of young people in the current youth labour market. It does seem clear from the evidence above that ACCESS has provided a place for young people to go to as an alternative to both schooling and unemployment. However, it does not appear that ACCESS materially improves the employment chances of these young people, although this is not to deny that ACCESS courses can be very effective in teaching what Korndorffer (1987c) calls 'really useful knowledge'.

The growth of youth unemployment is causing a growing crisis in the senior school system, one which is only partially alleviated by minimal transition funding and a supply-led ACCESS programme. This issue will be addressed further in the conclusion to this thesis.

The third and final area to be examined in this section is the contribution ACCESS may make to the achievement of a free market society along the lines developed in

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<sup>37</sup> This situation has altered somewhat in 1989, with the introduction of a standard, means tested youth allowance for all young people between the ages of 16 and 20.

Treasury's vision. In other words, does the ACCESS policy foster economic efficiency and economic growth in a deregulated economy?

There are a number of issues that could be raised here, but many of them stray far beyond the boundaries of this thesis into the realm of economic theory<sup>38</sup>. However, in a December 1988 paper<sup>39</sup>, Treasury lays out the costs and benefits of Government expenditure on employment and training programmes:

*Benefits:*

- *Improvements in human capital, which tends to deteriorate when not in use.*
- *Improved employment opportunities for the disadvantaged.*
- *Reduced social and psychological costs arising from long-term unemployment.*
- *Product of any work done under the scheme.*
- *Benefit payments avoided and tax payments gained from those finding employment.*
- *More equitable distribution of job opportunities and income.*
- *Reducing the problem of hysteresis, where cyclical increases in unemployment become permanent because the long-term unemployed become much less employable.*

*Costs:*

- *Deadweight: Government funds events that would have occurred anyway.*

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<sup>38</sup>One clear example of this is the debate over 'labour market flexibility', or allowing wages to fall during periods of recession when capital is unable to sustain profits. The basis of struggle over this issue, the adherence to it by the Treasury and the ex-Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas, and its rejection by the Labour Government makes a fascinating story but is largely tangential to the arguments of this thesis. In one aspect, however, both ACCESS and the unemployment benefit are relevant in as much as they may have played a role in either allowing wages to fall (in the sense that wage labour becomes devalued to the level of the unemployment or training wage) or in keeping them up (in as much as benefit levels may, in some cases exceed the low wages on offer). Treasury tended to hold the latter view (Briefing papers to Ministerial meeting on Economic and Employment growth, 8.2.89).

<sup>39</sup>Treasury, The (1988) Government Expenditure and Employment (in briefing papers to the Ministerial meeting on economic and employment growth, 8.2.89).

- *Substitution: employers substitute those in the target group for those outside, without increasing jobs.*
- *Displacement: both individuals, sponsors and communities may come to rely on the state to provide answers. Consequently, Government can find it hard to withdraw from schemes even in times of rapidly falling unemployment.*
- *The cost of funding the schemes, and the accompanying "crowding out" effect on the private sector, with a consequent loss of sustainable, real jobs.*
- *Count effects: not all those eligible for the schemes may be included in the unemployment count and/or receive unemployment or other welfare benefits. Attempts to minimise this by targetting will tend to discriminate against women.*

It may be possible to derive some notion of why the state continues to support the ACCESS programme from this list of costs and benefits. In terms of the benefits, it is unclear whether ACCESS achieves many or any of those on Treasury's list. For example, the human capital argument seems to be based on a particularly mechanistic view of people; can being unemployed really be described as being "out of use"? The arguments about increased employment opportunities seem to be contradicted by the evidence given above, although no comparative figures for those unemployed people not on ACCESS schemes are available. The equity arguments, too, depend on the subsequent employment prospects of trainees; to participate in an ACCESS scheme does not, in itself, ensure equity<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, whilst it does appear that, for the duration of the courses, ACCESS somewhat improves the social and psychological well-being of participants (Robinson 1987), again it is not clear what benefits extend beyond the period of the course. Therefore, Treasury's list of benefits cannot be said to unequivocally provide justifications for state post-school training courses.

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<sup>40</sup>This is not to say that there was not a high level of disadvantaged people on ACCESS schemes. In fact, participation by Maori people over the first 18 months of ACCESS was very high at 51 percent (ACCESS training support, Wellington), although overall levels of disadvantage tended to be spread across the spectrum (ibid). However, whether ACCESS improved the opportunities of these people or merely maintained them (as Lauder et al 1988 claim) is unclear.



In relation to the costs that Treasury lists, the situation is even clearer. None of the costs listed, except those relating to the actual costs of provision (part of which is a substitute for costs which the state would have otherwise to pay in unemployment benefits) and the cost of apparently higher unemployment figures (which is an ideological, not a monetary, cost) are relevant to ACCESS. There is evidence that ACCESS increases total unemployment figures, as about one third of those who participate on ACCESS courses are not registered as unemployed (ACCESS Training Support, Wellington).<sup>40b</sup> However, whether they would become enrolled, had they not been on training schemes, would also have to be taken into account.

In Treasury's cost/benefit terms, then, there is little justification for state involvement in the ACCESS programme. However, when placed within the macroeconomic framework, another justification emerges, relating to the positioning of ACCESS within particular economic circumstances. Treasury argues that the timing of the implementation of employment and training schemes is crucial to their success:

*If expenditure is made too much in advance of an upturn then the improvements in human capital will have eroded again by the time of the upturn. If expenditure is made too late, then the Government reinforces the cycle of demand for labour, possibly largely wasting public funds<sup>41</sup>.*

The assumptions about the cyclical, as opposed to the structural, nature of unemployment implied in this passage should be noted. But putting that aside, Treasury then goes on to spell out its analysis of the role of the ACCESS training programme:

*In New Zealand's circumstances, this suggests that the expansion in ACCESS may not have been optimally timed but that the programme may now be coming more into its own as employment opportunities start to open out again.*

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<sup>41</sup>Treasury, op cit.

<sup>40b</sup> This is because a number of people are included on official unemployment and training figures who would otherwise, if they were not on an ACCESS course, ~~not~~ not appear.

So, according to Treasury, the use of ACCESS lies in promoting job skills at a period in which jobs are beginning to once again be created as a result of a broader economic upturn. Its use over the past two years, concomitantly, has been of virtually no value because the economic conditions did not exist by which the programme could have been taken advantage of. As a result, skills learned on ACCESS were wasted and had been, over time, depleted. In other words, ACCESS training did serve no useful purpose for the state but, given the projected economic upturn, ACCESS may in the future prove useful in providing job skills in an expanding economy. Future ACCESS schemes may serve some accumulation function, then, in ways that they have been unable to in the first two years.

The arguments used by Treasury contain a number of contradictions relating to the nature of unemployment, the usefulness of ACCESS as a labour market intervention, the transferability of skills from training course to workplace and a number of other factors. It is not my purpose to challenge these here. The central point is that within the dominant monetarist economic philosophy, ACCESS is seen as having a 'labour market' role to play, and that therefore it has some imputed value for the Government (and the state as a whole).

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the implementation and the breakdown of ACCESS, as it was conceived in the policy formation stage, occurred as simultaneous processes. It was argued that the ACCESS programme served no discernible useful purpose for the state in terms of its role as a post-school training initiative. The final part of the chapter, however, argued that the policy did serve a number of other goals, relating to its position within overall state policy processes.

## **Chapter six**

### **Theoretical evaluation and future directions**

This concluding chapter has two separate components. The first section will assess the usefulness of the theoretical framework of *limits* and *capacity* of the state employed throughout the current study, and will evaluate whether this framework can be extended beyond the current study into a more general consideration of the state in education. The second section will offer a brief summary of current, and some possible future developments within the ACCESS training policy. The chapter concludes that a state-centred analysis has been of particular assistance in examining the ACCESS policy, as on many occasions the state itself, rather than capital or civil society, has been the driving force of policy development and change.

#### **1. The analytical framework: limits and capacity of the state**

The analytical framework developed in this thesis was derived from the work of others (e.g. Skocpol 1985; Dale 1986b) who have recognised that neo-Marxist theoretical approaches do not provide an adequate account of the autonomous role of the state in policy processes. The framework goes further than other accounts of educational policy (e.g. Carnoy and Levin 1985, Apple 1982, 1986, CCCS 1981) in offering a basis for a more thorough analysis of state processes. However, it does not go as far as Mouzelis (1988) suggested, in erecting a theoretical edifice alongside Marx's analysis of the economic, that would view the political as a mode of production with its own forces and relations of domination (see chapter two). The theoretical and analytical problems associated with such a problem would be immense, although it is an attractive solution to the present neglect of the state sphere.

The theoretical approach taken here is self-consciously aligned to much of the analysis being undertaken at present within the sociology of education, particularly in Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The rise of monetarist policies in education has required new approaches to research. This has been evident in New Zealand where much of the best scholarship in this field has been appropriated by Treasury and used to argue policy approaches completely at odds with those envisaged by the authors of the research<sup>1</sup>.

The impetus for a more coherent approach to the analysis of state policy arose out of the contradiction of monetarist policies being pursued by a Labour Government, which at the same time introduced a number of policies aimed at overcoming disadvantages caused by class, gender and ethnic position. It was fairly obvious that some agencies of the state were pursuing policies that aimed to free capital from its need to respond to the demands of a liberal-democratic society, while other agencies were working equally hard to maintain the traditional redistributive role of the post-war state. ACCESS provided a site where, eventually, most of the conflicts of the larger state were played out between two agencies in particular.

However, as chapter three showed clearly, the interface of education and the workforce has been a source of contestation throughout this century, and it is not surprising that some of the larger conflicts of the state were encapsulated in this small policy area.

The encroachment of monetarist policies did provide a severe test to the framework of *limits* and *capacity*. Under the previous, social democratic settlement, the *limits* of the state were defined in terms of the proportion of the total resources it could capture, and the distribution of those resources within and between state agencies. The monetarist

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<sup>1</sup>See Treasury 1987. The work of Richard Harker, Roy Nash, Hugh Lauder, Ranginui Walker and others has been liberally quoted in this document.

era has sought a reversal of these *limits*, whereby the state agency demanding the fewest resources is deemed to be most efficient and therefore most powerful. This has caused a partial reversal of power relations within the state. Education, for example, once the jewel in the crown of the New Zealand state is in the process of being dismantled and reformed under the programme outlined by Picot (1988) and put in place by *Tomorrows Schools* (Minister of Education, 1988).

A number of aspects of state limits were examined in this study. The first was the relations of the state to capital and civil society. Clearly the move towards monetarist policies was in line with the demands of some sections of capital, notably 'big business' represented by the New Zealand Business Roundtable (1987). However other capitalist blocs, such as the primary producers, were adversely affected by the state-led changes to the economy. The sector of finance capital, at least until the sharemarket crash of October 1987, was perhaps the biggest beneficiary of the changes. Capital was thus differentially affected by the new policies, and only in the 'big business' and finance sectors was there much evidence of a state/capital alliance, although the significance of this should not be underestimated.

The level of capital accumulation during the period had differential effects on the state. The removal of subsidies and protection, the devaluation and floating of the dollar, the rise in interest rates and the pursuit of low inflation caused massive drops in production in some industry areas, which in turn brought about the high levels of unemployment described in chapter five. There is no doubt that the cumulative effects of structural economic change put strain on the state's ability to function effectively. The cost of unemployment benefits alone exceeded \$1 billion in 1988-89. However, it is difficult to separate the *real* funding crisis of the state from the use of funding shortages as an ideological tool by monetarist agents to secure a reduction in state services. To what extent were the *limits* on the state driven by internal exigencies rather than material necessities? To this extent, the model of *limits* is overly weighted

towards consideration of the material effects of capital, and cannot easily discriminate between these and ideological factors. It is not clear how the ideological and material limits of the state in relation to capital can be differentiated; however, this is a complex area and no single concept can adequately explore the nuances of the relationships between the two spheres.

The *limits* of the state in relation to civil society are somewhat clearer, and are once again understood in relation to ideological factors. On the one hand, the state began to pursue a programme of supply-side policies, justifying this in relation to the need for funding cutbacks in 'inefficient' state services. On the other hand, however, more policies than ever were targeted to the working class family, women and Maori. It cannot be said that the ideological justifications for state action were very successful, particularly in relation to employment and unemployment. Yet, beyond the provision of basic state services, civil society had little power to limit the move towards supply-side policies. However many of the effects of earlier decisions are only now beginning to be felt. The potential for the future breakdown of consent for state cutbacks can only be speculated upon.

The introduction of monetarist policies were severely *limited* by the institutional structure of semi-autonomous state agencies. The account in chapter four of the Department of Education's resistance to the monetarist strategy, and the Department of Labour's rapid adoption of it, demonstrates the problems involved in making broad changes within the state as a whole. Eventually, the Government was forced to disband the Department of Education completely, change the administrative structure of education at all levels, and regroup this sector into a new set of institutional structures in order to implement its policy direction; the success of this strategy cannot yet be evaluated. Institutional *limits* thus make state agencies resistant to change; sometimes to the extent that the institutions are dismantled.

The area of resource *limits* received a lot of attention in this study. The shape and distribution of resources indicates the priorities of the state as a whole. However, it is fairly clear from the real reduction in state expenditure on unemployment schemes over the period that ideological factors, in this case the continued assertion that unemployment could only be solved by the achievement of a free-market, self-regulated economy, can themselves significantly alter the allocation of resources within the state. Unemployment remained a high priority which demanded, under the new ideology, an ironically reduced expenditure on unemployment programmes<sup>2</sup>. The historical pattern of resource allocation in this area of the state, as in many others, was severely interrupted by monetarist ideologies. The switch from conjunctural to structural modes of policy making led to new kinds of priorities and new patterns of state expenditure.

The very centralised nature of the policy process, identified as a further *limit* on the state, proved in this instance to provide the conduit for the swift application of the new policy approach without always, however, gaining the consent of those who would have to implement the policies. The resistance of the Department of Education to change has already been cited as the main cause of its demise. The role of Treasury as a control Department, which was designed to allow for expenditure advice at all levels of the policy process, in fact provided the perfect vehicle by which monetarist philosophy could be introduced in every policy area. No other state agency, probably not even the Government, had the power and networks to permeate throughout the state its view of policy (see Grace's account of *ideological manoeuvre*, 1988 p.5).

The final limit on state action identified earlier was the relations between state agencies. There is little need to recount once again the *limits* on policy production and implementation caused by the struggles between the Department of Education and the

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<sup>2</sup>In the belief, of course, that the further state commitments are reduced, the quicker will come the economic recovery (Treasury 1987).

Department of Labour; their effects are well documented in chapter four. In the next section of the conclusion, the present and future effects of these will be described.

The second analytical concept employed in this study was that of state capacity. The intention behind this concept was to signal that not only are states and state agencies affected by limits, but that they themselves have the power to shape ideological and material conditions. In this sense, the term *capacity* is similar to that of *autonomy*; however, state *capacity* is not always intentional whereas the notion of autonomy seems to suggest intentionality, or at least agency.

Four aspects of state capacity were suggested in chapter two. The first related to the particular hegemonic settlements between the state and other spheres of society. Both the mandate for the state to act, and the particular ideological circumstances, were said to affect state capacity. The central issue that needs to be explored here is the move towards monetarist policies and the consequent shift from conjunctural to structural policy development. With respect to the monetarist view of the state, Lauder (1987 pp. 5-6) notes:

*First and foremost, the state is considered to stifle the impulse to make profits because it draws off funds from the private sector thereby reducing the latter's ability to invest and make profit. In the jargon of the day, the state 'crowds out' the private sector. Moreover in doing so it stifles both the entrepreneurial initiative and imagination of rich and poor. It reduces the capacities of the rich because it overtaxes them.*

The *capacity* of the state, then, to act in particular ways is itself, according to monetarist theories, to be eliminated, as such action in turn prevents 'real' action by private individuals through, in particular, the disturbance of economic signals from the free market. The particular condition this led to was a split in the state, between those agencies committed to the continuation of conjunctural policies and the growth of the state, and other agencies, notably the Treasury and, more recently, the State Services



Commission<sup>3</sup>, who have worked to ensure the reduction in the provision of state services. The two, contradictory, ideological strands have worked side by side for a considerable period of time. Clearly, the Government (see above) has itself been racked by similar contradictions, and both capital and civil society are themselves split in contradictory ways over the approach the state should take. This struggle itself must reduce the *capacity* for state action in the state as a whole, and few state agencies, whichever orientation they uphold, are free from the ideological challenges of the other camp. It is the struggle itself, not its outcomes, that are constraining state *capacity* at present, although the implications for *future* state *capacity*, whatever the outcomes at this point, are likely to be significant.

The second aspect of *capacity* described in chapter two was the effects of the historical development of state agencies, their inter-relationships and effects on civil society. It is fairly obvious that the putative historical resilience to policy changes (Archer 1984), at least in the area of unemployment policy, does not necessarily shield state agencies from sudden change. Although the ACCESS training programme was based on historical precedents reaching back to 1978, the sudden abolition of job creation programmes marked a significant departure from previous practices which, although contested strongly, was successfully achieved. Part of the reason for this was that the new policies were justified by reference to new material conditions, in particular, the inability of schooling to respond to youth unemployment. On the other hand, the Department of Education, under attack for its liberal-democratic policies, exhibited a great deal more resistance to change. Nevertheless, the reform of the education system successfully countered this block and was, as well, presented in an ideological form which appeared to increase the democratic thrust of education. History, it must be assumed, is no saviour of state functions.

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<sup>3</sup>This agency has translated the monetarist mandate into a series of policies relating to the recruitment, retention and working conditions of state services personnel.

The third area of *capacity*, and a particularly interesting one in the context of the current study, is the ability of the state to act in its own interests. It can be argued that the adoption of monetarist policies, which requires a huge sacrifice of state services, can be seen as antithetical to the interests of the state, and yet these policies were actively promoted very clearly from within the state sphere. However, although this may be true of the state as a whole, there is little doubt that monetarism privileged Treasury, in particular, over other agencies of the state; there is no record that Treasury has undertaken the staffing and funding cutbacks common in other areas of state services. The situation from 1984 can best be described, as noted above, as a polarity of interests within the state, undermining the *capacity* of the sphere as a whole but privileging certain agencies within it.

The final area of *capacity* to be considered was noted in chapter two as "the cumulative effects of the shaping factors of state agencies on the nature and aspirations of society". At a very broad level, there is little doubt that these effects saved many aspects of state services from abolition by the monetarist agents. In 1987, the Treasury essentially argued that the state was an inefficient provider of education, because it inevitably provided more education than would be provided under a private system of schooling<sup>4</sup>:

*In so far as it does exceed the optimum level, government intervention is imposing a net cost. Further, it is reinforcing the costs of institutionalization referred to earlier. Thus, both in terms of the performance of educational institutions and of the weight given to them as against other educational sources, government expenditure is liable to be significantly inefficient and ineffective. Education provides an illustration of the ineluctable tendency for any government programme to grow incrementally where not explicitly resisted.*

These attacks on schooling, however, did not result in any particular reduction in education services (except, perhaps, expenditure at the tertiary level), but rather in a

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<sup>4</sup>Treasury (1987), Volume II, p. 38.

series of policies which would merely guard against those "ineluctable" tendencies that Treasury describes. A real reduction in state education services would simply be politically and socially untenable, although a cutback in funding for the same amount of services does appear to have been effected.

The concepts of *limits* and *capacity* provide a structural imperative to examine the material and ideological conditions within which the state operates in a historically specific moment. The usefulness of the framework lies in its tendency to treat conceptual notions like accumulation and legitimation functions as problematic; subject not to theoretical assertion but to empirical proof. The weakness of the framework essentially involves its inability to specify relations between material and ideological imperatives, although this distinction, too, can be examined at least in part empirically.

The framework adopted in this thesis does expose the shortcomings of the approaches taken by Althusser (1972), Archer (1984) and Salter and Tapper (1981) that were outlined in chapter one. Althusser's analysis of state apparatuses such as schools rested on a model of the state as a superstructure, built to uphold the ideological and material conditions necessary for capital. There is no space within Althusser's theory for any notion that the state may 'work for itself', nor for the possibility of struggle and contradictions within the state sphere. The driving force of change, for Althusser, is necessarily and unproblematically located within the sphere of capital, and not at all within the state itself. His theory omits entirely the possibility of the kinds of state struggle outlined in chapters four and five of this thesis.

Archer's (1984) approach, too, tends to omit the possibility for struggle within the state sphere, although she goes further than Althusser in recognising that the state has an existence separate from other spheres of society. However, the historical determinism of her account of the development of state education, in particular her emphasis on the way that the historical preconditions of state education determine its

current form, fails to make such development problematic. The structural contradictions entailed by state development, and captured within the concepts of *limits* and *capacity*, are entirely absent from Archer's theory. In particular, she fails to recognise the power relations that state development engenders. Her historical determinacy is quite inadequate for explaining the current shift in educational policies that the move towards monetarist economic solutions has engendered, and the alteration in power relations that have accompanied this shift.

Finally, Salter and Tapper's (1981) analysis focussed too narrowly on one particular state agency and those who worked within it. It has been clearly demonstrated in the analysis of the ACCESS Training Programme that it is not a particular agency, but the power relations between state agencies, that provide the driving force of policy change. This can be finally demonstrated by the pending abolition of the Department of Education and its replacement with the new Ministry; a move designed to reduce or even eliminate just those power relations described, in the British context, by Salter and Tapper.

Missing from all these accounts, then, is the concept of political struggle within the state as a whole and between its various parts. The concepts of *limits* and *capacity* have been useful precisely for bringing the notion of struggle to the forefront of state policy analysis. In a reversal of the traditional systems theory approaches (Prunty 1984), this framework has treated conflict, instead of harmony, as the driving force of policy change.

## 2. ACCESS for the future: Education or vocation?

It is customary in studies of this kind to conclude with some recommendations about the future of the policy issue under study. In terms of the analysis of ACCESS developed in chapters four and five, the most cogent recommendation would have to

be to abolish the policy altogether, on the grounds that it serves only two minimal purposes; an opportunist role for the state and a rather speculative role within the monetarist economic framework advocated by Treasury. It is not worth pursuing this aspect of the analysis further, as it does not provide a useful basis for consideration of state action. However, the issue I do want to focus on is whether the state will alter the ACCESS policy and, if so, in what direction it will move.

Some indications of change are already evident as this study is completed. The first, and most significant, is that it appears ACCESS will be relocated under the new Ministry of Education, which will replace the Department of Education from October 1989. This change was advocated by the Hawke Committee Report of July 1988, and confirmed in the Government policy document, 'Learning for Life' of February 1989 (Minister of Education 1989).

The second possibility for change is the creation of a training scheme, similar to ACCESS, located not within educational institutions but in the workplace. The beginnings of this kind of approach have already been mooted, with the planned introduction of a Conservation Corps and work experience training for the longer term unemployed<sup>5</sup>. Such an approach, bringing training into the workplace, would appear to be very much in line with the labour market goals sought by Treasury within the monetarist framework.

The evidence for both these approaches will be considered in this section. It will become clear that the old contest between the Department of Labour and the Department of Education over post-school training did not end with the introduction of ACCESS, and that the driving force of proposed changes may lie more firmly within the concerns of the state itself than with the need to address labour market problems.

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<sup>5</sup>Goff, Phil, Minister of Employment (1989) *Active Labour Market Policies* In Briefing Paper to Ministerial meeting on Economic and Employment Growth, February.

The Hawke Report argued that it was essential to raise the level of participation in post-compulsory education and training. Two reasons were given for this. First, New Zealand's rate of participation in this area is very low in relation to other OECD countries (see also Pole, 1989), and second, "increasing the average level of generic skills and abilities in the population is likely to be more important than responding to shortages of particular skills" (1988 p. 21). Moreover, the average level of skill required in the workforce was identified as having risen recently and, the Report claimed, it would continue to rise (ibid). The Hawke Report's arguments for a more unified system of post-compulsory education and training were developed out of these claims.

The Report rejected raising the school leaving age as a solution to the problem of skills shortages:

*The consequences for many schools of having to provide for significant numbers of reluctant returners would be significant. Disruptive students, vandalism, truancy and so on have a powerful effect on teacher recruitment and retention and on the public's perception of secondary schools. But the principal disadvantages lie elsewhere. Providing appropriate curricula and learning activities would not be easy (1988 pp. 21-22).*

The Report argues that the ACCESS scheme is partially "remedial to failures on the part of the regular educational system" (1988 p. 31). Thus, while ACCESS should not be funded through existing educational institutions, it should be under the aegis (perhaps as a separate section) of the proposed new Ministry of Education and Training (1988 p. 47)<sup>6</sup>:

*The ACCESS scheme is to some extent remedial, compensating for failure of the delivery system for education, and Education should not be able to shift its responsibilities elsewhere (1988 p. 50).*

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<sup>6</sup>Hawke's arguments for the new body to be called the Ministry of Education and Training were rejected by Government in favour of the Ministry of Education.

The points made by the Hawke Report here link back to the discussion at the end of chapter five, where it was argued that part of the usefulness of ACCESS was its ability to offer an alternative destination to young people who wished to leave school but were unable to gain work. The Report suggests that this is a useful and important role, and justifies the transfer of ACCESS from Labour Department to Education Ministry control.

The Labour Department officials on the Hawke committee, however, strongly disagreed with Hawke's recommendation, arguing "that there would be a clear advantage in leaving ACCESS and apprenticeship with the Department of Labour, with a commitment to a review in 5 years" (1988 p. 50). Nevertheless, the 'education' arguments for ACCESS were dominant in the Hawke Report. This is not to suggest that labour market considerations were altogether omitted. The new Ministry would not involve merely a change of name, but a whole new approach to post-compulsory education and training:

*...the education system should be required to accept responsibility for providing the training required to enable people to find employment. It should both want and be able to absorb an input from employers and from N.Z. Employment (within the Department of Labour). Advice about the allocation of government funds between "mainstream" education and ACCESS programmes should be principally the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Training as part of an "across the portfolio" approach to policy. The Ministry of Education and Training will have to build better relations with noneducationalists than has been possible for the Department of Education (1988 p. 60).*

The reformed Ministry, then, was to have a different focus from the Department of Education, especially in relation to the post-compulsory education sector. The protests by the Department of Labour had little to do with the focus of ACCESS, and much to do with the loss of institutional control. Indeed, Hawke's proposal that not only ACCESS, but also apprenticeship training and the Vocational Guidance section of the Department of Labour be transferred to the new Ministry of Education and Training

would significantly cut back the regionalised structure of the Department of Labour, leaving the Employment Advisory service as the only employment-related regional provision. This represented, for the Department of Labour, a major loss of its *capacity*, particularly since it had only recently extended its expertise into the area of education and training (see chapter five). The loss of over \$300 million in funding, too, which was by far the largest single component of the Department of Labour's budget, would have major effects on the resources of the Department.

The construction of the new Ministry of Education and Training, as proposed by Hawke, would have a significant impact on existing education agencies within the state<sup>7</sup>. It represents a move to constrain the *capacity* of educational agencies, which had developed historically through the liberal-democratic ethos promoted by various policy documents from Thomas (1943) onwards. Post-compulsory institutions were clearly now to respond to changes in the labour market; a policy approach which had been rejected throughout the post-war period.

In February 1989 the Government released a policy document, *Learning for Life*, (Minister of Education, 1989) which confirmed Hawke's proposals for ACCESS as well as the general labour market focus for education. REACs were to be funded through Vote: Education, and the Training Support Agency was to be transferred from the Department of Labour, to be a free-standing agency within the Ministry of Education<sup>8</sup> (ibid, pp.20, 28):

*The arrangement under which the agency works will ensure the agency's responsiveness to the needs of the labour-market and to the needs of the unemployed. It will be negotiated directly with the Associate Minister of*

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<sup>7</sup>However, Hawke was merely following, although in some ways extending, proposals that had been made several months earlier in the Picot Report (Picot, 1988).

<sup>8</sup>The emphasis on the free-standing structures for ACCESS is very interesting. The implication seems to be that ACCESS should be kept out of the hands of educators, who may pollute the labour market focus of the programme. Both Hawke and *Learning for Life* place emphasis on this.



*Education, with input from the Ministry of Education and the Department of Labour (ibid p.28).*

The apprenticeship and vocational guidance and counselling aspects of the Department of Labour were also to be incorporated within the Ministry, again co-ordinated across other state agencies. The Ministry of Education would incorporate a labour market focus across post-compulsory education and training institutions:

*This will be ensured by a variety of mechanisms including: labour-market expertise within the Ministry of Education; union/employer and Government involvement in the composition of NEQA; the tripartite composition of the Regional Employment and ACCESS Councils (REACs) and apprenticeship committees; the labour-market concern of the Training Support Agency; the facility for institutions to establish advisory bodies capable of offering labour-market advice; and appropriate labour-market goals written in the charters of institutions and developed within their corporate plans (ibid, p. 28).*

The conclusion that must be reached here is that the education agencies of the state had gained control over ACCESS at last, but that only a major change in the broad focus of the agencies themselves had allowed that to happen. The rebirth of a strong labour market focus in state education heralded a new settlement in the education/labour debates; one which has moved the state education system as a whole more closely in line with the needs of the workforce. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the Department of Labour had, through these processes, lost a significant amount of control. Given this agency's central role in supporting the monetarist economic policies, and the Department of Education's much more equivocal stance, this loss of control is significant.

What was won at the policy level in terms of labour market control over education may not be transmitted unproblematically into practice. It is inevitable that the historical role of the Department of Education will not simply be obliterated, either within the new Ministry or in the large number of educational institutions which will now have a great deal of autonomy (at least on a day-to-day basis; see Codd, Gordon and Harker 1989) over their operation within the system.

It is unlikely that the non-educational focus of ACCESS (Lauder et al 1988) will be continued when this policy comes under the control of the new Ministry. Given the largely meaningless role of ACCESS at the structural level, there is a great deal of space for reform; the direction of that reform, given the policy's new 'home', is likely to be away from the labour market and towards broad educational objectives.

It appears at this stage that the Department of Labour has been severely disadvantaged by the structural reformation of the state in education. However, there are a number of proposals that indicate the Department of Labour has its own plans for ACCESS, related to work-based training which would be controlled through the Department of Labour. This is the second trend in ACCESS training mentioned above.

The Hawke Committee Report had been written for Cabinet's Social Equity Committee. At the same time another report: *Report of the Working Group on Employment Policy* (Department of Labour, 1988), was being prepared for the same Committee. The basis of this group's recommendations was:

*That the key task for employment policy at present is to promote adjustment within the labour market to the change in the economy (1988 p. 18).*

This was very clearly not an educative aim; Hawke argues convincingly that even vocational training requires a range of skill beyond mere labour market adjustment (Hawke 1988 p.16). However, the Department of Labour argued very strongly that post-compulsory education and training or work experience should form the basis of working life for all people between the ages of 15 and 19:

*This does not imply a raising of the minimum school leaving age. What it does imply is general acceptance by society that in order to be well equipped for the world of the late 20th century and beyond, all people between the ages of 15 and 19 should be involved in higher education, initial vocational education and*

*training, or work experience with associated training or some mixture of the three<sup>9</sup> (my emphasis).*

The proposal for work experience along with training was not exactly new; the WSDP had offered a similar focus before it was abolished. However, that programme had employed young workers on award rates of pay. What was being proposed in the Report was a new approach, which can be summarised as 'work-based ACCESS'.

The Report stated that ACCESS training is at present limited by "its present focus on off-job training" (1988 p. 9):

*There is an increasing amount of analysis and research that stresses the value of work-based skills training. Apart from the value of practical experience and the motivational effects, the particular strength of this approach is the opportunity it offers for linking training to specific job opportunities.*

*The present off-job training focus of ACCESS arises partly because the target group is largely composed of disadvantaged school leavers, but also because of the industrial relations difficulties of negotiating suitable work-based training courses that can be run while trainees are on a training allowance (ibid p. 10).*

In other words, the Report argued for a work-based ACCESS scheme where young people would work (and receive training) on a training allowance instead of award rates of pay. As the Report notes, this proposal had been raised before but was vehemently objected to by unions, on the grounds that it essentially involved the introduction of youth rates of pay. As well, the administrative difficulties of policing training in numerous separate workplaces, the scope for exploitation by employers and the difficulties raised by the possibility of two groups of workers, in one workplace, undertaking the same work at different rates of pay had prevented any previous serious consideration of a work-based training programme.

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<sup>9</sup>This statement is contained in a set of papers sent by Max Kerr of the Department of Labour to the Minister of Employment in September 1988. It is not clear whether these were prepared for the Working Group report or whether they summarised them, as the latter report is undated. These papers were circulated to the National Council of the Labour Party, and particularly the Employment Committee of that group (of which I was at that time a member), for comment.

Yet there is little doubt that, in 1988, the Department of Labour was strongly advocating such a programme. By bringing employers into training and putting them "into a leadership role in defining training needs" (ibid, p. 11), not only would the aim of work-based training be realised (in a very cost-effective way; ibid), but it would encourage more work-based training beyond the ACCESS scheme: "the effectiveness of which ha[s] often been underestimated in the past" (ibid).

The Department of Labour argued several times in this report for a diversity of labour market interventions to deal with the differing needs of people and markets. This point was taken up strongly by the Minister of Employment at the Ministerial meeting on economic and employment growth, held in February 1989. The Minister did not, in his written submissions, refer directly to ACCESS work-based training, although on-job skills training and work experience are both raised as issues. At the present time, two major reports on ACCESS are about to be released; one covering the effectiveness of the programme and the other dealing with its cost effectiveness. It is likely, given the evidence outlined above in chapters four and five, that both these reports will be fairly negative. Were I to make a prediction at this late stage in my thesis, it would be that the shortcomings of ACCESS will be used by the Department of Labour to argue for a new, work-based training programme, on the grounds that the previous scheme was located too far from the workplace and its content was too general to allow for success. Thus, at just the point that control was to be gained by the Ministry of Education over ACCESS, the scheme would be abolished and funding channeled into work-based training, probably under the control of the Department of Labour.

### 3. Conclusion

The theoretical framework of *limits* and *capacity* developed in the early chapters of this thesis has provided the basis for a close-in examination of the state's role in the ACCESS training policy. The study has confirmed the usefulness of such a

framework, by demonstrating that the concepts derived from relative autonomy theory, in particular legitimisation, accumulation and social control, do not provide an accurate picture of this policy. Further, the points made in chapter five and in this chapter show very clearly that the impetus for continued policy development has come not from capital or civil society but from the state itself. The arguments that are likely to shape the future of ACCESS are driven almost completely by intra-state considerations; the continued struggle between the Labour and Education institutions forming to a great extent the characteristics of future policy provision in this area.

Very early in the study I claimed that the sociology of education had not developed adequate theoretical tools with which to examine state policies. This claim has been vindicated to a certain extent by the approach taken here, but nevertheless there is a strong need for further debate, discussion and research in this area, particularly given the long-term implications of monetarist state policies for educational provision. The framework used here provides some encouragement to those who are committed to state policy analysis but who have not previously had the theoretical tools to carry out this work; the domination of systems theory assumptions in this field can clearly be challenged. However, beyond relative autonomy theories of the state there is still much room for further theoretical development.

## **Appendix One**

### **Methodology**

The study documented in chapter four contains material from a number of sources, collected in differing ways. The key methodological processes adopted were first, the collection and analysis of policy documents and, second, those of observation and participation. However, it should be made clear that I was a participant in the study before, during and after the time that I was an 'observer', or a researcher. In this appendix I want to do two things; first, document my own participant roles in the events described here and, secondly, to document the specific research tasks I engaged in for the purposes of this study. There is an organic relationship between the two roles, often recognised in feminist research but frequently ignored or actively rejected in much mainstream research, where the model of 'objective', 'scientific' researcher still seems to pervade much research activity despite much profound critique of the desirability or even the possibility of such an approach.

#### **Researcher as participant**

My interest and involvement in the areas of unemployment and post-school training slightly precedes the events described in chapter four. In April of 1984 I was nominated by community organisations in the Manawatu to represent them on a new regional advisory committee - DETAC. I ended up, in fact, representing not only community organisations but also 'women' on that body. Shortly after this there was a change of Government, and the DETAC's around the country became entangled in the huge web of the Government's consultative process. Most of the reports described in chapter four, at least up to the 'New Deal', were actually received by me in my

position as a member of DETAC, and I contributed to some of the submissions that are mentioned.

At this stage I had no thought of making the policy process of the development of ACCESS the subject of my PhD. However, two sets of events at the beginning of 1985 caused me to change my mind. The first was the beginnings of the Labour Government's shift towards monetarist policies. For those of us used to the liberal-democratic state, the construction of monetarist policies came like a series of blows. The change was profound; for example, whereas *intervention* had previously been seen as something good, it was suddenly re-defined as public enemy number one. The state-led reshaping of social structures and values was underway, and it was, as chapter four records, to bring profound changes to many aspects of our lives. The second set of events that led me to this study was a visit made by DETAC to Levin. This town, 45km from Palmerston North, was under the aegis of the Manawatu DETAC; it was only later, and due entirely to the representations of Horowhenua's active MP, Annette King, that the region gained its own community committee. It became really clear that the Levin group were likely to receive pilot project funding, and, fascinated by the changes taking place in employment policy, I received permission to study the process of this pilot study. I was also, in this way, able to liaise between DETAC and the Horowhenua ACCESS Liaison Service, thus fulfilling a useful role in both organisations.

There is also another strand to my participatory role. As a member of the National Council, and later of the National Executive, of the New Zealand Labour Party during much of the period described here, I was able to get access to many documents, opinions and people that have assisted my research. There has been, over the period in which this study was carried out, some small conflict of interests between my position in the Labour Party and the information it gave me, and the research process. Wherever possible, and with one or two exceptions, I have not used the 'insider'

information I gained through my position in the study itself. In purely aesthetic terms this is a pity, as there are a number of places that the addition of some of that material would have added a further dimension to the study. However, the omission of that material did not alter the analysis of ACCESS at all.

### **Researcher as observer**

At the point at which I decided to make the development of ACCESS the subject of my PhD research, I focused on the issue of data collection. I began to store away reports, papers, press clippings and releases and figures for later analysis. I had myself placed on the Minister of Employment's mailing list, and received much material through that source. The material that forms the focus of the particular policy under review here thus comes from a number of sources. The first source is entirely public, and consists of policy documents, press statements and manifesto material that is available in the public sphere. The second source is also public. This is the statistical and forecasting material provided monthly by the various Government Departments, in particular the Department of Labour, which deals with training, unemployment and education. The third source consists of minutes, circulars and information given to the District Employment and Training Advisory Committee, of which I was a Government appointed member between 1984 and 1986. It also relates to the Horowhenua Access Liaison Service, whose development I studied for the whole period that this body was in existence; from mid-1985 until the end of 1986.

I gained permission from the Levin Committee to attend their monthly meetings as an observer. As well, I conducted a number of interviews with Ann Hinch, who was to become Director of the ALS. I was allowed to collect and copy any documents I chose from the ALS files, and received frequent reports from the service.



I played a further role, too. The ALS carried out a major survey of employers in the Horowhenua region in 1986. I was contracted to analyse the data and write two reports for the incoming REAC on employers needs in the Horowhenua region (Gordon, 1987b, 1988).

I have continued to collect material and information on ACCESS throughout the period of writing this thesis. As it nears completion I am very aware that the fate of the policy itself still hangs in the balance. By writing what is, in essence, a contemporary history of events which are still unfolding, I find myself with a story without an end.

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