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SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: WHOSE AGENDA? **CHOICES FOR THE FUTURE**

The Key Word is "Social"!

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Abstract

This paper considers the space within which the State, the Public Service and Common Wealth interact. In particular, power relationships which fall outside nation-states are examined. These general issues are related to the author's understanding of the responsibility of Tauiwi to move from notions of majoritarianism to better understanding Tino Rangatiratanga as the context for power relationships in Aotearoa.

In order to address these issues, setting the agenda for democracy is presented as an urgent priority for the Third Sector, alongside but independent of the State / Government / Statutory Sector and the Business / Commercial / Corporate Sector.

Issues of dependency are examined at personal and structural levels. The question of Social Responsibility is then related to the larger picture, of interrelationships between the natural system, the support system, and the social system. A brief description will be given, of some post-normal scientific methodologies which increase our ability to examine complex social processes, in ways that expose the inadequacy of many of the foundations of the currentlyfashionable doctrine of "economic rationality". For example, the currently-dominant hypothesis, that **either** we are "dependent" **or** we are "socially responsible", will be exposed. The possibility of redefining "work" will be used as an illustration of the recognition that There Are Many Options (TAMO), and it is not a question that There Is No Alternative (TINA)!

Introduction

The call by Government for action on Social Responsibility should be welcomed as recognition that policy requires more than market mechanisms for implementation. On the other hand, it should also be received with great caution, because the attempt over the last 20 years to incorporate many social activities into the market - by redefining them as commodities - has made much of what really matters to us invisible. This is an opportunity both to put Social Responsibility on the Agenda and to insist that social activities be seen in their full context of relationships between people, rather than seen only in the limited context of market transactions between individual buyers and sellers.

Current policy framework

The current requirement is, however, that instead of taking this full social context into consideration, priority must be given to "efficiency", which in practice comes down to maximising profit or minimising cost. This requirement has transformed the complex web of mutual relationships inherent in social activities into a simple sub-set of traded items of production, consumption and exchange. The policy development associated with this approach has been underpinned by slogans such as Margaret Thatcher's assertion that "there is no such thing as society, there are just individuals" [], "get big Government off my back" and concern about the "nanny state" on which some people are "dependent". When anyone points to the way prices never fully reflect all the relevant social factors, the outcome is described as "market failure", as if this is only a minor aberration on the way to incorporating everything into the market.

Alongside such conclusions is promotion of the idea that if everyone will just express their individual preferences and self-interest, and "demand", then the market will respond. It is time to remind ourselves that there is no such thing as supply and demand - only supply and funded demand. The market will not respond unless we have funds to go with our demands.

It is therefore of deep concern that the Social Welfare Minister Roger Sowry states that: "the proposed code of social responsibility will by its very nature be like the fiscal responsibility legislation, will broadly set the guidelines we will use for the new social development, and will spell out the set of responsibilities along with that set of rights we have in society".[]

The fiscal responsibility legislation is the backdrop to policy developed within a market framework. We need to be aware that new policy will be developed within that market framework unless we see that the Framework itself is broadened.

In addition, this current approach is associated with emphasis on "strategic management", where individual blame is apportioned when difficulties arise and "outcomes" are seen as clearly definable and not a matter of perspective. This emphasis on defining outcomes is what Christopher Pollitt, speaking at the 1997 NZ Public Service Senior Management conference, called:

"unwarranted conceptual imperialism.... There may be fundamental political and social dissensus as to what the desired outcomes are supposed to be. Are prisons supposed to rehabilitate or punish?..... Outcomes are not products..... Rather they are interactions.... What I do not mean is that ministers and public servants can wash their hands of outcomes. What I mean is that responsibility for them is often shared...... Government responsibility begins to shade into societal and individual responsibility.... There is an ethical issue here. What does it say about our standards if ministers and public servants avert their gaze from the final impacts of the programmes they have fashioned?" []

There is much evidence that the final impacts of current policies are failing to achieve what is expected of them. Alarming social statistics in this (and other) countries abound. A fifth of the world's people now share less than 1.5% of the world's income [] and pressures on scarce environmental resources are introducing the danger of collapse of agricultural, forest, soil, water and other systems []. In this land, 30% of our children live in benefit dependent families, we have the highest female youth suicide rate and the third highest male youth suicide rate amongst the 23 OECD countries, the number of people receiving food bank assistance has risen from 4000 in 1990 to a recent figure exceeding 65000 [].

The assertion that it is individual behaviour rather than the social order that is to blame for this state of affairs must be exposed as false. The currently-prevalent explanation is that there has been a sudden (over the last 15 years) widespread personal failure of individuals in their families and local neighbourhoods, causing them to move to benefit dependency instead of being socially responsible. The agenda for defining Social Responsibility must not be left to those who take such a simplistic view.

Professor Deakin from Leeds University recently presented his research to a seminar at Oxford University on "Individual Moral Character is Responsible for the Poverty People Face" []. He described the recent shift in the view of welfare as being:

- > to a channel of the pursuit of self-interest from a mechanism for the re-distribution of wealth
- ▶ to the exercise of control by society from an expression of altruism
- > to a mechanism of moral regeneration from a negation of social divisions.

He argued that the possibility that there can be an alliance between the haves and the have-nots must become part of the policy debate.

Possible policy frameworks

Pollitt quotes Immergut [] - "It is important to be clear that political and administrative institutions set the boundaries within which strategic actors make their choices". This reality gives the opportunity to address the assertion often stated by those in power (and felt by many lay people) that there is no alternative (TINA). In reality there are many options (TAMO).

This TINA principle is best exposed by analogy with Henry Ford's famous dictum in relation to his motor cars - "You can have any colour you like as long as it is black". What TAMO affirms is not only that different colours are to be encouraged but also that alternatives such as bicycles, buses and horses may also be solutions to the transportation problem.

There is useful comparative work being done by Pollitt and others []:

"... (In) Sweden and Finland business is not regarded as inherently superior (where the) state is fundamentally a burden on society..... (There) is considerable scope for national leaders to adapt reform policies to suit the particular institutions and value preferences of their own countries."

The question we face is how to explore this scope when "TINA" (especially that in the form of marketdriven policy) and the paralysis we feel from analysis of all that is bad and sad around us, seems overwhelming.

"As the millennium draws to a close we must not succumb to the notion that we have failed, and therefore must retreat into ever smaller spaces of self-definition. This is precisely the time to dream the best dream of them all...." []

A commitment to Social Responsibility might provide a way to dream this dream in a way that is ethical and inclusive, allowing for TAMO.

But how are we to develop and monitor policy, without imposing one "solution"? In a pluralistic world strong personal convictions are important but they cannot be shared by everyone, nor can they be proved to be right []. Also we must keep constantly in our minds that our current legal system is predicated on individual property rights implying that all such property can be "valued" and traded. Yet most of us know that the things we really value cannot be priced in dollar terms.

It is my contention that individualisation of social responsibility is a contradiction in terms! **Social** is the key word!

Social ethics

We must find ways ethically to control "the best dream" of an inclusive framework for the future for social responsibility. We must not be limited to doing so within the market framework alone.

Peter Pruzan of the Copenhagen Business School suggests that such a dream will be "ethical if all parties involved can accept it.... (This ethics refers to) both to a conversation process and to the action which is the product of the conversation. The same action can be both ethical and unethical either for two different groups at the same time or for the same group at different times" []. This means that we need to map the expressions of consensus, for example The Peoples Charter []. Ethical baselines need to be articulated which will form the touchstones for policy development.

Philippe van Parijs' book "Real Freedom For All - or what if anything can justify capitalism" [] promotes touchstones of what he summarises as "undominated diversity". The test of whether or not this has been achieved is that people are satisfied that they do not wish to have the lifestyle of the other person. He also advocates what he calls the "wisdom of the ancient - active and constant participation in the collective power" and expresses concern at the modern approach of "peaceful enjoyment of private independence".

Van Parijs also argues that we need to pay much more attention to the endowment that we have inherited. This, he suggests, is mostly in the "unowned commons" where there is access for all and which is unrestricted by a set of rules. This endowment and the unowned commons must be examined alongside but independent of public and private ownership if we are to achieve real freedom for all.

Social Capital/Cohesion and Responsibility

We hear talk of Social Capital and Social Cohesion as the Government attempts to rationalise increases or decreases in what it calls Social Responsibility. In her "Cautionary Notes on Social Capital" Linda Hill points out that the main indicators of Social Capital / Cohesion focus on "*interaction as valuable in itself, without regard to the nature of the shared goal.... The emphasis on measuring interactions without regard to goals means that personal and political purposes are entirely blurred"*[]. Also David Robinson [] has suggested that the purpose of or use made of Social Capital is largely in terms of how it could contribute to economic growth and social well-being, where social well-being is generally presented as the correction of dysfunctional situations.

We must therefore be very wary of the Government's proposed Code of Social Responsibility, and focus on social issues, as it is likely to be linked to these concepts. In her "state-of-the-nation" address last week [], the Prime Minister stated that answers need to be found to social problems and that "we will only get the real results New Zealanders are looking for if we work together on solutions more radical and honest than we have been to date". In the same address she stated that the economic programme "will continue".

It seems that much of the current apparent willingness by our Government and by international agencies like the World Bank to focus on "Social Responsibility", "Social Cohesion" and "Social Capital" is a reflection of their adherence to "economic rationality". The World Bank's shift "to protect poor and marginalised people as part of structural adjustment programmes" [], is but one example. No World Bank official has been more clear than A Choski, Vice President Responsible for Human Resources, when he told the 1994 UN Social Summit that "investing in people is not only the key to improving people's lives, it is also good economics [] ". Robert Putnam sees Social Capital to the key to "democracy and prosperity []".

As Public Service International points out, however, the linking of these two concepts raises the spectre that the apparent retreat from monetarism is:

"more apparent in theory than practice on the ground. It represents... a pre-emptive strike, aimed at preventing a more general shift to more progressive international policies and structures, particularly those advocated by the Copenhagen Social Summit and the Commission on Global Governance. It also represents an attempt by the IMF and the World Bank to marginalise the more progressive and politically accountable UN agencies like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). (Finally) it represents a response to the combined pressure from a growing group of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and movement organisations like Public Service International (PSI)" [].

The Third Sector and Democracy

The combined pressure by most NGOs and some members of the labour movement is a major source of hope here in this land, as well as globally. The Third Sector must actively set the agenda alongside the two other Sectors of Business and Government. It is about new approaches to "democracy". I like the idea that democracy:

"... is not just voting, but setting the agenda. It's not the tyranny of the majority, but it is finding common ground between different people and groups, and it is definitely not the clever manipulation of people to simulate grassroots support" [].

The "classic" welfare state in the industrialised world was in need of reform. In addition it is now transparently obvious that import-substituting growth in the so-called "developing" world laid the basis for today's situation of crippling debt in those countries. We needed change.

But the "Mantra of the Market" [] as the answer to these problems needs constantly to be challenged. Privatisation and contracting out of Government responsibilities to Business and to the voluntary (Third) sector organisations need to be transparently examined. In fact activities in all three Sectors need to be mapped more coherently. As quoted from Pollitt above "It is important to be clear that political and administrative institutions set the boundaries within which strategic actors make their choices". But if these boundaries are to be redrawn - and that is the plea of this paper - we must have a bigger picture to work from than that which is produced by a market approach to social planning.

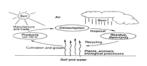
The Third Sector has produced much information which is being side-lined and made invisible by the market focus common to both the Business (commercial/corporate) Sector and the Government (State/statutory) Sector.

An example of useful resources being produced in the Third Sector is the comparison made by Hilkka Pietilä, between the Cultivation Economy and Industrial Production [] - see Figure 1. The reader will note that much of what is made invisible by the Industrial Production view of the Economy is included in the Cultivation Economy, yet industrial production is not excluded from the Cultivation Economy.

In addition, we should note that the Third Sector is more properly named the First Sector - it was there before Governments and Commerce appeared in the human world! However, it is indeed the Third Sector of society, in terms of power in the political pecking order. Whether named the Third Sector or not, what is important is that we know what we are talking about. Participation and governance of their affairs by citizens is not merely what the State prescribes and/or the Market allows - it is far more than those.

A new democracy will be required to achieve participation and governance which takes into account much more than commercial and statutory activities. However, in recent years deregulation of trade, especially capital transactions, has meant that the space within which the State, the Public Sector and the Common Wealth interact is no longer controllable by Nation States. They have become "too big for the small things and too small for the big things..... Because a private/public dichotomy is no simplistic solution, (the Third Sector) must explore a new space where creativity, imagination and initiative thrive" []





I commend to the reader, work that the Association of Non-Government Organisations in Aotearoa (ANGOA) [] has done in defining their role as an NGO. Their definition of an NGO as:

- non-profit making
- voluntary
- > independent of government, business interests and politically partisan bodies
- part of and serving social movements with a commitment to an ecologically sustainable Earth and a dignified existence for all

can assist us in setting the agenda for the Third Sector. In addition, it should be noted that ANGOA has established a Treaty-based relationship with INGOA (Iwi NGOs in Aotearoa). ANGOA's membership of CIVICUS [] brings a transnational possibility to that agenda.

Culture in a Treaty-based Future

Fundamental for us in this land, whether Maori or Tauiwi, is the need to establish local relationships with those Tangata Whenua who are the keepers, caretakers and protectors - the kaitiaki - of the places in which we work. The experience of local communities with the Resource Management Act has already established protocols for contact in many places. As an instrument of the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Waitangi requires us to honour the extra-ordinary rights and responsibilities retained by Maori who hold kaitiakitanga, as well as to take shared responsibility with Maori to build an honourable Kawanatanga. Kaitiakitanga responsibilities apply under Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Treaty.

Getting some of the road blocks out of the way so those with Maori ancestry can do their work, both retaining and regaining Tino Rangatiratanga and accessing whatever is set up by a more honourable Kawanatanga, are only part of what needs to be done by Tauiwi. We must also declare what we hold precious. In addition, we need to ensure that the values of all cultures are protected; an ethnically-

and culturally-diverse, Treaty-based framework is for me an exciting filter through which to see the field of Social Responsibility.

Attention to culture raises fundamental questions for considering what it is that could bring us together. As a Kura Kaupapa Maori school teacher in the Coromandel stated in a Heartland programme in 1996 -"culture is what you have left when you don't have any money". Coming together in a new order which is better for everyone, requires that we map connections, strengthen links and advocate a response to the ideology of individualism across all our Sectors. We will need to lose some things, and gain others. This reflects Jane Kelsey's conclusion [], that the problems for Tangata Whenua and for Tauiwi are the same but that the solutions may be different. Any national voice will need to emerge from those local, regional, and national relationships.

Subsidiarity - linking the local to the global

A focus on augmenting what local people do well requires us to be clearer about what is appropriately done regionally, nationally and internationally. In addressing this split of responsibilities, I want to refer briefly to the notion of Subsidiarity. The touchstone of Subsidiarity is that wherever a task can be satisfactorily achieved (in the opinion of all those involved) by the initiative of those involved, the fulfilment of the task must be left to those people. In other words, the group affected by the decision is the group that makes the decision. The idea is monitored by criteria such as "no bigger than necessary" and "as big as needed to achieve the common good". Liberalistic individualism, which subordinates society as a whole to the sum of selfish actions by individuals, is replaced by the sense of mutual collaboration, animated by a common will. In addition, a social undertaking of any sort, by its nature, ought to aid the members of the body social but never destroy or absorb them [].

The limitations of "employment"

One major constraint to creation of an innovative future is the continuing incorrect use of the word "Work". As an example, the former Prime Minister, Rt Hon Jim Bolger, at the launch of the From Welfare To Well-Being 1997, quoting British (Labour) Prime Minister Tony Blair, said: "*The new welfare state must encourage work not dependency*." He then continued to use "employment" and "self-employment" as synonyms for "work". The current Prime Minister, talking on social issues, refers to the economic programme continuing [] and how "*unemployment had to come down*". This linguistic artifact reduces the citizen-producer to an increasingly precarious and passive role as a production factor in the marketplace.

If, instead, we acknowledge that everyone's contribution to society includes their "work", we soon note that many "work" functions are not included in conventional economic statistics. Making visible all the productive activities is not merely a matter of including them in market terms. Such "False Economy" [] is illuminated by the following examples:

- In the USA, families without a worker with at least a college degree increased their annual employment effort (i.e. hours in employment) by 12% between 1973 and 1988, but they received 8% less annual income in real terms [].
- ➤ High-low cycles of employment were experience by 40% of men in the lowest quintile and by 20% in the highest quintile. Swings in employment opportunity are not felt most by high-earners [].
- > Even those employed full-time may not earn enough to sustain their livelihoods [].
- ➤ Of the world's working-age population of around 3 billion, only 400 million are "employed" in industrialised countries, yet "job creation" is high on the priority list of governments, world-wide. Even the ILO notes that the linkage between economic growth and employment options is not an automatic one for all groups [].

The idea that employment is a fair way of distributing income must also be addressed. For both practical and theoretical reasons, we know that we cannot rely on the market, which has neither social ethic nor conscience, to distribute income fairly. Provision of a Universal Basic Income is probably the most creative response to this problem []. It could best be associated with a "move away from taxes on labour, incomes, profits and capital towards taxes on pollution and the use of resources.... In other words, it would be funded by taxing people on the value they subtract rather than the value they add []. This non-targeted scenario:

"would emphasise the need to clarify the responsibilities of citizens towards themselves, their children, one another and society as a whole in return for their right to an equal share in the value

of common resources For example, the problem for ageing societies, of taxing the earnings of fewer economically active people more highly to support a growing number of pensioners would be largely avoided." []

I suggest a new way of addressing our future is to look not just at employment alone, but at livelihood systems as a whole, taking note of all the "work"/ mahi [] being done. This includes self-provisioning and pluri-activity []. "Sustaining" (rather than sustainable) economy and "Resourcefulness" [] rather than resource use become the guiding criteria. This will require integration of the matrix of interactions between policy, science and technology and investment/finance, with the focus being on augmenting what local people already do well. There are many examples of local economic development in this land []. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh [] sees:

"... as the essential first step, to help people to be more aware of their skills, not to tell them at first that they are going to receive training. Doing so leaves them seeing themselves simply as tools of production, employed to benefit the one who owns the capital. Many lifestyles do not involve employment, or do so in only a very fragmentary fashion".

Ellie Perkins (of York University, Ontario, Canada) is researching local economies and has summarised the results of her work in a useful article "Building Communities to Limit Trade" []. Such resources will assist in building a bigger picture where we do not accept that TINA applies to our economic future.

A possible framework?

Renewed hope lies in tackling and conceptualising fundamental issues of effectiveness. The ethical, inclusive framework of "the best dream" means moving on from only market-economics and social dysfunction to find new innovative responses that may incorporate existing tools but also go beyond them. "Rather than build a wall to keep out the wind, build a windmill!" []

I suggest that an ethical, inclusive framework for the "best dream" must be predicated on Subsidiarity and deliberately engage all three Sectors of society. It must be concerned with both process and content/action and involve:

- * seeing the Treaty-based approach [] as a whole
- * planning a process by which society can move from a concentration on individual rights to one based on community ethics which can be accepted by all those involved
- * identifying and building on existing strengths and assets, thus seeing training, education and learning differently
- * organising production and distribution of goods and services (i.e. economic activity) in a way that does not conflict with these goals
- * mapping the connections between the parts and celebrating!

One substantial contribution [] John Peet and Hartmut Bossel, Ethics and Sustainable Development. Setting the Agenda For Engineers. Dept of Chemical and Process Engineering, University of Canterbury Aotearoa New Zealand, paper to 1998 IPENZ Conference,

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- i Social Services Report, Public Service International, January 1997
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- i Jobs Letter 28 November 1997
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- i Immergut 1992, quoted in Trajectories of Reform: Public Management Change in Four Countries, Christopher Pollitt and Hilkka Summa article in Public Money and Management January-March 1997i. Immergut 1992
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- i Shipley Wants Radical Work on Social Issues, The Press 4 February 1996, p3.
- Public Services International (PSI) Social Services Policy report, January 1997
- i PSI Report op.cit.
- i Hill op.cit.
- i PSI Report op.cit.
- i Highlander Workshop on Democracy, December 1996 (Highlander Research & Education Center, New Market, Tennessee, USA)
- i Lalita Ramdas President of the International Association of Adult Education, address to CONFITEA, 4th UNESCO Adult Education conference held in Hamburg, July 1997
- i Hilkka Pietilä, "The Triangle of the Human Economy, Household- Cultivation-Industrial Production, An Attempt at making visible the human economy in toto", Independent writer and researcher with the Institute of Development Studies, University of Helsinki, paper to the International Association For Feminist Economists June 1996 Summer conference and discussed with K Peet during a recent visit to Finland
- i Perez de Cuellar, "Our Creative Diversity", Immediate past General Secretary of UN, now President of the World Commission on Culture, in his address to the CIVICUS conference
- i Association of Non-Government Organisations (ANGOA), PO Box 12-470, Whanganui at Tara (Wellington)
- i CIVICUS is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. It is dedicated to pursuing a world such that:
 - citizen action is a predominant feature of the political, economic and cultural life of all societies
 - private action for the public good is expressed by a rich and diverse array of organisations operating sometime apart and sometime in dialogue with government and business; and
 - ➤ a healthy society is one in which there is an equitable relationship among citizens, their associations and foundations, business and government.

This statement is taken from CIVICUS Strategic Plan 1998-2000, September 1997

- i Jane Kelsey, Tino Rangatiratanga and the Potential for Alliances, paper for the Socialism and Feminism Conference, Christchurch, August 1990 (University of Auckland)
- i Roman Catholic doctrine of Subsidiarity
- i The Press, "Shipley Wants Radical Work on Social Issues", op.cit.
- i Anne Else, False Economy, 1996
- i Barry Bluestone and Steven Rose, Overworked and Underemployed: Unravelling an Economic Enigma", The American Prospect Inc. 1997
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- i John Lawrence, UNDP "Adult Education And Jobs, Or Sustainable Livelihoods?", Presentation to theme on Changes in the World of Work, CONFITEA V (UNESCO), July 1997
- i John Lawrence op.cit.
- i Phillippe van Parijs op.cit.
- i British Government Panel on Sustainable Development (First Report, January 1995, para 16)
- i Ecotax Reform Some Economic, Social and Political Issues, James Robertson, his notes from his seminar to Green College, Oxford University, November 1996
- i My understanding of mahi is that it includes labours of love and focuses on the dignity of the person

- i K Peet's meeting with Dr Arne Haselbach, researcher on the re-definition of "work", Adult Education Academy Brigittenau, Vienna
- i Theme from Capacity Building workshop at CIVICUS conference held in Hungary September 1997 summarised in K Peet's report as ANGOA delegate to that conference.
- Just Dollar\$ PO Box 4232 Utautahi (Christchurch)
 Green Dollars (Local Exchange and Trading System)
 COMMACT Aotearoa
- i Preparatory papers for CONFITEA V, UNESCO Adult Education conference July 1997, Asia and Pacific section
- i Ellie Perkins, "Building Communities to Limit Trade", Alternatives Journal, January/February 1996 pp 10-14
- i Challenge to participants at CONFITEA, reported in K Peet's report of the conference attended as International Federation of WEAs delegate
- i The Treaty of Waitangi (1840), signed by the British Crown and the Chiefs of over 500 Hapu, is the founding document of the State of New Zealand Aotearoa as it currently exists.