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### **1. Introduction**

In this presentation I draw on my research into the way neo-tribal capitalism has developed in New Zealand to shed light on the way neo-corporate capitalism is developing in the university more widely. I suggest that university leaders serve as brokers between a corporatised university and the knowledge and financial capitalism of the contemporary global marketplace. It is the structural position of university leaders that makes the brokerage particularly effective. Acting as intermediaries between academic labour and the global higher education market, brokers commodify the knowledge product in the act of serving the international demand. In so doing, this group emerges as a self-interested bourgeoisie.

The methodological issue to be addressed in researching the brokerage process and the brokers themselves will involve analysing the full brokerage process. This could range from identifying the agents, their networks, and the various structures that are established as a result of the brokerage function, as well as analysing that function through brokerage discourse and policy development.

### **2. The Brokerage Process**

Dominic Boyer draws our attention to how ‘personal influence, especially elite personal influence, is undoubtedly too often underestimated in social analysis’ (2010, p.75). My research into neotribal capitalism in New Zealand suggest strongly that elite personal

influence is a major factor in the broker of that elite's economic and political ambitions into the New Zealand polity.

I have used Richard Lachmann's (2000) insightful observation that the source of societal change occurs as an emergent elite enters into a new relationship with power to trace how that new relationship is forged. In doing so, I have identified brokerage as the key enabling process (Rata, 2003, 2004). My analysis of brokerage within the university in particular (2010 GSE) with respect to policies and practices to establish the infrastructure for the production of Maori indigenous knowledge – the ideology of the tribal elite – identifies the 'moments' of transformation. These occur in the roles and functions that create and maintain the new relationships between the brokers.

But any analysis of brokerage starts by identifying the interest groups, their representative agents and respective agendas. Although each side is pursuing its own agenda the differences are softened by sufficient commonality of motive for agents from both sides to enter into relationships that function to serve those motives. With brokerage the two sides are those already in power and the emergent elite. In the case of the university the commonality rests on the fact that both interest groups are intent on acquiring control of the 'business' of knowledge production. For one group, a combination of university leaders, government neoliberals and business elites that control was acquired through the reform of universities as market oriented corporations.

For the Maori tribal elite control is also about the profits that come from commodifying knowledge in an age of knowledge/financial capitalism. But there is another purpose to its interest in knowledge particularly. The second goal is specific to an emerging elite and to the character of knowledge as the means of ideological production. Controlling the production of ideology is the means by which New Zealand's tribal elite justifies tribalism. One would expect that this would be an impossible task given that tribalism is a regressive form of social organisation. It is racial and exclusive to those 'of the blood'. However, New Zealand's secular religion of biculturalism has meant that retribalisation is generally understood, not as a 'blood and soil' ideology but as social justice for a disenfranchised Maori population. Elsewhere I have shown that this is not the case; that retribalisation has created a wealthy elite and further disenfranchised Maori in poverty.

Neotribal brokerage has been extremely successful because both the tribal elite and the neoliberal elite share the same economic ambitions of privatising or part-privatising New Zealand's public resources. This commonality has enabled differences to be glossed in a rhetoric of social justice despite the fact that a difference exists between the two interest groups that is so fundamental it will emerge in the future as a source of conflict. While the established elite share the neoliberal economic approach of the neotribal elite, the former does not share the neotribal elite's reactionary politics. The established elite maintains a commitment to classical liberal democracy – to universal political and legal equal rights. The neotribal elite has no such interest. Its politics are committed to the re-establishment of a tribal aristocracy – one that will combine the political advantages of birth-ascription and the economic advantages of capitalism. However, that discussion is not my purpose here.

The point I want to make in this presentation is a general one about the brokerage function and approaches to its research. While common interests bring together the emergent elite with established elites, the actual transformation of the interest group into an elite is within the brokerage function. Citing Burt (1992), McAdam et al (2001, p. 142) argue that the brokerage process is itself transforming. 'Brokerage produces new advantages for the parties, especially for the brokers'.

In higher education access to and control of the knowledge commodity in the global marketplace creates the shared interest. Local emergent elites play a major role in localising global capitalism, so research that looks to finding the points of convergence would do well to analyse how brokerage serves to mediate global and local concerns.

Everywhere brokerage involves institutionalising the compliance and audit culture of new public management but, the compradors themselves have a local colour. Their class interests are materialised from their own histories and their success at brokerage relies on exploiting those histories. (See Social Anthropology Special Edition, 2010)

It is likely that there are two main sites of brokerage. One occurs within the university. This is where the emergent localised elite creates practices and policies that privatise knowledge is its control; practices of the compliance and audit culture. In turn this enables the commodification of knowledge and its placement into the global market. Maori indigenous

knowledge is an example of this process. The interest group identifies itself and is recognised by the other interest group as having a special claim to control over knowledge – a recognition made possible because both interests groups are focussed on controlling knowledge production. The emergent elite uses localisation politics to justify its special claim. Criteria are drawn up and placed into policies and practices that action the control. In my own research I have used examples of the way ethnics procedures control who may undertake Maori research in New Zealand to show how the process works. But the control goes even deeper than that – it extends to defining knowledge itself. For example, the large and wealthy South Island tribe, Ngai Tahu, has entered into agreements with Otago and Canterbury universities and with other institutions. The *Ngai Tahu Agreement* provides generic guidelines for tertiary institutions to meet their obligations as Treaty partners. According to one of the writers Its ‘prime concern with Treaty-based Guidelines is to declare a position on what is knowledge and what is not’ (Tau 2003, p. 10).

Structural positions are created for the interest group so that it can operationalise policies and practices. These occur inside the institution: on the one side the compradors whose functions as employers and managers of academic life transform them into an elite and, on the managed side, those academics who are regulated by the policies and practices of compliance and audit. It is in the exercise of management in this way that neoliberal structures take hold. Although structure and agency are conceptualised separately, they act interdependently as one force. Spinoza’s idea of process as structure in motion is the transformative force. The structural positions authorise the exercise of power but it is people who exercise power, and in doing so, solidify the process into structure. The neoliberal university is a new social world, one where, in Jonathan Friedman’s description, ‘power is converted into authority and the latter into forms of socialisation; the formation of subjects and of subjective experience’ (2000, p. 645).

The brokerage occurring between the university and the global marketplace for the selling and buying of knowledge, of the knowledge production process, and of place within the knoweldge production factory is also a site for class re-configuration. It is about elite emergence but also about proletarianisation. Researching this site involves identifying the strategies, actors, networks, practices, policies and effects that materialise the brokerage relationships. Research can identify the benefits and losses of that materialisation – who gets what and how? Who loses power and benefits? David Cannadine has referred to the

reduction of the intellectual class to a ‘proletarianised civil servant status’ (2008, p. 6). Others are less kind. Once again Jonathan Friedman’s insight is useful – in researching the exercise of authority it is possible to see power or powerlessness at work. What authority are academics losing – what policies show this loss of authority?

### **Researching the Brokerage Relationship**

The actual brokerage relationship itself is worthy of research. It is in the brokerage between partners that the neotribal elite justifies its existence as leaders (Rata, 2003). They are the individuals who ‘cross’ between the Treaty partners, representing one to the other, despite their shared location in the ruling class. In doing so, they secure the positions of privilege and power of that class. To do this research would require identifying the specific agents and their networks.

Jessop (1990) and McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) have noted that such investigation requires the identification of the actors, their identities, actions, institutional positions, and the network structures. It becomes necessary to identify individuals in order to show the positions and the networks that link these positions. The ‘very idea of ‘elites’ suggests qualities of ‘agency’, exclusivity’, ‘power’, and an apparent separation from ‘mass society’ – concepts that in different ways, oblige us to consider related themes of stratification, hierarchy, brokers and causal agents behind events’ (Shore, 2002, p. 4).

In doing so it is impossible to avoid naming those agents and inquiring into their motives. In my opinion the naming of individuals is justified by restricting the investigation to their public roles - the writings, public statements, and university activities, such as committee involvement and research supervision. One example of an indigenous intellectual whose career demonstrates how the establishment of structural positions from the brokerage of the initial agents that then leads to further elite agency is Tania Ka’ai. This academic completed her PhD in 1995. The following year she was appointed to the position of professor at the University of Otago where she claimed ‘international recognition in indigenous epistemologies’ (Ka’ai, 2005). In 2007 she took up a professorship at the Auckland University of Technology. Recently she supervised the successful PhDs of her daughter and son-in-law – both in the field of indigenous knowledge and carried out in accordance with the criteria laid down for indigenous knowledge research.

However it is difficult to investigate the invisible private networks behind the public ones. This is particularly the case with tribalism where kinship is a strong force behind the scenes. These kinship networks reveal themselves from time to time. For example, in the Tania Kaai doctoral supervision I mention above. I have also identified two families that dominate tribal ideology in health and education (the Duries and Mead/Smiths) through their involvement in the writing of several major education policy documents, for example, the Maori Tertiary Strategy Framework and the 'Durie Principles'.

Other evidence of the close familial networks surface from time-to-time in published format. For example, E. T. Durie's reference (2003, p. ix) in the Foreword to Professor Sidney Mead's book, 'Tikanga Māori'. The distinctly unscholarly reference to Mead's 'respected family lines' juxtaposes 'scholarly' and 'family lines' without difficulty despite the inherent conflict between birth-ascribed authority and the authority conferred by scholarship.

### **Researching Motive**

Motive is a particular difficulty in researching agency. While power can be revealed in how authority is exercised, how does one research motive? Once again, Jonathan Friedman's theoretical insights are useful. He recognises that cultural change is embedded in the political and material existence of real people with motives, beliefs and interests. 'All cultural creation is motivated. And the motives lie within the contemporary existences of creating subjects' (1994, p. 13). My own approach to investigating motives, is to deduce them from publicly stated intentions in relation to stated goals. I have used the Maori Tertiary Strategy in this way.

A final note about brokerage. One thinks of brokerage as a transitory, emergent phase, one in which an emergent elite uses its relationship with power to establish its own structures. It is reasonable to assume that once that transition phase is over and the new elite is firmly institutionalised that the brokerage role comes to an end. The end is a class-in-itself. This hasn't yet happened with the Maori tribal elite. This is probably the case because full emergence would require revealing its true character as a capitalist elite. While remaining as

brokers, the elite is able to maintain the pretense of representing poor Maori in the interests of social justice.

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