ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the nature, scope and characteristics of recent adult literacy policy in New Zealand, and explores the reasons and mechanisms by which such reform took place.

In this analysis of adult literacy policy, the author considers the context in which adult literacy rose to ascendancy in New Zealand government policy during the first decade of the millennium. In addition, she examines the relationship between adult literacy policy and changes in political ideology and government leadership, assessing the impact of both neoliberalism and inclusive liberalism (Craig & Porter, 2006) and Third Way thought (Giddens, 1999) on policy.

Analysis was undertaken of government documents published from 1999-2008, as well as policies released during the previous political era, 1984-1999, to situate later policy. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 20 adult literacy policy actors in the country, including government bureaucrats, literacy researchers, and other experts who worked in and for unions, interest groups, and community and workplace literacy organizations. In drawing from Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) and Ball (1994), the findings focus on three contexts of policy: the context of text production; the context of influence; and, the context of interpreted practices and outcomes. To address these contexts, the author drew on an array of methodological and theoretical tools.

The findings from this study provide four keen insights: First, adult literacy policy formed a legitimate part of economic and social policy; in other words, adult literacy policy was developed for both economic and social purposes and constituted actual policy response beyond rhetoric. Second, adult literacy policy, while developed between 1999-2008, was a continuation of previous government policies set in motion during New Zealand’s so-called neoliberal era (1984-1999). Third, policy was characterized by paradoxical discourses of “control” and “freedom.” And, fourth, government prioritized practices of economically
related workplace literacy and of targeted social support.

This dissertation contributes to both the understanding of inclusive liberal/Third Way government education policy as well as to the emergent field of policy studies on adult literacy in developed countries.
PREFACE

This research required the approval of the UBC Research Ethics Board. Ethics approval was granted on November 20, 2007 by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board. The study was considered to constitute “Minimal Risk.” The approval certification number is: H07-02577.
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>Adult and Community Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey</td>
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<td>ALPA</td>
<td>Adult Literacy Practitioners Association</td>
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<td>ALS</td>
<td>Adult Literacy Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARLA</td>
<td>Adult Reading and Learning Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>AssTTle</td>
<td>Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALT</td>
<td>Certificate in Adult Literacy Tutoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>COGS</td>
<td>Community Organization Grants Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTU</td>
<td>Council of Trade Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOL</td>
<td>Department of Labour</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFTS</td>
<td>Equivalent Full Time Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>English for Speakers of Other Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLQA</td>
<td>Foundation Learning Quality Assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTÉ</td>
<td>Full Time Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>IALS</td>
<td>International Adult Literacy Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITF</td>
<td>Industry Training Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITP</td>
<td>Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics</td>
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<td>ITPQ</td>
<td>Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality</td>
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<td>ITOs</td>
<td>Industry Training Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEDC</td>
<td>Less Economically Developed Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLN</td>
<td>Language, literacy and numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDC</td>
<td>More Economically Developed Country</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>MSD</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCALE</td>
<td>New Zealand Certificate of Adult Literacy Educator</td>
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<td>NCEA</td>
<td>National Certificate of Educational Achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCSALL</td>
<td>National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIACE</td>
<td>National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>New Zealand Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>NRDC</td>
<td>National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>NZCTU</td>
<td>New Zealand Council of Trade Unions</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZQA</td>
<td>New Zealand Qualifications Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTEP</td>
<td>Other Tertiary Education Providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>PBRF</td>
<td>Performance Based Research Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PD/ProD</strong></td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PCET</strong></td>
<td>Post-Compulsory Education and Training</td>
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<td><strong>PSET</strong></td>
<td>Post-Schooling Education and Training</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>PTE</strong></td>
<td>Private Training Establishments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PVT</strong></td>
<td>Public Value Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>REAP</strong></td>
<td>Rural Education Activities Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STEP</strong></td>
<td>Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TEI</strong></td>
<td>Tertiary Education Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TEAC</strong></td>
<td>Tertiary Education Advisory Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TEC</strong></td>
<td>Tertiary Education Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TEO</strong></td>
<td>Tertiary Education Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TES</strong></td>
<td>Tertiary Education Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNESCO</strong></td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UPP</strong></td>
<td>Upskilling Partnership Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEA</strong></td>
<td>Workers Educational Association</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WINZ</strong></td>
<td>Work and Income New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WTO</strong></td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a doctoral dissertation has been one of the most fundamental—and painful—learning experiences of my life. For this reason, I wish to first express thanks for the process itself, for teaching me things about myself, about others, about learning, and about life more generally that I doubt I would have otherwise learned.

While the past two years of writing has often been a solitary time, I would not be submitting this document if it weren’t for the insight, guidance and support of a number of key individuals. I am eternally grateful for the help provided to me by my two main academic advisors: Dr. Kjell Rubenson and Dr. Kalervo Gulson. Foremost, Kjell has been my mentor for over six years, and most of what I have learned about academia, researching and writing I have learned from him. It has been an academic apprenticeship, during which time I have trained with the master, and have moved from “legitimate peripheral participation” towards full participation. He has also provided much-appreciated financial as well as intellectual support. Kalervo has taught me the importance of thoroughness, attention to detail, and integrity. He applies a level of intellectual honesty to his own work and to evaluating that of others that I now endeavour to emulate.

Many other professors at UBC have taught and guided me. Former committee members Dr. Jo-anne Dillabough and Dr. Tara Fenwick have both been great academic role models. Tara, in particular, helped me to re-think some fundamental ideas in my dissertation and take it in another—better—direction. Dr. Shauna Butterwick and Dr. Garnet Grosjean have taught me much about adult education and have been very supportive. My third reader, Dr. Don Fisher, helped me to explore some of the key concepts in my thesis in his thought-provoking comments and questions during my defense. Thanks Don! I also wish to give thanks to Dr. Pierre Walter, who acted as a university examiner for my dissertation. Pierre has been so kind and caring towards me during my doctoral studies, and has acted as my advocate on a number of occasions. He also presented me with some really engaging and
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Finally, I thank my family: my parents, for encouraging curiosity and instilling in me a love of the world; my cats and good friends, Pippin and Mary, for keeping me company as I slogged away writing in my room. And, above all else, I extend many thanks to my partner Kevin, a true academic whose students are lucky to have him, and from whom I have learned to be more honest and to not be satisfied with my work until it is as good as I can make it, and from whom I have received an amazing amount of moral as well as financial support. I hope to one day help you to the extent you have helped me through this process. Thank you!
A NOTE ON STYLE

This dissertation’s formatting largely follows the 6th Edition of the APA (American Psychological Association) style manual. However, it varies from those guidelines in four ways:

- **Quotations by research participants appear in italics.** This allows the reader to easily distinguish between quotes from participant interviews and those from documents.

- **Canadian spelling is used throughout.**

- **Headings are numbered.** This helps to distinguish sections and allows them to be referenced throughout the thesis.

- **Footnotes, indented quotes, the final reference list and appendices are single spaced.** This improves readability, and helps footnotes to fit on the appropriate page.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

STUDYING ADULT LITERACY POLICY IN NEW ZEALAND

The goal of this dissertation research was to better understand the scope, characteristics and drivers of New Zealand (NZ) adult literacy policy from 1999-2008 in relation to government reforms that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. Specifically, I was interested in understanding the shift that took place in adult literacy policy discourse from the periods 1984-1999 and 1999-2008.

In essence, then, this dissertation presents a study of adult literacy policy from the past two and a half decades in New Zealand/Aotearoa. In this introductory chapter, I discuss in more detail: what adult literacy is and why it is important; the political, economic and ideological nature of policy in adult literacy over the past few decades; the reasons why New Zealand adult literacy policy from 1984-2008 makes for an interesting and useful case study; the existing literature on adult literacy policy in New Zealand; and, the educational context in New Zealand. I finally end the chapter with an overview of my study and the entire dissertation. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for understanding my study and to explain why researching adult literacy policy over the past decades in New Zealand is both important and interesting.

1 “Aotearoa” is the Māori word for New Zealand. Appendix B provides a compendium of Māori terms used in this document.
1.1 Adult Literacy: What is it and Why is it Important?

The term “adult literacy” may conjure an image of peasants sitting together in an undefined sub-Saharan African country writing out their names slowly on pieces of paper while their teacher copies single letters repeatedly on a chalkboard. This image probably does not resonate with what we otherwise know about the developed nation of New Zealand. This traditional definition of adult literacy—as constituting rudimentary reading and writing, or a basic grade-school education—remains widely used. For example, when the UN reports the rate of illiteracy among women in Somalia, we can be sure they are using the term in this traditional sense. And, under this definition, a study of adult literacy in New Zealand would appear of questionable benefit. Yet, over the past two decades, in numerous countries that boast “official” illiteracy rates of around 1% or less (UNDP, 2008), adult literacy has garnered political and public attention. This is in large part due to a widened interpretation of the term. Adult literacy, thus, has become an “issue” (at least discursively) in what might be considered highly literate places, such as NZ.

While earlier notions of literacy remain both in common usage and in the public consciousness, the idea of literacy has expanded. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)—an examination piloted in a number of developed countries in the mid to late 1990s under the sponsorship of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—was a principle catapult for a large-scale questioning of what literacy actually is. Since the release of the IALS results in the 1990s, literacy, as it pertains to developed nations, is no longer merely conceived as the ability to read and write, but rather is acknowledged as comprising a wide variety of competencies. Nominal “adult literacy”

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2 While the expression “More Economically Developed Country” (MEDC) is probably more appropriate, I have used the more simple term “developed” throughout this thesis. I recognize that the word may be seen as problematic (e.g., connoting that those countries with stronger economies are somehow also more culturally and socially developed etc.) However, for reasons of conciseness and familiarity, I have still chosen to use the terms “developed” or “developing” instead of MEDC or LEDC (Less Economically Developed Country).
courses, then, have come to address basic reading, writing and numeracy; computer literacy; and, problem solving and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, when the results of the IALS survey were released, they suggested that large percentages of people in countries like New Zealand were not fully prepared for functioning well in society (see OECD & Statistics Canada, 2001). Indeed, the expanded understanding of literacy—that encompasses the ability to infer meaning from a variety of texts, to problem solve, and to use numbers effectively—has meant that many people previously classified as “literate” were reclassified as possessing insufficient skills for participating in a modern economy and society. Due in large part to the influence of the OECD and IALS, adult literacy has become the term of choice for governments in developed countries for talking about education for adults. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to focus on adult literacy policy, albeit noting that the term is not always used with consistency.

1.2 Adult Literacy Policy: Why Policy from Recent Decades is Interesting

Recent adult literacy policy is especially interesting. However, before addressing the reasons why it is interesting, it is first necessary to define what I mean by “policy.” Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997) commented that policy is something that “you recognize...when you see it” (p.23). In this study, I adopt Dye’s definition of policy, as “anything a government chooses to do or not to do” (Dye, 1994, p.4). I have approached the study of policy holistically, interpreting policy and policies “as both systems of values and symbolic systems; ways of representing, accounting for and legitimating political decisions” (Ball, 1998, p.124).

I claim that studying adult literacy policy from 1999-2008, in relation to policies enacted during the 1980s and 1990s, can provide key insights into changes in political

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3 In Appendix A, I explain how I use and define certain terms, such as policy. I encourage the reader to refer to this Compendium of Technical Terms.
ideology and government priorities. More specifically, researching adult literacy policy can help us better understand neoliberalism, the Third Way and inclusive liberalism in social policy.

1.2.1 The global shift towards neoliberalism: social policy in the 1980s and 1990s. Starting in the 1980s, there was a global shift towards neoliberalism: the belief that market forces are most efficient and effective at allocating resources (Gray, 1998). Neoliberal ideology prioritizes market efficiency and growth above other goals and arguably anthropomorphizes the market as an important actor who should be given unbridled freedom from government intervention or constraint (Kelsey, 1997). Underpinning neoliberalism is an emphasis on individualism, competition and self-interest. However, unlike classic liberalism, neoliberalism places market liberalism above personal freedoms (Peters, 2001). As Canadian intellectual Ralston Saul (2005) puts it, neoliberalism involves viewing the world through an economic prism.4

Within a neoliberal framework, skills, such as literacy, are seen as invaluable for weathering the storm of increasing competition (due to deregulation), falling wages (due to deunionization and general marketization), and a frayed social safety net (due to privatization and funding cuts). As part of a move towards neoliberalism, which primarily occurred in much of the developed world in the 1980s and 1990s, education and skills became increasingly linked to economic concerns. Human capital theory began to dominate: that is, crudely, the belief that an investment in education and training enhances an individual’s economic productivity (Becker, 1964; Schulz, 1961). However, state funding of, and official policy on, skills or adult literacy training has tended to lie in tension with the neoliberal preference for marketization, privatization and general deregulation (smaller

4 This paragraph can be considered a rudimentary description of neoliberalism. I further explore the concept of neoliberalism in Chapter 2, as I believe a more nuanced and in depth analysis of the history, ideology and operationalization of neoliberalism is necessary for understanding the overall context of adult literacy policy development in New Zealand.
Financial support and official policy have been more enthusiastically embraced by Third Way (Giddens, 1999) governments and under inclusive liberalism (Craig & Porter, 2004) rather than under more “pure” neoliberalism.

1.2.2 Inclusive liberalism in social policy: a reason to focus on 1999-2008.

Craig and Porter (2003, 2006; Porter & Craig, 2004) have described inclusive liberalism as a version of liberalism in which partnerships, collaboration and cooperation are key. It is an “inclusive” liberalism, which promotes the inclusion of: marginalized individuals in economic and social life; various branches of government in making policy; economic and social outcomes of policy; state, market and civil society partnerships (e.g., in public-private-partnerships). According to Craig and Porter (2003, 2006), the move from neoliberalism to inclusive liberalism began to take place in the late 1990s as a reaction to the perceived inadequacies of a neoliberal doctrine. New Zealand is one of the few developed countries Craig and Porter (2006) have identified as having embarked on a journey towards inclusive liberalism.

Inclusive liberalism shares much in common with the Third Way, a political theory with which the reader may be more familiar. The Third Way is a political doctrine, developed by British sociologist Anthony Giddens in the 1990s as a “new” option for centre-left governments. It has been promoted as a mid-way point between welfare liberalism and neoliberalism. Such an approach, Giddens argued, enables centre-left governments to reinsert issues of social cohesion, civic participation, and democracy into politics. Furthermore, under this model, skills and training are endowed with a special role in addressing central social welfare policy concerns (Giddens, 1999; 2003).

While the Third Way is generally associated with traditionally left-leaning political parties, inclusive liberalism describes a global political shift occurring across institutions and various levels of government. Inclusive liberalism is arguably a more holistic social theory, and has been further explored than the Third Way in regards to its theoretical
underpinnings, its history and the reasons behind its rise in organizational and government policy at the turn of the 21st Century. For these reasons, I have chosen to focus more on inclusive liberalism, while understanding the move to the Third Way as part of an overall transition towards inclusive liberalism; in other words, I have taken the Third Way to be a subset of inclusive liberalism.\(^5\)

In this dissertation, I focus on the interrelation between inclusive liberalism and adult literacy policy. I chose the year 1999 as a starting point at which to evaluate the shift in adult literacy policy in New Zealand, as it marked the election of the centre-left Labour government, under whose tenure much adult literacy policy arose. The end date of 2008 is important since it marks the end of the Labour party’s term, and election of the Fifth centre-right National government under new Prime Minister John Key. Literacy policy from this time (i.e., 1999-2008) provides a key vantage point from which to examine inclusive liberalism in government policy and allows us to explore possible change in political orthodoxy.

### 1.3 Adult Literacy Policy in New Zealand

In this section, I offer justification for choosing New Zealand as a case study in which to explore adult literacy policy. I then provide further context on educational reform during the past decades by drawing on recent literature and studies. Finally, I describe the current terrain of adult literacy to help the reader to understand the provision and management of adult literacy in the country.

#### 1.3.1 Why a case study of New Zealand? I have so far given an overview of what the term adult literacy has come to mean; why adult literacy is now considered important in developed countries; and, why it is useful to research adult literacy policy of

\(^5\) In Chapter 2, I also further explore inclusive liberalism and its theoretical underpinnings.
recent decades. The reader may still be wondering though, “Why New Zealand?” In other words, why does the experience of a small South Pacific island nation with a population of 4 million inhabitants and 15-times more sheep than people matter to readers living many, many time zones away?

It is my contention that New Zealand provides an ideal case in which to explore recent adult literacy policy. There are two reasons why New Zealand makes a good case study and is a logical site for studying adult literacy policy from the past ten years. First, New Zealand shares many similarities with other important Anglo-Saxon nations and may provide insights to understanding these contexts also. In its inclusion of Indigenous peoples in political affairs, the country may also offer lessons to other post-colonial developed countries. And, second, the country has a reputation as a pioneer in political and educational reform. As a small nation, it has been able to institute reforms at a scale unthinkable in larger countries. Specifically, it experienced a radical neoliberal restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s undergoing a subsequent shift to inclusive liberalism and the Third Way during the following decade.

**New Zealand’s similarity to other nations.** A good reason why adult literacy policy in New Zealand deserves attention is that the country shares many structural similarities to many other countries of interest. Specifically, New Zealand has a liberal market economy (Esping-Andersen, 1996, 2002), similar to the U.K, Canada, Ireland, the U.S and Australia. As Rothstein (1998) observed, Anglo-Saxon public policy, in contrast to more social welfare policy, has tended to target the poor rather than directed to society as a whole (e.g., subsidized medicine for the elderly instead of cheap or free drugs for everyone). Furthermore, New Zealand, like other Anglo-Saxon countries, New Zealand has been

---

6 The term “Anglo-Saxon” is used by political theorist Esping-Andersen, Rothstein and others to describe a liberal market approach to social policy. However, it is not without controversy to apply the term to countries such as New Zealand, as doing so ignores the contribution of Indigenous cultures and ideas, and the multicultural nature of the country. However, the term is still useful as it indicates the similarities
attracted to the notion of adult literacy while at the same time tending, in the past at least, to approach skills policy in a bifurcated manner (Brown, Green & Lauder, 2000), supporting a large pool of low-skill jobs and a relatively small number of high skill ones. Scholars have observed of Canada, and of the Anglo-Saxon approach to adult literacy in general, that literacy education has tended to be insufficient to really help most people participate in the knowledge economy (Veeman, Walker & Ward, 2006). Recently, New Zealand began to promote literacy as part of its agenda to build a high skills society. Whether the government paid more than rhetorical attention is a question I examine in this thesis.

However, while sharing many similarities to other colonized Anglo countries, such as Australia, Canada or the U.S—in that it is living with the legacy of colonization and the subjugation and ensuing low socioeconomic position of Indigenous peoples in relation to the rest of the population—New Zealand has sparked the interest of many other countries because of the growing integration of Māori into mainstream politics and their significant involvement in developing public policy, such as in health and education. The case of New Zealand may provide insight into the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the policy process and into how adult literacy policy might affect, and be affected by, Indigenous peoples.

**New Zealand as a laboratory for neoliberalism and inclusive liberalism.** The second reason adult literacy policy in New Zealand from the past ten years makes sense to study is that the country can be understood as a laboratory for social, political and educational reform. In particular, New Zealand is a nation that, perhaps more than any other developed country, experienced pronounced changes in its political economy over the last thirty years. It moved away from an exceptionally protected welfare system to a radical neoliberal experiment, and later to a more inclusive liberal model (Craig & Porter, 2006).

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From the 1930-1980s New Zealand was one of the world leaders in welfare reform and had an especially regulated economy (Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004). By the 1980s, the country was experiencing numerous economic and social problems. It had a relatively undiversified economy, isolationist and protectionist trade policies, unsustainable levels of agricultural subsidies, and (according to some sources) crippling powerful unions (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005). In the early 1980s, faced with these challenges and in the aftermath of the oil crisis, former National party Prime Minister Robert Muldoon borrowed millions of dollars to build large-scale industrial projects under his “Think Big” initiatives aiming to reduce New Zealand’s reliance on imports. These investments were widely unpopular and expensive, and arguably did little to aid the economy (Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004).

Faced with this troubled political and financial situation, the incoming Labour government, which was elected in 1984, sought to stimulate the economy under the guidance of Finance Minister Roger Douglas. His economic policies became known as “Rogernomics,” deliberately reminiscent of Reaganomics. The world watched on as a highly regulated and closed welfare state radically deregulated, restructured, decentralized, privatized, deunionized and helped unravel, to varying degrees, the social fabric that had held the country together for the previous decades (Kelsey, 1997). Collectively, these social policy initiatives came to be referred to as the “New Zealand experiment” (Easton, 1997; Gray, 1998; Kelsey, 1997; Saul, 2005). This experiment was spearheaded by the traditionally leftist Labour government during the mid-to-late 1980s and strengthened and continued under a new-right National party throughout the 1990s. Overall, New Zealand constituted a radical trial of neoliberalism. However, although the 1980s and 1990s saw radical changes to New Zealand’s economy and education system, it was not until the

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8 See Figure 4 for the changing rate of unionization in New Zealand.
9 New Zealand was not the first neoliberal experiment—this prize generally goes to Chile under Pinochet. However, New Zealand was known for the severity of its reforms and the speed at which they were implemented.
following decade that adult literacy started to receive attention.

In 1999, reeling from the effects of “[a] free-market project in laboratory conditions...which resulted in the creation of an underclass” (Gray, 1998, p.42), New Zealanders overwhelmingly elected a government that would show concern for equality and social and economic inclusion rather than for curbing government spending and for economic growth at any cost. Incoming Prime Minister Helen Clark’s proclaimed mission was to undo some of the damage done by the neoliberal reforms instituted over the previous 15 years. In seeking to address both social and economic concerns, and in fostering the notion of inclusion in social policy, the New Zealand Labour government, in power from 1999-2008, has been described as moving towards inclusive liberalism (Craig & Porter, 2004, 2006) and representing a Third Way politics (Economist, 2003; Giddens, 1999; Kelsey, 1997). One part of the government’s Third Way, inclusive liberal agenda was to promote economic and social inclusion through skills development and adult literacy in particular (Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004).

**New Zealand as pioneer in public policy.** New Zealand is not only of interest because of the changes made to its political economy over the past thirty years. More concretely, New Zealand has consistently been a leader in public policy reform (Roberts, 2003), and serves as an example of reform that has followed in many other places around the developed world. There is a term in common use around New Zealand to describe the entrepreneurial and pioneering character of New Zealanders: *kiwi ingenuity*. This expression evokes New Zealanders’ willingness to implement radical and creative ideas to solve problems. In social policy, such ideas and reforms are interesting in their novelty and the speed at which they have generally been implemented. The country has acted as a micro-laboratory for the experimentation of a number of reform strategies. For this reason, kiwi ingenuity in social policy, and in education policy particularly, has been able to capture the attention of policymakers worldwide. Indeed, from its influential contribution to the
phonics/whole-language debate on teaching reading to school children in the 1970s-80s, to the radical transformation of school curriculum, the decentralization of school management and the implementation of “performance indicators” and new teacher standards in the 1980s and 1990s, New Zealand has acted as an “incubator” for numerous policy and programme ideas in all levels of education (Ball, 1998; Martens & Starke, 2008; Roberts, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2006).

In short, then, New Zealand’s similarity to other developed Anglo-Saxon nations; its experience of extreme neoliberal restructuring; its reported shift to inclusive liberalism and its related heightened concern with adult literacy; and, its overall reputation as pioneer in political, cultural, social and educational ideas and reform, all make for an interesting case study. Literacy policy provides a window into the country’s political landscape. And, New Zealand, once again, provides a model for examining policy reform more generally.

1.3.2 Existing literature on NZ adult literacy policy. New Zealand compulsory school reform, enacted during the 1990s especially, captured the attention of both local and international scholars (e.g., Ball, 1998; Martens & Starke, 2008; Peters, 2001; Roberts, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2006). In terms of literature on adult education during this time, less was written, though, again, some important observations were made in regards to the impact of neoliberalism on adult education policy. As for literature on adult education policy reform during the first decade of the 2000s (the main focal period of this dissertation), there was very little existing prior to my undertaking research in 2008. This fact acted as a major impetus for this study.

To contextualize my case study, I now situate it within the literature on adult education policy in New Zealand during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. I return to these studies in the conclusion where I evaluate my findings in relation to those of other authors. Below, I provide a summary of studies that have examined both the neoliberal era and the later inclusive liberal one in adult education.
Adult literacy policy during the neoliberal era: 1984-1999. Several articles were published on individual adult education policies created in the late 1980s and 1990s, and on particular government ministries or actors during this period. However, little has been recorded on the impact of these reforms on the field of adult education as a whole. For this reason, one objective of this study was to further explore policy from this era to learn more about the nature of policy and the possible shift in policy from this time to the first eight years of the new millennium.

What has been written about adult education during the 1980s and 1990s has tended to critique the neoliberal bias evident in adult education policy in terms of funding cuts, privatization, surveillance and the increasing demands placed on accountability (e.g., Boshier, 2001; Boshier & Benseman, 2000; Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998; Caunter, 1990; Codd, 1995; Grace, 1989; Hill, 1990; Roberts, 1997a; Snook, 1989, 1991; Zepke, 2001).\(^\text{10}\)

Additional key studies from this era include those written by three important NZ education scholars, Casey (2006), Findsen (2001) and Tobias (2004). Beyond criticizing the neoliberal flavour of educational reform, these articles note the conflict in adult education policy enacted under the 5\(^{\text{th}}\) Labour government (in power from 1984-1989). Writing on the Lifelong Learning Task Force that had been established in 1985, Robert Tobias observed that this document, on the one hand, emphasized breaking down institutional barriers to learning, allowing for the possibility of more diverse curricula; and, on the other, endorsed a “highly individualized and consumerist notion of lifelong learning and a managerialist approach to problem solving” (2004, p.576). According to Tobias, the Labour-led government negotiated competing ideologies on adult education/lifelong learning. Casey (2006) also noted how lifelong learning policy in the 1980s in New Zealand reflected a

\(^{10}\) Much of this literature is explored in Chapter 2, throughout the findings, and again revisited in the concluding chapter.
hybridity in the Labour government. Similarly, Findsen (2001) suggested that, while implementing a policy of market liberalism, the fourth Labour government was simultaneously operating policies of social equity aimed at honouring the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, the treaty signed in 1840 between Māori and the crown and upon which the country was established. According to both Tobias and Findsen, this negotiation over competing ideologies was generally quashed during the 1990s under the more right-wing National party. As Findsen (2001) and others argued, an emphasis on social equity noticeably softened during the 1990s (see, e.g., Hazeltine, 1998; Kelsey, 1993, 1997).

Another seminal article published about adult education policy enacted under the subsequent National government is Peter Roberts’ (2000) *Knowledge, information and literacy*. In this article, Roberts dissects the *NZ Foresight project*, established by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology in 1997. He problematizes the overall discourses in this document, which, he argues, promote nebulous notions of knowledge and information as ways of helping New Zealanders to compete in a new economic order. He also criticizes the presentation of knowledge as a commodity “to be bought, traded, sold or consumed” (p.439), identifying an over-emphasis on economic exchange and value in the Foresight project.

At the same time, the NZ Foresight policy—at least according to Roberts’ interpretation—represents one of the first attempts of the government in the 1990s to distance itself from an extreme neoliberal response to the knowledge economy, and in fact reflects some key inclusive liberal ideas. The policy presents alternate predictions of New Zealand’s future. The first scenario is *Possum in the glare*, which portrays an outdated New Zealand whose citizens’ skills are unsuited to the knowledge age. The second future option is

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11 This is highly reminiscent of Lyotard’s (1984) proclamation in his treatise, *The postmodern condition*, in which he predicts and criticizes how knowledge and information would be treated in the near future.

12 Possums freeze in the glare of car headlights. A similar expression in North America is “deer in the headlights.”
Shark roaming alone, which describes a triumph of individualism and entrepreneurship with New Zealanders contributing to a new economic competitive environment but at the expense of community. The third option, and the one preferred by the Ministry, boasts the title Nga kahikatea, the name of a native tree, depicting the country reaching new heights both in business and innovation, and in social cohesion. According to Roberts, the report brought together a drive for scientific, technological and economic success, on the one hand, with a caring social ethic and commitment to the environment, on the other (p.442). While Roberts accuses the report of placing “economic imperatives first” and consigning “cultural matters...to secondary—and sometimes afterthought—status” (p. 449), he also notes a shift in discourse coming from the architects of neoliberalism.

Roberts’ policy analysis challenges Tobias’ (2004) claim. According to Tobias, the National government of the late 1990s was not “influenced by the lifelong learning discourses that had emerged in many other OECD countries at the time” (p.579) and its policies had very little to do with lifelong learning and served only to implement neoliberalism. Roberts’ article suggests that in the late 1990s (perhaps in response to IALS and other OECD reports released in the late 1990s), certain sectors or factions of the government also started to adopt OECD policy concerns and discourses.

**Adult literacy during the inclusive liberal era.** Prior to the undertaking of research for this dissertation in 2008, very little had been written about the impact of inclusive liberalism or Third Way ideas on adult education policy in New Zealand. Of the articles released before 2009, authors tended to note the continuation of neoliberal discourses in reforms undertaken by “new” Labour (i.e., during the first decade of the 2000s). For example, Law and Stalker (2005) criticized the government for its continued neoliberal bias and managerialist emphasis. Similarly, Zepke and Leach (2007) noted that more emphasis had been placed on institutional accountability and quality assurance by new government policy, leading to some detrimental effects on those working in post-compulsory
education and to education as a whole. On the other hand, Casey (2006) observed differences in discourse towards a focus on community and social inclusion. Casey noted a stronger accent on community-responsive educational services and the expansion of workplace education in policies released under Labour. While Casey did not fully accept the Labour government’s mantra that “the singularly and the ruthlessly pursued market model of the 1980s and 1990s is over in New Zealand” (p.354), she did observe that “new” Labour (like its British counterpart) wanted to balance social and economic concerns and to hold efficiency and equity in balance. Casey’s article, thus, suggests the presence of inclusive liberal discourses in Labour government documents.

In addition to these articles, there were a handful of studies released after 2008. I explore these in further depth in the final chapter where I relate my findings to theirs. Three main articles were released in 2009 by Strathdee (2009), Slater (2009) and Zepke (2009). Zepke’s article focuses on the government’s Third Way approach to lifelong learning and explores the nature of reform to lifelong learning policy under the latest Labour government. Strathdee (2009) and Slater (2009) studied some of the effects of recent government policy on the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector through the creation of a new ministry, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). These two authors see these effects as generally damaging to the field.

My study examined some of the issues identified by the authors I have mentioned here, in my endeavour to more fully understand the shift, nature and drivers of adult literacy policy over recent decades.

1.3.3 New Zealand’s educational terrain today. All the reforms of the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, investigated by others and now in this thesis by me, resulted in the creation of a particular educational terrain. A principal goal of this research was to better understand why the educational terrain became what it was. In this section, I provide an overview of this terrain to help the reader better understand the New Zealand educational
context.

The following figure shows the institutions that provide adult literacy courses in the country. Below the graph, I offer more detailed explanations on the particular institutions:
Figure 1: Who Provides Adult Literacy in NZ?
All of the eight universities in the country offer programmes that contain adult literacy components. *Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs)*, like community colleges in North America, provide adult literacy/basic education courses by integrating literacy components into their vocational courses, and/or in offering transitioning courses for students to move into university programmes. *Wānanga*, which are the three relatively new Māori universities, provide adult literacy programmes as part of their courses.\(^{13}\) All three types of institutions—i.e., universities, ITPs and Wānanga—are considered *Tertiary*\(^ {14}\) *Education Institutions (TEIs)* and are subject to particular government requirements in terms of funding and programming. *Private Training Establishments (PTEs)*, created in the early 1990s with the passing of the Education Act (Ministry of Education, 1989), are small institutions that include private ESL schools, hairdressing schools, business colleges and organizations run as charitable trusts that provide basic skills programmes. A minority of these PTEs deliver what would be termed adult literacy programmes. *Industry Training Organizations (ITOs)* are not listed as providers as they arrange for training. There are around 40 ITOs in the country, and these administer the training and credential requirements for each industry sector (e.g., boat making, carpentry, aviation etc.). Around a quarter of ITOs are currently working with *Workbase* on programmes focused on literacy. The remaining ITOs may or may not integrate explicit literacy training (in part, depending on how literacy is defined). The *OTEP* (Other Tertiary Education Providers) categorization comprises all other institutions offering some tertiary education; some of these courses and programmes include literacy components. *REAPs* exist to provide lifelong learning support to their communities through multiple work streams, including early childhood education,

\(^{13}\) Very little is known about the adult literacy programmes in Wānanga given the lack of research or reporting from the three institutions. One of the Wānanga came under attack for its so-called “green light” adult literacy programme, based on a Cuban model, which was deemed to be of poor quality and of little use to students (Participant interview).

\(^{14}\) In New Zealand, the term *tertiary education* is used much more holistically than it is in other places. See Appendix A.
working with schools and adult and community education. WEAs advance, as well as provide, adult and community education centred on social justice (which may or may not contain literacy components). In addition, adult students can also complete their high school diploma through secondary schools and the Correspondence School (distance education).

The three main bodies that oversee adult literacy provision in New Zealand are:

1. **Literacy Aotearoa**, which is premised on a bicultural\(^{15}\) model of delivering community adult literacy programmes throughout the country (with around 47 locations, see Fig. 1).

2. **Workbase**, responsible for promoting, supporting and facilitating workplace literacy programmes.

3. **ESOL Home Tutors** is the largest refugee and migrant settlement agency and provides language tuition and settlement support.\(^{16}\)

Literacy provision in New Zealand has tended to be divided into workplace, industry and employment-related literacy education, on the one hand, and adult and community literacy programmes, on the other. Literacy Aotearoa and ESOL Home Tutors generally provide Adult and Community Education (ACE), whereas Workbase runs workplace literacy programmes and courses.

Literacy Aotearoa supports 47 organizations to provide community literacy programmes throughout the country. The umbrella organization administers the 47 centres, or *nga poupous* as it calls them, and stresses a strong social justice and bicultural vision.

Funding for the Literacy Aotearoa branches (or *nga poupou* members) is often in the form

\(^{15}\) In NZ “bicultural” tends to refer to Māori and Pakeha (New Zealanders of European descent, see Appendix B).

\(^{16}\) In New Zealand, the term ESOL—English for Speakers of Other Languages—is used as opposed to ESL (English as a Second Language) given that English is often taught as a third or fourth language to learners, meaning ESL is not always accurate.

* Although ESOL comprises a literacy component, given that it is more language focused, it was not the topic of investigation for this study.

* Note also that 23% of New Zealanders in the last census identified themselves as immigrants (see http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage.aspx).
of small grants applied for individually and administered through bulk funding by the head office of Literacy Aotearoa who distributes the monies they receive. Given the strong Māori influence of the largest community adult education provider, community literacy in NZ is often associated with Māori kura, or education. Literacy programmes in these organizations can include Te Reo (Māori language) literacy classes; Te kura kaupapa (Māori customs and language programmes); drivers’ license training (literacy programmes in preparation for the written exam); literacy programmes associated with setting up small businesses etc.

Workbase works with ITOs, unions, businesses and tertiary education organizations to provide and assist with literacy programmes. They also run and facilitate professional development (PD) for literacy tutors. Workplace literacy programmes in New Zealand seem to vary greatly. Sometimes courses last a matter of weeks and others numerous months. Instructors often go out to the paper mill or the factory to work alongside the learners/workers; some even spend weeks or months on location, taking the learning programmes to the students.

In terms of management and policy enactment, the government departments and ministries that affect and effect adult literacy policy include the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Department of Labour (DOL) and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) oversees accreditation and quality control and enables organizations to confer particular credentials and apply for particular pools of funding. Other key players in the development of adult literacy policy over the past decades will be examined in the findings chapters as we explore the drivers of adult literacy policy formation.17

17 For additional and comparative data on educational attainment and participation in tertiary education, see Appendix C.
1.4 Overview of Study

Having established the parameters and rationales for this study, and provided the basic context surrounding the case study, we can now turn to the research questions, design and contributions of this dissertation.

1.4.1 Research questions and design. Two principal research questions guided this research project:

i. How did NZ adult literacy policy vary between the periods 1984-1999 and 1999-2008?

ii. What were the key drivers in NZ that shifted the policy discourse in adult literacy from 1984-1999 and 1999-2008?

In brief, this dissertation research can be considered a policy sociology (Ozga, 2000) of adult literacy, an approach that acknowledges policy as inseparable “from other socio-political activities and actors... [and that]...recognizes the politics of the policy process” (Ozga, 2005, p.3). For this study, I drew on three main sources: official government or government-sponsored policy texts from the periods 1984-1999 and 1999-2008; documents published by non-government literacy advocates (e.g., educational organizations, think-tanks/lobby groups, and unions); and, interviews with 20 expert policy actors in the arena of New Zealand literacy. Indeed, a distinct contribution of this study is its inclusion of the perceptions of both policymakers and those who receive, interpret and operationalize policy. All interviews and document analysis took place during 2008 and 2009.

1.4.2 Significance of study. As noted in 1.3.2, prior to conducting this study in 2008, there was limited literature on the development of lifelong education, lifelong learning... 

\[18\] I use the term “policy actor” in a somewhat unconventional manner. I provide more information on my use of this term in Chapter 3.
or adult literacy policy during first decade of the 21st Century. Indeed, one major propellant of this study was the relative dearth of literature on the political, economic and ideological context of adult literacy policy. Adult literacy policy as it has been developed following IALS is a relatively recent phenomenon; for this reason, it has not been widely studied. Previous policy research, both on adult literacy policy in NZ and abroad, has tended to focus mainly on individual policies (e.g., Roberts, 2000; Tett, 2006; Tobias, 2004; Wickens & Sandlin, 2007), and/or has performed a rather limited discourse analysis on policies and groups of policies (e.g., Edwards & Nicholl, 2001; Roberts, 2000). My exploration of adult literacy policy in New Zealand over the past decades addresses a gap in the literature by examining policy holistically, across time and across various contexts of policy (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). Specifically, this study contributes to the growing discussions on:

1. Inclusive liberal policy reform and adult learning policy;
2. How the state operationalizes an agenda of adult literacy; and
3. The relationship between neoliberalism and inclusive liberalism in adult literacy policy.

1.5 Structure of Dissertation

Over the next seven chapters, I provide the background for understanding, and then describe the contexts of, adult literacy policy in New Zealand from 1999-2008 in relation to policy from 1984-1999. The dissertation is structured as following:

Chapter two explores the background against which adult education policy has developed in the Western world over the last three decades. More concretely, the chapter explores the changing relationship between adult education policy and the nation-state, and further situates my study within the relevant literature.

Chapter three describes the methodology, and theory underpinning the methodology, which I drew upon in this dissertation. I detail the approach I took to
examining adult literacy policy in the contexts of policy text production, influence, and interpreted practices and effects (see Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). I also discuss the data sources and specific methods used.

**Chapters four, five, six and seven** are the findings chapters of this dissertation, laid out in accordance with the methodological framework inspired by Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) that was introduced in Chapter 3. Specifically, **Chapters four and five** investigate the context of policy text production. Here, I present the findings from my discursive analysis of government or government-contracted policy texts. In my research, I examined texts primarily in terms of their articulation of policy problems (the issues that the policies seek to address) and of policy solution/s (the solutions put forth in the documents for addressing the ascribed policy problems). **Chapter four** explores the values and goals in official government policy on “skills” and on post-compulsory education published under the so-called neoliberal era (1984-1999) to provide context for policy in the following decade and to enable us to see the differences between this period and the following. **Chapter five** lays out my discursive analysis of policy documents on adult literacy from 1999-2008. This chapter situates recent adult literacy policy reform within the greater context of previous policy reform and compares and contrasts the two eras. **Chapter six** focuses on the context of policy influence. It investigates which ideas, organizations, documents and individuals were the main drivers of policy formation, and how. **Chapter seven**, the final findings chapter, examines the context of interpreted practices and outcomes of policy. It analyzes the interpretations of and responses to policy practices and effects by non-government policy actors contrasting these with official government discourse.

Finally, **Chapter eight** unifies the overarching themes identified in the four preceding chapters and further explores the intersection between inclusive liberalism, neoliberalism and adult literacy policy in New Zealand. The chapter also discusses the implications of my study and summarizes the overall conclusions.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

THE CONTEXT OF ADULT LITERACY POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPED NATIONS

This chapter describes the trajectory that adult education policy has taken in the developed world since the 1980s and examines the responses made to adult education policy in the academic literature. I explore the context of the economy, the workplace and adult education in regards to two periods: 1980s and 1990s, and late 1990s–2008. In this chapter, I illustrate how the policy discourse shifted from “adult education for society and personal development” to “adult education for economic growth” (in the 1980s and 1990s) and then to “adult education for society, personal growth and the economy” (in the late 1990s–2008). I also show how the transnational institution of the OECD disseminated the ideas of “lifelong learning” and “adult literacy” throughout the developed world.

2.1 Adult Education in the 1980s and 1990s: Neoliberalism, the Knowledge Economy and Lifelong Learning

The end of 20th century was marked by a structural threat to the welfarist domestication of capitalism, and by the revival of a socially reckless form of neoliberalism. (Habermas and Pensky, 2001, p.48).

Prior to the 1980s, adult education was generally a civil society activity characterized predominantly by community concerns and generally operating outside the purview of government control (Ellis, 2003; Knowles, 1962). Governments in developed countries tended to ignore adult education, or nominally, but not financially, support it (Brown & Lauder, 1992; H.M. Levin, 1998). Arguably, there was little economic imperative for a system of post-school education (Brown & Lauder; Levin). During the 1980s and 1990s, however, adult education underwent a radical reconceptualization and subsequently gained
increased attention. Specifically, governments, organizations and individuals started to see an economic benefit to adult education, and adult education became more economically directed. This shift was driven by two fundamental and interrelated changes in the ways people thought about the economy: first, the ascendancy of neoliberalism; and second, the growth of discourses and practices of the knowledge economy, or the idea that the economy is dependent on knowledge as input and output. The form in which adult education gained traction was through lifelong learning; and, the transnational organization, the OECD, can be seen as the vehicle that spread this concept throughout the developed world.

In section 2.1.1, I first explore the rise of neoliberalism from the late 1970s to the 1990s. I then assess how neoliberalism changed how the nation-state managed and organized social policy. This section then ends with an analysis of how the knowledge economy has affected the workplace and the role of skills. In 2.1.2, I focus on the development of the idea of lifelong learning and its dissemination by the OECD. And, finally, in section 2.1.3 I address the academic responses to lifelong learning policy as found in the literature on adult education during this time.

2.1.1 Neoliberalism and the knowledge economy. In order to make sense of what happened to adult literacy policy during the 1980s and 1990s, it is first necessary to explore the role of neoliberalism in social policy in developed countries during this time. Below, I explore the trajectory and nature of neoliberalism and then discuss the knowledge economy and its relationship with neoliberalism.

The rise of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism arose in the 1980s as a response to perceived failures of Keynesian welfare liberalism, and represented a fundamental shift in belief about how social policy and the economy should be managed, resulting in significant policy reforms. From the end of World War II up until the late 1970s, most Western political economies adopted a Keynesian approach to macroeconomics: the view that the economy naturally experiences growth and recession, and that when economic growth is slow or
negative, governments should run deficits to increase spending on social services and boost employment. Keynes argued that governments could increase employment by raising inflation, arguing that there was an inverse relationship between unemployment and inflation (i.e., that there could not be both inflation and unemployment at the same time, a.k.a stagflation, see Murad, 1962). During the 1970s, however, the world began to experience stagflation in response to the oil shocks, dissolution of the Bretton Woods agreement and subsequent floating of national currencies, and general economic turmoil. This resulted in the ascendancy of Chicago School economist Milton Friedman’s neoliberal ideas. Friedman had predicted that Keynesian policies would lead to stagflation, and, instead, had proposed the theory of monetarism\(^\text{19}\)—the view that authorities should focus solely on maintaining price stability (Friedman, 1962). Friedman endorsed supply-side economics—the belief that economic growth, normatively assumed to be the primary goal of government, is best achieved by lowering barriers to production. The dominance of monetarism and supply-side economics resulted in three main policy shifts: stabilization of inflation and interest rates; liberalization of global markets for free trade; and, privatization of public assets and (full or partial) shifting of public assets and services to the private sector (Stiglitz, 2002). In practice, adherence to a Friedmanesque supply-side economics consisted of deregulation and severe spending cuts to social services. This one-size-fits-all neoliberal approach to economic policy squeezed policies and views within a shrinking ideological framework (Stiglitz, 2002).

Neoliberalism spread from institution to institution and from government to government through an intensification of globalization, defined here as increased global flows and movement of people, technologies, money, goods, culture and ideas resulting in a weakening of government control (see Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2000), and transnationalism, or the extension of governance and policies beyond national borders

\(^{19}\) Friedman (1962, 1968) asserted three claims in his theory of monetarism: 1. That excess money supply generated by the central bank (in other words, printing too much money) necessarily leads to inflation; 2. That market economies are inherently stable in the absence of major unexpected fluctuations in money supply; and, 3. That fiscal spending creates a drag on the economy by raising interest rates.
(Mahon & McBride, 2009). Furthermore, neoliberalism, globalization (and transnationalism) have been involved in a mutually reinforcing feedback loop: neoliberalism furthers globalization and transnationalism, which in turn allow for greater implementation of neoliberal policies. The result has been an erosion of nation-state centred and independent policy creation.

**Neoliberalism and changes to the nation-state.** This shift towards neoliberalism and rise in globalization and transnationalism changed the role and function of the nation-state, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries and particularly in regards to social policy (Esping-Anderson, 1996). Notwithstanding the lowering of barriers to trade, weakening of government regulations, and growth of the private sector, the state in many senses grew during the 1980s: in the name of “small government,” government and governance increased (Brodie, 2004; Rose, 1999); in the name of “free markets” the state actively intervened to promote a “market society” (MacEwan, 1999; Slater & Tonkiss, 2001); and, while social services started to be questioned as an inalienable citizen right, greater responsibility was expected from citizens (Olsson, O’Neill, & Codd, 2004). In fact, rather than leading to a diminution of state power, neoliberalism resulted in a redistribution and reconcentration of power in the state (Held & McGrew, 2000).

French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1998), provided a description of how neoliberal economics affects the nation-state through what he termed “the Tyranny of the market.” According to Bourdieu, power is transferred (and in many cases usurped) from the “left-hand” to the “right-hand” of the state under neoliberalism. He explained:

The left hand of the state [is] the set of agents of the so-called spending ministries, which are the trace...of the social struggle of the past. They are opposed to the right hand of the state, the technocrats of the Ministry of Finance, the public and private banks and the ministerial cabinets...[T]he right hand does not know or in many cases does not even care to know what the left hand does. And, more importantly, it does not want to pay for it—[the right hand is] obsessed by the question of financial equilibrium (1998, pp. 2-5)

Bourdieu concluded that this dynamic results in “the failure of the state as the guardian of
the public interest” (p.2), where those who work for the left hand are held responsible for the inadequacies of the market without having been given adequate means to correct for these inadequacies. In contrast, the right hand is made up of technocrats who have been elevated to the status of “state nobility” and “[have] succeeded in presenting neoliberalism as self-evident” (p.29).

In New Zealand, the growing dominance of the right hand of state was witnessed particularly in the rise of *New Public Management* (NPM), a management philosophy in which governments seek to make the public sector more efficient and cost-effective by increasing privatization and instituting market-oriented reforms (Boston, Martin, Pallot & Walsh, 1996). In New Zealand, NPM grew to dominate public policy during the 1990s as the government applied competition to the public system by the private system. As Boston et al. (1996) reflected, in NPM a singular economic lens was applied to public policy issues. Accordingly, clients became consumers; citizens were referred to as shareholders; and profit constituted the main objective. While the left hand of the state withdraws, Bourdieu noted, the right hand engages in techniques of regulation and control. We can observe this phenomenon in the example of NPM; the shift in management of public services did not organically occur but rather was created and controlled so to function in a way consistent with government aims and ideology. Regulation, surveillance and control were crucial in implementing policy reforms in the neoliberal state, as Bourdieu argued.

*Post-Fordism, the knowledge economy and changes in the workplace.*

Neoliberalism and globalization substantially impacted the workplace and the role of skills. Specifically, starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the workplace experienced a shift from Fordism to so-called post-Fordism (Castells, 2000). The Fordist economy relied on large-scale mass production under protected national markets where job descriptions were clearly defined and employment was (generally) for life. In contrast, *post-Fordism* is characterized by the utilization of just-in-time production techniques and the reliance on more technology, less manpower, and a flexible, high-skilled workforce that can produce
innovative, specialist products and services to compete in the world market (Castells).

Post-Fordist modes of production gave rise to a knowledge economy, which is dependent on the input of ideas, technologies and information for the output of economically profitable ideas, technologies and information. Yet, because this occurs within a neoliberal policy environment, the knowledge economy operates in unprotected global markets, and in an atmosphere of high staff turnover, competition and general decreasing worker and job protections (Castells, 2000). Discourses surrounding the knowledge economy became entrenched in policy discourse during the 1980s and 1990s. Kenway, Bullen, Fahey and Robb (2006) write,

> Knowledge economy policy discourse, with its interlaced ideas about knowledge, information, learning, economy, and society has become so influential it has assumed the status of truth, dominating the policy lexicon and excluding alternative economies – even denying that they exist. (p. 4)

Knowledge economy discourses are closely connected to discourses surrounding the unique role of the highly skilled individual—the “entrepreneur” (see Boshier, 2001), the “knowledge worker” (Drucker, 1966), or the “symbolic analyst” (Reich, 1992)—who with her higher-order information processing skills is dependent on no-one as she freely moves around from job-to-job, increasing her earning potential and employability. Collectively, these discourses of post-Fordism, the knowledge economy, and highly skilled individuals can be considered new economy discourses.

These new economy discourses did not necessarily reflect the reality of the workplace during the 1980s and 1990s, however. Indeed, many jobs still remained outside the knowledge economy and continued to utilize Fordist manufacturing techniques (Kumar, 1995); therefore, not all workers could be considered highly skilled. Nonetheless, the knowledge worker was the role to which adults in the developed world were now urged to aspire as a remedy to increasing job insecurity (Beck, 2000).

Two prime assumptions underlie new economy discourses: first, that innovation, creativity and flexibility drive the economy; and, second, that learning is both a way to help
existing knowledge workers progress through their careers, and to facilitate other workers’ transitions into the new economy in the face of a competitive and precarious environment resulting from neoliberal policies (see Fenwick, 2003). In sum, under the knowledge economy and post-Fordist modes of production skills are seen as necessary for people to excel, or even to survive, in a new economic climate.

2.1.2 Lifelong learning and the OECD. Adult education gained political traction under neoliberalism and in response to these new economy discourses in the form of lifelong learning, or adult learning for professional or personal reasons in which emphasis is placed on both the individual learning experience and learning for economic development (following, e.g., Tight, 2002).

By the late 1980s, lifelong learning had largely displaced the earlier notion of lifelong education, a concept previously popularized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the 1970s through the Faure Report (*Learning to Be*). *Lifelong education*, in contrast to lifelong learning, refers to social, personal and moral education continuing along one’s lifespan beyond compulsory schooling. UNESCO saw lifelong education as a way not only to enable citizens to adapt to such changes but, more importantly, to assist them to personally become catalysts of positive change (see Lengrand, 1986). Nonetheless, lifelong education had not made much of an impression on most Western governments in the 1970s (Bell, 1996).

In this conceptual shift from lifelong education to lifelong learning, the prevailing discourse in adult education went from a vision of social progress or personal growth to one focused on helping people to plug into an ever-changing economy. In effect, the humanist/progressivist influences in adult education were replaced by human capitalist ones (Rubenson, 2006). Ideologically, lifelong learning fits within a neoliberal and knowledge economy paradigm. Specifically, in its focus on “learning” as opposed to “education,” the concept of lifelong learning reflects a discourse of individualism associated with new economy discourses. Tuijnman and Broström comment:
The emphasis on ‘learning’ rather than ‘education’ is highly significant because it reduces the traditional preoccupation with structures and institutions and instead focuses on the individual. ...the realization of lifelong learning depends to a large degree on the capacity and motivation of individuals to take care of their own learning (2002, p.103).

Indeed, this individualism connoted by “learning” is contrasted with the social nature of “education,” which stresses the role of the educator. Furthermore, within a lifelong learning paradigm, skills and learning tend to be reified and treated as attainable and binary (i.e., you either have the skill or knowledge or you do not). Individuals are seen as continually having to upgrade their learning—as one would upgrade software for a computer—to keep current in response to changes in the economy and workplace.

The enthusiasm with which governments adopted economically driven lifelong learning represents a stark contrast to earlier responses to notions of lifelong education for social and moral progress (Bell, 1996). Before the rise of neoliberalism and the knowledge economy in the 1980s and 1990s, adult education had not been particularly institutionalized, regulated or government directed. At times, governments even actively rejected adult education programmes (see Adams & Horton, 1998; Selman, Cook, Selman & Dampier, 2006). Indeed, major adult education movements of the 20th Century—such as the Highlander Centre, Antigonish, or Freirean-inspired literacy campaigns—were seen as antagonistic to the state in their challenges to the existing socio-economic hierarchy. Lifelong learning, in contrast, was not only not seen as a threat but rather was actively embraced.

The role of the OECD in spreading the idea of lifelong learning. The OECD was pivotal in influencing national policy creation in education throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and propagated the idea of lifelong learning throughout its member countries (Rubenson, 2006). As Mahon and McBride (2009) point out, “although nation states still make policy, they do so in the context of an increasingly dense web of transnational networks, operating at different scales” (p.3). In essence, the OECD has constituted a principal actor in transnationalizing adult education policy, starting primarily in the 1980s.
and assisted by the intensification of globalization and neoliberalism.

The OECD is an international economic organization of 32 members that compares its members’ policy experiences, seeks answers to policy problems, identifies good practices in policy, and coordinates domestic and international policies (Mahon & McBride, 2009). It is “one of the world’s largest international bureaucracies” and “provides a setting for reflection and discussion, based on policy research and analysis that helps governments shape policy” (OECD, 2004, cited in Porter & Webb, 2009, p.45). According to Istance (1996), the OECD has assumed the role of semi-autonomous educational think-tank. Specifically, the organization has been instrumental in the development of policy on adult literacy and lifelong learning across its generally first-world member countries (see Henry, Lingard, Rizvi & Taylor, 2001; Rubenson, 2006, 2009). In short, then, the OECD is the mechanism by which discourses and policies surrounding lifelong learning were globalized.

The OECD helped set the terms of the debate in adult education both by issuing country reports in which it gives “recommendations” and promotes “best practices” in adult education, and by creating surveys to measure skills (see Henry et al., 2001; Rubenson, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Walker, 2009a, 2009b). As Steiner-Khamsi explains, there are two features of OECD studies that make them credible and respected: they are “meticulous in methodology and international in scope” (2004, p.207). Due to the positive reputation of its reports and surveys, the OECD has become what Marcussen calls an “ideational arbiter” (quoted in Porter & Webb, 2009, p.45). Consequently, governments’ concern with lifelong learning in places like New Zealand can be attributed in part to the OECD (see Casey, 2006; Rubenson, 2009). In fact, governments during the 1990s largely adopted the term “lifelong learning” from the OECD (Rubenson, 2006, 2009).

The OECD was an early convert to neoliberalism and helped spread the neoliberal view of social policy throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Porter & Webb, 2009). A neoliberal ontology underpinned both the organization’s idea of lifelong learning circulated throughout

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20 While the OECD was—and still is—generally thought of as a “rich countries’ club,” the inclusion of Mexico, Turkey, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia challenges this description.
developed nations in the 1980s and 1990s and its deliberate system of measuring countries’
performances against one another (Rubenson, 2006, 2009). The OECD injected human
capital theory into adult education in the developed world. In its advocacy of lifelong
learning, the organization endorsed some of the underlying assumptions of human capital
theory—that skills inhere in individuals; that these skills are measurable; and, that the
motivation to invest in one’s human capital (e.g., by undertaking further training or
education) ought to be based on rational calculation of individual return (Becker, 1964;
Schulz, 1961). In particular, the OECD publication *Education and the Economy* (1989) was
pivotal in linking adult education to the economy. In this document, the OECD made explicit
the connection between a person’s varying ability to read and write and her ability to earn
high wages and to contribute to her nation’s economy. Shortly following this report, the
OECD, in conjunction with researchers and government entities in a number of Western
countries, embarked on the development of an instrument that could measure skills seen as
essential in bolstering the knowledge economy (i.e., IALS). During the early-to-mid 1990s,
the organization also developed a number of subsequent reports on the connection between
lifelong learning and the knowledge economy (see Rubenson, 2006).

While the OECD helped bring lifelong learning to governments’ attention, and while
the economic relevance of adult education started to be taken seriously for the first time,
substantial policy creation and funding increases to adult education did not generally follow.
In fact, neoliberal practices of deregulation, privatization, decentralization and the related
enervation of the left hand of the state were in tension with, and indeed prevented the
actualization of, a fully funded centralized system of adult education.
2.1.3 Academic responses to lifelong learning policy. While adult education in its form of lifelong learning\(^\text{21}\) received growing government attention throughout the 1980s and 1990s, educational scholars tended not to welcome this increased attention but rather were uneasy with the turn adult education had taken. Throughout the 1990s, many academic articles and books on adult education argued that adult education had been usurped by a neoliberal agenda (see, for example, Collins, 1991; Cruikshank, 1998; Mezirow, 1996). Mezirow’s article in particular typifies the sentiment of the field in general at that time. He wrote of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) that,

\begin{quote}
[All evidence points to abandonment of significant social goals...[a] failure of our historic promise to serve as a means of realizing democracy’s full potential and the decline of a once idealistic movement to a collective free market mentality with a vested interest in serving only those who can afford to pay and in maintaining the social status (p.2).]
\end{quote}

In particular, scholars criticized the policy focus on “learning for the economy” for its neoliberal bias and overt techno-rationalist assumptions (see, for example, Collins, 1991; Cruikshank, 1998; Fitzsimons & Peters, 1994; Mezirow, 1996; Roberts, 1997b). Canadian adult educator, Michael Collins, for example, claimed that adult education was in “crisis,” having succumbed to the “cult of efficiency” and, in doing so, losing its original mission—to social justice and to supporting the individual and community. Collins expressed his cynicism about the concept of lifelong learning, which he accused of eroding community values, circumscribing dialogue, and ultimately destroying “the commons” by framing learning and teaching in terms of individual achievement. Other scholars criticized lifelong learning for being individualized and philosophically rooted in a radical liberal individualism (Boshier, 2004). Indeed, researchers accused “learning,” as conceptualized in

\(^{21}\) As previously mentioned, during the 1980s and much of the 1990s, the term “lifelong learning” arose as a dominant discourse. “Adult literacy” was a term that was still not generally used. However, the skills, education and learning associated with IALS’ notion of literacy received some increase in attention, which is seen in government reports and documents at this time.
OECD and government documents during the 1980s and 1990s, of becoming an individual responsibility rather than a social opportunity (see Rubenson and Walker, 2006; Walker, 2009a).

In other literature, writers argued that evidence for a knowledge economy, and high skill demands, was generally weaker than the discourse proclaimed. David Livingstone (1998), for example, developed the idea of an “education-jobs gap,” arguing that underemployment was a greater problem than insufficient training. He stated that there had been “little evidence of any general and persistent technical skill deficit among employed workers” (1998, p.175). Livingstone (1998, 1999) argued that workers tended to under-use the skills they had, and employers tended to consider only a small subset of their employees’ skills to be particularly useful. Indeed, according to Livingstone, by undertaking further education, people were becoming further underemployed. As literacy scholar Glynda Hull (1993) observed, the education and skills gaps in the workforce generally comprised “soft skills” such as communication, teamwork and customer service, rather than “technical skills” that, she argued, could be taught in adult education classes. In other words, Hull (1993) observed that the deficit was in certain worker dispositions rather than hard skills.

These authors seem to mimic former US Labour secretary Robert Reich’s (1992) proclamations made in The Work of Nations (borrowing in his title, evidently, from Adam Smith’s seminal primer of classical economics): that only 20% of workers in the new economy will be knowledge workers (see Beatty & Drucker, 1998), or what he calls symbolic analysts (Reich, 1992). In other words, according to Reich, 80% of the global population would not need particularly well developed critical thinking skills or high levels of literacy as the vast majority of people would be working in the service industry or in routine-production jobs. Such lines of argumentation question the concreteness or sincerity of government

22 Livingstone does point out, however, that this is specifically a North American—i.e., Canadian/U.S—perspective.

23 Reich’s response to the fact that only 20% of jobs could be considered “knowledge jobs” was to let most of the non-thinking jobs “drift overseas,” and have the symbolic analytical occupations concentrate in the
support for lifelong learning or the knowledge economy beyond the discursive.

**Reactions to lifelong learning policy in New Zealand.** Similar to researchers in other developed countries, educational scholars in New Zealand were pointedly critical of a neoliberal incursion into adult education policy throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, scholars critiqued the replacement of longstanding humanistic models of lifelong education in favour of more technocratic and economistic models of lifelong learning (Boshier, 2001; Boshier & Benseman, 2000; Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998; Zepke, 2001). There are four main themes that underpin scholarly writing on lifelong learning policy in New Zealand during the 1980s and 1990s: first, criticism over the monetization and commodification of adult education; second, critiques of the over-regulation of adult education through the NZQA; third, concern for the lack of attention and funding paid to adult education; and, fourth, observations on the impact of knowledge economy discourses on education policy. I discuss the points made around these four themes below.

1. **Monetization and commodification:** Authors were critical of fees introduced to adult education courses, and of the shift towards a commodification of adult education. Findsen (2001), for example, lamented the restructuring of university-based adult and continuing education during the 1980s and 1990s that, he argued, transformed university-based adult education from a valid state-funded enterprise for the disenfranchised into a “cash cow.” Writing in 1989, NZ education Professor Gerald Grace (1989) contributed a philosophical piece on how both compulsory and non-compulsory education had become commodified. He wrote that the tradition of understanding education as a public good was under challenge by ideas that assert that education is a commodity and other ideas that radically question the notion of public provision of education and government support.

2. **The over-regulation of adult education:** Other articles (e.g., Codd, 1995; Roberts, 1997a; Zepke, 2001) directed their criticisms to the over-regulation of education through the

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U.S. This has clearly not happened given the millions of Americans who work in menial service industry jobs for low minimum (and sub-minimum) wages.
New Zealand Qualifications Association (NZQA), an organization that, in the 1990s, transformed compulsory schooling and some adult education programmes. Zepke (2001) argued that the NZQA limited educator and institutional autonomy and generally narrowed the idea and practice of education. As Roberts (1997a) noted, the NZQA’s rational “scientific” quality allowed it to assume the status of “official knowledge” on educational standards, thus enabling the organization to radically transform education. In other influential articles, Snook (1989, 1991) observed that the NZQA treated education as a privilege rather than a right.

3. Lack of support for adult education: Other scholars argued that despite the emphasis on educational reform in the late 1980s, basic adult education continued to be ignored as a policy priority. Caunter wrote on the government support of literacy programmes for New Zealand adults in the late 1980s and early 1990s:

A lack of clear commitment from government to adult literacy programmes has resulted in many literacy schemes becoming reliant on the cooperation of the nearest polytechnic for financial assistance. Most schemes in New Zealand are small and are co-ordinated by volunteers...Recent post-secondary educational reforms, which give more autonomy to tertiary institutions, do not appear to be improving the situation at this stage. (1990, p.58)

Similarly, Hill (1990), working for the NZ Council for Educational Research, also put forth policy recommendations for reform and for increased financial support of adult basic education.

4. The impact of the OECD’s knowledge economy discourses on education policy: Scholars also reflected on the impact of knowledge economy discourses on education and training policy, especially over the mid-to-late 1990s. In an article released in 2006, Casey noted the influence of “international policy trends, such as those emanating from the OECD,

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24 Adult literacy, as the term was used in the 1980s and early 1990s, can be considered a subset of what would later be referred to as adult literacy. Indeed, the OECD’s notion of adult literacy had still not entered the public discourse in the early 1990s and, therefore, literacy tended to be understood in a more traditional and binary sense. I discuss the impact of the OECD’s definition on adult literacy in section 2.2.2.
in economy and production, labour market reform and education” (2006, p.344) on the policies of Australia and New Zealand. She identified two OECD publications, The knowledge-based economy (OECD, 1996b) and Benchmarking knowledge-based economies (1999), which outlined the elements and means for achieving and measuring the knowledge-based economy. She found that these reports “were influential in the policy developments and practices in Australia and New Zealand, and significantly account for the growing economic and education policy convergence between the two countries” (p.351). In another example, Brian Caldwell (1989) noted the counterpressures in educational governance stemming from the OECD and other forces to shape labour market and educational policy in New Zealand and other Anglo-Saxon countries. These observations confirm the influence of the OECD and its knowledge economy discourses, and educational research in particular, on NZ policies.

2.2 Adult Education in the Late 1990s – 2008: Inclusive Liberalism and Adult Literacy

Policy started to turn away from harsher tenets of neoliberalism beginning in the late 1990s. There were shifts in the perceived role of adult education and skills during this time towards striking a balance between economic and social concerns. This is not to say that neoliberalism or lifelong learning were ideas that had existed unchallenged throughout the 1980s or 1990s; but, instead, challenges and alternatives to both neoliberalism and lifelong learning became more loudly voiced and more fully formed beginning in the final years of the 1990s.

In section 2.2.1, I first explore the theoretical model of inclusive liberalism (and interrelated ideas on the Third Way), which are ways of describing these political, economic and ideological changes that have in turn affected adult literacy policy. In 2.2.2, I then investigate the role of the OECD in its reflection of inclusive liberal ideals and in promoting adult literacy through IALS. Finally, in section 2.2.3 I explore the academic responses to
inclusive liberalism in recent adult education policy.

2.2.1 Inclusive liberalism. While neoliberalism can be understood as the “the repudiation of the Keynesian welfare state and the ascendance of the Chicago School of political economy” (Brown, 2005, p.38), inclusive liberalism presents a middle road between welfare liberalism and neoliberalism where the notion of inclusion is central. It seeks to bridge the divide between market and state, economy and society, and, private and public, by including these traditionally considered binaries.

The concept of inclusive liberalism was developed by New Zealand sociologist, David Craig, and Development Economist, Doug Porter. In their study of the World Bank, Craig and Porter (2003; Porter & Craig, 2004) noted that in the final years of the 20th Century and beginning years of the 2000s the Bank began to promote a partnership approach. Specifically, partnerships were advocated between organizations and aid-receiving countries, on the one hand, and the people the organizations and governments were collectively trying to lift out of poverty, on the other. Porter and Craig found that the emphasis on GDP, fiscal responsibility and a disciplinary “structural adjustment” approach in the vein of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had given way to discussions on collaboration, care and inclusion. They subsequently noted that it was not only in the World Bank that change was occurring, but also in other organizations and in government policy of both developed and developing nations (Craig & Porter, 2006). Borrowing from Richardson (2001), Craig and Porter (2003; Porter & Craig 2004) termed this “new” political and economic ideology inclusive liberalism.

The notion of inclusion is central to inclusive liberalism. Craig and Porter (2003, 2006) argue that an emphasis on inclusion became visible in organizational and government policy in four different but interrelated ways:

i. Promotion of the social and economic inclusion of marginalized peoples.

ii. The greater inclusion of state, market and civil society actors in public policy (e.g., through public-private-partnerships).
iii. Including social and economic factors and outcomes in the development and enactment of policy; and,

iv. The inclusion of services, programmes and branches of government under one banner for greater efficiency and effectiveness. This is encapsulated in the trend towards *joined-up government*—the “integration of services, processes, systems, data and applications necessary to achieve a seamless, citizen-centered government.”

In addition to inclusion, other key ideas associated with inclusive liberalism are: empowerment, social accountability, partnerships, integration, responsibility, active citizenship, caring, capability, and good governance (Craig & Cotterell, 2007).

Inclusive liberalism, as explicated by Craig and Porter (2003, 2006; Porter & Craig, 2004), has various overlaps with sociologist Anthony Gidden’s (1999, 2003) ideas about the Third Way. In *The Third Way: The renewal of social democracy*, Giddens (1999) put forth his plan for how left-leaning governments could help citizens respond to rapid technological change and increasing job insecurity by forging a mid-way point between neoliberalism and old-style welfarism. The Third Way does not fully reject the primacy of the free-market, though it does ascribe a more involved role for government than is advocated under a neoliberal model (e.g., within public-private-partnerships). New Zealand educational scholar John Codd (2002) succinctly summarized the tenets of the Third Way as “social inclusion, pluralism, and democratic involvement within an active civil society that supports a market economy” (p.32). Like neoliberalism, it similarly values efficiency (e.g., through more “joined-up government”). Yet, in contrast to neoliberalism, the Third Way places a greater emphasis on equity. The Third Way, according to Giddens, allows for individuals and governments to creatively learn to live with globalization without losing sight of cherished

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25 This fourth notion of inclusion, joined-up government, is only really relevant when applying the theory of inclusive liberalism to understanding government policy rather than organizational policy (such as in the World Bank).

values such as “community” or “democracy” (Giddens, 1999, 2000, 2003). Giddens acted as advisor to Tony Blair, who, along with former U.S president Bill Clinton, is most associated with this “new” left-wing politics. This vision of a middle way was embraced by centre-left governments across the world, including the labour government in New Zealand whose leader, Helen Clark, declared herself a Third Way politician (Economist, 2003).

The main difference that exists between the Third Way and inclusive liberalism is that the Third Way has tended to refer to ideologies of, and policies enacted by, self-identified left-of-centre governments and politicians (starting in around the mid-1990s); in contrast, inclusive liberalism refers to a change in public policy, starting in the late 1990s, across organizations, the political spectrum, and the globe (see Mahon, 2006, 2009; Mahon & McBride, 2009; Roelvink & Craig, 2004). Inclusive liberalism has generally been most visible, nonetheless, in policies enacted by traditionally leftish governments, such as the recent Labour parties in the U.K and New Zealand, the federal Liberal party in Canada, or the U.S Democrats. I see inclusive liberalism as developing a philosophical backdrop to, and providing an explanatory framework for, the Third Way.

Inclusive liberalism (and the Third Way) advocates an approach to policy that addresses the “excesses and evils” of both the social welfare state and the market economy. An extreme market economy is seen as resulting in segregation, monopolies and cartel-formation; and an “inflated” welfare state is argued to be plagued by bureaucracy, corruption, and inefficiency (resulting in queues and shortages etc., see Rothstein, 1998). The affirmed intention of an inclusive liberal government is “to unleash the productive potential of the private sector, not to replace it” (Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004, p.36). Inclusive liberalism, and interrelated ideas on the Third Way, can be understood as the “theoretical sensitizers” I have used in exploring the historico-politico-economic context in which recent adult literacy policy was developed from 1999-2008 in New Zealand.

*The theoretical underpinnings of inclusive liberalism.* It is now useful to investigate the historical and philosophical foundations of inclusive liberalism to provide us
with a more secure grasp of:

1. What inclusive liberalism actually is more precisely;

2. Why inclusive liberalism might aptly describe some of the changes we have recently seen in social policy, and adult education policy more expressly; and

3. Why inclusive liberalism, and associated ideas on the Third Way, may have caught the attention of organizations and governments.

Porter and Craig developed the theory of inclusive liberalism by drawing on the work of Hungarian intellectual, Karl Polanyi. Specifically, Craig and Porter noted parallels between Polanyi’s reflections on the first decades of the 20th Century, made in his seminal work *The Great Transformation* (1957), and characteristics of the global economy following the rise of neoliberal globalization in the latter part of the century and beginning of the 21st Century (Craig & Porter, 2003, 2006). According to Polanyi (1957), the shift to a laissez-faire experiment in the 1920s (in an attempt to restore the 19th century liberal economy following World War I), saw the withdrawal of state support and the separating out of the market from the community: namely, a disembedding of the economy. More concretely, Polanyi described laissez-faire economics as a move away from an embedded system (where the economy is subordinate to civil society) towards a market economy or disembedded system (where social relations are embedded in an economic system, with society operating in the interest of the economy). Polanyi emphasized the contradiction between the requirements of a capitalist market economy for limitless expansion, epitomized by laissez-faire economics, and the human requirement to be sustained by mutually supportive social relations. He argued that “a self-regulating market could not exist without annihilating the human and natural substance of society” (1957, p.3). According to Polanyi (1957), the move to a more laissez-faire economics following World War I was the essential cause of three major interrelated crises: first, the 1929 stock market crash followed by the Great

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27 Laissez-faire economics is a doctrine that claims that an economic system should be free from government intervention and instead driven solely by market forces. The term is often used synonymously with neoliberalism. However, I use the term neoliberalism to refer exclusively to policy and ideological reforms which occurred in response to the collapse of Keynesianism starting in the late 1970s.
Depression; second, the demise of democracy in most continental Europe states; and, third, the ensuing second World War. In order for capitalism to continue to survive, Polanyi claimed, there needed to be equal emphasis placed on economic freedoms, on the one hand, and social protections, on the other. This belief led Polanyi to predict that there would be a concentrated attempt to partially re-embed capitalism; in other words, according to some, Polanyi forecasted the ascendancy of Keynesianism (Craig & Porter, 2006).

Drawing from Polanyi, Craig and Porter (2003, 2006) liken inclusive liberals of the late 1990s and early 2000s to those who followed the experiment in laissez-faire economics of the early 20th Century. According to Craig and Porter, inclusive liberals, like the Keynesian welfare liberals before them, realized that the pendulum swung too far in the direction of the market and had to be brought back to allow for a balance between the market, state, and civil society. In addition, the more recent neoliberal experiments, perhaps most far-reaching in New Zealand (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005), are likened to the laissez-faire experiments that preceded them in the 1920s. However, despite the similarities between the laissez-faire reforms of the early 20th Century and neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, inclusive liberalism is not considered equivalent to the welfare liberal response that arose in the 1940s and 1950s.

Critiques of inclusive liberalism. Numerous authors who have been critical of neoliberalism have put forward similar criticisms of inclusive liberalism. In fact, these scholars express doubt whether the ideas in inclusive liberal or Third Way government policies constitute a new phase in liberalism distinct from neoliberalism (see, e.g., Bastow & Martin, 2003; Callinicos, 2001; Kelsey, 2002; Newman & De Zoysa, 2001). Indeed, a few writers have gone so far as to accuse the Third Way of representing nothing more than neoliberalism under a revamped marketing campaign (for example, Callinicos, 2001). There are three main areas of criticism: The first is over the balancing of private and public in public-private-partnerships. Critics claim that these partnerships have rarely been made up of equal partners, but rather that the private has been held above the public (see Bastow &
Martin, 2003; Callinicos, 2001; Kelsey, 2002; Newman & De Zoysa, 2001); the second is over the focus on inclusion. These same authors argue that this attention on inclusion primarily constitutes a ploy to make individuals take more responsibility for their own well-being; and, the third is over the reinvigorated role for the state, which these critics consider less about improving citizen welfare than about allowing for greater citizen surveillance (Bastow & Martin; Callinicos; Kelsey; Newman & Zoysa).

Even the architects of the theory of inclusive liberalism suggest that inclusive liberalism might represent only a slight softening of neoliberalism, and more of a return to classical liberalism in the vein of Adam Smith or John Locke. Indeed, Porter and Craig (2004) write that inclusive liberalism can look much like classical liberalism in its:

crumps from the table charity (aid not trade access), its education and policing of the poor, its keeping of questions of existing property and power distributions off the political agenda—all while appearing to stand shoulder to shoulder with the poor (p.55).

Craig and Porter (2006) themselves question whether the concern for partnerships moves beyond contracting out government services. In later works, the authors tended to refer to inclusive liberalism, as “inclusive (neo) liberalism,” a particular phase in neoliberalism, or simply “positive liberalism” (Craig & Cotterell, 2007), weakening their earlier claim of inclusive liberalism’s relative novelty.

Notwithstanding these hesitations, there are good reasons for understanding inclusive liberalism as a distinct variant of liberalism developed in response to neoliberalism. According to political scientist, Rianne Mahon (2009), the unpopularity of neoliberal reform and election of many centre-left parties in a number of countries (including New Zealand) during the mid-late 1990s and first years of 2000s have had three main effects:

1. A growing recognition of the role of the state in addressing public policy problems;
2. A concern for reconciliation of work and home life; and,
3. An elevation of social goals to work alongside economic ones.

Mahon concedes that inclusive liberalism overlaps with neoliberalism in its:
1. Unquestioned acceptance of the need for trade and investment liberalization;
2. Commitment to non-inflationary growth and fiscal conservatism;
3. Supply-side approach to employability; and,
4. Partial acceptance of current levels of inequality.

At the same time, she argues that inclusive liberal policy promotes increased investment for those who take responsibility for their own development (see also Walker, 2009a) and provides positive incentives for change rather than negative punishments. Punishments, she argues, are more consistent with a neoliberal approach.

There have been additional indications of a public policy, or at least an ideological, shift away from neoliberalism. Some of the main evidence can be found by looking at the OECD in more depth, which we do in section 2.2.2. As Deacon and Kaasch (2009) point out, the OECD (like the World Bank) reflected the prevailing economic wisdom of the time—transitioning from Keynesianism towards neoliberalism in the mid-1970s; promoting a neoliberal economics over the mid-late 1970s, 1980s and most of the 1990s; and, from the late 1990s, moved away from such an economistic model. Further evidence for inclusive liberalism is found in the recent decline in popularity of New Public Management to which Craig and Porter (2006) call attention. NPM has been countered by an emphasis on “joined up government” (Craig & Porter) and by the growing popularity of Public Value Theory (PVT) (M. Moore, 1995). PVT is an approach to management aimed at getting those “involved in providing public services to engage with their stakeholders; to understand the needs and preferences of the public they serve; and to plan, deliver and evaluate the impact of services through on-going involvement with users and stakeholders.”28 The theory emerged as a backlash to NPM (M. Moore, 1995), and, instead of promoting a competitive approach to social service provision, embraces a collaborative approach in which public agencies and government bureaucrats work together to co-create public value.29

29 Public Value Theory was developed by Harvard Professor Mark Moore in the mid-1990s. Moore asserts
emphasis on the public sector, collaboration and partnerships, and rejection of an entirely
economistic approach to public policy, PVT can be understood as part of a shift away from a
more extreme neoliberalism towards a tempered inclusive liberalism.

The workplace and skills under inclusive liberalism. Unlike the radical
transformation of the role of skills in the economy that occurred during the 1980s and early
1990s, there was no similarly extreme shift that happened in the late 1990s and early 21st
Century. In some senses, many of the changes affecting the workplace intensified: the
further development of post-Fordism; the growing advancement and role of Information
and Communication Technologies (ICTs); increasing globalization and global competition
for jobs; and, further refinement of new economy discourses. For these reasons, skills and
adult education became seen as even more important.

Notwithstanding the continuation of new economy discourses and practices that had
developed over the previous two decades, there were discursive shifts that reflected inclusive
liberal ideas. For example, the notion of the knowledge society started to appear in
government texts and literature in place of references to the knowledge economy (Roberts,
2000; Rubenson & Schuetze, 2000). While often used synonymously with the idea of the
knowledge economy, the knowledge society is a term referring to a society where knowledge
forms a major component of any human activity and, more concretely, where the economic,
social and cultural well-being of people is dependent on the creation, use and interchange of
knowledge.

Furthermore, skills development through adult education became something
governments and organizations could support. This was due to the partially reclaimed role of
the state and softening of some neoliberal discourses under inclusive liberalism. Indeed,
under inclusive liberalism, adult education was endowed with a strategic role in easing

that trying to make public sector organizations more like private ones often leaves staff feeling
demoralized and undervalued. At the heart of PVT is the assertion that the public sector is fundamentally
different to the private one, and that a public system does a better job of balancing equity and efficiency.
Instead of treating the public as consumers, which typified NPM, PVT promotes the notion of
“citizenships” and citizens (see M. Moore, 1995).
people’s transition into a knowledge economy and furthering social cohesion. As Giddens wrote, “education and training have become the new mantra for social democratic politicians” (1999, p.109); and, Tony Blair himself famously stated, “education is the best economic policy we have” (Martin, 2003, p. 567). In short, under inclusive liberalism, unlike under neoliberalism, there appears not to have been the same ideological tension between funding adult education and discursively endorsing it.

2.2.2 Adult literacy and the OECD. Throughout the late 1990s until 2008 (and beyond), the OECD continued to set the agenda for adult education policy in its member countries (Rubenson, 2006). However, the OECD’s notion of adult education during this time arguably came to reflect inclusive liberal ideas. Specifically, the OECD’s conceptualization of adult education found in documents released from the mid-to-late 1990s onwards reflects a Third Way approach to adult education, fitting between lifelong education (as it was promoted by UNESCO in 1972) on the one hand, and lifelong learning (as it was championed by the OECD in the late 1980s and much of the 1990s) on the other.

The Third Way approach is exemplified most strongly in the OECD’s interpretation (and embrace) of adult literacy, defined in IALS as “the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community—to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential” (OECD and Statistics Canada, 1995, p.1). The OECD brought this notion of adult literacy to the attention of governments of countries that had participated in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) over the mid-late 1990s. IALS plotted individuals’ literacy abilities on a five-point scale in the areas of prose, document and quantitative literacy. Each person who completed the survey received a score between 0-500 and all participants were divided into five levels, depending on their scores. Utilizing the same five-level diagnostic tool a number of years later, the

30 There were seven participating countries in the first round of IALS in 1994, for which results were released during 1995 and 1996. During 1996 and 1998 an additional 16 countries participated. New Zealand was included in the second-wave of countries.
Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL) followed up on IALS, focusing on four areas: prose, document, numeracy and problem solving. Upon release of the IALS and ALL results, a statement was also issued declaring Level 3 to be the minimum level of literacy needed for an individual to function in society (see OECD, n.d).

In short, over the past decade the OECD has treated adult literacy, learning and knowledge as:

1. Lying on a continuum;
2. Contingent on social context; and
3. Existing for personal, economic and social purposes.

First, the notion of a literacy continuum is expressed in the ranking of literacy ability over five levels. Second, the idea of adult literacy being contingent on context is reflected in the literacy tasks that participants were asked to undertake in IALS and ALL, which claimed to mimic real-life (such as interpreting a bus timetable). Another way in which a concern for context was expressed is through the use of interviews in IALS and ALL during which participants were asked to reflect on their own literacy practices. And, third, the endorsement of both social and economic purposes of literacy is visible firstly in the tasks survey takers were asked to undertake, and secondly in the definition of literacy itself: as existing for home, work and the community (OECD & Statistics Canada, 1995). In essence, adult literacy in the OECD—conceived as contextual, non-binary, and existing for personal, social and economic reasons—reflects an inclusive liberal/Third Way approach to adult education. In particular, it represents a hybrid between the more socially focused and progressive/humanist notion of lifelong education (e.g., Faure, 1972), and the more economic-focused human capitalist notion of lifelong learning (e.g., OECD, 1989, 1996a; see Rubenson, 2006).

An inclusive liberal approach to adult education is also evident in OECD documents

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31 The scores were divided as follows: Level 1 (0-225), Level 2 (226-275), level 3 (276-325), Level 4 (326-375), Level 5 (376-500). These five levels of skill are comprehensively described in the OECD and Statistics Canada report *Learning a living: First results of the adult literacy and life skills survey*, 2005.
written during this timeframe that did not always refer to the specific idea of adult literacy. In fact, while the OECD continued to refer to the concept of lifelong learning, it started to interpret the concept more holistically than it had previously. The organization began to promote the social and economic purposes of adult education on economic grounds and also on the grounds that increased skills contribute to social cohesion and inclusion in general (see Rubenson, 2006). Indeed, more recent OECD policy documents advocated adult education and literacy for broader social aims than documents published during the previous 10-15 years (see OECD, 2001, 2003, 2005; Rubenson, 2004, 2009; Walker, 2009a).

One of the first examples of the shift towards inclusive liberalism in adult education documents came in the critical OECD 1996(a) publication, *Lifelong learning for all*. This report, along with many documents published afterwards, praised adult education for its ability to strengthen democratic institutions, increase civic participation, and facilitate intercultural communication and understanding (OECD, 1996a, 2002, 2003, 2005). According to an OECD report in 2002, for example, training and education offer a “reduced risk of smoking, better well-being, lower criminal involvement, and higher participation in community groups” (OECD, 2002, p.125). As readers, we are urged to move “beyond rhetoric” (2003) and change our conceptions and understandings of human capital (OECD 2002, 2003). Furthermore, in these documents, the organization emphasized “future-directed individuals” (e.g., OECD, 2005), and promises economic, social and personal pay-offs from learning (that will be realized down the road). This emphasis on delayed gratification supports Mahon’s (2009) contention that under inclusive liberalism short-term inequality is tolerated, while the focus remains on the long-term benefits of social policy.

An emphasis on inclusion is particularly noticeable in certain texts. Inclusion is promoted in two principal ways in adult education policy discourses. This is especially true for documents published after 2000. Firstly, adult literacy is praised for its ability to include those left-behind by the tides of globalization and the “knowledge wave.” As the OECD
The wellbeing of nations\(^{32}\) (OECD, 2001) states, adults who are unable to read are of particular concern “as they risk...social exclusion in a knowledge-based society” (p.45). Other OECD reports consider social inclusion and social capital to be key aims of adult learning policy; the low skilled and undereducated are argued to pose a threat to social cohesion (see, e.g., OECD, 2002). And secondly, inclusion is promoted, at least discursively, in bringing together in harmony the economic/human capital discourses with progressive/social capital ones to challenge traditional binaries. Thus, what emerges is a promotion of adult education for both economic and social benefits. As cited from a 2002 OECD report:

...the goal of education is to prepare for life as well as for work, and the economic role of education needs to be placed in the context of the development of the whole individuals—not just their working skills...moral and civic qualities, for example compassion, of the understanding of democratic institutions are also important potential outcomes of education (OECD, 2002, p.119).

In effect, while human capital arguments in the OECD remained, they became partnered with other more social concerns.

Given its continued transnational influence, the OECD’s ideas on adult literacy, on the economic and social rationales for adult education, on fostering partnerships, and on including marginalized groups, influenced government documents beginning in the mid-late 1990s and continuing through the first decade of the 21st Century.

2.2.3 Academic responses to adult literacy and inclusive liberal adult education policy. There are two main schools of thought in regards to recent government adult education policy documents written in the vein of the Third Way and inclusive liberalism. On the one hand, academics observed a change in government documents that mirrors the change in OECD documents (Field, 2001, 2003; Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003; Martin, 2003; Rubenson, 2004, 2005, 2009; Walker, 2006, 2009a, 2009b).

\(^{32}\) This title is also reminiscent of Smith’s primer, and particularly interesting in relation to the title of Reich’s 1992 book, The work of nations.
Specifically, these authors noted the impact of inclusive liberalism on more recent policy texts on adult education, in which partnerships are promoted and adult education entrusted with a more critical role in ameliorating social, personal as well as economic problems (Biesta, 2005; Field, 2003; Martin, 2003; Print & Coleman, 2003; Rubenson, 2004). On the other, authors have expressed doubts that there is substantial evidence of policy becoming any less neoliberal or that change has been anything more than cosmetic.

Supporting the idea that there was a change, some authors noted particular changes in the U.K under new Labour. The shift to a more inclusive liberalism is visible in the adult literacy policy arena in two main trends that occurred since the late 1990s. The first change was in how adult education is managed. In particular, public-private-partnerships and collaborations in adult education provision increased. Hillier and Hamilton (2004) noted, for example, a distinct change under the “Skills for life” policy introduced under Blair’s Labour government; specifically, a focus on collaborations and partnerships partially replaced the competitive, and indeed neoliberal, approach previously adopted by the Further Education Council in the 1980s and much of the 1990s. We recall from earlier in the chapter that it is this “collaborative approach,” focus on partnerships, and (at least discursive) emphasis on consultation that Craig and Porter (2006) identified as major inclusive liberal shifts in approaches to social welfare provision. The second trend in the UK was the greater discursive stress placed on society and the social and cultural purposes of education. Hyland quoted the British Secretary of state as saying, for example, “lifelong learning helps make ours a civilized society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship” (Hyland, 2002, p.247).

Nonetheless, scholars also perceived an ongoing focus on the economic purposes, and human-capitalist understandings, of learning. Specifically, educational researchers show how policy documents from over the past decade or so (similar to policy documents published over the 1980s and 1990s) exhort citizens to upgrade their skills and engage in lifelong learning to be able to succeed in the knowledge economy (see Field, 2001; Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003; Hinchcliffe, 2006; Martin, 2001, 2003; Rawolle, 2000; Walker,
There is evidence that governments and organizations continued to consider individuals with officially low literacy levels worrisome, since they do not adequately contribute to economic growth. For instance, Scott Murray (2006) of UNESCO and Statistics Canada commented in 2006 that “over half the GDP growth differences [in Canada] can be attributed to literacy,” and that those with Levels 1 or 2 literacy rates (within the IALS ranking system) “drag down the economy.” In Murray’s view, adult literacy is a key to unlocking an individual’s potential to contribute to national economic growth. There are also academics who claim that a discourse of crisis continued to pervade public discourse on adult literacy, especially for those at the bottom of the pack, and especially in Anglo-Saxon nations (Veeman, Walker & Ward, 2006). Wickens and Sandlin (2007) contested claims that the influence of neoliberalism was tempered in adult education policy, asserting that both UNESCO and the World Bank continued to take a neoliberal approach to literacy policy throughout the first decade of the 21st Century. These authors argued that the two organizations promote a neocolonialist approach to literacy in their efforts to integrate countries into the new economy. According to Wickens and Sandlin (2007), the organizations viewed literacy as the “process and content of learning to read and write to the preparation for work and vocational training, as well as a means of increasing the productivity of the individual” (p. 287). Indeed, educational policy researchers have concluded that commonly the “economy” is placed far above the “society” in literacy policy, notwithstanding the purported dual focus. Reflecting on New Labour’s policies in the UK, Lyn Tett (2006) wrote, “despite the new rhetoric of social inclusion and citizen participation, the vision that drives the literacy agenda is the needs of global economic competitiveness” (p. 9).

There is additional evidence provided by educationalists that Third Way policies mirror neoliberal ones in their goal of eliminating “state dependency.” Hyland, for example, reports that former UK Labour Party Education Minister Blunkett once remarked, “[through education] we are able to reduce dependency on the state and make work pay” (Hyland, 2002, p.247). Some educational scholars fear that literacy and learning have been promoted
under Third Way governments in Anglo-Saxon states in lieu of holistic social policy, enabling governments to evade stronger welfare commitments (Rubenson & Schuetze, 2000; Veeman, Walker & Ward, 2006). In other words, authors express a concern that citizens are urged to take care of themselves by learning, as the state can no longer afford to do so. Mundy and Murphy exemplify this line of thinking and capture this trend:

“A new policy agenda [has] emerged across social policy fields. In the field of education this has translated into new policies and policy debates that emphasize the redemptive capacity of educational investments in the context of global economic competition, while suggesting a more limited, regulatory role for the state in educational provision (2001, p.227).”

Scholars have also noted another sense in which eliminating state dependency is a goal of governments. Specifically, they assert that adult literacy policy, while focusing on the mitigation of poverty, seeks to also minimize state monopolies, and encourage greater consumer responsiveness and efficiency from state organizations (see Hyland, 2002; Martin, 1999).

Relatedly, other educational scholars criticize the “individual responsibility” discourse they claim continued to pervade Third Way and inclusive liberal policy discourse (Biesta, 2005; Fejes, 2005). According to these critics, meritocratic discourse in government policy remains, which asserts that those who work hard and are disciplined succeed. This liberal ideal, Biesta and Fejes argued, translates into governments viewing unemployment less as market failure and more as an individual’s failure to develop her capitals—human, cultural and social. The individual is deemed as needing to take responsibility for his or her own learning. Moreover, Stephen Ball noted that the discourse surrounding responsibility morphed into that of accountability. Commenting on policies enacted under Tony Blair, Ball claimed that increased government attention on lifelong learning was dovetailed with an overemphasis on accountability (Ball, 1999).

For the above reasons, some scholars have lamented rather than celebrated the increased attention adult education received. As Griffin noted, “lifelong learning has not
been rejected as being too radical, but has been incorporated and appropriated by
governments to serve purposes other than those which some educators think it should”
(Griffin, 2006, p.566). Indeed, Third Way discourses on education still adopt the idea of
adult education as linked to a monetary value, and treat adult literacy, skills, training and
education as resources and as an economic imperative. As Secretary of State, Blunkett
additionally claimed, “learning is the key to prosperity... [and] an economic imperative”
(quoted in Hyland, 2002, p.247). This economic interpretation of adult literacy sits
uneasy with adult educators and researchers who generally adopt a more humanistic and
progressive view of adult learning.

Nonetheless, it seems that an economic approach to adult literacy policy has been
more pronounced in some countries more than others. For example, a number of authors
cite Scotland as a different case where policy was more inclusive, more focused on learners’
goals, and took into consideration the social, cultural, and political context of the learner
(Macdonald, 2005; St Clair & Belzer, 2007; Tett et al., 2006). In effect, the degree to which
adult education policy shifted towards a more inclusive liberal model seems to have
depended on the country, organization or context.33

2.3 Conclusions

The last three decades’ tumultuous economic and political journey greatly affected the role,
management and understandings of adult education worldwide. As neoliberal global
capitalism began to take hold in response to the financial crises of the 1970s, adult
education, in its incarnation of lifelong learning, started to play a key role in this new
system. At the same time, facilitated by increasing global networks, as well as trade
liberalization, policy became further transnationalized. We see that the OECD was and has
been a crucial player in this transnationalization of adult education policy and discourse.

33 In terms of responses of New Zealand authors, I address these articles in Chapter 1 where I laid out the
significance of my study and situated it within the broader literature. I also refer to this literature
throughout the rest of the document.
Starting in the later years of the 1990s and continuing through the first decade of the new millennium, the ideological-political terrain further shifted which also transformed adult education policy.

There is continued debate as to whether such a move towards inclusive liberalism or the Third Way constituted a marked shift away from neoliberalism. Indeed, whether the economic and social were held in equal regard, whether resources followed the hype around adult literacy, and whether we can say that inclusive liberal policy is fundamentally qualitatively different from neoliberal policy, continue to be highly contested questions. Was there a balance in the social and economic purposes of adult learning? Did a recent discursive focus on adult literacy actually affect resource distribution and create policies that might ultimately help further social equality and cohesion? What ultimately has this meant for the role of the state in adult literacy policy and its impact on processes, practices and outcomes? This thesis seeks to address these questions.

There is a growing body of literature on the relationship between adult literacy policy and inclusive liberalism. A handful of recent articles have examined the policy shift that started to occur in non-compulsory adult education. In these articles, some authors have looked at specific policies or organizations. Others have focused on policy aspirations and language. For this project, I approached policy more holistically than had been attempted in previous studies on adult education policy and inclusive liberalism/Third Way. I focused on adult literacy policy during New Zealand’s inclusive liberal period (from 1999-2008) and also examined its antecedents in the period before (1984-1999). In the next chapter, I discuss in greater depth both how I went about researching adult literacy policy in New Zealand from 1984-2008 and the theoretical considerations that underpinned my methodological approach.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

A POLICY SOCIOLOGY OF ADULT LITERACY

I have termed this study a policy sociology, borrowing the expression from educational policy researcher, Jenny Ozga (1990, 2000). Ozga describes policy sociology as an explicit sociological approach to examining policy where analysis is “rooted in social science tradition...historically informed... [employing] qualitative and illuminative techniques” (2000, p.380). In addition, policy sociology acknowledges policy as inseparable “from other socio-political activities and actors... [and]...recognizes the politics of the policy process” (Ozga, 2005, p.3).

In this policy sociology, I draw on Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) and Ball (1994) to focus on three particular contexts of policy: the context of text production; the context of influence; and, the context of interpreted practices, effects and outcomes. To address these contexts, and in examining adult literacy policy in relation to neo and inclusive liberalism, I utilize an array of tools. More concretely, I take ideas from: agenda-setting theory in political science (Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen & Jones, 2006; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Birkland, 2003; Green-Pedersen & Wilkerson, 2006; Walgrave, Varone & Dumont, 2006); policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Phillips, 2005; Steiner-Khamisi, 2004, 2006); and, various interpretive approaches to document analysis (Edelman, 1988; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Yanow, 2000) and to interviewing (Kvale, 1996). As Stephen Ball (e.g.,1994) has argued, to understand policy we often need a toolbox replete with a variety of concepts and theories. In terms of data sources, there were two parts to this research: documents and interviews. Overall, this study can be understood as a qualitative research project, though existing quantitative data were also drawn on in some instances.

In this chapter, I describe in detail the methodology of this policy sociology: that is, the concepts used and theories drawn upon; the philosophical assumptions underpinning the
research approach; the research methods and data sources; and, how I ensured rigour in the study.

### 3.1 Why a Policy Sociology?

I believe a policy sociology approach has allowed for a richer exploration of adult literacy policy and of the political, economic and social context within which policy was developed. As the founder of the academic discipline of social policy Richard Titmuss explained, “The study of social policy cannot be isolated from the study of society as a whole in all its varied social, economic and political aspects” (Titmuss, 1974, p.15). Unlike other approaches to or interpretations of policy analysis, the approach I adopted for my study is directed to unearth the assumptions, understandings and perceptions of policy and to examine policy’s political, economic and social implications (Ball, 1999).

Despite differences in interpretation (Ball, 1997, 1999; Gale, 2001; Halpin & Troyna, 1994; Ozga, 2000; Taylor, 1997; Troyna, 1994; Whitty, 2002), I am using the term “policy sociology” to stress the idea that this is an interpretive and sociological study of adult literacy policy. My research operates from the assumption that there is always a prior history of significant events, a particular ideological and political climate, and a social and economic context. I concur with Ball when he writes, “policies are both systems of values and symbolic systems; ways of representing, accounting for and legitimating political decisions” (Ball, 1998, p.124). While others make mention of critical policy sociology (e.g., Gale, 2001), I have not. This is firstly because there may be confusion in using the term “critical”; and,

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34 An alternative approach to studying policy could be one of “policy science.” In contrast to policy sociology, policy science (Ball, 1995; Ozga, 2000) takes a descriptive, rather than interpretive approach (see Yanow, 2000). It is premised on the notion that policy is created in a sequential fashion by self-interested rational actors who have clearly defined goals. As Heck explains, such an approach to policy analysis characterizes the process of policy development as representing equilibrium, stability and incrementalism (Heck, 2004, p.23). Moreover, the politics that are inherently assumed in a policy sociology perspective tend to be downplayed or ignored in this alternative approach to policy analysis.

35 There is often confusion over what the term “critical” might mean or stand for. The term is employed by those who consider themselves to be more influenced by critical theory in the Marxist or Frankfurt School...
secondly, because sociology, by nature, means critically examining the social world making the word “critical” redundant.

Ozga (1990, 2000, 2005), who is best associated with policy sociology, advocates bringing together structural macro-analyses of educational policies coupled with micro-analyses of people’s perceptions and experiences. Similarly, Vidovich (2007), who also applies a sociological lens to policy, argues for a policy analysis that explicitly links the bigger picture of global and national policy to smaller pictures of policies and practices within schools or organizations. She explains that studying policy from this perspective entails an examination of both text and action, both words and deeds, and both what is enacted and intended (Vidovich). I adopted such a sociological approach to studying adult literacy policy, which allowed me to focus on the discourse, responses to, and wider socio-politico-economic framework of, policy.

As a policy sociology, this study employed an interpretive rather than descriptive approach to policy analysis (Yanow, 2000). This allowed me to delve deeper into the context in which policy was created, the reasons for its creation, and to more insightfully interpret its effects. Certain questions undergird interpretive policy analysis. Yanow (2000) highlights some of these questions: what does a [particular] programme mean? For whom does this programme have meaning? How is an issue being framed? What are the symbolic acts in policy? When are acts in government symbolically important though not resulting in actual enacted policy? Which issues are considered valid? Which aren’t? As Schuerich (1994) and Gale (2001, 2003) noted, it is also a matter of examining how problems get constituted and how certain responses to policy problems are put beyond the realm of possibility while others gain traction. The concern for the researcher becomes, Yanow (2000) notes, not, what are the facts? But rather, what do those facts mean? And, how do different interest groups and parties frame particular policy issues? In adhering to such an approach, I operate from the assumption that value neutrality in policymaking is impossible, concurring tradition (such as Anyon, 2005 or Apple, 2000), and others, like Ball (e.g., 1997; 2008) or Ozga (2005), who can be best understood, at least recently, as operating from more of a post-structuralist persuasion.
with Cookson’s statement, “in educational policymaking the agenda is set by the ideological field” (Cookson, 2003, p.121). And Ball notes, policy-making is a process that takes place within arenas of struggle over meaning (Ball, 1997, p.263). In sum, a policy sociology approach enabled me, as the researcher, to bring out the nuances of policy.

3.2 The Contexts of Policy

In this interpretive policy sociology, I drew on Bowe, Ball and Gold’s *Contexts of policy*. In their seminal work, *Reforming education and changing schools: Case studies in policy sociology*, Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) developed three policy contexts within which to understand policy. Before addressing how exactly I took up these contexts of policy for my study, I provide an overview of them here:

1. **The context of influence**: This is the site where policy discourses and concepts are constructed and debated; and where individual and collective ideas gain currency (such as, privatization, literacy for social purposes etc.) and provide impetus to policy development. Understanding the context of influence requires an understanding of *which* ideas, organizations and people get to influence *what and who*; *who and what* ideas are present and absent; and, *how* discourses become influential.

2. **The context of text production**: The context of influence helps create a context of policy text production and vice versa. Examining this second context involves the analysis of policy texts as the representation of policy with a view to highlighting inconsistencies and commonalities in an overall policy agenda.

3. **The context of practice**: This third context relates to the interpretation and operationalization of policy by those at whom it is aimed. It is a focus on the responses to policy.

As the below schemata shows, all contexts exist in a symbiotic relationship with one another:
Following on from Bowe, Ball and Gold’s (1992) model, Ball (1994, 1997) added two additional contexts:

4. **Context of outcomes**: This context relates to the second-order effects of policy. Examining the context of outcomes means paying attention to the second-order effects on policy, and exploring how policies affect injustices and inequality.

5. **Context of political strategies**: This final context can be understood as more normative, in that it is the context in which a policy researcher seeks to identify “a set of political and social activities that might more adequately address inequalities” (Ball, 1994, p.26).

In this theoretical and methodological approach, Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) consider policy as a discourse, understanding discourses as attempts to mobilize, persuade and encourage certain responses and actions, and also as contradictory: “[discourses] are both an instrument and an effect of power...also a hindrance...and a point of resistance” (Foucault, 1981, quoted in Ball, 1990, p.24). Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) note that discourses determine what becomes appropriate (see also, Scheurich, 1994). As Said contended, “discourses get things done, accomplish real tasks, gather authority” (quoted in Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996, p.22).

In addition to placing a discursive emphasis on policy contexts, Ball (1994, 2006)
notes the importance of adopting a policy trajectory approach to evaluating discourses. According to Ball, looking at the policy trajectory means tracing the development, formation and realization of policies from the context of influence, through policy text production, to practices and outcomes (see Ball, 1994). As Liasidou (2009) put it, focusing on the policy trajectory entails attending to “the ways in which the constellation of policy dynamics are intertwined, contested and infiltrated in the official policymaking process” (p.107). By examining the policy trajectory, the researcher seeks to grapple with various questions: Why is the policy on the table at this moment in history? Why was the policy adopted, on whose terms, what grounds, in whose interest, and why now? (Taylor et al., 1997). The aims are to make transparent the ever-changing and precarious discursive realities influencing the policymaking process over time, and to “pinpoint the diverse and contradictory values and beliefs vying for ascendancy” (Liasidou, p.107). As Ball noted, such an approach “provides a mechanism for linking and tracing the discursive origins and possibility of policy, as well as the intentions embedded in, and responses to, the effects of policy” (2006, p.51). In effect, paying attention to the trajectory of policy, rather than seeing policy as an individual textual moment in history, helps counter “rampant ahistoricism [which occurs in] most education policy research” (Ball, 1997, p.265).

In this policy sociology of adult literacy in New Zealand over the past decades, I focused on Bowe, Ball and Gold’s (1992)—and Ball’s (1994)—original three contexts of policy, explicitly adopting a discursive and policy trajectory approach to analyzing policy.\(^\text{36}\)

In my analysis of data, I first considered the context of text production, then the context of influence, and finally I explored the context of “interpreted” practices and outcomes (as opposed to merely practices and outcomes, as I explain below). These three contexts formed

\(^{36}\) It is important to note that while I am drawing from Ball et al.’s (Ball, 1994; Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992) methodological framework (with some modifications) my political project does not mirror that of Stephen Ball who is generally understood as advocating a marrying of post-structural and critical approaches to policy (see Ball, 1997). While I find some insights from post-structural theory useful—specifically the emphasis on the impact and effects of discourses—I am not a post-structuralist. Rather, in my approach to examining policy contexts I am taking a page out of Ball’s own book: drawing on a variety of theoretical insights and a well-stocked tool box.
the basis of my analysis. Below, I discuss these policy contexts and then present an overview of the data sources and specific methods I used to approach these data.

3.2.1 The context of policy text production: a discursive analysis of text.

While it is the context of influence that makes the context of text production possible, I approached the context of text production first as it provides the initial interaction the public or researcher has with policy. Examining texts as representations of policy provides the backdrop to then analyzing the context of influence. (And, as Figure 2 shows, no context operates separately from the others, suggesting it is not necessary to start with the context of text production).

A study of policy text production is a study of operational statements of values with prescriptive intent (Kogan, 1975). In analyzing these operational statements of value, I took a discursive approach to analysis. Examining discourse in texts is important, namely because discourses lead to concrete changes in the world as socio-linguist Norman Fairclough (2003, 2006) has demonstrated. In talking about globalization, Fairclough explains, “economic changes began to occur when the discourse was operationalized, implemented, put into practice” (2006, p.2). Fairclough goes on to argue that discourses have simplified economic and political relations but they have only been able to do so because they “resonate with people’s experience of the world” (p.19). However, it is important to note that policy texts are not necessarily coherent, but rather that “competing discourses are stitched together in new policies” (Taylor, 1997, quoted in Ball, 1998, p.126). The political context in which policy takes place may be promoted, challenged, disregarded or obfuscated in policy documents.

In my discursive examination of policy text, I focused primarily on, firstly, the policy concerns or issues articulated in the texts both individually and collectively; and, secondly, on the proposed and undertaken approaches or solutions to these expressed government concerns. In the context of policy text production, both “problems” and “solutions” are placed beyond question (Foucault, 1972). Furthermore, while an identified, and indeed constructed, problem can be responded to in a myriad ways, there is often only one solution,
or limited solutions, put forth. In concentrating on “approaches” and “solutions,” I have drawn attention to what Edelman (1988) calls the “spectacle of policy.” Edelman notes, “‘problems’, structured and mediated through policy and the media, create a political spectacle seeking to ‘arouse, reassure, interest or divert people’” (p.31). In the context of text production, individuals and ideas are conceptualized in particular ways (see Lewis, 2000). For example, welfare recipients or those with low levels of formal education may be portrayed as lacking, lazy or just generally unworthy; the public, in general, is often defined as victim or potential victim (Scheurich, 2001). For Edelman, this spectacle and these public policy “crises” are distractions, diverting the public’s attention from more important problems.

As well as focusing on constructed policy “problems” and proposed “solutions” in policy texts, I also sought to reveal the role and uses of metaphor in these texts. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out, “any human conceptual system is primarily metaphorical in nature” (p.193), and that “it is natural for us to conceptualize situations in metaphorical terms” (p.172). Language is not rhetorical, these authors argue, but rather literal with metaphor forming the ordinary sense in which we think about things in the world. Metaphors shift the debate in social policy. For example, when we discuss “social fabric” we think of society as being woven or bound (see also Yanow, 2000). We evoke the metaphor of “time is money” when we talk about time as being “spent,” “saved,” “wasted,” “used efficiently” etc. This time metaphor adheres to a mechanistic view of the world as made up of “objects” or matter-in-motion (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Yanow, 2000). The time metaphor also reflects liberal values of efficiency, a Protestant-ethic ideal of parsimony, and a condemnation of at least two of the seven deadly sins, “sloth” and “avarice” and perhaps even “gluttony.” Examining some of the different metaphors in adult literacy policy, and contrasting and comparing these metaphoric conceptual frames as they relate to one another, helped me to elucidate key themes, barriers and enablers of policy. As Edwards and Nicholl (2001) put it, “illuminat[ing] the use of metaphor in policy texts” (p.104) can help reveal the character of policy.
In sum, in examining the context of policy text production I sought to reveal the themes, values and priorities of government more broadly and in the arena of adult education/adult literacy policy more concretely.

3.2.2 The context of policy influence: understanding the what, who and how of policy influence. The context of policy influence is the context of how and why certain ideas or policy discourses gain traction. To examine policy influence I turned to insights from Edelman (1988) and from the field of agenda setting (e.g., Birkland, 2003) in an effort to identify: which policy problems were constructed; how they had been constructed and for what purposes; and, how policy problems were justified to back up a particular position (see Stone, 2002). I also paid attention to policy “transfer” or “borrowing and lending” in education policy (Phillips, 2005; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2006), in looking at the influence of individual people, countries, organizations and ideas. Here, the issue of key policy actors and organizations is fundamental given the widely recognized influence of individuals and groups of individuals over the agenda-setting process.

How issues become ‘issues’: agenda setting in public policy. In the context of policy text production, I investigated the articulated problems and solutions. In looking to the context of policy influence, I endeavoured to learn how and why such problems and solutions became policy “issues,” and why these problems and solutions had been articulated in particular ways.

To assist me in answering the questions of why and how, I turned to literature on agenda setting in the field of public policy. Put simply, an “agenda is the set of issues that receive serious attention in a polity” (Princen & Rhinard, 2006, p.1120). And, agenda setting is “the process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention” (Birkland, 2003, p.109).37 Investigating the agenda-setting process, which is what

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37 Agenda setting as a field of study is attributed mostly to a group of political science professors at the University of Washington led by Professor Baumgartner. In the 1990s, this group set out to trace the
I did in this research project, entails understanding the material interests of social and state actors, and the institutional and ideological contexts in which they operate (Birkland, p.111). Looking at an agenda means focusing on: specific legislation; what is being constituted as a problem and the perceived magnitude of that problem; and the solutions put forward to address it (Birkland). Furthermore, examining a government agenda also involves exploring what’s not present, recognizing that “keeping issues that would be inconvenient off the agenda is at least as important for political success as winning disputes that do arise” (Lindbolm & Woodhouse, 1993, p.11).

To understand how adult literacy became an agenda item, I explored how the concept of adult literacy was and had been conceptualized and defined as a problem. Birkland (2003) observed that certain issues make it to agenda status depending on how well the issue can resonate with the larger public. For example, the way anti-drunk-driving legislation receives public endorsement in the U.S is by emphasizing the notion of individual responsibility and self-reliance, which are part-and-parcel of American individualism. Indeed, an issue must be slanted in such a way as to resonate with a particular public. Furthermore, something becomes an agenda item, like adult literacy, when it moves from being a condition to a problem; as a problem, it becomes “treatable” (Birkland, 2003). Edelman (1988) sheds additional light on how agendas are created and set, asserting that the creation of crisis and problem is a political act. Edelman, in extending Birkland’s claim above, argues that issues that are easily individualized and would not involve a rethinking or restructuring of the status quo, e.g., child abuse, are much more likely to garner attention by government than issues that would require a serious reconsideration of the allocation of resources; a

development of national public policy in the US since the time of WWII in their “policy agendas” research project (see http://www.policyagendas.org/). The field of “agenda-setting studies,” as developed by Baumgartner, is premised on a “punctuated equilibrium model” of policy, which claims that most change in policy is incremental with sudden punctuated instances of change across time. Baumgartner asserts that due to institutional inertia, vested interests, and the bounded rationality of policy actors, policy tends to change gradually. This theory is based on the punctuated equilibrium model in evolutionary biology that asserts that most species experience little change evolutionarily with rare, rapid events of extreme change. This theory counters the gradual evolution theory that posits that species change at a similar rate over time.
configuration of social and economic institutions; or power skewing. This makes “homelessness” a much less likely candidate for a government’s key agenda. Indeed, not all issues rise as easily to “problem” status where they can then be acted upon. For this reason, it was important to look at how adult literacy might have risen to problem status.

In wanting to better understand the context of policy influence, I also focused on “policy windows.” In his 1984 book, *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*, Kingdon (1984) explains that there are “windows of opportunity” that open on particular policy issues, due to various circumstances, which makes the incorporation of such issues into the government policy agenda more likely. As Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen and Jones (2006) explain, advocates must try to capitalize on these “policy windows” in order to make an impact on the government agenda. Researchers, in turn, attempt to identify policy windows to better explain how, why and in which ways certain issues make it onto a government agenda. In attempting to explain actual changes to the agenda and policy shifts, John (2006) gives three explanations of why sudden or more substantial change can occur:

i. Partisan shifts
ii. Shocks to a political system
iii. New ideas that hit a political system where policy entrepreneurs sell an idea to political leaders and it catches on later in the media

To explain how and why certain items make it onto the agenda, authors such as Pralle (2006) and Levin (B. Levin, 1998) suggested that ideas are transmitted like a disease, where policies and agendas spread locally, nationally and even globally after reaching a “tipping point” (see also Gladwell, 2000). Pralle writes, “initial events in a sequence can lead to a cascade of subsequent events that dramatically change the status quo” (Pralle, 2006, p.989). While it is very difficult to pinpoint the start of a policy epidemic (Phillips, 2000) there were, nonetheless, three additional factors that were possible to analyze in my study of adult literacy in an analysis of policy windows, identified by Birkland:

**Windows of opportunity**

- *Changes in indicators*, such as statistics. These are ways for an issue to garner
attention. For example, the results of the IALS might have provided a window of opportunity to literacy advocates to bring their concerns to government and lobby for greater resources and policy geared towards adult literacy. As Pralle (2006) explains, however, it is not the indicators themselves but rather their publicization that may cause them to be taken up by policymakers. The choice of indicator is crucial and indicators are often used selectively.

- **Focusing events.** This refers to those sudden rare events that can spark attention—such as Earth Day, or the Olympics—and that can be capitalized upon by advocates.
- **Crises** are types of focusing events. Although characterized by Birkland (2003) as separate to focusing events, I consider them particular types of focusing events that lead to policy change. For example, a “crisis” could be a school shooting that can then lead to policy on gun control.

In reflecting on windows of opportunity, Pralle notes that “the impact of these factors depends in part on whether and to what extent competing interest groups are organized around an issue, their relative power at the time of the event, and their organizational structure” (2006, p.989). In my study I looked at John’s three explanations and Birkland’s three windows of opportunity in examining policy influence.

**Policy movers and shakers.** In exploring the context of influence, and in delving deeper into the agenda-setting process, I was interested in learning which policy actors had been instrumental in influencing, and in fact creating, the government’s agenda on adult literacy. In this dissertation on adult literacy policy, I define policy actors as those people who create, interpret, influence and respond to policy in adult literacy. Howlett and Ramesh (2003) divide policy actors into five categories: 1. elected officials; 2. appointed officials; 3. interest groups; 4. research organizations (like think-tanks), and, 5. Mass media. As Lindbolm and Woodhouse (1993) note, not just elected or appointed officials or bureaucrats make policy; but rather there are numerous influencing factors and people. Steiner-Khamsi cautions, “the role of policy entrepreneurs is not to be belittled” (2004, p.215). Like these
authors, I, too, adopt a similarly broad understanding of who can be a policy actor, and describe all the participants in this study as policy actors.

Government policy actors are of particular importance to understanding the context of influence. Individuals at all levels of government can define institutions and set the parameters for what is and isn’t possible in policy. Jones writes, “I am convinced...that the characteristics of organizations—even large and complex ones—derive in large measure from the characteristics and qualities of the people within them” (2003, p.184). Furthermore, as those who have worked in public policy have noted, individuals have their own agendas and can often place their personal ideas and biases above those of the party (B. Levin, 2009).

Individual politicians and bureaucrats help shape the agenda and determine what becomes a policy issue and what doesn’t. Furthermore, certain government policy actors can portray issues as technical problems rather than social questions enabling them, as experts, to dominate the decision-making process and to weaken the impact of outside policy actors (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). Contrastingly, when ethical, social or political implications of particular policies assume centre stage, a much broader range of outside participants can become involved (Baumgartner & Jones).

In addition to government policy actors, interest groups also serve a crucial role in the policy-making process, especially in terms of their “enlightenment function” for official policymakers (Lindbolm & Woodhouse, 1993). As Howlett and Ramesh remarked, “public policy is shaped by the interaction between the state, the interest group or groups recognized by the state” (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003, p.37). There is not just one set of interests in the creation of policy, or in the developing of an agenda. Instead, a policy “is a set of shifting, diverse, and contradictory responses to a spectrum of political interests” (Edelman, 1988, p.16). It is known that the priorities of government and the public are not fully intertwined; however, groups can lobby the government to press for change. Successful interest groups coalesce with other groups, as Lindbolm and Woodhouse explain (1993). They “shop around for a venue” at which to pitch their agenda—in other words, they seek out a particular person, particular ministry, or level of government to find a hearing for their ideas. Yet not
all interest groups enjoy success in helping to set government agendas. Indeed, Lindbolm and Woodhouse note the unique privileged position of business in the policy-making process whose constituents can often convince government that their demands are “reasonable.”

**Policy transfer.** In exploring the context of policy influence, I also set out to discover more about the transnationalization of policy ideas into the NZ arena. This is because of the growth of transnational governance in education and *policy transfer*—“the process whereby knowledge, policies, or administrative arrangements shift from one nation or policy domain to another”38 (see also Desjardins & Rubenson, 2009; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). However, while there has arguably been a growth of policy transfer, much research on political economy has been rooted in a “methodological nationalism,” as Mahon and McBride (2009) observe in the introduction to their edited book, *The OECD and Transnational Governance*. According to Mahon and McBride, social policy has tended to be viewed as emanating from national concerns and contributing solely to a national agenda. Nonetheless, the influence of transnational policy transfer is becoming increasingly apparent in the development of national government policies on education, prompting many researchers to investigate policy transfer in education policy (e.g., Dolowitz, 2000; Phillips, 2005; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2006).39

While policy rarely gets transplanted exactly from one context or country to another (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000), there is increasing evidence of policy overlaps and commonalities across the globe. Steiner-Khamsi explains that transnational policy transfer requires an act of externalization in which either an imaginary international community (e.g., international standards) or concrete other (e.g., national education systems, reform strategies) are evoked as a source of external authority (2004, p.203). It appears that

38 See [http://www.answers.com/topic/policy-transfer](http://www.answers.com/topic/policy-transfer)

39 Ascertaining policy “roots” and pinpointing what is original about policy and how policy is then translated into different national contexts can be very challenging. In fact, establishing directionality of policy (in terms of who is doing the borrowing or lending) can sometimes not even be possible. For this reason, the term *policy transfer* is preferable wording to *policy borrowing or lending* given the dynamism of policy and how it moves among countries, organizations, institutions and individuals.
policies or general policy directions do not originate in countries or emerge organically. Certain inter and trans-national organizations have been important in the development of policy ideas.

In addition to organizations, individual countries have become pioneers for certain educational policy directions and ideas. This is particularly true of New Zealand. New Zealand scholar Roger Dale claims that the export of education and training services over the early 2000s generated more money than NZ wines!40 (cited in Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, p.204). As Steiner-Khamsi (2004, 2006) notes, New Zealand led the way in outcome-based education (OBE) in the early 1990s. In its focus on benchmarks, placing the individual student and learning at the centre, and, providing precise measurement of teacher performance, by the late 1990s New Zealand had become “the magnet for [educational] policy pilgrimage” (2006, p.672). Moreover, individual people are also clearly important in the policy transfer process and can bring back pieces of information and ideas from meetings, conferences, conversations, or reports that can morph into other ideas and agendas. For example, in her analysis of the spread of the outcome-based education model, Khamsi (2004) identified New Zealander Maris O’Rourke as having embodied the OBE model and through her professional positions and associations was able to spread OBE to other institutions and countries. When she went to the OECD and the U.S, it is claimed, OBE went with her.

In sum, in the context of influence I sought to identify instances of policy transfer, reveal policy movers and shakers, and generally explore the agenda-setting process, drawing on different scholars and schools of thought. Together these tools have helped me to develop a greater understanding of the drivers of adult literacy policy over the first decade of the 21st Century in New Zealand.

40 And, yes, New Zealand does have a well-established wine industry and exports wine globally.
3.2.3 The context of (interpreted) policy practices and outcomes. In this final context, I was interested in exploring the interpretation of policy practices and outcomes by those policy actors who work outside of government. By interpreted practices and outcomes, I am referring to the perceptions of and responses to individual policies, general policy agendas, and the practices associated with the formation and development of policy. In other words, I analyzed participants' perceptions of government practices as well as their responses to these practices. In exploring this context, then, I focused on participants' interpretations of the general impact adult literacy policy had had on their working lives, the field, and on society as a whole.

I have named this context one of “interpreted” practices and outcomes since I believe an objective assessment of policy effects is not possible—given the timeframe as well as the relative subjectivity in analyzing the impact of policy. What I present is an evaluation of policy outcomes and practices not as objective facts, but instead as mediated and interpreted by different actors. In his later writings on the contexts of policy, Ball (1994) additionally referred to the act of examining policy’s second-order effects—or the impacts of policy on social justice. In a study on adult literacy, this could mean trying to trace policy change to the lives of individuals who undertake literacy education. In this study, I was unable to conclude whether, or the extent to which, life has become more socially just for certain groups of people as a result of an individual policy or group of policies. In choosing to look at interpretations of these effects, then, I am acknowledging that policy is always interpreted and mediated by those for whom it is intended (or for those who “suffer” it, see Foucault, 1977).

In addressing the context of interpreted practices and outcomes, I am asserting that there is a symbiotic relationship between government and other policy actors. Focusing on how policy action is perceived helps provide a greater context to policy text production and policy influence. In studying the context of interpreted policy practices and outcomes, I have been able to make comparisons between stated intent of policy texts and perceived intents.
and effects. This context also helped to further reveal the relationship between actors in policy networks. Specifically, turning to the insights of a variety of non-government policy actors helped me to dislodge policy from the exclusive domain of policy elites by turning up the focus at the micro level (Ozga & Lingard, 2007).

3.3 Methods and Data Sources

There were two parts to this policy sociology: document analysis and analysis of interview data. Data was analyzed overall in terms of the political context of adult literacy, in terms of how neoliberalism and inclusive liberalism/Third Way ideas were manifest in text, practices and outcomes; or, more explicitly, in policy discourse, policy processes, policy foci and policy funding.

3.3.1 Document analysis. The documents. There were three types of documents that I looked at for this study:

1. Key policy documents and initiatives by government agencies and ministries developed from 1984 until 1999.
2. Key policy documents and initiatives by government agencies and ministries developed from 1999-2008.
3. Documents outlining policy priorities of various literacy organizations, unions, and individual researchers.

The first group of policy texts were read with an aim of better contextualizing and understanding documents and policies created post 1999, and to help me better understand the policy trajectory and possible shift in adult literacy policy from the first period to the latter. The third type of documents centred on 1999-2008 and helped reveal the characteristics, scope and drivers of policy formation over the past decade. All documents and policies were identified through a combination of: prior knowledge about adult literacy

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41 All government documents analyzed for this study are detailed in Chapters 4 and 5.
policy in New Zealand; identifying references to key policies made in the literature and in other policy documents; and, checking with participants about which policies they felt were most important and corroborating each person’s opinion with other participants and documents.

**Method: The 10 ‘As’ to document analysis.** Document analysis was fundamental to understanding all contexts of policy, that is: the context of text production, the context of influence, and the context of interpreted practices and outcomes. In examining the first two sets of government documents (as detailed in the previous page), I was motivated to explore the operationalization of language in policy texts across the past two to three decades. I sought to develop methodological tools that would help me unpack the language used, the way in which discourses were mobilized in texts, the concrete responses put forward in the texts, and, the trajectory of policy across the years. A concern with policy influence as well as with interpreted policy outcomes and practices added dimensions to the analysis that moved it beyond a study of linguistic patterns.

To enable me to thoroughly examine all policy documents within the three contexts of policy, I created the 10 As of analysis (as detailed below). These 10 As of analysis were employed to each document individually and also applied to the policy landscape more generally. These 10 As were re-examined collectively in relation to and in conjunction with the findings yielded from interview transcripts. Not all As were necessarily present or relevant in all documents, however. Furthermore, this approach was methodically applied solely to documents in categories 1 and 2 (detailed in the previous page). In addition, the fiscal context of adult literacy policy (as evidenced in 9 and 10 below) were not thoroughly applied to examining the documents that led up to the decade of adult literacy policy development (that is, documents from 1984-1999) given the paucity of fiscal information. Nonetheless, the following methodological tools I describe have provided consistency, clarity

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42 Non-government documents were read to help me better understand the context of policy development and were not examined in the same methodical manner.
and rigour to the study.

1. **Authors**: The author(s) and/or organization/ministry behind the publication of the document were noted.

2. **Aims**: Each document was analyzed to determine the main aims of the document as well as the aims imbued to literacy and learning more explicitly.

3. **Articulation of policy ‘issues’**: I attempted to identify the “problems” the government policy was seeking to address.

4. **Approaches to policy ‘issues’**: Analysis was undertaken to address the solutions put forth in the documents to address the articulated policy issues and problems (as per 3.).

5. **Assertions**: The general truth claims of the documents were identified.

6. **Assumptions**: I examined the underlying assumptions—on the purposes of literacy, the purposes of the individual policy, on what was important and what wasn’t.

7. **Agenda**: I explored the overall agenda of the document and of the policy terrain that drove the creation of the document. Additionally, each document was examined with the goal of establishing whether it referred to changes in indicators, focusing events, and crises (as per Birkland, 2003) to learn more about the agenda-setting process in the context of influence.

8. **Actors**: The following questions were asked in reading each text to understand more about policy transfer and, in particular, policy movers and shakers: Who are the actors mentioned in the text? What role are they seen as playing? (as individuals, groups of individuals, organizations, ministries etc.) Who are the authors of the text citing?

9. **Amount**: Policies were examined with a view to identifying monetary commitments.

10. **Allocation**: Attention was also paid to where money was being allocated, where possible.

3.3.2 **Interview analysis. The interviewees**. All 20 interviewees for this research project can be considered policy actors. There were both government (internal) and non-
government (external) policy actors. I have placed my participants into the three following categories:

1. **Government bureaucrats:** People who were appointed to particular positions in different government ministries and helped create adult literacy policy in some way. These people worked for the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, and the Department of Labour.

2. **Literacy policy researchers:** These were people who were often contracted by government or other organizations to research outcomes of policy or to help government establish priorities for adult literacy policy. Most researchers were formally or concurrently practitioners. Researchers tended to be contracted by unions, various government ministries, and key literacy organizations. Some were independent, others worked for universities, and others were affiliated with small businesses.

3. **Literacy promoters:** These individuals were involved in the promotion of literacy and learning on behalf of their organizations. Literacy promoters can be understood as forming part of the literacy “interest group.” This included former and current practitioners. These participants worked in different organizations, including business interest groups, unions, and community and workplace literacy providers.  

Conducting interviews with the three “types” of people, as categorized above, was crucial to helping me understand the political context of adult literacy.

*Selecting interviewees.* Including the above three types of policy actors as participants enabled me to thoroughly explore the contexts of adult literacy policy in New Zealand. The reader may note, however, that my participants do not neatly fall into Howlett and Ramesh’s (2003) categorizations: i.e., elected officials, appointed officials, interest

43 It should be noted that a number of these expert interviewees had worked in two or three of these roles (i.e., government bureaucrats, literacy promoters or literacy researchers). Participants had also worked at a number of different institutions across the three categories. There were three people who had worked in all three categorizations at one time or another.
groups, research organizations and mass media. There are specific reasons for this. In my study, appointed officials were selected over elected officials since access to MPs (Members of Parliament) and other elected politicians would have been difficult, and more importantly, knowledge of adult literacy policy was generally greater among bureaucrats. As Lindbolm and Woodhouse (1993) note, “bureaucrats are keystones in the policy process...[M]ost functions once performed by legislatures are now performed by the bureaucracy [which includes] large numbers of specialists who have time and expertise to deal with policy issue on continuing basis” (p.52). I chose to interview literacy researchers, rather than researchers from specific research organizations. This is because research organizations that examine adult learning, and adult literacy in particular, are virtually non-existent in New Zealand so it made sense for me to interview researchers with multiple, or no, organizational affiliation(s). The literacy promoters are the equivalent of various interest groups; and, finally, adult literacy is such a small focus of media in New Zealand that it made little sense to talk to people in the mass media.

Interviewees were selected mainly through a process of prior knowledge (either due to personal knowledge/acquaintance or, more often, as a result of document analysis) and a process of snowballing. More specifically, a few people were contacted because I already knew that they had knowledge of adult literacy policy and were heavily involved in adult literacy in New Zealand. I identified another group of people through the documents I had been reading, as authors or as cited authors. The rest of the interviewees contacted were those people recommended to me by others as potential participants who were involved (directly and indirectly) in the creation, interpretation and/or implementation of policy in adult literacy. Every single person recommended to me was contacted and a large majority of these people agreed to be interviewed. Since the field of adult literacy policy in New Zealand is small, this amounted to a total of 37 people. Of those 37 people contacted, 22 agreed. Due to timing, two of the interviews did not occur. Some of those who did not agree to be interviewed put me in touch with others in their organization or ministry who could help. The 20 people interviewed comprise most of the major players in adult literacy policy
in New Zealand. Of those who did not agree to be interviewed (or who failed to respond), all but three came from the same institutions/organizations/ministries as my actual 20 participants.

My goal in recruiting participants was two-fold: one, to have as many identified literacy “experts” as possible; and, two, to have organizational diversity—that is, representation from as many principal organizations and government departments/ministries involved with adult literacy as possible. While gender or ethnicity were not main concerns in selecting participants, in my attempt to locate a cross-section of experts in adult literacy policy, I made sure to include a number of Māori participants and organizations, given the key involvement of Māori in the development of adult literacy in New Zealand. In the end, there were three organizations/ministries where no one was interviewed. All the study’s respondents can be considered literacy experts. Indeed, if all my participants were stranded on a desert island, there would be limited expertise and historical memory on adult literacy left in New Zealand! These participants contained an incomparable knowledge of the sector and its development in the country. I mention this, as this factor distinguishes my study (somewhat) from other qualitative studies where the goal can be to have as many voices, or as many diverse voices, as possible. Instead, the aim of these interviews was to have expert policy actors in the field of adult literacy policy recount their experiences, share their expertise on New Zealand adult literacy policy, and offer various insights from their particular organizational and/or personal positions. Therefore, seeking additional participants, outside of the 37 recommended, would not have added that much to the overall findings.

It is finally important to mention that all interviewees were anonymized and their institutional affiliation not explicitly noted. This is why I have only identified main government ministries and have not provided details on other organizations. This is also the reason I do not identify people’s institutional affiliation in the findings chapters. Such

4 These were, the Industry Training Federation (ITF), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and someone from the head office of Adult and Community Education Aotearoa (ACE).
anonymization is crucial in a country like New Zealand and a sector like adult literacy that is strikingly small and connected. For this reason, no meaningful description of any participant was possible given concerns for confidentiality.

**Details on the interviews.** I conducted interviews over a five-week period during February and March 2008. There were 16 separate interviews in which three interviews were attended by more than one person. All interviews were conducted in person, lasting anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours, and averaging just over one hour. Notwithstanding the presence of an interview protocol, which is included in Appendix D, the interviews can best be considered semi-structured. Indeed, over the interviews, not all questions were asked; some questions were added, others deleted and others rephrased in an overall attempt to gain greater understanding of the trajectory and landscape of adult literacy policy in New Zealand.

Unlike documents, which come written and solely require the interpretation of the researcher, interviews are co-constructed, as well as interpreted, by the researcher. The attitude, interview questions, and general approach to interviewing all become important. My methodological approach drew on Steinar Kvale’s ideas on *qualitative interviewing*, which he defines as “an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (1996, p. 2). This approach enabled me to understand more about adult literacy policy in terms of: general trends and themes; the espoused purposes of policy; the process of policy production; and, the various perceptions of policy development and implementation. Furthermore, this approach allowed me to more fully comprehend how policy reflects current and changing government priorities and political ideologies.

Kvale (1996) provides two insightful metaphors for thinking about the two approaches one can take to interviewing: as either “miner” or “traveller,” with the latter reflecting his own and recommended approach to interviewing. A *miner* interviews with the aim of extracting particular facts and material that she has previously decided to mine. In contrast, the *traveller* conceives the interview as a journey that will lead him to tell a “tale to be told
upon returning home” (p.4), as he wanders along with people he meets in his travels, getting them to talk about their worlds. The traveller is the role I sought to adopt in my interviewing journey. As the traveller, I attempted to connect with my participants and learn from them and their particular “cultures” as researchers, policymakers, advocates and practitioners.

**Method: The 5As of interview analysis.** I transcribed the interviews verbatim, where possible, conducting about half of the transcriptions myself and outsourcing the rest. I first read all transcripts while listening to the digitally recorded interviews to make sure the transcriptions were as accurate as they could be. After an initial reading of the transcripts, I sent participants their transcripts and asked if there was anything they would like to change. Two people were additionally contacted where there was confusion and where further clarification was needed.

In my reading of the interview transcripts, I developed five “A” steps to analysis to complement the 10 As of document analysis. These themes arose organically when reading the transcripts within the broader framework of the three contexts of policy. These five steps were also underpinned by a number of different questions that I asked myself upon reading the transcripts and when conducting the interviews. I describe the five As and include the questions below:

1. **Agenda:**
   - What was the agenda of the ministry or organization on whose behalf the participant was speaking (where relevant)?

   According to the participant(s):
   - What was the overall perceived agenda of the government in the development of recent literacy policy in general, and in certain initiatives or documents in particular?
   - How is the agenda similar or dissimilar to past government agendas in adult literacy?

2. **Agents and actors:**
   - Who were the key individuals and organizations/ministries identified by the interviewees as pivotal in policy development in adult literacy in New Zealand?
3. Assumptions:
   - What were the interviewee’s assumptions on the purposes of literacy or post-compulsory education? 45
   - What were the interviewee’s assumptions on the nature of literacy?
   - What did the interviewee believe to be the assumptions of government in regards to adult literacy and adult literacy policy creation?

4. Alternatives:
   - What policy alternatives were identified by non-government participants?

5. Assertions:
   - What general assertions did the interviewee make? (In regards to the purposes of adult literacy, the direction adult literacy policy has taken, will take or should take...)

These questions guided the identification of emergent themes that related to the overall aims of the research and specific research questions. I then coded individual transcripts with these themes. Subsequently, I examined themes across transcripts, allowing for a bird’s-eye view on the data as a whole.

As the “traveller,” I approached the interview texts hermeneutically with the idea that understanding the whole interview necessitated referencing the individual parts. 46 To understand the parts of the interview it was critical to examine them in light of, and in reference to, the overall study and to the findings yielded through the document analysis. In addition, I employed a “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Kvale, 1996) to interpreting meaning. I approached the interviews—and the research project overall—with the idea that assumptions and ideologies underpin what people say and write. This is characteristic of policy sociology and interpretive approaches to policy analysis. One cannot take everything said by

45 I mostly use the term post-compulsory instead of post-secondary education to refer to all formal and non-formal education undertaken by individuals no longer of compulsory school age. It includes adult education, upper high school (beyond compulsory grades), and all other tertiary education. The minimum school leaving age in New Zealand was 15 during the 1980s and 1990s, and is now currently 16.

46 I am not claiming, however, that the interview analysis was a “hermeneutic study” in the technical sense of the word (as developed by Gadamer, 1989, for example), as it is not methodologically faithful.
participants at face value without exploring underlying motivations and ideologies.

### 3.4 Ensuring Reliability, Validity and Generalizability

I attempted to ensure reliability, validity and generalizability in this study in a number of ways that I outline below:

I endeavoured to be reliable in five principal ways:

1. By being consistent and open in my treatment and choice of phenomena, and by approaching each document like other documents in their category and each interview transcript like another;

2. By using tactics for checking representativeness and by more thoroughly examining, rather than dismissing, ideas in texts and interviews that could be considered outliers;

3. By employing “methodological triangulation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) by using two distinct methods in gathering data (i.e., document analysis and interviews);

4. By analyzing a cross-section of documents that were identified by participants as important; and,

5. By crosschecking with participants who had been important in the development of policy along with how and why. This also helped me to avoid speaking to interviewees who would not have been able to help me in my research endeavour.

In terms of generalizability, the commonalities in and across documents and interviews suggest certain conclusions. Therefore, I can generalize about which policies have been important, what the general trajectory of adult literacy has been, what some of the key drivers have been in this process and how changing political ideologies influence policy development. In addition, although I cannot make any claims about adult literacy policy in other developed nations (not having studied them), my findings are useful for thinking about other contexts, especially adult education policy in other Anglo-Saxon countries.

In addressing the issue of validity, I checked my ideas against what had been written
elsewhere in different policies or in the same policy text, or against what was said by others or by the same person. When certain ideas did not match other measures of evidence, I did not ignore the former reality but rather examined it in relationship to the latter. In interview research and document analysis, I searched for intersubjective agreement and overlaps. In this sense, then, the research can be considered valid.

3.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have described the methodology employed for this study: a policy sociology of adult literacy that addressed three contexts of adult literacy through interviews and document analysis. An interest in the intersections among adult literacy policy, the changing role of the nation-state, the role of transnationalism, and the influences of neo and inclusive liberalism/Third Way (as described in Chapter 2) all acted as theoretical sensitizers. These sensitizers, in turn, shaped the research questions (detailed in Chapter 1) and framed the findings. Focusing on discourse, and on the historical, political and sociological dimensions of policy, allowed me to see more of the picture of adult literacy policy in New Zealand. This approach to policy sociology as outlined in this chapter enabled me to explore the central research aims and questions.

In the following four findings chapters, I explore the three contexts of policy as unfolded through my research. In the first two findings chapter, I focus on the “context of policy text production;” first, for 1984-1999 and then from 1999-2008. In these chapters, I explore the policy documents in general as well as the overall adult literacy policy document terrain in New Zealand. In the third chapter, I examine the “context of policy influence” by highlighting the agenda-setting processes, policy transfer, and policy movers and shakers, bringing to the fore some of the policy influences. In the fourth chapter, I shift the focus more to the non-government participants and their views on the outcomes and practices of policy, juxtaposing official authorized discourse and practice with non-government policy actors’ interpretations and responses to policy practices and outcomes. In short, then, each
findings chapter addresses a different piece of the overall context of adult literacy policy in New Zealand.

A DISCursive ANALYSIS OF POLICY TEXTS FROM 1984 – 1999

In this and the following chapter, I offer an analysis of the New Zealand policy text landscape in adult literacy to illuminate the nature and scope of reform, and to tease out the differences between adult literacy policy enacted during New Zealand’s so-called neoliberal era and inclusive liberal one.47 In Chapter 4, I investigate official government policy documents from 1984-1999; and in Chapter 5, from 1999-2008.

There were two main purposes to analyzing both sets of official government texts. My first aim was to call attention to the articulation of policy issues in regards to adult education by determining what and how “problems” have been articulated. The second purpose was to bring forth the proposed approaches to addressing such problems as they relate to adult education, through identifying the solutions offered by government in response to the problems articulated (see Edelman, 1988). While the meta purpose of this textual analysis was to explore the articulation and approaches, I also paid attention to three additional As of analysis as outlined in the methodology (for a total of five): first, the aims of education and literacy put forth in each document or policy; and, second and third, the general assertions and assumptions in individual texts and across texts. For documents studied in Chapter 5, I examined two additional As: the amount of money allotted to adult literacy according to the budgetary texts and the allocation of these monies. The reason I do not really explore the amount or allocation of funds in Chapter 4 is because there was very

47 It is important to remember that there was no substantive context of policy text production in adult literacy in the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand. The word “literacy” was generally still used to exclusively refer to basic reading and writing in the context of compulsory schooling. This does not mean that there was no government policy affecting what would later be referred to as adult literacy. Rather, the lack of discussion around the term adult literacy indicates the large influence IALS had in shaping the linguistic landscape in adult education in New Zealand starting in the late 1990s. For this reason I focus on adult education/post-compulsory education policy reform during this era rather than on policy that explicitly mentions adult literacy.
little budgetary information available from between 1984-1999. In fact, there are only three publicly available budgets for this period: 1997, 1998 and 1999. It would therefore have been difficult to map the trajectory of funding across the previous time span, i.e., 1984-1999, or between the two eras, i.e., from 1984-1999 and 1999-2008. However, in Chapter 5 I provide a general comparison between the 5th Labour government budgetary commitments to adult education funding and the money allotted to adult education by the previous National government in its final three-year term.

In Chapter 4, I examine policy texts from 1984-1999 as they help us to: situate more recent adult literacy policy; address the impact of neoliberalism on adult literacy policy from 1999-2008; and, to understand how skills/adult education policy varied between this and the following inclusive liberal era. Discursive analysis of policy texts was limited to a number of key government documents. As mentioned, these documents were flagged by participants and by the literature as being important in the development of adult literacy policy. From my analysis, I discerned three different chapters in the development of adult literacy policy in New Zealand during this time. The first period, from 1984–1990, under two terms of the fourth Labour government, can be considered a foundation stage where policy problems related to skills and education were raised and repeated resulting in legislative change. The second period, 1990–1996 (under the first two National administrations), can be understood as an era of solidification, where new policy rules surrounding adult education became normalized and institutionalized. The third timeframe, from the mid-late 1990s (under the last National government), saw the intensification of certain neoliberal values surrounding adult education (where some social values were minimalized, and financial support for adult education was reduced).

In what follows, I first briefly describe the texts analyzed from 1984-1999. I then provide an analysis of the articulation of policy problems and of the approaches to address these problems. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main themes in the documents.
4.1 Overview of Policy Texts

The timeframe of this research starts with the election of the Labour government in 1984, and for this reason I chose to analyze policy documents concerning post-compulsory and adult education released from 1984 onwards. This is not to say that no relevant adult education policy had been created prior to 1984, however. There was, for example, the Education Act released in 1964 that recognized the development of technical education and defined it as “post-secondary education directly related to or in preparation for the trade or profession in which the pupil gains or expects to gain his livelihood” (NZ Government, 1964, p.87); and the Vocational Training Council Act of 1982, which was established to cover apprenticeships and technical trainees. Undoubtedly, many of the policies and acts developed during the 1980s and 1990s built on policies and acts that came before them. Indeed, nothing is created in an historical vacuum. I chose not to explore these texts. This is because it was during the neoliberal era—starting in 1984 with the election of the 4th Labour government—that the New Zealand education system experienced major, transformative reforms which affected both compulsory and non-compulsory education.

Although neoliberal policies were first created in 1984 (Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004), the reader will notice that none of the documents analyzed in this study were published before 1988. This is because there were no major reforms enacted in adult education/post-compulsory education prior to the second term of the 4th Labour government (Snook, 1990). As New Zealand educational researcher Ivan Snook commented in the early part of the 1990s, “for over one hundred years, the structure of the New Zealand education system has been basically stable... After re-election in 1987, however, the Labour government initiated a major ‘reform’ of the system, from early childhood to tertiary” (1991, p.621).

While there were distinct differences in government policy published by, or initiated under, the Labour (1984-1990) and National governments (1990-1999), this overall period (i.e., 1984-1999) is considered by many to constitute New Zealand’s neoliberal era in public policy reform. In what follows, I provide an overview of some of the policy documents that
defined post-compulsory education during this neoliberal period of governance.

4.1.1 Overview of policy documents affecting adult education. The Report on the working group on post-compulsory education and training, commonly known as the Hawke Report—named for the head of the committee, Professor Hawke (Hawke, 1988)—initiated much of the reform in adult education and in the tertiary sector more broadly (see Walker, 2003). As Snook observed, the Hawke Report formed the basis of the post-secondary details in the radically influential Education Act (Snook, 1991). Professor Hawke conceived his role as “bringing together debates into a framework for policy action by government” (Hawke, 1988, p.ii).

Following this publication came two government reports, Learning for Life and Learning for Life II (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b). From these two documents, recommendations were then translated into the (revised) Education Act (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989) and Education Amendment Act (NZ Ministry of Education, 1990). The recommendations were also reflected in part in the Industry Training Act (NZ Government, 1992) published two years later. Although a couple of reports were released in the 1990s that can be considered influential in post-compulsory education reform, it is fair to conclude that the most far-reaching reforms were initiated under the Labour government. Nonetheless, both governments (and both decades) were pivotal in transforming the post-compulsory education sector (Johnson, 2000).

The key government documents examined for this project were the following:

Documents and policies released under the 4th Labour government.
Documents and policies released under the 4th National government.


4.2 Articulation of Policy Concern(s)

There is one policy concern that runs across all these documents. This can be reduced to one key assertion: the post-compulsory education system is inadequate for assisting the country to adapt to economic and social change. In effect, the government declares, across a large majority of texts, that there has been a lack of responsiveness from the tertiary education system to the changing demands of the labour market and of society in general. I gleaned two principal policy concerns (and six sub-concerns) related to this notion of a changing economy and society and inadequate post-compulsory education system:

1. There is a skill deficit in relation to changing labour market demands and the “new” economy.

2. The current post-compulsory education system is inadequate to address the requirements of the new economy and changes in society because it is:
   a. Outdated and sluggish
   b. Too small
   c. Too uncoordinated and fragmented
   d. Inefficient
   e. Low in quality; with low standards, and lacking sufficient processes of accountability.

In this section, I show how these above claims constituted the government’s main concerns.
in regards post-compulsory education reform.

4.2.1 An economic problem of skill deficit and an outdated tertiary education system. All texts communicate a concern for increasing skills, growing the knowledge economy, and modernizing the economy. Documents reply upon a language of crisis to garner support for these three concerns. The government White Paper on tertiary education (NZ Ministry of Education, 1998) notes, for example, “employers will demand higher and more diverse skills and knowledge” (1998, p.2). This document cites an unprecedented need for citizens to retrain, upskill and change direction to meet employer demands. Similarly, the 1999 Budget (NZ Treasury, 1999) talks of the necessity of expanding the knowledge base of New Zealanders. It encourages citizens to gain and use skills and knowledge so that they can participate in (and contribute to) the global knowledge economy.

All documents published under both Labour and National are predicated on two underlying, and related, assumptions: first, that post-compulsory education should be responsive to the economy; and, second, that economic prosperity and societal wellbeing are dependent on the tertiary education system. These two assumptions are apparent in, for example, the 1999 Budget when the author writes, “the public demand that the New Zealand tertiary sector is able to meet the challenges that it will face over the next 20 years” (NZ Treasury, 1999, p.3). The 1998 Budget similarly endorses these two ideas when it talks about “building a high quality workforce improving skills and training through education” (NZ Treasury, 1998, n.p). In this statement, the Treasurer, then Winston Peters, directly links improvement in the workforce to skills and training provided by post-school education. This concern with improving skills through post-compulsory education reform is not particular to the National government. In a much earlier example, the Hawke Report (1988) report raises its concern over the issue of a tertiary education system unresponsive to market forces. Hawke explicitly laments the gap he sees between the labour market and education.

The primary message the government is sending in its description of the post-compulsory education system, whether in 1988 or 1998, is that the system is too outdated
and sluggish to be able to respond to a skills deficit and to increase the country’s economic competitiveness. Indeed, a number of documents invoke stagnation and slowness metaphors when talking about the post-compulsory system. In 1989, the Department of Education refers to the tertiary education system as undynamic, unable to cope with change, and “slow to respond” (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a). Connoted in this statement is the idea that the education system is playing catch-up with the economic and social changes that have already taken place. A number of documents treat the post-school education system as an out-of-date technology, a piece of equipment that is in dire need of upgrading. The budgets assert that (post-school) education needs to be brought up to speed in order to contribute to New Zealand’s future prosperity (NZ Treasury, 1997, 1998, 1999). The assumption is that New Zealand should have a modernized tertiary education system that can compete on a global scale (Hawke, 1988; NZ Treasury, 1999). In an early example, the first Learning for Life document argues that New Zealand requires an education system for “...the new millennium” (NZ Dept. of Education, p.54), and one which is at least on par with systems in other OECD countries.

4.2.2 The tertiary education system is too small, uncoordinated and centralized. Most documents put forth the notion that the tertiary education system is too small, fragmented, and uncoordinated: in other words, that there is too little demand and supply.

All documents call for greater accessibility and participation in tertiary education. Inadequate capacity and participation are particular concerns. Hawke (1988), as well as the Ministry of Education (1998) writing 10 years later, state that there is not enough post-compulsory education of any form (whether at the university level or more basic levels). Documents consider low participation rates equally worrying. As noted in the Education Act: “compared with other successful modern nations, NZ lagged behind in recognition of the need for higher participation levels...” (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a). This message, which is reiterated throughout the texts, suggests that New Zealand during the 1980s and 1990s
was not up to scratch on a global level in terms of the size of its system (its supply) and its participation rate (demand).

Fragmentation, division and a lack of coherence are also basic problems identified with the system, especially in documents published during the late 1980s (see, NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b) before many reforms were implemented due to the Education Act (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989, 1990). For example, one prime division considered problematic in these earlier documents is the gap and distinctions created between “education” and “training” (see, e.g., Hawke, 1988). There is a concern for a more cohesive tertiary education system.

At the same time, however, the government expressed equal apprehension that the tertiary education system is too centralized and constrained to allow for a more dynamic and flexible system capable of addressing changes to the labour market and society (see, e.g., NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b). In effect, in its efforts to reform the tertiary education sector the government decries both fragmentation and division, on the one hand, and centralization and constraint, on the other.

4.2.3 The tertiary education system is inaccessible and inequitable. In a number of documents, the government connects the problem of inadequate participation in the tertiary education sector directly to equity. This is especially true of Labour government documents (i.e., Hawke, 1988; NZ. Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b; NZ Ministry of Education 1989, 1990). These earlier texts call particular attention to the underrepresentation of certain groups in the tertiary system. For example, the Hawke Report and Learning for Life documents identify certain target demographics for which participation should be increased: individuals of lower socio-economic status; the long-term unemployed; women; immigrants and Pasifika; other ethnic minorities and Māori. These

48 New Zealanders of Pacific Island heritage, including NZ born and immigrant populations, are commonly referred to as Pasifika. New Zealand has a large number of Pasifika. Niueans, Cook Islanders and Tokelauans have had right of abode in the country since the early 20th Century. In the mid-1960s,
documents stress the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi and general cultural and gender sensitivity in expanding post-compulsory education (Hawke; NZ Dept. of Education; NZ Ministry of Education). These documents all make the claim that the benefits of tertiary education have been concentrated in the hands of elites. A desire for tertiary education massification is seemingly linked to a desire for greater equality. Indeed, in documents published under the Labour government especially, the issue of social responsiveness and equity comes to the fore. In addition, these documents highlight the notion of post-compulsory education and training for both the economy and society; or, as Hawke writes, “for economic efficiency and social equity” (p.6). It is notable that the Hawke Report itself was received by the “Cabinet Social Equity Committee.” Furthermore, the Education Act, written in response to these reports and continuing the general sentiment, implores institutions to be more responsive to communities and to support social cohesion (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989).

In documents published under the National government (i.e., throughout the 1990s) the idea of education benefitting the individual above either the New Zealand economy or society begins to take flight. This fact is articulated best, perhaps, in a document published by the Tertiary Review Group (NZ Ministry of Education, 1991). In this document, the government recommends a user-pays system of post-compulsory education, arguing that tertiary education is of primary benefit to individual students, not society. While a concentration on equity in post-compulsory education is not entirely diminished in later documents published under the National Party, social inclusion tends to be treated distinctly more secondary to personal economic gain.

Samoans were granted temporary visas and quotas were established, though labour shortages in the late 1960s and early 1970s led to these generally not being enforced. Following economic problems in the mid-to-late 1970s, temporary visas were abolished and government clampdowns on illegal immigration ensued. During the 1980s, racial profiling of illegal immigration was recorded: Pasifika made up 86% of all prosecutions for overstaying visas yet they only comprised ~30% of all overstayers. Resentment towards Pacific Islanders during this time was palpable. (Personal experience and NZ Encyclopaedia by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, see: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/immigration-regulation/6)
4.2.4 A problem of inefficiency, standards and lack of accountability.

Another principal concern articulated regarding the tertiary education system, is a lack of standards or quality in education. Furthermore, it is repeatedly argued that a lack of efficiency and accountability contribute to inadequate standards.

Accountability is a fundamental issue, especially for the National government in its efforts to reform tertiary education. This is not to say accountability is a new concern. Indeed, a concern with accountability is also evident in the Hawke Report and Learning for Life documents. Yet, the language in these earlier documents is couched more often in terms of “responsibility” rather than “accountability.” As the government commented in 1989, there needs to be a “responsibility for excellence” (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, p.20).

However, by the 1990s calls for responsibility are muffled among clamours for greater accountability to ensure improved “standards.” The 1999 Budget (NZ Treasury, 1999) and Tertiary White paper (NZ Ministry of Education, 1998), for example, use the metaphor of lifting standards and achievement in post-compulsory education, connoting the idea that education in New Zealand is a weight that should be elevated to a significant height. The 1997 Budget talks about “raising the quality of post-secondary education” (NZ Treasury, 1997, p.4). Both the Green and White paper documents (NZ Ministry of Education, 1997, 1998), published in the late 1990s, take this emphasis on accountability even further. In these papers, the government directly asserts that the taxpayer is not getting value for money from the tertiary sector due to a lack of oversight and accountability.

4.3 Approaches to Policy Problem(s)

The solutions submitted to address the aforementioned problems of insufficient skills for a. A modern economy and society, and b: A (discursively constructed) poor tertiary education

49 Interestingly, the only time the word “literacy” is mentioned in the documents analyzed is in relation to “standards” (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989). Adult literacy is only referred to in the creation of the NZQA, in Section 42 of the Education Amendment Act, 1990 (NZ Ministry of Education, 1990).
system (i.e., outdated and sluggish; small; undiversified, uncoordinated and fragmented; inequitable and inaccessible; inefficient, of low quality, and unaccountable), are the following:

- To link the tertiary education system more closely to the economy and to labour-market demands.
- To increase capacity and participation (and more equitable participation).
- To improve the quality of the tertiary education system through general mechanisms of government control (assessment, standardization and generally increased oversight); and,
- To allow for greater diversification and privatization.

These articulated approaches, like their associated “problems,” are underpinned by a number of ideological and political assumptions. The main policy theme as it relates to adult education during this time centres on the perceived need for drastic reform of the tertiary education system. As the titles of two principal documents released under the 4th Labour government suggest, the goal is to help provide “learning for life” (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b).

4.3.1 Turning post-compulsory education into lifelong learning. One proposal in these documents is to reconceive the function and nature of education along the lines of lifelong learning (see Tight, 2002). Principally, the goal is to promote education as something that exists beyond compulsory schooling (specifically, beyond the age of 15, NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b). Adult education and training are distinguished from the idea of childhood and adolescent “schooling.” We can see an example of this in the renaming of PCET (Post-Compulsory Education and Training) to PSET (Post-Schooling Education and Training). In addition, notable in the Hawke (1988) report and subsequent documents are many allusions to the notion of retraining or learning across the lifetime. Essentially, the definition of education is widened. This expanded conception of post-compulsory education
first put forth in the 1980s includes institutional learning, on-the-job, self, and informal learning (Hawke). In the Hawke Report, non-formal learning is introduced as a legitimate form of education. There is a notable shift in discourse from education to learning. An example of this can be found in the renaming of the “National Council of Adult Education” to the “National Council of Community Learning” (Hawke, 1988). This mimics, of course, the general trend occurring globally in the 1980s and 1990s towards lifelong learning, as more individualizing discourses began to emerge and take hold (Boshier, 2000; Rubenson, 2005).

What is perhaps most indicative of a reconceptualization of education as lifelong learning is the proclaimed desire to eliminate distinctions between training and education, a problem we saw declared in 4.2.2. The gap between education and training is the problem; bridging the gap, then, is the solution. Learning for Life argues, for example, “distinctions between education and training should be avoided” (Hawke, 1988, p.8; NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, p.7). The document declares that both education and training are of equal value. Such a point is also reiterated throughout subsequent documents and policies. Furthermore, it is lifelong learning for economic purposes that is the goal of post-secondary education most endorsed in earlier documents. This assumption of learning for the economy is then normalized in later documents.

4.3.2 Linking post-compulsory education more closely to the labour market. One of the main solutions to the identified problem of skill deficit and labour market deficiencies is to expand and develop the connection between tertiary education and the economy.

The goal of linking tertiary education more closely to the economy is evident in a number of changes: the creation of Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) to support industry training; the increased promotion of on-the-job training; and, the development of more vocationally-slanted courses and programmes to be provided by a growing number of
Private Training Establishments (PTEs).50 These three changes, and indeed the creation of both ITOs and PTEs, were consequent to the passing of the Education Act of 1989 and Education Amendment Act of 1990.

Earlier documents include other examples of linking education more closely to the economy. Learning for Life II (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989b), for example, proposes that labour market policy be developed within the policy division of a Ministry of Education.51 And, along with Learning for Life I, this document recommends the establishment of:

1. A vocational guidance and careers advisory agency to provide training and information;
2. An advisory committee on national skills development, and one on Science and Technology;
3. More on-the-job training and workplace programmes.

The Hawke Report (1988) also emphasizes the importance of vocationalization. Relying upon the authoritative position of the OECD, Hawke suggests that universities should show a more obvious relationship between programmes and labour-market outcomes. He writes, “any educational programme with objectives such as those listed by the OECD...will encompass skills and abilities which are useful in employment” (p. 1.3).

The focus on industry training and education for and on-the-job continued throughout the tenure of the National government. For example, the 1997 Budget calls for lower taxes to reduce disincentives to employment and training so to facilitate greater on-the-job training (NZ Treasury, 1997). Many industry training and workplace education programmes were largely made possible by the creation of the Industry Training Strategy, which was introduced as a result of the Industry Training Act of 1992. This strategy went some way to establishing Hawke’s vision of replacing trade-based apprenticeships with industry-based

50 I encourage the reader to refer to Figure 1 in Chapter 1 to be better able to understand and navigate NZ’s current adult literacy terrain.

51 The Ministry of Education, created as a result of the Education Act, did not concern itself with labour market policy. The reader should also note that prior to the Education Act of 1989 New Zealand had a Department rather than Ministry of Education.
A change in language. In examining these documents, one notes a remarkable linguistic shift in discussions on education. In effect, while education becomes linked more closely to the economy and labour market, it also becomes treated as a business. Consequently, the language of business starts to form the language of education. This trend, as we have already seen, was lamented by many adult educationalists writing throughout the 1990s (e.g., Collins, 1990; Hull, 1993; Mezirow, 1996). Examples of this linguistic change are seen early on in the Hawke Report (1988) and the Learning for Life documents (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b). These texts talk about “delivering” education and stress the desire for educational institutions to undertake “entrepreneurial activities.” It is as far back as 1989, in Learning for Life II, that the term “CEO” is used to refer to heads of educational institutions (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989b). This document also proposes improving the ability of institutions to generate income. In the Education Act, institutions become categorically referred to as “providers;” and, the Education Amendment Act stresses the importance of “efficiency” (NZ Ministry of Education, 1990).

In later documents published under the National government, the language shifts again towards the notion of “competition” (see NZ Ministry of Education, 1997, 1998; NZ Treasury, 1997, 1998, 1999). These later documents make numerous references to “incentives,” “competition” and the need for educational institutions to compete with one another. As a Ministry of Education document puts it, competition will “take New Zealand to the leading edge” (NZ Ministry of Education, 1998, p.5). In other examples, the Green and White papers declare a fear of institutional “monopolies” and “sector capture” (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989a, 1989b). Indeed, a business and consumer model of education, stressing institutional and individual competition, is considerably entrenched in many texts published under the National government.

Change in government, change in priorities: jobs above education (?) Both Labour and National governments declared their desires to link education more intimately
to the economy and to the business world. However, documents indicate that education and training beyond 15 was distinctly less of a focus for National, who appear to have valued employment above all else. This is especially true of their final term, 1996-1999. In 1997, for instance, the government proposes a $44\textsuperscript{52} million increase in funding to its employment strategy over three years (NZ Treasury, 1997). Subsequent budgets even propose a “community wage” programme that would replace the unemployment benefit. Under this initiative, welfare recipients would be required to “look for work, to work in the community or to train” (NZ Treasury, 1998, 1999, n.p). In other words, recipients would only receive welfare cheques if they fulfilled their side of the bargain (in a rather extreme workfare regime). However, the training proposed, required if the person was not working, was to be of very short duration. Furthermore, training appears to have been considered decidedly secondary to moving an individual into a job of any kind as soon as possible. While it is important to note that the community wage programme did not go ahead due to widespread criticism, the ideology underpinning it—of valuing employment and cuts in social spending above post-school education—is evident in the last three budgets released by the National government. For example, the 1999 Budget announced that a “Māori industry-based training programme, piloted in two areas over the next two years, will place unemployed Māori in permanent jobs using a wage subsidy.” (NZ Treasury, 1999, p.16). Although the word “training” does appear here, it is treated as inseparable to getting people into jobs. Further evidence of a lack of support for training and education is manifest in the 1998 Budget, which proposes shifting funds from the government Training Opportunities programme, that provides government-funded training to the unemployed, to initiatives directed to helping the unemployed find work. In this budget report, the government additionally calls attention to the rising cost of public services like education:

\[ \text{[U]} \text{ncontrolled spending has no long-term benefits for New Zealand...the} \]

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{52} Note that all monetary amounts noted in this document are in NZ dollars. At the time of research,} \]
\[ \text{\$1 NZD = \$0.70 USD.} \]
government’s decision to limit the cost of additional policy decisions to $5 billion over the three years to 1999/2000 is a powerful tool which enables key areas to be addressed while maintaining a credible fiscal and economic strategy (NZ Treasury, 1998, p.6).

It is additionally revealing that funding for education in the 1998 Budget is concentrated in “the formative years” (NZ Treasury, 1998), rather than directed to training and post-compulsory education. In other words, for the National government adult education and training does not appear to be as much of a major financial concern as cutting back on social spending and raising employment rates cheaply; moreover, it is considered decidedly less important than compulsory schooling.

4.3.3 Increasing participation: neoliberal tactics. So far, we have seen how the Labour and National governments of the 1980s and 1990s attempted to link tertiary education more closely to the labour market and to economic concerns to address certain problems (as articulated in section 4.2). This attempt is evident in the discursive shift to lifelong learning and business, and in the prioritizing of post-compulsory education that leads to direct economic benefits. Documents also suggest that the National government showed less of a concern for tertiary education and more of a goal of savings in welfare payments by getting people into jobs. These trends can be interpreted as neoliberal approaches to post-compulsory educational reform. Likewise, the strategy for addressing the articulated problems of inadequate participation and capacity is to promote the massification of post-compulsory education in a similarly neoliberal manner.

Similarly indicative of an ideological turn towards neoliberalism in promotion of massification are the tactics put forward to elevate participation in post-schooling education: incentives, increased private sector involvement, fees, and lower taxes. Hawke (1988) first put forward the idea of an Equivalent Full Time Student (EFTS) model of

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53EFTS is the measurement used in NZ to calculate students' enrolment at an educational institution. An FTE, Full Time Equivalency, of 1.0 means that the student is equivalent to full time, while an FTE of 0.5 signals that the student is only half-time. Different scales are used to calculate EFTS at educational
funding. This idea is developed in subsequent initiatives and concretized by the Education Act (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989). According to Hawke, this institutional funding-per-student model (cynically referred to as a bums-on-seats method of funding) would encourage as much enrolment as possible. Part of the endeavour to raise participation includes a recommendation to introduce student fees to help pay for an expanding system. Lower taxes are also put forward as mechanisms for boosting participation, especially by National: “Lower tax rates put additional dollars in the hands of New Zealanders, and encourage them to undergo training, gain employment, invest in their businesses, and save for their futures” (NZ Treasury, 1998, p.7).

Privatization is one of the prime solutions for lifting participation and expanding capacity. In 1988, Hawke recommended increased reliance on non-public sector funding and an option for institutions to “decide in principle to adopt policies and procedures which require a greater level of private funding of PCET” (1988, p.8). In particular, the Education and Amendment Act (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989, 1990) ushered the way for the opening of many private institutions, establishing PTEs in New Zealand and providing them with the ability to apply for registration under the NZQA. Numbers grew to over 700 in the 1990s (Walker, 2003), and currently there are over 900 such institutions to be found in the country, some providing subsidized or free programmes for individuals with low levels of education, and others charging high fees for students to undertake courses in almost any imaginable subject (such as mechanics, ESL; hairdressing; pedagogy etc.).

4.3.4 Increasing participation: sensitivity to equity. Notwithstanding the decidedly neoliberal approach to reforming education and to increasing participation in particular, one can equally discern discourses surrounding social concerns and the targeting of disadvantaged groups, especially in documents released by the 4th Labour government. In texts published during the late 80s, there is mounting discussion of “targeting” learning institutions.

54 See: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/results.do?regionCode=0&typeCode=PTE&nameQuery=
opportunities to the disadvantaged: to allocate funding to disadvantaged groups for whom access, foundation and bridging courses would be entirely publicly funded (Hawke, 1988; NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b). Hawke (1988) writes,

The government has established five underlying themes common to all areas of social policy reform:

- Enhancement of the family
- Implementation of the principles of the Treaty
- Improvement of the social and economic status of women
- Provision of a legislative environment that safeguards basic human rights and freedoms and works towards the removal of discrimination
- Recognition of the needs, contributions and traditions of Pacific Island peoples and other minority cultures residing in New Zealand

In this and the Learning for Life texts (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b) authors reiterate goals of “removing barriers” and making post-compulsory education more accessible to groups that are disadvantaged. These texts also propose the formation of advisory councils and structures to include provision for Māori, Pacific Island and “women’s issues.” Ambitious by today’s standards even, Hawke proposes of these councils that “by 1996 [they] show that the distribution of council members fairly reflects their communities, noting the gender, ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the community” (1988, p.21). Following on from these three documents, the Education Amendment Act (NZ Ministry of Education, 1990) conflates the issue of participation and access, conceptualizing them within the frame of furthering equality in and through educational opportunities.

In these documents produced under the Labour is a particular concern for cultural representation, especially concerning Māori. We see numerous exhortations for greater consultation with “the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa” (i.e., Māori, see, e.g., Hawke, 1988). Hawke reflects on the need for consultation in accordance with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. And, Learning for Life II urges that “specific ethnic groups [be] consulted using their own methods of consultation about all matters which affect them” (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989b, p.20). This document also proposes that students be given an education that “respects their cultural background” (p.21). Māori access programmes, along with the
proposal for developing separate campuses for Māori, were floated in the Hawke Report. These proposals were consequently made a reality by the Education Act that officially recognized Wānanga, or Māori tertiary institutions (see NZ Ministry of Education, 1989, 1990).

The targeting of adult education and training for disadvantaged groups continued under the National government. For example, the 1998 Budget (NZ Treasury, 1998) notes the need to provide “learning opportunities” for post-school students with disabilities. And, the speaker in the 1997 Budget speech remarks on the importance of improving opportunities of New Zealand youth to prepare themselves for life and employment. It also emphasizes the need to secure second chances and enhanced opportunities for older people (NZ Treasury, 1997, p.6). In addition, millions of dollars were earmarked in the 1999 Budget towards Māori language development and work skills programmes for Māori youth in prison. Many documents, across both 1980s and 1990s, emphasize targeted educational programmes and institutions diversified according to the needs of identified marginalized groups. The context of policy text production from 1984-1999 observably stresses support for those at the margins of society in a concern for closing the gap of educational opportunity.

4.3.5 Quality control, standardization, centralization and accountability. Part of the context of policy text production in adult education and training in New Zealand from 1984-1999 is one of control. It is a story of the government seeking further power over post-compulsory education in the form of enforced accountability, quality assurance, outcomes, oversight and regulation. These emphases arise out of a desire to improve the system in the ways it was deemed deficient, as outlined in section 4.2. Surveillance and monitoring, an essential component of the Rightward turn in education (Apple, 2000), definitively characterize adult education and training policy throughout this era. The approach to educational reform is one characterized by performance targets, education reviews, increased oversight, and permission for sanctions
(NZ Ministry of Education, 1989b). In effect, the model of PCET promoted throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s especially, is one that is centralized, cohesive and controlled. This is exemplified by the proposed establishment of a Ministry of Education and Training (which in actual fact became the Ministry of Education) and the concomitant disestablishment of the Vocational Training Council and National Council for Adult Education.

Indeed, the watchword throughout this time soon became “accountability”: accountability to students, to community, to taxpayers, and to the notion of “quality.” According to the Ministry of Education in the late 1990s, post-compulsory education and training should “protect students’ and tax payers’ interests” (NZ Ministry of Education, 1998, p.55). The ministry asserts in the same document that tertiary providers need to be more strongly motivated to respond to student needs and improve the quality of their programmes. As Hawke (1988) put it a decade earlier, PCET should be responsive to client demands and community needs. Hawke suggests that institutions be required to be more open to their “client base” to ensure such responsiveness. As later decreed by the Ministry, “tertiary providers have to disclose to students information about the policies they have in place to safeguard students’ and educational interest” (1998, p.27). In a number of documents throughout the 90s, the word “information” is used in relation to accountability: better information for the government, better information for providers, and, better information for students (NZ Ministry of Education, 1998). Accountability is proffered as the major response to purported: “poor quality” of education; rising costs; lack of institutional and systemic responsiveness to the labour market, changing economic and social needs; inequality of access; and, inadequate levels of participation and institutional capacity. It is the drug to counter numerous educational ills.

**The role of the NZQA.** Accountability was essentially enshrined through the establishment of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). The creation of the NZQA denotes, as declared by Peters, Marshall and Fitzsimons (2000), “a shift from input controls to quantifiable output measures” (p.455). It was created to establish policies and
criteria related to quality assurance of, not only compulsory schooling and the formal tertiary education sector, but also providers of adult and community education (ACE). The NZQA conducts assessment; liaises with overseas certifying bodies; oversees entrance to university; grants approval of courses; represents institutional authority; provides accreditation to new courses; and took over from the Vocational Awards Act. It became, as it were, the “big brother” of education. It was also created specifically to ensure consistency and coherence—further evidence of a desire for a centralized, cohesive, “seamless” education system. In the Education Amendment Act, the NZQA was provided all-encompassing power of (most) non-university educational assessment (NZ Ministry of Education, 1990) which continues to this day. Its power has arguably grown since its creation, a fact I explore in more depth in Chapter 5 (see also, Walker, 2008).

The NZQA was conferred by the Education Amendment Act of 1990 with the ability to invigilate over most matters educational. Furthermore, there were subsequent calls throughout the 1990s for greater quality control and institutional accountability through the NZQA and other means. In the late 1990s, for example, the Ministry of Education (1998) brought polytechnics under the NZQA’s umbrella, which had previously been exempt. It also called for the NZQA to offer further quality validation services. The 1999 Budget also demanded “more rigorous assessment” (NZ Treasury, 1999, p.12) through the NZQA. Perhaps most striking was the suggestion of output-oriented funding in the Green and White papers where money would be taken away if institutions did not generate certain output in accordance to previously decided-upon figures (NZ Ministry of Education, 1997, 1998). Proposals were made for greater monitoring for solvency. The Ministry of Education proclaimed, “providers will have to prove they are solvent before they can receive tuition subsidies” (1998, p. 10). In fact, the Green paper (1997) was to require that all post-school education be legally structured as companies and be made to show a profit! Although the government White Paper that was passed in 1998 did not mention the commercialization of existing institutions, it did argue that taxpayers and students were not getting “value for money”, and consequently made demands for greater accountability and quality assurance.
(NZ Ministry of Education, 1998). In short, the narrative of adult and higher education in New Zealand over the 1990s especially, was one of expanding surveillance and control.

4.3.6 Decentralization, diversification and dynamism. The creation and development of an assessment framework suggests a pattern of centralization and coordination, yet this is only one part of the story. The other side of the story of tertiary education during the 1980s and 1990s is a concern with decentralization and (partial) institutional autonomy to allow the system to become more dynamic. As Hawke put it, post-secondary education reform should be a process of “devolution and accountability” (1988, p. 4).

Alongside the increasing demands for “output” and other pre-defined measures of accountability, documents express the desire to loosen government control in certain areas. For example, the 1990 Education Amendment Act states that it is “[g]iving tertiary institutions as much independence and freedom to make academic, operational, and management decisions as is consistent with the nature of the services they provide” NZ Ministry of Education, 1990). The value of loosening, rather than tightening, control is also perceptible in the Learning for Life recommendations for the development of a Ministry of Education that would provide policy advice rather than operational advice (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a). Another example of loosening control is witnessed in the calls for devolving greater power to “interest groups” and Māori in particular. However, with devolution of power come increased expectations for citizen responsibility. As declared in a later Ministry of Education report, “it is up to us to take advantage of the opportunities the reforms create” (NZ Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 2). This statement reveals an endorsement of a self-help ethic, where it is made clear to institutions, groups and individuals that it is up to them to make the necessary changes to be able to benefit from government policy.

Discourses of freedom and autonomy are seen throughout the period. Other associated discourses include “choice,” “opportunities,” “decentralization” and “flexibility” (NZ
Ministry of Education, 1998). These terms all connote freedom, autonomy and perhaps even equity. Yet these notions of choice, opportunities, decentralization and flexibility (and autonomy and freedom more generally) tend not to be goals in and of themselves, but rather reflect the government’s desire for greater individual and institutional innovation, dynamism, and adaptability to change. This desire is most pronounced in later National-led documents. As a 1998 Ministry of Education document asserts, there is a need to support “flexibility and self-management in education [since] successful providers will be those that can adapt quickly to meet the increasing demands of students for high-quality tertiary education” (p.56). Similar sentiments are voiced in the 1999 Budget speech, with successful providers characterized as those who “encourage enterprise and innovation” (NZ Treasury, 1999). The Ministry of Education (1997, 1998) notes the particular importance of institutions that are creative and innovative, forward-looking and future-oriented; in other words, those post-compulsory institutions that can adapt to a changing future. In addition, discourses of autonomy and freedom are connected to calls for greater competition. This is also particularly noticeable in documents published under National. Contrastingly, in earlier texts especially, autonomy and freedom discourses are sometimes connected to the idea of “collaboration.” This is particularly visible in the Learning for Life reports (NZ Dept. of Education, 198a, 1989b), where the post-secondary education system is conceived as a song with many different yet complementary harmonies (i.e., types of institutions).

4.4 Conclusions

The Treasury took seriously all the ‘leftish’, ‘radical’, ‘sociological’ critiques of education, all of which (as we know only too well) show that in terms of fostering equality, the education system in advanced countries has failed. It then turned the argument on its head, holding that a ‘radically’ new solution was required, not (as liberals think) a tinkering with the existing system (Nash 1988, p.36).

What occurred in the New Zealand post-compulsory education system during the so-called neoliberal era was radical social policy change. Yet it was radical not only materially—with
policies that made concrete changes in the management of education— but also, and perhaps more importantly, symbolically and discursively (see Taylor et al., 1997).

In the key documents analyzed above, the post-compulsory education system is identified as inadequate in a number of dimensions. It is charged with being irresponsible to labour market needs and inadequate to help citizens adapt to economic and societal change. The post-compulsory education system is additionally accused of being inadequately relevant; relatively impractical; insufficiently dynamic; in need of expansion; inequitable; inaccessible; of poor quality; and generally unaccountable to minorities, to students, to government, and to the New Zealand economy and society more generally. We see in these documents a growing concern for citizens to update skills to help the country excel and a tertiary education system that is failing to help them do this.

The responses or articulated approaches to such perceived problems, as put forth in the texts, include:

- Expanding the idea of what counts as (post-schooling) education;
- Linking education and training more closely to the labour-market and the economy;
- Applying business standards and norms to post-compulsory education. This is evident in the government’s concern for profit making, competition, efficiency and entrepreneurship;
- Expanding both supply and demand by: cutting costs to enable massification; lowering taxes; allowing for privatization; introducing fees for the majority while focusing on targeted access for specific underrepresented groups; and, above all,
- Concentrating on quality control (and the pursuit of “excellence”) and accountability. Quality control is part of a centralizing endeavour enabled by the formation of the Ministry of Education, and by the creation and greater bestowal of power to the NZQA. These two ministries managed (arguably micro-managed) post-secondary education and educational institutions throughout this time.

At the same time, the documents promise more freedom for individual students and institutions. In other words, discourses of control and oversight are coupled with those of freedom, flexibility, diversification and decentralization. The concern for decentralization
and devolution of power appears connected to a desire for institutions to be able to respond dynamically to labour-market demands and to general economic and societal change.

It is reasonable to presume from the reading of texts published in the 1980s and 1990s that the fourth Labour government spearheaded and ratified most of the major post-compulsory reforms; established much of the vocabulary surrounding adult learning and education; and, linked adult education more closely to the economy. Indeed, the most substantive reform from this entire period is the establishment of the Education Act (enacted by the Labour government), which then led to the transformation of the entire landscape of education in New Zealand.

In the Labour government, we see evidence of hybridity with attention paid to both social and economic concerns. Though as Snook (1991) mused regarding the first wave of reforms under Labour to compulsory schooling, “the [education] system sold as a decentralizing measure is becoming more centralized and bureaucratic.” (p. 622). In his examination of the Labour-led post-compulsory education reforms, Snook cynically concluded, “overall, the move is clearly towards privatization (posing as accountability), centralization (posing as devolution), local responsibility (posing as local control), and de-professionalization (posing as community involvement)” (Snook). Indeed, such competing aims were not necessarily held in balance with one another.

Under the National government, discourses and reforms continued, especially those associated with privatization, competition, accountability and institutional responsiveness. One can also conclude that the National party was generally not as concerned with post-compulsory education and training as the Labour party that came before it. Financial support weakened and calls for a community wage and savings on unemployment benefits often muted discussions on training and education. In addition, the emphasis on social equity noticeably softened. Nonetheless, a concern for equity is still visible in government texts published throughout the 1990s, suggesting that negotiation over values and politics was not entirely quashed and that competing interests remained.

In conclusion, due to the reforms made to tertiary education during the late 1980s and
1990s, adult education, training and “skills” came to form a part of the discursive terrain of non-compulsory education. Moreover, the documents, policies and general (post-secondary educational reforms of the 1980s and 1990s set the stage for adult literacy policy development over the first decade of the 21st Century.

A DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF POLICY TEXTS FROM 1999 - 2008

The 5th Labour government was elected in 1999 and began issuing policies and implementing major reform to the post-compulsory education from 2000 until their defeat in the 2008 election. This timeframe was, in effect, when the butterfly of adult literacy was released from its cocoon that had been woven together throughout the previous two decades. In this chapter, I show how the “problem” of adult literacy from 1999-2008 is not entirely new but rather was constructed on top of the previous principal policy concern developed during the late 1980s and 1990s: that New Zealanders possess insufficient skills for the changing economy and society. In other words, adult literacy policy was promoted during the first decade of the century as part of a larger “solution” (rather than comprising an entirely new policy approach) of an expanded, diversified, decentralized, more equitable, labour-market responsive, accountable, and generally controlled and centralized tertiary education system.

In what follows, I first briefly describe the texts I analyzed published between 1999-2008. I then provide an analysis of the articulation of policy problems and of the approaches to address these problems. I draw on five As of analysis, including two additional As of analysis to those used in Chapter 4 in turning to annual budget reports from 2000-200855: amount of funding and allocation of funds. I chose to examine budget policy texts as they move us beyond the discursive as authoritative texts that allocate funding to specific agendas. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main themes in the documents and a comparison between this era of adult literacy policy and the previous period of post-compulsory education reform, contrasting the two periods and pointing to

55 Note that the 2000 Budget was the first Budget released by the 5th Labour government.
5.1 Overview of Policy Texts

The decade from 1999-2008 may soon become known as the decade of adult literacy policy in New Zealand. Indeed, during this ten-year period there was a flurry of texts written on and about adult literacy (as the term tends to be used by IALS). Documents were released by various departments and ministries of government, businesses, unions, literacy organizations, interest groups and other interest groups. As one government bureaucrat remarked to me, “it is amazing the churn of research and documents on adult literacy; every day something new hits my desk.” Clearly, I was unable to investigate all research and documents from this time period. However, I did analyze those documents flagged as influential and of importance in developing an adult literacy agenda in New Zealand.

Adult literacy was first brought into the limelight, and advanced as a government concern, by the Adult Literacy Strategy (ALS) (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a). This strategy was built on the existing structure of adult literacy in New Zealand and “uses the three existing literacy organizations as the foundation or basis for developing literacy responses in New Zealand” (p.45): Workbase, Literacy Aotearoa, and ESOL home tutors. There were also documents published before 2001 that were not included in this study, but which also affected adult literacy. These include the amended Education Act in 2000, which removed age discrimination for school (where it would no longer be limited to those 18 and under) and called for greater oversight of PTEs; and, the Education Standards Act in 2001, which allowed government to more easily intervene in “failing” Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs).

Shortly following the ALS, the Māori Literacy Strategy (MLS) was released by the Māori Adult Literacy Working Party (2001) to government officials. According to my participants, this document did not really influence literacy policy per se but it was still important in helping to bring Māori language (Te Reo) literacy to the government’s
attention. It is also important as it provided a Māori response to the ALS; it signified the inclusion of Maori in the political discussions on adult literacy.

Following the ALS and MLS was arguably the most pivotal development in adult literacy. Here, I am referring to the creation of a new quasi ministry, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), which was established as a result of the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) and consequent Tertiary Reform Bill (2002). TEAC issued a series of four reports in 2000 and 2001 (TEAC, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c) which set forth a vision of developing tertiary education in New Zealand, and streamlining and incorporating post-compulsory education under one umbrella, TEC. Adult literacy and numeracy represents a significant part of TEC’s concerns. Indeed, it is from TEC that many of the main strategies and reforms affecting adult literacy emerged. This was principally through the Tertiary Education Strategies (TES), which lay out the government’s five-year strategy in all educational and training matters beyond compulsory schooling, and the related Statements of Tertiary Education Priorities (STEP), which speak to the government’s more immediate priorities over a 2-3 year period.

Another key initiative in 2004 was the Ministry of Education’s Learning for Living project, a professional development programme for literacy instructors. This project also resulted in the release of a number of short texts. Another reform that took place a few years later was the Foundation Learning Quality Assurance (FLQA), developed by the NZQA and implemented from 2007 onwards. This document details the more stringent quality requirements placed on providers of literacy and also provides details on the new tutor qualifications. In 2007 also, TEC published the Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy. This document elucidates the steps literacy learners go through (or should go through) and was created to help instructors and institutions plan adult literacy programmes in reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy. Lastly, in 2008, the Department of Labour (DOL), working with other government departments and outside organizations, released the New Zealand Skills Strategy supported by the Upskilling Partnership Programme [UPP]. This text promotes a coordinated approach to upskilling the literacy, language and numeracy
skills of NZ’s workforce to enhance productivity and international competitiveness.

In addition to key documents outlined above, I also analyzed the monetary commitments made in national budgets from 1999-2008 as part of the context of policy text production. As Taylor et al. point out, some policy documents or gestures are considered more symbolic than material (1997). Budgets are material policy documents. They operationalize substantial change in their role as authoritative texts (Bourdieu, 1991), establishing norms and determining outcomes, practices and effects. They differ from other texts in their direct rather than indirect allocation of value, yet they are an essential part of understanding the context of policy text production.

Below is an overview of the above-described pivotal government documents that I examined for my dissertation research. By no means is this an exhaustive list but it does provide a sketch of adult literacy policy creation under the fifth Labour government:

*Documents and policies analyzed released under (or during) the 5th Labour government analyzed for this study:*

- Adult Literacy Strategy (2001)
- Māori Literacy Strategy (2001)
- Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy (2007/2008)
- New Zealand Skills Strategy supported by Upskilling Partnership Programme [UPP] (2008)
- New Zealand Budgets, 2000 - 2008

56 For example, other key, but non-literacy specific, reforms and policies include the Modern Apprenticeship scheme, launched in April 2000, and the enactment of the Modern Apprenticeship Training Act in December 2000.
5.2 Articulation of Policy Concern(s)

The policy concerns articulated in the above documents overlap in large part with those enumerated in texts released during the previous era. However, the problem of a skills deficit is more pronounced in many of these documents, and for the first time adult literacy is mentioned as part of this concern around skill deficit. In the first decade of the 2000s, the discourse shifts quite squarely to language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) and foundational skills/education. The government continues to promote adult education for its role in helping people to adapt to change. Discourse around a “knowledge society” (and sometimes a “knowledge economy”) is augmented, and more attention is placed on Māori, Pacific Islanders and other target groups in the government’s overall agenda of greater social and economic inclusion. In addition, a focus on quality and accountability permeates throughout (as it did during the previous two decades), and in some areas this focus even increased.

5.2.1 Literacy and skills as a principal articulated concern. The term “literacy” is inserted into the discussion on post-compulsory education and training (or on tertiary education), and is intrinsically connected to discourses surrounding skills. In short, the policy assertion largely became that there were inadequate literacy and skills in the general population. In keeping with the trend consistent with IALS, the definition of literacy is expanded to encompass aspects of learning that were previously referred to as part of post-compulsory or post-schooling education and training. The term literacy is first taken up in a serious way in the Adult Literacy Strategy where, reminiscent to discourses of IALS or ALL, literacy is defined as a complex web of reading, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving, creative thinking and numeracy skills” (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a, p.3).

Across the documents, the word “literacy” tends to be used in conjunction with other words and concepts to construct a problem of inadequate skills and/or education. In general, literacy becomes synonymous with skills. Other synonymous terms used in policy documents include: lifelong learning; key or general competencies; core competencies;
essential or foundational skills; fundamental skills; generic skills, or proficiency. Specifically, literacy is increasingly used alongside the terms “language” and “numeracy” in New Zealand literature (see also Benseman & Sutton, 2008), and is considered to form the core of basic skills or competencies. Above else, the documents conceive literacy as foundational. The Foundational Learning Quality Assurance (FLQA) document (NZQA, 2007), for example, uses the expression “foundational learning” as the umbrella term which incorporates literacy. The definition of foundation learning in this document mirrors, and in fact expands upon, the IALS definition of literacy: “the application of a complex web of reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, problem solving, numeracy skills and communication technology so that people can achieve their own goals in meaningful social, cultural, vocational and/or learning contexts” (NZQA, p.3). One can observe numerous “path” and “building” metaphors in descriptions of literacy; literacy is considered fundamental, foundational, a STEP57 or “stepping stone” to something else. For example, a literacy course is described as one that is directed to those near the beginning of a learning path or further along. Courses are also aimed at those yet to begin the construction of their learning and others who are far along in the building process. In addition, the “learning progressions” (TEC, 2008) immediately connote the journey metaphor; literacy is a road along which we all find ourselves and along which we are implored to continue. In what order skills may follow, however, is up for debate.

The word “literacy” is used in numerous ways. Within the first 66-page Tertiary Education Strategy (TEC, 2002), for example, literacy is mentioned 63 times: in relation to entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity and invention; as a definition of foundational skills; as a “skill among many including communication, technology, team work, self-confidence” (p.12). It is a word that appears time and time again alongside the words “language” and “skills.”58 This represents a marked linguistic shift from earlier decades. Certainly, “skill” was

57 It is no coincidence that TEC called its statement of tertiary priorities “STEP.”
58 For example, skill is mentioned 579 times and literacy 47 times in the NZ Skills 42-page document (Skill
a word found in reports and documents published over the 1980s and 1990s, yet it was not used with such notable frequency. In addition, when it was used, it was rarely associated with such a wide range of behaviours and abilities. What we see in the 2000s, then, is a policy concern for skills with literacy forming the core of the concern.

5.2.2 Inadequate literacy and skills for an innovative economy. While the context of text production suggests that “literacy” is a new discourse and “skills” a much-enhanced and more prominent discourse, the goal of learning largely remains improving the national economy’s ability to compete globally. The problem articulated, again, is an inadequately skilled and modernized workforce for a strong and modernized economy. Throughout the Cabinet document (Cabinet Business Committee, 2007), the draft version of the skills strategy, there is repeated mention that a highly skilled workforce is necessary for global competition. Comparisons are made between New Zealand numbers and OECD averages, which show the country lagging behind other countries in economic competitiveness (Cabinet Business Committee, 2007; Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008). In addition, the 2003 Budget suggests that it is necessary “to equip New Zealanders with 21st Century skills” (NZ Treasury, 2003). The promotion of such “modern” skills suggests that the “old” Fordist skills of last millennium will not suffice. The documents draw on high-skills rhetoric. Some examples of this language are included in the 2001 Budget, which claims that the country needs increased “entrepreneurship and a highly skilled workforce producing the skills we need” (NZ Treasury, 2001, p.9). In subsequent budgets, the word changes from “entrepreneurship” to “innovation.” For example, the 2002 Budget states, “highly skilled people have to be available to supply the needs of an increasingly sophisticated economic system, and so education, training and immigration policies need to be recalibrated around the requirements of an innovative culture” (2002, p.4). The 2004 Budget notes the role of skills, talent and innovation (NZ Treasury, 2004). And, the 2006 Budget speech even

changes the budget line item formerly referred to as “tertiary education” to a newly-developed “innovation and skills” section “...in an effort to build on the work of the growth and innovation taskforce” (NZ Treasury, 2006, p.5).

These concerns are intimately connected to the government’s mounting aspirations of developing a knowledge economy and/or knowledge society. Indeed, asserted on the first page of the Adult Literacy Strategy, “high levels of literacy and numeracy are basic skills needed for participating in our high-tech, knowledge society” (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a, p.1). In another example, the first Tertiary Education Strategy (TEC, 2002) urges the country to respond to an “information revolution” (p.11) as it builds on old strengths and develops new ones. TEC conceptualizes basic skills (i.e., literacy or foundational skills) as part of the new economy discourses, assuming them to lead to high skills. Also in this TEC 2002 document, then Minister of Education Steve Maharey stresses that building a knowledge economy and society has as much to do with foundation skills as it does with world-class doctoral study. This concurs with Casey’s (2006) observation of the further refinement of knowledge-based economy discourses throughout the 2000s.

Lagging productivity is a particular concern and a keen motivator for the “Skills Strategy” (developed during the last year of Labour’s third term). The strategy argues that literacy is essential for building an effective workforce (Cabinet Business Committee, 2007; Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008). With insufficient literacy skills, these two documents aver, productivity suffers. Typifying this sentiment, the New Zealand Skills Strategy states that “low levels of literacy are attributed to relatively low productivity” (p.28). In addition, the most recent Tertiary Education Strategy, 2007-2012 (TEC, 2007), claims that raising adult workers’ foundational skills is the right response for increasing productivity (to mitigate errors and wastage, improve poor health and safety, and reverse trends of high staff turnover).

Sluggish productivity is argued to be the result of skills shortages. Other salient economy-related discourses that emerge throughout the first decade of the 2000s relate to “skill mismatch,” “skills shortages” or “skills gaps.” The 2003 Budget, for example, states the
importance of addressing labour shortages and skill shortages in critical vocations (NZ Treasury, 2003). The following year’s budget declares that employers need to fill skills’ gaps and that the education system must help produce new skills for a dynamic economy (NZ Treasury, 2004). Businesses, the 2005 Budget proclaims, need to be able to access the skills they need. Indeed, according to the Department of Labour, between 2003 and 2005, filled professional vacancies dropped from 71% to 54%, and in technical and associate professions, the rate declined from 79% to 46% (TEC, 2007). In fact, this document declares that in 2007, 14 trade occupations were facing “severe skill shortages” (p.36). What is notable then across the documents produced throughout 2000s—unlike those produced during the previous eras—is that more and more attention is paid to responding to skills shortages and to helping to bridge the so-called skills gap, (hence the rationale behind the NZ Skills Strategy). It is this skills mismatch that is used to justify the effort to “achieve a good match between the skills demanded in the labour market and those delivered via education and training” (NZ Treasury, 2002).

5.2.3 A lack of national unity and a need for societal improvement.

Articulated issues are not limited to concerns of the economy. (Nor were they in previous documents). Rather, social concerns are placed alongside economic ones. The STEP 2003 exemplifies this dual focus. TEC’s five main stated goals for this three-year period were: economic transformation, social development, Māori development and advancement, environmental sustainability, infrastructural development and innovation (TEC, 2003). Social issues indeed appear to be a worrisome concern for government. This is a sentiment that is espoused throughout all policy documents I examined.

National unity is a principal social issue one can glean from policy documents. For example, issues of “national identity” permeate through a number of documents (NZ Government, 2002; NZ Treasury, 2000, 2002, 2007; TEC, 2007). The latest TES, for example, encourages the inclusion of all New Zealanders in “(our) development as a prosperous and confident nation” (TEC, p.9). National success and the country’s well-being
as a whole are closely connected to improving education and training: “New Zealand’s future depends on the skills of our people; today’s young people are tomorrow’s leaders and thinkers” (NZ Treasury, 2001, p. 7). In another example, the 2002 Budget prioritizes developing a modern and cohesive society. This budget document similarly affirms that the future of the nation’s well-being depends on New Zealand collectively becoming a learning nation (NZ Treasury, 2002).

Many texts also reflect a concern for cultural and social cohesion and inclusion. A term reiterated throughout many of these documents is the “knowledge society” (see Codd, 2002; NZ Ministry of Education, 2001b; Peters; 2001). In the first Tertiary Education Strategy document, for example, there is specific mention of the importance of social development for the knowledge society and for an inclusive economy (TEC, 2002). The word “social” appears 46 times in this document, as an adjective connected to a variety of nouns: as in, “social development,” “social capability,” “social well-being,” “social change,” “social indicators,” “social and environmental,” “social interaction,” “social progress,” “social future,” “social dimension,” and “social needs!” In the STEP document, the Tertiary Education Commission lauds literacy as the foundation for prosperity and inclusion (TEC, 2005). This document additionally justifies funding literacy to help people “participate in society” as part of a broader vision for New Zealand to be “more innovative, more skilled, more productive, more prosperous, and with increased overall wellbeing” (TEC, 2005, p. 3).

These all represent changes in discourse from documents published during the 1980s and 1990s where social concerns were voiced but did not take such centre stage and were not connected to so many different ideas.

In keeping with inclusive liberal tenets, the government promotes literacy and skills in their documents for the economy as well as for the society; for life and work; for the individual as well as for community; and for company as well as nation. These myriad concerns are captured well in the following quote taken from the Budget speech in 2003:

Mr Speaker, the greatest need that businesses have is for skilled and well-trained employees. Labour is now the most important input in any modern
economy and the quality and quantity of skills demanded continue to rise. Educating for a successful, innovative economy is, therefore, a crucial theme of Budget 2003. But education is also about the development of each individual to his or her full potential and about the pursuit of values that cannot be expressed in purely monetary terms (NZ Treasury, 2003, p.2).

In the Adult Literacy Strategy, low literacy is considered a policy issue owing to its declared pernicious effects on the individual and her family, such as lower pay, poor health, lower home ownership, passing on low skills to children etc. (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a). As a corollary, higher literacy is equated with higher earnings, community involvement and an increased sense of belonging (NZ Ministry of Education). Lower literacy and skills become policy concerns out of a declared desire for greater equity; for example, to see more people “sharing in the wealth that we create” (NZ Treasury, 2007). Indeed, literacy is promoted specifically for social mobility and for addressing poverty and inequality. As Casey (2006) observes, “new” Labour in New Zealand (like its British counterpart) sought to return to a pre-1980s of balancing social and economic concerns, attempting to hold efficiency and equity in balance.

**Targeting equity.** Similar to the governments of the 1980s and 1990s, the NZ government of the first decade of the 2000s identified certain demographic groups as causing chief concern in terms of their low levels of literacy. Target groups mentioned in the ALS include, for example: families, prison-inmates, job seekers—especially Māori and Pasifika (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a). One new target group that is identified alongside “baby boomers” and other older workers is the “baby blip generation,” a term that refers to those born in the late 1980s and early 1990s when there was a spike in the number of births (TEC, 2007). Another group of importance in regards to literacy are immigrants, mentioned in many of the documents. This presents a contrast with target groups of earlier documents, during which time immigrants would have been mostly English speaking or coming from the Pacific Islands. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the country experienced
a sizable intake of Asian immigrants. Notwithstanding the inclusion of these aforementioned demographic groups, there are four groups that are repeatedly mentioned across a number of government documents as needing particular help in boosting their skill/literacy levels and social/economic position and inclusion: Pasifika, Māori, those of low socio-economic status, and those with disabilities (TEC, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007).

Māori and Pasifika are the two principal groups of concern in terms of literacy levels. This is mainly due to the low scores obtained by these two demographics in the IALS and ALL. (For comparative data on educational attainment, see Appendix C). As a Ministry of Education Report notes, while 43% of Pakeha were at levels 1 and 2 in IALS, the percentages were 71% and 76% for Māori and Pasifika respectively (NZ Ministry of Education, 2005). In addition, in the NZ Skills Strategy Māori are identified as needing to “develop a strong base of literacy skills” (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008, p.16). In this 42-page document, Māori were mentioned 50 times and Pasifika 46 times (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008). Generally, both Māori and Pasifika are placed together as demographic groups requiring attention: first, to increase their skills; and, second, to improve the existing education system so it becomes more equitable for them.

While not a particular demographic, the group that is given the most attention are individuals in the workplace. This focus started with the Adult Literacy Strategy, which concentrated “especially [on] those in low-skilled employment” (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a, p.14.). This is in some senses not surprising given the identified skills shortage and historically low unemployment rate. Indeed, during the first decade of the 21st Century the national unemployment rate was at least 5-7 percentage points lower than it was in the 1980s or 1990s. (By 2007-2008, the official unemployment rate was the lowest in the OECD at less than 4%, Withers, 2008). Furthermore, almost 50% of those identified in the ALL

59 9% of New Zealanders identified themselves as “Asian” in the previous census held in 2006. The number in 2010 is thought to be a few percentage points higher.

60 Pakeha is a term used by everyone in New Zealand to refer to white New Zealanders. It is generally considered a neutral term.
survey at literacy levels 1 and 2 were in employment (Satherly & Lawes, 2008).

5.2.4 **A post-compulsory education system deficient in its capacity and quality.** The final “problem” I have identified as articulated in these policy documents has to do with the educational system’s response to fixing the perceived and articulated economic and social problems. In effect, documents describe the post-compulsory adult education and training system as deficient in its ability to provide the skills necessary for New Zealand’s success. The government continues to view quality and provision as inadequate on a number of different levels. For example, the main goals laid out in the Adult Literacy Strategy in 2001 were:

- The professionalization of adult literacy teaching
- The training of current providers
- The development of qualifications
- The production of quality resources
- An assessment system to measure and report literacy gains; and
- Investment in staff development (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a).

An improvement is called for in teaching and standards, which translates into a dual focus on professionalization and outcomes. A 2001 Ministry of Education document, *Moving forward: Skills for the knowledge economy*, observed that much of the adult literacy sector was characterized by short-term contracts, minimal job security no real career path, no qualifications (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001b). The problem, the Adult Literacy Strategy (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a) notes, is a reliance on community volunteers. Indeed, while there was widespread educational reform subsequent to the 1989 Education Act, the community sector, or Adult and Community Education (ACE), had generally been left intact (see also Slater, 2009).

5.2.5 **Conclusions.** The policy issues identified and articulated in these documents include: literacy and skills shortages; inadequate social and economic inclusion; a concern
for (re) building national strength (in a renewed nationalism of sorts); and, an overall desire “to build and sustain an inclusive and vibrant society and prosperous economy” for supporting New Zealand’s economic growth, innovation, productivity and living standards (TEC, 2005, p.3). Present is a metaphor of construction, of creation, of solidifying the foundations of New Zealand society and developing a robust society and economy.

The list of the TES 2002-2007 strategies provides insight into these policy priorities (TEC, 2002):

- **Strategy One** – Strengthen System Capability and Quality
- **Strategy Two** – Te Rautaki Mātauranga Māori – Contribute to the Achievement of Māori Development Aspirations
- **Strategy Three** – Raise Foundation Skills so that all People can Participate in our Knowledge Society
- **Strategy Four** – Develop the Skills New Zealanders need for our Knowledge Society
- **Strategy Five** – Educate for Pacific Peoples’ Development and Success
- **Strategy Six** – Strengthen Research, Knowledge Creation and Uptake for our Knowledge Society

Indeed, government documents on post-compulsory education and training enumerate many social and economic issues to which a further reformed tertiary education system is put forward as the answer. Literacy becomes a central part of this increasing role for education and training, and becomes enmeshed in a formal tertiary education system as the decade progresses.

### 5.3 Approaches to Policy Problem(s)

The principal response to the concerns mentioned in section 5.2 is a new-and-improved post-compulsory education system. This is a similar approach to that advanced during the previous era, only this time literacy becomes part of the core mandate. In this vision to restore and bolster New Zealand’s economy and strengthen national unity, the government
focuses on ensuring increased access to post-compulsory education and improvements in quality through centralization, oversight, assessment, standardization, accountability, diversification, and collaboration. The government also shows a marked concern for workplace and work-based literacy in both text and funding.

**5.3.1 The rise of literacy as the policy answer to public policy problems.**

Just as literacy is constructed as the problem, it is also promoted as the solution. Literacy, in fact, can be considered the policy approach to all educational problems and is articulated as an “urgent priority” (Cabinet Business Committee, 2007; Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008; TEC, 2007). It is conceived as a *sine qua non* of both further education and training, and, as the STEP 2005 states, of “long-term economic independence and well-being” (TEC, p.31). The overall TEC agenda is to increase tertiary participation and literacy levels (TEC). Similarly, the number one priority of the New Zealand Skills Strategy (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008) is to “increase LLN [language, literacy and numeracy] skills of the workforce” (p.14). This priority includes: “increasing literacy, language and numeracy learning opportunities, and the quality and relevance of those learning opportunities...[a] focus on ensuring New Zealanders have at least a foundation of LLN” (p.14) ; “creating more spaces in workplace, communities and institutions [for literacy];” and, increasing workforce and employer awareness of the benefits of improved literacy, language and numeracy, programme participation (p.9). There are also more specific goals, such as increasing the numbers of individuals at IALS level 4 and 5 by 25% (p.9). In this document, literacy is part of an overall agenda to develop *all* skills, such as staff development, relationship building, coaching, leadership and technical skills (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum).

In a number of documents, we can see literacy becoming a major government strategy. Indeed, it is not coincidental that the metaphor used in the beginning of the first TES (TEC, 2002) is a military strategy, communicating that raising the education levels of adult New Zealanders is similar to a desired military objective. The government, in effect, committed itself to fighting a war against low education, low skills, and low literacy.
5.3.2 Budgetary responses to a literacy agenda: exploring the funding landscape.

“Whatever the grand theory, those who control the finance, control the enterprise” (Snook, 1991, p.622)

The solution of literacy-as-social-policy moved beyond merely the discursive. Following the publication of the ALS, the government took to heart its fundamental recommendation for increased literacy-specific funding. General adult literacy funding appeared in most budgets from 2000-2008. For example, in 2001, $18 million (out of $215 million for post-compulsory education) was allotted to advance the adult literacy strategy; a further $25 million was designated to be spent on adult literacy over a four year period starting in 2003; and, in 2006 $33.5 million was committed to funding literacy, language and numeracy specifically. Financial support for literacy development includes measures specific to improving capability, relevance and quality. The 2007 Budget, for example, notes its concern for the “quality and relevance of tertiary education,” making available $35 million for supporting the strategic change of Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) and Wānanga as part of a “quality reinvestment programme.” The government also allots money to increasing the number of literacy specialists (NZ Treasury, 2000). There is a notable trend of allocating funds to reviewing best assessment practices and to literacy testing. An example of this is money that was put aside in 2003 to enable the country to conduct ALL (NZ Treasury, 2003). Furthermore, in response to a perceived need to support meaningful assessment, in the 2007 Budget it is announced that there would be $7.5 million over four years, and $2.2 million of capital funding over two years put towards funding and developing a national assessment tool for adult literacy, numeracy and language (NZ Treasury, 2007). In adopting IALS’ definition of adult literacy, it is certain that the aforementioned amounts represent just a fraction of monies apportioned to programmes connected to adult literacy.

There are particular areas into which funding was funnelled, revealing the overall government priorities. Many of these areas centre on workplace and industry training. Table
provides us with a general sense of the state of funding in adult literacy over the 5th Labour government’s nine-year term:

**Table 1: Funding Allocation for Adult Literacy, 2000-2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Amount &amp; type of funding over four years</th>
<th>Total expend. on other areas (over 4 yrs)</th>
<th>Total Budget (billions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$66 million: to industry training and apprenticeships</td>
<td>$300 million to education</td>
<td>$36.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$56 million: to industry training</td>
<td>$467 million to education</td>
<td>$38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>$41 million: to apprenticeship programmes; $8 million: to implement the adult literacy strategy</td>
<td>$400 to tertiary ed. &amp; skills dev. alone</td>
<td>$39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$84 million: to strengthen the interface between industry and the education sector</td>
<td>$400 million to new school properties</td>
<td>$48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>7.7% funding increase to those ITOs that cover 71% of trainees; $21.5 million: for polytechnics to develop industry engagement plans (over four years)</td>
<td>$2 billion to education</td>
<td>$49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$44.6 million: for skill development through additional industry training places, modern apprenticeships, and workplace numeracy and literacy programmes</td>
<td>$1.4 billion to education</td>
<td>$52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$58 million: for training for industry; $33.5 million: to increase the literacy, language and numeracy skills of low-skilled employees; $34.4 million: to fund an additional 3,000 Modern Apprenticeships; $15.6 million: to the Industry Training Fund</td>
<td>$527.8 million to schools:</td>
<td>$54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$69 million: for increasing participation in Industry Training</td>
<td>$129 million to support universities to strengthen international competitiveness.</td>
<td>$57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$168 million: to the NZ skills strategy to lift literacy, language and numeracy skills of New Zealand workers to create a more educated, productive workforce</td>
<td>$750 million to the health sector over one year</td>
<td>$59.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above table shows the proportion of budgetary spending allocated to adult literacy-related activities. We can see large pots of funding put aside in 2000, 2006 and 2008, and a consistent amount allocated each year from 2000. For a comparison, in the 1997 Budget only $4 million is allotted specifically to post-compulsory education and $14 million to the Employment Strategy (none of which included provisions for training or education, at least
according to the budget document, NZ Treasury, 1997). In addition, the 1998 and 1999 budgets (NZ Treasury, 1998, 1999) make no specific mention of funding directed to post-compulsory education except for a statement in the 1999 Budget statement commenting that the proposed reduction in taxes would “improve incentives for individuals to undertake education and training” (NZ Treasury, 1999). While we see increased attention and funding over the following decade, the amount still trails behind the amount given to compulsory schooling and is a tiny fraction of the monies given to the health sector and the overall budget.

The state of funding in 2008. The funding mechanism of literacy was first laid out in Section 159L of the Education Act 1989 (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989). It then shifted with ensuing Act amendments. What was a definitive funding shift in New Zealand under the latest Labour government was a move away from a demand-driven funding model (that focused on participation and competition between providers), to an investment-led approach that promotes collaboration between providers, and quality, relevance and access of provision (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008a). A recent report written for the OECD (NZ Ministry of Education, 2006) also notes the shift in the sector from funding the demand side (e.g., emphasis on student choice, which was popular under the National governments of the 1990s) to the supply side, where funding is based around providers meeting the “nation’s needs” (p.17). Regulatory changes also occurred, including the introduction of charters and profiles, which “set the strategic direction for each Tertiary Education Organization (TEO) and its funding agreement with the Crown” (NZ Ministry of Education, 2006). These were more recently replaced by Investment Plans. What these two changes suggest is a dual move towards further centralized control (with the introduction of charters and profiles), on the one hand, and increased flexibility in funding and an emphasis on collaborative and less competitive funding, on the other. The 5th Labour government prided itself on its difference to the previous National government, who they accuse of “exclusively raising participation at the least cost” (NZ Ministry of Education, 2006, p.29). Yet, while the government is arguably
more generous in its funding of adult literacy programmes than the government that came before it, rhetoric around wanting to save money still exists. The 2007 Budget, for example, declares that there should be “better value for money for taxpayers and students” and proposed tax measures to improve New Zealand’s access to worldwide labour, skills, and capital.

It is not possible to adequately compare rates of funding to literacy-related programmes in recent years compared to the two decades that came before it. Indeed, a quote from a 2008 country report on adult learning, published for Confintea V and by the NZ Ministry of Education, states, “it has not been possible to find a reliable source of funding data across the LLN sector to show the changes in funding since 1997” (2008, p.27). Furthermore, it is near impossible to ascertain exactly which funding ends up where. While I am unable to offer a thorough assessment of the funding situation, I have provided a table below, which offers more details on the funding that was available to various institutions in 2008. The table gives an overview of the funding terrain that organizations had to manoeuvre (at the time of research) and further highlights government priorities. (Grants range anywhere from $1,000 NZD to $1,000,000 NZD in support).61

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61 Note that not all organizations would qualify for these grants.
The three main pools of funding to which organizations applied in 2008 are the Workplace Literacy Fund, Foundation Learning Pool and Adult and Community Education (ACE). Total Adult and Community Education funding for 2008/2009 was $43.87 million.

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62 This refers to funding made available to help ITOs to incorporate foundational skills components into vocational training courses and programmes. It is led by ITOs, which purchase appropriate off-site training in ITPs and PTEs and assess trainees in the workplace. Industry contributes on average 25% of the cost of training. By 2008, initiatives were in place for most ITOs to integrate literacy, numeracy and language into their training.

63 Training Opportunities programmes are for those over the age of 18 who are unemployed and have low educational achievement. They provide foundation and vocational skills training at levels 1 to 3 on the qualifications register. Programmes are for a minimum of 30 hours per week and are free to the learner, transport costs are covered and the recipient remains eligible for the unemployment benefit. The literacy focus was being strengthened in 2008.
Schools receive approximately $22.0 million and Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) nearly $18 million from ACE. REAP (Rural Education Activities Programme) and Other Tertiary Education Providers (OTEPI) receive most, if not all, their funding from the ACE funding pool. In fact, the two largest OTEPI providers (Literacy Aotearoa and ESOL Home Tutors) receive nearly 70% of the ACE funding (see Ministry of Education, 2008a).

Funding specific to Literacy, Language and Numeracy is outlined in the following table:

**Table 3: Funding Streams to Adult Literacy in 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Stream</th>
<th>Amount in millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Literacy Fund</td>
<td>$11.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Learning Pool</td>
<td>$21.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Levy</td>
<td>$0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$32.07</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Specific funds that recently became available are the Workplace Literacy Fund, established in 2001 for employees to get up-to-date on their language and learning skills; the Foundational Learning Pool, supplying funding for literacy, language and numeracy; and, funding which has also been made available to help institutions and organizations adhere to the new FLQA requirements. Furthermore, as we saw in Table 1, the government approved an additional $168 million over four years to implement a suite of initiatives to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of New Zealanders (NZ Treasury, 2008). If not for the election of the opposition in 2008, and concurrent world economic crisis, this would have seen the annual funding for specific LLN initiatives rise to $76.50 million by 2011/12, up from $32 million (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008a).

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64 In addition, a Community Learning Aotearoa New Zealand (CLANZ) fund is available for community groups; and, many organizations receive money from a variety of other government departments and sources (see NZ Ministry of Ed., 2008a).
The aforementioned tables and descriptions illustrate the complexity of the funding landscape through which organizations must manoeuvre in order to obtain financial support. (Some of the impact of this is discussed later in the thesis). Furthermore, they demonstrate the existence of material help to developing a literacy agenda. I examine the foci of these priorities below.

5.3.3 Further understanding government priorities: workplace programmes for growing the economy.

“Our tertiary institutions foster our future potential; our workplaces produce our daily bread.” (NZ Treasury, 2008, n.p.)

Not all types of literacy or foundational learning programmes were morally or financially supported in the effort to raise literacy levels for economic and social improvement. Quite specifically, the focus has been on workplace and work-based literacy.

In effect, the period from 1999-2008 was characterized by a workplace literacy strategy. Industry training, and modern apprentices, became the site of many literacy initiatives. While the documents analyzed repeatedly mention community literacy and Adult and Community Education (ACE), primacy is given to workplace literacy. This support of workplace literacy above other types of programmes began with the Adult Literacy Strategy (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a) which mentions workplaces as a first port of call for literacy training followed by community and tertiary institutions. And, since 2001, the Workplace Literacy Fund has subsidized up to 85% of the cost of workplace programmes, for “employees to gain work-related literacy skills” (Gray & Sutton, 2007, p.1), if the employer makes up the remainder of the contribution. For the fifth Labour government, the workplace initiative culminated in the New Zealand Skills Strategy discussion document launched on 29 April 2008. The New Zealand Skills Strategy propelled workforce literacy into the forefront of the government policy agenda. The strategy has as its number one goal the “effective utilization and retention of skills to transform work and workplaces” (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008, p.10). And, at the heart of realizing this goal, is the intention to
firstly “increase literacy, numeracy and language skills of the workforce” (p.27). The document outlining this strategy states that “it is proposed that the core focus of the Skills Strategy be on the existing workforce, with actions that have immediate impact as well as longer-term actions through to 2020 and beyond” (Cabinet Business Committee, 2007, p.1). This is justified since “…80% of the 2020 workforce is in work now” (p.3). “The skills strategy,” the document also notes, “will deliver a unified approach to ensure New Zealand individuals and organizations are able to develop and use the skills needed in the workplaces of the future” (p.10).

There are many other examples of a workplace and labour market emphasis, and of discourse around the importance of workplaces as providers of literacy programmes and foundational skills. For example, TEC remarks on having employed a Literacy and Numeracy Employer Advisor appointed to work with employers to advise on accessing literacy and numeracy support for their employees, or for developing employers’ own literacy and numeracy initiatives (TEC, 2002). The workplace emphasis extends to institutions, especially polytechnics and PTEs, in a concern for better addressing industry and overall labour-market needs. The Skills Strategy details its goal of creating a better match between workers’ skills and industry and regional needs. This requires developing skill plans for priority industries and regions. TEC, in particular, draws attention to the issue of regional responsiveness in an effort to make polytechnics more responsive to the needs of the community around them. This support of regional responsiveness is additionally reflected in specialized funds, which have been allotted to help institutions meet this imposed regional demand.

One trend in these documents is a focus on “embedded literacy,” referring to the practice of integrating literacy and numeracy instruction into vocational subject areas. Embedded literacy is understood as a way to help make literacy and foundational programmes more relevant. The Skills Strategy (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008) and the Learning for Living documents (e.g., NZ Ministry of Education, 2005), for example, cite relevant research to promote the practice of literacy skills being embedded and
contextualized in vocational and workplace training. In fact, since reforms in the mid-late 2000s, many vocational courses are required to contain explicit literacy and numeracy components, since it is asserted that “literacy [is] developed more effectively in contexts that have meaning and purpose” (p.7). This sentiment mirrors that of the OECD, who has claimed that adult literacy is contingent on social context, and exists for personal, economic and social purposes (see section 2.2.2).

Contextualizing literacy, or fitting it into existing vocational courses, is part of a broader government demand for literacy and education to demonstrate relevance—to regions, industries, and above all, for the economy. In fact, the Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities was created so that the Tertiary Education Commission could:

make an assessment of strategic relevance with regard to courses, programmes and providers. Those that cannot demonstrate strategic relevance will not be funded. This will become apparent in the short term for private training establishments. Overall funding to private training establishments will be capped next year with new courses, programmes and providers being funded from a strategic pool within the overall cap (NZ Treasury, 2002, p.9).

STEP 2005 -2007 directly states, for instance, “less public money [will] be spent on courses with low relevance and value to the economy” (TEC, 2005, p.11). And, in another section of the document, the government avows that there will be no funding for programmes with relatively poor employment outcomes and those that solely meet personal interests (TEC, 2005). This practice supports Casey’s (2006) observations of, a. the further refinement of knowledge-based economy discourses throughout the 2000s, and b. The connection of knowledge-based economy discourses with discourses focused on community-responsive educational services and an expansion of workplace education.

5.3.4 Ensuring and accounting for improvements in ‘quality’ in literacy programmes. The concern for relevance is closely related to the preoccupation with quality. Indeed, “quality” and “relevance” are often mentioned side-by-side. As noted in the 2005 Budget, the government had a “determination to drive towards a higher level of quality
and relevance in our post-compulsory sector [so to deliver]...high quality education services” (NZ Treasury, 2005, p.5). Furthermore, in the Skills Strategy the government makes explicit its goal “[to increase] the number of literacy, language and numeracy learning opportunities available in a range of contexts and increasing the quality and relevance of these opportunities” (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008, p.56).

The word quality is also used in reference to improving provision, capability, assessment, and outcomes. It is present in a relatively new discourse of professionalization (that is, professional development and qualifications). This discourse on professionalization was largely absent in documents published on post-compulsory education and training in the 1980s and 1990s. In the ALS, for example, highly skilled individuals and quality programmes are connected to teaching qualifications, best practice examples, and assessment of learners (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a). It was in the ALS that the government laid out its main goals for supporting the development of adult literacy in the country. These were:

1. The professionalization of adult literacy teaching
2. The training of current providers
3. The development of qualifications
4. The production of quality resources
5. An assessment system to measure and report literacy gains, and,
6. Investment in staff development.

As this list illustrates, according to the government ensuring quality requires improving both teachers and programmes. This translates into a dual focus on professionalization and outcomes.

Assessment and outcomes as tools for improving quality. The government values improved outcomes and assessment of learners (see NZ Treasury, 2006, 2007, 2008). This is evidenced, for example, by the funding of an assessment tool to help measure literacy outcomes. The development of this tool was put out to tender. As of late 2009, it appeared
that the instrument chosen would be one based on AssTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning), a computer-based literacy and numeracy assessment tool, created by a University of Auckland professor, that has been utilized in primary and high schools for a few years.\[^{65}\]

The “progressions” (Foundational Learning Progressions) are also an example of an attempt to classify literacy skills. They provide an aid to instructors in the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. While explicitly not an assessment tool or curriculum (as the document notes), the progressions are fomented as an instrument to inspire course and programme planning, and to provide useful information on how activities for learners should progress (TEC, 2008).\[^{66}\] The purpose of the progressions is to: “identify a common sequence of knowledge and skills that an adult needs to develop in order to reach foundation level competence in these areas” (NZ Ministry of Education, 2005, p.3).

**Developing teacher credentials.** In addition to demanding increased quality from students, demonstrated through assessment, there is a parallel policy emphasis on improving quality from educational staff and educators. For example, efforts to improve quality in the NZ Skills Strategy include:

- Increasing “management and leadership capability in organizations to better develop and use skills” (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008, p.42);
- Developing the “capacity of firms to support workers to develop skills” (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum);

\[^{65}\] At the time of research, this tool was still in development. I re-visit the perceptions of assessment, and an assessment tool, in Chapter 7 when I discuss the context of perceived policy practices and outcomes.

\[^{66}\] There are four areas in the Foundational Learning Progressions: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and there are between 4-6 subsections within each general area (e.g., vocabulary progression, listening critically progression, comprehension progression etc). Within each subsection there are, again, 4-6 progressions along which a learner would ostensibly progress—e.g., in the interactive speaking progression, learners at the first level would be able to “respond to and use simple formulaic expressions in spoken language” (p.14), whereas learners at the fourth level would be able to demonstrate a wide variety of competencies in speaking. The information is listed in the order in which various materials should be taught, according to the authors of the document. It is assumed, then, that learners who have only demonstrated competency in the first progression in a category should not be then expected to get to the fifth level without passing through progressions 2, 3 and 4.
Increasing delivery of courses;
Developing resources appropriate to the social, cultural vocational context; and,
Increasing the number of staff who are: suitably qualified, undertake PD, have relevant experience, and have, or are working towards, qualifications (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum)

The most recent policy development is the creation of qualifications for adult literacy teachers, which emerged out of a general concern with professionalization. To this end, in 2006 the government allocated $7.7 million over four years to provide 200 additional study grants so to increase the number of fully qualified adult literacy tutors (NZ Treasury, 2006). The NZ Certificate of Adult Literacy Education (NCALE) General and NCALE vocational are qualifications considered comparable to “advanced trades, technical and business qualifications” (NZQA, n.d). These were first introduced in 2007. Other professional development programmes include the Ministry of Education’s “Learning for Living” project which led to the offering of workshops and courses to practitioners, and also other professional development opportunities made available through ALPA, the Adult Literacy Practitioners’ Association, an association created for those in the field to develop networking and PD opportunities (see, NZ Ministry of Education, 2005).

Quality assurance. “Quality assurance” continues to be the language of choice as a policy solution for correcting perceived deficits in determining outcomes. The Ministry of Education argued back in 2001 that government funding should be contingent on providers meeting quality requirements and redoubling monitoring and evaluation (2001a). The Skills Strategy document calls for the undertaking of “a targeted review of the qualifications system, focusing on diploma and certificate levels” (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008, p.45).

Discourse around “standards” persists. Starting with the ALS, there is an espoused desire to develop standards linked to the NZQA, specifically for foundation and literacy courses. This desire eventually resulted in the formation of the FLQA, which was to act as a counterpart to the NZQA (while still administered through the NZQA), and which was
directed specifically to foundational learning in ITPs, PTEs, Wānanga and the ACE sector (NZQA, 2007). The Foundation Learning Quality Assurance (FLQA) was developed by the NZQA in 2006 and instituted from 2007 onwards. It proclaims itself as a way to integrate foundation, bridging and standalone programmes into the NZQA framework, promoting unity and further cohesion in the system. It is a further extension of the NZQA into ACE, which began in 2005 with audits and quality reviews required of this previously exempt sector (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008a). The FLQA, along with the previously formed Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITPQ), incorporates even more institutions and programmes into the NZQA. This contributes to the mission of the Education Act of 1989, which stipulates that all tertiary education, except for university education, fall under the jurisdiction of NZQA. The NZQA was first directly connected to the Tertiary Education Strategy in 2003. This gave the qualifications authority jurisdiction over quality in tertiary institutions as established by the Tertiary Reform Amendment Act of 2002. Both the TES (TEC, 2005, 2007) and FLQA (NZQA, 2007) reflect the government’s resolve to make greater use of the NZQA in the non-compulsory schooling sector. This finding of an increased focus on quality assurance resonates closely with Zepke’s (2009) conclusions in regards to the NZQA over the first decade of the 21st century. Zepke claims that, instead of reversing the trends of the previous decades of quality assurance and accountability, there has been a pronounced increase in the focus on continuous improvement in quality.

In sum, discourses of quality are embedded in discourses of “professionalization” and of “assessment,” “standards,” “outcomes,” “relevance,” “qualifications” and “best practices.” This is seen in the ALS’ priorities of:

- A skilled teaching workforce
- Relevant qualifications for adult literacy teachers
- Incentives to attract and retain high quality teachers
- Quality teaching resources
• Models of best practice programmes
• Measures of learners’ level of literacy and learning achievement
• Commitment to the professionalization of adult literacy teaching
• Training current providers
• Development of adult literacy teaching qualifications
• Production of quality resources
• Development of an assessment system to measure and report literacy gains
• Enabling providers to invest in staff development

(NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 10).

Centralization and regulation. Both the NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission represent the ultimate in centralization, coordination and regulation. Indeed, by including everything to do with non-compulsory schooling under one banner, the TEC reflects an earlier championed idea expounded in the Learning for Life reports (NZ Dept. of Education, 1989a, 1989b) for “a connected tertiary education system” (NZ Dept. of Education, 19891, p.17); and, the TES specifically promotes a more coordinated approach to policy (see, e.g., TEC, 2002). Over the past decade, both the NZQA and TEC expanded their mandate, incorporating non-compulsory adult education under their umbrellas. As Nick Zepke (2009) explains,

Since 1999, the post-school sector in Aotearoa/New Zealand has embraced all government-funded provision of adult lifelong education in what is known as tertiary education. All tertiary education provision must meet most of the same policy priorities, abide by the same accountability regimes and operate on similar funding formulae as other actors in the sector (p.752).

Clearly, over the first decade of the 21st Century the government sought to manage, contain, coordinate, regulate and centralize adult literacy in the country.
5.3.5 Discourses of collaboration and diversity. Centralized regulation is only part of the explanation for what happened to the management of adult literacy under the Labour government’s watch. Indeed, calls for increased centralized regulation in numerous policy documents are coupled with discourses of collaboration, consultation and continued emphases placed on autonomy, flexibility and diversity.

“Collaboration” and “partnerships” are promoted as the preferred method to enacting reform to the post-secondary education system. For example, in putting forth a vision of adult literacy improvement in the country, the ALS declares a need for people to come together, so that government, employers, and providers work collectively to help make the literacy strategy a reality (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a). Partnerships are stressed as particularly important; in the ALS, the term “partnerships” is uttered several times in reference to community, providers, government agencies, institutions, workplaces, iwi, and other funders, who are all encouraged to collaborate and work together. Published seven years later, the NZ Skills Strategy continues to reiterate its concern with “collaboration” and “partners,” with the latter uttered most frequently in conjunction with the modifier “social.” For example, one of the declared objectives, in helping to execute the national skills strategy, is to “partner firms with tertiary organizations and others to enhance management and leadership skills” (Cabinet Business Committee, 2007, p.2). This document also asserts that “partnerships are a new way of approaching the development of literacy programmes in the workplace” (p.1) and the “best ways of improving foundation skills in the workplace” (p.2).

In the 2002 Tertiary Education Strategy (TEC, 2002) an array of desired partnerships are further elucidated as essential to improving the education system; in fact, there are 39 mentions of partner or partnerships, with references to “treaty partners,” “government partners,” “investment partners,” “collaborative partners,” “genuine partners,” “research

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67 The best approximation for an English translation of iwi is Māori “tribe.” See Appendix B.

68 Treaty partners refer to the Crown (and all associated ministries acting on behalf of the government) and Māori. These were the two signatories of the original Treaty of Waitangi document.
partners,” and, endorsement of increased partnership among different groups in general. This finding concurs with Strathdee’s (2009) assertions that the Tertiary Education Strategy strongly emphasizes partnerships, collaborative aspirations and civil society sensibilities alongside its concern for skills for a knowledge-based, globalizing economy.

Collaboration and partnerships are part of a broader concern for representation. This is manifest in discourses around consultation. The TEC (2002, 2003), for example, explicitly states that its strategy is not a “top-down approach” but a collaboratively crafted framework for thinking about how to improve tertiary education. The first tertiary education commission document notes, for example, that 121 submissions were received and 50 workshops were given prior to preparing the first tertiary strategy and to creating TEAC and TEC (TEC, 2002). An expressed concern with consultation and representation can be seen as part of the government’s effort for improved accountability to specified groups alongside the demand for greater accountability from others. This fact is reflected in the special funds and committees established for Māori and Pacific peoples, such as The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs Pacific Modern Apprenticeship Action Campaign or the Māori Working Party who created the MLS (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001). The focus on inclusion and collaboration is also reflected in the proposals put forward in the budget to remove barriers of entry for particular target groups, and to strengthen the capacity of Māori and Pacific Island communities through education (NZ Treasury, 2000). The government also allotted new funding to this cause, such as $19 million to improving educational outcomes for Māori and Pacific peoples (NZ Treasury).

At the same time, the discourse of consultation and representation is also one of apportioning greater responsibility to non-government actors in attempts to improve the post-compulsory education system. The 2002 Tertiary Education Strategy remarks, “[you] cannot rely on Government alone to make the difference” (TEC, 2002, p.10). Collaboration can thus also be understood as a way for the Labour government to assign greater responsibility.
5.4 Conclusions

Policy texts reflect priorities, values and intent. In this and the previous chapter, I highlighted the values, intents and priorities of government as they were manifested through key discourses in post-secondary, and subsequently adult literacy, policy. Discourses around which concerns (and problems) were constructed, such as the knowledge economy, skills shortages, labour-market gaps, inequality between different social groups, and generally an inadequate post-secondary system for addressing these issues. And, discourses, too, around which solutions were articulated, including system expansion, access, targeting, quality assurance, accountability, privatization, professionalization, collaboration, centralization, diversification, decentralization; and, most recently, literacy. Literacy, and particularly literacy for the workplace, has been advanced as both a policy problem and central policy solution. To conclude this chapter, I synthesize the main findings as they relate to the scope, nature, and characteristics of policy in adult literacy as developed from 1999-2008 in consideration of the political and historical context in which adult literacy policy arose (i.e., from 1984-1999).

5.4.1 The connections among key discourses: 1984-2008. Below, I present a graph that illustrates the main conclusions of the context of policy text production based on my discursive analysis of policy documents from 1984-2008.
Figure 3: The Context of Policy Text Production
Everything red, or with a red arrow, can be considered an articulated “problem,” and anything green, a proposed “solution.” There are three main articulated problems expressed across the two and a half decades: skills, literacy, and the Tertiary Education System. First, a discourse of skills centres on two major problems, a labour-market gap and the changing economy. Second, literacy is conceived as a problem of skills and a problem for the Tertiary Education System. Third, the Tertiary Education System is conceptualized as suffering from four major problems: underdevelopment, poor quality, inaccessibility/unfairness and lack of diversification. In contrast, the “solutions” centre on skills, which ideally lead to literacy, a revised Tertiary Education System and collaboration. Solutions for improving the Tertiary Education System include collaboration, and making it larger, centralized, standardized, diversified, targeting access and increasing quality assurance through professionalization, outcomes, assessment, and accountability. The three discourses which are either new or which became more pronounced from 1999-2008 are literacy, collaboration and professionalization. The borders around these boxes have been bolded.

Further interpretation of the above figure is given below.

Adult literacy and the relationship between the two time periods. The discursive landscape of adult literacy as it stood in 2008 was built on the discursive rules and regulations established throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a period during which the New Zealand education system was radically transformed. In effect, the reforms and policies of the 1980s and 1990s created the adult literacy landscape of the 2000s. The context of policy text production illustrates a continuation of discourse from pre-literacy to post-literacy texts and policies.

Documents and policies enacted under the 5th Labour government focus on what appears, at first, to be a new topic: adult literacy and foundational skills. The spate of documents published throughout the past decade is unprecedented. However, literacy and foundational skills were incorporated into the already existing discourse of skills and tertiary education reform. It should be noted that the concern of building a knowledge economy and
promoting the economic and social/personal rationales of learning did not start with the advent of a new government.

From 1999-2008, literacy becomes intrinsically linked to the notion of higher skills, and the knowledge economy and knowledge society. Crisis discourse around skills shortages also became part of the linguistic landscape. In turn, the government legitimated workplace literacy and literacy programmes that connect more intimately to the economy. Pivotal, literacy was officially institutionalized by its incorporation into the newly formed Tertiary Education Commission. Indeed, TEC established literacy as an essential part of tertiary education, central to the government’s economic and social goals, and a policy priority within the broader Tertiary Education Strategy. Through the creation of TEC came further centralization of post-compulsory schooling, education and training. The quality framework, established under the Education Act, and enshrined through the NZQA, was spread to sectors of post-compulsory education that were previously exempt, including many literacy, foundational and industry training programmes. The discourse of quality was married with a discourse of professionalization, which had previously been unseen in adult education, but had featured quite predominantly in regards to reforming the compulsory schooling sector during the 1990s. Other changes that occurred during the first decade of the 2000s included the weakening of language around competition (which had come to dominate during the mid-late 1990s) in favour of discourses surrounding collaboration, coordination, and cohesion. There is discursive evidence of inclusive liberal sensibilities in conjunction with continued neoliberal concerns.

What Figure 3 attempts to capture, then, is the notion that PCET, and later literacy, were both promoted as promised solutions to economic and social problems. It also shows us that there are many similarities between the problems presented to the public by the 4th Labour government, which catapulted wide-scale reforms, and by the more recent Labour government. What did change are the approaches to the policy issues, and the growing role of adult literacy as a solution. The reasons for, and drivers of, policy formation in adult literacy from 1999-2008 are examined in further detail in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 6: THE CONTEXT OF POLICY INFLUENCE

DRIVERS OF ADULT LITERACY POLICY FORMATION

In the previous chapters, I highlighted the pervasive, influential discourses that accompanied the development of post-secondary, and subsequently adult literacy, policy. However, to understand the overall policy context, and indeed to make better sense of the context of policy text production, we now need to examine the context of policy influence.

The context of influence reveals the drivers of discourses. As Ball (1994) puts it, to study the context of influence is to explore the antecedents and pressures leading to the gestation of policy. This context seeks to provide answers to the how and why of policy. Specifically, studying the context of influence in adult literacy helps us to address the following questions: How did adult literacy policy develop and rise to ascendancy? Why did literacy policy take the form it did? What were the principal drivers of adult literacy policy formation in New Zealand over the first decade of the 21st Century? And, how does the context of influence reflect a possible shift in the political context and government priorities?

In this chapter, I seek to provide answers to the above questions and to better explore the reasons why the adult literacy policy terrain in 2008 became what it was. In exploring this context of influence, I turned to the insights and opinions of my participants to gauge their thoughts on policy development in adult literacy. I also relied on policy texts (mostly from the first decade of the 2000s) to help me make sense of literacy’s journey to policy prominence. Specifically, I paid attention to 5 As of analysis in document analysis and interviews, guided by associated questions:

- **Authors**: Who are the authors of influential texts, in terms of people, organizations or departments?
- **Actors (and agents)**: Who are the key actors identified by interviewees and in documents as being influential in the agenda setting process?
• **Assertions**: What assertions are made by the documents and individuals?

• **Assumptions**: What are the underlying assumptions of the documents and of interviews?

• **Agenda**: What has the agenda setting process been like (in adult literacy)? What is the agenda and how has it been executed?

To explore this fundamental narrative of adult literacy policy, I centred on the following:

i. Policy catalysts

ii. The role of government

iii. The role of social partners, interest groups and individuals

iv. Tactics of influence

Together, these elements help create a more comprehensive picture of the context of influence of adult literacy policy development.

In the context of influence, interest groups struggle over the construction of formal policy. It is in this context where key concepts and policy lexicon are developed.

Furthermore, in the examination of the context of influence we look to “establish the relationship between the properties of discourses, the person who pronounces them and the properties of the institution which authorizes him to pronounce them” (Bourdieu, 1991, p.111). There has not been one clean path to adult literacy policy, yet through analyzing documents and interview transcripts I could see the direct and indirect impact of transnational policy, key events, individuals, organizations, ideas and practices on the development of an adult literacy policy agenda.

### 6.1 Policy Catalysts

By policy catalysts, I am referring to those important events that act as windows of opportunity that enable certain policy concerns to gain traction and to enter the vocabulary of policy makers, government officials and the public at large. Previously mentioned in Chapter 3, agendas are determined by partisan shifts, shocks to a political system and by
policy entrepreneurs selling ideas to politicians that then catch on (John, 2006). We know that the development of adult literacy policy in New Zealand coincided with the election of a new government, a government whose declared mission was to redress the shocks to the politico-economic system caused by the radical policies released over the previous two decades (Casey, 2006; Kelsey, 2002). Yet, we do not know much about the detailed mechanisms by which literacy became a key “agenda” of this government. Agendas, as Levin (B. Levin, 2009) points out, are shaped by political commitments, party platforms, personal views and targets; though what determines these political priorities is not always clear. There are, as Kingdon (1984) argued, windows of opportunity that allow policy entrepreneurs and general interest groups to influence government policy. These opportunities, which are centred on a change in indicators, focusing events and crises, enable new ideas to be brought to light. I explore the key indicators, crises and focusing events as they relate to the creation of an adult literacy agenda in NZ over the first decade of this millennium.

6.1.1 The role of IALS in shaping the policy agenda. It is clear from my research that the release of the IALS results in the late-1990s served as a primary window of opportunity. Indeed, IALS can be understood as focusing event, crisis, and change in indicators. The release of the results arguably had a similar effect to the revelation of the results of the OECD-sponsored PISA test in Germany, resulting in what Steiner-Khamsi referred to as “PISA shock” (2004, 2006) since the results of this test for 15-year olds showed Germany fairing much more poorly than many other developed nations. Similarly, we can also talk about there having been an “IALS shock” in New Zealand. This “shock” created perhaps the greatest policy catalyst. According to Michael, a government bureaucrat:

*It’s all driven by IALS...absolutely that it grew out of IALS ... Nothing had ever kicked it [adult literacy policy] along in any way [before]. They [the government] never contested the IALS results or ALLs, whichever one. They believed them.*
Michael’s sentiment was reiterated throughout most of the interviews. For example, in response to my question of why literacy had come to the attention of government and business in recent years, Kevin—who had worked for many years in educational and public policy and who then worked for an interest group—remarked, “I think that...someone...had the smarts to read the IALS survey and do the thinking...I mean you’ve got 2 million people in the workforce and potentially half of them have literacy skills beneath minimum levels.” Indeed, many documents cite numbers taken from IALS in establishing a literacy imperative (e.g., NZ Ministry of Education, 2001b, 2005; TEC, 2005, 2007). For example, we are told that “just under half of working New Zealand adults do not have the literacy, numeracy, and language skills needed to improve work practices” (Workbase, 2007, p.1); and that “40% of New Zealanders do not have all the literacy and numeracy skills to cope with the demands of their jobs” (Workbase, n.d, p.2). The power of IALS is palpable. As Steiner-Khamsi reflected, “beginning in the 1990s, ranking and league tables became such important policy tools to accelerate change and innovation in educational organizations” (2004, p.210). In this case, the national and comparative results of the IALS survey appear to have resulted in a slew of policies and initiatives directed towards improving adult literacy. IALS, as Percy (2004) notes, set the terms for debate and discussion in adult education in New Zealand and effectively shifted the debate away from an illiteracy/literacy dichotomy, which is what we also saw in Chapter 2.

In creating a literacy imperative, the government relied on IALS in three main ways: First, the government drew on the IALS Level 3 threshold for literacy to claim that half the New Zealand population was deficient in literacy (i.e., ~50% of New Zealanders scored below Level 3); Second, the government drew attention specifically to the low levels of literacy among Māori and Pasifika populations (as previously mentioned, 71% and 76% of Māori and Pasifika, respectively, scored below Level 3, NZ Ministry of Education, 2005); Third, the government turned to the ALL results, partially released in 2008, which showed some improvement in numbers, to declare that their policies had resulted in substantial progress in adult literacy levels across the country (Satherly & Lawes, 2008). (For example,
the percentage of New Zealanders deemed to be at levels 1 and 2 in prose literacy dropped from 51% in IALS to 43% in ALL). As one policymaker informed me, “...I guess I’m pleased to say that results are tracking in the right direction. Results are better...it does suggest that engagement in education, you know, is taking things in the right direction...”

Furthermore, the demographic breakdown of numbers in IALS and ALL allowed government officials to argue that a correlation exists between low literacy levels and increases in immigration. This information permitted government officials to claim that the reasons why progress between the IALS and ALL had been small was due to increased immigration of people who speak first languages other than English.

We can glean three additional insights from the above findings: 1. The impact of IALS suggests that cross-country educational surveys and the OECD wield enough influence to shape government priorities and policy. 2. International ranking tables and competitions are shaped by and adapted to local (i.e., national) policy priorities. In the focus on Māori and Pasifika, for example, we see how IALS is adapted to a priority of targeted equity (as we also saw in Chapter 5). 3. Finally, these findings show how surveys like IALS are used by government to call attention to, and perhaps even manufacture, achievements on previously declared policy priorities. In other words, a positive change in indicators from one survey to the next allows the government to announce that their policy has had a beneficial effect.

6.1.2 Other focusing events. In addition to IALS, there were other events, reports and statistical data that were capitalized upon by literacy advocates to canvass widespread public and political support and awareness of adult literacy. These tools, which I discuss below, are utilized by literacy advocates to pressure government and sway public opinion. Literacy organizations, as policy entrepreneurs, have used other pivotal focusing events to help garner government support and attention, such as literacy days and weeks set aside in the calendar year. In fact, the year in which Workbase was created, 1990, was the International Year of Literacy (L. Moore, 1996). International Literacy Day, celebrated on September 08 and established by UNESCO in 1965, has also been taken up by organizations
(such as Workbase and Literacy Aotearoa) to launch particular campaigns or projects. A number of community literacy educators also mentioned Adult Learners’ Week (n.d) as the time during which their organizations launched events. Through publicizing the event, literacy promoters were sometimes personally interviewed by the local newspapers and/or radio stations. One literacy practitioner told me that a prominent Member of Parliament (MP) attended the event they had organized. Indeed, this week provides a chance for literacy organizations and educators to organize events to raise awareness not only for literacy but also for their particular programmes and organizations more specifically. I was also told of other awards, ceremonies and events that had drawn local government attention, such as student graduations, local library events, or fundraising dinners. For example, another community literacy practitioner remarked that she was interviewed in the paper following a student award ceremony at her organization.

6.1.3 A growing policy epidemic. What appears to be as equally catalytic for the development of an adult literacy agenda as the focusing events mentioned above are certain reports and government policies from the previous era. I illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5 the power of policy texts, and, in particular, the impact of policies created in the 1980s and 1990s on adult literacy policies that followed them. In many ways, it is these earlier policy texts published under the 4th Labour government that provided windows of opportunity to allow for a cascade of further policy. The Hawke Report (1988) can be considered one of the most pivotal drivers of policy formation in adult literacy. This report also built on, or at least was written in a similar vein of, other texts on reforming compulsory schooling such as the Picot report (1988). The Hawke Report then served as a catalyst for the Learning for Life: Beyond the Age of 15 documents that resulted in the Education Act, Amendment Act, Industry Training Act, and so on and so forth. In thinking about policy that was specifically termed “adult literacy” policy, we can see that the Adult Literacy Strategy in 2001 started yet another cascade of policy. The ALS was then “picked up by the overall tertiary strategy” (the TES), as a policymaker in a government department told me; and, as literacy researcher
Elise noted, literacy then “moved much more mainstream.” Bianca, a senior policy analyst at another government ministry, commented that even the newer Foundation Learning Strategy (part of the Unifying Skills Strategy) also drew heavily on the ALS. These documents, among many others, took the window of opportunity opened up by ALS to bring adult literacy further to the fore.

According to participants, policy development had not necessarily been evidence-based. Indeed, the literacy agenda was largely driven by discourse and events rather than by an accumulation of unassailable research on the benefits of adult literacy. As noted in a Ministry of Education 2001 document, “adult literacy education in New Zealand is not well informed by New Zealand research and information on adult learning, or through monitoring and evaluation of successful adult literacy programmes” (2001b, p. 18). This sentiment was expressed almost seven years later when I was talking with two senior government bureaucrats. Literacy policy, then, seems to have been more “popularity-based policy” rather than “evidence-based policy” (B. Levin, 2009).

6.2 Power: The Role of Government

In this section, I highlight the main drivers of policy in government in terms of organizations and people, drawing attention to the role of the TEC, DOL and NZQA as the forces behind adult literacy policy development in centralizing and controlling the adult literacy agenda.

6.2.1 Driving government bodies. The main government agencies involved in the development of recent adult literacy policy have been:

- Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)
- Department of Labour (DOL)
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)
- Ministry of Education (MOE)

To a lesser extent, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has also been involved.
Overall, however, the TEC and DOL stand out as the two key departments behind much recent policy, having authored most if not all pivotal documents over the past decade. Most interviewees substantiate this fact also. Specifically, the TEC (although not strictly a ministry) brought post-compulsory education under one umbrella, and has been most powerful in overseeing the funding and administration of most adult literacy programmes in New Zealand. Kevin, who works for a business lobby group commented, “I think it’s actually... one of the legacies of TEAC. You know one of the things that I think is quite innovative? To say, well, actually, it’s not just universities, it’s ITOs, it’s literacy [as well].” In addition, the DOL was the driving force behind the NZ Skills Strategy, partnering with the TEC on a number of joint concerns.

Both DOL and TEC have been dependent on the NZQA to develop assessment tools and credentials in adult literacy. And, it is the NZQA that has driven and steered concerns on assessment and accountability, placing strict quality requirements on adult literacy providers in terms of programme evaluation and professionalization of teaching staff (see NZQA, 2007). Specifically, the National Qualifications Framework, created as an outgrowth of the Education Act and operated by the NZQA, determines credentials. The NQF operates on a 10-point scale. Courses and classes deemed between level 1-3 are considered equivalent to senior secondary education or basic trades; levels 4-6 are “approximate to advanced trades, technical and business qualifications” (NZQA, n.d), and levels 7-10 are equivalent to Bachelors, Magisterial and doctoral programmes. Most adult literacy programmes fall within levels 1-6. The NQF also provides curriculum tied to “unit standards” that act as a “common qualifications currency” for students to transport between institutions (Roberts, 1997b, p.36). Adult literacy programmes administered through most institutions work with “unit standards.” This has been the case since the mid-1990s. The NZQA, then, does more than influence the adult literacy agenda; in fact, it determines the agenda.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Ministry of Education was not a key ministry or department in the development of adult literacy policy throughout the first decade of this millennium.
The Ministry grew out of the 1989 Education Act and has overseen adult education and training since its creation. And, as previously mentioned, it was behind the development of the “learning for living” professional develop programmes for literacy educators (e.g., NZ Ministry of Education, 2005). However, the Ministry of Education was not part of the discussion around developing workplace literacy or the skills strategy. For example, a number of participants noted the almost peripheral role of the Ministry of Education in the development of the workplace skills strategy. Kevin from a business lobby group observed, “you have a whole lot of agencies sitting at the table laying out, you know, this new strategy around workplace literacy and the Ministry aren’t there.” He later remarked frankly, “the MOE just has been increasingly sidelined. And so that is why everything has been moved to TEC or the DOL.” This “sidelining,” I was told by a literacy researcher, was because the Ministry “dragged its feet on a whole load of projects where it [MOE] should’ve delivered a hell of a lot faster.” Another literacy practitioner and researcher blithely stated that “they [MOE] didn’t deliver. And so key people, heads of agencies are seen as people who get things done or not;” whereas DOL and TEC “were agencies seen as groups, government departments that deliver on policy.” This is according to someone who worked for a workplace organization. The reason behind the Ministry of Education’s lack of inclusion and participation in recent policy decisions on adult literacy was perceived to do with not having recruited people with an interest in adults, but rather “[people] very much focused on the school sector,” as a long-term research and practitioner noted. Elise, another long-term researcher and practitioner, observed,

And it would be true to say that they never really recruited people with a strong vision in this [adult education] sector. And they took a while to resource it. And they haven’t had a strategy... They've done things but they've been far less important than the things that needed to be done. They put a huge amount of energy into this 'professional development'...not people with a passion or a vision... [but rather with] an expertise in early childhood in the early childhood department.

What this implies is that adult education is seen less as a ministry (of education)
concern. Furthermore, this also suggests that the ministry did not adapt to the changes that took place over the past decades to more thoroughly support education beyond compulsory schooling. In contrast, according to interviewees, the DOL and TEC stepped up their mandate in regards to the new strategy and took over the space previously filled by the Ministry of Education. With adult literacy and skills only one portfolio among many for the MOE, TEC has come to act more and more as an autonomous ministry (although, at the time of writing, it still did not legally enjoy that privilege).

6.2.2 Principal individual actors. Beyond government ministries, agencies, organizations or departments, influence in literacy policy was also concentrated in individuals. Personalities were important. Michael, a government bureaucrat, noted, “...You know how personal fires or agendas can make a difference...policy is often driven by personalities. And it hugely depends on individuals.” There were a few names that kept popping up in my interviews, including the former head of TEC, Janice Shiner, who one practitioner/researcher declared to be “the shining light,” allegedly unlike many others before her who did not really “get the issue of foundational learning.” Three other practitioners mentioned former (Labour) ministers of education Steve Maharey and Peter Mallard as being “a great support” of lifelong learning and adult literacy. Two community literacy practitioners also commented that Labour MP and (then) current party leader Phil Goff had been supportive of adult literacy. Someone working in workplace literacy even recognized one former National MP, Katherine Rich, as having understood the literacy issue.

Notwithstanding the alleged support of adult literacy by particular MPs, the trend has increasingly become for policymakers to move around from department to department with high frequency, and not to have a particular expertise in the area to which they are assigned. This is a pattern established in the mid-late 1980s, and seemingly intensified over the last two decades. Michael, who worked for a prominent government department, explained that virtually none of the policymakers, in any of the ministries, had come out of practice nor had they any previous adult education experience. He attributed this trend directly to the
neoliberal reforms of the past decades: “Rogernomics led to the idea that if you manage a pig farm you can manage [anything]... in the old days a lot of practitioners went in to the department and then Rogernomics killed that.” One of the other reported reasons for the lack of practitioners in government was, according to practitioner Elise, that educators go into adult education to teach and are concerned about being seen as “selling out” if they take up a government position. Those who work as policy wonks and bureaucrats in New Zealand are, I was informed, “former university lecturers, academics and unionists” (Kevin, who worked in business), or “MBAs and PhDs with no practical experience” (Rebecca, who worked in community literacy). It appeared that while there was a handful of individuals in government, and in a few ministries or departments, that were supporting and pushing ahead the literacy agenda, there were others who were not. They often effectively could not, given their lack of expertise and understanding. In fact, through the interviews I conducted it became increasingly apparent that policy support and enactment owed a great deal to others outside of government; to those who had the expertise and one-issue commitment: the “policy entrepreneurs,” a topic to which we now turn.

6.3 Influence: Policy Entrepreneurs

While various actors in government might be considered the locus of power, I term those non-government actors who were crucial to the development of adult literacy policy part of a concentration of influence. These are the organizations and individuals (and their related ideas) that swayed government, and in fact pressured individuals and bodies in government, to create both symbolic and material adult literacy policy over the past decade or so. In this section, I concentrate on those actors and organizations that were influential in setting the agenda; those, as Bourdieu put it, given the authority to speak (Bourdieu, 1991). As we shall see, the web of influence is comprised mainly by the OECD, policy transfer from the U.K especially, the social partners of the Industry Training Federation (ITF), Business New Zealand, Workbase, and the NZ Council of Trade Unions (NZCTU), with Māori community
literacy organization Literacy Aotearoa also wielding influence (though less substantial). Individuals from these organizations have been equally important also.

6.3.1 Transnational policy transfer: the impact of external organizations and nation-states. We turn first to the influence of policy transfer on adult literacy policy in New Zealand. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the role of organizations in facilitating the transfer of policy has grown, especially regarding the OECD, World Bank, UNESCO and international consultants. The OECD has been the most important transnational organization in fomenting and facilitating the creation of adult literacy policy. As we have already learned, the OECD was responsible for the creation and dissemination of IALS and ALL, and through this and its country reports has been the principal driver behind the political interest in adult literacy in developed nations. Its role as direct policy influencer is apparent in New Zealand; not only through IALS and ALL, but also in how often documents cite other OECD reports and statistics to comment on country achievement (or lack of achievement) in adult literacy performance. Elise noted, for example, “I think it was also because of this OECD-driven knowledge thing and international pressure that everyone else was geared up so we needed to too.”

In addition to noting the role of the OECD, numerous participants commented on the direct impact of policy from the U.K on New Zealand. Samantha, a government official, revealed that her ministry had looked at “Great Britain and the Skills for Life” in its creation of adult literacy policy, in general, and the Skills Strategy especially. The influence of the U.K was corroborated by Leanne, a literacy researcher, advocate and practitioner, who commented, “it was once the UK had established a strategy and a strategy unit and was beginning to develop and claim results for its initiatives that New Zealand started to pick up.” In another example, Kevin remarked that he was “always struck by comparing [NZ] with England,” lamenting, however, that there had been (at least up until early 2008) “nothing as brave or ambitious as, for example, the British ran. I mean, I had someone in here last year from the National Research and Development Centre... talking about what
they’ve done.” In fact, a recent edited book on foundational learning in New Zealand (Benseman & Sutton, 2008) even includes a chapter on the Skills for Life strategy written by Associate Director for the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), Jan Eldred. The UK was often used as the poster child for adult literacy workplace programmes and the yardstick against which New Zealand should measure itself. Specifically, numerous participants mentioned the importance of the Moser report.\(^7\) A Workbase document (2007) also uses the U.K as the measure of success in adult literacy policy to which New Zealand must strive. This document states, “the UK has similar workforce literacy levels to NZ” (n.p), and that the losses of billions of G.B pounds from low literacy in the U.K should act as a motivation for New Zealand literacy policy. Practitioners also noted the influence of British materials on their practice, including a particular assessment-measuring tool. This tool, according to the latest Confintea V country report on adult learning in NZ (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008a), indicates whether a learner has additional literacy and/or numeracy needs. It was directly adapted from an assessment tool created as part of the UK Skills for Life strategy (in a clear act of policy transfer). This screening tool has been made available to organizations throughout the country. The relationship between the U.K and New Zealand, in terms of influencing adult literacy policy, is a long one. This is especially true when we examine policy surrounding quality assurance, programme assessment, and workplace skills. One participant recounted of the 1980s,

> *When I first got involved, the ScotPac\(^7\) thing had been brought in from Scotland by the Minister at the time, which is what led in to the idea of competency, the whole NZQA and, you know, the adult, the unit standard approach.*

Australia and the U.S have also influenced the NZ adult literacy policy agenda. In a

\(^7\) The Moser Report was the summary and recommendations of the working group on “improving literacy and numeracy” in the UK headed by Sir Claus Moser. It formed the basis for the UK’s Skills for Life initiative.

\(^7\) It appears that Scotpac no longer exists. From what I understand from my interview, it was a quality assurance model developed in Scotland and brought to New Zealand during the late 1980s.
chapter written by Moore (1996), for example, she notes that ITOs that had been established in Australia, were the inspiration for the development of ITOs in New Zealand. Australia, I was told by long-time workplace policy actors, was “way ahead” in 1995 and was the inspiration behind the training packages brought into New Zealand in the mid-1990s. A couple of long-term practitioners and researchers also remarked on the influence of NCSALL (National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy) documents and the NRDC (National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy), both from the U.S. The influence of the NRDC is perhaps most evident when we look at its emphasis on embedded teaching and learning of adult literacy—which was being promoted with vigour in vocational courses in New Zealand in 2008. The U.S has been additionally influential in its *Future Standards* documents which were acknowledged as forming the basis for New Zealand’s recent learning progressions (Reid, 2008). In addition, government reports and documents draw on information from national organizations, such as the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in the U.S and the National Centre for Vocational Education in Australia.

Like Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) report, however, it is near impossible to measure the clear flow of policy from lenders to borrowers, and even harder to ascertain where ideas originate in the first place. Moreover, as information gets passed down, the message mutates, owing in part to the different motivations and ideologies of the various policy actors and governments involved, and in part due to natural loss, as we see in the child’s game of telegraph. Nonetheless, my research suggests that policy has not been endemic to New Zealand, but rather at least partially introduced. This is thanks to transnational influence as well as to the actions of certain organizations and individuals within New Zealand.

6.3.2 **The social partnerships: the role of national organizations.** It is not just the influence of transnational policy transfer that led to and shaped the adult literacy policy agenda in New Zealand. My research indicates that partnerships between the so-
called “social partners”\textsuperscript{72} and certain government departments have been the reason behind why so much policy was enacted over the past few years in the country. These partnerships allowed transnational policy transfer to take hold.

Partnership rhetoric was pronounced in documents and in interviews. This is in line, of course, with the discursive trend associated with inclusive liberalism and the Third Way, as we also saw in Chapter 5. For example, the Ministry of Education (2001a) stresses the need for “cooperation and alliances.” And, the Unifying Skills document notes that “partnerships are a new way of approaching the development of literacy programmes in the workplace” (Cabinet Business Committee, 2007, p.1) and the “best ways of improving foundation skills in the workplace” (p.2). In looking to the context of influence, it also becomes clear that the discourse of collaboration and partnerships translated into practice.

It is not surprising that particular social partners and social partnerships have been critical for the development of adult literacy policy. Levin (B. Levin, 2009), a former Canadian government education minister and current academic, reflected that “people [often] do not generally take their ideas and opinions from original research, but from the accounts and translations of that research as brought to them by a wide array of third parties and popularizers” (p.56). These “parties and popularizers” were crucial to adult literacy gaining traction as an issue, as well as to the construction of certain policy “problems” and particular policy “solutions.” As I will show, it was the workplace rather than community partners that were most influential.

\textit{The principal ‘workplace’ partners.} The workplace or business partners have been crucial in raising the national profile of adult literacy: these are, the ITF, Workbase, NZCTU, and Business NZ. All these organizations have worked closely together, and in conjunction with the DOL and TEC, to advocate, and promote particular policy solutions, for adult literacy in New Zealand:

\textsuperscript{72} “Social partners” is a term frequently used in the literature and in interviews to refer to the main organizations with whom the government has partnered on particular issues.
• **ITF**, with its specific emphasis on industry helped create a new funding system and was involved in the development of the new credentials for teaching literacy, specifically the NCALE for vocational literacy instructors.

• **Business NZ** is the largest business and employment interest group in New Zealand, and the self-proclaimed “voice of NZ business,” according to its website. It expanded its mandate to focus on literacy. It also recently took an interest in sustainability in an explicit concern with quality of life and equity issues, not just business and trade. (It appears that all this is an expansion of its initially narrow *raison d'être* which was almost exclusively to improve trade relations and the environment for NZ businesses).

• **Workbase**, the voice of workplace literacy policy in New Zealand. It provides training for ITOs. It can be understood as a particularly important social partner, having been entrusted with, and funded for, the development of the NZ literacy portal for all things literacy.73

• **NZCTU** has worked with ITOs and advocated for training since the mid-1990s (L. Moore, 1996). However, their involvement in lobbying government and working with them in promoting adult literacy is considered relatively recent.

These organizations above have individually shaped literacy policy and practice substantially. Furthermore, they have banded together to influence government policy more extensively and have influenced one another in coming together to form a network of influence. Workbase, above all, has been particularly influential as the booming voice of adult literacy in New Zealand. As the leading organization in New Zealand in workforce literacy, it saw massive increases in funding and support which had spill-on effects for many industries and which gave a big boost to workplace literacy more generally.

**A spotlight on the NZCTU.** I shine a spotlight on the NZCTU in its role in developing workplace literacy policy and programmes in New Zealand, and in working with

what could traditionally be considered adversarial groups (such as Business NZ) to help develop adult literacy in the country. Interestingly, it appears that as the union’s influence in the country decreased its influence in adult literacy increased.

The NZCTU’s interest in adult literacy, according to a union-based participant, has been “quite recent.” For example, a literacy researcher noted that before 2001, the CTU was not really interested in literacy and it was only in 2005 that there came a “wake-up call” for unions to get involved in workforce literacy as it was becoming a growing concern in New Zealand. Since this time, unions have become considerably involved in training and literacy programmes, implementing a “Learning Reps” programme in 2005. This is a programme where a union representative—such as a shop steward—is trained as a contact person for their colleagues to: provide them with information about learning opportunities; help them receive adequate training; and, represent the learners’ needs and interests to the employers. This programme is currently funded as part of the overall NZ Skill Strategy and supported by TEC, NZCTU and Business New Zealand.74

What is clear is that the unions have attempted to adopt a partnership approach that would “[not be] acrimonious with employers,” I was informed by another union member. The CTU’s espoused goals in instituting literacy programmes are to:

build positive attitudes to learning, improve skills and employability of the workforce, better adapt to change, unlock potential within individuals so they can take up promotions and professional opportunities; increase participation in workplace learning; provide support and advice for workers in the workplace for all workers.57

Becoming involved with literacy training fits ideologically with the union, according to one CTU participant:

We are much more comfortable with pay being based on skill levels than we are on performance pay, individual measurement, personality stuff whatever, so unions tend to be, you know, more sympathetic to pay systems that recognize some skill component, and so it fits in there.

Their goals and approaches, then, have not tended to contrast drastically from those of their partners in regards to promoting literacy policy—i.e., Business New Zealand, Workbase and the ITF—who might otherwise seem like opposing and competing interest groups. This embrace of partnerships reflects a Third Way (Giddens, 1999, 2003) approach to social programming. Yet, it is not a partnership with equally powerful partners, which is often the critique of partnerships developed in a Third Way approach (see Bastow & Martin, 2003; Callinicos, 2001; Kelsey, 2002; Newman & De Zoysa, 2001). Furthermore, business interests seem also to have won out above traditional union interests, indicating the relatively more powerful position of business, and indeed the power of capitalist interests over more socialist or social democratic ones (see Callinicos, 2001; Lindbolm & Woodhouse, 1993).

It is in union weakness, rather than strength, that the NZCTU decided to form coalitions with other organizations thus allowing their influence to grow. Indeed, the union’s relative weakness appears to have propelled their move towards greater collaborations and partnerships. As the below figure shows, New Zealand experienced substantial deunionization throughout the neoliberal era which slowed yet did not reverse under Helen Clark’s Labour government:

![Figure 4: Unionization across Countries and Decades](Taken from the Economist (2010, p.60).)

All fall down
Union membership, % of eligible workers
- Ireland
- Canada
- Britain
- New Zealand
- Germany
- Japan
- US

Source: Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies

Figure 4: Unionization across Countries and Decades
Taken from the Economist (2010, p.60).
It was clearly a result of neoliberal deunionization throughout the 1980s and 1990s that unions banded together with other organizations to wield influence on the government. In their much-diluted state and less significant role, unions formed allegiances with other social partners.

**Establishing and developing a workplace agenda for literacy.** The NZCTU, along with the ITF, Workbase, and Business NZ, have collectively been able to make a strong impact on adult literacy in the country. Together, bar Workbase officially, these organizations put together the Upskilling Strategy in conjunction with TEC and DOL. Furthermore, they were crucially involved in the creation of the Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN) Action Plan (2008-2012) which was part of the Skills Strategy. Together (including Workbase), they also created a document that arguably led directly to the skills strategy: *Making policy happen: The Key Steps Forward* (Business NZ, NZCTU, ITF & Workbase, 2007). According to a variety of participants, this influential document placed significant pressure on the government in regards to workplace literacy to which the government then felt the need to respond. This document recommended four key steps to improving adult literacy: 1. Raising awareness of the benefits 2. Improving access to training 3. Building Scale and 4. Developing a plan. The power of influence of this document was apparent. One government bureaucrat shared,

*I was up on the Terrace the day it [The Key Steps Forward] came out. And I can tell you that senior government people went into this immediate huddle... They were taken aback... and what happened then was that it forced them to sort of bring those groups in a lot more.*

It should be acknowledged, however, that by reinforcing workplace literacy during this and previous decades, the government allowed for the growth of workplace literacy

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75 Workbase was not allowed to actively participate in the development of the Upskilling Strategy due to its ambiguous role of both social partner/interest group/think-tank and literacy provider. Its latter role, as provider, is what led the government to reject its inclusion out of concern for not "showing favourites" with educational providers.

76 The Terrace is a street in Wellington where most government offices are.
providers. This then enabled the workplace literacy contingent to become stronger and to be able to lobby more effectively for government attention as it grew in capacity and overall legitimacy.

The role of ‘community’ social partners. Notwithstanding the recent influence of workplace literacy, the history of adult education in New Zealand is one of community literacy. According to a report written by Johnson (2000), an American literacy researcher commissioned to document the state of adult literacy in NZ and propose changes, New Zealand adult literacy has its roots in community-based, social justice-oriented campaigns of 1970s (Johnson, 2000). In addition, voluntary adult literacy programmes have been operating in New Zealand since 1974 when the Hawkes Bay New Readers Scheme was established (Caunter, 1990); and, in 1982, Adult Reading and Learning Assistance (ARLA) was established for the purpose of linking and supporting the literacy schemes and giving the literacy movement a national voice. Initially, workplace literacy was not particularly strong in New Zealand and both the community and workplace literacy sectors fell under the umbrella of ARLA. There was a split that occurred in 1990 as the philosophies diverged—one tending towards Māori community literacy (Literacy Aotearoa) and the other towards the workplace (Workbase)—with grants awarded by the government to workforce literacy, on the one hand, and Māori literacy on the other. Since that time, workplace literacy has grown substantially due to increasing government financial support, as noted in the previous chapter. To the chagrin of many community literacy advocates and educators, the community sector has not been anywhere near as influential at the policy-making table in adult literacy. (An issue I explore in greater depth in Chapter 7, in reflecting on perceived government practices and outcomes). Nonetheless, the influence of community literacy on adult literacy policy is discernible, albeit substantially weaker.

Community literacy, while seemingly underfunded, remains strong. In the recent government agenda, passed in 2008, polytechnics were especially supported in their links to community groups as the government attempted to make polytechnics more responsive to
the needs of the community around them. Community literacy also forms an important part of the TEC agenda of upping tertiary participation and literacy levels (TEC, 2007). In its concern for boosting the economic and social inclusion of “target groups”—which in general comprise Māori and Pacific Islanders—the government maintains financial support to community adult literacy. One community literacy educator claimed that the community literacy sector was almost entirely behind the increase in government attention to adult literacy: “literacy has a much higher national profile as a public policy issue. This is due to our efforts...to develop meaningful policy advice and action plans.” While I consider this claim to be overstated, one can discern numerous instances in which community literacy has evidently influenced the agenda.

Understanding the influence of Māori on the policy agenda. As a group, Māori were particularly influential in shaping recent social policy, a fact I also explore in my examination of the context of practice and outcomes. In terms of the recent policy focus on adult literacy, Māori helped influence the agenda through the MLS released in 2001 (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001). This document called for a reconceptualization of the first Adult Literacy Strategy that would take into consideration a specific strategy for Māori. Māori have contributed especially to the discursive policy landscape and to the growing trend of Māori more clearly controlling Māori educational (as well as other) affairs. This discursive influence is perhaps most evident through government officials utilizing similar language in documents and in their conversations with me to that employed by Literacy Aotearoa and kaupapa77-based organizations. For example, Samantha, a Pakeha who had worked for a variety of government departments, reflected:

*Thinking about both Māori in the Pacific is useful for us in terms of thinking about ethnic and cultural diversity and I guess responsiveness of our institutions and lecturers and institutional people in recognizing the whole person and their cultural identity.*

77 Māori ontology. See Appendix B.
Evidence of Māori influence is present in the development of the credentials for literacy educators, namely the NCALE. Both the vocational version and general NCALE\textsuperscript{78} include as learning objectives “understand[ing] historical and theoretical issues underpinning adult literacy and numeracy education in Aotearoa New Zealand,” and, for literacy educators to become “knowledgeable about Māori adult literacy.” Added to the general NCALE is for literacy educators to take into account “learners’ spiritual and/or cultural beliefs, emotional states, knowledge and skills, environments and past experiences.”\textsuperscript{79} Both Level 5 certificates require that students (teacher trainees, as it were) study current and historical trends in Māori literacy.

It is in part due to the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s that community literacy maintained, and in some instances heightened, its influence on government. New Zealand sociologists Cheyne, O’Brien and Belgrave (2005) argue that the New Right reforms of deregulation and decentralization enacted during the 1990s made greater community involvement possible for organizations, such as Literacy Aotearoa, during the following decade.

6.3.3 Principal individual actors. To further understand the influence of various non-government actors or policy entrepreneurs it is necessary to look at the individuals identified as influential in shaping and creating the government’s literacy and skills agenda. It is fair to say that non-government literacy advocates, in the form of organizations and also individuals, have been most influential in helping to raise literacy’s profile and in bringing the issue of workforce literacy (specifically) to the fore.\textsuperscript{80}

The one name that was repeatedly mentioned was Liz Moore, the former head of Workbase. One participant asserted that the entire emphasis on workplace literacy was


\textsuperscript{79} See \url{http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nqfdocs/quals/pdf/1212.pdf}

\textsuperscript{80} This is not to downplay the influence of actors who came before them, such as Professor Hawke, Economics professor at the Victoria University who wrote the Hawke report (1988).
attributable to the ideas brought forth by the then-president of Workbase. Another respondent commented that the Adult Literacy Strategy (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a), entitled “More than words,” could more aptly be called “Moore’s words” since, according to this interviewee, the government had taken so much of what Liz Moore had suggested and had, in some cases, cut and pasted big chunks of texts from Liz’s report into the ALS. Another participant shared that, in drawing from her workplace literacy experience in Australia and the UK, Moore became heavily involved with the Ministry of Education in the late 1990s in New Zealand. Specifically, she advocated to the previous National government that all vocational tutors be upskilled. (A policy that finally came to fruition in the late 2000s). Eight participants in total mentioned Moore as having had a strong influence on government and having effectively transformed the field of workplace literacy, bringing literacy to the attention of companies also. One workplace literacy respondent reflected, “Liz Moore...got attention in Wellington because she was very strategic... It was like put on a suit, smarten up the language. And there was Liz, willing to speak to any company—challenging them but not making them uncomfortable.”

Another name that was mentioned a number of times was Jeremy Baker, the then head of the ITF who had previously worked for DOL and who had also been seconded to support the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission between 2000 and 2002. One policymaker informed me that in all his roles Jeremy has heavily advocated for adult literacy, claiming that literacy “[is] significant in terms of the sort of labour market needs” and that Baker was currently “pushing ITOs to come to terms with [the need to focus on workplace literacy].” Bill O’Reilly, the Executive director of Business New Zealand and outspoken supporter of the recently formed school qualifications (the National Certificate of Educational Achievement or NCEA qualifications), was also mentioned by another senior government official as having been a crucial driver of both the school qualifications and of developing workforce literacy skills. In addition, influential literacy researchers, Allison Sutton and John Benseman, were also referred to a number of times as having helped shift policy and bring literacy to the attention of the government. In community literacy, practitioners made
numerous references to the head of Literacy Aotearoa, Bronwyn Yates, as having lifted the profile of literacy and Māori literacy in particular.

In addition, many literacy advocates whom I interviewed were often quite knowledgeable about how to be a policy mover and shaker and influence the government agenda. Kevin explained,

> The thing about the...government is that—it’s both a good thing and a bad thing—we go into elections with a manifesto and we will deliver on our manifesto...so what it means is that the really important stages of any process are actually not official things between elections. It’s talking to the labour policy council before the election, getting your items on the agenda on the manifesto.

This is not to entirely individualize the policymaking process as reactive to savvy individuals. Institutional affiliation and slant has been important in the creation of an adult literacy agenda in NZ. Notably, the most influential policy movers and shakers have come from business, or have tended to advocate literacy on economic grounds as so to resonate with an already-existing agenda. As Liam, a community literacy advocate, further expanded, “you take on a position you don’t necessarily have in order to get undue influence or advantage.” To help set an agenda, the agenda should already resonate with a government’s existing ideological bias. In other words, policymakers need to be predisposed to an issue in order for them to be receptive to it (Birkland, 2003). Indeed, for issues to “stick” they must be crafted in such a way as to fit within a particular partisan mandate. In other words, issues must be made to work within a government ministry’s, or an individual policymaker’s, already espoused ideology and mandate. They must, in effect, contribute to and shape an existing discursive arena. Indeed, the context of influence builds on what already is.

### 6.4 Conclusions

As I have illustrated in this chapter, literacy became a serious and legitimate government response in NZ by way of the OECD, which helped directly to manufacture changes in indicators and crises through IALS and ALL. Policy trends in other OECD-countries also
constituted drivers of policy—especially British skills policy and the U.K in general. In addition, policy entrepreneurs, particularly those organizations and individuals concerned with workplace literacy programmes and economic rationales, worked together in conjunction with sympathetic political figures and ministries—namely the TEC and DOL—to facilitate the enactment of literacy policy. In effect, the growing trend towards collaboration and partnerships, and (at least the semblance of) consultation, further allowed for greater influence of non-government bodies on the government’s social policy agenda. In addition, neoliberal policy reform and inclusive liberal policy discourse allowed for the possibility of further influence. The increase in influence resulted in part due to widespread reforms of deregulation and decentralization that took place during the 1990s.

The below graphical representation presents the context of influence, as I understood it from the research:
Figure 5: The Context of Policy Influence in Adult Literacy in NZ
As we see above, “transnational persuasion,” “national government power” and “interest group influence” all intersect. The government agencies that had the most power in determining and influencing adult literacy are DOL, TEC, the NZQA and the MOE to a lesser extent. The entities that exerted transnational persuasion, in acts of policy transfer, include the OECD, through IALS/ALL and its country reports, and the U.K, previously through Scotpac and later through Skills for Life. Interest groups that were most influential are comprised of social partners (ITF, CTU and Business New Zealand) and literacy providers (Workbase, and Literacy Aotearoa to a lesser extent). Government agencies act upon transnational persuasion—specifically, upon the OECD and UK—through the flow of people and ideas. In turn, transnational persuasion influences government power through the creation of country reports, policies, surveys etc. Interest groups and government departments influence each other; and, social partners are directly persuaded by transnational organizations and representatives. As I have shown in this chapter, the context of influence is not a monolithic entity. Different and competing interests and ideologies form an amalgam of influence, which then determines the policy agenda.

The main drivers of literacy policy, as we have seen so far in this chapter and the previous chapter, are workplace and work-related literacy programmes; literacy for economic development and for the knowledge economy/society; increased quality control (in standardization, assessment, accountability measures, and professionalization); centralization (to enable greater control); partnerships and collaborations; diversity of provision (to cater to all learner’s needs and contexts) and a particular concern for Māori (and to a lesser extent Pasifika and other target groups). What has become clear in both the context of text production and context of influence is that in the partisan shift to a Labour government in 1999 the political-economic context was ripe for influence in the arena of adult literacy. In other words, the government, in effect, allowed themselves to be influenced—in a concern for a more inclusive liberal capitalism premised on skills development, partnerships, collaboration and a desire for social and economic inclusion, growth and progress.
CHAPTER 7: THE CONTEXT OF INTERPRETED POLICY PRACTICES AND OUTCOMES

RESPONSES TO AND INTERPRETATIONS OF ADULT LITERACY POLICY

We have so far looked at the discourses surrounding adult literacy policy development and the drivers of policy formation. In this chapter, we now turn to the context of interpreted policy practices and outcomes. This is where we focus on policy actors’ interpretations of and reactions to government adult literacy policy. Specifically, we explore the responses to discourses and agendas by those who have been affected by, mediated, and influenced government policy. Yet, as I illustrated in the previous chapter, adult literacy policy in NZ has not been a simple case of government “acting” and people “responding.” Rather, NZ governments have responded and outside policy “receivers” have also acted. In effect, there is a cycle of action and response among different policy actors (i.e., advocates, bureaucrats, elected officials, researchers, practitioners, lobbyists and combination thereof). The context of interpreted practices and outcomes sheds further light on the contexts of policy text production and of policy influence and the relationship between them. This context tells us how the discourses, priorities and values, as explored in Chapters 4 and 5, were taken up, resisted and responded to. It tells us how policy practices and trends are thought about in the literacy community, and how members of that community believe these policies have affected them and the field of adult literacy in New Zealand. In addition, focusing on the context of interpreted outcomes and effects allows for some examination of the alignment between government policy stated intent and perceptions on implementation. In examining this context, we are also provided with more transparency on the country’s politics—in its shift from a purported neoliberal model to an inclusive liberal/Third Way government in the development of an adult literacy agenda.

In this chapter, I turn more closely to 4 As of interview analysis: the agenda,
assumptions, alternatives and assertions, and the corresponding As in government and non-government documents. In what follows, I look at the responses to and interpretations of: the government’s overall literacy agenda; the economic rationales for adult literacy; the workplace literacy focus; community literacy responses; policy consultation and collaboration processes; and, policy initiatives of quality assurance, embedded literacy education and professionalization. I revisit the government’s words and deeds, as explored in the previous two chapters, and juxtapose them with the words and deeds of the external policy actors. I show how literacy advocates were generally supportive of the Labour government’s agenda but, at the same time, felt that efforts had been too narrow and that they (as individuals and organizations) were too controlled and constrained by government. Participants highlighted the dominance of an economic workplace literacy agenda over community literacy or societal concerns. This chapter additionally reveals the juxtaposition of discourses of collaboration and cooperation (reflective of inclusive liberalism), on the one hand, and the actual practices of consultation, on the other. Finally, this context illustrates further tensions between control and freedom in the development of an adult literacy agenda.

7.1 Overall Responses to the Development of Adult Literacy Policy

It is without a doubt that the Labour government discursively prioritized adult literacy over the first decade of the 21st Century. Budgets throughout the 2000s mention significant investments in literacy and basic skills. Indeed, both money and talk, both symbolic and material policy, were at the forefront of developing an adult literacy agenda. In addition, the government claimed that the emphasis paid to literacy and tertiary participation more generally was working. It argued that the total number of post-secondary students in 2007 represents a doubling of participation of that recorded in 2000 (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008a). The government also boasted that overall literacy levels improved from IALS to
ALL: 56% of the population was estimated to operate at levels 1 and 2 in the first IALS (undertaken in 1998) dropping to 43% in ALL (NZ Ministry of Education). Changes also occurred in the levels of tertiary education participation and achievement. (See Appendix C for changes in participation and achievement). In this section, I discuss the responses to and interpretations of these government claims, and to government adult literacy policy more generally, over the past decade.

7.1.1 Participant support for the government claim of adult literacy as recent policy priority. Most non-government policy actors agreed that the government had shone the spotlight on literacy over the past 10 years. Analysis of interview transcripts and examination of the proliferation of recent policy reveal that adult literacy rose to prominence and legitimacy in government circles. According to a long-term literacy practitioner and policymaker in NZ, “you can say that from 2000 until now has been a distinct stage.” Indeed, various participants dated the start of interest at 2001 or 2000. This government “heightened awareness” and “recognition” were remarked upon by all literacy educators and researchers. According to two practitioners (one community, one workplace), it was “the biggest change in the field in over 20 years.” Specifically reflecting on the workplace strategy, another person claimed that New Zealand “[has embarked on] the biggest workplace literacy project anywhere in the world really... that is without precedent.”

It is fair to assert that there was buy-in to the government’s agenda. This support of an adult literacy agenda is witnessed, for example, in participants’ utilization of similar discourses and language. The engagement of similar terminology can be taken as indication of a basic consensus around the power of literacy as social policy. For example, the general understanding of literacy as building block or foundation to better things was embraced by many. As policy advocate Kevin put it, “you can’t pick up skills unless you have the core competences [of] literacy and numeracy.” In addition, the expanded definition of literacy, as embraced by IALS, was evident in a number of non-government documents. A Workbase
[Literacy is] not just the ability to read, write, add and subtract. It is a continuum of skills that are vital to effective performance in the workplace...[it is] being able to communicate ideas and opinions; use information and math skills; make decisions and solve problems; [and] use information systems, technology and tools (Workbase, 2007).

In short, the fact that the government had placed emphasis on adult literacy was acknowledged and embraced by all participants. However, as we will see in the next section, the specifics of the adult literacy policy that emerged were contested.

7.1.2 Hesitation over government claims of positive policy impact.

Notwithstanding broad-based support for the government’s initiative, participants expressed particular complaints, which centred on claims of inadequate support for the adult literacy field. For example, one participant exclaimed that the policy agenda had had “more bark than bite.” The Adult Literacy Strategy (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a), for example, was described by another non-government actor, Elise, as symbolically important but “more words than action.” As Kevin noted, “[it] meant well but didn’t do much.” Kevin also commented that, in general, “there’s been a lot of policy talk...but not a great deal of action.” Bianca, a government bureaucrat, concurred, jadedly remarking in response to my question of impact of adult literacy policy, “I don’t think it is a story of impact; it’s a story of muddle.”

Others had complaints over the funding of the literacy agenda. One head of a literacy organization, Rebecca, shared that her organization had been penalized due to its size: “the bigger you become, the more you are penalized,” she told me. Another practitioner who had served on a granting agency confirmed this sentiment, remarking that granting agencies would “look and say [to her organization] ‘Oh, they’ve got TEC contracts. They don’t need

81 The respondent was being overtly ironic if we consider the title of ALS.
any money from us.’” This participant argued that, by doing this, the government was ignoring the fact that much of the TEC money could be

_tagged to specific projects and can only be used for those specific projects...so you build your capacity and you’re doing well but people would see it on the books that you look good financially. The sentiment becomes, ‘they’re too rich.’_

Other participants challenged certain acts of policy transfer in developing NZ’s literacy agenda. These policy actors criticized the act of bringing in policy initiatives from the UK to New Zealand, which they saw as inappropriate and detrimental to the field of adult literacy as a whole. Sarah, for instance, was derisive about the “purchase model” to funding adult literacy, which she argued was how government now contracted literacy services. This was a model, Sarah remarked, that had been directly brought in from Britain without question. According to Sarah (who was a workplace literacy researcher and manager), this was “a top-down, driven model” based on carrot and stick incentives, where providers, like her organization, were asked to do more with less money. Community literacy worker Liam also commented on the problems with policy transfer in general:

_There’s a whole lot of material that informs policy that is derived from the UK—all the values that that brings with it and that gets planted in front of you. And it’s not, it seems to me, critically examined in terms of how it relates to New Zealand. It is actually—this is what works over there, so let’s try to make it work here._

In another example, Leila, another community literacy advocate, complained:

_And now you look at the policy...with the NZQA where I walk in with my UK quals and get granted an equivalency and my UK quals are valid. So as the UK person I don’t have to take anything about Māori issues, I don’t need to know anything about Indigenous literacies. I sure as heck don’t need to know about the history of this country. And then to be able to then walk out and teach..._

In addition, other Māori non-government policy actors (N=5) were critical, or at least wary, of the success the government had declared in combatting low levels of literacy and
post-secondary participation for Māori. Indeed, a number of recent documents cite “success” in Māori literacy (e.g., Satherly & Lawes, 2008; TEC, 2005, 2007). For instance, specific mention is made of the increase in Māori participation in tertiary education, with the recent TES (TEC, 2007) boasting that Māori had the largest participation rate in tertiary education than any other cultural or ethnic group. However, these statistics, as a Māori literacy advocate pointed out, conceal the fact that what is termed “tertiary education” is really at the diploma or even foundational level, and that literacy rates are still below what is perceived as adequate (i.e., below Level 3 on the IALS or ALL scale). Another Māori community literacy leader was additionally displeased with how IALS statistics had been used, both during the previous and (then) current government.

There was a lot of damage done with the last one [IALS], I was...trying to explain [to the media] that...it is unfortunate that Māori comprise a higher level of people with low literacy but that is not to say that Māori is thick... Quite frankly, I'd prefer nothing to come out than have to do yet again another damage control where the same people are being bashed again because...that kind of reaction is damaging.

Yet another Māori practitioner participant remarked on the relative lack of commitment by the government to examine the ALL numbers adequately and in a timely manner, noting, “we’ve got two people working on it in New Zealand—they had 23 in Australia and they had a smaller sample size than we had.”

In sum, then, the literacy initiative, while broadly supported, was not entirely endorsed in its execution. Certain policy practices were seen as not only ineffective but even detrimental to adult literacy learners, practitioners and to the field as a whole.

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82 See Appendix C for further data on tertiary participation and achievement rates.
7.2 Responses from the Workplace Literacy Sector

*It's the economy stupid*- Bill Clinton

What is apparent from my analysis of government documentation, and interviews with policy makers and bureaucrats, is that “literacy for the economy” and in the form of workplace programmes was the principal priority of this agenda. This point is evident in the two previous findings chapters. In particular, government focus was on workplace literacy, Industry Training Organizations, and apprenticeship programmes. The 2004 Budget, for example, makes clear that modern apprenticeships and industry training initiatives were to be supported by totally new funding initiatives, building citizens’ “trust in government [with its] strong social services” (NZ Treasury, 2004, p.4). My study’s participants concurred that the patent government priority was for workforce literacy and programmes; and that this bias was evident in both rhetoric and in the subsidies and grants recently provided to workplace programmes. In this section, I focus on the responses from those policy actors who work in the field of workplace literacy—researchers, practitioners and policymakers.

**7.2.1 Support for an economic, workplace focus.** “The economy” has been used as a general motivator and driver behind much government adult literacy policy and discourse. We saw this previously in Chapters 4 and 5. The economy as rationale has been supported, mirrored and promoted by literacy organizations providing workplace literacy. Perhaps most indicative of an endorsement of economic reasons for adult literacy is Workbase, who released a full-page brochure, serving as promotional material to ITOs and companies, entitled *An economic imperative* (Workbase, 2007). In this brochure, Workbase puts forward the economic case for investing in workforce literacy. In other examples, “productivity” and “knowledge economy” discourses were utilized by a number of people involved in workplace literacy. One interviewee based at a workplace literacy programme explained,
New Zealand now has very high employment,\textsuperscript{83} high labour market participation. New Zealanders on average work some of the longest hours in the world. So, you know, how really are we going to make that sort of step up in terms of employability? It’s not going to be about drawing people into the labour market, it’s not about asking them to work longer, it is really about a productivity shift; what does that mean in terms of the skills of the workforce?

David, a union and business literacy expert, also informed me, “[The] knowledge economy stuff...we do take it pretty seriously, that in a world of declining resources the one resource that is infinite is knowledge, but it’s only infinite if you invest in it.” Participants believed that this economic rationale was the great force behind the recent action in literacy policy. Kevin, who had previously worked in government for a number of years, commented,

\textit{I think one of the things that’s changed is that adult literacy in, you know, 2000, 2001 was sold by the government as a social inclusion thing and I think that’s possibly why it didn’t go anywhere. It’s now being done primarily through the economic development lens.}

The above quotes are suggestive of discursive transfer; as words and ideas circulate throughout the media, organizations, and between individuals, linguistic patterns begin to form in individual and organizational speech. What we see, too, in these quotes is broad-based buy-in not only to the overall claims and language surrounding workplace literacy but also to the specific rationales provided for and behind workplace, and work-focused, literacy.

Organizations put forth numerous reasons for adhering to an employment-focused model of adult literacy. Workbase, for example, declares “employee satisfaction” to be a key outcome of workplace literacy programmes, as well as: “greater enthusiasm for training” (the notion that training begets training); improved confidence, motivation, communication and teamwork; increased recruitment and training; more attention to detail; less waste; increased flexibility of workers—alongside the usual improved skills, productivity and

\textsuperscript{83} This was at the time of research, but it is no longer strictly the case given the impact of the economic recession on the country from late 2008-2010.
growth (see Workbase, n.d., 2007). In another example, according to the NZCTU brochure on “learning reps,” 37% of employers involved in workplace literacy report a more confident and enthusiastic workforce, 22% of workers are considered by employers to be more receptive to training and 19% as having the additional skills necessary for promotion.

In addition, “health and safety” became particular motivators of workplace literacy for organizations. In 2006, a large-scale analysis was undertaken of 58 programmes delivered to 51 companies. The top concern motivating the companies’ interest in implementing a workplace literacy course was “health and safety” (Gray & Sutton, 2007). A number of Workbase documents (e.g., n.d; 2007) also comment on the need for increasing literacy of workers as it will help in the mixing of chemicals and measuring additives, as well as reducing injuries and accidents. This in turn, according to Workbase, can affect a company’s bottom line. In another example, a story of a health and safety disaster (due to low numeracy and literacy) was relayed to me by a few participants, making me wonder if it had almost reached “urban myth” status. David (in union-based education) recounted,

_Health and safety...is a bit of a driver in this space... we’ve already had a lot of investment in that. There was a case a couple of years ago where there was a cleaner at a school who was off sick and so someone was taken on on a casual basis and was cleaning the kids’ toilets using chlorine or some kind of chemical and misread the quantities, and they had to evacuate the whole school. Half a dozen kids had to go, they were fine, but I think it was like by a factor of 10, you know it was one of those kinds that he used 10 times what he

84 The list of benefits of workplace literacy programmes to workplaces, as enumerated by Workbase in this article (2007, n.p), is remarkable. I list them here (verbatim) to show the power that has been imbued to literacy in the workplace:

- Improved communication (this means better teamwork – and this means fewer mistakes and greater efficiencies)
- It’s a confidence builder. Employers report improvements in their workplaces as a result of the
- Confidence gained on these courses.
- It enables many to follow a pathway into qualifications more easily.
- Knowing how to do their paper work reduces stress levels for both workers and their
- Supervisors – and it provides better information for your company.
- Knowing how to measure and weigh accurately leads to less wastage.
- Knowing how to read signs and policies leads to safer workplaces.
- Improved English naturally means better communication.

Such statistics and stories can be seen as “crises” and policy catalysts for businesses, for various organizations and for individuals to enlist in further training and education. At the same time, interviews revealed pragmatism in using the health rationale for literacy. As one literacy researcher observed, “there’s a certain amount of money sloshing around in health.” Whether individuals or organizations believe the received wisdom or claims of literacy’s powerful potential is up for debate.

Other reasons for supporting workplace literacy go beyond the economic and in fact the workplace. For example, many participants responded positively to the government initiatives as they saw workplace literacy programmes as “spilling into” many other arenas of people’s lives. According to Kevin, “our running assumption is that if you give people in the workplace skills around literacy and numeracy, they’re going to apply it somewhere else and that has a whole lot of other spill-over effects.” Workplace literacy programmes were seen as developing skills that can be used to help one’s children and grandchildren, for example. As Sarah, a workplace literacy educator recounted:

“I love the story of the Pasifika grandmother who’d done a three-year literacy programme that included becoming an aged care worker, which was very hard, and she said to her grandkids, ‘this has been really hard for me and if I can do this, you’re going to university’...showing the ability to succeed.

7.2.2 Questioning the economic and capitalistic associations of a workplace literacy agenda. Notwithstanding the general support for the new workplace agenda, not everyone was convinced that the economic argument made sense; nor did some people seem to agree with the economic reasons provided by the government in support of adult literacy. David, who is involved with union training, was wary that if policymakers concentrated exclusively on the economic justification for literacy, dollars would not necessarily trickle down to those who currently have low levels of literacy:
It’s not that rational necessarily... if you’ve had constrained resources around your investment and training dollar from a government point of view, investment in people who’ve already got reasonable skills to have even higher skills might have more of an economic pay-off than investment in those who don’t.

Additionally, policymaker Michael remarked that the economic imperative for literacy was not really established by the research:

And this whole argument around productivity. They are trying to crank up productivity. And so, the two sort of aligned. And that is why they thought, ‘Okay, we’ll kill two birds with one stone.’ ‘And we’ll put the two together and workplace literacy will be our salvation’, without any huge evidence about it...

Nor was the economic rationale necessarily what motivated employers:

And the other thing that I would say is that I have also been quite amazed. In particular, a couple of companies, run by engineers, both of them, what I saw as quite hard-nosed companies. And when I talked to the management about what you would like to get out of [training], they said, ‘We don’t expect for you to give us an increase in profits. What we want is a happier workforce with people who enjoy their work more.’ He said long-term that may well be beneficial, but that is the key thing that they are looking at. You know, I have been amazed at how sort of non-economically driven their expectations are.

Having worked in both workplace and community literacy, Michael continued, that to contrast “workplace,” as standing for the economy, against “community,” as standing for “society” was erroneous:

The workplace is juxtaposed with community in a very ‘this is social justice, social inclusion. This is capitalist, rampant mad dogs’...And one of the things that I would say...is that if you look at workplace programmes...they are learners that community programmes don’t get. They are all the right people. They are half-Māori, a quarter Pasifika, 85% have no qualification....They are in low-income jobs. They are in poor communities. They are everything that a social inclusion argument is about. And they just happen to be recruited through a workplace programme...But they’re absolutely the right people. That is the first point. The second is that there is a lot of interest in the broader impact in families and communities about looking at what happens as a result of workplace literacy...And the summary of it is that it’s a two-way street. If they learn literacy skills in the community they take them to work. If they learn them at work, they take them home. My position is that I don’t give a stuff where they learn. If you get the right people and you make an impact
on them then you have an impact.

This participant clearly supported both workplace and community and attempted to bridge both sides.

The workplace is where the learners are, a number of people reflected. Kevin stated, for instance, “Given that most adults are in work, that’s a good place to start in getting them...” And, as Amy commented, “they don’t discuss this in the [TES] strategy but really the benefits of it are you don’t have the problem of people who are exhausted after work who have to find baby sitters and transport, childcare issues.” Participants therefore considered it common sense that if you were interested in the literacy skills of the workforce you would bring the literacy to them.

In addition to supporting workplace literacy because that was where learners would be, workplace literacy advocates and practitioners also generally saw workplace literacy as superior to community programmes in delivering literacy courses to learners. Sarah, a workplace literacy practitioner, talked about the shortcomings of community literacy programmes. She commented that learners many only “meet for an hour a week” which wouldn’t “shift [learners] two levels above.”

86 Another person who was a manager in workplace literacy was also concerned about the short duration of many community courses. “Three to seven weeks,” she remarked, lamenting that as soon as the student has learned what they want to learn—for example, the driver’s licence written test—“they start to fall out.”

7.3 Responses from the Community Sector

Response to the government workplace skills agenda from those outside the workplace literacy sector was mixed. While some were pleased for the increased emphasis on adult education and had managed to slant their courses to take advantage of the workplace

86 It was not clear in this quote what scale the interviewee was discussing—NCA levels (i.e., 1 – 10, with a Bachelor’s degree equivalent to a 7) or the IALS scale of 1 – 5 or another scale.
literacy focus, others felt like the government was neglecting community to the detriment of potential learners and the country as a whole.

7.3.1 The spill-on effect to community literacy. Some community literacy policy actors I spoke with believed that the literacy agenda, while focused on the workforce, still positively impacted community literacy. According to some participants, a spill-on effect has occurred. For example, there are signs that community literacy forms some part of the overall TEC agenda of upping tertiary participation and literacy levels (TEC, 2007). Indeed, three community literacy practitioners reported an increased profile for their organizations and some increases in funding. This was usually due to increased literacy participation, however, rather than increases in absolute terms. However, in many ways, the role for community literacy seemed to remain strong, with policy makers and researchers referring to the important and unique role community literacy plays in New Zealand. Government worker and previous practitioner Bianca remarked:

*I think they [community literacy organizations] still play that outstandingly important role of connecting with people who wouldn’t connect into an institution in the first instance, and, I mean, they articulate this clearly themselves, that they pathway people into something more formal, so you can connect with people, you can make them feel comfortable...*

The support for community literacy was especially apparent in terms of the targeting of marginalized groups, namely Māori and Pasifika. According to a number of non-government respondents, the effect of focusing on Māori in particular (see, e.g., Johnson, 2000; NZ Ministry of Ed, 2001a, 2001b, TEC, 2007) has yielded positive outcomes. In an interview with Kim, who runs a literacy programme focusing on the Māori community, she commented that, since starting in the field over a decade previously, there had been “a huge focus in terms of working with Māori, increasing needs for Māori... and they [the government] are making headways here in their understanding, so it’s good... and working with Pacific peoples as well.” Marianne, a non-Māori community literacy instructor noted
that her organization does “whanau\(^7\) literacy now, which \(\textit{they}\) didn’t used to do.”

Rebecca, another non-Māori community instructor, also noted that more Māori parents were wanting to learn with their children to help their kids with their homework. This raising of awareness of literacy was having an effect on the community at large and contributing to increases in participation. Kim explained,

\[I\text{ think our Māori and Pacific peoples are actually realizing that our kids and our whanau are actually struggling with literacy and that we need to actually sort that out ourselves, you know. We can’t rely on other people to do that, so... But I’m getting a lot of mothers and grandmothers here wanting to come along and do the tutor training because their mokopunas [little ones or grandchildren] are lacking in literacy.}\]

The literacy focus was seen to spread to families and the wider community. This in part reflects an inclusive liberal ideology espoused by the government in its more recent policy documents such as the Tertiary Education Strategy (TEC, 2002, 2005).

\textit{Subversion of and active responses to a workplace agenda.} While participants saw spill-on effects from a workplace agenda to community literacy, literacy organizations also adapted to, shaped and subverted government policy and general priorities. One way in which this was most evident is in community organizations moving into the workplace sector so to tap into the new monies by becoming part of the workplace agenda. One of my participants told me, for example, that she had been encouraged to take her literacy organization’s services to the workplace as \textit{“that is where everything’s going...yeah...hop on the bandwagon and pretty much go into workplace literacy.”}\n
This is evidence of policy transfer, though it does not generally mean that organizations were changing their overall philosophies.

Indeed, organizations were not necessarily slotting themselves into an economic imperative. Kevin, who had worked in a number of business organizations, related that

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\(\text{\(^7\)}\) Family. See Appendix B.
Here it is important to note that Literacy Aotearoa’s classes continued to be influenced by Freirean (e.g., 1997), Māori, and Marxist philosophical ideas. The head of Literacy Aotearoa continued to adhere to her definition of literacy as “listening, reading, writing and critical thinking, interwoven with the knowledge of social and cultural practices. Literacy empowers people to contribute and improve society” (Māori Adult Literacy Working Party, 2001, p.39). Tiro Rangatiratanga—or Māori self-determination—also heavily influenced the approach taken to learning at Literacy Aotearoa, at least at some nga poupo members (i.e., branch members). The Māori philosophy, premised on Māori kaupapa, was perceived by a number of organizations as representing a distinct contrast with, and perhaps challenge to, state control and to general ideologies and philosophies of government bureaucrats and policy makers. It is in the Māori Literacy Strategy that we see a radically different understanding of literacy than that found in most government documents: the authors write, “literacy difficulties are usually the result of inequalities in social and economic systems...literacy services should involve learners becoming more aware of the world and creating and understanding of power relations and influences which operate in it” (quoted in Johnson, 2000, p.5). In this strategy, literacy is conceptualized as “reading the word and world” (in drawing from Freire & Macedo, 1987), as fully embedded in the socio-cultural-political-historical context, and as existing to promote change. In the same way that not all workplace literacy practitioners and advocates embraced economistic reasoning of literacy, neither did all community literacy practitioners contort themselves to fit fully within an ascribed government agenda.

7.3.2 Disillusionment and uncertainty over a workplace agenda. Despite negotiation of the government’s workplace focus, community literacy participants also
expressed both hesitation and disappointment with the seemingly singular enthusiasm for
the workplace (as opposed to for the community sector). A community literacy advocate, for
example, commented that while being workplace oriented “wasn’t bad” there needed to be
some balance since focusing on the economy would not necessarily lead to further social
cohesion and equality. Eric, another literacy researcher and advocate, presaged (shortly
before the economic downturn, which was not yet on the radar at the beginning of 2008):

So people are getting drawn up into the workplace and they’re kind of
learning on the job, which is great. But if there’s a downturn, and these things
are cyclical, there’s always a downturn, then the flaws in the system will be
exposed one more time.

According to many, the community literacy sector had been neglected in this newfound
passion for workplace and work-based literacy. Leila and Liam, both community literacy
educators, commented that “there is more money...in anything that’s not community ed.”
Rebecca admitted to a “sense of bitterness about workplace literacy receiving all the money
and the sidelining of community.” “...We’re the poor cousins of the tertiary sector and yet
we’re doing a lot of work!” Kim, another community policy actor, indignantly remarked.
Rebecca, a long-time practitioner, explained:

They’re clearly putting a heck of a lot more money into the field but it’s clearly
not coming into the community sector. It’s going to polies [polytechnics],
PTEs; it’s going to research...The sector... is not resourced properly. In order
 to get the kind of... lift the level...it’s not resourced correctly at all...

In another example, Elise, a researcher and former community and workplace literacy
practitioner, remarked that “community has lost and ITPs have gained. Shorter courses are
gone.” Although thrilled about the increased government interest in literacy—which
generally meant workplace literacy—she also acknowledged:

I would be very disappointed if the system did actually cut out the
community. It is kind of a stepping stone. Gotta have that provision and I
think it’s a real change that there have been very good family literacy,
whanau literacy examples yet no money has really gone into it...
There was questioning whether the tide of adult literacy truly lifted all boats or only ones situated in the workplace and/or related to employment skills.

**Difficulties in securing funding in the community sector.** Increased emphasis and support for literacy resulted in increased competition for community providers. One fundamental way in which community literacy providers believed they were being placed under pressure is by the increase in numbers of organizations applying for money. This is illustrated by Elise:

> So there are more providers but the pot’s stayed the same...you put up funding of a million dollars and you get excited about it and then you cut it 35 ways. An organization gets $20,000 and they haven’t got staff and haven’t trained anyone. And what do you expect, you know?

Kim further complained about the lack of experience and expertise of some of the newer organizations: “...But we’re having to compete against other groups that have just formed overnight... there’s a lot of cowboys and cowgirls out there providing provision.” Other examples provide further evidence of the competition to which community groups have been subjected:

> They [community literacy organizations] are in competition. They are all chasing the same dollar from the government; they’re not collaborating; they’re not building up a pool of resources that they can use. There’s no realistic culture of sharing information with within the group because it’s a little cutthroat industry that’s been established through the funding system. [Leila, community literacy]

> And so... I mean in one year, there were thirty groups who apply and the next year there’d be 60, and the funding is still the same so it’s putting that resource in and we can’t operate on half of the hours to run the same amount of classes that we’ve done from year to year, so it’s a struggle that we have at the community level. [Kim, community literacy]

The time, effort and general bureaucracy involved in applying for multiple grants placed additional pressures on community literacy workers. Rebecca told me, for example, that she was struggling with the demands of putting in 40 grant applications since so many
were not being funded. She further clarified the ways in which the community sector has failed to thrive in the same way that the workplace has:

We have the accountability requirements that bring extra work for us. We’re basically under-funded in the admin. area in such a way that makes it difficult to respond when there is funding available—and I might get my head cut off next for what I’m about to say—I also think that there’s not a lot of sympathy in the Ministry or, I’m not sure where it’s coming from, for the fact we attempt to be a treaty-based organization.\(^8\) I do think that’s been an issue...too hard to deal with.

Trevor, who also worked in a community literacy organization, reiterated this notion of a sector that the government “isn’t quite sure what to do with”:

You know, when you talk to government ministries, they’ll talk, but will they walk the talk? I think it’s [community literacy] actually in the too-hard basket. And I think that’s the problem with community literacy...the bureaucrats, the policy-makers, even the politicians have difficulty grappling with this whole area.

In effect, where community literacy programmes are concerned, funding or increased capacity did not beget funding. In a seeming anti-monopolistic sentiment, and demonstrating support for the notion of deregulation as a catalyst for competition, the government made funding more difficult to source, prompting seasoned grant writers to remark on their waning success in securing funds. It appeared that the possibility for greater diversification, differentiation, deregulation and general decentralization, enabled by the reforms first undertaken in the Education Act (NZ Ministry of Education, 1989), were in part continued over the first decade of the 21st Century. In fact, although funding overall increased, funding to individual providers may have stagnated or even decreased, in spite of the government’s declared vision of a more collaborative funding environment (see, NZ Ministry of Education, 2006, 2008).

\(^8\) A treaty-based organization is one that holistically demonstrates commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and to kaupapa Māori, rather than just having a designated Māori position or committee.
7.4 Responses to Purported Increases in Collaboration and Consultation

One purpose of this research was to investigate whether, according to participants, the environment in adult literacy was in fact becoming more collaborative. I sought to better understand the relationship between discourses of collaboration (which we saw in Chapters 4 and 5) and practices (which we saw in Chapter 6 and see now in Chapter 7). As detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, one of the major discourses of the most recent Labour government, in keeping in line with inclusive liberalism, was one of partnership, collaboration, and cooperation. Shown in Chapter 6 were the ways in which this emphasis on partnerships facilitated the ability of some groups and individuals to help shape the agenda. Here, we now turn to policy actors’ experiences with partnership, collaboration, consultation and cooperation.

7.4.1 Evidence of greater collaboration and consultation. There is evidence of greater partnership. In other words, the rhetoric appears to have been borne out (at least partially) in practice. Lucy, who works at a polytechnic, explained,

The relationships are changing. I mean the government is making everyone, forced everyone, to work a lot more collaboratively so that has happened; and that has happened for all the learning projects, as well where you have had representatives from all your PTEs and Polies [polytechnics], which is fantastic and especially at the foundation level where literacy fits.

The government, it seems, considered partnerships a necessity. This fact is manifest in the state’s expressed interest in a “tripartite” social partnership approach (i.e., Government, business and NGO/Union sector). In response to a greater call and possibilities for partnership, non-literacy organizations have gotten on board the literacy issue, such as major company The Warehouse (the NZ equivalent of Wal-Mart), banks and coffee shops. Kelly, a policy researcher, remarked that the police and corrections had provided some partnership in a community literacy project.
Furthermore, according to some, the concern for partnership resulted in greater consultation:

*Up until six months ago...there was an appalling amount of consultation. You know, one thing I would ask in Wellington—where and when are we going to talk to groups, interested parties? And so on...and there would be this deafening silence...there is a hell of lot more consultation than what happened previously.*  
[Michael, government worker]

The move towards inclusion, as part of an inclusive liberal or Third Way approach, appears to be supported by certain policymakers in the field.

### 7.4.2 Expressed concerns with the consultation process.

Notwithstanding the growing trend of partnerships and consultation, it appears that not everyone was included in the newly established partnerships, nor invited to consult on issues. Potential and former partners were sidelined or clearly absent. According to participants, some organizations may be “flavour of the month”, as one person put it, and invited to work and consult with government, but they are then “not invited back.”

The loudest criticism of the government’s consultation practices, unsurprisingly, comes from the community sector. This supports Strathdee’s (2009) and Slater’s (2009) general contentions regarding ACE in New Zealand. In reflecting on the creation of a particular funding document, *Koia! Koia!*, Strathdee (2009) noted the exclusion of community in the development of ACE policy, with insiders...“calling the shots.” Similarly, Slater (2009) noted the exclusion (or at least inadequate inclusion) of learners and practitioners in the reform and subsequent management of ACE through the TES and STEP strategies. A number of community respondents also lamented both a “lack of consultation” and their inability to shape the policy agenda. One community literacy policy actor proclaimed:

*So there needs to be more wider consultation...[and] more involvement from...people working in the community...because I think there isn’t enough*
people from the community being involved in policy decisions and I mean, they’re all tertiary89 when I go to working groups...there’d be me and maybe a couple of others who are from community and everybody else is tertiary, you know, and there’re more of them.

Furthermore, even those who were consulted considered the consultation processes far less than perfect. This opinion was exemplified by the following conversation I had with two people working in the field of workplace literacy:

Sarah: The view from TEC is ‘why would we consult with you? We’ll just tell you what we need when we’ve decided.’

Amy: ‘We will all figure out what to do and then we’ll tell you...we have to climb this mountain and how are we going to do it?’

Sarah: ‘We won’t talk to anybody who might have climbed a mountain before because they’ve only climbed little mountains and we are climbing Mt Everest.’

Amy: Yeah. So, there hasn’t been much of a consultation going on.

Sarah: And actively I would say. There’s been questioning of why people would have an expectation of consultation.

Council of Trade Union participants also shared this outlook: “the government brings in a programme; the unions could have been calling for it but then the employers just pick up the funding...they just exclude the unions totally.” In fact, even those “preferred” literacy organization partners remarked that they had not received preferential treatment lest the government be “captured” by them. In other words, the government attempted to treat all providers alike, or at least attempted to provide the image of neutrality.

Likewise, a number of my participants noted that they considered their interactions with government less like consultation and more like lobbying that was (according to some) adversarial in nature. Liam, for example, commented at length on “lobbying” and Leila about “struggling against government” as community organizations. In response to the

89 By the word “tertiary” the respondent was referring to the fact that people were coming from polytechnics and universities; that they were mostly, in other words, academics.
question surrounding consultation and being able to influence government policy, Leila, a Māori literacy leader, explained to me what the process of consultation “looks like”:

>You come to the meeting with a set agenda to look at the set priorities of the group you are working with. You may or may not have gotten the information prior to it. If you don’t, you’re dealing with it as it comes through that table on that day. If you do, you’re going to put a fair amount of time aside in order to do that. On a good day, I’ve managed to do that, on a good week. But that’s a very good week...And you hope you can infiltrate and have some influence of some type and I think we do. But you never can dismantle the framework—you can tweak the framework.

She continued that all you could do was to “be in the house when they’re there, to answer questions that are being asked but not to think that, having been asked, we’ll be listened to...” Liam—another person working in Māori literacy—also remarked:

>So ...we’ve set up an agenda, which is TES, and we have these add-ons that we’ll bring in, which ignores that the process has been exclusionary because unless it fits with what they’ve already got, it’s going to be rejected.

Improving relations with Māori, increasing Māori participation in tertiary education and negotiating issues of autonomy/accountability were particular challenges for the most recent Labour government (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005). The government’s desire for inclusion and greater social cohesion is evident in its sharpened focus on Māori as a targeted demographic. Furthermore, Māori clearly have acted as active policy creators rather than mere policy receivers. In terms of consultation, though, the arena is somewhat murky.

There is, indeed, much criticism emanating from the Māori community. In reflecting on Māori’s role in the consultation process, Liam commented that the efforts of bringing Māori concerns to the agenda had seen some battles won, but that even when Māori literacy advocates may have made some inroads on one policy, a subsequent policy might be released with exactly the same flaws. In other words, an initiative or policy may have already been produced by government, he explained, before Māori or community literacy is “let in” to comment on it after the agenda has essentially been set. Evidence of this, Leila informed me, is in the development of the Māori Education Strategy, Ka Hikitia, which was released.
six months after the second TES (NZ Ministry of Education, 2008b). However, as Moana and Leila note, who both work with Māori learners and with Māori literacy issues, “it was school-focused;” in other words the Māori Education Strategy focused almost exclusively on developing Māori policy and programming in compulsory schooling. At the time of writing, a Māori adult literacy strategy, or a Pasifika strategy, had not yet been developed.

*Perceived obstacles to consultation.* Both Māori and Pakeha practitioners alike believed that the makeup of government and the way government was set up stymied and even quashed opportunities for meaningful collaboration. Māori literacy advocates noted the lack of cultural knowledge on the part of government administrators who, according to Liam, still have a general “lack of knowledge around Māori educational analysis.” Leila additionally commented on the glaring difference in the cultural makeup of policymakers compared to the literacy learners whom they purport to be trying to help. Many practitioners across the board felt that meaningful partnership with and support of the community sector was not really possible due to the lack of representation from the community sector in government, as alluded to in the previous chapter. A community participant deftly captured this trend:

> It’s really hard to talk about the adult education community sector and the difficulties of advocating for it when none of you have had those experiences...And, therefore the issues we’re talking about—difficulties in learning and more frequent negative teaching and learning experiences at school, you don’t necessarily get that. If you can’t get it, how can you really write a policy for these people that is going to be useful and relevant to them?

According to practitioners and researchers, the main obstacles to influencing the agenda-setting process were the already dominant agendas in government as well as the attempt by government to remain “neutral.” The concern for government neutrality was an intriguing one. Just over half a dozen practitioners and researchers spoke to me about the government’s apprehension of “being captured by the field,” which is how policymakers described it. Amy explained that this had led to numerous pilot projects conducted by
government, which she considered both a waste of time and money, because they [government] were too concerned that talking to practitioners and experts in the field would not be objective. She explained, “I think that they worry that they’ll get captured by us. And, so, if they just talk to us that would mean that we’d capture them with our agenda...so it’s not objective.” Leila also mentioned that the fear government officials have “is that they don’t get captured by the field. So for us to be inviting them for any length of time is seen to be capturing them instead of an engagement.” According to Leila, an ideal consultation process would look like a critical engagement between people who know something about the field, which would include practitioners, researchers, advocates and the officials themselves. However, this participant remarked that government officials were concerned that they would be drawn into her organization’s particular philosophy. “So at the end of the day,” Leila shared, “it makes it extremely difficult to be heard, because your comments are always being censured in terms of, ‘I’m being captured if I agree with you’...it’s a conundrum in terms of how we deal with that.”

While non–government policy actors generally considered this approach to be problematic, and at times absurd, one policy researcher noted that there was some valid reasoning behind government’s fears, since if the government approaches Literacy Aotearoa, for example, they would get a different story and corresponding ideology than if they consulted with Workbase. However, as a community literacy educator remarked, the government is far from neutral or objective: “ultimately it comes back to what counts as knowledge? Who is at the table? Who gets priority? When you talk about [neutrality], who are you talking about? It defaults back to those who are ultimately in power.”

These above comments provide a different perspective on the government’s core beliefs in engaging in supposedly value-neutral policymaking. The government justifies prioritizing certain ideas—such as workplace literacy, assessment, quality assurance, for example—by drawing on “best practices” and ostensibly “objective” data. This is reflective of a managerialist (and indeed neoliberal) approach to policy development, as Ball (1997) observed, which relies on statistics and supposed objective criteria to provide backing to
subjective viewpoints and to support particular policy directions.

### 7.5 Responses to the Management, Oversight and Professionalization of Literacy

The concern for quality in adult literacy was strongly visible when examining the context of policy text production (in Chapters 4 and 5). This quality concern is indeed manifest in a variety of identified policy issues and responses, such as embedded literacy, regional needs, greater standards, increased outcomes, improved assessment, professionalization and the overarching accountability and oversight to ensure quality. These discourses and practices of quality were interpreted, responded to, and mediated in a number of different ways.

#### 7.5.1 Reactions to the trend of ‘embedded literacy.’

“Embedded literacy” is one discourse emphasized in policy texts and practices (as we saw in the context of text production in Chapter 5). Embedded literacy is part of an overall shift towards a more contextualized curriculum, where literacy and numeracy comprise a major part of a vocational course (much along the same lines advocated in and by IALS and ALL). Polytechnic and ITO instructors, in particular, are being asked to adopt a more integrated approach to teaching where they would teach requisite literacy and numeracy skills alongside the skills that relate directly to their given trade. A government policy researcher explained,

> So it is more of a focus on embedded literacy and numeracy rather than specific programmes of learning to read... So in that way we’re looking to ensure that vocational tutors are aware of the literacy-numeracy components within courses being provided, and thinking more explicitly about how to identify and meet the needs of their learners in those areas.

To make learning relevant for a particular industry, organizations and instructors attempt to make programmes link directly to workers’ lives by utilizing “real-life scenarios” (Workbase, n.d). The field—at least in 2008—appeared to be shifting towards a more situated approach
to literacy, with literacy requirements linked very much to what workers need on the job. Sarah, who worked at a workplace programme explained,

...like a cook or a carpenter. They’d say, well, in order to cook this, or to build this, you would need to understand these types of equations, do some calculations... [focusing on the particular] literacy and numeracy requirements of the job.

It is a way of incorporating literacy more explicitly into industry and keeping workplace training in line with the government’s desire for a more coordinated, integrated system of adult literacy and policy. Embedded literacy also represents further evidence of standardization.

Many workplace literacy participants and researchers welcomed the development. Vocational tutors informed me how they were trying to use authentic and concrete examples from the industry or job to make the learning more directly relevant. Unions also reflected this trend in their training and literacy programmes. “It’s really all about making education more meaningful,” a union education researcher commented.

On the other hand, there were reported problems in terms of the ability of polytechnic and other vocational subject-matter instructors to effectively teach in such a contextualized manner and to include literacy components in their teaching. This is mainly to do with the fact (according to four practitioners at least) that vocational instructors tend to have had little to no teacher training. “They’re carpenters, they’re not literacy instructors,” was the sentiment of four people I spoke with. These respondents were concerned about the inadequacy of training instructors had received to be able to really teach reading and writing skills in their contextualized curriculum. Nonetheless, vocational instructors were being demanded by government and by their institutions to adopt an integrated approach to vocational training and teach literacy more explicitly. These participants’ observations call into question the adequacy of government support for, or follow-through on, declared budgetary and discursive priorities in teaching an inclusive curriculum in adult literacy.
7.5.2 Responses to increased assessment and demand for outcomes.

Embedded or contextualized literacy is juxtaposed with, and sometimes complemented by, discourses of accountability and associated discourses of assessment and outcomes. We see this in the continuation and even tightening of outcome criteria; for example, in the requirement that two-thirds of adult literacy students receiving government funding must move either into higher level class or into further employment (see Walker, 2003, 2008); and, for example, in the continuing development of new assessment tools (see NZ Treasury, 2007). The requirement to conform to recent government demands was taken up differently by different people.

While some participants remarked that they found it a struggle to adhere to new measures, others noted that they had been able to adapt the system to suit their own approaches and pedagogies. For instance, although government bodies were increasingly interested in improving student credentials and in the quantitative assessment of learning, instructors have responded to this requirement various ways. For example, some instructors have attempted to divert student attention from earning “credits” or “points”, towards actual learning. Lucy a polytechnic instructor explained that she did not make the credits the focal point as it would be “all about getting to that 80 credits [needed to move up a level] as opposed to learning the content of the programme.” Yet, she used the credits as a motivator: “So when they are at 76 credits I go ‘Do you know that with four more credits you can get NCEA Level 1?’...and they go ‘wow’ and then they are so driven to get those last four credits.”

Other institutions even created their own parallel assessment tools. Workbase, in conjunction with ITOs, created the “Descriptor Bank Project” to describe the literacy needs in the workplace in manufacturing and processing. In this immense task, Workbase established a five-year plan of action to function alongside the TES years. In examining 80

90 Formal institutions and most workplace programmes are obliged to follow NQF requirements and work with unit standards. Some courses adhere to the compulsory school system of NCEA standards, levels 1, 2 and 3 (equivalent to the last three years of high school).
unit standards associated with careers in these areas, Workbase lifted out the literacy skills. The descriptor list includes reading, writing, speaking and listening, numeracy, critical thinking plotted on a scale from 1-6, with literacy skills at level 1 considered the easiest, and those at level 6, the hardest.

At the same time as individuals and organizations are developing their teaching in a way they believe is most appropriate rather than adhering directly to government ideals, these individuals and organization also expressed criticism of the government’s concern with assessment and outcomes. Such criticism is epitomized in one university researcher’s comment: “[The government wants] to get a ruler and run it over...to measure what’s happened.” This comment was not only shared by many participants but it is also reminiscent of earlier critiques made by New Zealand educational scholars writing on reforms that were passed in the 1980s and 1990s (Findsen, 2001; Roberts, 1997a, 1997b; 2000; Tobias, 2004). This critique also mirrors Apple’s (2000) reflections on the “cult of accountability” in compulsory schooling in the U.S, where teachers are held accountable for outcomes and for curricula over which they have little control. Similarly, most non-government participants heavily censured what they saw as a government obsession with metricization, standards, outcomes and assessment.

Specific criticisms varied. Some instructors believed that outcome targets established by government departments were not always realistic. Kim, who ran a community literacy organization, told me about a WINZ (Work and Income New Zealand) government contract her organization had received that expected that by providing 30 learners with 12.5 hours of literacy learning the learners would all become adequately competent to move into a job. Other participants criticized the exclusion of literacy “outcomes” that they considered meaningful but which were rejected by government as evidence of progress. For instance, a community instructor considered a student not “swearing profusely anymore” an outcome, though she doubted that this would be accepted in her reporting. Another workplace practitioner recounted a story of a student who learned to use the telephone and who was previously “absolutely scared stiff to ring anybody up and ask how much does it cost to go
to the movies.” This instructor considered this a significant outcome. She also noted that sometimes it was a matter of learners “not doing something harmful or inappropriate” rather than doing something. Yet, while refraining from irresponsible or anti-social behaviour was seen as an “outcome” for her, it would not be considered as such by assessment bodies. There was an overt disconnect between how non-government policy actors defined success with what the official definition of success was according to the government. Another community literacy educator, for instance, was annoyed at the government’s “craze” with measuring outcomes by certificate levels or credentials. She commented, “maybe I want to have my literacy skills improve so that I can do something else...relative to getting a B.A, MA or PhD, it’s just as valuable but how do you judge its value?” She continued,

But it’s about what you value in measurement. So if the unit standard is valued, then its measurement is seen to be valuable...But my self-assessment coupled with a few observations from other people?...So, it all comes back to who defines what is important and what’s valuable... And that’s part of the issue...trying to value the soft skills people gain and getting that assessed.

In other words, measuring outcomes through traditional means of academic assessment did not seem fair or useful to her for assessing learning in adult literacy. Workplace literacy expert, Sarah, pinpointed the tension between government and outsider interpretations of success in literacy programmes:

The thing they [the government] haven’t been able to figure out is how do you invest in this area and be assured that you are going to be getting literacy outcomes that are meaningful for the country in return because they were very worried about the absence of credible, well-skilled providers. It wasn’t that, how do you prove that there is any effect, but they didn’t see a sector capable of delivering quality interventions and any method of tracking of what you were getting for your investment from the government.

(This return on investment speaks to the dominance of economic considerations in the creation and oversight of educational policy).

Nonetheless, participants did concede that discussions around policy tables appeared
to have changed (at least somewhat). Samantha, a government bureaucrat, admitted that there was “less press on evidencing and more of an acceptance that there are a range of benefits [of literacy programmes to literacy learners].” There is also evidence that there was less emphasis placed on accountability for community groups, at least compared to institutions and workplace programmes. Indeed, many community organizations and instructors commented that they were under relatively little pressure and could develop their own curriculum and evaluation. Literacy Aotearoa noted, for instance, that at their learning centres “learners set their own programme and learning plan.” In another example, Elise, a literacy researcher, informed me that the pressure to show “measurable results” was not really applied to community literacy. And, yet another community literacy practitioner declared with joyous amazement that her organization was given funding for a 15-hour literacy programme with “no outcomes!” This suggests that the pressures around outcomes and academic performance may have weakened somewhat, at least in some aspects for certain literacy providers.

7.5.3 Professionalization. The other major discourse connected to developing higher “quality” literacy, along with “outcomes” and “assessment,” has been professionalization and, specifically, credentialism of adult literacy instructors. According to a Ministry of Education document *Moving Forward: skills for the knowledge economy*, in 2001 much of the adult literacy sector was characterized by short-term contracts, minimal job security no real career path, no qualifications (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001b). Since that time, there have been many programmes implemented, and set to be implemented, to help address the (widely considered) lack of professionalization in adult literacy. Indeed, what was proposed in the ALS (NZ Ministry of Education, 2001a) has now become a reality: increased focus on teacher quality with government funding contingent on providers meeting quality requirements. This can be seen in staff undertaking PD programmes and working towards gaining qualifications and relevant experience.

In talking to government officials, the concern with professionalization was palpable.
“I think the most pressing thing is the professionalization of the workforce,” Samantha clearly stated. For her, an ideal future for the adult literacy field consisted of qualified tutors who would engage in ongoing professional development that included “frameworks for assessment and for quality assurance.” Another policy maker conceded that these new frameworks for assessment and quality assurance place professionalization at the centre, which would “ultimately need to be linked to further funding.” In other words, funding of literacy programmes would become contingent on the professional development and qualifications of an organization’s instructors.

Placing literacy within the larger context of a national skills agenda, and moving it away from the community sector, was a major propeller of professionalization. Bianca, a policy bureaucrat, stated:

\[
\text{Literacy and numeracy has clearly been put under the umbrella of the overall skill strategy for New Zealand, and so I really like the fact that it has been taken out of community volunteers, grass roots, not that those things aren’t valuable — they are valuable and we really appreciate what they contribute— but that has meant a very fragmented, unprofessional, poor capability — you know — erratic funding. You never know whether you are going to get another grant next year. All of those kinds of issues...which has really hindered...the building of quality that we really need.}
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In other words, in its inclusion under a larger umbrella of skills development, literacy and numeracy have been subjected to greater scrutiny—not only in terms of student achievement but also in terms of verifying the quality of its workforce. Indeed, professionalizing has generally meant credentializing the workforce, from diploma level courses to Masters’ degrees. Much of this, as previously noted, has been driven by the NZQA through the FLQA (NZQA, 2007), as well as through TES’ stated commitment to make greater use of the NZQA in the non-compulsory schooling sector (TEC, 2005, 2007).

There are many examples of greater opportunities for professional development and acquisition of further qualifications in adult literacy. As well as there being more NCALE programmes on offer—both the general and vocational stream—universities also became part of the literacy credentializing trend. In 2007, for example, Auckland University of
Technology (AUT) offered for the first time a Master’s degree in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education—an online, course-based programme offered to practitioners that focuses on: adult literacy and numeracy theories; teaching strategies and assessment for literacy and numeracy; programme design; and, applied projects (AUT, 2008). Students in New Zealand are also now able to pursue degrees at the Bachelors and Masters level in education with a specialization in adult literacy.

This professionalization agenda has generally been endorsed by organizations, researchers and practitioners. Eric, a director of a small adult education organization, noted that the (NCALE) qualifications were “a step in the right direction.” He was also generally positive about the Ministry of Education’s “Learning for living” project:

Professional development in the field is beginning to hit home. So, we’ve got a lot of providers...involved in the 'learning for living' PD programme. And I think it’s been a significant feat, not always as sharp as I might’ve liked it...could’ve done better. But first-time conversations with professional communities where people get together and talk about what is going on with your teaching.

In other examples, Rebecca, another director and practitioner of adult education noted the problematic connection made between professionalization and increased demands of accountability, though, at the same time, was also pleased at the introduction of certification since it could possibly result in “having some kind of career structure.” Lucy, an adult literacy tutor at a polytechnic, explained, “long gone are the days of ‘grannies’...the volunteer-type of person who sits around in somebody’s home with their woolly cardy...and doing good....” Lucy hoped that qualifications would change public perceptions. She hoped that the educational field could become one where you would have “a primary school teacher, a secondary school teacher, an adult literacy teacher.” She continued,

I think that is going to have a huge impact on our capacity and our capability...I see our strategy [the general government approach] really helping with...professionalization and de-stigmatization of adult literacy in

91 In New Zealand, the word “cardy” is used to refer to “cardigan.”
New Zealand. It has always been the poor cousin of all of the other tertiary stuff and now it is actually not. Well, it is probably still the big poor cousin, but not so much.

Professionalization of volunteers was generally welcomed, as participants believed it would help create public perceptions of adult literacy educators as capable and professional. Though, as Rebecca reflected, just because you aren’t paid, does not mean you can’t be a professional. She commented, “...it’s unfortunate that there’s probably still a misconception that volunteers are ladies in pearls who play golf, or retirees. I believe that volunteers can be professional, you know... I’m unhappy about the term ‘professionalizing it’ [when it refers to remuneration].”

Concerns and confusion over professionalization and credentials. On the other hand, there were a number of critiques, concerns and some confusion (especially from community literacy practitioners) over NCALE and its becoming (potentially) obligatory for everyone. Most organizations had been informed that the NCALE or the Masters would be compulsory to all instructors by 2009, though this had not strictly occurred. Some even told me volunteers would be made to undertake a qualification in order for their organization to still qualify for government funding. It was not clear whether this would in fact become policy; nonetheless, most instructors recognized that government funding would be increasingly contingent on whether tutors had qualifications, (a fact we saw confirmed earlier by policymaker Samantha). This trend had placed organizations in a bind and created resentment and confusion. Marianne, who was a senior instructor in the field for many years, questioned why she needed to undertake qualifications with so many years in the field, still confused whether she could “get by” with her Level 3 CALT (Certificate in Adult Literacy Tutoring) without having to undertake the NCALE. In another example, Rebecca had recently found herself in the position where her organization had been “inundated” with applications of people wanting to teach yet not one had “adult literacy training”. This is not surprising since the main form of adult literacy training is the NCALE, which has only been available since 2007. Nonetheless, she was not willing to hire the applicants due to the new
requirements and fears over funding. Marianne also remarked that there are “those [volunteers] who just want to do the tutoring and just work with the students. They don’t see a lot of point of getting through the qualifications.” Qualifications for all did not seem either realistic or fair for many community adult educators.

Furthermore, while professionalization had started to occur, at the time of research it had not yet resulted in more stable jobs for practitioners or in the availability of increased funding for the community sector. As another government participant pointed out, “it’s okay to crank the game up but it’s a two-way process. And if you talk to a lot of the tutors, they feel that it is one-way at the moment. They’re having to move but they still can’t get beyond the one year contract...at most.” Michael also reflected, “If you don’t have real jobs it does seem a bit artificial to be driven to get qualifications, you know? And if you’re the most marginalized kind of employment...” A “huge amount of work” is still done by volunteers in most community literacy providers, Rebecca noted at least in regards to her experience in her organization, with paid staff generally overworked and underpaid: “…outside funding is hugely significant, and we’d do a much better professional job if we could have more resources and we could support the tutors we have better,” she commented.

These comments reveal tensions and resentments. Furthermore, there is of yet insufficient evidence as to whether professionalization will transform the field as a whole, and whether it will help create more of a career path for practitioners. What we can conclude from section 7.6 is that over the past decade the adult literacy field was subject to increased oversight and regulation in the form of accountability, standards, quality and professionalization. These are all eerily reminiscent of neoliberal policy discourses expounded throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This is notwithstanding the renewed inclusive liberal emphasis on collaboration, partnerships and consultation, which, again, were patchily implemented.
7.6 Conclusions

The context of interpreted/mediated policy practices and outcomes has provided further information on the government’s literacy agenda and, in turn, has given us additional insight into the goals and practices of adult literacy policy in New Zealand.

In sum, according to non-government policy actors, the adult literacy agenda was/is real. Moreover, these participants generally considered the proliferation of adult literacy policy a positive contribution to the field and to the country. The workplace focus, while considered the favoured child (over community) in adult literacy policy, was also supported by most, insofar as it brought attention (and indeed increased funding) to the field as a whole. At the same time, community literacy participants criticized the government literacy agenda on the basis that it presented an imbalance between community and workplace, and between society/community and the economy. The community sector has adapted to and subverted the government’s workplace agenda; the focus on Māori, and the intrinsic link in the country between Māori and community literacy has led to some positive outcomes for this demographic (according to some). There seem to be, also, some additional possibilities for diversification and inclusion of marginalized groups. In addition, the collaboration emphasis—part of the government’s declared commitment to furthering inclusion of social partners—does not seem to be as visible in action as it is in discourse, at least this is the case according to certain policy actors and organizations. The desire to appear neutral, though not really borne out in practice, is given as a reason by government for limiting and delimiting consultation. Furthermore, the make-up of government appears not to have changed following the technocratic trends established under Rogernomics: where policy bureaucrats would no longer be experts in a particular field but rather career politicians who would move from post-to-post every few years. According to a number of long-time literacy experts, this has unfortunately resulted in losses in institutional memory, and has prevented the development of meaningful relationships between government and outside policy actors. This fact stymies policy influence, as argued by this study’s participants.
In the arena of quality assurance, and interrelated discourses of assessment, outcomes and professionalization, there were positive and negative responses. On the one hand, expansion of quality assurance was viewed as problematic in consideration of its association with increased oversight, accountability measures and emphasis on output. Professionalization, in particular, also caused confusion, mistrust and some resentment, especially given that the sector continued to be under-supported and underpaid, especially in community programmes. On the other hand, the existence of new credentials (e.g., NCALE, new Masters’ programmes) has been largely welcomed, and most practitioners were pleased with the heightened government commitment to providing the field with further legitimacy.

In short, the context of interpreted policy practices and outcomes suggests a series of tensions: between bureaucrats and practitioners; between workplace and community sectors; between social and economic motivations for literacy; between partisanship and (espoused) neutrality; between policy-by-consensus and policy-by-decree; and, more generally, between controlled centralization (manifest through standards, standardization, national credentials, quality control, and a national skills’ agenda) and a focus on decentralization, diversification, collaboration, targeted diversity. My qualitative interviews reveal that these diverging discourses do not necessarily work well in tandem and may present conflict, winners, and losers, rather than a collaborative agenda of inclusion, which was the declared goal of the 5th Labour government in its commitment to Third Way principles (Economist, 2003).
At the end of the 20th Century in New Zealand, adult literacy was primarily a community-based field led by volunteers. In fact, prior to the election of the 5th Labour government, adult literacy had substantially failed to capture government attention, and explicitly termed “adult literacy policy” was virtually non-existent. Elected less than one year after the release of the International Adult Literacy Survey results, Helen Clark’s government made skills policy—and adult literacy policy explicitly—part of its social policy agenda; an agenda which the government claimed represented a stark contrast from the neoliberal social policy that had preceded it (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005).

The point of my dissertation was to better understand this newfound government interest in adult literacy in New Zealand, in terms of the nature, scope and characteristics of the reforms introduced by New Zealand’s 5th Labour government. What drove this research was a desire to learn what the adult literacy agenda had been in New Zealand from 1999-2008, why and how reform had come to pass, and what the shift had been in adult literacy/education policy discourse from the periods 1984-1999 to 1999-2008. To address these research aims I undertook an interpretive policy sociology focused on three contexts of policy of adult literacy (see Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). The data consisted of major policy documents and texts, and transcripts from interviews conducted with primary policy actors (experts in the arena of adult literacy, N=20). In devising the research instruments, and approaching the analysis of policy contexts, I drew on a variety of methodological and theoretical literature including agenda setting (e.g., Birkland, 2003), policy transfer (e.g., Steiner-Khamsi, 2004), qualitative interviewing (Kvale, 1996) and discourse analysis (e.g., Edelman, 1988; Fairclough, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). From these tools, I then
devised further analytical tools, which I employed to examine texts and interview transcripts: the 10 As of document analysis and the 5 As of interviewing.

In this final chapter, I attempt to make sense of some of the answers I derived to my questions through my methodological approach. I tie together the findings from the previous four chapters, synthesizing the three contexts of adult literacy policy in New Zealand as I understood them. In what follows, I first synthesize each policy context and then provide a conclusion of the overall context. Second, I engage a broader discussion on the main findings as they relate to neo and inclusive liberalism. Third, I connect my study’s findings to the findings of other studies and to other literature. Fourth, I discuss the implications and contributions of the dissertation’s findings. And, finally, I offer some brief commentary on what has happened since 2008 in the country, before providing some concluding statements.

8.1 The Contexts of Adult Literacy Policy in NZ

The contexts of policy, as expressed by Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992), provided a clear and comprehensive framework from within which to examine adult literacy policy in New Zealand. In these contexts, I explored the relationships among texts, influence and mediated and interpreted practices and effects, utilizing a discursive lens with which to view adult literacy policy and its trajectory. In this section, I provide an overview of the findings of each context ending with a summary of what these contexts tell us when taken together.

As I argue here, and as demonstrated over the three findings chapters, the context of adult literacy policy over the past decade presents a continuation of the context established during the New Right era (i.e., 1984-1999). In fact, adult literacy policy reform over the past decade or so would not have been possible if it were not for the neoliberal educational reforms that preceded it. As we have seen, market-based reforms during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s led to a significant increase in participation across all tertiary education as the sector moved from an elite to a mass system (McLaughlin, 2003). In the
late 1980s, similar issues propelled the expansion of post-compulsory schooling to those that later resulted in the creation of adult literacy policy over a decade later: modernization, global integration, creation of a more knowledge-based economy, and economic inclusion for those at the margins.

Below, I break down each of the three contexts in adult literacy in New Zealand as previously developed in the findings chapters, providing additional reflections to help us make sense of what these contexts tell us individually and collectively.

8.1.1 Context of text production. Policy texts are the representation of values, of policy intent and of policy action (Ball, 1994). As Codd once reflected, we discursively analyze texts in order to decipher language that is used to legitimate political and government processes (Codd, 1988). In the overall context of text production in adult literacy in New Zealand from 1984-2008, we focused on the articulation of policy problems and the proposed approaches or expressed answers to such problems. In examining this context of policy text production, we saw that the ideals, discourses, and concepts in tertiary education developed over the late 1980s acquired currency throughout the 1990s and established the discursive context in which more recent adult literacy policy initiatives were created.

One key theme in reforming post-compulsory education that was first articulated in the late 1980s, was the expressed desire to establish greater systems of accountability in post-compulsory education through increased centralized control. Essentially, as the country rolled back its welfare state (Kelsey, 1997) it ushered in a new evaluative state (Ainley, 2004), which categorically transformed the educational system. A new and improved tertiary education system, as proposed by the Education Act in 1989, was to be subjected to improved systems of accountability to increase educational capacity and standards. This concern with evaluation and accountability—which is observable in discourses of professionalization, credentialism, standards, quality assurance and assessment—started in the compulsory school sector in the later part of the 1980s. It then began to more fully
permeate tertiary education over the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. And, under the fifth Labour government, it came to govern adult education (and what was at this point referred to as adult literacy education). A discourse of professionalization, which had come to dominate discussions on compulsory schooling, emerged in writings on adult education also. In essence, Hawke (1988) had paved the way for an expanded understanding of tertiary education in his endeavour to link education and training more closely. This helped set the stage for the further usurpation of adult literacy into tertiary education in the 2000s. As such, the field of adult literacy became part of a broader mission to reform post-compulsory education; and, as an official part of post-compulsory education, adult literacy became subjected to similar accountability demands as the educational system as a whole.

Along with discourses of assessment, quality assurance, accountability etc., additional discourses emerged during the 1980s and 1990s that affected post-compulsory education. These discourses were augmented throughout the following decade in their connection to adult literacy and skills training. Modernization, global integration and competition, and the knowledge economy all acted as drivers of reform towards greater skills, greater access, and system expansion. As Casey (2006) noted, during the first years of the millennium there was further refinement of knowledge-based economy discourses with a focus on skills and innovation. A concern with skills led to reforming, and further reforming, the tertiary education sector. This also led to a focus on adult literacy, and workplace literacy in particular, as literacy was reconceptualized to fit within an extant skills discourse.

Specifically, what we learned through the context of policy text production was that the “new” discourse of literacy was situated within older Labour policy priorities of revamping the post-compulsory education sector to: develop the skills of citizens; address the so-called skills-mismatch and labour market deficits; and, help bridge the growing divisions between the haves and have-nots in New Zealand society. At the turn of the century, literacy was added as an ingredient to the mix of post-secondary education and skills training, and began to be heralded as a solution to articulated policy problems. This occurred primarily because of both a change in government and IALS, as I will explore in the context of influence below.
Changes in and through policy texts. As Fairclough (2003, 2006) has demonstrated, discourses lead to change, and words can substantially transform policy and practice. In the late 1980s, discourses led to the creation of the Education Act, the Ministry of Education, PTEs, the Industry Training Act, and, above all, the NZQA. These texts then resulted in further credentialism, accountability measures and surveillance over adult literacy and foundational workplace learning. Texts and discourses surrounding adult education and skills triggered the funding of particular policy priorities, such as workplace literacy, and resulted in the endorsement of certain policy practices, such as professionalization and collaboration.

As Taylor (1997) pointed out, policy can either be substantive or symbolic. This is not to say symbolic policy is less powerful, but, as we know, certain things can only get done if there is money to back up a policy priority. We see a shift in symbolic policy from the 4th Labour government (1984-1989) to National (1990-1999). Labour endorsed more of a social equity rationale for post-schooling education than National. The earlier Labour government also appears to have valued (at least in part) financially supporting post-compulsory education. This is evidenced particularly in its Learning for Life documents and in the Education Act. By investigating the Education Act (a Labour-led document) and the final budgets of the National era (1997-1999) we see a shift in ideology, with the 4th Labour government endorsing a social equity rationale and focusing on learning more substantively than National. The National government, in power from 1990-1999, did not explicitly reference supporting education for social reasons as much as Labour. Furthermore, National was behind significant cuts to post-compulsory education, and in its final term (1996-1999) proposed the creation of a community wage programme that seemed to prize employment above education. I believe these differences speak largely to the ideological distinction between the two central political parties.

It is much harder to discern substantive policy than symbolic or discursive concerns for the time leading up to 1999. Indeed, the funding priorities of the two previous
governments during the neoliberal era (i.e., Labour from 1984-1989; and National from 1990-1999) were not so easily gleaned from my research given my lack of access to financial data. For these reasons, we cannot conclude that the 4th Labour government’s discursive concern for social equity, diversity and equal opportunity was not matched by commensurate funding, though given the widespread funding cuts starting in the mid-late 1980s, it is doubtful that practice matched discourse. In terms of the latest Labour government, who ushered in adult literacy policy and reform, we can more easily determine substantive and symbolic priorities by examining some of the funding allocations: workplace literacy education and work-based education; targeting of disenfranchised New Zealanders (mostly Māori and Pasifika); credentialization of teachers; assessment of learners; and overall quality assurance and improved processes of accountability.

**Shifts in discourses.** Policy text discourses have shifted. This is notwithstanding the fact that the context of adult literacy text production from 1999-2008 emerged from the context of post-compulsory education text production from 1984-1999. In concluding the context of policy text production, I have provided below a table that gives an overview of the differences between discourses from 1984-1999 and from 1999-2008. It is not that the terms in the left-hand column were replaced by those in the right-hand; but, rather, terms that emerged over the past decade entered into the lexicon of policy discourse alongside terms that came before:
Table 4: Discourses of Adult Education from 1984-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourses 1984-mid-late 1990s</th>
<th>Discourses late 1990s-2008</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge economy</td>
<td>Knowledge society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Literacy and IALS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global integration</td>
<td>Globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest groups</td>
<td>Social partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professionalization</td>
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In essence, these newer and older discourses came together in the “new” adult literacy agenda.

8.1.2 Context of influence. The context of influence is where policy discourses and concepts are constructed and debated, and where individual and collective ideas gain currency (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). Through the actions of individuals, groups of individuals, organizations and institutions, these discourses, concepts and ideas provide impetus to certain policy development. As we saw in Chapter 6, in New Zealand, transnational organizations, national ministries and departments, national organizations and key individuals all came together to create the context of influence in adult literacy as it stood in 2008. Together, they have been key players in the agenda-setting process. My analysis of data led me to conclude that influence in adult literacy in New Zealand has taken the form of: national government power, through the DOL, TEC, and MOE (to a lesser extent); transnational persuasion (most notably through the OECD, and practices of other countries); and, interest group influence, observable in the soft and hard lobbying by organizations such as Workbase, Literacy Aotearoa, NZCTU, and the ITF. The individual actors in all three groupings (i.e. in national government power; transnational persuasion and interest group influence) are all important, especially those working on behalf of various organizations as part of an adult literacy interest group. Furthermore, it is the connections among the individuals from each group and with each other that is also of prime importance.
in establishing the context influence. As Steiner-Khamisi noted, “how (global) networks exert influence is as important a question as how educational policy makers and stakeholders are positioned in them” (2004, p.216).

Unsurprisingly, my research confirms the influence of IALS, and more generally the OECD, on the development of an adult literacy agenda. Barton and Hamilton (2000) observed that the results of IALS, ALL or other literacy assessments are “targeted at policymakers internationally, [with] considerable power to shape the vision that funds literacy programmes around the world” (p.378). This has surely also been the case in New Zealand. Nonetheless, it was not a foregone conclusion that IALS would act as the “focusing event” or “change in indicators” that it did (see Birkland, 2003), or that the OECD would be able to shape and, in fact, set the terms of discussion in concerning skills and employment. What happened is that individuals, organizations, event and reports managed to resonate with the Labour government’s already existing concerns. This is surely true also for organizations and individuals during the previous era. Steiner-Khamsi (2004) points out,

The potential of influencing educational reform depends on whether a controversy over educational reforms already exists—attractive if at that particular time policymakers are in need of additional external support for an already existent agenda...The most frequent response to OECD-type studies is indifference. In fact, in most countries, comparative and international studies pass unnoticed by politicians or general public and cause little excitement—positive or negative.

It appears that the conditions were favourable for the creation of adult literacy policy; that there was an IALS-shaped window of opportunity. This, I argue, was due in part to the context preceding 1999—a context in which expanding and reforming post-compulsory schooling dominated policy goals, in which reforms were implemented leading to the creation of certain ministries and departments (such as DOL, MOE, NZQA) and organizations (such as Workbase, Literacy Aotearoa, Business NZ, ITF, NZCTU etc.). And, this was also due in part to the election of a Third Way, inclusive liberal government for whom skills training, consultation, an overall concern for inclusion were central tenets of
their mandate as a political party.

To be sure, resources affect the ability to influence. Certain organizations in New Zealand increased their influence on adult literacy in what appears to be a “Matthew Effect,” where riches have begotten riches. As particular organizations have become “fatter” over the years, fed by money and fuelled by government endorsement and general legitimation, these organizations have, in turn, become more powerful which has then led to them accruing further funding and credibility. One example of an organization that has profited (at least in part) from this Matthew Effect is Workbase. Partially confirming Lindbolm and Woodhouse (1993) observations, who claimed that business holds a privileged position in the agenda-setting process, I found that economically or employment-oriented interest groups, such as Workbase, Business NZ, ITF and NZCTU, benefitted from increased opportunities for influence and position in the policy-making process. In fact, these organizations had a direct role in the creation of the NZ Skills Strategy, having managed to convince the government of the “reasonableness” of their demands for an emphasis on adult literacy to address skills gaps and to help build a strong economy.

The role of individuals. Individuals are always crucial as policy catalysts, conduits of policy transfer, and as those who set and establish agendas. In small countries like NZ, people move from national government department, to lobby group, and even to transnational organization, carrying their agenda with them, developing it, sharing it and swaying others. Steiner-Khamsi has described this as the “Maris O’Rourke effect,” referring to the New Zealand architect, or at least popularizer, of outcome-based education in the 1980s, who then led to the transfer of OBE across the world during the 1990s. Steiner-Khamsi suggests that the “tipping point” (see Gladwell, 2000) for the NZ model going global coincided with O’Rourke’s tenure at the World Bank, noting the unique role of policy think-tanks in the dissemination of policy ideas. Liz Moore is an example of the Maris O’Rourke effect—a policy entrepreneur for adult literacy. Specifically, ALS can be traced directly to her influence; the development of Workbase was due to her work in the organization and her
direct lobbying of the government; and, we can see the role Moore had in bringing in educational ideas from the UK and Australia to workplace learning and literacy in NZ. Other key figures before Moore include Professor Hawke, whose initial report in 1988 started a chain reaction of discursive priorities and policy creation surrounding reforming post-compulsory education. Yet, it is not just the individuals, organizations, and focusing events that act autonomously to change the policy terrain due to their clever lobbying; but rather certain individuals and organizations are given the authority to speak by the powers in the society (Bourdieu, 1990). These events, individuals and organizations do not just claim legitimacy and the authority to speak, but rather they both claim and are granted symbolic capital that in turn begets symbolic and material gain (see Bourdieu, 1991).

In short, influence is overt, covert, implicit, and explicit. What the findings of this research show is that individuals and groups from a variety of philosophical and ideological positions have often joined forces with one another to further promote the issue of adult literacy, to gain further influence and also to share in the riches bestowed on workplace literacy.

8.1.3 Context of interpreted practices and outcomes. The context of mediated and interpreted practices and outcomes can be understood as the responses to the discourses, practices and processes of policy text production and of policy influence, and to the relationship between these two other contexts. In addition, the context of interpreted practices and outcomes of adult literacy policy (like the context of influence) speaks to the co-creation of policy. In a democratic country like New Zealand, it is not the case that government dictates and enacts policy on an unsuspecting polity. Furthermore, responses to policy creation are not preordained or automatic. As this research revealed, there is not a predictable model of cause and effect in adult literacy policy in New Zealand but rather a model of unpredictability, subversion, moulding and negotiation. Indeed, the context of interpreted practices and outcomes revealed tensions in how adult literacy policy came to be formed, debated and negotiated.
By exploring the experiences of non-government policy actors, we were able to examine, and also problematize, the 5th Labour government’s claims of neutrality and objectivity in creating policy. The expressed desire by government ministries not to be “captured” by various providers discloses government’s desire to appear to create value-free, fair and balanced policy. This aim of avoiding sector capture and institutional monopolies can be seen as a reiteration of objectives expressed in earlier concerns such as those present in the Green and White papers released under the former National leaderships (NZ Ministry of Education, 1997, 1998). This also reflects a value placed on diversification of the field. However, such “objectivity” is clearly challenged by the unequal attention given to business interests, workplace literacy, and quality assurance in adult literacy above, say, community adult education. It also seems that the government’s desire to appear neutral affected the consultation processes in which it sought to engage. Consultation and collaboration, especially according to less favoured community partners, has been more rhetorical than anything else.

Nonetheless, what we can conclude from the context of interpreted practices and outcomes is that the Labour government made adult literacy a priority; and, furthermore, this fact was generally welcomed by those in the field. To garner financial support for their organizations, some participants commented that they were adapting to the emphasis on workplace literacy, taking up the discourse of workplace skills and employment but not necessarily changing their organizations’ fundamental mandates or missions. In short, what may seem on the face of it a constrictive government focus on skills and employment, opened up spaces and opportunities for various programmes and projects.

8.1.4 The overall context of adult literacy policy in New Zealand from 1999-2008. In my analysis, and in collectively making sense of the answers to my research questions and of the three contexts of adult literacy policy in New Zealand, I conclude that adult literacy became a central part of New Zealand’s economic strategy and social policy through a process that:
1. Expanded upon the previous governments’ strategy to upskill New Zealand;
2. Intensified discourses of both centralized “control” and decentralized “freedom;”
   Control (and constraint) was primarily reflected in discourses of centralization,
   standardization, regulation, and evaluation (specifically, assessment, accountability,
   quality control and professionalization). Freedom (and opportunity) was evident in
   discourses of decentralization, consultation, deinstitutionalization, privatization,
   diversification and also professionalization; and,
3. Prioritized practices of economically-related workplace literacy and targeted social
   support (namely, for Māori and Pasifika).

In sum, seemingly dissonant political ideologies, developed throughout the 1980s and
1990s, were joined together in the 2000s to form adult literacy policy that engaged
discourses and practices reflecting both neoliberalism, welfare liberalism, and above all,
inclusive liberalism.

8.2 Exploring the Paradoxical Discourses and Practices of an
Inclusive (neo)Liberal Adult Literacy Policy

I contend that adult literacy policy from 1999-2008 in New Zealand, as explored above,
brought together ingredients of authoritarianism and libertarianism and concerns for an
active market and active society. The result has been policy that both enabled and
constrained adult literacy initiatives, and that reflects both neoliberal (Gray, 1998; Kelsey,
1997; Saul, 2005) and inclusive liberal (Craig & Porter, 2006; Mahon, 2009; Walker, 2008a)
philosophies.

   Authoritarianism is evidenced in the government’s emphasis on control, regulation,
standardization, centralization and accountability. Here, we see the neoliberal ideological
pennant for the metricization and control of social policy outcomes in the development of
adult literacy policy, and also in the connections made between adult literacy and global
competitiveness. Ingredients of libertarianism are reflected in practices and discourses of decentralization, deregulation, diversification and the focus on personal and institutional responsibility. Support for an active market in adult literacy policy is observable in the emphasis placed on the workplace; the economy in general and the knowledge economy in particular; competition between providers and students; and outcomes (e.g., student “success”). Finally, the active society is a theme that also runs throughout adult literacy policy and is present in discourses of collaboration, consultation, community, student access, and the knowledge society.

There are, on the one hand, discourses of control, associated with a narrowing of options and a narrowing of the literacy arena to centre on the workplace and particular social groups; the constraining and delimitation of literacy practice; and, the controlling of the sector from both the state and the market. On the other hand, there are numerous discourses of freedom and opportunity; of freedom as it is understood within neoliberalism (e.g., freedom to run a business, individual opportunities to further one’s career through credentials); and, freedom as it is often conceptualized within welfare liberalism (support from the state, freedom to access educational opportunities, freedom from social exclusion etc.).

There has been a tripartite approach to adult literacy policy: with the inclusion of market, state and civil society actors (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005; Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004). The discourses of freedom and control, and of authoritarianism, libertarianism, active market and active society, reflect inclusive liberalism in adult literacy policy.

As we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, authoritarianism, libertarianism and an active market are brought together in the neoliberal state (Brody, 2004; Rose, 1999). An active market and authoritarianism reflect techniques of regulation and control exemplified in Bourdieu’s (1998) description of the right-hand of the state. In adult literacy policy, this is perceptible in the ever-mounting standards of accountability to which practitioners, students and organizations are subjected. As my findings illustrate, strict measures of accountability
placed on adult literacy and education in fact increased not decreased under the tenure of latest Labour government. However, it is precisely because this was the first time adult literacy had been integrated into serious educational policy, and in the process subjected to accountability measures once only reserved for K-12 schooling. Furthermore, the technocratic “state nobility” remain. Noted by a number of participants, career politicians manage the realm of education rather than people with any specific knowledge of the field. As one long-term researcher, practitioner and policymaker described, the idea that “if you could manage a pig farm you could manage education” (popularized under Roger Douglas’ reforms in the 1980s and 1990s) still resonated (and resonates) in government circles.

At the same time, “new” Labour in New Zealand—as was the case in the U.K, at least in reference to adult literacy, skills and training policy (Hyland, 2002)—continued to employ discourses of freedom. These discourses can be divided into libertarianism and active society. Libertarian discourses dominated under the previous National government and were still present under the 5th Labour government. These are reflected in frequent allusions to “choice” and “freedom,” as we saw in Chapters 4 and 5. Libertarianism is also visible in the act of handing over to literacy organizations greater responsibility and control for managing social cohesion. Active society discourses were almost as equally detectable. Indeed, the latest Labour government brought together libertarian values with magnified discourses focused on society, community, and equity (those discourses associated most with welfare liberalism, see Olssen, O’Neill, & Codd, 2004), and also on collaboration and inclusion. This trend indicates that the 5th Labour government shared similarities with the 4th Labour party of the 1980s, who, in some of their reforms, could be understood as neoliberal “lite” in comparison to the National party of the 1990s. (In contrast, National advocated for the community wage, cutting educational hours and funding, further privatization etc.). Indeed, noticeable in the first wave of documents released during the late 1980s was a consideration of equity alongside the more primary concerns of efficiency, growth, and radical modernization and global integration (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005; Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004).
8.2.1 Adult literacy policy and inclusive liberalism for state legitimation.

It is possible to view inclusive (neo)liberal adult literacy policy developed in NZ over the past decade (as described above) as legitimating the state and bolstering state control through an inclusive Anglo-Saxon capitalism. This is visible in four main ways. First, the 5th Labour government helped to legitimize itself through adult literacy policy by providing the impression of governing, and doing so in a manner to distinguish itself from the neoliberal governments before it. Second, the government focused explicitly on the economy, taking a “risk management” approach to social policy. Third, the government adopted a targeted welfare approach to adult literacy policy. In other words, it boosted its legitimacy by focusing on the economy and social outcomes yet in a way consistent with an Anglo-Saxon approach to skills policy (see Esping-Andersen, 1996; Rothstein, 1988; Veeman, Walker & Ward, 2006). Fourth, the state increased its power by exerting additional control over the educational process.

First, adult literacy policy can be seen as a tool directed to bring legitimacy to the Labour government by allowing it to distinguish itself from the policies and ideologies of the National government that preceded it. As the Prime Minister of the Labour coalition government declared on several occasions throughout 2005, the singularly and ruthlessly pursued market model of the 1980s and 1990s “was over” in New Zealand (Casey, 2006; Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005). It is important to remember that neoliberal governments like the National party during the 1990s were more interested in adhering to free-market orthodoxy (as epitomized under Douglas’ ideas on (re)organizing the economy) than they were in actively promoting and supporting adult education policy. In contrast, adult literacy policy, through its purported ability to increase productivity, reduce poverty and foster inclusion, formed part of the Labour government’s policy solution to what was a declining belief in New Zealand in the ability of the deregulated market to distribute goods equitably, and of globalization to cultivate cherished notions of community and a sense of belonging. To return to a quote from one of this study’s participants, adult literacy policy
isn’t necessarily that rational: “investment in people who’ve already got reasonable skills to have even higher skills might have more of an economic pay-off than investment in those who don’t.” Adult literacy policy hasn’t been mostly about responding to perfect economic information but rather can be seen a central way in which the government was able to differentiate themselves from the employment-focus, user-pays system advocated by the previous administration.

Second, the Labour government focused explicitly on the economy, as well as taking a “risk management” approach to social policy—a tool to further social and economic policy results by guarding against potential future problems. Firstly, the Labour government continued to place the economy at the centre. Indeed, business was still very much at the centre of social policy under the last administration. For example, in 2008 New Zealand continued to be a business paradise under the Labour government, receiving accolades for being first in the world in ease of starting a business; first in the world for protecting investors and second in the world, after Singapore, in terms of ease of doing business.92

Secondly, the approach taken to bolstering the economy was one of risk management. A book written on New Zealand public policy during the tenure of the latest Labour government declared, “[an] emphasis on risk management [has become] the dominant consideration...about the way in which the state organizes and provides social services” (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005, p.56). Adult literacy or learning programmes served as ways for government to hedge its bets against unemployment, and as a New Zealand document put it, to save the “next generation from welfare dependency” (Rich, 2003). Adult literacy policy was a way for the government to invest in the future today—by preventing child illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and crime—with potential savings on escalating health costs, prisons, welfare cheques etc.

Third, and related, recent adult literacy policy reflects an Anglo-Saxon capitalism in the way in which the government approached social policy—through the targeting of

92 See http://www.doingbusiness.org/economyrankings/
particular groups. Indeed, there was an emphasis on inclusion though not all parties were equally included, as those in community literacy attest. Rather, policies can be better considered redistributive ones, targeted to Māori or Pasifika rather than holistic welfare policies. This targeted and risk-management approach can still be best described as a liberal market or Anglo-Saxon approach (Esping-Andersen, 1996; Veeman, Walker & Ward, 2006).

To return to Rothstein’s (1998) reflections, welfare programmes that target the poor only have long been the Anglo-Saxon approach to social policy, with at-risk groups singled out as needing help by the state, while other groups bear more costs as individuals in user-pays systems.

The fourth way in which the state sought to gain power and legitimacy through adult literacy policy is by increasing regulation and control over the educational process. The strategies used in adult literacy policy include professionalization, emphasizing assessment and increasing measures of accountability, all of which can collectively be understood as part of a quality assurance agenda. The centralization and regulation of adult literacy brought adult literacy under further government control. We can understand more recent literacy policy not just an attempt to further economic and social inclusion and to temper the effects of globalization, but rather as part of a broader political, and perhaps ideological, project of wanting to help to legitimate the state and capitalism, and increase state control.

In sum, adult literacy policy was a way for the NZ state to gain legitimacy and power by employing inclusive liberal and neoliberal discourses and practices of inclusion, managerialism, targeted welfare and a particular “risk management” approach to economic and social policy.

### 8.3 Connecting my Findings to Other NZ Studies

It is additionally useful to explore my findings within the context of previous studies written about New Zealand’s neoliberal era and its more inclusive one. Tobias (2004), Findsen (2001) and Casey (2006), whose studies I introduced in Chapters 1 and 2, are three such
authors whose arguments mirror my own findings in regards to the ideological tensions in social policy released under the 4th Labour government (1984-1989), and also in regards to the differences between Labour-released legislation and policy enacted by National. All three, as I noted in Chapter 1, observed hybridity in the 4th Labour government’s approach to adult education policy, and all three claimed that National was less sympathetic to a more concerns of equity and social inclusion. Tobias’ (2004) argument that National was “uninterested” in lifelong learning is perhaps a stronger claim than I would make from my policy analysis; nonetheless, from examining the context of policy text production from 1984-1999 I also conclude that National, from 1990-1999, was decidedly less sympathetic to state involvement in lifelong learning than the Labour government before it (1984-1989).

In contrast, my findings did not reflect those of Roberts (2000). In examining the Foresight document published in 1997, Roberts observed a shift in discourse towards an arguably more inclusive liberal approach to skills policy. (Though, as he noted, the sentiment was still generally neoliberal). My sense is that while this was true of the Foresight project, this was not the general government sentiment of that time. Indeed, we should remember that this document was released a year prior to the proposed development of a “community wage” programme that evidently prized cutting welfare cheques and moving people into any job above funding meaningful education or training for the unemployed.

Scholars writing about the first decade of the century noted the continuation of neoliberal discourses in adult education reforms undertaken by “new” labour. This is something I also observed in my analysis of the overall adult literacy agenda of the latest government. Commenting on the creation of TEAC and the associated reports (e.g., TEAC, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c) Zepke writes, “TEAC...did not reverse the previous ethos but merely continued, in a more tempered form, economic rationalism with its focus on globalization, performativity...[and] user-pays” (2009, p.698). Similarly, Law and Stalker (2005) criticize TEC’s ostensibly behaviourist, narrow, normative and conformist vision of the citizen (p.6), which arises, I argue, from a continued neoliberal bias and managerialist emphasis. Education professor Nick Zepke (2009) questioned the success of the
government’s “third way [approach] that was supposed to mitigate the worst of both the traditional welfare state and neoliberalism” (p.754), noting the continuation of the “learning for earning” paradigm (as he puts it) championed in earlier OECD documents and by more neoliberal governments. While I would argue that TEC did not entirely reflect neoliberal concerns, I would agree with Zepke that neoliberal ideology is definitely discernable in a number of reforms and policies enacted over the previous decade.

In another article, which I also introduced briefly in Chapter 1, Slater (2009) commented that it was ironic that the adult and community education sector had avoided the market reforms of National (a government that had been clearly more market oriented), but had been subjected to reforms centred on accountability and performance by the Labour government who claimed to represent an alternative to the government that had preceded it. I do not see this fact as ironic, given that community education was not, and never really would be, a priority for a neoliberal government like National in the 1990s. In fact, the previous National government, in their keen focus on saving money and their neoliberal approach to social policy and growing the economy, would be much more likely to ignore the sector rather than seek to reform it. Moreover, subjecting ACE to stricter standards of accountability and the like is more reflective of an inclusive liberal/Third Way approach to social policy that discursively prizes post-compulsory education as a response to bolstering social policy in other areas, and which continues with neoliberalism’s managerialist tendencies.

As I have illustrated over the past four chapters, adult literacy became a central and centralized social and economic policy initiative in New Zealand over the past decade. This led some New Zealand scholars to be critical of the usurpation of adult literacy into the mainstream. Nick Zepke (2009) writes, for example,

Consequently, adult lifelong education in all its branches has been domesticated, its radical potential severely limited. Martin’s (2006) observation that mainstream respectability and responsibility compromises education leading to critical understandings, social action and political change seems to apply to Aotearoa New Zealand.
Slater (2009), too, criticized the usurpation of Adult and Community Education (ACE) into TEC as a centralizing endeavour. He is unsupportive of the government’s centralizing endeavour.

This “taming” and centralization of adult literacy policy were not generally criticized by my participants, though some community interviewees displayed some nostalgia. For the most part, however, my participants never really believed that adult literacy had truly ever had a “heyday” in New Zealand since, as they saw it, the field had never been properly resourced or respected. What Slater, other authors, and my research suggest, however, is that the adult literacy policy agenda of the past decade did not endorse a UNESCO-type civil society vision of lifelong education. Rather, it promoted a highly controlled and regulated version of a somewhat tempered version of lifelong learning in the form of adult literacy for the workplace and economy in continued consideration of society. Indeed, adult literacy was domesticated, centralized and moulded into government social and economic policy in New Zealand. Everything to do with non-compulsory schooling became a part of the TEC and subjected to its regulation. All tertiary education provision must now meet most of the same policy priorities, abide by the same accountability regimes and operate on similar funding formulae as other actors in the sector. It is an example of “joining up” (Ball, 2008; Craig & Porter, 2006) education policy in one broad, holistic framework. TES, and TEC as a whole, was behind the development of an inclusive liberal adult literacy policy agenda. As Strathdee (2009) writes, the tertiary education strategy (TES), published in 2002, emphasized partnerships, collaborative aspirations, and civil society sensibilities alongside its emphasis on skills for a knowledge-based, globalizing economy.

Notwithstanding continuing practices of managerialism, neoliberalism and concerns for an active market, in contrast to claims made in recently released articles, I argue that there was something distinctive about the Labour government’s modus operandi under Helen Clark, particularly in terms of its concern for skills and literacy. The country’s workplace skills strategy (Skill NZ Tripartite Forum, 2008), mirroring in some senses U.K Tony Blair’s Skills for Life policy, did do away with some of the more competitive
mechanisms endorsed by the National government. In addition, the influence and inclusion of Māori in recent policy creation—and the apparent increased emphasis on issues of equity, especially where Māori are concerned—also suggest a change. However, my thesis confirms Cheyne, O’Brien and Belgrave’s (2005) assertions: the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s helped determine the trajectory of policy development under the inclusive liberal Labour government. Specifically, these authors note how massive deregulation that occurred over the 1980s and 1990s allowed for greater Māori autonomy and inclusion, helping them to establish their position of power during the following decade.

My findings problematize some of the observations made in literature on Third Way social policy, and on Third Way/inclusive liberal New Zealand adult education policy in particular. I do not believe the inclusive liberal state of adult literacy in New Zealand to be nothing more than old wine in new skins, a description Fejes (2005) used to refer to recent Third Wayish Swedish policy. Inclusive liberalism/the Third Way, as it is reflected in adult literacy policy in New Zealand, can be better understood, not as a political compromise where a mid-way point is reached between social welfarism and neoliberalism, but rather as an expansive political ideology growing out of neoliberalism, welfare liberalism and classical liberalism, which binds together conflicting discourses, values and practices. Here we can see adult literacy as bringing together discourses of lifelong education (learning for personal and community development) and lifelong learning (learning for individual, primarily economic, reasons in the face of an uncertain future), constituting what might be best understood as a Third Way.

8.4 Contributions, Implications and Considerations of the Findings

Above I detailed some of the theoretical contributions of this study—contributions to the existing understanding of the relationship between inclusive liberalism/Third Way and skills/adult literacy policy in New Zealand. Here I note further contributions and
implications of this study.

8.4.1 Contributions. As I remarked in the first half of this dissertation, very few empirical studies have thus far been undertaken to investigate what adult literacy policy looks like textually, what factors might lead to its creation, and how policy is experienced. Furthermore, few studies have been undertaken of a country’s national adult literacy policy agenda, and even fewer have concentrated on developed countries’ efforts to create adult literacy policy following the release of IALS. Studies on the relationship between policy and political ideology—specifically in regards to the relationship between inclusive liberalism/Third Way and adult education policy—are also few. For these reasons alone, this study clearly fills a gap in knowledge and in the literature beyond the New Zealand context.

More specifically, my findings contribute to the literature in three main ways. First, my research suggests that policy in adult literacy moved beyond the discursive; it was not just a rhetorical concern that the New Zealand government had for adult literacy in contrast to what other authors have noted about adult education policy (e.g., Edwards & Nicholl, 2001). Second—contrary to some claims made about neoliberal education policy (e.g., Apple, 2000) and even Third Way adult education policy (e.g., Martin, 2001; 2003)—adult literacy policy in NZ appears to have been both social and economic—it wasn’t just an extension of economistic concerns. And, third, the findings add to our understandings more generally of: inclusive liberal and neoliberal policy reform in adult education; how a developed state can operationalize an agenda of adult literacy through policy; and, the relationship between neoliberalism and inclusive liberalism in adult literacy policy reform.

The specificities of this case study should, of course, be kept in perspective. The size of New Zealand, its history and, in particular, the historical and current relationship between the crown and Māori are key considerations. Indeed, as authors have noted, over the past decades there has been a continual attempt to balance both economic/social universalism and Māori particularism (e.g., Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005; Dalziel & Lattimore, 2004; Zepke, 2009). Literacy policy over the past decade was developed within a
particular geographic, historical, cultural, social, political and economic context.

Notwithstanding these particularities, I claim that these findings and this study should be of interest beyond the New Zealand context. For example, a concern with becoming a knowledge economy and an embrace of neoliberal, and now inclusive liberal, ideas and discourses did not originate in New Zealand; nor are many of the trends outlined in this dissertation particular to the context and character of NZ and its inhabitants. Indeed, while this has been a study of the New Zealand state, I have also paid attention to methodological transnationalism (Mahon & McBride, 2009), noting the influence of the OECD and the bi-directionality of policy influence in agenda setting. These trends have international significance, and these discursive patterns are occurring across a number of OECD countries.

The findings also suggest implications for practice beyond New Zealand. In my study, I illustrated how individuals to whom policy is directed have been able to interpret and subvert policy within the inclusive (neo)liberal duality of control and freedom. The spaces opened up allowed for increased influence. This may also be the case in other jurisdictions and for other outside policy actors. Indeed, these practices I identified in my study may speak to other contexts and individuals. Not to be overlooked also are the positive effects a focus on workplace literacy has for individuals, not to mention the spill-on effects to New Zealand society. The focus on workplace literacy programmes have reached “the right people,” as one of my respondents maintained:

*Māori... Pasifika, 85% have no qualifications...They are in low-income jobs. They are in poor communities. They are everything that a social inclusion argument is about. And they just happen to be recruited through a workplace programme... it’s a two-way street... If they learn literacy skills in the community, they take them to work. If they learn them at work, they take them home.*

These insights may prove useful in thinking about the development of adult literacy policy in other countries. This is not to advocate for direct policy transfer. Rather, this finding should be seen as an invitation to policy makers and researchers from across the globe to pay
further attention to New Zealand’s latest skill strategy and its journey towards adult literacy policy in the first decade of the 2000s, in thinking about the context of their own jurisdictions.

8.4.2 Suggestions for further research. Most clearly, as is the case with all academic studies perhaps, this dissertation research points to the importance of further studies. It illustrates the benefit of looking at policy across various ministries, across time, and across countries. For example, methodologically, my findings speak to the possibility of exploring the role of social network theory in adult education/skills policy transfer, in New Zealand and elsewhere, to help reveal more clearly the processes of policy shifts and the major role of policy catalysts in disseminating ideas and reports (see also Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Focusing more directly and comprehensively on a country’s political economy and the role adult literacy plays within it would also be an avenue for further research, where researchers might look more closely at economic structures, changes in the economy and social policy, and the direct impact of changes in political economy on society. This study of the New Zealand context brings forth questions surrounding the creation and nature of adult literacy policy in different countries and in different sectors. Contrasting adult literacy policy in various Anglo-Saxon states would reveal more about the specificities and overlaps in policy. For example, a comparative study between NZ and the UK could shed further light on the development of adult literacy/skills policy in countries that share many similarities. Conversely, a comparative study between an ascribed liberal welfare state and a social democratic state, such as Sweden (Esping-Andersen, 1996) would also better reveal differences in the three contexts of adult education policy. In addition, it would be useful for a researcher to undertake a study of another sector, such as health, where he or she might investigate the impact of neo and inclusive liberalism present in the three contexts of policy.

Finally, what is now arguably needed is a follow-up study, ideally one that would take place at the end of the second decade of the 21st Century. This is so we might learn what happens to adult literacy policy in New Zealand compared to what happened over the
previous decade. A study like this would be especially revealing in light of both global political and economic change that has occurred since this research was undertaken, and the change in government in late 2008 from a Labour to a National leadership.

Indeed, many changes seem to have occurred since this research was conducted. The unemployment rate in New Zealand rose from a low of 3.5% in late 2007/early 2008 to over 7% in December 2009.\textsuperscript{93} The skills exodus argument, given as a key rationale for upskilling the population, no longer resonated as the government “bid farewell to the kiwi braindrain”\textsuperscript{94} (NZ Government, 2009). Furthermore, investing the country’s wealth in social programmes made more sense when there was more to go around; indeed, during the time of interviews the economy was enjoying sizable growth due to a resource boom, strengthening ties with China and other factors. At this time, it was clear, and also clearly unjust, that the marginalized—such as those with lower literacy levels—were not partaking of New Zealand’s economic and employment bonanzas. Since the election of the new government, and since the economy went into decline, some of New Zealand’s adult literacy policy initiatives and funding appear to have stagnated or even reversed. Certain literacy-specific programmes have been sheltered from some of the major budgetary cuts applied to non-economic related adult education courses. For example, a recent article in the country’s main newspaper, the New Zealand Herald, reported that the government would: “stop funding ‘hobby and personal interest courses’ and would focus the remaining 20 per cent of the current funding more tightly on ‘literacy, numeracy and foundation levels of education’” (NZ Herald, 2009).

Only time will tell how much literacy and numeracy will be protected from financial cutbacks. Furthermore, no matter what happens over the next two decades to the field of adult literacy, it will be unavoidably shaped by both the neoliberal era and responsive

\textsuperscript{93} See: \url{http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/lmr-labour-market-update-figo2-desc.asp}

\textsuperscript{94} See: \url{http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0906/S00338.htm} The reader should note that the article is partly misleading. This is because the National government attributes the drop in kiwi emigration, and the increase in the returning number of expats, to its particular policies. The government claims this is evidence that it was making good on its manifesto “to retain kiwis and attract overseas kiwis home.” In actual fact, the global economic crisis—and especially the dire situation in the UK where many kiwis had been living—best explains most of the changes in these numbers.
inclusive liberal era that followed. A study that compares my findings to those yielded from a later study will likely prove most interesting.

8.5 Conclusions

Governments in democratic nations, as people attempting to make decisions on behalf of the population, often look to a Third Way, a middle road, a happy medium. Like Goldilocks, policymakers (as well as lobbyists) are searching for the option they can sell as “just right”: not too hot, not too cold; whether it really is just right depends on who Goldilocks is. Indeed, this attempt to present a happy compromise between economy and society, equity and efficiency, centralization and decentralization, control and freedom and so forth will continue to define most politico-economic debates.

In recent years, adult literacy and skills training has been promoted as the Third way, the sensible alternative. Yet adult literacy policy has been subjected to forces and influences from all directions. The Third or inclusive liberal way to adult literacy can be likened to a duelling and collusion between state and market. The “active society” is caught in the middle. There are positive potentials for adult literacy in the midst of both market-oriented and statist solutions, which are both exerting force on the adult literacy policy terrain.

In closing, I claim that recent adult literacy policy in New Zealand is less a mid-way point between left and right, control and freedom, or efficiency and equity, but rather an attempt to continually blend together many dichotomous concerns and, indeed, paradoxical discourses. How these ideological, political and economic divisions are managed in the coming years, in other countries, and in arenas other than adult literacy, are further questions left to be explored.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Compendium of Technical Terms

In the literature, many of the terms included below are used in multiple ways. I have therefore provided an explanation of how I have used these terms in this dissertation.

**Adult education:** Any education or learning undertaken by individuals over 18 years of age excluding for-degree university education.

**Adult literacy:** Unless noted, I employ the OECD’s definition: “The ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community—to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential” (OECD, 1995, p.1).

**Adult literacy policy:** I generally use the term “adult literacy policy” synonymously with adult education policy when referring to adult education policy developed after or in response to IALS. (Therefore, adult literacy policy in New Zealand includes policies that may not explicitly refer to adult literacy but do address adult literacy as defined in IALS and ALL).

**Agenda setting:** “The process by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention” (Birkland, 2003, p.109).

**Discourse:** Is an attempt to mobilize, persuade and encourage certain responses and actions. Discourses determine what becomes appropriate, and “...get things done, accomplish real tasks, gather authority” (Said quoted in Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996, p.22).

**Fordism:** A manufacturing system, named for Henry Ford, designed to mass-produce standardized goods, and in which workers are paid sufficient wages to be able to purchase the products they make.

**Globalization:** Increased global flows and movement of people, money, goods, culture and ideas that escape government control (see Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 2000).

**Human capital theory:** The belief that an investment in education and training enhances an individual’s economic productivity. The theory is underpinned by three assumptions: skills inhere in individuals; these skills are measurable; and, the motivation to invest in one's human capital (e.g., by undertaking further training or education) is based on rational calculation of individual return.

**Inclusive liberalism:** An approach to policy that attempts to bridge welfare liberalism and neoliberalism. It emphasizes the notion of inclusion in social policy in terms of: partnerships; social and economic inclusion of marginalized groups; social and economic outcomes of policy; and joined-up government.

**Keynesianism**: The view that the economy naturally experiences growth and recession and that when economic growth is slow or negative, governments should run deficits and increase spending to prevent recession and ensure full employment.

**Knowledge economy**: An economy that is dependent on the input of ideas, technologies and information for the output of economically profitable ideas, technologies and information. In other words, knowledge is both a tool and a product.

**Knowledge society**: A society where knowledge forms a major component of any human activity and, more concretely, where the economic, social and cultural well-being of people is dependent on the creation, use and interchange of knowledge.

**Lifelong education**: Social, personal and moral education continuing along one’s lifespan beyond compulsory schooling.

**Lifelong learning**: Adult learning for professional or personal reasons in which emphasis is placed on the individual learning experience and learning for economic development (Tight, 2002).

**Neoliberalism**: An approach to policy that stems from the belief that markets are most effective and efficient at allocating resources (Gray, 1998). I use the term neoliberalism to refer to policy and ideological reforms that occurred in response to the collapse of Keynesianism starting in the late 1970s.

**Policy**: “Anything a government does or chooses to do or not to do” (Dye, 1994, p.4). Policies are “systems of values and symbolic systems; ways of representing, accounting for and legitimating political decisions” (Ball, 1998, p.124).

**Policy actor**: People who create, interpret, influence and respond to policy, including 1. Elected officials; 2. Appointed officials; 3. Interest groups; 4. Research organizations (like think-tanks), and, 5. Mass media (see Howlett and Ramesh, 2003). The policy actors in this study were: government bureaucrats, literacy researchers, and literacy promoters.

**Policy sociology**: An explicit sociological approach to examining policy where analysis is “rooted in social science tradition...historically informed... [employing] qualitative and illuminative techniques” (Ozga, 2000, p.380). Policy sociology acknowledges policy as inseparable “from other socio-political activities and actors... [and that]...recognizes the politics of the policy process” (2005, p.3).

**Policy transfer**: The process whereby knowledge, policies, or administrative arrangements shift from one nation or policy domain to another.

**Post-compulsory education**: Formal and non-formal education undertaken by individuals no longer of compulsory school age. It includes adult education, upper high school (beyond compulsory grades), and all other tertiary education. The minimum school leaving age in New Zealand was 15 during the 1980s and 1990s, and is now currently 16.

**Post-Fordism**: An approach to economic production characterized by the utilization of just-in-time production techniques; the reliance on more technology, less manpower, and a flexible, high-skilled workforce to manufacture innovative products and services to compete in a global market (Castells, 2000).
Qualitative interviewing: An approach to interviewing developed by Danish Professor Steinar Kvale. Kvale defines qualitative interviewing as “an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (1996, p. 2).

Tertiary education: All institutionalized education undertaken by post-school-aged adults, including university, workplace and community literacy programmes.

Third Way: A political doctrine that seeks to forge a compromise between Keynesian welfarism and neoliberalism.
APPENDIX B: Compendium of Māori Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aotearoa</td>
<td>New Zealand—literally, “land of the long white cloud”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hapū</td>
<td>Subtribe or clan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iwi</td>
<td>Extended kinship group; tribe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kahikatea</td>
<td>The tallest indigenous tree in NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitiakitanga</td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaupapa</td>
<td>(Māori) ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koha</td>
<td>Donation, reciprocity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kura</td>
<td>Schooling, education, customs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moko</td>
<td>Traditional Māori tattoo created by chiselling the skin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mokopuna</td>
<td>Grandchild; also used by older adults to refer to small children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>New Zealander of European descent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poupou</td>
<td>A term used by Literacy Aotearoa to refer to “locations” (Ngā Poupou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te kura kaupapa</td>
<td>Māori customs and language programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Reo</td>
<td>Māori language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiro Rangatiratanga</td>
<td>Self determination; sovereignty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangata Whenua</td>
<td>People of the land; original inhabitants of the country (i.e., Māori)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaty of Waitangi</td>
<td>Signed on February 06, 1840, between the Māori chiefs and the crown in the town of Waitangi in the north of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wānanga</td>
<td>Māori post-secondary institution (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whānau</td>
<td>Family group; (extended) family</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX C: Various Indicators on Tertiary Education in New Zealand

The below provides an overview of the context of educational achievement in the country:

Source: Statistics NZ, Household Labour Force Survey (June quarters)

Figure 6: Change in Qualification Attainment
**Figure 7:** Comparative Tertiary Achievement between Māori and non-Māori

Source: Statistics NZ, Household Labour Force Survey (June quarters)
Note: Series have been smoothed using trend lines.

**Figure 8:** Percentage of Degree Holders with Low Prose Literacy
Figure 9: Percentage of Population by Type of Qualification

(Note: Figures 6-9 are taken from: http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/education_and_learning_outcomes/qualifications/1903)
APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol

Possible Interview questions: Non-government Participants

1. **Position**
   1. What is your current role? How are you currently involved in adult education OR adult literacy in New Zealand? How long have you been in this position?

   2. How long have you been involved in adult literacy in New Zealand? In what capacity?

2. **Policy changes in general**
   3. Thinking over your experiences over (*how ever many years that may be*), what do you think some of the major changes have been in the field—both in policy and practice?

   4. Do you think that there is a current government focus on literacy? If so, when do you think this started? And, what are your thoughts on why that might be?

   5. Is it your impression that there is more money being allotted to adult literacy than there was? If so, which sectors do you think are seeing it most?

   6. What do you think the major policies have been over the past 10 years that have had the most effect on adult literacy? How have these affected your work?

   7. Do you know anything about the creation (the how and why) of these or other policies in adult literacy?

   8. Which policies from over the past 10 years do you believe have had the most impact on adult literacy? In what ways?

   9. How has your organization’s focus shifted over the past 10-20 years?

3. **Policy priorities**
   10. Where do you think the government priorities are in terms of adult literacy/foundational learning? (What types of learners? What types of institutions? What types of programmes? etc.)
11. In your opinion, how do you think current policies are helping individuals with low levels of literacy, in terms of their economic and social well-being?

12. What do you see as the biggest gap between government officials making policy and practitioners working on the ground? Are there increasing collaborations and consultation between government and other stakeholders? If so, in what ways?

Possible Interview Questions: Government Bureaucrats

1. Position

1. How does your work relate to adult literacy?

2. How long have you been involved in the field of adult literacy in any capacity?

3. How do you think you personally, as well as your department, have been involved in the creation of policy on adult literacy (whether directly or indirectly)?

2. Policy changes

4. What do you think the major policies have been over the past 10 years that have affected or relate to adult literacy in New Zealand?

5. Which policies from over the past 10-20 years do you believe have had the most impact on adult literacy? In what ways?

6. Do you know anything about the creation (the how and why) of these or other policies in adult literacy?
   a. Do you know who were involved in the creation of these policies?

7. What would you say are the main shifts in policy (in general) over the past decades in the field of adult literacy?

8. What do you think brought about these shifts?

9. How have these changes affected your work?
3. Current policy priorities

10. Do you think that there is a recent increase in interest in adult literacy in government in New Zealand? If so, when do you think this started, who might have been influential in this and what are your ideas as to why?

11. Where would you say the government priorities are in terms of adult literacy/foundational education? (What types of learners? What types of institutions? What types of programmes? etc.)

12. What do you think the future policy direction should be in the field of adult literacy?