

Reclaiming the Disengaged? Critical perspectives on young people not in education, employment or training

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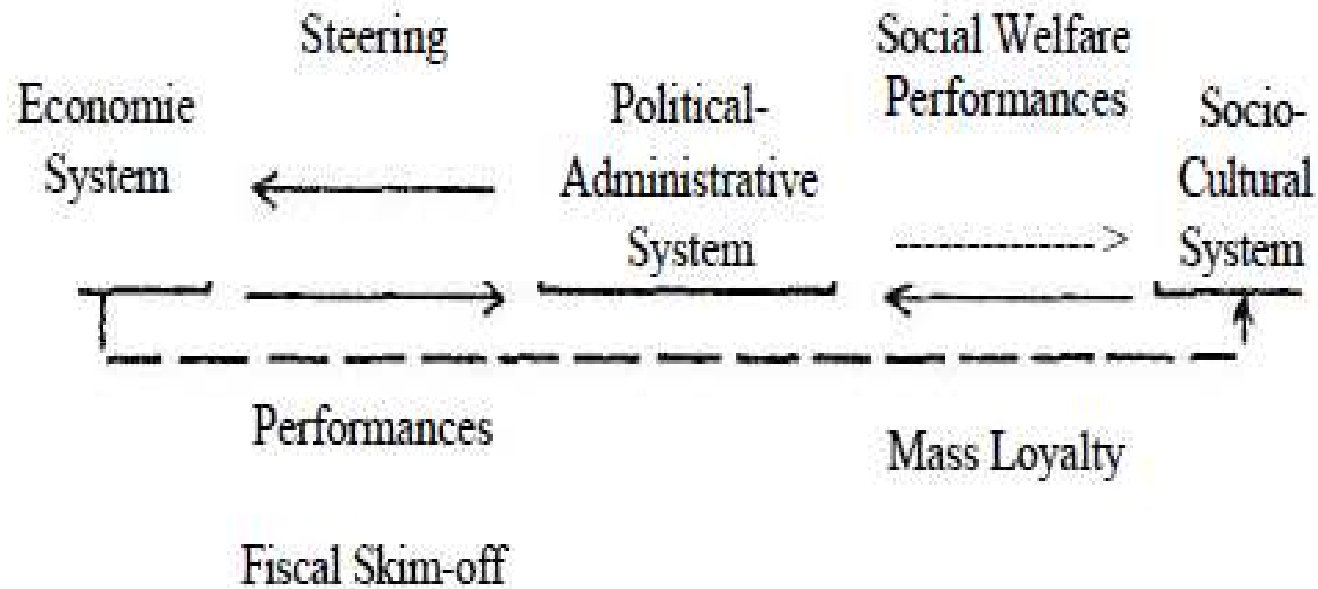
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Overview and Outline

- Habermas' theory of the State
- New Zealand Context
- Strategies for resolving crisis (motivational, punishing and bridging)

Habermas' Model



Pre-Political Determinants of the Normative Systems

Sources of Crisis

- economic - the economic sub-system distributes most benefits of economic growth to the advantaged (which is at odds with egalitarian defense of the economic system)
- rationality – interventions cannot resolve the problems that are created by the economic sub-system (state intervention can not resolve inequality, for example, if anything in recent times, it has exacerbated it). This leads to a crisis of motivation.

Socio-Cultural Sub-system

- Unstated assumptions, traditions, cultural practices all eroded by economic development and state intervention (for example, community and kin based social networks).
- Interventions in the economic and political-administrative sub-systems destroy social-cultural subsystem.
 - For example, credentialism has reduced the ability of familial social networks to provide good career guidance to young people.

Challenges to the Socio-cultural Subsystem

- Skill transmission
 - Technological change, deskilling, unemployment
- Work-ethic
 - Work poor communities, intergenerational welfare dependency
- Aspirations
 - Meritocracy and the promise of education
 - Expansion of education

State can't recreate socio-cultural sub-system, yet replacing or reproducing aspects of the system are vital to the smooth functioning of the economy.

For example:

Economic change and the transmission of the codes of apprenticeship and inheritance.

How do young people gain the skills needed to find work? How might the Government deal with the crisis of motivation?

Is it possible for the Government to create a 'work ethic'?

The New Zealand Context

- High youth unemployment (particularly for ethnic minorities)
- Low levels of educational achievement (particularly for ethnic minorities)
- Concerns about intergenerational welfare dependency
- Failure of previous strategies (e.g. NQF, Workfare)

The New Zealand Context

- Neo-liberal reform
- Expansion of the service sector
- Expansion of training state

Welfare Reform

- Motivational Strategies
- Bridging strategies
- Punishing strategies

Motivational Strategies

- Attempting to create more motivational and useful forms of education and training (note: these have failed to date)
 - National Qualifications Framework
- Replacing functions formerly complete by networks (as part of the socio-cultural sub-system) by introducing new modes of skill transmission and by introducing more punishing forms of welfare support.

Bridging Strategies

- Employment brokers
- Government acts job matching agency
- Replacing functions formerly complete by networks (as part of the socio-cultural sub-system) by connecting job seekers with job vacancies.

Punishing Strategies

- Increasing the negative effects of remaining on welfare
 - Benefits set at low levels
 - Work tests (including those on sickness benefits)
 - New ‘food only’ credit cards
- Replacing functions formerly complete by networks (as part of the socio-cultural sub-system) by instilling work-ethic and discipline.

Conclusion

- Government needs to maintain capitalism.
- Interventions and economic development destroyed resources needed by capitalism.
- Government attempting to replace and or recreate these resources, through welfare state intervention.
- Such interventions not new. Previous strategies have failed and these will too.
- For example, low-wage low skill equilibrium.