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# New Zealand in the mid-1960s: A Nexus of Culture, Economics, and Ethnicity

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to provide a general survey of the nature of New Zealand culture, society, ethnicity, and the nation's economy in the mid-1960s. It commences with a snapshot of the country in 1966, and then explores various facets of the country in that decade, with a focus on selected political, economic, and social developments, and the role of Maori in the emerging society and economy. The nexus between a nation's culture and history, and its economic condition is well-established (Beugelsdijk & Maseland, 2010), with historical and cultural assessments providing a vital context to economic analyses (Hodgson, 2001). The socio-cultural dimension to economics is critical. It provides frames of reference for economic data, insights into variables that affect economic performance, and helps to explain the decisions of actors in the classical and neoclassical traditions of economic analysis (Smelser, 2010).

## **Introduction**

The material in this article serves cumulatively as an historical milestone from which subsequent developments in New Zealand's economy and society can be measured, and as an assessment of the relationships between culture, society, the economy, and Maori in the period under review. This article is divided into two sections. The first offers an overview of New

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Zealand in the middle of the decade, summarising aspects of the country's demographic, economic, cultural, and political profile at this time. The second section provides a thematic assessment of various aspects of New Zealand during this decade, focussing on particular events and developments that characterise the nature of the society at this time and highlighting some of the issues New Zealand was confronting. This second section is divided into various parts, each of which address a specific aspect of country's history in this period. Because of the constraints of space of an article, a series of vignettes are included as part of this latter section as a means of illustrating broader themes in New Zealand's historical evolution in this era. Each one is examined as an element that contributed to the nature of New Zealand society in this decade, and for their economic role as seen by politicians and policy planners at the time.

Although hindsight opens up many of these developments and circumstances to a multiplicity of interpretations, the emphasis here is on how these economic and social changes were understood at the time. At certain junctures, this reveals the extent to which perceptions of economic priorities have shifted over fifty years, and helps to clarify decisions and approaches to issues that may seem less explicable from the distance of half a century.

### **A Snapshot of New Zealand in 1966.**

The vital statistics on New Zealand in the 1960s are readily assembled. The population had reached 2,676,919 according to the March 1966 census results – an increase of over ten per cent from the previous year. At around 190,000, Maori constituted just over seven per cent of the country's total population, but was faster growing than the Pakeha majority. For someone born in New Zealand at this time, if they were

male, their life expectancy was estimated to be 68.44 years, and 73.75 years if they were female (Department of Statistics, 1966).

Demographic statistics can also be suggestive of social conditions, as revealed in the fact that in 1966, under eleven per cent of children were born to unmarried parents (compared to around 50 per cent in 2015 (Statistics New Zealand, 2015)), and that women on average were giving birth at a younger age than at any other time in the preceding three decades. This corresponded with the average age at which people married falling. And of the marriages that occurred in the country at this time, roughly four out of five were solemnised in a church (Department of Statistics, 1966).

In the mid-1960s, between ten and twelve per cent of pupils leaving secondary school went to universities to continue their education, but fewer than half of the number obtained a bachelor's degree within the following three to five years. One of the reasons for this low rate of completions was that around forty per cent of university students attended part-time. A report commissioned into the relatively low rate of tertiary education in New Zealand in this period concluded that "the imagination of the New Zealand public has not been sufficiently aroused to the unique importance of the universities for the continuance of [our] growth and development' (Picton, 1961, p. 23).

In the area of trade, the country's exports were dominated by Britain. In 1965, 51 per cent of all good produced in New Zealand went to Britain, five per cent to Australia, twelve per cent to the United States, and 31 per cent elsewhere. This heavy dependence on Britain had remained at this figure for most of the decade, but was lower than previous decades, (the high point of 88 per cent being reached in 1940, during the early phase of the Second World War). Imports corresponded in rough proportion with exports to these markets, with 37 per cent of New Zealand's goods coming from Britain, twenty per cent from Australia, twelve per cent from the United States, and

32 per cent from elsewhere (Gould, 1982; Singleton and Robertson, 2002; Evans et al., 1996).

By today's standards, the New Zealand economy was heavily regulated in the mid-1960s. Legislation such as the Control of Prices Act 1947 and the Trade Practices Act 1958 were still in force, while in 1961, the passage of the Monetary and Economic Council Act established a body which reported to the government the extent to which stability in prices and other economic objectives are being achieved, and which attempted to regulate the 'appropriate' level of bank credit (Quigley, 1992). Further regulation of the banking sector was enabled through the passage of the Reserve Bank Act 1964, which empowered the state to regulate the economy, and particularly the country's financial system to a greater extent than it was previously able, and reaffirmed the aim of monetary policy, which was the 'maintenance and promotion of economic and social welfare in New Zealand having regard to the desirability of promoting the highest degree of production, trade, and employment and of maintaining a stable internal price level' (cited in Quigley, 1992, p. 4). Throughout most of the decade, inflation ran between two and four per cent, and between 1960 and 1969, real per capita GDP in the country grew from \$13,000 to \$15,900 (1991-1992\$), (Carroll, 2012).

There was, however, a downturn during the decade. Triggered principally by a collapse in the wool market, GDP fell from a high in the decade of US\$ 7.27b in 1965 to US\$ 5.18b just four years later. The unemployment rate increased, but coming off historically low levels, it climbed to just 1.3 per cent (Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, 2009). Among the Government's responses to economic fluctuations in this era was the provision of export subsidies, and devaluations to make exports more profitable (Hawke, 1985).

For the entire decade, the National Party was in Government in New Zealand, led by Prime Minister Keith Holyoake (Gustafson, 2013). His twelve-year premiership (ending with a Labour victory in the 1972 General Election) helped the

National Party build the perception that it was the ‘natural’ part of government in New Zealand (Mulgan, 1978; Schwartz, 1994). On the eve of the 1960s, Holyoake declared his underlying philosophy to the electorate: ‘[w]e believe in the maximum degree of personal freedom and the maximum degree of individual choice for our people. We believe in the least interference necessary with individual rights and the least possible degree of State interference. The next National Government’, he vowed, ‘will establish greater personal freedom and opportunity than has existed in this country for at least a quarter of a century.’ (Gustafson, 2013, p. 148)

### **Society, Culture, Indigeneity, and Economics in New Zealand in the mid-1960s**

There are certain themes that assist in characterising the economic and social nature of the country in the 1960s. This section addresses a range of these which collectively give some impression of New Zealand in this period. What emerges from this analysis is that the 1960s was neither an era of social or economic revolution, nor one of conservatism, but instead, was continuing along the trajectory of social, economic and political evolution that in many ways had been set in train from the end of the Second World War. What is also apparent is the extent to which the state directed aspects of the economy in this decade to ensure it remained oriented to export-led growth.

#### **I**

One of the biggest social shifts of the decade was brought about by the introduction of television, which was rolled out in stages, with Auckland the first to receive broadcasts, followed by Christchurch, Wellington, and finally Dunedin in 1962. By March 1963, approximately half of the country’s population had

some television reception (New Zealand Broadcasting Authority, 1971; Boyd-Bell, 1985). Initially, transmissions were for two hours nightly, twice a week, but within six months, this had extended to every week night. Initially, there was a £4 annual licence fee for the owners of television sets (Boyd-Bell, 1985), but this did not go near to covering the costs of extending the service, which reached £15 million in 1964 (New Zealand Broadcasting Authority, 1971).

The number of New Zealand households with a television set grew from 5,000 in January 1961 to 80,000 by 1963, which represented an estimated national viewership of 300,000. The nightly news was the most watched programme, and was edited mainly from material flown in from the British Commonwealth News Film Agency. Slowly, though, a local news service evolved, but news broadcasts were initially just five minutes in length, and so there was comparatively little content. The bulletins were scripted in Wellington, and their content then passed on by telephone to secretaries in Auckland Christchurch, and Dunedin, who took shorthand notes, and then produced bulletins for the local newsreaders (Moon, 2011).

By 1969, there were 628,017 television sets in the country, and direct broadcasts of events such as election campaigns and royal tours were now possible. However, for international news, like the 1969 moon landing, the footage had to be flown to New Zealand from Australia, where it was received by satellite (Boyd-Bell, 1985).

The economic effects of a rapid growth in television viewing included the emergence of a new medium of marketing and advertising (Boynton-Jarrett, 2003), and a growing national awareness – principally through new bulletins – of the importance of the economy to the country (Gavin, 1996). Indeed, the nation's economic performance was one of the more regular television news topics throughout the decade, as well as being the primary focus of televised election campaigns, and arguably had a significant effect on the population's economic literacy in the 1960s (Coleman, 1963).

## II

Concerns about the fragmentation of Maori land-holdings, particularly since the Second World War, had led to a report being commissioned by the government on the matter in the late 1950s. However, as the research got under way, the scope broadened, and the resulting 1961 Hunn Report turned out to be a broad survey of Maori social and economic conditions in this era, covering Maori health, education, population shifts, crime, housing, land use, and employment.

The Report was used as the basis of government policy on Maori for the decade, and contained recommendations aimed to boost the provision of Maori housing, and to increase the number of Maori in apprenticeships and universities. Hunn had concluded that Maori enrolments at universities ought to be at eight times their existing levels, and that Maori service apprenticeships could be ten times the rate they were in 1960 (Hunn, 1961). However, some officials were less convinced about this need for an emphasis on Maori education. The Department of Labour responded by issuing a paper on the issue, which noted that 'it must not be overlooked that the readiness of Maoris to do unskilled, semi-skilled, manual and labouring work has made an important contribution to the economy', and that 'had this contribution not been available, we would have had to import ... a very much larger number of persons suited to such work' (Department of Labour, 1965, p. 8; Moon, 2011.).

Maori generally responded more favourably to the report's findings and recommendations. However, as the Maori Synod of the Presbyterian Church observed, not all the report's suggestions and proposals were 'in harmony with Maori ideals, and which tended to perpetuate and even increase conditions which are regarded by the great bulk of Maori opinion as unjust'. It was more the general tone of the report which caused anxiety among some Maori, with the impression being cast that

‘the 1960 Pakeha way of life is the perfect ideal, and that any part of the “Maori way of life” is less than perfect, indeed very much less!’ (Maori Synod, 1961, pp. 3, 10). The adherence to the Modernizing philosophy of the period was clearly evident throughout the report (Rostow, 1960).

### III

Although a vigorous state housing programme had been in place in New Zealand since the late 1930s, by more than two decades later, there was still some stigma associated with people who lived in them. In the 1960s, though, a more affordable but still privately-owned housing model was emerging: the ‘group house’. Constructed by companies such as Fletcher, Keith Hay, Lockwood, Neil, and Reidbuilt, they achieved economies of scale through the mass production based on standardised floor plans that were quick to construct, and made further savings through using inexpensive materials (such as Fibrolite). Despite their limited aesthetic appeal, group houses enabled people on lower incomes to afford their own house.

One of the consequences of the availability of more affordable houses in the 1960s was a renewed faith in the market to resolve the nation’s housing needs, and a consequent widespread abandonment of the ideology of state interventionism in housing provision that had dominated government policies in the second half of the 1930s.

The growing availability of group housing coincided with an increase in the working-age population in the country, rising real wage levels, low interest rates, and unemployment was below one per cent (Chapple, 1994; Hall and McDermott, 2007; Bassett and Malpass, 2013).

Despite criticisms of their bland, repetitive designs, and the overall sense of sterility emerging in those suburbs dominated by group houses (Jenkins, 2004), in the 1960s, they served

thousands of the country's families, and helped New Zealand maintain one of the highest rates of home ownership in the developed world in this period (Moon, 2011).

#### IV

As New Zealand found itself having to compete more vigorously in international markets than it had in previous decades, in the 1960s, the government produced two reports on the state of the country's education. There were issued by the Parry Committee and the Currie Commission, which investigated the university and secondary-school sectors respectively.

The Parry Committee placed considerable emphasis on the need for the country's universities providing vocational qualifications, principally on the basis that this would assist in the development of New Zealand's secondary industries. The rationale for this approach was summed up in a single line: for the nation to advance economically, then 'she will have to educate – or import – more chemical, physical and biological scientists; more engineers; more chemical, building, and food technologists; more economists; and more people trained in the arts and skills of management' (The Parry Committee, 1960, p. 7).

This vocational emphasis was not made at the expense of other areas of tertiary study, though. The Parry Committee suggested that there be a broadening of the range of subjects on offer in the country's universities that had 'a direct bearing on New Zealand's own life and problems', and which were 'designed to foster the growth of national self-understanding and to increase delight in life' (Ibid, p. 8). It was an almost Fabian approach to the purpose of education.

The findings of the Currie Report dovetailed with those of Parry's committee, and at over 900 pages, was substantially more detailed. The basis for the Currie report was a mounting sense of anxiety in some quarters of the country that education

standards in general had been declining for at least the last three decades (Auckland Star, 1960). The report's authors trawled through vast quantities of evidence and ended up publishing – in 1962 – the most comprehensive analysis of New Zealand's education system produced in the twentieth century (Scott, 1996). It had examined the nature and content of the secondary school curriculum, the overall organisation and structure of the school system, and how teachers were recruited and under what conditions they worked (Currie Commission, 1962), although there was a suspicion that its overarching purpose was to 'bolster the Department of Education and give it the power to act more directly with "hands on" control' (Scott, 1996, p. 75). Yet, despite its ambitious aims, or the potential motive for its commissioning, the Currie Commission ended being too detailed for its own good. Few people read through each of its 328 recommendations (many which had not been costed, and were therefore not regarded as feasible), and practically no-body sifted through the two million words of evidence, and the many lengthy written submissions on which the report's conclusions and recommendations were based. Consequently, the sheer bulk of the report ended up depriving it of the influence a more succinct version might have achieved, and as a result, most parts of the secondary school education sector continued to function largely unaffected by the Commission's findings (Cumming, 1978).

The links between education and economic development were a consideration for officials and politicians at this time, but while a slow increase in the percentage of school-leavers going on to tertiary study was regarded as a longer-term solution, more immediately, the skills deficit in certain sectors of the economy was addressed by an immigration policy which overtly aimed to lift the country's living standards through the economic benefits that would flow from a skilled immigrant workforce bolstering production and broadening the country's skill base. The principal areas of employment growth in the economy during the decade were (in descending order)

manufacturing, power (including electricity and oil), the service industry, and building and construction. Projections made at the start of the 1960s emphasised that employment in the primary sector would continue to remain static numerically, and fall in percentage terms over the course of the next eighteen years (Sutch, 1968).

## V

Growing car ownership in New Zealand following the Second World War led to an increasing demand in the country for petrol. From the 1950s, the government responded by examining the possibilities of New Zealand refining its own oil, and as the changing strategic situation in the southern hemisphere brought on by the Cold War heightened the awareness of a need for economic self-sufficiency, and the urge for greater relief of the balance-of-payments situation, studies of the refinery options available intensified (Cocklin, 1992).

When considered from a current perspective, the need for a refinery for the country would not be a matter of strategic significance or economic importance, but when in 1958, the Prime Minister, Walter Nash, initiated a review of oil prices, the resulting findings led the government to ask the Shell Oil Company to consider establishing a refinery in New Zealand, on the basis that in the Cold War climate, more self-sufficiency in petroleum production was regarded as strategically vital to protect the domestic economy. Shell, was enthusiastic about the opportunity this posed, particularly as they sensed it could lead the company monopolising the country's entire domestic refining market. Unsurprisingly, there were concerns expressed by the other oil companies represented in New Zealand that this could lead to an unfair advantage for Shell, and so the government brought all the oil companies into the project, and began construction of the refinery, with the government

maintaining a 31 per cent share in the refinery on behalf of the general public (The New Zealand Refining Company, 1981).

The chosen location for the refinery was Marsden Point (Patterson, 1990), which was favoured because of the affordability of the land on which the refinery would be sited, its proximity to the city of Whangarei, which could serve as a supply of labour and logistical support, and the fact that it was adjacent to a deep-water port. Construction commenced in 1962, and as the available workforce locally was quickly used up, foreign workers – particularly those with technical expertise in this area – were brought in to supplement the workforce. In March 1964, the first tanker of oil from Kuwait was unloaded, and by June, the first quantities of refined fuel were ready for export (The New Zealand Refining Company, 1981). The Construction of Marsden Point was also the first major post-war project in which immigration policy was oriented to resolve significant skills deficits, and it encouraged future administrations to focus more strongly in immigration as a means of accelerating domestic economic development.

The rise in the 1960s both in domestic and international air transport, and the accompanying growth in tourism led to the need for a civilian international airport in Auckland – another of those developments which in hindsight seem unremarkable, but which at the time were signifiers of new stages in the economic development of the country – particularly as tourism represented a departure from the focus on primary industries.

At the start of the 1960s, international visitors were still using the military airport at Whenuapai, which was on the rural outskirts of the city. It had been a compromise that was tolerable as long as the volume of tourists remained light, and the frequency of flights did not reach the point where it interfered with the airforce's activities at the airport. However, by the late 1950s, it was already that this accommodation between civil and military airport needs would not be sustainable for much longer.

The first challenge facing local body authorities in Auckland was where to locate a new airport. Planning was stalled on several occasions as a result of rivalries between different local government factions. However, these were overcome when it was discovered that Whenuapai's runway would not be able to sustain the weight of the larger commercial jets being used for much longer (Auckland Regional Authority, 1981).

The Auckland Airport Committee, which was charged with choosing a location for the airport, finally nominated Mangere, which was still in a sparsely populated area to the south of the city. The land was flat, there were no natural obstructions for potential flight paths, and there was potential to improve access to the centre of the city.

There were further delays, though, over the issue of the cost and scale of the project, and which groups should bear what portion of expenditure. A journalist reporting on the issue noted that the local authorities 'all (or nearly all) want a new airport, but in typically Auckland fashion, they want someone else to pay for it' (Auckland Regional Authority, 1981, p. 3).

The government was forced to step in and take a lead role in managing the project. Progress accelerated thereafter, and on 20 July 1965, Auckland International Airport began operating (Flynn, 1969). As a sign of the demand it met, within a year, nearly 700,000 passenger movements were being processed annually. This represented the single biggest development in the country's tourism industry in this decade.

## **VI**

During the 1960s, Cold War animosity between the Superpowers was played out in various parts of the world, and in the case of a few locations, such as Vietnam, erupted into war. The New Zealand Government, although generally conservative in foreign affairs, and aligned through the ANZUS Treaty with the United States, was nevertheless sensitive to committing New Zealand troops to the Vietnam War. Unlike

Australia, which had sent military ‘advisors’ to Vietnam as early as 1962, it was not until two years later, in the face of mounting American pressure (United States President Lyndon Johnson expressed his desire for ‘a strong show of flags’ in Vietnam), that Holyoake finally reached an interim compromise, sending twenty-five army engineers (all non-combatants) to the region (Moon, 2011).

However, as the war escalated in scale, so too did the expectation of the Western powers that New Zealand’s commitment to the fighting reflect its strategic allegiances. This was linked directly to

Britain, the United States, and Australia (in that order) were New Zealand’s main export markets, and so there were an underlying economic imperative (in addition to historic ties and other factors) that influenced New Zealand’s foreign policy. Consequently, in May 1965, the first New Zealand combat forces were dispatched to the war zone. The government was anxious to limit the extent of its involvement in the fighting, and devoted considerable efforts to pursuing all international peace efforts which aimed at ending the conflict (Clark, 1997). Aware that its position was increasingly at odds with those of its closest allies, the Government deployed various arguments to support its position, including going as far as to claim that further military commitment was not feasible because New Zealand was unable to afford the associated costs (Clark, 1997).

Ironically, while economic considerations influenced the extent of New Zealand’s participation in the Vietnam War – particularly with the United States being the country’s second biggest export market, the conflict weakened growth rates in the United States economy and increased inflation, which softened demand for some New Zealand exports from the latter 1960s and into the early 1970s, when this slower growth was exacerbated by the oil shocks (The Reserve Bank of New Zealand, 2007).

## VII

In 1966, the Finance Undersecretary, Robert Muldoon, took on the task of managing New Zealand's shift to decimal currency. The decision to shift to decimal currency had been made by the government in 1963 (Hargreaves, 1972), and was driven by the twin needs of simplifying the currency system domestically, and aligning New Zealand's currency system with that of 95 per cent of the world's currencies. The benefit to visitors to New Zealand, and the ease of international transactions, were cited as related reasons for this change (O'Connor, 1966).

The Decimal Currency Board was established to manage this transition, with some assistance from Treasury and Reserve Bank officials, and with Muldoon holding overall responsibility for managing the project. While there was some anxiety over how the change-over would occur, there was comparatively little opposition to it. Some traditionalists in the country were in favour of keeping the names 'pound' and 'penny' for the decimalised system, as Britain later chose to do. However, the 1964 Decimal Currency Act ruled this out, specifying that '[t]he denominations of money in the currency of New Zealand shall be the dollar and the cent' (Decimal Currency Act 1964, s5(2)), and by the beginning of 1967, the country was looking forward with considerable enthusiasm to 'DC Day' (Berry, 1967), which was set for 10 July, when the shift to decimal currency took place.

## VIII

Individual economic independence, which was allied to the country's growing prosperity, also facilitated the development of new social practices and values (Marks, 1998; Carmichael, 1982), as a Wellington social worker summarised it in 1967: 'Young people now...create much more than ever before the circumstances of their own lives. If they think their home is too restricting they go flatting or boarding....[They are] much more

independent economically and this too often means less parental control' (Dominion, 1967). For women especially, the alteration to their lives brought about by the changing social and economic circumstances of the 1960s was pronounced. In 1936, for example, under four per cent of married women were in paid employment. In 1966, this had risen to 20 per cent (Elworthy, 1988), and with increased employment rates for women came increased economic and social freedom.

However, standing against this accelerating current of social change was the institution of marriage, which was still widely regarded as one of the mainstays of New Zealand society, and the best as well as the only 'appropriate' arrangement into which children should be born and raised. The common wisdom of the period was that if children were brought up outside of marriage, this would lead to a youth delinquency problem in the country (Finlay, 1966). The intensive period of urbanization following the end of the Second World War may have even helped to entrench this attitude, as nuclear families were the most effective economic unit in the country's growing stretches of suburbia.

Those who strayed from society's norms – especially in sexual areas – could easily become labelled as 'social outcasts' or 'deviants' (Beckingham, 1977, p. 1; Shawyer and Ludbrook, 1981, p. 5). But with the rise of the permissive society, and the inevitability of unplanned pregnancies that went with it, the belief in marriage as the only place where good child-rearing was possible was slowly giving ground, but with an emphasis on 'slowly'.

However, there were still numerous barriers facing any woman in the 1960s wanting to raise a child on her own, especially a child born outside of wedlock. In addition to New Zealand society at this time condemning such 'behaviour', there were substantial financial obstacles for most single, unwed mothers (Glass, 1965). The social welfare system was not especially well geared to cater for this category of need, and usually provided for nothing more than the barest subsistence

living. Yet, for most unwed mothers, state assistance was the main or even the sole source of income. Some sought financial assistance from their babies' fathers, but in this period, a large proportion of men avoided their obligations in this area (Society for Research on Women, 1970). This left only one alternative for single mothers: to seek help from the wider family circle.

The challenges to these mothers were not just financial, however. The legal status of the baby was also an issue that had to be contended with. Until the final few months of the decade, the common law accorded children born out of marriage 'inferior status' (Henighan, 1993, 173), and technically speaking, designated them in the eyes of the courts as *filius nullius* (no one's child). It was not until the passage of the Status of Children Act in August 1969, that this anomaly was overcome, and equal recognition in law was given to children whose parents were unmarried.

However, despite social and legal opprobrium, the growth in the number of children born out of wedlock was an unavoidable fact of New Zealand society. Between 1951 and 1976, the percentage of births in this category in New Zealand more than doubled (Carmichael, 1985), making it harder for society to sustain its earlier condemnatory opinion of pre-nuptial births. Yet, the prejudice persisted, and was certainly potent during the 1960s. A 1967 government report noted that 'in order to avoid public and family censure, many unmarried mothers leave home to live elsewhere, sometimes under assumed names' (Report of Child Welfare Division, 1968, 8). Embarrassed families would explain to others that their daughter had 'gone to stay with an aunt' in another part of the country, which was a euphemism employed to conceal the fact that a pregnancy had occurred before marriage. And for those with money, and the will to do so, the abortion industry could ensure that 'there never was a birth' (Waikato Times, 1965).

The state's reaction to the rising incidence of illegitimacy was a mixture of moral concern and pragmatism. From the government's perspective, it was 'essentially a moral problem',

but as the number of children born to unmarried women rose from 11.6 per cent of all live births in 1966 to 12.7 per cent the next year (Report of Child Welfare Division, 1968), fifty per cent higher than in the United States or Britain (NZPD, 1966), the focus shifted from condemnation to looking at means of addressing the financial and personal struggle that unwed mothers and their children faced. Ironically, in the middle of Holyoake's rule – at a time when self-reliance and self-betterment had become the mainstays of National's philosophy – the government showed that it was still prepared to make the welfare state do what it was designed for: protect the most vulnerable people in the nation – so that there would be in Holyoake's words, 'fair shares for all' (Doughty, 1977, p. 210; Moon, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

This article explored various facets of New Zealand in the 1960s, with a particular focus on 1966. The country is revealed as being dominated economically by its traditional relationship with Britain, and in international relations, increasingly by being in the orbit of the United States. However, despite the gravitational forces of these relationships, there were already signs of New Zealand wanting to pursue a more independent foreign policy (which accounted for autarkic development such as the construction of the oil refinery at Marsden Point).

Domestically, there was a growing awareness that the country needed more university graduates, and in a wider range of disciplines. This ambition was more feasible because of growing rates of urbanisation, including a rapid rate of Maori urbanisation, and the rise in the number of skilled immigrants. Considered more broadly, this era was one which fits in with the larger arc of New Zealand's social, economic, and political evolution following the Second World War, where the vestiges of the colonial-era economy – one dependent on the export of

primary goods – was coming increasingly into contact with a growing service- and skills-based sector in the economy. As one economist summed it up at the time, ‘in New Zealand in the 1960s, the greatest need is for the development not of ‘land’ nor of ‘capital’ but of the third, the ‘human’ factor in production’ (Sutch, 1968, p. 162).

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