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### **International Mobility of Recent Migrants: Theory and Application to New Zealand and British Citizens in Australia**

**Ottillie Stolte**

**Geography, Tourism & Environmental Planning, University of Waikato, NZ**

#### **Abstract**

This research examines active labour market policy, and in particular, training schemes targeted towards unemployed individuals who are the most disadvantaged in the labour market in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The purpose of this research is to first, highlight the main tensions between the current policy frameworks for the design and the practice of such training. The second purpose is to offer explanations for these tensions by highlighting the competitive free-market and rational individualistic assumptions that underpin the current frameworks and, in particular, how these constrain the 'choices' and possibilities for the most disadvantaged unemployed. The study identifies and examines State Active Neoliberalism, as a specific place-time articulation of neoliberalism, adopted by two successive Labour-led governments in New Zealand from 1999-2005. Thirdly, a community development theoretical framework is proposed to underpin recommendations that could support more enabling and empowering policies for the most disadvantaged unemployed and the organisations that seek to assist them.

The thesis draws on case studies of major State-funded training schemes for long-term unemployed individuals to illustrate the 'on-the-ground' consequences of the discursive shifts in policy rhetoric. This research combines an in-depth, qualitative field research approach with a critical analysis of policy frameworks and political representations of unemployment, training and labour market issues in documents, publications and communications.

The findings of this research are that a competitive quasi-market for training provision and the increased reliance on narrow outcome measurements, position commercial imperatives ahead of assisting the most disadvantaged unemployed. In order to remain viable, training organisations are increasingly faced with the need to sacrifice social motivations for commercial survival. This situation erodes the scope, at the local level, for services that are relevant to the various needs and circumstances of disadvantaged unemployed people. While the overarching policy discourses maintain that training schemes serve the needs of the most disadvantaged unemployed, policy mechanisms and competitive labour market contexts undermine such objectives. Not only are the most disadvantaged unemployed people frequently unable to access services claiming to be for their benefit, they are by definition less likely to succeed in the context of competitive labour markets and individualised society.