



Occupy Aotearoa New Zealand

At universities here in Aotearoa New Zealand there are inklings that a new type of protest movement may be emerging. Closely linked to the Occupy movement that began on New York's Wall Street and quickly spread around the world, this emergent tertiary-education-focused protest movement does not announce clear demands. It is hard to tell if protesters are angry at the Government, campus managers, or even other staff and students. It lacks figurehead speakers. It relies heavily on social media, and seems preoccupied with process rather than outcome.

At both the University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington, protest movements without any clear leadership from either student or staff unions on campus have challenged the prevailing tertiary education environment. What we have in the past treated as issues to be addressed, the protesters have treated merely as symptoms of a wider malaise; a malaise to which the protesters are offering no remedy. Or at least not a remedy we find palatable.

For many steeped in the traditions of campaigning and activism the Occupy movement runs counter to the learning and wisdom we've built up over the years. We know from experience that, to win, we should strategically identify a goal that is achievable. We should then build public support around our single issue, putting pressure on a single target to create change. We know we should utilise rather than reject opportunities. We know the end goal is to have and exercise the power our opponents currently hold. But Occupy protesters appear to reject all these things we have learnt from hard won experience.

Occupy is an evolution of the anti-globalisation protest movements of the earliest days of the century, as characterised by *No Logo* and the Battle in Seattle. There protesters brought a myriad of issues into one protest movement and tried to draw the links between them all. Thus environmental issues, workers' rights, excessive marketing, and so on were all brought together in a messy amalgamation of anti-globalisation sentiment.

The Occupy movement appears to go one step further, not expecting these diverse issues to co-exist under one banner, but simply to share the same pavement – to cohabit and debate with each other about a way forward. The process of debate, of finding a new way of doing things is as important as any change that results.

In some ways, this sounds like a utopian university – passionate academics sharing the same campus space, debating among each other to establish rules and processes by which we all get along.

The tertiary education offshoot of the Occupy movement obviously focuses on tertiary education issues – and its apostles comprise mostly students and staff. So, whereas the broader Occupy movement most notably challenges corporate wealth and power, this nascent tertiary education movement challenges managerialism and the narrow vision for our future that many institutions and their funders advocate.

Interestingly, for us as a union, we are debating a similar set of issues and coming to the same conclusion – that many of the problems we are trying to address are actually the symptoms of a mania for managerialism within our institutions. And, that protest is not so much a means to create change but part of a democratic tradition within tertiary institutions that informs and expands public debate and creates new wisdom for us. So perhaps, in our small way, we are part of the Occupy movement too. **A**

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If you are a Kiwi in Aussie you can vote in the NZ Election!

Most New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who live in Australia can enrol and vote in the upcoming NZ general election, on or before 26 November. But hurry, you need to make sure you are enrolled before then! For more information, go to bit.ly/vote-overseas and keepmmp.org.nz.

We need your vote for MMP to help NZ keep one of the fairest voting systems in the world. And we need your vote to give your Kiwi friends and family a government that cares about public education and workers' rights.

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...continued from previous page

will have opportunities to meet people from many countries in the seat next to them.

So finally, a small example of the kinds of ways we can cosmopolitanise our curricula. Let's say you're in an engineering tutorial investigating the processes for making skim milk from whole. Chances are there are students from at least three countries in the room. Why not ask them to investigate the processes in each of the three countries? This could even lead to discussions of whether milk is regularly drunk in each country, and whether skim milk is popularly consumed, and if not, why? It can also lead to discussions of global food networks – who is importing milk products and who is exporting – and why?

The next thing you know the students not only have a cross-cultural comparison of skim milk processing from which to gain opportunities to more critically assess the local processes, but they're engaged with questions of global food security and various nations' roles. And because there are people from the countries in question involved in the discussion, the care factor goes up – it is far more interesting and rewarding to most people to have intentful and 'authentic' discussions with some form of personal engagement.

You want to cosmopolitanise the cohort? Stop overlooking the opportunities sitting in our classrooms. **A**

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