VET, democracy and philanthropy: exercising ministerial responsibility

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Abstract

Based upon extensive research in a single jurisdiction, this paper explores the possibility that a similar pattern of behaviour on the part of cabinet ministers with responsibility for technical and vocational education and training can be established elsewhere. By comparing three parliamentary democracies that have assumed increased levels of local decision-making regarding the expenditure of public funds, common patterns of conduct have been identified. The shared actions of publicly elected parliamentarians are similar to those exhibited by wealthy philanthropists in that both have access to large amounts of money and are in pursuit of specific social and economic agendas for improving the lives of targeted groups of residents. It is concluded that in order to influence these vocational education and training policy decision-makers, an understanding of what motivates philanthropic styles of behaviour must be explicitly articulated and used to frame the presentation of desired programmatic outcomes when interacting with cabinet ministers.

Introduction

It is argued in Vocational Education and Training: the Northern Territory's history of public philanthropy (Zoellner 2017) that those individuals who assume the role of the government minister with responsibility for vocational education and training (VET), since gaining powers in a version of local self-government of the jurisdiction, behave in the manner of wealthy philanthropists. Furthermore, if one wishes to genuinely influence VET policy decision-making, it is crucial to understand what inspires wealthy philanthropists to allocate large sums of resources in order to achieve their desired outcomes because the elected members of parliament and super-rich donors are motivated in similar ways. Both groups are driven to guide society in directions that align with their views of how to make the world a better place and have access to the resources to move events in particular directions. The argument is based upon a historical analysis of the provision of VET to the populace of the Northern Territory before and after self-government was devolved in July 1978 from the Commonwealth of Australia to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly for most state-type functions, including education and training.

The research project described in this paper seeks to determine if a prima facie case can be substantiated that similar patterns of philanthropic motivation can be detected in other British-style parliamentary democracies. If so, do such findings suggest non-traditional ways of both understanding and influencing public policy-making in VET? In addition to the site of the original study in the Northern Territory of Australia, British Columbia in Canada and Scotland in the United Kingdom have been chosen for comparison. These jurisdictions share a large number of characteristics:

- historic rule by the British Crown
- were progressively granted increased political and financial self-government
- have a unicameral parliament based on the Westminster tradition
have a cabinet of elected parliamentarians with the responsibility to make
government functional including the provision of education and training
occupy a landmass characterised by harsh climatic extremes and isolation
require public policies that recognise a significant proportion of their population
suffers a variety of socio-economic disadvantages whose resolutions often include
VET provision, i.e., Aboriginal people in Australia and Canada as well as Highlanders
in Scotland and
extensive public policy predicated upon human capital development and the
presumed links between education, training and socio-economic prosperity.

Of course, there are also significant differences between the three countries, especially
those in the 'new world' and Scotland and the impact of Anglo-Saxon cultural conventions
exported into Canada and Australia by the Scottish diaspora (Herman 2003, p. 329).
However, in the need for brevity and the explicit purpose of this project these differences are
not explored in great detail; it is the progressive assumption of local decision-making power
and control of the public purse by parliament and its cabinet ministers/secrertaries that is the
focus. For reasons that will become apparent, the time period in question is different for each
country; the Northern Territory is from 1978, British Columbia from the end of World War
Two and Scotland from 1999.

Democratic institutions

British Columbia

The first elected House of Assembly of the Colony of Vancouver Island was elected in 1856
and absorbed into the newly established United Colony of British Columbia in 1866. The
colony was excluded from the original declaration of the Dominion of Canada 1867, but
affiliated four years later while retaining the provincial responsibilities for education, health
and natural resources (The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia 2018b). After joining
the Canadian Confederation the first 25 member Legislative Assembly was elected (growing
to 87 members by 2018) and has a Cabinet that informs the Legislative Assembly on the
financial requirements of the Government which are legislated by the members as a supply
bill (The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia 2018a). All government agencies, boards
and commissions operate under the direct authority of a cabinet minister who is held
personally responsible for the provision and conduct of government in British Columbia (The
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia 2018a).

Scotland

The first recorded historical mention of a parliamentary assembly was in 1235 and there
have many variations in governance structures ever since, culminating in the 129 members
of the Scottish Parliament assuming power to legislate on devolved matters (including
education and training) from 1 July 1999 (Scottish Parliament 2018a). Following each
election since devolved responsibility, the Scottish Parliament nominates a First Minister
who, after being formally appointed by the Queen, is ultimately responsible for all policies
and decisions; the First Minister then appoints a cabinet consisting of secretaries and their
supporting ministers who oversee the operation of government and its agencies through the
setting of policy and introducing legislation into the parliament for consideration (Scottish
Parliament 2018b). Matters devolved from Westminster include the economy, education and taxation; the Cabinet, consisting of the First Minister, Cabinet Secretaries, the Minister for Parliamentary Business and the Permanent Secretary, is the main decision-making body of the government (Scottish Parliament 2018b).

**Northern Territory**

A semi-elected Legislative Council (six elected and seven Australian Government appointed members) met for the first time in 1948 and progressively moved to a fully elected 19 member Legislative Assembly in 1974 which conducted the negotiations for the transfer of legislative responsibility for state-type constitutional functions, including education, training and budget, from the federal government to a yet to be established Northern Territory Government (Heatley 1979). Self-government was assumed by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and its 5-man Cabinet from 1 July 1978 and the total number of parliamentary seats was increased to the current 25 in 1982 with nine ministers (Heatley 1990). After nearly 65 years of governance by an unelected federal government bureaucracy the new Northern Territory Government cabinet and ministers enthusiastically embraced responsibility for exercising their mandate to govern and be held accountable for their actions in the Westminster tradition (Weller & Sanders 1982). This desire for increased local control and responsibility still exerts a strong influence as evidenced by a waxing and waning effort to transition from the constitutional status of a territory to full statehood (Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory 2014).

**Post-school vocational education and training**

Again, the three jurisdictions share a number of characteristics in the VET space. A clear distinction is made between legally regulated apprenticeships and the much larger provision of general and occupational training. Each has a number of programs targeted at ‘equity groups’ for the purpose of increasing individual skills in ways that are intended to lead to employment. In addition, each nation has developed a training market that has encouraged private providers to compete with the traditional public colleges.

**British Columbia**

The Canadian Confederation maintains the clearest demarcation of responsibility for VET of the three countries – the responsibility for education and training sits squarely at the provincial level and there is not even a federal ministry of education (Wheelahan & Moodie 2017, p. 12) although the national government funds priority programs at certain times such as the Red Seal initiative in support of interprovincial skills mobility (Álvarez-Galván et al. 2015, p. 10). Macdonald (1962, p. 26) reports that due to the two world wars and the Great Depression post-school education was not a large-scale undertaking in British Columbia until after World War Two when a period of "tremendous expansion" of student enrolments commenced. His recommendation for the establishment of "two basic kinds of institutions of higher education"; universities as well as colleges with four-year degrees granting powers and for the provision of advanced training augmented by a group of decentralised regional two year-colleges established the public institutional structure of VET that is still evident today (Macdonald 1962, p. 50). In addition, the provincial government had established an Institute of Technology in the early 1960s.
The Legislative Assembly (2018a) regulated apprenticeships as early as 1894. From 2003 the apprenticeship system has been controlled by the Industry Training Authority (ITA) which also allocates substantial public funds to both public colleges and private providers in support of this training (Legislative Assembly of British Columbia 2018b). The board of directors of this government authority is appointed by the minister and effectively all matters, including funding decisions, are subject to ministerial discretion. In addition to apprentice training funding from the ITA, the public colleges are directly funded by the provincial government ministry with responsibility for training and are notified by means of an annual ‘budget letter’ from the minister which sets out operating grants and student targets (for example, Brewster 2017).

**Scotland**

By the late 19th century Scotland had become the first fully literate nation and its education system had inspired the rest of the world allowing Scots to dominate British politics and pretty much run the empire (Herman 2003, pp. 394-396). Artisanal guilds had played an important role in regulating apprenticeships in the United Kingdom (UK) until the 19th century when abolished by various acts of the state in favour of government direction (Thelen 2004, p. 93). 43 Scottish Further Education colleges were incorporated in 1993 thus transferring them from the management of regional education authorities to the bureaucracy of the UK Government's then Scottish Office (Lang 1995, p. 4) which then handed over responsibility to the new Scottish Parliament. Since 1999 a series of amalgamations has reduced the number of Further Education (FE) colleges to 25.

One of the very first acts passed by this contemporary parliament in 2000 gave it authority "to make provision for the payment of grants in respect of the education and training of certain individuals" (United Kingdom Government 2018, p. 1). While the legislative and financial responsibilities were granted to Scotland in 1999, some United Kingdom-wide policy initiatives such as the re-introduced apprenticeship levy on large employers (Department for Business 2015) still impact on local provision. In the specific case of the levy, a Flexible Workforce Development Fund is being used to provide these employers with workforce training through the FE colleges "to enable them to deliver the outcomes expected by the Scottish Government" (Scottish Funding Council 2017b, p. 2).

Scotland has legislated for two separate statutory authorities to finance 'modern apprenticeships' and the public colleges. Since the 2005 merger of separate higher and further education bodies, the Scottish Funding Council (2017a, p. 4) allocates the public funding provided from parliamentary grants to further education and higher education institutions "to support the Scottish Government's priorities for education". The members of the board of directors are appointed by the Scottish Ministers, normally for a period of three to four years (Scottish Funding Council 2017a, p. 31). A range of funding programs for apprentices, trainees and those deemed eligible for individual training accounts is funded through a separate ministerially-owned company The Skills Development Scotland Co. Limited (2010, pp. 2-5); whose directors also serve at the pleasure of the Scottish Ministers. These two arm's length from government bodies are expected by the cabinet to work in conjunction with each other to produce "a system wide approach" for skills planning and development as well as "harnessing the energies of industry leaders" (Swinney 2017b, p. 2).
Northern Territory

As described by Wheelahan and Moodie (2017, p. 12) states and territories share power and funding responsibilities with the Australian Government in pursuit of a national VET system with each jurisdiction maintaining their constitutional power and different structures and practices. National policies can have significant impact in the Northern Territory through mechanisms to provide student loans (Australian Government 2015) or the direct funding of delivery such as the Productivity Places Program (Department of Education and Training 2008). For the past decade this shared interest in VET has been formalised in a series of partnership agreements (for example, Council of Australian Governments 2012). The desire for Northern territory control of the training system has been persistent and strong – the very first piece of legislation passed by the semi-elected Legislative Council provided for the establishment of the Apprenticeships Board (Northern Territory of Australia 1948). In the negotiations for self-government in the mid-1970s, a rear guard action by unions and some Australian Government bureaucrats to not devolve the control of education and training was bitterly opposed by Northern Territory politicians but resulted in responsibility being handed over in 1979, one year after nominal self-government commenced (Heatley 1990, p. 88).

Since assuming control of VET, the Northern Territory Government has created and abolished a variety of institutions to deliver training in the jurisdiction. The centre piece of public provision was a North American inspired degree-granting community college that provided apprentice and general training (Berzins & Loveday 1999). This institution was augmented by regionally based and specialist colleges established under separate legislation that focused upon technical and further education and some apprenticeships (Zoellner 2017, pp. 99-160). Over time all but one of the public colleges were consolidated into a single dual sector university offering a full range of VET courses and higher education to doctorate level at a variety of campuses and centres (Webb 2014). The remaining Aboriginal-controlled college also morphed into a dual sector VET and degree-granting institution (Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education 2014).

In the early days of local rule, public funding for apprenticeships was allocated by a ministerially appointed Industry Training Commission (Northern Territory Archives Service 1980), while the colleges were funded from the Education Department operating under the responsibility of the minister (Education Advisory Group 1978). After a number of administrative changes both functions were consolidated in the Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority (Watts 1991). Members of the statutory authority were appointed by the Minister with responsibility for VET. Funding grants were made to both public and private providers for both general and apprenticeship training on the basis of contracts called resource agreements (Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority 2000) which removed the colleges and university from direct government control although the minister does still appoint the majority of governing council members. From 2003 the use of an arm's-length authority structure to allocated public funding for VET delivery was abandoned and the function was brought back into a departmental structure in order to be more responsive to ministerial direction (Zoellner 2017, pp. 194-195) and this arrangement remains in place currently. The chief executive of the department is held accountable to cabinet (Pope 1986).

Philanthropic behaviour
Philanthropists are willing to give on the basis of personal initiative that is triggered by a strong commitment to the goals they support (Schuyt, Bekkers & Smit 2010, p. 4). In particular, the great wealth controlled by some individual philanthropists affords them the means to move from being simple consumers of the social agenda to being producers of it (Schervish, Herman & Rhenisch 1986, p. 9). The allocation of resources by the wealthy supports this productive role by redistributing economic capital to individuals and organisations in order to achieve particular goals in ways that capitalist markets cannot by producing the institutions capable of achieving the desired state of affairs (Schervish, Herman & Rhenisch 1986, p. 6-11). For example, the Rockefeller Foundation in the United States is credited with the creation of the social sciences as a university-level field of studies, while John D. Rockefeller used his personal wealth to establish the University of Chicago in 1892 (Patterson 2001, p. 23) – the institution from which would emerge the influential human capital theory (Becker 1993) that underpins the contemporary policy settings of VET in all three of the countries compared in this paper.

Analysis of the giving behaviours of the 'super-rich' posits a link between wealth, an attitude of social responsibility and influencing public policy where the donors tend to support familiar people and organisations while shaping as well as contributing to favoured causes (Hay & Muller 2013, p. 6). Ostrower's (1995) study of over 100 wealthy philanthropists found their strong preference to support educational and cultural endeavours to achieve social goals. The Scottish-American Andrew Carnegie (Lagemann 1989) exemplifies this preference with his financial support to more than 3,000 libraries in various countries including Scotland, Canada and Australia in addition to his multiple donations to a wide range of educational causes ranging from university research to individual music lessons. In his manifesto on the obligation of the super-rich to philanthropic giving, Carnegie (1889, p. 18) described:

> Individualism will continue, but the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor; intrusted for a season with a great part of the increased wealth of the community, but administering it for the community for better than it could or would have done for itself.

There is little evidence that the super-rich "pursue a crudely self-interested public agenda or single-handedly achieve it" (Schervish, Herman & Rhenisch 1986, p. 6). "Factors inducing the identification of the self with the needs and aspirations of others" have the most impact upon philanthropic behaviour and are frequently defined by the networks of formal and informal relationships of the giver (Schervish, Coutsoukis & Havens 1998, pp. 1-2). In another study into the giving behaviour of the wealthy, it was found that they "typically thought in terms of personal considerations, social and familial networks and identifications and attachments to different organisations" based upon an "underlying ideological framework that informs their understanding of philanthropy as a social institution" (Ostrower 1995, p. 113).

In fact the financial contribution of the Rockefeller Foundation created a new brand of intellectual – the technical expert who brings objectivity and academic science to bear on socio-economic problems (Fisher 1983, p. 208). In the context of administering efficient democratic government, these specialised professionals swelled the ranks of government agencies and authorities providing ministers with the expertise to implement practical programs of social control. In the same manner as philanthropic foundations distanced the
wealthy giver from direct contact with recipients and responsibility for outcomes, the technical expertise of government agencies de-personalises their minister's giving behaviour in a dispassionate search for knowledge and societal improvement (Zoellner 2017, p. 22). The relationship between the giver and the beneficiaries of the philanthropy of the wealthy has a distinctive characteristic: "the recipient of the charitable donations is usually absent from the context in which the donation is made" (Bekkers & Wiepking 2007, p. 3).

Citing Bratchell, Chard (1983, p. 19) describes the role of further education in the United Kingdom prior to the Second World War: "it was driven by a strong sense that it was a sort of charity provided with a degree of social awareness and separate from educational considerations". Providing access to health and education services is amenable to philanthropic interventions in the name of improving global society through human capital development. These two policy areas were specifically targeted by the Rockefeller Foundation a century ago (Fosdick 1989, p. x) and dominate the contemporary priorities of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014). Philanthropic programs that are intended to increase access and opportunity education and training can be quantified and symbolised by measuring student numbers and the number of formal certificates issued. Schervish (1998, p. 601) has found that the primary means of communication in the philanthropy of the wealthy is "the symbolic medium of words and images". This, of course, is also the central business of politicians.

The introduction of 'new public management' and its outsourcing of service provision to both public and private providers has allowed ministers and public servants to focus on policy and funding while being distanced from direct responsibility for failures and operational problems (Hill & Hupe 2002, pp. 110-112; Keating 2004). Gordon (1991, pp. 10 and 45) proposes that the aim of government is to guide the development of individuals to foster a general improvement of the state and its expert systems; while gathering increasing amounts of information to identify problematic groups in society that pose a risk to themselves and society. Improving their human capital through VET leading to employment is often seen as a solution to their circumstances while improving society in general. In fact, VET is a solution to virtually every public policy problem, therefore highly amenable to ministerial discretion and/or the subject of philanthropy (Zoellner 2013, p. 65).

Social welfare and economic interests are conjoined in the advanced market democracies of the three jurisdictions in this study in which the pursuits of the wealthy and the functioning of the state have developed into "campaigns for citizenship [that] link demands for certain political and legal rights with projects to reform individuals at the level of their personal skills and competencies" (Barry, Osborne & Rose 1996, p. 1). In this situation the funding of VET is a useful practice of government as "it matches the resources of the giver to the needs of the recipient through a social relation that is directly mobilised and governed by force of a morally armed entreaty" (Schervish 1998, p. 601). This also encourages the minister or secretary with responsibility for the provision of vocational education and training to behave like a wealthy philanthropist.

The devolution of governance powers from distant bureaucracies to the three jurisdictions was done in the belief that the closer the distance between the citizens and their elected parliamentarians, the better democracy will function (for example, Martin & Dewar 2012, p. 50; The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia 2018a). The popularly elected secretaries
and ministers of the respective parliamentary cabinets suddenly gained access to very large amounts of public resources and the legal mandate to distribute them (Northern Territory of Australia 1984; The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia 2018a; United Kingdom Government 2018). Given that the case has been argued that Northern Territory ministers with responsibility for VET have behaved in the manner of wealthy philanthropists (Zoellner 2017), that jurisdiction will no longer be discussed in favour of developing a first impression whether self-governing Scottish and British Columbian ministers are acting in a similar manner to their Australian counterparts.

**Ministerial behaviour**

In addition to the record of parliamentary proceedings (Hansard in British Columbia and the Official Report in Scotland) which contains indications of ministerial motivations and intentions, the Scottish and British Columbian secretaries and ministers commit to writing their exact expectations of those organisations in receipt of government funding for VET. These various directives will form the primary source of data to determine if they also allocate the large amount of public funding at their disposal in ways that are similar to super-rich philanthropists.

**British Columbia**

Since 2006 the ministerial preferences regarding apprenticeships have been sent to the Industry Training Authority in the form of a letter with various titles: Shareholder's Letter of Expectations; Government's Letter of Expectations and from 2015 onwards the Government Mandate Letter. The content is a mixture of reminders of whole of government bureaucratic process, a list of the specific legislative requirements imposed on the authority and a group of directives and/or ministerial priorities to be addressed in the forthcoming year in return for the financial contribution determined by the minister-in-cabinet. In order to ensure that the government-appointed directors are clear about the minister's intentions, each is required to sign the letter and a copy is published on the ITA website. In the 2017/18 letter (Bond 2017) the minister directed the ITA to undertake a range of "strategic actions" including to:

- increase youth participation by providing trade training earlier
- prioritise strategies to improve completion rates
- better utilise research, data and evaluation to inform policy and programs
- advance actions to increase access trades training for women, youth and Aboriginal people
- meet industry and labour market needs for skilled workers and
- reduce barriers to certification and enhanced mobility of apprentices.

In a similar manner, each of the province's publically funded colleges and universities receives an annual budget letter from the relevant minister which announces the various financial allocations made by government, the student targets and associated roles, expectations and accountabilities. Each of the 25 letters has a similar structure and identical generic government process reminders but vary in terms of funding amounts allocated and student loads and program offerings depending upon regional location and overall mission i.e., the expectations for the University of British Columbia differ from the Justice Institute of British Columbia.
Using the 2017/18 budget letter to the British Columbia Institute of Technology (Brewster 2017) as an example, there are reminders of government-wide budgetary procedures, overarching policy imperatives such as the commitment to Indigenous truth and reconciliation and ongoing legislative requirements. There are also specific training activities financed for "a One-time Health Program, Adult Basic Education, English Language Learner and Adult Special Education" as well specific funding and enrolment targets for about 20 occupations considered to have 'skills gaps' that can be addressed through the provision of public funding (Brewster 2017, pp. 1-2). The Assistant Deputy Minister describes that the reason for allocating $C117 million to the institute is "to improve affordability, build better services for everyone and invest in a strong, innovative economy that creates jobs and works for all British Columbians" (Brewster 2017, p. 1).

In his opening statement, the then Minister for Advanced Education described:

> The *Ministry of Advanced Education 2014/15-2016/17 Service Plan* was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared (Virk 2014, p. 4).

In discharging his duties, the minister conjoins training and education in order to ensure that British Columbians are "first in line to fill those jobs" that are predicted to exceed one million vacancies by 2020; tempered by the necessity to invest the daily spend on "our public post-secondary system" of $C5 million "wisely and responsibly for both citizens and students" (Virk 2014, pp. 3-4).

*Scotland*

As with the Canadians, Scotland separates funding mechanisms for apprentices and trainees from those that finance the public further education college sector. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is a ministerially-owned company that allocates funds (£183.5 million in 2015-16) sourced from the Scottish Parliament to ensure skills occupational training is aligned with the vision and purpose of the Scottish Government (Cunningham 2015, p. 1). The board of directors is appointed and removed at the discretion of the Scottish Ministers who are also the sole member of the company (The Skills Development Scotland Co. Limited 2010, pp. 4-5).

In addition, SDS receives an annual letter of guidance from the relevant minister to ensure there is no ambiguity about the company's operations and that they "fully contribute to the Scottish Government's strategic objectives; I am writing to you to set out my expectations of SDS for the coming year" (Swinney 2017b, p. 1). Like the British Columbian ministers, economics, skills and jobs are joined together in pursuit of "sustainable, inclusive economic growth for Scotland" in which "a skilled population [is] capable of meeting the needs of employers, where fair work is central to realising the potential of individuals and communities" (Swinney 2017b, p. 1). The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills goes onto describe his personal influence in the funding process; "in what has been a difficult financial settlement for public services across Scotland, I am pleased I have been able to provide a cash increase for SDS" (Swinney 2017b, p. 3).
The Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) affairs are the responsibility of a board whose members are "appointed by the Scottish Ministers" subject to the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (Scottish Funding Council 2017a, pp. 33-34). The council has "taken on new work to support the Scottish Government's priorities for education" (p. 4) and in 2016 had a net annual expenditure of nearly £1.8 billion of public funding (Scottish Funding Council 2017a, p. 24). In 2014-15 the SFC allocated £548 to the Further Education colleges that enrolled 221,660 students and employed 10,719 full time equivalent staff (Audit Scotland 2016, p. 4). Like SDS the Scottish Funding Council also receives a letter of guidance from a minister "setting out my expectations for the funding provided to the SFC" in the pursuit of "this Government's defining mission" of education and ensuring every young person can gain the skills and qualifications to succeed in life and "enable them to help create and benefit from sustainable economic growth in Scotland" (Somerville 2017, p. 1). "Colleges are at the centre of our efforts to build the workforce Scotland's employers and economy need" (Somerville 2017, p. 5).

In addition, the minister specifies the central role college's play "in widening access to higher education" and her priorities for the reduction of gender imbalances in occupations and college senior academic circles as well as increasing access to colleges by specific target groups such as speakers of languages other than English, young people and residents of the country's most deprived areas that suffer from multiple deprivations, especially in education and health outcomes (Somerville 2017, p. 4). In support of the guidance to meet the Scottish Government's strategic directions, the minister states, "I expect the SFC to be able to demonstrate clearly how Scotland's colleges and universities are contributing to the delivery of our national priorities" and goes onto to indicate "I am pleased that I have been able to provide cash increases to both the college and university sectors" (Somerville 2017, p. 2).

It is worth noting that the most recent letter of guidance varies little from the script followed by the first Scottish Parliament's minister with responsibility for the devolved matter of VET:

So since July 1999 I have had the honour, as Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, to oversee the FE sector's vital role in shaping Scotland's future. That is why education is the Scottish Executive's top priority. We shall equip the FE sector with the necessary resources to enable colleges to play a key role at the heart of securing social justice and economic development within Scotland (McLeish 2000, pp. 4-5).

Discussion

This section will return to research findings on the characteristic behaviours of wealthy philanthropists and compare them to the observed ministerial actions. By definition, the super-rich who are motivated to give have access to large sums of money, just as both the British Columbian and Scottish ministers who allocate millions of dollars or pounds to their VET sectors each year. Likewise, the control of vast sums of resources allows the donors to produce the agendas in pursuit of their strong commitments to goals they support. In the cases examined here both ministers and philanthropists have demonstrated an explicit commitment to improve the economic prospects of the jurisdiction and its residents by providing the resources to increase human capital. This is most frequently accomplished by
funding initiatives and programs that improve access to education and health services which are the two most important contributors to increasing productivity through human capital improvement (Becker 1993, p. 55). The British Columbian support for the 'One-time Health Program and Adult Basic' Education mirror the Scottish efforts increase access from residents who live in areas that have 'multiple deprivations'. Both align with the priorities of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) to ensure "the next generation can access quality healthcare and a great education" and the Rockefeller Foundation's multiple intergenerational and global interventions to improve education and health outcomes (Fosdick 1989).

Just as the wealthy philanthropists establish foundations to manage their giving and identify 'worthy recipients', the ministers establish bodies to identify both generic labour force targets and groups of residents that require special attention. In British Columbia current priority groups included Aboriginal people, women, those with low levels of literacy and youth while the Scots have identified women, youth, non-English speakers and those who live in areas that suffer from a combined range of social and economic disadvantages. The ministers use both government departments (e.g., BC's Ministry of Advanced Education) and statutory authorities (e.g., the ITA in Canada and the SFC and SDS in Scotland) to serve the same roles as the philanthropic foundations. These bodies establish technical mechanisms to distribute funds to VET providers and individual learners, collect large amounts of data in able to be able to account for the expenditure and monitor outcomes and supply the technical expertise to ensure operations are efficient and effective while providing an evidence base that can be used to offer advice to government.

Not only does the relevant minister appoint the individuals who will govern or lead these bodies but they issue them with explicit instructions as to the minister's priorities and desired outcomes that arise from the funding they have received. Both the foundations and the government-sanctioned bodies have a staff of technical experts who use their knowledge base to ensure an alignment between providers' outcomes and the funder's policy intention. Equally, the recipient is absent from the donation's context because these experts and their evaluations of success are virtually always highly quantified; examples of the proxies for the individual beneficiary used in philanthropic-type giving include:

- "increase in low-income students' college completion rates" (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation 2014)
- "student full time equivalent targets" in British Columbia (Brewster 2017, p. 7)
- "SDS should provide 27,000 new Modern Apprenticeship starts" (Swinney 2017b)

Finally, we have shown that the single most important motivator for super-rich philanthropists is an identification of the self with the aspirations of others aligned with a desire to support familiar people and organisations. For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) will support "ideas that support our strategic priorities". The ministers also have been shown to identify with organisations and the people whose lives they seek to improve. British Columbia's Minister of Advanced Education described, "It has been my great pleasure to visit every one of our 25 public post-secondary institutions and many private career-training institutions and universities" that "with the input and support from the dedicated staff of my ministry" ensure that "we can meet the ever-changing needs of student and our economy" (Virk 2014, p. 4). The Scottish Cabinet Secretary also describes his identification with the
public institutions. He states, I have "recognised it is the greatest privilege to have the opportunity to shape the future of Scottish education. We are blessed with colleges and universities that are world class. They are the jewels in the crown of Scottish education" (Swinney 2017a).

One final example of the powerful influence of identification is also shared by all three jurisdictions. There is a common narrative of the jurisdiction's residents being united in their desire to exercise local democratic control of government in the face of perceptions of a distant and unresponsive central government. The recognition of 'Territorians' in Australia (Weller & Sanders 1982), the shared experience of 'western alienation' in British Columbia and the centuries old dream of Scottish 'independence' each serve as mechanism for the political class to identify with the aspirations of the public. British Columbians share a "sense of grievance" and "feel that their province is treated poorly in the Canadian federal system" (Berdahl 2010, p. 1). In a statement to parliament regarding legislating for the referendum on independence, the then Scottish Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, explains this sense that is evident in all three jurisdictions:

To give the Scottish people the chance to complete the powers of the Scottish Parliament, to make sure decisions about the economy and welfare as well as health and education are taken not by governments in Westminster that we often do not vote for, but by people who care most about Scotland's future – those of us who live and work here (The Scottish Parliament 2013, p. 591).

Conclusion

Building upon the initial argument that ministers with responsibility for VET in Australia's Northern Territory had behaved in a manner that was very similar to that of wealthy philanthropists in terms of articulating and funding a socio-economic agenda, this paper sought to determine if these behaviours were on display in other similar jurisdictions. As in Australia it was found that multiple ministers exhibited the same basic patterns of conduct and that these were consistent with those observed in the super-rich benefactors. A prima facie case that the VET ministers of British Columbia and Scotland also act like and display the characteristics of wealthy philanthropists is supported.

It also suggests that for those who seek to influence public policy in vocational education and training need to develop tactics that recognise and use the factors that research into philanthropic motivators has described: self-identification, the use of technical expertise and having superior knowledge systems aimed at protecting and enhancing the advanced market democracy of each country. Philanthropic behaviour is a powerful, if unappreciated, influence in policy-making whose significance needs to be understood by those seeking to achieve particular outcomes in vocational education and training.

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