Women Talking Politics

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We Miss Your Existence Juliana, Exquisite Corpse

Latin Feminist Collective

Juliana, as many of us, was thriving and surviving in this society

We, like sisters, bonded by the same kind of story, is a sad story

So many sad stories behind women's eyes

Do they feel powerful by taking someone's else life? Or is it just a game where we are the prize?

A no never means no. No, means the end of life

Vida, sin vida

We are not appreciated and valued, but we are beings full of love and power

The power to transform our realities, *por nosotras y las que vienen*

We must change our realities

We humans, we women, come to this world to survive

Ayuda! A woman calls for help in Spanish, lonely in the English crowd of deaf ears

Why can't we be in a world safe, to live *'sabroso'?*

From the heart within, arm by arm, we decided to be one

Earth, wind, water, and fire, bonded in one body, one feeling, one fight

Expression, poetry, art, body. That historical memory that runs through our blood

The same one that we liberate from the sacred womb

the other side of the Pacific *las mujeres transeúntes* encounter the sufferings

The sufferings and struggles we share, give us *el poder*

And the flowers and the candles and the rain and the tears, honouring your presence amongst us

Let the lighting fire of feminism never extinguish

I found you in my journey

We found you, Juliana

Tenemos un nombre más allá de las estadísticas

Juliana -in soft whispering voices- JULIANA in desperate crying howls

Juliana, we don't forget your name

Nos unimos desde una esperanza de construir en nombre de Juliana

We don't let go your tender embrace

The anger for your murder brought us together

Stop taking our lives!

Dejen de pegarnos, de violarnos, de matarnos

Is the government responsible for her femicide?

And our thirst of justice has irritated this 'safe' country

But we don't care, we will keep shouting *NIUNAMENOS!*

With the blessing of the ones that you take from us, we here to embrace our sufferings together

We will fight *por nosotras y por nuestra dignidad*

Broken by the cracks of death, we went to the streets to seek justice for our sister

Te queremos

The ones that are still standing, will keep fighting so others can live, just as you, just as I do

Vamos a bailar y a disfrutar nuestras vidas libres de violencia

We are all Juliana

We miss your existence

Tanto arde que inspira, como fogata en noche oscura.

WOMEN. LIFE. FREEDOM – Calling our Prime Minister to stand with Iranian women and all women

Can a surge of women-led protests reverse 40 years of oppression?

The current protests in Iran are the largest the country has witnessed in years.

And they're being led by women, who are publicly shaving their heads and burning their hijabs. Following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police detention in September, thousands are flocking to the streets in major rallies against Iran's harsh dictatorship.

There are two petitions urging our Prime Minister and Government to join the courageous demonstrators in Iran in condemning the Iranian government's violence against women.

Despite the horrific domestic reality of violence against women in New Zealand, we should be standing for human rights and equality together with this historic revolution led by Iranian women – Women, Life, Freedom. Every Iranian around the world knows the violence of that regime and we are terrified of this incredible movement as they face vicious crackdowns and internet blackouts.

As the first country to give women the vote, we should be doing a lot more than just amplifying their voices. We are all entitled to human rights. These include the right to live free from violence and discrimination. But across the globe, many women and girls still face discrimination on the basis of sex and gender.

Until the women of Iran are free, we are going to stand with you, in solidarity. It is the only way to send a strong message of support for women.

We urge Prime Minister, Hon. Jacinda Ardern to stand with the Iranian women and with all women . We urge the Government to take a stronger stance and condemn the treatment of women in Iran.

Commentary from Dr Negar Partow*

5/10/22
It has been over two weeks since Iran has been the scene of violence and brutality, and once again the main target of the anger are women. I have been struggling to write about it. There's no doubt that I feel their pain and suffering and truly wish them a democratic and free system. I admire the bravery, courage and livelihood of Iranian women who have never given up fighting for their freedom over the last four decades. Nonetheless, every time I thought about writing, a worry stopped me. The

attack on #sharifuniversity, is the event that made me share my hope and concerns. The Islamic republic have promoted and practiced a culture of violence for over four decades. If it doesn't accept a concession, which the attack shows it hasn't yet, there would be two outcomes from this round of uprising. It could result in another round of oppression, torture, imprisonment and public practice of gender based violence. The other outcome is the victory for people. Even if there is a coherent plan for a post-revolutionary state, which I don't see anywhere, the transitional period from a violent totalitarian regime to a democratic representative government requires a carefully planned reconciliation strategy. This transitional period worries me the worst. Who would draw the line and how could Iran avoid a period of bloodshed? The aftermath of this uprising could be more costly than participating in it. May be there are less costly actions that could reduce the chance for the regime to practice violence? Like not going to work claiming you have COVID? I am not a strategist for non-violent resistance movements but I know the less chance they have to be violent, the more chance a reconciliation process will have to succeed. Iran is a vast country with many potential resources and people with longing for democracy. It, however, needs plan and leadership for passing through a complicated historical process. There is only one wish I have for Iran and that's the end of cycle of violence. What an ideal blueprint that would be for a transitional system. Or, I just still have a dream.

*This commentary was first shared on Facebook.

From the Editorial Board

Join the Conversation, Be the Conversation

Barbara Bedeschi-Lewando, Heather Devere, Heather Tribe, and Nashie Shamoon

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha, tēnā koutou katoa

This issue of *Women Talking Politics* offers innovative features which present a unique space for debates around topics at the intersection of feminism and human rights because it includes a wider range of voices and formats than those usually accommodated in academic journals. We publish articles and commentaries from several disciplines in a variety of voices - articles engaging gender and its interaction with race, culture, class, nation, violence, and/or sexuality. We have lively, provocative poems that will hopefully prompt intense debate. The pandemic has made it apparent that collaboration does not require in-person contact, possibly making it more feasible to network and start new collaborations. We completed the whole journal based in four separate locations, sometimes across continents.

We want to highlight and celebrate this special contribution and we hope you find this work as cutting-edge and thought-provoking as we do.

Women Talking Politics is an online, open-access, peer-reviewed feminist journal that provides a forum for scholars, activists, and students to explore the relationships among theories of gender and women's rights and various forms of organizing and critical practice. Our intention is to empower and boost the visibility of the research, early-career researchers, and women's rights activists. We share relevant writings, with a vision to build bridges and improve connections between individuals and research entities within Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world.

One of the most disturbing recent developments is the rise of open misogyny and gender-based violence worldwide, and this is reflected in the number of submissions we received that address the violent patriarchy. The cover page, photos and a poem are the work of the Latin Feminist Collective based in Aotearoa New Zealand in remembrance of Juliana Herrera, a Colombian woman violently killed by a convicted rapist in our so-called peaceful country. Negar Partow also brings to the attention of the government and New Zealanders the protests here by Iranian women concerning the death in custody in Iran of Mahsa Amini for daring to show more hair under her veil than the government permits. Hafiza Yazdani's personal commentary on the treatment of women in her home country of Afghanistan by the Taliban, and Elle Dibrova's article on violence against the LGBT community in Russia provide more evidence of continued and continuous gender-based violence.

Georgie Silk's poems, threaded through this issue also deal with gender diversity, feminism and women's support for each other.

More crises in our world are represented in the articles on climate change and the pandemic with insights from Tara Brabazon who provides a feminist analysis of silence, ignorance and post-pandemic resistance in her article, calling for 'alternative ideas, trajectories and histories' to be recovered from 'this pancaked patriarchy'. Heather Tribe's article is on how issues related to food security and infant feeding impact on women in particular. Another issue exacerbated by the pandemic is access to medicines. Zohreen Ali analyses this as a human right (right to health and right to life) under the various UN conventions in her article.

Peace scholars consider activism and decolonisation as part of the change needed for a more socially just world. Monica Carrer's commentary looks at gender, the everyday and activism from her research background in studying resistance to conflict in India, and an article on decolonising the field of peace and conflict studies from a gender perspective is provided by Heather Devere, Katerina Standish and Kelli Te Maihāroa.

While there is fear, disappointment, disgust and horror raised by the political writers in this issue, there is hope, strength, clarity and courage interwoven. These are stories that need to continue to be told, these are voices that need to be heard, and these are insights that are needed for our world.

As editors we thank the contributors for these wonderful examples of what gender-based analyses can reveal. We thank the previous editors of Women Talking Politics, in particular Lara Greaves and Jennifer Curtin who guided this publication through the demanding years of the pandemic, and handed over the reins to us this year. We thank the New Zealand Political Studies Association/Te Kāhui Tātai Tōrangapū o Aotearoa for continuing to support this publication, and in particular Richard Shaw the Tumuaki/President and Shirin Brown, Māngai Wahine/Women's Representative.

We call upon you the readers to help maintain this mahi by responding with commentary, your own research and studies, mentoring students, to keep visible, heard, respected and acknowledged those who might otherwise not appear to be concerned about and impacted by political issues in Aotearoa and internationally.

Afghan Women and Taliban: an individual experience and story

Hafiza Yazdani

9/11/2021

The Taliban took over the government of Afghanistan in 1996 – 2001 for the first time, and during these years the Afghan people experienced many restrictions contrary to human rights. One of the main areas of restrictions was in women's education; Afghan women and girls had no access to education and employment. All schools and education centers were closed for girls for four years. Females were confined at home without any programs and activities. I was one of those girls, and I was kept in the house without being able to go outdoors. We passed our time like this for some months, until the day when my father was arrested at his workplace. We didn't know where he was being kept and spent 10 days searching for him. We found him in a badly tortured condition. He had been so brutally beaten up by the Taliban that it was hard to recognize him. Since that experience of torture, my father has carried the fear and physical pain within himself to this day. We had to leave the country and move to Pakistan. We lived in the city of Peshawar for four years. My younger brothers and sisters between the ages of 10 to 18, and I, all worked hard, day and night, to maintain our lives in Peshawar. We all were busy with carpet weaving at home. These long working hours meant my brothers and sisters were unable to attend school regularly. I was fortunate to be able to attend a few English Language classes.

We moved back to our own home after the Taliban was defeated by US and international troops in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was established in Afghanistan in 2001. We had a new government and started a new life with fresh hope and opportunities. We experienced a peaceful life for the first time after so many years. Importantly we women did not have to wear the burqa anymore. I had to find a job before starting my schooling again. Since I had learnt some English in the Language Course in Peshawar, I had the possibility of finding a job with an international organization. It was the time that the international community opened their offices in Kabul and other cities of Afghanistan to support the new government of Afghanistan for the country's reconstruction and development. So, there were employment opportunities for those who knew English.

I found a job with the United Nation Office in Kabul. It was a big opportunity for me to help my whole family economically and support my siblings to restart their schooling and continue their higher education in universities, working towards Bachelors and Masters degrees. In addition to my employment, I also focused on my own education and development. In 2005, I went to Kabul University and commenced my Bachelor's degree program in sociology, and then I travelled to Austria for a Master's Program. I continued working with international organizations such as UN Agencies, USAID, The World Bank, and the Swedish Embassy. I also managed to continue my education at the PhD level, winning a scholarship and completing a doctorate in December 2020 from Otago University in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research was very important for the education sector of Afghanistan. Studying and working for the last two decades, I have contributed to my country's

development. The change in my personal life, my family lives, my community, and my whole country has been tremendous.

I tell my personal story to show here that I am simply one example of millions of Afghan people who have worked hard towards development and peace in Afghanistan. Millions of people like me made their way through education and contributed to the developments of Afghanistan, particularly women. With all the challenges, facing political dilemmas and insecurity, Afghan women have made efforts to be the change agents in the country and they have played their role well in all development sectors. The years from 2002 to 2021 were good for progress and social change in Afghanistan. The presence of the international community and their support for Afghanistan contributed significantly to social changes in this country. Although we Afghan people experienced failed political policies and strategies with leadership of Afghan politicians whose personal interests superseded the interests of their people, we achieved remarkable progress in our social lives. The last two decades were an era of learning and information for Afghan people. Women had places in schools and universities, and we used education to our advantage in our personal and professional lives. We had the opportunity to work in all the development sectors and run our families and the local economy. We followed our pathway slowly in a forward direction, although we had our big political challenges. We failed politically, because of Afghan male leadership and political failure on the part of the international community. These political failures have contributed significantly to the current chaos in Afghanistan.

Main discussion points:

The international community was present in Afghanistan for two decades, with the goal of supporting the people of Afghanistan to have better lives. Most of the international community missions in Afghanistan made big efforts to bring about social change in peoples' lives in Afghanistan, and I think they achieved good results. Now, by leaving Afghanistan, it feels that the international community has devalued the social gains made that improved peoples' lives. With the Taliban back in power the Afghan people have abruptly gone back to 20 years ago to relive the lives they had during the Taliban's previous administration between 1996 and 2001. I question how the international community could agree to US troops withdrawal at once this year, and not consider the millions of people left behind? Why did the international community not express their concern and disagreement about this momentous decision?

The US and NATO and other international supporters came to Afghanistan with the main political purpose to overthrow al-Qaeda and stop their terrorist activities in the region and in the world. Although the US government leadership claimed they achieved their goal, effectively al-Qaeda is back to power in Afghanistan. This is a big threat both to the region and the world. The world will be treated again to similar terrorist attacks as 9/11.

The presence of the international community in Afghanistan could not last forever, but the strategy of rapid troop withdrawal has led to the collapse of the country, economically, politically and socially. The Afghan people fear, once again, and have lost hope, while experiencing a dark era. All are trying

to get out of the country which is not possible. Afghan women will once again be confined to home-prisons and have lost everything they have achieved over the last two decades.

Resources

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Imagined traditions versus real lives: explaining the link between hegemonic national identity and the othering of LGBT+ people in contemporary Russia

Elle Dibova

The political regime in contemporary Russia has been promoting an exclusionary version of national identity based on traditionalist ideology for over a decade. The ideology of traditional family values that has been displaying strong resistance to increasing social equality and inclusion in sexual and gender terms and was toughened around 2012 (Laruelle, 2020; Morozov, 2015) has affected the lives of millions of LGBT+ people in Russia and limited their access to sexual rights (rights related to sexual orientation and gender identity). The traditionalist agenda started to be gradually introduced within the new understanding of 'Russianness' in the mid-2000s, when the shift from a moderately Western-friendly position towards distinctly anti-West foreign policy also signified the top-down decision to construct the national identity of 21st century Russia in Slavophile terms (Laruelle, 2008). The shifting between Westerner and Slavophile ideas is in no way new to the country since "the centuries-old opposition to the West has defined its [Russian] identity" (Morozov, 2015, p. 137). The West – or more specifically, Europe - has historically been a reference point for Russia. Putin's anti-liberal politics appears to be just another – although arguably an extreme - swing towards the anti-West direction. From the very start of his rule, following Eltsin's urge to construct the new Russian nation, Putin announced his aspiration to define the Russian national ideal (Putin, 1999). Over his first term, this quest did not display any apparent anti-West sentiments but this changed after his re-election in 2004 and has been reinforced since then.

At the beginning of Putin's third term, the search for national identity was framed as defining the nation's spiritual bonds (*dukhovnye skrepy*) (Wilkinson, 2014) that eventually revealed that there was not much to be found to unite Russian people, rather than abstract 'patriotism' (Malinova, 2014). Instead of formulating 'Russianness' in terms of what it was, the political elites turned to the seemingly easier option of emphasising what it was not (Morozov, 2015). Formulation of national identity in this way has been a common thing both historically and geographically, inevitably requiring finding the Other who would embody characteristics that are not acceptable for the ideal understanding of the national (Edensor, 2002; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Triandafyllidou, 1998). Not unexpectedly for Russia, the Other appeared as being manifested in the West, and more specifically Western liberal values (Laruelle, 2020). The antagonism has been framed into the ideology of traditional values that was supposed to ensure national security and the survival of the Russian nation (Wilkinson, 2014). The substance of the ideology has been formulated mostly in negative terms, as opposed to the West, and was focused to a significant extent on the restriction of access to sexual rights for non-heterosexual and transgender citizens. In other words, 'sexual conservatism' and strong unacceptance of LGBT+ equality became an essential feature of the hegemonic national identity formulated by the political elites (Stella & Nartova, 2016).

The example of contemporary Russia additionally demonstrates that the link between citizenship and national identity is fairly straightforward "as it is the essence of who belongs in the nation-state that determines who is, and can be, a citizen" (Kaufman & Williams, 2004 p. 420). LGBT+ individuals as a group have often deprived of some citizenship rights since, as Richardson (1998) argues, there are frequent processes of dehumanisation and de-personalisation of sexual minorities that exclude them from citizenship in societies that naturalise heterosexuality as the only 'right' sexuality. This idea is examined in detail in the concept of sexual citizenship, that, broadly speaking, involves relationships between a state and its sexualised citizens, mostly sexual minorities (Binnie, 1997). The concept reveals that access to rights for LGBT+ people is often limited as they are pushed out of the understanding of the true national and turned into second-class citizens by the state heteronormative (and frequently homophobic) discourses and policies. As Richardson (2004, p. 395) argues, "[l]esbians and gay men have historically had ambiguous citizenship status, neither fully accepted nor totally excluded; their place in the national imaginary has been as marginal citizens." While over the last decades, many Western countries are gradually – although not necessarily consistently – moving towards gender and sexual equality, contemporary Russia represents an opposite example of tightening restrictions regarding the access to rights for its LGBT+ citizens through institutionalised homophobia that is framed as one of the constitutive parts of national identity (Stella, 2015; Wilkinson, 2014).

The process of othering of LGBT+ people in the country has been carried out by the political regime with the help of the traditional values ideology that divided people into 'traditional', or 'right', 'true' Russians and 'non-traditional', or those not meeting the standards of 'Russianness'. While the ideology itself will be examined closely later in the article, here it needs to be noted that the political regime created an image of a traditional, conservative native, a bearer of authentic 'Russianness' that in reality did not represent any actual 'living memories' of the population (Morozov, 2015). As Morozov (2015) laconically puts it, within Putin's conservatism, the native traditionalist-thinking Russian represents an 'empty spot', being "nothing more than a mirror image of the West" (p.133). Sentiments that are referred to in today's traditional values ideology have very little to do with actual traditions that existed throughout the country's history (Muravyeva, 2014) but rather resemble the Slavophile version of nationalism that was popular in the Soviet literature of the 1970s, with *derevenshchiki* (village prose writers) expressing the most extreme form of it, idealising a patriarchal Russian peasant and equating Russian moral values with those of the countryside and the Russian Orthodox Church (Evans, 1995; Zdravomyslova & Temkina, 2012). Importantly, even half a century ago, the figure of the patriarchal peasant that was popularised by village prose writers was more imagined rather than documented. Today, given that around 75% of the Russian population are city-dwellers, the reference to a typical Russian as a 'peasant' certainly does not represent the real state of affairs (Schulmann, 2017). Thus, it can be argued that contemporary Russia is an 'imagined community' (see Anderson, 1983) in its most literal sense, since the common feature based on which the community is imagined has been imagined itself. One of the key components of the traditional values ideology, namely the idea of the historical non-Russianness of homosexuality, also does not reflect reality which will be demonstrated in the body of the article.

This article will focus on the link between hegemonic national identity and the limitations of sexual citizenship in contemporary Russia. In particular, it will examine mechanisms of othering of LGBT+ people and the impact that the traditional values ideology, as an essential element of the hegemonic

national identity, has on them. The article proceeds as follows. Firstly, I will provide some historical background, arguing that actual historical understandings of non-heterosexual practices and attitudes towards them do not represent what the contemporary ideology of traditional values implies; and that the state-sponsored political homophobia was only born in the Soviet Union over the period of Stalin's rule. Next, I will turn to the contemporary, post-Soviet period and demonstrate how the conservative (or repressive) turn that took place over Putin's rule resulted in the exclusion of sexual and gender minorities from the understanding of the national, and limited their access to sexual rights. Also, in that section, I will analyse the ways in which sexual citizenship in Russia has been limited under the influence of the traditional values ideology. After that, I will argue that the process of othering of LGBT+ people has instrumental purposes for the political leadership and is used to maintain the status quo and legitimise the continuation of the regime. The conclusion provides a short summary of the arguments and suggests that in order to be included back to the national community, LGBT+ individuals need to reclaim their voices. For that, a broader effort of the general population in reinventing human solidarity will be essential.

Historical background

To begin with, although relatively little research has been conducted in the area, it is still possible to reconstruct the approximate picture of non-heterosexuality and attitudes towards it in the country starting from the early modern period onwards. According to Igor Kon (1997), the pioneer Soviet sexologist, "homosexuality was neither mentioned nor punished in any Russian secular legislation until the time of Peter the Great" (p.221). In the early modern times, homosexual relations were not an issue of first priority even for the Orthodox Church and did not attract its special attention, unlike in Western Europe (Roldugina, 2016). Interestingly, as Kon (1997) also points out, 'a primitive acceptance' of homosexuality in the tsarist Russia of the 15th through 17th centuries was on a level unimaginable for Europeans, and even later when, following the Swedish model, Peter the Great introduced punishment for sodomy - sexual intercourse between males - it was applied only to military servants. Later, despite closer contacts with Europe and emulating its value system that led to creating uneasiness about homosexuality in Russian society, male sexual intercourse was 'commonplace' in many closed educational institutions. Moreover, during the 18th and 19th centuries, homoeroticism was quite widespread among Russian intellectual elites and members of the royal family (Kon, 1997; Roldugina, 2016). Generally, same-sex relations "were spoken of scornfully, but at the same time rather humorously" (Kon, 1997, p.222).

The introduction of punishment for consensual same-sex sexual relations between males of all social strata took place in 1832 during the reign of Nicolas I, who introduced a new criminal code that was based on the German model (the code was enacted in 1835). The new prohibition concerned only '*muzhelozhestvo*' (anal penetration) and was applicable only to males who, if proven to be guilty, were punished by exile in Siberia for life. In 1845, the updated Criminal Code maintained the punishment for *muzhelozhestvo*, but in 1885 the sentence was eased and replaced with 4 to 5 years of imprisonment (Criminal Code, 1845; Criminal Code, 1885; Healey, 2001b). Later, in 1903, the punishment was reduced to the maximum of three months' imprisonment (Criminal Code, 1903), and although it would be wrong to claim the existence of actual social acceptance of homosexuality in

that period, debates over the necessity to decriminalise it did take place (Healey, 2001a). Baer (2005) also agrees that "historians have argued that homosexuality enjoyed greater tolerance in prerevolutionary Russia – among virtually all social classes - than it did in Western Europe" (p.201). Moreover, the period of the Silver Age – the very end of the nineteenth and the first two decades of the twentieth century is considered to be an 'open flowering of queerdom' (Beaudoin, 2006, p.230) in the country.

Right after the Revolution in 1917, male homosexuality was decriminalised by Bolsheviks, and over several years some attempts to liberalise the sexual lives of citizens and promote gender equality were taking place, although the Soviet 'sexual revolution' was a secondary if not a peripheral priority for the new regime (Wood, 1997). Citizens were proclaimed to be liberated from the tsarist oppression, including oppression of sexuality. There was no significant interest or demand for repression of sexual minorities in the USSR of the early communist period, and the medical understanding of sexual minorities' issues was relatively advanced for that time (Kon, 1997). This is not to say that the first years of the Soviet Union demonstrated particular acceptance of homosexuality; rather, it could be tolerated if an (open) homosexual person displayed 'right' ideological views and loyalty to the communist party. Political/ideological affiliation was considered to be more important than sexual identity (Mole, 2019). Although attitudes towards homosexuality were ambivalent over that time, the public discussion around it was happening nonetheless (Roldugina, 2019). Moreover, during the early Soviet period, homosexual discourse was thriving in poetry, literature, and artistic circles (Essig, 1999; Kondakov, 2013; Nance, 2018; Roldugina, 2016). In the 1920s, a homosexual subculture existed in several cities across the country (Roldugina, 2016; 2020).

The state-sponsored 'homophobic turn' started after Lenin's death in 1924 and was significantly speeded up in the early 1930s. This turn can be explained by the fact that the political goals of the regime changed "from bringing about the Bolshevik revolution to ensuring absolute control over society and fostering mass industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture" (Mole, 2019, p. 3). Homosexuals did not fit into the strict conservative gender order that was declared necessary "to serve the needs of the socialist state" (Stella, 2015, p. 28) and were perceived as treasonous towards the state (Essig, 1999). Healey (2018) and Roldugina (2019) argue that contemporary Russian political homophobia was born under Stalin's rule that signified an abrupt return to patriarchal ideology. In 1934 homosexuality was recriminalised in the USSR, marking the beginning of the political repressions against homosexuals. Offenders of Stalin's sodomy law were sentenced to up to five years in the Gulag's collective labour camps. A famous writer Maxim Gorky, who was an ardent supporter of the regime, labelled homosexuality as an extremely unpatriotic and immoral 'social crime' that is corruptive for youth and is a symbol of the Western capitalist system's decay (Skrabnevsky, 2020). Thus, male homosexuality was perceived in the USSR both as a crime and as a vice (Stella, 2015). It needs to be noted, however, that there was no public discussion of homosexuality in the Soviet Union from Stalin's rule onwards since sexuality, intimacy, and corporality in general were moved to the realm of unspeakable (Kondakov, 2013; Mole, 2019). The discursive silence about these areas - framed in terms of shame and fear - was a distinct feature of the Soviet period. Interestingly, even today, homosexual men have not been officially recognised as victims of Stalin's political repressions (Napreenko, 2014; Roldugina, 2018).

Political terror against homosexual people, according to Healey (2018), originated from the belief of Stalin and Politburo members in the homosexual conspiracy that was ostensibly aimed to destroy the Soviet Union. Overzealously searching for enemies of the state who intended 'to subvert the existing order' (Rees, 1998, p.87), Stalin found them, inter alia, homosexual men who were framed as traitors, spies, counterrevolutionaries, foreign agents, and bearers of 'decadent bourgeois morality' (Pollard, 1995, p.186). Homosexual men, or 'pederasts' in Stalin's terms, were considered to be 'socially alien' to Soviet society. As Mole (2019) notes, this homophobic turn can also be explained by the 'anti-intellectualism' of new Party elites who came to power under Stalin and by the industrialisation of the country that needed a huge labour force that, in turn, was required to produce more children from its citizens. Since homosexual men could not procreate, they were considered abnormal and contrary to the collective – as defined by the political elites - interests. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that homophobia over the period of Stalin's rule from its very beginning was characterised by its politicised nature and direct state sponsorship. That period was just the start of the instrumentalisation of homophobia for political purposes in the country (Mole, 2019).

However, the origins of the Soviet public homophobia are not directly rooted in the political repressions of homosexuals. Same-sex violence and humiliation that became a common thing in the Gulag were perceived by many as the main – if not the only - manifestations of same-sex relations. A strong association between homosexuality and violent prison culture was formed. This link resulted in demonising homosexual relations in memoires of many political prisoners, and, as Roldugina (2018) argues, it is exactly these realities of Gulag's everyday life as represented in memoires that contributed to the development of public homophobia back in the Soviet Union. The frequent equation of – particularly male – homosexuality with being an outcast, 'degraded', and 'humiliated' (*'opushennyi'*) has become common (Essig, 1999).

As for female homosexuality in the Soviet Union, it was not prohibited by the law, however clearly not because of its greater acceptance. For several years after the Revolution, the medical perceptions of lesbians were ambiguous and were shifting from relative tolerance to open repression (Healey, 2001a). Since the beginning of Stalin's terror against homosexual men and until the collapse of the USSR, female homosexuality was silenced and tabooed (Marsh, 2001), being considered a psycho-neurological pathology and subject to psychiatric cure. Attwood (1999) ironically notes that Stalin "clearly could not imagine such a thing" (p.124) as lesbianism. Also, given the main socially prescribed role of mother, women experienced very strong social pressure to put family first and to suppress personal sexual interests (Mole, 2019). For this reason, many Soviet lesbians chose to live behind the facade of the heterosexual family, having lesbian relations in parallel with it (Attwood & Isupova, 2018). However, as Clech (2019) notes, some Soviet lesbians also suffered from the fear of criminalisation and, as well as some homosexual men, underwent psychiatric cure, so "both women and men experienced the pathologisation and criminalisation of homosexuality as forms of stigmatisation" (p. 40).

Interestingly, after Stalin's death, Khrushchev chose to keep the law against male homosexuality, which "ran counter to the otherwise overwhelming trend of these years, when thousands of Stalin's legislative acts were reviewed by commissions of lawyers, police, and party authorities, and rescinded or relaxed" (Healey, 2018, p.4). The topic of sexuality, however – whether dominant or deviant – was still kept silenced and out of any public discussion. As Mole (2019) argues, "[r]eferences to same-sex

desire were all but absent in the Soviet press and removed from all translations of foreign literature, while gatherings of gays and lesbians in the public sphere were forbidden" (p. 4). 'Sexophobia' (Kon, 1997), 'asexuality' (Roldugina, 2020) or 'hostility to sexuality' (Mole, 2019) was one of the key features of Soviet society. Together with the lack of even basic sex education and the Iron Curtain that blocked nearly any contact with the West until the mid-1980s, it contributed to the rising level of ignorance around sexuality and gender issues among the overwhelming majority of Soviet citizens. Rigid gender order postulated the nuclear heterosexual family as the only possible base of Soviet society (Mole, 2019; Stella, 2015).

The short period of perestroika and glasnost of the mid- and late-1980s as well as the chaotic 1990s when the collapse of the Iron Curtain allowed floods of information around sex issues to come to the country from the West, promoted the appearance of some fragmented and sporadic LGBT organisations, journals, publications, and events (Stella, 2015; Gessen, 2017; Kon, 1997; Mole, 2019). However, the law prohibiting male homosexual relations was repealed in 1993 for openly practical purposes rather than as a result of actual social change, because for the country to be included in the Council of Europe – which Russia was very interested in – it needed to align its legislation with European human rights norms (Kondakov, 2013). Despite some movements towards liberalisation in the 1960s and 1970s, no large-scale sexual revolution and/or gay movement happened in the country, and no sex education was introduced (Healey, 2014). The overwhelming amount of explicitly sexualised images and information arriving from the West did not work to form a balanced understanding of sexuality among the unprepared population. Some were taken aback and started associating all things Western with immorality, perversion and permissiveness. As Mole (2019) notes, the coincidence of the economic and political uncertainty in the country, the demographic decline and the sudden visibility of sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular created an impression that the things were in some way connected, that in turn, provoked a backlash among conservative parts of the population. Due to the economic 'abyss' that the country was plunged into after the extremely poor attempt to be democratised in the 1990s, imitating Western liberal practices, many Russians felt alienated from the whole idea of democratisation and the West in general (Morozov, 2015).

The turmoil of the 1990s – a predictable consequence of ‘shock therapy’ employed by political authorities that they later desperately tried to alleviate – and the newly introduced market economy that was not comprehensible for the Soviet population, which was used to state planning, significantly contributed to many males finding themselves not able to adjust to the changing realities (Ashwin & Utrata, 2020). Over the course of the 1990s and the early 2000s, the discourse related to the 'masculinity crisis' in Russia became widespread (Riabov & Riabova, 2014b). Male unemployment, alcoholism, and mortality rates rose while an average male life expectancy plummeted to 58 years (Ashwin & Utrata, 2020; Stella & Nartova, 2016). In terms of the political and media discourses, Russia was often portrayed as a prostitute used by the West (Riabov & Riabova, 2014b). The change happening with the country was painted with uncertainty, instability, impoverishment of the population and the breaking down of old worldviews and values. Some started to feel nostalgia for the perceived stability and predictability of old times (Ashwin & Utrata, 2020) and a reference to 'tradition' entered the vocabulary of the public sphere. 'Traditional' was quickly equated with 'normal', heterosexual relationships and patriarchal gender roles. However, in general, there was no particular

hostility towards this 'non-traditionality', and the societal attitudes towards homosexuality were even slowly improving (Moreno et al., 2020).

Thus, it is possible to conclude that Russia does have a history of non-heterosexual relationships; what the country does not have, is any actual long-standing tradition of hostility towards them. Available evidence suggests that not only was homosexuality widespread in Russia and the Russian Empire, it also was not in general perceived as an issue, and what is especially interesting, the trend of decreasing tolerance towards sexual minorities came to the country from the West. The 'tradition' of strong non-acceptance of homosexuality that is so often invoked in the contemporary Russian political rhetoric on national identity, was born in the Soviet Union under Stalin's rule, and it was exactly then when non-heterosexual people were framed as 'aliens', 'traitors' and not representing the country's national identity.

National identity, traditionalism, and sexual citizenship

It can be argued that "until 2005, sexual minorities in Russia did not cause any special worries to the authorities" (Kon, 2010, p.27). This changed quite suddenly when the conservative ideology of traditional Russian values with sexual moralism as its cornerstone started to be introduced into the policies and practices across the country. The ideology - a base for which was prepared by the already active masculinisation of the country and Putin's personal image (Ashwin & Utrata, 2020; Foxall, 2013; Riabov & Riabova, 2014a, 2014b; Sperling, 2015; Wood, 2016) - was eventually turned into a crucial part of the hegemonic national identity (Edenborg, 2020; Hooper, 2016, Wilkinson, 2014).

Traditionalism occupied the stage of Russian domestic politics rather promptly, although not unexpectedly, and was linked to the anti-West turn in Russian foreign policy that over Putin's second term, pushing the country into isolation and bringing about a search for "a new ideology for domestic consumption" (Sleptcov, 2018, p.149), first signs of which could be seen in 2006 when the Pride Parade was banned by the Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, and the same prohibition was issued over the two subsequent years (Wilkinson, 2014). Between 2006 and 2012, a number of regional laws were initiated that prohibited propaganda of 'non-traditional sexual relations to minors' and later, in 2013, the federal law of similar content was adopted (Stella & Nartova, 2016; Sleptcov, 2018). Interestingly, the law provides no explanation of what exact tradition it refers to. This point is particularly interesting with regards to the whole ideology of traditional values. Formulated in this highly abstract way, 'traditional Russian values' do not convey any particular meaning because of the country's cultural, ethnic, regional, and religious diversity (Muravyeva, 2014). It would be clearly wrong to say that throughout history, there has been only one specific set of traditions all over the huge territory of Russia. Thus, the ‘tradition’ that informs these ‘traditional values’ is to a large extent imagined or invented. The process of invention of traditions was a focus of analysis by well-known experts of nationalism Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and although the authors did not analyse the concept of traditional values as such, it can be argued that the logic behind ‘invention’ of any phenomenon promoted by political elites as ‘traditional’ would be similar to one described by Hobsbawm and Ranger. Importantly, perceptions of sexuality and eroticism are frequently placed at the forefront of the traditionalist reinvention of traditions that are usually based on separating sexual

'rights' and 'wrongs' (Weeks, 2007). This holds true in contemporary Russia, where traditions have been imagined in explicitly patriarchal, sexually restrictive terms and have largely affected women, non-heterosexual, non-binary and transgender individuals.

Traditionalism, as Plummer (2003) points out, "represent[s] a source of moral authority that defines an unchangeable measure of goodness, truth, values, and identity" and is often "seeking a return to past values" (p.46), which is exactly the case in contemporary Russia, where "the entities that deliberately incite homophobia are the same people and organisations that preach traditionalism" (Kon, 2010, p.27). As Wilkinson (2014) argues, homophobia represents the main substance of Russian traditional values which, in turn, have formed the hegemonic national identity. It can also be argued that this identity does not correspond with both the historical traditions – as was shown earlier – and existing realities in the country because, inter alia, current political elites are not familiar with nor interested in learning these realities (Morozov, 2015). Interpreting Russian history in a very inconsistent way and using an eclectic mix of ideas (Stepanova, 2015), Putin's political regime takes no consideration of today's life that has been changing significantly since the USSR collapsed. In particular, political authorities are trying to impose their view of moral 'rights' and 'wrongs' in the sphere of sexuality, paying no attention to actual family arrangements that people choose today. Stepanova (2019), for example, argues that both Soviet and post-Soviet regimes "interpret morality as something originating 'ab extra', as an act of obedience of one's will to the rules of action established by a higher authority" (p.343).

Ironically enough, Russian political elites today try to frame this traditionalist moralism into a unique Russian feature, although many Western countries, including Britain and the USA, took the same path a few decades earlier. The words of Plummer (2003), who writes about the history of Western gay movements, sound very relevant for Russia today: "Gays and lesbians stand for the whole threatening order of change – changing women, changing families, changing bodies […] they are accused of promoting the slide into moral decay" (p.37). In the same book, Plummer also notes that "the issue of gay and lesbian rights clearly provides fuel for an ongoing battle between tradition and change " (p.130). Even the concept of 'traditional family values' itself as a symbol of the heterosexual family is no invention of Putin's regime since, among other examples, it was widely used in the UK of the late 1990s under Tony Blair (Bell & Binnie, 2000). Thus, not only is the Russianness as formulated by the Russian political authorities through the traditional values ideology a product of imagination, this imagination is not even their own.

As for introducing traditionalism into Russian official policies, the federal law on propaganda mentioned earlier is especially important. It also demonstrates how the link between hegemonic national identity and sexual citizenship was built in Russia because it presented ‘non-traditionality’ as a negative, less socially valuable characteristic into the law and officially linked it to LGBT+ individuals. The referencing of LGBT+ individuals as non-traditional, in essence, represents deliberately pushing them outside of the boundaries of both national and acceptable, playing a significant role in the process of their othering, silencing, and demonising. It is important to note the ambiguity and vagueness of what is considered to be 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations' (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015; Rusnak, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014). It is defined as

> the act of distributing information to minors that 1) is aimed at the creating of non-traditional sexual attitudes, 2) makes non-traditional sexual relations attractive, 3) equates the social value of traditional and non-traditional sexual relations; or imposition of the information about non-traditional sexual relations that creates an interest in these relations (Para 1, Article 6.21 RF CAO).

Interestingly, in the explanatory note to the law issued by one of its initiators, MP Elena Mizulina, it is pointed out that by 'non-traditional sexual relations' the law considers ‘sodomy, lesbianism, bisexualism, and transgenderism’ (RIA News, 2013), although the last point obviously does not belong on the list. This adds to the vagueness of the law’s wording and its possible interpretations. Moreover, the fact that the social value of 'non-traditional sexual relations' is lower than one of heterosexual relations is framed in the law as self-evident; the assertion that harm can be done to juveniles by the information about sexual and gender diversity is also not substantiated (Stricklan, 2015; Wilkinson, 2014). The wording of the law, as well as its application, clearly demonstrate its discriminatory nature. For instance, activists were charged with its violation for displaying posters that state "Homosexuality is normal", "I am proud of my homosexuality", "Children have the right to know. Great people are also sometimes gay; gay people also become great. Homosexuality is natural and normal", "Homosexuality is not a perversion. Field hockey and ice ballet are" (Faina Ranevskaya's famous quote), "Gay propaganda does not exist, people do not become gay, they are born gay"; "Being gay and loving gays is normal. Beating gays and killing gays is criminal", "A family is where love is. Support LGBT+ families" as well as for posting statistics regarding gay parents being no worse than heterosexual ones and listing famous gay people (Judgement, 2017; Russia, 2020a; Stricklan, 2015; Wilkinson, 2014). Thus, the law has implicitly turned LGBT+ activism into illegal activity, affecting the constitutional right of Russian citizens to freely assemble, speak out, and campaign peacefully (Belyakov, Demidov & Yassin, 2013; Wilkinson, 2014). This has effectively excluded LGBT+ individuals from the public domain and reduced their visibility to the minimum.

The law on propaganda is not, however, the only piece of legislation that has been considered or signed by the Russian authorities in an attempt to limit the access to rights for LGBT+ people in the country. In particular, in 2013, a Draft Law was considered by the Russian Duma that would allow authorities to legally remove children from gay parents. Although the draft was not approved, the government still demonstrated interest in the passage of the law (Rusnak, 2014). Later, in July 2020, one of the amendments that was introduced by President Putin to the Russian Constitution specified the definition of marriage as a union of a man and a woman, depriving same-sex couples of any hope to be recognised officially by the state in the future (Para 7, Russian Federation, 2020). Two weeks after that, a new bill was proposed that aimed to ban transgender people who legally changed their gender marker from getting married or adopting children. Additionally, the bill would prohibit legal change of gender marker, require changing birth certificates back for those who have already replaced them, and superfluously ban same-sex marriages (HRW, 2020; Russia, 2020b). After the wide-reaching public outcry, in October 2020, the bill was rejected by the Russian government (Ria News, 2020); however, another LGBT+ related initiative appeared – this time, authorities stated their intention to arrest gay parents who had their children through surrogacy. Although this initiative also has not been legalised, some gay parents fled the country in fear (Merz, 2020). Further, in March

2021, another draft bill was introduced, which was aimed at the prohibition of propaganda of sex reassignment, transgenderism, bisexuality, polyamory, and abortions, as well as the ban on information that offends family values (Maishev, 2021). Also, an initiative to increase the penalties for the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations was introduced in Duma the same month (Sysoev, 2021). Later, in June 2021, a draft bill was introduced that, among other things, proposed the restriction of access to surrogacy for men who are not officially married (Ria News, 2021). In September 2021, Roskomnadzor (Russian federal executive agency responsible for monitoring, controlling and censoring Russian mass media) proposed to recognise 'LGBT ideology' as extremist (TASS, 2021), after which, in November, the agency discussed a proposal to ban any mention of 'non-traditional sexual relations' in mass media with no age limitations (Tuniaeva, 2021). As of May 2022, none of these initiatives have been legalised; however, the direction the legislative thinking is moving in is obvious. Finally, in June 2022, a legislative initiative to ban any propaganda of 'non-traditional sexual relations' (not only towards minors) was proposed. Later the same month it was rejected by the Russian Duma due to the lack of the formal Cabinet's review of the initiative. (State Duma Committee, 2022; The System, 2022). It seems very likely, however, that as soon as the review is obtained, the draft law will be enacted, especially given that Russia has been expelled from the Council of Europe (after its invasion to Ukraine) and has no more formal obligations related to the European Court of Human Rights.

Moreover, existing realities of contemporary Russia are characterised by a high level of societal homophobia, which has been significantly fuelled by the political ideology of traditional values. In particular, Pew Research surveys on Russian's social attitudes towards homosexuality conducted in 2013 and 2019 demonstrated that the opinion that homosexuality should not be accepted by society remains high and stable: 74 per cent of respondents in both years supported this view (Poushter & Kent, 2020). Data from Levada Center, one of the biggest Russia-based opinion poll organisations that positions itself as independent, shows that negative attitudes towards same-sex sexual relations have increased over the twenty years: in 1998 there were 54% of respondents who believed these relations were always wrong while in 2017 this number rose to 69% (Levada Center, 2018). It was also demonstrated by Levada Center that 31% of respondents would drift apart from a person if they found out about the person's homosexuality, and additional 18 % would reduce their interactions (Levada Center 2019b). Further, another study showed that a homosexual couple was defined as one of the less attractive neighbours for Russian respondents (Levada Center, 2019a). When the question of the less attractive neighbours was asked within the World Values Survey Wave 7 at the end of 2017 in all the Russian regions, it appeared that 66.2% of the population named homosexuals (Haerpfer et al., 2020). Another major study that measured a multidimensional level of discrimination comprising three components, namely punishment and criminalisation of homosexuality, rights denied to LGBTQ individuals, and the level of intolerance they face, was conducted several years ago cross-nationally and spanned 175 countries. It scored Russia with a discrimination index of 17, while 22 was the worst among all the examined countries (Lee & Ostergard, 2017). Finally, according to the annual review of the law and policies that impact the lives of LGBT+ individuals compiled by the International Lesbian and Gay Association in 49 European countries, in 2020, Russia was in 46th place (Annual Review, 2021).

It is important to emphasize that “hostile and apprehensive attitudes toward sexual minorities do not stem from the respondents’ personal experience” (Kon, 2010, p. 24) since 87% of the Russian population claim that they don’t know any homosexual people (Levada Center, 2021). It is reasonable to suggest that it is related to the fact that many LGBT+ people in Russia do not come out but hide their sexual orientation and gender identity rather than that there are significantly fewer non-heterosexual people in Russia than anywhere else.

Furthermore, not only has the main traditionalist trope of the hegemonic national identity in contemporary Russia excluded LGBT+ people from the understanding of 'normality', framing them as less socially valuable, second-class citizens deserving fewer rights, it has also contributed to their increasing stigmatisation and abuse. The voluminous spread of misinformation regarding non-heterosexual and transgender people has been a key feature of the traditional values ideology (Edenborg, 2018; Kondakov, 2013; Mortensen, 2016; Persson, 2015; Rivkin-Fish, & Hartblay, 2014; Soboleva & Bakhmetjev, 2015). Discrediting LGBT+ individuals in circumstances of widespread ignorance around sexuality and gender issues did not appear to be a challenging task for the authorities who have been capitalising on the existing prejudices of the general population and fueling them more.

One of the misleading facts about homosexuality that has contributed to the increasing stigmatisation of LGBT+ individuals, and has been disseminated by many Russian political figures as well as state-owned mass media, is the alleged connection between homosexuality and paedophilia, or, in a milder version, inevitable mental harm to minors. Although no scientific proof has ever been provided by its proponents, the assumption has become a commonplace argument against LGBT+ people in the Russian public domain (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015; Mortensen, 2016; Persson, 2015; Roldugina, 2018; Soboleva & Bakhmetjev, 2015). The idea about the ostensible mental damage that can be done by LGBT+ individuals to children is closely linked to the widespread view - that was further promoted by the propaganda law - of non-heterosexuality as something rooted in nurture but not nature, something that can be 'imposed', 'incited', 'propagated' and 'advertised'.

Also, LGBT+ individuals have been portrayed within Russian political and media discourses "as a threat to the biological reproduction of the nation" (Mole, 2019, p.9) and the source of demographic decline in the country, which has added significantly to the group's stigmatisation (Mortensen, 2016; Rivkin-Fish, & Hartblay, 2014). The interpretation of sexual minorities as a threat to a nation is, however, not original. Among other examples, the most striking is perhaps one of Nazi Germany, where less than a century ago, homosexuals were blamed for a German demographic decline (Wilkinson, 2014). The rhetoric of the Russian traditionalist ideology has framed sexual minorities as an 'infertile', 'sterile', dysfunctional part of the population (Persson, 2015). Representatives of the political regime and even medical specialists often do not consider non-heterosexual people as 'proper' candidates for and having legitimate access to assisted reproductive technologies (Stella & Nartova, 2016) and the practice of adoption (Persson, 2015).

Demographic decline is presented as a threat to national security not only by the political regime but also by the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) (Ashwin & Utrata, 2020), which plays a significant role in the traditional values ideology and is another contributor to the increasing stigmatisation of LGBT+

individuals in the country. Given the increasing influence of the church in the political sphere, its unofficial status as 'an intimate ally of the Kremlin' (Nuñez-Mietz, 2019, p.550-551) and the importance religion has been given in the hegemonic national identity today, its open condemnation and dehumanisation of sexual and gender minorities are especially alarming (Wilkinson, 2014). Religious and political discourses echo each other in terms of support of strict heteronormativity, 'natural' gender roles, sexual purity and social conservatism in general. Not only has the state itself embraced an aggressive stance towards LGBT+ people, it openly indulges the ROC's dehumanising hate rhetoric (Moreno et al., 2020) and its idea that homosexuality is the main source of the alleged moral crisis in the country (Nuñez-Mietz, 2019).

Moreover, religious sentiments have been accepted as part of official policies, including ones on private life and family. For instance, the rationale behind the introduction of the anti-propaganda law, according to MP Elena Mizulina, was in its alignment with the religious values of the Russian nation (Mortensen, 2016), whereas the draft "Concept of Family Policy" – although not enacted – also written by Mizulina included explicitly religious connotations (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015), referring to a family consisting of a man, a woman and children as a 'spiritual unit' and 'a little church' (Stella & Nartova, 2016), and recognition of a church marriage (Muravyeva, 2014). Moreover, a compulsory religious education course that was introduced in 2012 into Russian schools that are officially secular, is in practice heavily Orthodox-oriented (Blinkova & Vermeer, 2018). In other words, "[u]nder the disguise of a moral renaissance" (Kon, 2005, p.121), the ROC is imposing strict control over the sexuality of the population, shielding it with a promotion of a ‘true’ national identity. Thus, the Church actively assists the Kremlin in the development of anti-LGBT campaigns, granting the authorities a spiritual right to convert them into a state policy that directly affects access to sexual rights for non-heterosexual and transgender citizens (Paternotte & Kuhar, 2018).

It is also important to emphasise that the integration of the 'traditional values' sentiments into the broader anti-West rhetoric - as was mentioned earlier - with its emphasis on Russian cultural exceptionalism (Suchland, 2018) has also significantly added to LGBT+ individuals' stigmatisation. Shocking – although not substantiated – stories of decadent immoral Western countries, where parties of pedophiles are ostensibly coming into being, have been frequently repeated by the president and other political authorities (BBC News, 2014; Persson, 2015; Putin, 2013; Soboleva & Bakhmetjev, 2015). In this regard, several neologisms – 'liberast' (Napreenko, 2014), 'tolerast' (Hutchings & Tolz, 2015), and 'Gayrope' (Gulevich et. al, 2018; Moreno et al., 2020; Riabov & Riabova, 2014a) - are very illustrative. They came into existence within the Russian public sphere in the 1990s - early 2000s. The first two words were made by combining the words' liberal’/’tolerant' and 'pederast' (derogatory for a homosexual male in Russian), thus explicitly equating western liberalism and tolerance towards non-heterosexuality. The third one was made up by combining the words 'gay' and 'Europe', explicitly equating these two. Moreover, the state propaganda directed people's attention to the alleged threat from the West that, as defined by the political regime, is aimed at harming Russia. Any counteractions within the country that go against the party line are considered to be "a product of outside intervention" and therefore "cannot yield any legitimate authority" (Morozov, 2015, p.151). The fear of 'the fifth column', of a traitor, a spy disguised under the mask of support for political or social change but acting in the interests of the hostile and dangerous West, is overwhelmingly common (Stricklan, 2015), as are various conspiracy theories that often involve LGBT+ people as

key villains in one or another way (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015; WCIOM, 2018). These sentiments have been promoted by both the political regime and the ROC, and their cooperation was recently seen in the ROC's position around the role that is ostensibly being played by LGBT+ people in destroying traditional Russian values when Primate Kirill claimed that pride parades and gay people are to blame for the 'special military operation' (as the war in Ukraine referred to by Putin's regime and its supporters) since ostensibly it was started in order to defend Russia from Western values embodied in pride parades (Russian Orthodox Church, 2022).

The stigmatisation of LGBT+ individuals that has been sponsored by the political regime has increased the already existing lack of legal protection for them and weakened their access to sexual rights. There are no official statistics of hate crimes towards LGBT+ people in Russia, but even the few known cases are enough to demonstrate the scale of the problem and the fact that the number of crimes is increasing (Caroll, 2019; HRW, 2014; 2016; 2018; Kondakov, 2019; Lokshina, 2020; Persson, 2015; Philippova, 2021; Plotnikova, 2021). Also, as Wilkinson (2014) argues, "it is difficult not to see a relationship between official homophobia and growing popular moral vigilantism that seeks to police observance of traditional values with threats and violence" (p.370). The information about monstrous gay purges in Chechnya – a Russian republic - in 2017 was explicitly denied by Russian authorities, although the facts have been evidenced by international human rights organisations and several victims (HRW, 2017; Edenborg, 2018; Suchland, 2018). The homophobic violence towards LGBT+ people is not only occurring in the Chechen Republic, where the tradition of 'honor killing' still exists, but in other Russian regions too. This can be evidenced, inter alia, by the homophobic killings of Vlad Tornovoy, Oleg Serdyuk, Dmitry Tsilikin, Elena Grigorieva, Roman Edalov, and the attempted murder of Dmitry Chizhevsky that happened across the country including Moscow and Saint Petersburg (Caroll, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2014; Lokshina, 2020; Moreno et al., 2020; Ober, 2015; Persson, 2015; Reevell, 2014).

The lack of legal protection for LGBT+ people also concerns everyday homo- bi- and transphobia – there are no prevention mechanisms and anti-discriminatory laws in the country. Due to that, forced migration is not a rare event (Benavides, 2017; Benaya, 2021; Current Time, 2019; Dzuzzati, 2020; Roth, 2021; Tatarnikova & Babushkina, 2018; The Moscow Times, 2020; The Village, 2021). Additionally, firing people from jobs due to their non-heterosexuality and LGBT+ activism has also been not rare over the last decade (Abad-Santos, 2013; BBC News, 2016; CESCR, 2017; Nechepurenko, 2013; Turovskyi, 2015). Recently, a situation of taking away an adopted child from a gay family in Moscow by the Investigative Committee became known (Khazov-Kassia, 2021).

Preserving the status quo

To make sense of this traditionalist agenda that has been at the forefront of the hegemonic national identity in Russia for over a decade and has resulted in the weakening of sexual citizenship in the country, it is necessary to examine the bigger picture that was framing Putin's conservative turn around 2012. The period of 2011-2012 was marked by massive urban protests in Russia in the wake of parliamentary and presidential elections that were regarded as falsified by a big part of the population (Laruelle, 2020). These protests "were perceived as a symptom of an imminent, genuine

threat" (Morozov, 2015, p.139) to the survival of the political regime because they introduced the idea of the government's corruption into the public domain and significantly lowered the president's approval ratings, especially among the urban middle class that began to reappear in the 2000s and was loyal to Putin over the first decade of the new century. This loss of the urbanites' backing required political elites to look for another popular support base; it was found in the rural electorate. In order to connect with and appeal to non-metropolitan Russia, the political leadership introduced the new ideology of traditional family values that presented a new vision of Russian national identity and positioned true 'Russianness' along imagined traditional village lines (Hale, 2016).

Not only has the version of national identity that is painted in strong social conservatism and is grounded in 'traditional values', religion, and a cultural understanding of the nation appealed to rural Russia, it – perhaps more importantly – has prevented any possible revolutionary activities (Gessen, 2017). The overzealous emphasis on Russian national identity and its superiority required a particular inferior Other to be found. The role of the external Other was ascribed to the West, while LGBT+ people were positioned as internal Others, representatives of the external Other. Being non-heterosexual or transgender has been framed as not compatible with being a proper 'Russian' and contradictory to Russian 'traditional values', which manifested in the limitation of the access to sexual rights for LGBT+ individuals.

The traditionalist vision of national identity that was promptly enacted and started to be actively spread by the political leadership in response to the mass discontent in 2011-2012 became the main source of political legitimacy that would ensure internal homogeneity of the nation in terms of defining what traditional 'Russianness' means and punishing those who do not fit into it (Mole, 2019). This vision of national identity has been explicitly heteronormative and conservative and has been manifested in a comprehensive package of measures to establish stricter control over the population in the biopolitical domain, crush civic activity, and suppress political subjectivity (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015; Morozov, 2015). Arguably, the actual rationale behind these measures relates to reinforcing the already strong 'vertical of power' and promoting 'disavowal of politics' among ordinary citizens so that they are deprived of their legitimate voices and perceive the current situation as 'an incontestable fact of life' (Morozov, 2015, p.148).

The current 'traditionalist' vector of the regime stems from its initial direction towards stability that Putin took from the very start of his rule. As Morozov (2015) puts it, "[t]he Putinite discourse describes the mission of the presidency as consisting in preserving stability, and thus preventing any genuine political change" (p.159-160) by the top-down inaction and impeding action from bottom-up. By protecting 'traditional Russian values', Putin tries to reaffirm and reinvigorate his own as well as the whole political regime's legitimacy (Ashwin & Utrata, 2020; Mole, 2019). Starting from Putin's third term onwards, the idea of stability became an obsession, "pushing the counterrevolutionary agenda to the limit: all extraordinary politics is equated with revolution, and therefore rejected and suppressed" (Morozov, 2015, p.146). The fear of Revolution organised from overseas is reflected in the 2013 Federal Security Service report, which describes the existence of a foreign gay conspiracy that is aimed to overthrow the Russian government (Nuñez-Mietz, 2019). Moreover, the National Security Strategy introduced in 2015 brought "discussion to its logical conclusion by introducing the idea that Russia's 'traditional spiritual values' are formulated in contrast to Western humanitarian

values” (Pynnöniemi, 2018, p.243). In 2021, the new National Security Strategy (The Decree of the Russian President, 2021) was enacted, which reinforced the role of ‘traditional Russian spiritual and moral’ as well as ‘cultural and historical values’ even more. The Strategy also emphasised the need to protect these values from the threat of outside interventions. As Morozov (2015) points out, Putin's traditionalist regime is inherently anti-modern since modernity with its loss of certainty contradicts what the regime has been trying to establish –"finite truth – religious, moral or scientific" (p.147).

Consequently for LGBT+ individuals in the country – and for other marginalised groups that do not fit into the anti-modern matrix of the political system – the Soviet habit of "being told what to think by the regime" (Mole, 2019, p.5) has been capitalised on by the political elites in the twenty-first century which, together with the overwhelmingly high percentage of state-owned mass media, has resulted in naturalising the sentiments of the hegemonic national identity by many Russians. The contemporary homophobia repeats its Soviet predecessor as being produced by the monopolist on truth – the ruling party, not science (Kondakov, 2013) since it is grounded in prejudices and biases reinforced top-down rather than knowledge-based evidence. People as a source of political power are not given a voice, and political elites "speak for the masses" (Morozov, 2015, p.156) who are perceived as immature and not intelligent enough to speak for themselves. Moreover, through the monopoly on truth, the political regime is able to divert "political and social unrest over election fraud, corruption, and painful social reforms into fighting against imaginary moral threats" (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015, p.49). Channelling people's discontent from the government to the designated Others, among which are LGBT+ individuals, this social polarisation additionally contributes to preserving the political status quo. Arguably, this top-down polarisation of the Russian society today is aimed at ensuring the political regime's continuation with the help of "asserting Russia's historical subjectivity by denouncing Western hegemony", which "is the main source of legitimacy for Putinism" (Morozov, 2015, p.157). Those who do not fit into the promoted understanding of Russianness – like LGBT+ people – are shown that they do not properly belong to the nation and deserve fewer rights.

Conclusion

This article contributes to the understudied area of scholarly debates around the link between the hegemonic national identity in contemporary Russia and sexual citizenship in the country. It shows that deliberate political promotion of hegemonic national identity in Russia has been tightly linked with the exclusion of LGBT+ people from an understanding of the national as well as their deprivation of rights. Additionally, the article demonstrates that the traditional values ideology that is at the forefront of the hegemonic national identity in Russia today cannot be interpreted as referring to actual historical traditions in the country. Available sources show that political and public homophobia does not have deep roots in the Russian state and society, but was born under Stalin's rule less than a hundred years ago and from the very start had an instrumental character. Later, in 1993 when male homosexuality was decriminalised, it would take time for society to shape its views on the phenomenon. The short relatively democratic period from the 1990s to the early 2000s was not enough, although some slow changes towards increasing tolerance did start to happen. Thus, it was not particularly challenging for the contemporary Russian political regime to reinforce and fuel

public homophobia, capitalising on existing biases against sexual and gender minorities, as well as "deeply rooted complexes and phobias, patriarchal instincts, communal belonging, and mob mentality" (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015, p.51). The non-acceptance of LGBT+ people is a crucial part of the traditional values ideology that has been used by Russian political elites as a source of consolidation of the nation. The ideology was intensified as a response to mass protests against the perceived falsification of the elections in 2011-2012 and has been working since then as a legitimisation of the current political regime that ostensibly defends the nation from the threats that those designated as 'Others' pose. Therefore, the article also acknowledges the instrumentality of the traditional values ideology that is at the forefront of the hegemonic national identity in Russia today, and has been actively used by the political authorities to exclude LGBT+ people from national belonging through limiting their access to rights.

Sadly, there is very little hope for real democracy under the current political regime in Russia, but if there is some, it is connected to the people and not to the political system. It can be argued that in order to be included again in the national community and regain their rights, LGBT+ people need to increase their positive visibility, although this is an extremely challenging task under the current circumstances. Importantly, this is a two-way process and cannot be done without support from the heterosexual and gender-conforming majority. In other words, as Ashwin & Utrata (2020) argue, the way out of the exclusionary ideology in Russia is in building solidarity between people without regard to their differences. 'Reinventing human solidarity' (Morozov, 2015, p.165) is definitely not an easy task, especially for the country with the lack of experience of mass human rights movements (Roldugina 2016). It is important to remember that abstract moral principles of the imagined traditions do not represent the living reality and "it takes both careful telling of and attentive listening to the stories told by people in a diverse array of family settings as they struggle to make sense of their daily problems" (Plummer, 2003, p.102). Future research examining the real lived experiences of contemporary Russian LGBT+ individuals would be helpful in this regard. If we talk and listen to each other, non-discriminatively and respecting each other's dignity, there is a chance eventually to find common values that do not separate but unite all of us, regardless of our differences.

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No potential competing interest was reported by the author.

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Croissant

Georgie Silk

My new crushes goodnight message reads,
'Bonsoir, you delightful French croissant'

And after a somewhat meaningful text exchanged,
I've become a pastry.
A flaky puff,
soft and buttery,
a morsel you treat yourself to with coffee on a Sunday morning after a shower and grunting at the gym.

And a single croissant is hardly substantial in isolation.
You need to eat it with eggs and avocado
or have a larger lunch to compensate.

To describe me as delightful, delicious, delectable and delicate just highlights the fragility of my femininity.

Sure, he's mixed race, bisexual and apparently aware of gender roles
but in our heteronormative interaction, his masculinity instinctively magnifies my femininity.
And do I even want this?
I wouldn't tell my girl crush she is a cupcake.
I'd want her to be the entire dessert platter at a wedding party.
She would be the sugar, the speeches and the dance floor.

I put the query to my girlfriends over dinner.

My bestie says, you're not a croissant though, you're a fruit flan.
She describes me…Crisp shell, soft vanilla custard, perfectly cut strawberries with a shimmering glacé.
I mean, she's not wrong 🤷‍♀️

My other friend states 'if being called a croissant bothers you George, it bothers you. You gotta shut that shit down.'

But is this just my internal misogyny?
Because I love croissants.
Who doesn't love croissants?
Croissants are very lovable.

I contemplate a reply to him.

I look up croissant GIFs on my phone and scroll through images of croissants with animated eyes and flickering eyelashes looking sultry and seductive…

and it bores me.

My friend asks me if I'd call this guy a hearty meat pie or tasty sausage roll?
But it doesn't have the same effect does it?
It doesn't degrade him like it's degraded me.
He will probably laugh, find it a bit weird and move on.
And here I am…stewing.

I look at his message again, tap the laughing emoji reaction and shut my phone

But go to sleep thinking of pussys and custard fruit flans, penises and tasty sausage rolls.

The Medusa is not laughing: place of ignorance in a (post) pandemic interregnum

Tara Brabazon

Men's confidence provokes. Disturbs. Silences. It builds chimeras on narrow and shallow renderings of history, discovery and progress. It concertinas complexity through arbitrary reasoning and superficial justifications. It flattens the difference. The question is how alternative ideas, trajectories and histories are recovered from this pancaked patriarchy.

This article probes the resistance that is possible within the (post) pandemic interregnum. As with all posts – including (post)colonialism and (post)feminism - I am not suggesting that a moment or event is temporally discharged. COVID-19 will never be 'over.' I activate and occupy an analytical position – scaffolded through Ignorance Studies - that questions what (the hell) happened in the last three years. I focus on three dark events: the January 6 uprising in Washington DC, the trucker occupation of Ottawa, labelled the ''Freedom Convoy,' and the three week protest adjacent to the parliament buildings in Wellington. These odd – unexpected – events uncover disturbing vistas for scholars. These events, as recognized by Fernand Braudel (1958; 2002), are not 'the story.' Conjunctures and the longue durée provide a better frame that resonates with significance for scholars. Events are fizz. Smoke. Mirrors. I enter these bubbles of meaning and demonstrate why they must not be dismissed as the activities of a 'fringe' or the alt-right.

Feminism matters to this analysis, revealing the vagaries, inconsistencies and injustices of the patriarchy. One moment in this history provides the theoretical inspiration for this article. I activate Helene Cixous and her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976). Exploding from the tsunami of the Second Wave of feminism, her clarity, power and propulsive energy is disconnected from our current frightened, frightening and cancereal labelling of those with whom we disagree. Instead of tweets about TERFs or TikTok videos of 'Karens,' Cixous demanded more of us as thinkers and scholars.

> I shall speak about women's writing: about what we will do. Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement (1976, p. 875).
>
> Women must write through their bodies, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reverse-discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word 'silence' You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing (1976, p. 893).

The pandemic opened spaces for women who did laugh, including Sarah Cooper who sliced away Donald Trump's body from his speeches, and reperformed them as a woman in a home-based environment (Cooper, 2022). She invented a mode of ventriloquy where the puppet revolted against the puppeteer and rendered him a laughing stock. Cooper's intervention punched through the early

months of the pandemic in 2020. She was playful and deployed a marginalized platform – TikTok – to crush the credibility of the president of the United States.

This was a high water mark. As the pandemic killed millions of people and revealed the consequences of underfunding public health and public education for decades, the laughter stopped. Irrationality bladed the humour and became dangerous (Trump 2020a; Trump 2020b; Trump 2020c). I use the January 6, 2020 'uprising', the 'Freedom Convoy', and the 'occupation' of Wellington to not only investigate the (post)pandemic interregnum in which we live, work and research, but the consequences of deep and profound failures in leadership. These three events provide historical exemplars of Baudrillard's double refusal. I ask what happens when feminist scholars look at the Medusa 'straight on,' and explore why the laugher has stopped. Disgust is an inelegant replacement for laughter, as the Medusa is unable to reconcile ignorance with the necessities of survival.

Events

Events are the mosquitoes of history. They are small, but the bites are irritating, unexpected and leave a mark. The trope that aligns these three temporal mosquitoes in Washington, Ottawa and Wellington is the capacity for diverse citizens to believe lies (Higgins, 2021), and built transitory coalitions on the basis of ignorance, blame, shame, marginalization of disempowered groups and visceral anti-statism, anti-regulation and hyper, irrational individualism.

After Donald Trump lost the 2020 election in the United States, he called on thousands of his supporters to travel to Washington to overturn the 'stolen election' (Luke, 2021). He would "never concede," and described President-Elect Biden was an "illegitimate president" (Barry, McIntire, Rosenberg, 2021).Trump summoned his supporters – via tweet - to attend a rally before the January 6 Congressional vote: "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!" (Holland, 2021). On January 6, 2021, the 'Save America' Rally was held. It was given different titles: Rally to Revival, Save the Republic Rally, and One Nation Under God. Between 12:53pm and 5:40pm, a riot erupted in response to the claims of election fraud delivered in a speech by Donald Trump (Naylor, 2021). Trump affirmed the importance of being strong (Haberman, 2021). Attempting to delay the Electoral College vote count, the rioters entered the Capital Building and exploded into vandalism, looting, violence and assault. Pipe bombs were discovered. Members of Congress hid inside the Chamber as rioters crashed through the barricades. Congress was only confirmed as cleared of the rioters by 6pm. Five deaths resulted, 138 police officers were injured, and just under 900 people were criminally charged (Evelyn, 2021; Wolfe, 2021). The size of the riot was difficult to measure or evaluate (Doig, 2021).

Throughout the riot, Trump did not initiate the commands or public statement to mitigate the violence. Instead, at 4:22pm, he released a video message repeating the statements about electoral fraud, and told his supporters to "go home" (Trump, 2022). The iconography and imagery from this day is shockingly transcendent. The irrationality of the QAnon Shaman, with horned fur hat, face paint and bare chest, was intensified by the gallows built in the Capital, accompanied by the chant "Hang Mike Pence" (Staff, 2021). The riot, based on lies delivered to angry citizens via social media, resulted in

an attempt to prevent the counting of electoral college votes to enable the confirmation of Joe Biden's presidency. The foundation for such ignorance and irrationality was the continual pattern of misinformation, inaccuracy and incompetence throughout the Trump presidency (Brabazon, Redhead, Chivaura, 2018; Ben-Ghiat, 2021).

The question is who heard this tweet-delivered dog whistle? Extreme Right groups – the Oath Keepers, Proud Boys and Three Percenters – were charged with conspiracy after January 6 (Chapman, 2021; Hesson, Parker, Cooke, Harte, 2021). Journalists were attracted to the narrative of the extreme right attacking Washington (Coleman, 2021; Williams and Peniston, 2021; Zaru, 2021). However this is not the story. It is certainly not the full story. Most of the people charged with crimes as a result of this attack had no affiliation with extremist groups.

This chaotic, irrational event – founded in lies, hyperbole and the accelerated modernity of digitization - was described by David Carter, a federal judge, as "a coup in search of a legal theory" (Tigar, 2022). That theory will be offered in the concluding section of this article. But this event extended tentacles to the two events that would follow, fuelled not only by "great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long" (Trump in Moore, 2021) but hyper-irrational individualism and libertarianism, resulting from the public health initiatives to mitigated and manage COVID-19 (Nguyen, Scott, 2021). January 6 remains a reminder of the ease with which democratic behaviours and historic patterns can be disrupted (Greve, 2022). This was a failed coup (Musgrave, 2021), and this is the frame for the other two events summoned in this article. From the Shaman of Washington, I move to Ottawa truckers.

Between January 22 and February 23, 2022, a convoy of trucks and truckers protested COVID-19 mandates in Canada (Seto, 2022). Nicknamed – with provocative Orwellian connotations – the 'Freedom Convoy,' the trucks and other vehicles converged from Canadian provinces and into Ottawa on January 29, 2022. This protest was caused because both the US and Canadian exemptions for unvaccinated cross-border truckers ended (Smith, 2022). In response, Donald Trump demeaned and shamed Justin Trudeau (Lum, 2022). While the overwhelming majority of truckers were vaccinated – running at about approximately 85% - protesters occupied downtown Ottawa, confirming they would not leave until all COVID-19 restrictions were repealed (Aiello, 2022). By February 14, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau deployed the Emergencies Act and commenced a police action that arrested protesters, removed parked vehicles and dismantled the blockades. By February 21, the protests were cleared from Ottawa. Once more, far right groups were blamed for this protest, with the Canadian Trucking Alliance confirming that most protesters had no connection with the transportation industry. Protesting public policies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 became a proxy for libertarianism and 'freedom.' There was a connection to Donald Trump's libertarianism (DiMatteo, 2022), and racism was also part of the mix (Gilmore, 2022). A February 8 piece in *The Guardian* aligned the convoy with QAnon, conspiracy theorists, anti-government and anti-vaccine movements. Of greater interest is the degree of preparation and alignment between these groups. One of the organizers of the convoy, Canadian Unity, listed a series of demands on their website, with the goal of triggering an election. This odd combination of resistive forces also proposed creating an alternative government (Keyes, 2022). These demands included stopping all vaccine mandates, re-employing workers who had lost their jobs because of their vaccination status, and to

reverse the fines imposed through non-compliance with public health orders (Taylor, 2022).

While focused on Ottawa, the first convoy left Prince Rupert in British Columbia on January 22. By January 26, 400 vehicles crossed the Manitoba / Ontario border. However the evaluation of the size of the demonstration on Parliament hill on January 29 varies enormously: between 3000 and 18,000 people. However the behaviour of the protesters conveyed some critiques of Canadian nationalism, with the protesters dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial. The Terry Fox statue, commemorating the long-time cancer survivor, fundraiser and campaigner, was covered with an inverted Canadian flag and a protest sign (Trucker convoy, 2022). Volunteers at the local soup kitchen, the Shepherds of Good Hope, which operates to support Ottawa's homeless population, were harassed for not feeding the protesters. Protesters threw rocks at an ambulance on January 31, and racially abused the paramedics. Similarly, First Nations cultural practices were appropriated and mocked (Algonquin Nation issues statement, 2022). Concerns were also raised about the welfare of children living in the convoy trucks (Trucker protests 2022). While the protests were cleared, there was criticism of law enforcement for permitting the convey to occupy the streets for so long. There were arguments that the 'Freedom Convoy' signalled a civil war (Lithwick, 2022). The social and economic divisions within Canada were clear (Connolly, 2022). This occupation was to have an antipodal resonance (McKeen, Harvey, Leavitt, 2022; NZ police clash with protesters, 2022).

Summoning a temporal overlap in a different location, from February 6, there was an 'occupation' of Wellington in Aotearoa / New Zealand. For 24 days, protesters occupied the grounds of Parliament House and Molesworth Street in Central Wellington to overturn COVID-19 vaccine mandates (COVID-19 2022). A combination of both the January 6 and 'Freedom Convoy' demonstrations (Corlett, 2022), 1000 people blockaded the parliamentary buildings and grounds with their vehicles. The lawn and surrounding areas were filled with tents. As with Ottawa, bystanders were harassed, including children, and local businesses were disrupted. An odd combination of individuals and organizations were involved, including Destiny Church, the New Conservative Party, Action Zealandia, Voices for Freedom, The Freedom, New Zealand Doctors speaking out on Science, Rights Coalition, and Convoy NZ (McConnell, 2022). While vaccine mandates were the excuse for the protest, far-right elements were present, including Christian fundamentalism (Protest 2022). As with the January 6 riot, threats were expressed to kill politicians, particularly Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, with nooses hung from trees on the parliamentary lawn. If possible, the behaviour of protesters was even more concerning than in Washington or Ottawa, with protesters throwing faeces at police (Faeces 2022), shower facilities erected alongside the Cenotaph (Protesters bathroom, 2022), and antisemitism erupting with swastikas vandalizing buildings and messages attacking Jewish citizens written on car windows (Chumko, 2022; Holocaust distortion, 2022). Sexual assaults were also reported. Children were at a sanitation risk (Cornish and Hunt, 2022). Schoolchildren were abused by protesters for wearing masks (Traumatized 2022). The police were light handed in their approach through most of the three weeks, but finally cleared the parliamentary grounds, sustaining injury to 40 police officers. The Wellington protest was directly inspired by the Canadian 'Freedom Convoy,' with Canadian flags visible throughout the event. The protests were anti-authoritarian, anti-government, anti-police, anti-media, and anti-public health mandates. Noting the scale of the protest,

it is intriguing that the Wellington police focused on de-escalation and did not break up the group until it entered its fourth week (Vance, 2022).
What made the Wellington process distinctive was that protesters were surveyed, while protesting. David Farrar's Curia Market Research confirmed that 41% of the protesters came from provincial cities, with 17% from Auckland, and 8.7% from Wellington. Women were the majority of the protesters, with 64.4% of European origin, 27.2% identifying as Maori, 4.2% as Asians, and 2.6% as Pacific Islanders. This survey confirmed that 76.9% of protesters were unvaccinated (Strang, 2022). The media coverage was almost uniformly negative, with the selfishness of protesters logged (Borissenko, 2022). Concurrently, the protesters disengaged and distrusted the media (Hall, 2022). However it is clear that the easy sociological analysis of white men resisting the authoritarian government was not possible in the Wellington occupation. To add complexity to these events, it is necessary to enter the interregnum and the 'double refusal.'

(Post) Pandemic interregnum and the 'double refusal'

How can these three events be understood? The disconnection from any configuration of 'the public good' – or even 'the public' – requires urgent attention. Explanations for the irrationality, lack of information literacy, and disconnection from any concept of a community or commitments beyond the self(ish) are required. This explanation must begin within the frame of an interregnum.

An interregnum is a gap, break or aperture in governmental organizations and social order. Originally, it described the period between the reigns of monarchs. This unstable transition was a time of succession wars, foreign invasions and failed states. Antonio Gramsci's interregnum was more precisely and historically configured, derived from his writing about the 'crisis' in the late 1920s and early 1930s Italy. Gramsci confirmed that,

> The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear (2011).

In this in-between time, normative expectations are suspended, and assumptions about the future are parked. Violence is deployed to sustain some order. This is not a war of position. It is a deathly vacuum that kills the ideas and people that enter the space. Giorgio Agamben added to this Gramscian analysis, revealing that an interregnum is a suspension of social, political and legal systems, in anticipation of new systems, structures and rules (2003).

The interregnum has been used to understand other events that were the pivot to crisis. Before the events of January 6, Zygmunt Bauman deployed Gramsci's theorization to understand the transformations (or lack thereof) of the globalizing economic system after the Global Financial Crisis in 2008. Bauman argued that a morbid vacuum was created that separated power and politics, creating an "institutional disparity" (2012). After the GFC, economic systems did not change. The stock market and real estate capitalism continued to feed the instability of the interregnum. Indeed, public bailouts of banks – private corporations - were as necessary to sustain the unjust, under-regulated deployment of resources. This decision to use public money to subsidize private greed meant that public health and public education were underfunded for a decade. This meant that inelegant metrics

emerged to 'assess' and 'rank' schools and universities, and health systems were plunged into low wages for crucial staff. These crises emerged before the pandemic. These systems were not only unprepared for COVID-19, but the neglect of the public good, and the fraying and atomization of citizenship, exfoliated[1] Gramsci described as "morbid symptoms" (2011). There are two "morbid symptoms" that converged during COVID-19. The first was Baudrillard's "double refusal" – the refusal to lead and the refusal to be led. The second was a decline in information literacy, caused by the reduction in funding for public schools and public libraries, resulting in information silos and echo chambers created through social media platforms marginalizing, ignoring, simplifying and demeaning refereed scholarship. In the place of research and peer review are cliches such as "Believe the Science" (rather than understand the science), "Fake News," and "Freedom of Speech." These are slogans of the desperate, citizens who have not completed the complex foundational learning, reading and writing to formulate information literacy or disciplinary literacy, or the reflective consciousness to realize that personal rights are not of greater value or importance than collective rights. This is what Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West described as a confusion between the attention economy and information literacy (2021). It is also a denial of rigorous research methodologies in the development of knowledge.

Instead of activating complex, difficult and expensive practices and behaviours of reading, learning, thinking and writing, alternative strategies for the interregnum are displayed through the three events presented in the first section of this article. Shouting, tweeting, public urinating, destruction of property and active disrespect and denial of expertise are antithetical to teaching and learning, research and knowledge dissemination. During an interregnum, the definitions and responsibilities of intellectual work transforms. Agile research, with rigour, must be choreographed to build new relationships between the powerful and powerlessness, formality and informality, the stoic and the conversational, and the protectionists and the neoliberals. Wolfgang Streeck, in his "Return of the Repressed" (2014), argued that the battle between neoliberalism and protectionism will dominate our lifetime, with global uncertainty and danger attending this struggle. Like Gramsci, Streeck termed this period an interregnum.

For these Gramsci-inspired and enabled scholars, the interregnum is more than the loss of a routine or predictable behaviour. It is the destruction of one framework or paradigm, and a pause before the new system emerges. This pause – this interregnum – is our present. These are harsh, hard and brutalizing times. It is the lost weekend of intellectual life. The interregnum cannot hold or sustain learning and teaching, research and scholarship beyond 'industry partnerships' that fund academics and students to deliver quick and commercialized outcomes. This brutalizing realization triggers a cascade of others. There is no society beyond industry. There is no culture beyond commodification. There is no citizenship beyond shopping. There is no education beyond the preparation of job-ready graduates. To configure and built alternatives in an era of no alternatives requires not only active, engaged, thoughtful, evidence-based research, but a communication and dissemination system that not only enables citizenship but builds a community.

[1] I am deploying 'exfoliated' and exfoliation with precision here. Events rub the surfaces of the body politic, revealing difficult issues, intricate debates, and – too often displaced – deep injustices. September 11 exfoliated the xenophobia that shields the skin of nationalism. The Global Financial Crisis exfoliated the irrationality of real estate capitalism and stock market capitalism. COVID-19 exfoliated the generational neglect of 'the public good', revealing the under-resourcing of public health, public education, and public libraries.

The question is why a minority of citizens have disconnected from consensus policies, governance and regulation. A clear answer to this question is Jean Baudrillard's theory of the 'double refusal.' This theory summons the argument that the leaders refuse to lead and citizens refuse to be led by these leaders. This idea was developed in much of Baudrillard's posthumously published work, particularly *The Agony of Power* (2010). He stated that, "intelligence cannot – and never will be able to - be in power" (2010, 18). Leadership is lacking agency, credibility or authority. An array of techniques are deployed to maintain power without intelligence, including gaslighting, bullying and the cascading consequences of the Peter Principle (Peter and Hull, 1969). The leader cannot lead, so the focus is placed on the weaknesses, incompetence and ignorance of others. As Zizek confirmed, "power itself is an embarrassment and there is no one to assume it truly" (2017). The incompetence of leadership, which was particularly revealed through COVID-19 and the 'management' of a public health programme within a neoliberal frame, has been displayed with catastrophic consequences. While Donald Trump is of a different order of leader from Jacinda Ardern and Justin Trudeau, all three have failed to deliver economic, social and cultural outcomes that can connect and be communicated to large sections of their citizenry. Mediocrity and incompetence were fuelled by identity politics on the right and left. 'Politics of the self' transposed into selfish politics, blocking the development of 'me' to 'we.' This atomization of politics meant that leaders did not lead and followers – recognizing their incompetence – stopped listening to their leadership. This gap was filled with investments in representational politics, feeding the rise of the alt-right and 'celebrity professors' like Jordan Peterson (Brabazon, Redhead, Chivaura, 2018; Brabazon 2022).

The result of the double refusal is chaos. Confusion. Violence. Denial. Jonathan Rutherford offered a precise description of this disarray:

> There is a paradox. Changes are occurring faster in people's consciousness than in their behaviour and social conditions. This mixture of new consciousness and old conditions has created what he [Ulrich Beck] describes as Zombies categories – social forms such as class, family or neighbourhood, which are dead, yet alive (2000, p. 37).

The historic arc of COVID-19, January 6, the 'freedom' convoy and the Wellington Occupation is not anchored to – or originated in - September 11. The beginning of this story must be the Global Financial Crisis. The banking system was destroyed in 2007-8. The faith in finance capitalism and real estate capitalism was lost. More significantly though, the state 'bailout' of corporations - because banks were 'too big to fail' - meant that public infrastructure for health and education began to decay. Opportunities for innovation, enabled through university-led research for the green or blue economy were lost through the public subsidies of private corporations. The texture of globalization was toxic, dangerous, greedy and crowded. Unemployment, underemployment, precariat labour, zero hour contracts, and homelessness were attendant fears. University scholars were unable to offer alternatives and the loss of funding meant that restructures are the 'new normal' of higher education. The humanities in particular are demeaned. Without a robust and engaged theorization from the humanities, representational politics, identity politics, and 'fake news' gain traction and currency ahead of information literacy.

In an interregnum – marinated in death, disease and ignorance – the humanities and social sciences were and are needed to provide a path from information to knowledge, and experience to expertise. COVID-capitalism confirmed the unproductive, inaccurate and ignorant binary opposition between health and economic priorities. Thomas Raymen and Oliver Smith described this era as framed by "meta-crises of liberal capitalism," "harmful subjectivities," and "normalised harm" (2019, 115). This normalization of harm was intensified through the Presidency of Donald Trump and bubbled up in Ottawa and Wellington. Mabel Berezin predicted the geographical carry of the Trump presidency.

> Donald Trump's election has forced a collective re-evaluation of who the 'ordinary citizen' or 'forgotten man or woman' is. Level of education distinguished Trump voters from Clinton voters. In spring 2016, Trump exuberantly shouted, 'I love the poorly educated!' The ordinary citizens who voted for Trump did not care about his well-documented outrageous statements (2017, 1).

These harmful subjectivities – where fact, evidence and truth were displaced – were irrational. Brandi Janssen stated that, "while farmers mostly voted for Donald Trump, much of his platform is not favourable to agriculture" (2017). There are profound consequences – socially, economically and politically – when the relationship is severed between intention and outcome, goal and result, argument and evidence.

This severing of intention and outcome grows from ignorance and produces irrationality. Neoliberalism is a failed system that continues to guide public policy decisions. This is a damaged capitalism that continues to create damage. Even before COVID-19, citizens were experiencing end times. Consider Wolfgang Streeck's titles: *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism* (2014) and *How Will Capitalism End? Essays on a Failing System* (2016). Neoliberalism is a zombie ideology. It never quite dies. It shambles into our present. This is what Colin Crouch described as *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism* (2011). Even though the Global Financial Crisis was caused – as Gillian Tett described it – by "dancing around the regulators" (2009, 26), freedom without consequences continued to be celebrated through a global pandemic. The demonstrations against masks, social distancing and vaccines, replayed and refreshed the normalized harm from the GFC, finance and real estate capitalism. The blame culture – of migrants, refugees, 'the left,' China, North Korea, Russia, climate change, feminists, the trans community – was a mobilized political strategy to avoid a reckoning of the costs and consequences of marginalizing regulation, governance and public policy. This "Lockdown rebellion" (McGurn 2020) activated an array of issues and identity-based problems, including anti-abortion and climate deniers. COVID-19 deniers were part of this mix. Simon Winlow, Steve Hall and James Treadwell in their research into the English Defence League (EDL), confirmed that "capitalism had become so triumphant, ubiquitous and unchallengeable that it was commonly understood as a non-ideological fact of life" (2016, 13). This active forgetting of the Global Financial Crisis means that inequalities of class were masked. Therefore, when COVID-19 emerged, requiring a collective response to a society's health concern, the cry of 'freedom' – to buy toilet paper (Nguyen, 2020), get a haircut or shop without a mask – became a fighting right. While the middle class were able to work from home, the white working class – to cite Winlow, Hall and Treadwell – increased in their "marginality and redundancy" (2016, 83). Casualized work disappeared and working-class men disappeared from COVID capitalism.

Accelerated consumerism, the mortar which holds together a marginalized identity, was not possible.

How was this consciousness of marginality and redundancy to be expressed during a pandemic? The Ultra-Realist Criminologists research what happened to citizens that did not slot into the imagined narratives of the right or the left. Identity politics – the atomized celebration of 'me' and individual freedoms – reveals the sharp edges of consumerism and capitalism. Put another way, and more directly, what rights mattered during COVID Capitalism? Answers to that question are revealed through the three events that commenced this article. The detritus of the Global Financial Crisis remained. As David Cay Johnston confirmed, this was "bankers before brains" (2018, 194). Therefore, the next section shows what happens when ignorance marinates an interregnum, and how universities can intervene in this arc of decay and despair.

Ignorance Studies in an interregnum

In an interregnum, the role of universities changes. The instability and bleeding of finances from higher education means that 'industry partnerships' are valued more than undertaking research in blue sky science or the humanities and social sciences. The injustices in our higher education system – like in the population - are increasing. The rich universities are getting richer, and the universities that commit to social justice - first in family students, older students, citizens with an impairment or disability, rainbow students, Indigenous and First nation students, migrant students, students of colour and women - have fewer resources to try and enable educational pathways. For this moment, scholars must summon knowledge from the edge that does not abide by arbitrary rankings of journals, inelegant metrics, or research assessment or evaluation exercises. Researchers require new, radical, edgy and engaged strategies to enter this social, cultural, economic and intellectual maelstrom. This is knowledge for the interregnum

Ignorance Studies is an interdisciplinary field spanning sociology, philosophy, history and anthropology. It remains a key lens through which to consider Science and Technology Studies (Barbier, Boudia, Moizard-Lanvin, 2021). While knowledge creation demands the mesh of methodology, ontology and epistemology, the mechanism through which to investigate demeaned, marginalized or unproductive knowledges is much less certain. Put another way, ignorance may be used as a derogatory label. It is much more difficult to interpret, analyse, contextualize and understand.

To research ignorance is to reveal the textured skin of power. The wilful production of ignorance – through dismissing the effects of tobacco on human health or climate change deniers – can be tracked historically. It is much more difficult to explore ignorance in a saturated, hot present. As shown by the three events probed in this article, ignorance reveals the relationship between information and power. Knowledge is produced by dominant groups. Therefore, Agnotology – the study of ignorance – allows researchers to understand how ignorance is deployed as resistance and refusal.

Donald Trump deployed nationalism, xenophobia and fear, inciting violence while validating law and

order. Travis Boyce and Winsome Chunnu (2019) revealed how fear moves through history, like a white pointer shark through seals. Ignorance of slavery perpetuates fear of black men, enabled through racial profiling. Black lives matter for many reasons. One reason is that black men deserve lives beyond the fears and anxieties of white citizens. Donald Trump was voted into office by white men and women, many maintaining evangelical Christian faith structures, who had not completed a university degree. These citizens not only lacked extended formal education, but the disciplinary literacy gained through a degree. Fear is cement for thinking, reason, empathy and compassion. This narrowed view results in a large group of citizens voting against their interests. We live in selfish times. But the irrationality of citizens who gain from public health, public education and public libraries voting for individualism, freedom and choice – when they benefit so little from these ideologies – is the perverse tragedy of our time.

Pandemics mark out bodies to fear and other (Armstrong, 2019). Sources of infection are sources of fear. But the challenge is how to manage fear while providing life-saving information. Therefore public health discussions must always activate information literacy. Any additional information must be grafted to already existing information. If information does not fit into an already existing context, then dissatisfaction, confusion, disbelief and anger emerges. It is difficult to be reflexive and ponder the accuracy and efficacy of prior experiences and learning when they are challenged and found lacking. As Robert Graef confirmed, "losing ignorance can be discomforting when it entails shedding the insulating comfort of not knowing" (2017, 29). The decision to summon an information scaffold and learn, moving from ignorance to knowledge is courageous, and frequently disempowering. A pandemic is a frightening context, and inhibits openness to change and considering additional information. Ignorance can be benign, but when deployed as a weapon against experts, academics, researchers and intellectuals, it can block not only innovation, but survival. Graef described anti-intellectualism as "an old and very American problem" (2017, 105). What January 6, the 'Freedom Convoy' and the Wellington occupation confirm is that this American problem – during a pandemic – is contagious and carried through digitization. Masking and social distancing cannot counter digitization. Ignorance is the contagion. Anti-intellectualism remains its carrier.

What remains of concern to me, and was the trigger for this article, is also Graef's greatest fear: "anti-intellectualism in universities" (2017, 119). Grade inflation, the confusion of standardization and standards, the muddling of research metrics with research quality, has meant that universities can no longer save themselves. The widening participation agenda activated a noble ideology: higher education can benefit the many, not the few. However this ideology was not matched with a commitment to public funding and the andragogical innovation (Reimers, 2020). Therefore, research into ignorance – Agnotology – will enable academics to understand how often education is miseducation. Angulo investigated the three types of ignorance: native ignorance, passive ignorance and active ignorance (Angulo, 2016). Native ignorance is the absence of knowledge in children and young people. Passive ignorance merges when we limit what we know, such as selecting one subject, course or degree, rather than another, or reading one book rather than another. Active ignorance is forged from neither naivety or passivity, but requires the construction, maintenance and regulation of ignorance. The three events discussed in this article are the outcomes of active ignorance. However, there is a much greater application of this model. Kevin Elliott (2016) reviewed the impact of selectively funding some research projects and not others, marginalizing opposing scholarly

approaches, and blinkered framing of research questions and results. Elliott probed these active "ignorance-generating strategies" (2016), resulting in a taxonomy of ignorance.

The relationship between living and learning is the crucial discussion of and for our time. Identity politics and the alt-right are locked in a tough of war over the 'empowered I': the 'I' that can tell its story without critique. But individuality, competition and identity politics have shredded the self, leading to selfish politics, blocking the movement from 'me' to 'we' (Brabazon, 2022). Ignorance is socially constructed, but it is institutionally enforced. Ignorance has a context. Delusions have a context (Bortolotti, 2018). What is acceptable and unacceptable, bizarre or reasonable, is constituted in a volatile setting. Convictions are questioned. Epistemic 'truths' are doubted or abused as irrational. That is why Ignorance Studies remains the key to unlock January 6, the 'Freedom Convey' and the occupation of Wellington. There are personal benefits in not knowing and performing that lack of knowledge (Gross and McGoey, 2023). As Gross and McGoey have confirmed,

> The problem with epistemic privilege and epistemic disadvantage is particularly acute in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resuscitated long-standing questions about the rights and duties of private individuals in societies that are intractably interdependent (2023, 5).

How the limitations of research are presented to 'the public,' particularly a public infused by "populist authoritarianism" (Gross and McGoey, 3), remains the teetering challenge. How is expertise confirmed while noting the gaps in knowledge? What the presidency of Donald Trump confirmed is the missteps in twenty years of information literacy theory. I am part of this problem. I have argued that if citizens had better quality information, then they would make better, more informed decisions (Brabazon 2006; Brabazon 2008; Brabazon 2013). Yet this information deficit model did not emphasize the role of context, genre and modality in the delivery of that information. Each of us are ignorant for a reason. Some of those reasons are caused through economic injustice. Ignorance is deployed as a policy strategy by dominant groups to maintain their economic and epistemological position. To put the question another way, the issue is not what 'we' know, but who is allowed to know. Appadurai described the "social life of policies" (1986). He recognizes that governments rely on ignorance, particularly in security and defence planning. Attacks on 'whistle-blowers' confirms the repression of information by the empowered. Therefore, in an interregnum built on – and powered by – active, conscious and contextualized ignorance, what is the place of feminism and feminist research?

Feminism in the endless now

The function of feminism is clear. The task is to reveal the portrait in the attic of capitalism. Sam Sellar and David Cole described our present as "an endless now" (2017, 48). Feminist researchers must enter the now – understand the events – and end this interregnum, renewing leadership and enlivening citizenship. The point of patriarchy is to demarcate between women: gay and straight, trans and cis, binary and non-binary, colonizer and colonized. Women of different ages, faith structures and classes are hegemonically, architecturally and geographically separated. Before the COVID-19 vaccine, the only health advice available was 'social distancing.' Separating people was

a singular strategy, alongside disciplined personal hygiene. This crucial public health intervention had social and political costs. The atomization of the body politic ensured that the pandemic not only infected bodies, but politics. The resultant economic chaos reinforced an interregnum that commenced in 2008 with the Global Financial Crisis. This consciousness and awareness has been actively and rigorously blocked and marginalized by politicians on the left and right. 'Leaders' in government, education, real estate, banking and the share market have gained from the perpetuation of the ignorance that neoliberalism had failed the world. The active forgetting of 2008 – of public money 'bailing' out private corporations - meant that when the urgent necessity for public funding of health and education was required, that capital was not available. Public money paid the stake for private greed. And lost. Neoliberalism after 2008 was a zombie concept. It took just over a decade, but the zombie kill count has been high.

The moment an international public crisis – like a pandemic – emerged, the 'leadership' was not in place to manage it. The generational decline of public health funding revealed its cost, through body bags. While Jacinda Ardern appeared to be 'different' – young, a woman, and 'left wing' (noting the profound ambiguity of that phrase through zombie neoliberalism) – that is not the case. Ardern was a Prime Minister for an interregnum built on ignorance, forgetting and identity politics. Summoning the value of "kindness" (Willis, 2021) was not the point. In fact, it masks the point. The rage in the Wellington occupation is the visible and vocal confirmation of my argument. The loss of hegemonic concessions and consensus between dominant and subordinate groups means that citizens are voting against their interests (Brabazon, Redhead, Chivaura, 2018). There is a disconnection between lived experience, the interpretation of that lived experience, and the leadership activated in response to that lived experience, resulting in irrational, unpredictable, volatile anger. Kindness will not solve the toxic waterways (Melhem, 2021), or mitigate the disparity between the 'clean green' image required by Aotearoa / New Zealand's adventure tourism and the pollution created by the dairy industry. Then there is the "housing catastrophe" (Corlett, 2022), including 10,000 people living in emergency temporary accommodation, with housing affordability at a record low. It takes 12 years – on average – in New Zealand to save up for a deposit on a house (Corlett, 2022). Being kind – like being angry – will not solve homelessness or the wave of environmental crises hitting Aotearoa's metaphoric shore.

The notion of 'women's leadership style' remains a ruse. Kindness, compassion, decency and respect are important. They are the foundation of citizenship, debate and – indeed – civility. But in an interregnum, control is lost. Leadership and followership is disrupted. Fear feeds ignorance. Ignorance feeds fear. Inversions, confusions and misinformation dominate. Mikhail Bakhtin's liberation of and through the carnival remains important to remember and deploy in our present (1941). We take too seriously the issues that should be shredded with laughter. Conversely, citizens laugh at – or indeed marginalize, forget and erase – topics that require expertise, clarity, precision and rigour. Laughter is required to break us out of this toxic interregnum, where men and trucks and guns occupy space, frighten, threaten, damage and undermine. Laughter ruptures the tight framing of women, compressed by the foot binding binaries of genitals and brain, silence and shame, complicity and competing, visible or invisible.

There is nothing special about women's leadership. Most of us have experienced appalling women whose incompetence is only matched by their cruelty. A vagina does not a feminist make. Indeed, a

vagina does not a woman make. Instead, we as women have minimized our political and personal capacity when attempting to conflate femininity and competence (Kaseman, 1998). Our bar of ambition is set too low. With courage, we can move beyond a woman's leadership style (Jewell and Whicker, 1993) and shatter the chaotic misogyny drowning diversity, resistance and community in this (post) pandemic interregnum.

Helene Cixous's Medusa spoke to us through her laughter. Fill out our bodies. Occupy space. Occupy silence. Build relationships. Make trouble. Laugh. Sarah Hagi's tweet that became a slogan - "Lord, grant me the confidence of a mediocre white man" (Hagi in Shaw, 2016) - captures this courage and revulsion, and the resistive capacity of laughter. Significantly, I have referenced Hagi's tweet through an article written by another woman. Hagi received such trolling and attacks via Twitter in response to this maxim that she closed her account. Therefore, besides her comedic flair, feminist researchers must also log the misogyny that is the fuel of the powerful – whatever their gender identity or genitals. Misogyny pumps through our institutions and media platforms, wounding women and erasing, demeaning and denying our voice, evidence, testimony and texts. Misogyny enables active ignorance to emerge and continue. Unless feminist researchers remember, log, take notes and cite the diversity, intricacies, confusions and courage of women, we will be lost to the historical record of the interregnum. We will be ignored in preference for a painted Shaman in a trapper hat. Lost in the litter of the Wellington protesters. Silenced by the horns of truckers.

Redistribution of wealth is required. So is redistribution of confidence. The confidence of mediocre men – from Donald Trump to Boris Johnson, from Jordan Peterson to Joe Rogan – must agitate and inspire women. The confidence of mediocre men is created because they have moved through families, schools, universities, and the workplace, and life has not punched them too hard or too often. If women can reclaim the confidence to occupy space, read, think, speak and laugh – if women can support other women to enable social change – then the interregnum will end. Our first step is not to be lost in shame and silence, fear and horror, ignorance and denial, at the injustices in health, education, housing, the environment, and food and water security. Let us laugh like a Medusa at the pompous and incompetent. But that is only the first stage. More importantly, through our expertise, knowledge, wisdom and collaboration, let us revise a different future. And then make it.

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Infant feeding during social instability; future climate disruptions based on crises in Aotearoa's present and recent past

Heather M. Tribe

This essay explores the transferability of experiences of infant feeding during crises and reflects upon a future defined by climate change. To begin this reflection, I first examine the ontological assumptions of minimal foundationalism, whereby it is assumed that observable regularities occur within specifically similar social, historical, and cultural contexts. After this, I frame the need for further research through examination of the current climate change research regarding Aotearoa New Zealand. The focus of the essay then shifts to the existing literature exploring infant feeding during a natural hazard induced crisis. This section is followed by novel reflections from two case studies: the Canterbury Earthquake Sequence (2010-2011) in Te Waipounamu (South Island), and the initial lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic within Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) (March 2020-June 2021). From these discussions, the similarities between contrasting experiences are reflected upon and examined through a feminist political ecology lens. Lessons relevant to a future defined by climate change are then extracted.

The two crises selected for this study were both sparked by naturally occurring hazards. The risk these hazards created was, in many ways, amplified through insufficient risk reduction within the social environment. My work focuses on sociological lived experiences of such events and does not have capacity to discuss - in this article - the importance of various conceptual classifications of such events as disaster, catastrophes, pandemics, or emergencies.

Between heterosexual parenting partners, the expectation and workload of infant feeding (regardless of the method) in Aotearoa primarily falls on the mother's shoulders due to both the physical aspects of breast-feeding, and pre-existing social and cultural expectations. Therefore, infant feeding in crises is an issue of gendered vulnerability, as an inability to make informed decisions reduces women's ability to cope with and recover from crises.

Minimal foundationalism

This essay upholds the position of minimal foundationalism that there are observable regularities in the world, but that they are heavily shaped by the contextual factors from which they emerge. Minimal foundationalism is applied here both to the natural and social world. Jackson (2010) proposes a few benefits of minimal foundationalism in that it ontologically proposes a degree of objectivity and, furthermore, discourse and materiality are conceptualised as shaping each other in a dialectic, never-ceasing dynamic. This allows for research on both instances of natural hazards embedded in the 'real world' such as tectonic plate movement and the atmospheric implications of increased greenhouse

gas emissions, as well as the discursive processes by which the interactions of the natural world upon the social world are given meaning. Furthermore, as there are some loose regularities across the social/natural world, therein lies the benefit of conducting research across two different crises located within similar historical and social/cultural power structures. These structures influence the characteristics of the crisis experiences and the experiences of gendered violence/vulnerability. Through this, minimal foundationalism provides a pathway to understanding what a climate crisis of the future may entail, as depicted through lived experiences of past and contemporary crises within the same cultural and sociological contexts. Assuming a continuation of these social and cultural power structures in our future, we cannot establish a finite truth, but we may tentatively suggest some characteristics which may be exhibited under further crisis conditions.

Climate change and Aotearoa New Zealand

Like many parts of the world, the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report observed - with very high confidence - that climate change is already affecting Aotearoa. This is happening through changes in precipitation patterns, increases in temperature, changes to the frequency and duration of droughts, sea level rise, and increased occurrence of extreme events (IPCC, 2022). Moving from solely the geophysical impacts of climate change to the more sociological, we see a great array of new research. Research predicts that climate change will result in an increase in pests and diseases in Aotearoa (Kean et al., 2015), additional harm is posed through the linking of salmonella outbreaks with increased temperature (Lal et al., 2016). This research highlights additional challenges to the growth and provision of healthy food and human wellbeing.

Water is an area of additional risk in New Zealand. Elevated water tables, compounded through sea-level rise and intense rainfall will exert additional pressure on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water supply and quality (Ministry for the Environment, 2020). This was exemplified in 2016 when a heavy rainfall event washed sheep faeces infected with campylobacter into Havelock North's water supply, resulting in an estimated 6-8,000 people becoming unwell (Gilpin et al., 2020). Flooding events are also set to increase in magnitude, particularly in western and northern parts of New Zealand (Collins et al., 2018).

Despite all this research, there is little to no exploration of the gendered experiences of climate change in Aotearoa. We understand climate change will amplify a range of crisis-like events and long-term changes. Reflecting on the previous section that explores ontological assumptions, we may assume the potential for similarities across disparate natural crises, hence, there is capacity to review crisis literature within the context of Aotearoa, which is not linked to climate change. This essay focuses on the experiences of infant feeding during crises: the following section provides a brief overview of the international literature exploring this experience.

Infant feeding in crises

The World Health Organisation (WHO) stated, "mothers and babies form an inseparable biological and social unit, the health and nutrition of one group cannot be divorced from the health and nutrition of the other" (WHO, 2003, p. 3). Regarding crises, WHO explicitly states that in normal circumstances and, more importantly in crises, breastfeeding is the optimum infant feeding method where possible. This is for the short- and long-term health outcomes for both the infant and the mother (WHO, 2003). However, it is well established that during crises, formula producers will freely supply crisis-stricken communities with their products, and manipulate parents' fears for their infant's nutrition, leading to early and unnecessary cessation of breastfeeding (WHO, 2003). This poses significant health risks to infants as crises often create or exacerbate poor sanitation, lack (and contamination) of water, shortages of fuel and supplies and intermittent electricity outages. All of these inhibit the ability to safely prepare infant formula. The literature agrees that, should mothers have adequate and comprehensive support, they will be able to continue breastfeeding, despite environmental instability and stress. This support includes sufficient water, food, and rest for breastfeeding parents, access to lactation consultants, and adaptable workspaces to accommodate breastfeeding parents (Bartle, 2011; Spatz, 2004; WHO, 2003).

Methods

To explore the experiences of infant feeding in crises, I conducted interviews with five women who either had infants or worked with new parents during a crisis. This was part of a broader Doctoral study exploring gendered experiences of vulnerability/violence in conjunction with crises. The recurring issue surrounding infant feeding was not an expected area of exploration within my thesis. As I was following Charmaz's (2014) guidelines of constructivist grounded theory, I moved iteratively between data collection and data analysis which allowed a focus on emerging areas of research, such as infant feeding. I followed Clark & Braun's (2006) decisions of data analysis; the first of which is how to decipher and determine prevalence of themes within and across the data corpus. In this I focused primarily on issues which recurred for many participants or were particularly important to a few participants; infant feeding was an example of the latter.

My participants were selected through pamphleting in social agencies and harnessing the snowball (word of mouth) technique. Interviews were audio recorded, on average lasted about an hour, and were primarily based on open ended questions exploring crisis experiences and self-defined experiences of vulnerability or violence. This highly qualitative methodology was selected to shed light on the complex and highly interrelated experiences of an otherwise heavily under-researched area within the context of Aotearoa. These crises were selected as they were ten years apart, allowing many similar social and cultural structures to remain, yet distant enough to allow ample opportunity for some historical development. The Canterbury Earthquake Sequence was a profound and well researched crisis which allowed me significant additional literary resources to ground my work in. Comparably, the COVID-19 lockdowns were contemporary and allowed me a greater degree of accuracy in participants' recollection of events. The COVID-19 participants were primarily based in

Waitākere, the western region of Tāmaki Makaurau. This was due to the richness in contacts I had here, which exempt me from the gatekeeping that researchers of marginalised or vulnerable communities often face. Lastly, I selected two highly diverse natural crises to research - a virus pandemic and an earthquake sequence - as the similarities from such events could only be linked within a heavily centralised social system. This focus upon the reactions of the social system to natural crises could then be extrapolated into future natural crises.

Infant feeding in Aotearoa during COVID-19

Knowledge access

When Aotearoa went into a severe lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19 within the community, much in-person contact was reduced and restricted. Whilst this was successful in eliminating the first few community outbreaks and served to protect our most vulnerable, it also created many novel and significant challenges for new parents. New parents were, at this stage, used to seeing their Well Child Tamariki Ora provider (a government funded education program for new parents - facilitated through the likes of Plunket NZ) in person and having a range of networks and resources to guide and support them in their early parenting journey. However, the majority of these were restricted under lockdown regulations. This impeded parents' access to knowledge, such as methods of infant feeding. Participants explored these phenomena in the following sentiments:

> Jessica (maternal mental health nurse): She was trying to like, video call to show her, she's trying to breastfeed, you know? Because she couldn't learn any other way. They had no appointments that they could go to face to face;
>
> Laura (maternal mental health nurse): They go into this "I got a baby and I have no idea how to do it" so it's kind of that crash of "how's this gonna work?" And in COVID it's been increased double, because then all of a sudden, it's not only "I have no idea how to do it, but I have no one to tell me how to do it." Like, no one to teach you how to make a bottle.

The experiences of Jessica and Laura, both of whom work in supporting roles for new mothers, reflect the new barriers to accessing infant feeding knowledge during the initial lockdowns. Jessica noted the challenges in learning how to breastfeed over a video call, whilst Laura noted the challenges in learning how to formula feed and not having the swathe of support many new parents may have accessed, had it not been for the lockdowns. Both sentiments contributed a new perspective to the infant feeding literature. The majority of crisis/infant feeding literature focused on the physical resources which were inhibited, such as clean water, food, power, and a high degree of sanitation, yet did not consider the impacts of reduced access to educational and family support. It was recommended that in order to continue breastfeeding during crises, access to lactation consultants was necessary (Bartle, 2011), yet my research highlights the need to go a step further and ensure education (preferably in-person) on diverse infant feeding methods is critical during crises.

Cost of breastfeeding

Many jobs were unable to continue their productivity during the peak of the crisis. COVID-19 signified a new normal for crisis-working experiences. The widespread integration of the internet and rapidly developing video-calling capabilities allowed most office workers to continue their work in a working-from-home capacity. This reduced the financial burden for many, although it was commonplace for incomes to be decreased during this time too. A second experience of the COVID-19 lockdowns was precipitated through the increased financial burden on families, particularly those who were already stretched. This experience was embodied by a young mother of three, Lennon:

> Lennon: My breast pump broke… if you go to a store and buy an electric pump, it's like 300 plus dollars.

For many breastfeeding parents, expressing milk is the only feasible way to ensure a constant and stable supply of breastmilk to their infants. WHO recommends 80 minutes of direct contact time spread over six feeds a day (WHO, 2003); this is not possible for many mothers who needed to navigate the requirements of their babies with other siblings, work, and life commitments. However, access to the required equipment to express, store, and feed milk raises issues of equality. For a mother of three children, the cost of a breast pump was significant for Lennon. She was faced with either the cost of the necessary equipment or the challenges of not having it. As it was such a significant cost for her, she needed to try to mitigate the outcomes of not having an electric pump. This was time consuming and created additional stress as she did not know if her new baby was receiving enough milk, yet she was not able to provide him more direct contact time as she also had to meet the needs of his two siblings and their sick father. Lennon's experience highlights the literature, such as Bartle (2011) who argues that breastfeeding is not free. Lennon raised the example of paying for a new breast pump, however, the literature highlights there are other, more subtle costs which are often overlooked. In order to breastfeed, breastfeeding parents must have additional food, water, and rest (Spatz, 2004; WHO, 2003). For families experiencing food insecurity, the literature shows mothers are usually the first to forego food (Alston & Akhter, 2016; Beaumier & Ford, 2010; Briones Alonso et al., 2018; Maxwell, 1996; Watson, 2015). This maternal buffering is also reflected within the literature from Aotearoa (Carter et al., 2011; Tribe, 2021; Tribe, 2020). With women being more likely than other family members to forego food, the toll that breastfeeding can have on dwindling bodily reserves can be severe. This becomes exacerbated in crises due to decreased financial stability and increased external threats.

Canterbury Earthquake Sequence

Loss of critical formula requirements and market inundation

Many shocks of the Canterbury Earthquake Sequence (CES) destroyed potable water lines, sewer lines, and power lines, as well as buildings. This resulted in flooding, water contamination, infringed sanitation, and power outages. Consequently, the reduced access to clean water and power inhibited parents from various methods of infant feeding, as described by Lara:

> Lara: they had the same thing with the formula [companies] like, "We will help look after the women." But then the milk would dry up and then the women would use contaminated water to make the formula… I think national radio contacted us. They needed to have that balanced voice because you've got the [formula] companies that come in, but you also needed to endorse that if women keep calm, they can keep breastfeeding.

Lara was working as a lactation consultant at the time of the Earthquake. She witnessed the loss of sanitation and the lengths that formula-feeding parents went to in order to feed their infants. This experience of the increased risks of formula feeding precipitated through crisis disruption is well documented within the international literature (Bartle, 2011; WHO, 2003). Lara also noted the inundation of formula being marketed as a product for helping distressed, breastfeeding parents. This reflected the established finding within the literature that, during natural and humanitarian crises, formula producers will flood communities with their products. This would have been particularly potent in the context of Aotearoa due to the stronghold of formula producers from major dairy industries here (Bartle, 2011). Lara's organisation was approached to advocate a contrasting narrative that, if provided the correct support, resources, and space, mothers could continue to breastfeed. This experience is in alignment with international literature (Bartle, 2011; Spatz, 2004; WHO, 2003).

Similarities in crisis experience

A political ecology lens, centralising the social experiences of crises is well established amongst crisis sociologists (Wisner et al., 2004). A prominent framework, postulated by Wisner and colleagues (2004), explored crisis-induced harm as the consequence of a natural hazard and pre-existing unsafe social conditions. Perez-Escamilla and Sellen (2015) argue that any social, economic, political, legal, or biomedical factor preventing women from breastfeeding should be seen as a fundamental social injustice. Furthermore, breastfeeding success is an intersectional experience and requires intersectional solutions (Pérez-Escamilla & Sellen, 2015). The following sections shall review the commonalities between the crisis experiences and the factors which prevented or prioritised one or other method of infant feeding during crises.

Access to knowledge

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, isolation posed additional challenges for new parents to learn how to feed their infants. Whilst there were caveats in place to prevent online-only knowledge sessions from leading to infant malnourishment, the restrictions to only communicate through virtual channels created significant stress for new parents who did not know how to care for their infants. This was more challenging for those who were breastfeeding, as it was the more complex method of infant feeding and was harder to master without in-person contact. Whilst these technological developments provide exciting opportunities, should we truly harness them for communication in the future, the caveats allowing in-person contact are critical as we adjust. This complexity was reflected in the experiences from the CES also. To combat the dominant narrative from formula companies where breastmilk was framed as unsafe and unreliable, breastfeeding advocates were sharing knowledge on radio stations regarding how to breastfeed during times of disruption. Access to infant feeding knowledge was crucial for all new parents during crises, however, for parents who had chosen to breastfeed, additional knowledge and support was needed as it was a more complex and harder to

achieve method of infant feeding.

Financial drivers of 'choice'

We frame a parent's method of infant feeding as a choice, one which - although often contested and speculated about - should be respected. From a New Zealand perspective, Bartle (2011) explores the farcical experience of infant feeding 'choice' arguing that the inundation of formula advertising, commercial dairy's lobbying power in government, and social discrimination against breastfeeding in public or in the workplace heavily impede parents' choice on infant feeding (see also Spatz, 2004; WHO, 2003). This is reflected in the literature, which states that, globally, less than half of infants under six months are exclusively breastfed (La Leche League International, 2021). Ongoing discrimination in the workplace and inability to breastfeed or pump throughout the workday, as well as the framing of the narrative around breastfeeding as being painful, messy, time-consuming, and not overly beneficial, conditions mothers to abstain from breastfeeding in preference for formula feeding. This is the dominant narrative that breastfeeding advocates are critical of and attempt to combat through knowledge sharing and empowerment.

The persuasive power of formula producers becomes more potent during natural crises and humanitarian crises, as formula companies will flood markets with their product, leading to early and unnecessary cessation of breastfeeding (WHO, 2003). As Lara discussed, this flooding of the market was witnessed during the CES. Whilst the dominant narrative frames this market flooding as an act of humanitarian kindness, it is in the companies' financial best interest to gather new customers for their products. Through the constant exposure to formula-favoured marketing and inundation of access to formula, new parents without a balanced channel of advice may switch from breastfeeding to formula. Relactation after breastfeeding cessation is possible, however, building upon the previous argument regarding knowledge access, relactation is challenging and heavily time consuming. Considering this, many new parents who switch to formula feeding would mostly not switch back after the stress of the crisis has passed.

These financial incentives were reflected in the COVID-19 lockdowns also. Lennon, one of the participants to share her experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, discussed the financial struggle to acquire a breast pump - a necessary piece of equipment for her to continue breastfeeding whilst meeting her other critical obligations. Lennon quoted the cost of a breast pump as $300, which was substantially more money than she had available. As only financially privileged individuals can source the critical equipment needed to breastfeed in a busy life, there are clear social injustices at play. Corporations chose to price their goods - knowing the importance - above the capacity of many families living at or below the poverty line, inhibiting their ability to breastfeed alongside other life commitments. Whilst this study did not find similar experiences in the CES, I did find experiences of families without infants living below the poverty line and the financial over-extension the earthquakes caused for them. In these experiences, food insecurity and maternal buffering were also noted, aligning with non-crisis literature of this phenomenon (Carter et al., 2011; Tribe, 2021; Tribe, 2020). For families living at or below the poverty line prior to a crisis, the financial strain was often amplified, reflecting the literature (Enarson, 2012; Wisner et al., 2004).

Formula risks

A further aspect critical to the financial success of formula companies flooding markets with their products during crises is the integration of fear tactics. The persuasive power of formula producers becomes increasingly potent during crises where they harness parents' fears of breastmilk being unreliable or unsafe for infants (WHO, 2003). The reality of this ploy is antithetical to its purpose as breastmilk is, by and large, the safer option for infants during crises. As Lara discussed in her experiences of the CES, there were prolonged power outages and inaccessibility to uncontaminated water. As she witnessed the formula producers inundating the community with their products, she also witnessed parents making formula feeds in unsafe ways without the necessary power and clean water.

Fear tactics were also used during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, with speculation on the transferability of the COVID-19 virus through breastmilk. However, research in this area is inconclusive and highlights its transmission is through respiratory droplets alone (Mazur-Bialy et al., 2020; Spatz, 2020). A compounding factor to formula feeding during crises, globally, is that there were widespread formula shortages and store price gouging, making formula inaccessible to many (Spatz, 2004). This financial inaccessibility would affect families living at or below the poverty line more so, reflecting the sentiments discussed in the section above.

Cumulatively, these critiques serve to disprove the common claim bolstered by formula companies that, during crises, breastfeeding is unreliable and unsafe. The experiences of my participants, in combination with international literature, highlight that during crises, formula feeding creates significant risks in both its safety for the baby and its reliable accessibility. These experiences were further exemplified in the recent infant formula shortages across the states. These shortages were precipitated by ongoing supply chain and labour shortages driven by the pandemic, and a massive recall due to a bacterial outbreak in the formula (Paris, 2022)

Solutions

From what I have explored through my analysis of the COVID-19 lockdowns and the CES, two very distinct natural hazards resulted in similar experiences of harm. This is likely because the unsafe societal conditions were common in both crises and resulted in additional barriers to informed and unbiased decision making and knowledge acquisition; heightened financial strain further restricting choice; and formula companies' manipulation of fear and speculation for monetary gain. The consequential relationship between unsafe societal conditions and resulting crisis-induced harm aligns with the ontological assumptions of minimal foundationalism. As there were similar social and cultural factors at play in both case studies, this fostered observable similarities in experiences of harm from disparate natural hazards.

As was discussed in the earlier section of this work, climate change is already affecting Aotearoa and will continue to do so. From a geophysical point of view, this is resulting in changes to precipitation patterns, increases in temperature, changes to the frequency and duration of droughts, sea level rise, and increased occurrence of extreme events (IPCC, 2022). These geophysical changes, in combination with their impacts on our health and food systems, have the potential to create and amplify new natural hazards. An evolving status quo, influenced through changing climatic factors,

in combination with more frequent and severe extreme weather events, will continue to pressure our infrastructure systems and amplify the unsafe conditions under which we live. Continuing the assumptions under a minimal foundationalist ontology, I would assume that, unless we adapt our social and cultural factors imminently, we should anticipate further experiences of harm, such as were witnessed in the two case studies here.

To protect infants in the future, let us now review the solutions from crises present and past. Reflecting on Lara's sentiments again, her organisation was requested to provide an alternate narrative to infant feeding during the CES. In this, they provided knowledge and empowerment for parents to keep breastfeeding and not switch to formula feeding where possible. Further, the literature highlights the importance of social support for breastfeeding parents. These include familial support to ensure the breastfeeding parent has enough food, water, and rest, as well as wider support from lactation consultants and adaptable workspaces to accommodate breastfeeding parents (Bartle, 2011; Spatz, 2004; WHO, 2003). Perez-Escamilla and Sellen (2015) align with this and argue that evidence-based advocacy is critical to supporting diverse, vulnerable communities. According to the literature, parents should be supported with longer maternity leave and flexible workspaces in order to continue breastfeeding for as long as possible. Their employers need to be adaptive to breastfeeding parents' needs and their families need to support them to continue breastfeeding, even in the midst of crises (Bartle, 2011; Pérez-Escamilla & Sellen, 2015; Spatz, 2004; WHO, 2003).

Conclusion

Using a minimal foundationalist ontology, I have outlined the transferability of experiences of harm within various crises. I have also explored the most recent climate science written about Aotearoa, depicting a future of greater climate instability and natural crises. Following this, I shift the argument to explore the literature of infant feeding in contemporary crises, with a focus on Aotearoa. I then discussed my methodology and the data analysis which resulted in these findings as distinctive within my doctoral studies data corpus. I begin the exploration of the infant feeding data set through separating the experiences of the CES and COVID-19. Firstly, exploring COVID-19, I focus on two experiences which arose from my participant discussions; access to knowledge and the cost of breastfeeding. Following this discussion, I move to the primary issue which arose in the CES discussions; access to critical formula requirements and market inundation. Having discussed the two crises in isolation, I move to discuss the similarities in greater detail. These similarities were based within the political ecology lens, which positioned experiences of crisis-induced harm as firmly pre-existing within society and therefore transferable between crisis experiences. The issues which were experienced within both crises discussed here were the inaccessibility of choice, the financial drivers of 'choice' and formula risks. The last part of this essay explored the solutions which arose within the discussion.

As I write this essay, it is the winter of 2022; I am 27 ⅕ years old; and my youngest niece, Maeve, has just been born. 2050 is the prophesied year whereby we need net zero carbon emissions or face irreparable and catastrophic climate change. At that time, I will be 55 ½ years old, Maeve will be

27, turning 28 - my age now. If she or her elder sister, Emilia, decided to have a baby of their own, what would I want them to know or have access to? What world would we desire to give to them and what social structures could best support them in the climate trials that they are to face? We have explored the harm that crises can cause; the pain and distress as they interact with our fragile social systems. Yet we have also explored the resilience we have embedded in our communities and recognised the areas in which we can improve. We are at a point of critical climate adaptation - it is necessary to continue and bolden our climate mitigation strategies - but we are also already seeing it is not enough to solely mitigate. We can, however, choose to adapt. Doing so would prepare us not just for the climate crises of the future, but also the crises which will occur regardless of climate change.

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Access to Medicines as a Human Right, is it To Be or Not To Be?

Zohreen Ali

This essay looks to answer whether access to medicines is a protectable right under international human rights law. The first two parts will look to see where it would fit. The first section looks at access to medicine under the 'right to health' and whether the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides any obligations. The second section looks at access to medicine under the 'right to life', and whether the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides any obligation on the State to carry out positive acts. The third section will go on to answer whether such rights and obligations extend to private corporations, such as pharmaceutical companies, if access to medicine is an identifiable right. The last section will conclude with the potential improvements and future prospects for access to medicine under an international human rights law framework.

Background

According to the World Health Organisation ("WHO") around two billion people do not have access to basic medicine, which has caused misery and suffering that could have been prevented.[2] 'Access' in the context of medicine is defined as "having medicines continuously available and affordable at public health facilities or medicine outlets that are within one hour's walk from home of the population".[2] According to the Millennium Development Goals Task Force report, within developing countries, the availability of medicines in the public sector was only 34.9%.[3] In accordance with the report, when medicine is not available in the public sector individuals have to turn to the private sector where medication is more expensive. What this means is that a large portion of the population are not able to economically access medicine, even though they may be dependent on it.

For some, illness and disease have meant that they are reliant on medication to survive or to live a life without suffering. In both developing and developed countries essential medications have become harder to access due to price and availability. An example is HIV/AIDS drugs. During the 1990's a combination therapy known as HAART became available at the price of $10,000 – 15,000 per person per year.[4] This treatment, which is made up of a combination of different antiretroviral drugs, decreased death caused by HIV by a significant amount[5]. Later in the millennium, the drug AZT was available which was more effective, but also cost around $10,000 per person per year.[6] Due to public

[2] NB: It was not possible within the timeframe to ensure that all the footnotes in this article are correctly formatted.
[2] Millennium Development Goals Task Force *Millennium Development Goal 8: delivering on the Global Partnership for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (United Nations Publications, 2008) at 35.
[3] Millennium Development Goals Task Force, above n 2 at 36.
[4] Avert "HIV Treatment Programmes overview" (15 April 2020) <www.avert.org>.
[5] UNAIDS *UNAIDS Data 2018* (2018) at 5.
[6] Holger Hestermeyer *Human Rights and the WTO: The Case of Patents and Access to Medicine* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2007) at 5.

outrage and pressure from both international institutions the prices of HIV drugs were decreased to make them more affordable.[7] However, economic availability does not mean it is accessible, with an estimation of 38% of people living with HIV not receiving treatment,[8] of which a disproportionate number are from developing countries.

This issue is not limited to developing countries. Currently in the United States of America ("US") people living with diabetes are unable to afford insulin, a medication that is a matter of life and death for diabetics. A vial of insulin went from costing $24USD a vial, to now being projected to cost $200USD per vial[9] (diabetics needing several vials a month). Medication that assists those living with rare diseases, such as cystic fibrosis can cost up to $360,000NZD per person a year.[10] Drugs for Cancer treatment can cost upwards from $100,000 per person per year (depending on the cancer).[11] These are just some examples of medication costs. Due to the increase in privatisation of the health sector, especially privatization of production of pharmaceuticals, access to medicine has become more difficult due to the rising prices of a multitude of drugs. International human rights law may be the answer to the rising issue.

The three main sources of international law are treaty law, international customary law and general principles of law. Treaties and conventions are agreements that are binding once a state has signed and ratified it[12]. They are, thus, obliged to follow the guidelines provided. International human rights law consists of two types of obligations: negative and positive.

As Hoglester states in his research,[13] positive obligations require positive acts by the state to ensure those rights under international human rights law are met. Whereas, under negative obligations the States is obliged not to interfere with an individual's rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of movement, personal autonomy, right to life etc. The legal right to access medicine is not explicitly mentioned in any human rights law or agreement, but there is evidence that it is an element of the right to health and the right to life, as the next part discusses.

Access to Medicine and the Right to Health

The right to health is recognised as the right to "enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".[14] The origin and foundation of the right to health lies within the Constitution of the WHO,[15] which was adopted in 1946. The preamble, provides that "the enjoyment of the highest

[7] Hestermeyer, above n 5 at 6.
[8] Avert "HIV Treatment Programmes overview" (15 April 2020) <www.avert.org>.
[9] Irl B. Hirsch "Insulin in America: A Right or Privilege?" (2016) 29 DS 130 at 131.
[10] Cystic Fibrosis New Zealand "Kalydeco and other CF drugs – what happens now (5 February 2020) <www.cfnz.org.nz>.
[11] Hagop Kantarjian and S Vincent Rajkumar "Why are Cancer Drugs So expensive in the United States, and What are the Solutions?" (2015) 90 MCP 500 at 500.
[12] Malcom N Shaw *International Law* (8th ed, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017) at 70.
[13] Hestermeyer, above n 5 at 85.
[14] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 993 UNTS 8 (opened for signatures 16 December 1966 entered into force 3 January 1976) Art 12.
[15] *Entry in to Force of the Constitution of the World Health Organisation* GA Res 131 (1946).

attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being". Though the preamble is not binding, it is the core principle of other legal instruments that dictate the right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights[16] ("UDHR"), affirms the right to health. Article 25.1 provides that:

> "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [sic] and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security ..."

Following on from these two instruments, the right to health has been ever present in multiple international and domestic instruments.

As mentioned above, the right to health has been incorporated into many international instruments, the following are some examples of them. Article 5(e) of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination,[17] Articles 11(1)(f), 12 and 14 (2)(b) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[18] Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[19] Articles. 28, 43(e) and 45(c) of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families,[20] and Article 25 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[21] Some of these rights are recognised generally and some recognise the right to health, with regards to specific vulnerable groups. The right to health is not only recognised in international instruments, but it is also included in the Constitution of many Nations.[22]

Of all the provisions relating to the right to health, the most significant is Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights ("ICESCR").[23] The Article provides that party States to the Covenant must recognise "the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".[24] In conjunction with Article 2(1) of the ICESCR, it means is that by ratifying the ICESCR, party States take on the responsibility, not only to protect the health of its citizens, but also to take positive action to provide services, policies and funding that promotes good health and ensures the removal of health based discrimination.[25] In addition, Article 12(2) provides that:

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[16] *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* GA Res 217A (III) (1948).
[17] Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination 660 UNTS 195 (opened for signatures 21 September 1965, entered into force 4 January 1969).
[18] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1249 UNTS 13 (opened for signatures 1 March 1980, entered into force 3 September 1981).
[19] Convention on the Rights of the Child 1577 UNTS 3 (opened for signature 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990).
[20] Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families 2220 UNTS 3 (opened for signatures 18 December 1990, entered into force 1 July 2003).
[21] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2515 UNTS 3 (opened for signature 30 March 2007, entered into force 3 May 2008).
[22] Joo-Young Lee *A Human Rights Framework for Intellectual Property, Innovation and Access to Medicine* (Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2016) at 121.
[23] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, above n 1.
[24] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, above n 1 at 12(1).
[25] New Zealand Human Rights Commission *Human Rights in New Zealand Summary* (December 2010) at 154.

"The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for:

(a) The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;
(b) The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;
(c) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;
(d) The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness."

Though ICESCR itself does not explicitly state that the right to health is inclusive of the right to have access to medicines, the right is implemented through interpretation by General Comment No. 14[26] of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ("CESCR"), numerous reports of the Special Rapporteurs and Selected Resolutions by the UN.

The right to health under Article 12 does not provide everyone with guaranteed good health, but instead it provides the right to the highest standard of health a person can reach taking into consideration their biological preconditions.[27] As per General Comment No. 14, to enable a person to reach this standard of health, the right extends to "underlying determinants of health" (i.e. socio-economics such as housing and food)[28] and to health care, which includes medication. The General Comment No. 14 states that Article 12(2)(d) includes "the provision of essential drugs" when it comes to treatment and control of sickness.[29] This is based on the general fact that in this day and age drugs/medicine have become an essential part and method for treating and controlling disease and sickness. Thus, access to medicine falls under "medical service and medical attention". However, this access is restricted to "essential" medicines. The WHO defines 'essential medicines' as "those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population".[30] They also provide a Model list of Essential Medicines[31] which is used as a guideline by States to create their own domestic list of essential medicines. In addition, Special Rapporteur reports and Special Resolutions by the UN General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council have affirmed that access to medicines is an element of the right to health, as dictated by the ICESCR and General Comment No.14.[32] This, therefore, creates a responsibility for party States to provide access to medicine.

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[26] UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), *General Comment No. 14: The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health (Art. 12 of the Covenant)* (11 August 2000).

[27] Holger Hestermeyer *Human Rights and the WTO: The Case of Patents and Access to Medicine* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2007) at 103.

[28] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 11.
[29] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 17.
[30] World Health Organisation "Essential Medicines" <www.who.int>.
[31] World Health Organisation *World Health Organization Model List of Essential Medicines 21st List 2019* (23 July 2019) .
[32] *Access to medicine in the context of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health* HRC Res 12/24 (2009) (this is just one example, full reports available at <www.wto.org>.

Most importantly, the General Comment No. 14 recognises 4 key elements to the right to health, which can be related directly to access to medicine (referred to as the "AAAQ framework"). One, medicines must be available in sufficient quantities. Two, medicine must be accessible to everyone, which includes both physical and economic accessibility. Three, medicine must be acceptable with regards to medical ethics and cultural rights. And four, medicine must be of good quality.[33] These elements provide a framework for party States when implementing the right to health within their constitution.

Duties and Obligations Imposed

171 States are party to the ICESCR, of that 171 only 71 are signatories with the rest having ratified some or all provisions of the Covenant into domestic law, without signing.[34] Article 2 of the ICESCR provides the general obligation of these States. The provision declares that:

> "(1) Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.
>
> (2) The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

Both Lee and Hestermeyer in their respective works recognise that the obligation under Article 2(1) of the ICESCR is one of progression.[35] The principle of progression recognises that due to resource and financial constraints in some States, obligations can be realised over time. This means that not having available resources provides a defence for non-compliance, but this is limited. Under Article 2(1) there is still an immediate obligation to take steps to implement full realisation of the rights under ICESCR in a reasonable amount of time "to the maximum available resources".[36]

Domestic adjudicators have recognised that the progressive obligation under ICESCR applies to access to medicine, as a right to health. In the *Cruz Bermudez v Ministerios de Sanidad y Asistencia Social* (1999),[37] the plaintiff brought a claim against the Venezuelan Ministry of Health for its failure to provide antiretroviral treatment for people with HIV/AID. The Ministry used the defence that the failure was due to budgeting constraints, but they were taking steps to make improvements. The Venezuelan Supreme Court rejected their argument, stating that the government had failed to comply

[33] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 12.

[34] United Nations "Human Rights: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural" (2020) United Nations Treaty Collection <www.treaties.un.org>.

[35] Joo-Young Lee *A Human Rights Framework for Intellectual Property, Innovation and Access to Medicine* (Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2016) at 122 and Holger Hestermeyer *Human Rights and the WTO: The Case of Patents and Access to Medicine* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2007) at 89.

[36] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 30.

[37] *Cruz Bermudez v Ministerios de Sanidad y Asistencia Social* (1999) Tribunal Supremo de Venezuela.

with the right to health because the Ministry did not seek additional funds that were available to them. This case embeds that the principle of progressive realisation does not cover all the failures of governments on the basis that they did not have the financial means and resources. Instead, the court highlighted that governments must be able to prove that they have taken all steps to fulfil their duty under the right to health.[38] This provides further interpretation to the obligation of States to provide access to medicine under the right to Health.

In addition to the principle of progression, party States also have the obligation to meet minimum core obligations as stated under both General Comment No. 3 and No. 14.[39] Minimum core obligations are "minimum essential levels of each of the rights enunciated in the Covenant".[40] In the given list, providing essential drugs in times of epidemics, pandemics and during urgent circumstances (i.e. natural catastrophes) is a minimum obligation.

In order to understand the State's obligation in more detail under the ICESCR, they are put under three categories: "the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil" the right.[41] The obligation to respect dictates that the State must refrain from interfering with the right to health and thus avoid interfering with access to medicine.[42] Patent law adaptations conflict with this obligation, as this causes an increase in drug prices which interferes with the economic accessibility, a right under ICESCR.[43] However, this interference is committed by private entities more than by State governments. The obligation to protect requires state parties to ensure that third parties do not interfere with the access to medicine.[44] Due to the movement towards privatisation of health, states have to continue to ensure the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of medication (discussed further in part 2).[45] The obligation to fulfil requires states to implement legislation and policy towards the realisation of access to medicines.[46] Fulfilment includes promoting access to medicine through education and research, as well as providing those vulnerable groups with access to medication.[47]

Of the 71 countries that have signed the convention, two States have not ratified it, one of them is the United States of America ("US"). The US is one of the biggest importers and exporters of pharmaceuticals in the world alongside European countries such as Germany.[48] Even though countries like the US have not ratified the ICESCR, there is still an obligation, as they are still a signatory to the Convention. Under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties Article 18 when a State signs a convention they are obliged not to act in a way that would "defeat the object and purpose

[38] Lee, above n 9, at 124.

[39] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 43.
[40] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 43.
[41] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 33.
[42] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 34.
[43] Hestermeyer above n 14, at 109.
[44] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 35.
[45] Lee, above n 9, at 126.
[46] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 36.
[47] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 37.
[48] Daniel Workman "Drugs and Medicine Exports by Country" (13 October 2020) World's Top Exports <www.worldstopexports.com>.

of the treaty", which is also recognised at customary law.[49] Otherwise, party States that have ratified the Convention have provided consent to be legally bound by the instrument. Therefore, these States are legally obliged to provide access to medicine under the right to health in the ICESCR.

Access to Medicine and the Right to life

The right to life is essential to the realisation of other human rights. It is rooted in international law. Most significantly within the UDHR and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[50] ("ICCPR"). Article 3 of the UDHR provides that "everyone has the rights to life, liberty, and the security of person". Article 6(1) of the ICCPR further provides that "every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life". This is also echoed in the Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR),[51] as well the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights[52] and the American Convention on Human Rights.[53]

As per Article 6(1) of the ICCPR, the right to life is not limited to protecting individuals from being murdered and State killings, but it is also includes the protection from being "deprived of life" by not being able to access the means to stay alive or survive.[54] It, thus, includes both positive and negative obligations to protect the right to life. This interpretation was conveyed in *Morales v Guatemala.*[55] Furthermore, the European Human Rights Commission in *X v United Kingdom,*[56] in the context of a vaccine scheme, held that States need to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to safeguard life. There are no specifics that state that the right to life includes access to medicine.

As the above has shown, the right to life under Article 6(1) of the ICCPR can be interpreted to include minimum conditions vital for survival. Survival requirements are closely related to basic needs, such as access to food, water and medical services.[57] In addition, General Comment No.6 provides that the right to life should be interpreted in a broad sense that requires states to adopt positive measures "to reduce infant mortality and to increase life expectancy, especially in adopting measures to eliminate malnutrition and epidemics".[58] Thus, certain 'life-saving' medicines needed for treatment fall under that term of basic needs for survival, as imposed by the right to life. Limiting access to medicine under the right to life to 'life-saving' medication is a narrower scope to the 'essential medicine' as found under the right to health, nevertheless it still covers access to medicine.

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[49] Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1155 UNTS 331 (opened for signatures 23 May 1969, entered into force 27 January 1980) at Art 18.
[50] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 999 UNTS 171 (opened for signatures 19 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976).
[51] European Convention on Human Rights 213 UNTS 222 (entered into force 3 September 1953).
[52] African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights 1520 UNTS 217 (entered into force 2 October 1986).
[53] American Convention on Human Rights 114 UNTS 123 (entered into force 1978).
[54] UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), *CCPR General Comment No. 6: Article 6 (Right to Life)* (30 April 1982).
[55] *Morales v Guatemala* (1999) Inter-American court of Human Rights.
[56] *X v United Kingdom* [1981] ECHR 27 (ECHR).
[57] F Menghistu "The Satisfaction of Survival Requirements" in BG Ramcharan (ed) *The Right to Life in International Law* (Martin Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht, 1985) 63 at 63.
[58] *General Comment No. 6: Article 6 (Right to Life)*, above n 41 at Para 5.

There is further judicial evidence to say that a broad application can be made to Article 6(1) to include medical service and 'life-saving' medication. In *Paschim Banga Khet Samity v State of West Bengal,*[59] the Indian Supreme Court held that the Constitution provides an obligation on the State to protect the right to life of every individual. Thus, when the government had failed to provide access to medical treatment in time to a person needing such a treatment, it was held to be a failure of that constitutional right. It was adjudicated that the protection of health was amongst the minimum requirements of the right to life. Though this case was generally about health care, it provided evidence that the right to life includes the obligation to provide access to 'essential' medicines. Similarly, the Constitutional Court of Colombia also affirmed this point. In *Juan Guillermo Gómez Moarles v Ministerio de Salud,*[60] the court held that the government's denial of antiviral treatment for HIV/AIDS under the social security system was a violation of the right to life guaranteed under the Colombian government.[61] In conclusion, the obligation on states with regards to implementing the right to life encompasses the obligation to ensure that people have the access to essential medicines in times of dire need.

Duties and Obligations Imposed

Unlike the ICEPSCR, the obligation under the ICCPR is a direct one. Article 6(1) of the ICCPPR establishes that the right to life is to be protected by the law. Furthermore, Article 2 provides that the party States are to respect and ensure the rights in the Covenant, as well as taking steps to "adopt such laws or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant".[62] This obligation is not only a negative one, but also a positive obligation to implement laws and policies that protect individuals from violation of the right to life by both the State and private entities.

Hestermeyer, expresses that States are obliged to create legal instruments, where life-saving medicine is assured to the greater public.[63] This obligation also includes the States' responsibility to prevent private third-parties, such as pharmaceutical companies, from hindering access to life-saving medicine. Furthermore, Menghistu adds that the duty falls to national governments to ensure that they support the 'survival requirements' through budgetary means.[64] In other words, how taxpayer money is spent and the priority of where it goes is dependent on the government. Therefore, States must ensure that basic needs for survival are met to satisfy the right to life dictated by international law. In conclusion, the scope for accessing medicine is a lot narrower and limited under the right to life. Irrespective of this, an obligation to provide access to medicine does exist as an element of the right to life.

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[59] *Paschim Banga Khet Samity v State of West Bengal* (1996) SCC 4 (37) at 5.
[60] *Juan Guillermo Gómez Morales v Ministerio de Salud* (1998) T-328/98.
[61] Hestermeyer above n 14, at 118
[62] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, above n 37, at art 2(2).
[63] Hestermeyer above n 14, at 119.
[64] Menghistu "The Satisfaction of Survival Requirements", above n 44 at 69.

1. Responsibilities of Private Entities – Specifically Pharmaceuticals

The conflict within the practice of medicine, is that prices of certain drugs are making medicines unattainable and inaccessible. As the above evidence has showcased, an obligation on States exists to ensure that third-parties do not interfere with the right to health and the right to life.

As discussed earlier, the 'AAAQ framework' covers accessibility, especially economic accessibility. Under the right to health (ICESCR), States have an obligation to ensure that they are taking reasonable measures to provide access to essential medicines There are three fundamental obligations: respect, protection and fulfilment. The obligation to 'protect' encompasses the responsibility to ensure third-parties do not interfere with the accessibility, acceptability and quality. General Comment No 14 has interpreted this duty on States includes adopting a legal framework that controls the "marketing of medical equipment and medicines by the third-party" in a way that secures equitable access to medicine.[65] Failure of a State to do so is a violation of the agreed obligations under ICESCR. This obligation is also present in the right to life, as discussed earlier.

The question of whether that obligation/responsibility is shared amongst the State and private entities is made clear in the General Comment No.14. Responsibilities are shared between States, international organisations and national actors, which include pharmaceutical companies.[66] The Special Rapporteur by the Human Rights committee recognised that there needs to be a "reliable system for the supply of good-quality medicines that are affordable to all",[67] which is dependent on the pharmaceutical companies. But this responsibility is hindered by patent law, which is heavily influenced by the agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property ("TRIPS").[68]

The main barrier when it comes to the access to medicine comes down to patent law. Patents are legal documents that ensure the patent holder has the exclusive right to use their invention, also known as the monopoly right.[69] Patents are anti-competitive for the purposes of high invention output and increased innovation. Originally, under the TRIPS agreement, WTO members were required to provide patents for all new pharmaceutical inventions. This allowed WTO members to sue others for generic drugs copying their patented drugs.[70] Following the HIV pandemic, due to the outrage at the lack of availability of antiretroviral drugs in developing countries, the requirement for patents for pharmaceuticals changed. The Doha Declaration declared that the "TRIPS agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health".[71] Thus, the 'TRIPS flexibilities' were adopted, to ensure that patent protections did not undermine human rights

[65] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 35.
[66] *General Comment No 14*, above n 13 at para 63-64.
[67] *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health* UN Doc A/HRC/17/43 (16 March 2011) at 45.
[68] Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organisation 1869 UNTS 299 (entered into force 1 January 1995) – the TRIPS agreement was agreed upon under the WTO in the Uruguay round.
[69] Susy Frankel and Jessica C Lai *Patent Law and Policy* (LexisNexis, Wellington, 2016) at 7.
[70] Saeed Ahmadiani and Shekoufeh Nikfar "Challenges of access to medicine and the responsibility of pharmaceutical companies: a legal perspective" (2016) 24 DARU JPS at 2.
[71] *Declaration on the TRIPS agreement and Public Health* WTO Min/Dec/3 (20 November 2001) at para 4.

obligations and public health priorities.[72] This provided for developing nations to produce 'generic drugs' through compulsory licensing. This allowed judiciary bodies to license without the patent holders' consent.

Regardless of the flexibilities, States still made bilateral and regional agreements that implemented intellectual property protection and enforcement that exceeded the minimum requirements under the TRIPS agreement.[73] Therefore, pharmaceutical companies can still enforce patents over their newly invented medicines. The justification for this is to do with the innovation model. The innovation model relies on the monopolisation of medicines and high prices to invest into research and development (R&D). However, whether high prices for R&D are truly needed is contested. Patents enforce a strict 'no generic' drug production and thus high prices. What this leads to is States either having to pay for the high-priced products or individuals having to pay out of their own pocket. In return, this compromises accessibility of medicine and puts burdens on patients and health systems.

Regardless of cost for R&D, the Human Rights Council has stated that, under the right to health, a company who holds a patent on life saving medicine must "make use of all the arrangements at its disposal to render the medicine accessible to all".[74] However, this responsibility has been difficult to enforce, as not all States have implemented the TRIPS flexibilities to their patent laws. Furthermore, pressure from pharmaceuticals have also affected implementation in developing nations.[75]

In addition, Hunt in his research recognises that pharmaceutical companies have responsibility, not only to uphold their obligation to the right to health, but they also have responsibilities to shareholders under their constitution.[76] Their purpose differs from that of State governments. However, though the companies contribute a great majority to the health sector, their high prices mean that they are not meeting their human rights responsibility under the right to health and right to life. Standards of the right to health can hold these companies accountable for the violation of human rights. But with no way to punish violations or publicly hold pharmaceutical companies accountable, the standards under the rights provide no remedy for their violation, like they do for States.

Instead the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ("OHCHR") has made a suggestion that pharmaceutical companies should practice good corporate governance to ensure that they meet both their responsibilities, as mentioned above. The main guidelines provided by the OHCHR are as follows:[77]

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[72] *Report of the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel on the Access to Medicine: Promoting innovation and access to health technologies* (September 2016) at 18.
[73] Above n 72, at 19.
[74] *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,* above n 67 at para 47.
[75] Above n 67 at para 47.
[76] Paul Hunt and Rajat Kholsa "Are Drug Companies Living Up To Their Human Right Responsibilities? The Perspective of the Former United Nations Special Rapporteur (2002-2008)" (2010) 7 PLOSM.
[77] *UN Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of health* UN Doc A/63/263 (11 August 2008). (Human Rights Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies in relation to Access to Medicines found in the preamble).

1. The company should adopt a human rights policy statement which expressly recognises the importance of human rights generally, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health in particular, in relation to the strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities of the company.
2. The company should integrate human rights, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health, into the strategies, policies, programmes, projects and activities of the company.
3. The company should always comply with the national law of the State where it operates, as well as any relevant legislation of the State where it is domiciled.
4. The company should refrain from any conduct that will or may encourage a State to act in a way that is inconsistent with its obligations arising from national and international human rights law, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

These guidelines provide a way to participate in fair market practice. If such company goals were implemented it would create an easier access to medicine and it would also make it easier for companies to meet their human rights responsibilities. Furthermore, adoption into the company's constitution would hold them accountable if there was a breach. Further progress could also be made if governments ensured that these guidelines were adopted by pharmaceutical companies.

2. To the Future

At all steps, the UN Human Rights Council has recognised that access to medicine is a human rights development goal under the United Nations Millennium Declaration .[78] The WHO has set both global and domestic goals for accelerated progress when it comes to access to medicine. The target under the Millennium Development Goal ("MDG") is: "In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries".[79] To meet this target the Millennium Development Goals Task Force has come up with the following goals at the national level:[80]

- Eliminate taxes and duties on essential medicines;
- Update national policy on medicines;
- Update the national list of essential medicines;
- Adopt generic substitution policies for essential medicines;
- Seek ways to reduce trade and distribution mark-ups on prices of essential medicines;
- Ensure adequate availability of essential medicines in public health care facilities;
- Regularly monitor medicine prices and availability.

This list is not limited to developing countries, but instead making these changes to developed countries would be advantageous. In addition, commentary also suggests that such changes would allow medicine to be available to those living with life threatening illnesses and chronic diseases. It would generally provide everyone with the highest attainable standard of health as ensuring that those with illness and disease are not deprived of their life.

[78] United Nations Millennium declaration (also see above n 19).
[79] Millennium Development Goals Task Force, above n 2, at 35.
[80] Millennium Development Goals Task Force, above n 2 at 43-44.

As well, the Millennium Development Goals Task Force set goals for the global level. First, they suggest that international institutions should "encourage pharmaceutical companies to apply differential pricing practices to reduce prices of essential medicines in developing countries where generic equivalents are not available".[81] This provides an equitable access to medicine. It seems that those who need the medicine are either last to receive it or do not receive it all. By providing medication at lower cost in developing nations, it reduces the strain on their already limited resources. The second recommendation is to "enhance the promotion of the production of generic medicines and remove barriers to uptake".[82] As mentioned previously, TRIPS flexibilities allow for generics to be made, but they are still restricted due to pressure from other States and pharmaceutical companies. Improvements to the TRIPS agreement to ensure these flexibilities are implemented by all WTO would aid in meeting this goal. Making generics more widely available would create competition promoting economic growth as well. Third they recommend that there should be an "increase in funding for research and development in areas of medicines, including most neglected diseases".[83] With resources available, it would be another human right violation not to use and share scientific advancements to help those with rare and neglected diseases. In conclusion, in order to ensure access to medicine it falls to domestic governments to ensure that they have legislation and policies in place. The above recommendations are meaningless if States are not willing to incorporate them into their legal systems.

Conclusion

Under Article 12 of the ICESCR, access to 'essential' medicines is recognised as a fundamental human right under the right to health. Availability, accessibility, acceptability and good quality are all elements of this. However, whether access to medicine is an element under the right to health or a right on its own still requires further discussion on the matter. There is recognition also, that under the right to health, the obligation to provide access to medicines is one of progression. States must show that they are taking all reasonable measures for full realisation of the right.

In addition, access to medicine is also included in the right to life under the ICCPR. This right, however, is limited to 'life-saving' medicines under Article 6(1). The provision encompasses access to medicines, as 'life-saving' medicines is considered a basic need for survival. The obligation under the ICCPR is a direct one. The obligation requires the rights under the Covenant to be incorporated into law.

From the interpretation of the above instruments as well as commentary on the matter, there is recognition that States share responsibilities with pharmaceutical companies to provide access to medicines. Obligations under different human rights instruments require States to validate the human rights responsibilities of pharmaceutical companies by implementing them into legislation and policy. However, there are still improvements that can be made to prevent increases in prices of medicine and to ensure pharmaceutical companies are held accountable.

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[81] Millennium Development Goals Task Force, above n 2 at 44.
[82] Millennium Development Goals Task Force, above n 2 at 44.
[83] Millennium Development Goals Task Force, above n 2 at 44.

Access to medicine is a Millennium Development Goal, thus, is a progressive goal that requires participation by all entities. Improvements at both domestic and international levels are needed to further expand access to medicine. The end responsibility falls on both international institutions (such as WTO) and on domestic governments to ensure that everyone has equitable access to essential medicines. It seems an injustice that medication that is available to those suffering is kept at arms-length due to the capitalization on human health.

In reflection, there were certain elements regarding access to medicine that were not discussed due to limitations of time and space. As such, I have not addressed commentary that looks at access to medicine as a right under customary law as well as general principles that are recognised in human rights law. The concept of access to medicine is a large area in general. There are also other arguments to be made under patent law and the TRIPS agreement, which could also be addressed in a longer article.

Gender of a Phoenix

Georgie Silk

It makes me so mad
when he says, ‘I’m not a real man’.

I say, ‘no, I’m not the ‘real’ man’.
He has cisgender privilege.

A backbone that is stronger than mine.
Big hands and hair on his chest.

I am tiny in his palms.

I surrender, I surrender, I surrender and burn up.

Yet his hair is wild and he has the prettiest eyelashes.

He has the power of a man. Own it.

I resent how quick he is to pass up his masculinity.

I want to be both his masculinity and my femineity.

He talks about queerness like the sequinned jacket in his closet.
I say it looks good on him.

He should wear it to one of his gigs.

My queerness is as common as the hairs on my legs.

I held her last Friday so I think that means I’m gay. I’m gay

and slip into her bed so easily.

But I toss in my bed for him. He cradles me

but I’m wild and when threaten, will turn into a white wolf.

Ready to fight for blood and bone and fucking.

To prove my masculinity

and man up.

Gendered experiences and the gap between everyday and organised activism

Monica Carrer

The last day of my fieldwork in rural India, as I was waiting for the train at Jhargram station, Devi hugged me tightly. Both our faces were covered in tears. It was an emotional goodbye after those intense weeks together. She told me that I was like a daughter to her. I looked at her puzzled; she was only three years older than me. She smiled and said that once I will become a mother myself, I would understand.

I thought a lot about Devi's words in the years that followed. Although I was not yet a mother when I was conducting my fieldwork, my motherhood journey started soon after coming back, when I was still halfway through my doctoral journey. My life changed, of course. I was expected to write my thesis as if I was not a mother, and to raise my children as if I was not doing a PhD. And yet, what I was experiencing in my personal life certainly had much impact on my research. It allowed me to better understand Devi's words, to connect with the experiences of women and men who told me their stories. People's stories of love, care, and pain turned out to be a significant driver to action, even in a context of structural and direct violence.

I am not looking at everyday experiences of motherhood and their relationship with activism because motherhood should be central to women's identities or life choices. Nor should being a primary parent or caregiver be seen as only reserved for people identifying as women and giving birth biologically. The problem is that in patriarchal societies women's bodies are still expected to bear children and be primary caregivers, and, at the same time, the social construction of women's reproduction and caring responsibilities are still used as a barrier for women's empowerment in many fields of life. Patriarchal control over women's bodies through such norms and expectations has consequences on all women, whether they choose to have children, do not want to or struggle to become mothers, have different gender identities, have children in family settings other than the traditional heterosexual couple, or challenge the norm in any other way (Tazi-Preve, 2013). While the relationship between women's reproduction and access to career, power positions, and other opportunities is amply discussed, the question here is, how do gender roles and motherhood influence women's activism? I explore this question drawing from fieldwork research in India and autoethnographic reflections of my own experience. While drawing from the experience of motherhood which was central in both my research and personal experience as an example and while starting, the arguments about the everyday are broader, and have to do with how people experience power through everyday interactions, how they act to transform it, and why it matters.

My research in India focused on the Lalgarh movement in Junglemahal. This was a mass movement in a remote area of West Bengal which started when a group of adviasi (indigenous) women were brutally beaten by the police while protesting an attempted arrest. The movement, which initially involved non-cooperation resistance strategies through which local people managed to keep the state out of their villages, later escalated to a violent conflict between Maoists and state forces between

2008 and 2011. When I conducted my fieldwork in 2013-14, it had not been long since the violence had calmed down, and there was still an atmosphere of fear, as many of my respondents reported. Many of them were still trying to rebuild their lives and deal with the consequences of the conflict. For example, many had lost their job and means to sustain the family, students had to interrupt their studies, many wounds had yet to heal on bodies and minds, and those wounds affected family lives, and routines. There was still pain and fear, but also hope for a different future, and feelings of agency for the many who had engaged in resistance, peace, and solidarity actions to build a better tomorrow for their dear ones and the community (Carrer, 2022).

Although 'everyday' is not necessarily restricted to gender, feminists did pave the way in conceptualising the political importance of the everyday. The idea that 'the personal is political' shows us how the matters that we tend to think of as private are an expression of broader structures of power (Lee, 2007). While researching ordinary people's experiences in this situation of violent conflict and structural violence, it was very clear how power was reproduced and possible through these everyday interactions of violence and coercion. From the perspective of people's experiences, many forms of violence overlapped - structural violence, political violence, violent conflict, political violence, sexual violence, domestic violence, and more. At the same time, their narratives revealed that ordinary people act to resist this violence, transform power structures, and build peace and security in their communities, and that everyday action, in turn, influenced broader political dynamics (Carrer, 2022).

Gendered experiences did turn out to be extremely important in this research. The Lalgarh movement started with women's resistance, and it ended through their resistance. The Maoists and activists emphasized the role of women. A quick Google search for the 'Lalgarh movement' will immediately show images of village women carrying traditional weapons.[84] Women's heroic participation in the movement was applauded by urban activists in their accounts of the movement.(Sanhati; Bhattacharyya, 2009) and the Maoists's rhetoric emphasised gender equality in their ranks and the role of women as revolutionaries (Parashar and Shah, 2016). The narrative of Lalgarh, in particular, juxtaposed the abuse and exploitation of women's bodies with their transformation into revolutionary actors.

However, women's narratives emerging from the interviews were completely different from this glorification of women as revolutionaries. While the Maoist discourse emphasised gender equality and targeted women's participation, ordinary women's narratives brought attention to the extra challenges that they faced during the conflict because of their gendered roles (Carrer, 2022). During the conflict, women participated in different kinds of actions, and at the same time maintained their family responsibilities. As a result, women alone often had to find strategies to cope with the occupation of their villages by armed groups and protect their families. Most of the women I interviewed felt coerced to participate, and felt that the activists and Maoists did not respect or take into account the repercussions on their lives, so this was perceived as a divide and they were very critical of the movement for this reason.

[84] 'Lalgarh movement': https://www.google.co.nz/search?q=lalgarh+movement&client=firefox-b&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj35YCuwMDSAhUEKpQKHQ0QCNkQ_AUICCgB&biw=1394&bih=714. Accessed March 6th, 2017.

And yet, women did act, though it was necessarily part of the organized movement. In many villages, while the men fled, women were left alone and they were the ones who had to come up with strategies to deal with the armed groups, while protecting each other and their communities. They often started living all together in one house, organized themselves to gather information about the movements of armed groups, decided how to face them, and found ways to protect their villages. They also took action in different ways. There were, for example, women who set up collective strategies to avoid state forces, women who used the movement to lead their own protest actions, women who refused to be coerced into participating in rallies and violent actions, or women who stood together and used their bodies as shields to stop the violence. These narratives were not so much about supporting one side or another, they were about women's direct agency and ownership. This does not mean that women's actions were not political. It means that their politics was different from the agendas of political groups that claimed their voices (Carrer, 2022).

There was a gap between the discourses of activists in the movement, and that of ordinary people and, in particular, that of women. The fact is that people have everyday needs to look after, and activist leaders often see those everyday needs as an obstacle and a weakness. In patriarchal societies where women carry out many of the care responsibilities for the extended family, this means that women are seen less as agents of change. Even in a case such as this, where there was an active effort to put women's activism at the forefront, the fact that women's needs and everyday reality were not taken into account resulted in division and resentment. It was experienced as another form of coercion, which not only alienated women, but also ultimately induced many of them to resist coercion and take action against the movement and the Maoists.

In a way, this gap was an expression of the fact that organized activism tended to be led by more privileged leaders, often outsiders, who did not fully understand, or represent people and their needs, and in cases like this used coercion to induce people, especially women, to join. Women pointed out that, while taking part in action, they still had other responsibilities. They still had to take care of their children, grandchildren, or siblings, or study and work (Carrer, 2022).

However, women's action was extremely important, even though it did not necessarily fall within the organized movement agendas. Local women leveraged their networks and solidarity to support each other, gather information and resources, and resist coercion and violence, whether it came from the state, politicians, corporates, Maoists, or armed groups (Carrer, 2022) . Women had their own views on what 'change' was needed, and they were most motivated to do what they had to do to make change happen. Women who had direct intersectional everyday experiences of power and violence over a long period, often also had experience with some forms of resistance, and informal networks were a crucial infrastructure.

While from the perspective of organized activists and leaders, these family needs - such as caring responsibilities, work, study - were a limitation, for the local women, those everyday situations were the circumstances in which they encountered power and violence in multiple forms, and they were a site of action. Therefore, women had different priorities, views, and methods of resistance that were most suitable to their needs and priorities. From an everyday perspective, forms of peacebuilding and resistance serve not only the purpose of struggling against actors in power, but also, at the same time, help to fulfil needs of individuals, families, and communities.

While everyday action may be dismissed as limited, the everyday is the site where power and violence are expressed, particularly as a way of reproducing structures of power. If there is a gap between organized and everyday activism, that may also be an expression of problematic power relationships. In fact, often more organized and institutionalized organizations are led by more privileged people who may have more access to knowledge and resources, and who are involved in a cause that they may not have experienced directly. Even when activism aims at 'empowering' certain social groups, there may still be power dynamics that end up silencing those very groups, or ignoring complex intersectional power dynamics that alienate certain groups, or it may be organized in a way that, in practice, does not take into account people's needs, and so participating becomes difficult for those who already have to face challenges in their own everyday lives.

This is in many ways similar to how, in capitalist societies, our 'private' needs such as family, care, or even our own health and mental health, are seen to be in competition with our productivity. Just as many other women, I really struggled with this, especially since becoming a mother. Being a student and researcher in the field of peace and conflict, and in an environment and institution that claims to be supportive of gender equity, did not make a difference. And perhaps, in many ways, organized activism that is rooted in European capitalist traditions, even if it struggles against capitalist structures, has a similar logic.

Although ideas of equity and inclusion are based on moral arguments, they are still frequently based on assumptions that those who are excluded and marginalized are worth 'less'. Although much work can be done to remove structural barriers, if nothing changes in the perception of the 'other', then it is hard to avoid discrimination being expressed in one way or another. What if those very experiences that are seen as limitations were actually something that adds value?

In my case, for example, going back to my motherhood experience, although certainly it was difficult for me as a mother to join in organised activist actions, it is because of what I went through as an immigrant mother of colour of a neurodivergent child that I have learnt to resist and advocate every day. For me, 'everyday' agents of change are those who directly experience structures of power, and they are not marginalized because they inherently have something 'less', but because they could potentially undermine the control of those in power and the norms and structures that legitimize that, as happens in patriarchal systems. I believe that our 'everyday' action matters because it could lead to deep bottom-up changes in the fabric of the society, by questioning and transforming those norms and structures that are expressed in everyday interactions.

My personal experiences are what led me to co-found the Everyday Peace Initiative[85] with the view of supporting this kind of 'everyday' action for social change. Through this experience, I have connected with other mothers and parents who have also set up groups, advocacy networks and organizations to advocate and make change happen. These formal or informal networks often are not only a space for action and change, but also provide mutual support to the families with their needs and help improve their situations. These groups are examples of how everyday and organized forms of action could be blended in powerful ways for resistance and change, but also in sustainable and supportive ways. There are of course many limits and barriers, particularly because many women, families, and 'everyday' actors in general, are increasingly isolated and often struggle on their own.

[85] Websites: everydaypeaceinitiative.com. Digital platform: everydaypeace.community.

The challenge for 'everyday' actors is to get together, exchange knowledge and work together, for change that starts from the everyday but has the potential for larger impact.

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Women Talking Positive Peace: Gendering, Feminising and Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand

Heather Devere, Katerina Standish, and Kelli Te Maihāroa

For peace and conflict scholars, the concept of 'positive peace' epitomizes a move to promote social justice, equity and equality, and to address issues around poverty and discrimination through a focus on structural and cultural violence, in addition to the direct violence associated with the termination of war (Addams 1907; Boulding, K. 1978; Galtung 1969). While women in the academy have been battling sexism in the workplace and in their own discipline, at the same time they have been working to explain and promote positive peace as a concept that could bring about a more just world.

Women have been prominent in anti-war and non-violent protest movements throughout history (Boulding, E., 2000; Morrison 2006). It has been argued by feminist peace scholars such as Birgit Brock-Utne (1990) that these women share characteristics that encourage peaceful means and outcomes as 'they use [mainly] non-violent techniques, actions and strategies; they value all life in nature, especially the life of children, and their work is transpolitical, often aimed at reaching people in the opposite camp' (p.32). Brock-Utne urges that we 'listen to women, for a change'.

According to UN Women (2019), women's valuable work for justice, peace and security needs to be recognized as 'they continue to be sidelined in formal peace processes'. Damilola Agbajobi (2010) demonstrates that, despite women advocating for peace and their important roles as peacekeepers, relief workers and mediators, their participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is limited by lack of support and protection, as well as sexist attitudes and impunity for those who commit gender-based violence.

Women are often invisible in accounts of resistance and activism. As Jean Bethke Elshtain (1982) maintained, masculinist discourses from antiquity to the present divide society into "just warriors" (male fighters and protectors) and "beautiful souls" (female victims and noncombatants). Barkowski (2013, p.341) confirms that:

> … conspiracies of belligerent men plotting in small, secretive circles in an atmosphere that congratulates violent bravery and rewards machismo, leave little room for recognizing the importance of nonviolent alternatives or the contributions of women or non-fighting-age young men to the struggle.

An earlier piece in *Women Talking Politics* (Devere and Standish 2017) reflected on the role of women in the discipline of peace and conflict studies and the relationship to politics, commenting that despite women being visible from the beginning of the global peace movement, within academia the foundational male PACS scholars seemed unaware of many of the gender issues, and the

importance of gendering peace processes. As Branagan points out in 2022, even nonviolent histories 'are lax at pointing out the vital role many women have played in nonviolent struggle' (p.249).

So there is still a need for a feminist project in peace and conflict studies to address these hidden histories. This is not to diminish earlier nonviolent histories, but rather to build up knowledge that promotes pathways to peace, and to enhance nonviolent thinking by injecting feminist learning that has been identified as 'necessarily nonviolent'. This, according to Brock-Utne (1990, p.32) comes from the radical feminist paradigm where one's personal beliefs and experiences are regarded as political and relevant.

Feminist scholarship is not only concerned about women, but also recognizes how 'multiple factors of systems of power and oppression … intersect in defining the societal structures and people's lived experiences' (Stavrevska and Smith 2020). These factors of intersectionality include gender, class, race and ethnicity, sexuality, age and disability. Peace studies has often been silent about these issues in the literature (see for example, Azarmandi 2018 on race; Iñiguez e Heredia 2018 on class and privilege; Mizzi and Byrne 2015 on sexuality; Frances 2018 on disability).

Peace studies has primarily developed in the academy as a westernised concept. Polly Walker (2004) refers to 'the ontological violence of Westernization' in the field of conflict resolution, arguing that 'Indigenous ways of conceptualizing and experiencing the world' have been suppressed and silenced within the discipline. Indigenous feminists are also challenging 'colonialism alongside heteropatriarchy and racism with attempts to dismantle oppression in everyday practice' (Dhillon 2020 p. 483).

Two New Books on Peace and Conflict Studies

Women scholars in Aotearoa New Zealand have been the driving force for two new publications that provide wide-ranging coverage on issues related to peace where the work of women on peace and non-western voices are highlighted: *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace* and *Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies through Indigenous Research* (Standish et al 2022 and Te Maihāroa et al 2022). Four of the six editors are women academics (with three of those women collaborating on this piece of writing), and there are fifty-one women authors of chapters (out of eighty) who have contributed to the two publications.

Only three of the contributors to *Decolonising PACS* are westerners, there is extensive inclusion of non-western voices also in the *Handbook of Positive Peace,* and attempts have been made to recognise diversity and intersectionality. These publications are a modest contribution towards gendering/feminising and decolonising the field of peace and conflict studies.

The Positive Peace Quadrant

In the *Handbook of Positive Peace,* Standish et al (2022) coin the term 'the positive peace quadrant' with four elements needed to ensure positive peace:

1. *nonviolence* 'an action, a system, or an inner state of non-harming… to attain positive peace we need to recognize violence but respond nonviolently' (p.8);
2. *social justice* 'the advancement of the concept of inherent human worth and dignity and iterations that seek to recognize and respect humans, groups, and the natural world… Socially just societies are a key component of positive peace' (p.8);
3. *environmental sustainability* 'begins with an introspective exploration of the human bond with nature' in light of the fact that the 'resource consumption to which societies have become accustomed' is no longer sustainable. 'Positive peace requires prioritizing the survival of all living systems in human and natural worlds' (p.8-9);
4. *positive relationships* 'are those where both parties are actively engaged in maintaining a relationship characterized by equitable power relations, and by a genuine concern for the well-being of one another'. These relationships 'where the other is humanized, recognized as having equal intrinsic value, and equal right to contribute to collective decision-making' are needed for positive peace (p.15).

Each of the chapters in the two volumes of the *Handbook of Positive Peace* engage with aspects of the positive peace quadrant. For example, Lindsay, Figueiredo and Byrne are concerned to develop quantitative indicators to 'measure' positive peace that incorporate 'health, human rights, security, safety/crime, autonomy, environmental sustainability, trust, community cohesiveness, diversity, racism, gender equity, walkability, connectivity, access to nature, sustainability, environmental stressors, locality, income inequality, happiness index, savings/secure retirement, food security/hunger and shared economy score' (p.370). Looking at security sector reform, Alejandra Ortiz-Ayala argues that positive peace could be the paradigm that improves the relationship between citizens and the state. Reina Neufeldt sees positive peace as a 'moral standard or vision, against which conflict resolution and peace initiatives are assessed' (p.855) and, focusing on relational ethics, and in particular the ethics of care, argues that 'including an assumption of dependence and interdependence, care and responsiveness improves people's ability to understand and achieve positive peace' (p.855-856). Mahdis Azarmandi points out the 'epistemic limitations' of the concept of positive peace and argues that as the current paradigm is a 'colonial system that is racist, capitalist, heterosexist, and ableist', then positive peace 'can only be theorized and approached by critically and intersectionally challenging coloniality and the epistemic violence(s) it produces' (p.611).

Most of the chapters in the *Handbook of Positive Peace* do use approaches that engage with aspects of intersectionality, without necessarily identifying that as the framework. Attitudes and dialogue that are racist, misogynistic, homophobic, ableist, and xenophobic are identified and these are attributed to Western values, white supremacy, privilege, patriarchy and patriarchal biases, colonisation, coloniality, neo-liberalism and the Trump effect, and several acknowledge Indigenous knowledge as important for positive peace. In *Decolonising PACS*, the concept of positive peace is mostly implicit in the chapters, with the adoption of an 'unapologetic' stance that advances Indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems as models for learning about peace.

Gendering/Feminising Peace

Interestingly, only three chapters across both publications focus explicitly on gender and women's issues, despite the majority of the authors being women. There are also contributions by men that

discuss gender issues and recognize the work of women and the role of women in peace. The three chapters that refer to women or gender in the title are in the *Handbook of Positive Peace.* Natasha Jolly's chapter explores the 'relational' in transformative gender justice. She claims that the 'complementarity of transformative learning, psychosocial care, cross-gender participatory peacebuilding, and restorative justice processes' can model 'a gender regime grounded in partnership and relational mutuality' (p.455). Sylvia Frain looks at women, gender, and indigenous rights, applying a 'decolonial and gendered critique of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy' that she argues exposes white supremacy as a 'global threat to peace' (p.489). Marty Branagan considers 'women in environmental nonviolent action' and claims that 'women's actions have often proved to be turning points in nonviolent campaigns' that range from the abolition of slavery and the civil rights movement in the USA to the "disappeared" by the junta in Argentina, the Dharasana saltworks protest in India through to women involved in treeplanting in Kenya.

The role of women in peacebuilding is highlighted throughout the *Decolonising PACS* volume. In Ottoh's chapter on the experiences of the Igbo-speaking group of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria, he identifies the important role of the Umuada, a group of married women in peacebuilding ceremonies and suggests this is 'comparable to that of Women of Mano River in peacebuilding during Liberia and Sierra Leone wars' (p.35). Polly Walker reflects on her experiences of 'eco-relationality' while learning about Yolngu peacebuilding in the women's camp in East Arnhem land on the north coast of Australia (p.47-49). Kelli Te Maihāroa documents the work of respected Māori leader and peacebuilder, Anne Sissie Te Maihāroa Dodds of the Waitaha iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand who provides a 'peace activist's road map for future generations to follow' (p. 67). 'Liming and ole talk' as a site of negotiation is discussed by Camille Nakhid where she describes an all-female informal discussion of Caribbean Islanders where 'not everyone is going to agree', but while there may be a 'little tension' this will be 'without anger' (p.93). Maata Wharehoka, who co-authored a chapter (Te Maihāroa et al) looking at an attack against the peaceful village of Parihaka in Aotearoa New Zealand's north island, refers to the nonviolent resistance of the women who offer food to show hospitality (manaakitanga) to the invading troops of the British militia in 1881 (p.120).

Peace education is a field where women are particularly active, and both publications feature chapters that discuss the importance of 'education about, for, and by peace' as Heather Kertysia explains in the *Handbook for Positive Peace*: 'Education *about* peace focuses on the content of the teaching, the cognitive side… Education *for* peace focuses on peace as a process and looks at methods for attaining peace …. Education by peace refers to the pedagogy or the ways in which the practitioner engages with participants…' (p.176). Cheryl Duckworth argues that peace education is urgently needed to foster a culture of peace and equip students with understanding and tools to deal with rising authoritarianism, misogyny, racism, and xenophobia (p.195). In her chapter on 'weaving a culture of peace', Jacqueline Haessly identifies seven different 'strands' (values, images, language, systems and structures, policies and practices, education, and actions) that she claims are common to all cultures, which can be woven together to transform a culture into a culture of peace with justice (pp. 1110-1111). As the objective of education for peace includes building 'a society that fulfills the needs of all its members', Silvia Guetta emphasises that 'educational intervention should include a plan to develop knowledge and competences that enable generation of peaceful relationships' (p.1085). Incorporating grassroots environmentalism into a university programme of peace education is

recommended by Shir Gruber (p.681). In the section on peace education in *Decolonising Peace,* Kalika Kastein reflects on the Hawai'i-based teaching and learning framework Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ). Lucia Rodríguez McKeon considers the Zapatista Movement's educational project that was part of what she calls the 'endeavour related to genuine peacebuilding in order to eradicate structural violence' (p.160). And work of students from Te Ao o Rongomaraeroa, the University Centre for Peace and Conflict in Aotearoa New Zealand are highlighted in the chapter by Heather Devere, Michael Ligaliga and Kelli Te Maihāroa.

Building peaceful communities and the role of these communities in maintaining peace is discussed in the *Handbook of Positive Peace* by Cécile Mouly who identifies 'peace communities', 'peace zones' and 'peace territories' where local communities have opted out of engaging in harmful actions in places of conflict. She focuses on the peace communities in Colombia (p.1170). Transforming relationships through dialogue between 'left-wing' and 'right wing' groups in Jewish Israeli society is the topic of Julia Chaitin's chapter (p.1069). Contact programs used to address intergroup conflict that 'can be found in diverse settings worldwide', are examined by Rachel Nolte-Laird who looks at how these might help in reframing perceptions of equality (p.1056). The importance of trust for positive peacebuilding, trust as an outcome of intergroup contact and some of the conditions that create opportunities of trust are presented by Thia M. Sagherian-Dickey. Sorcha Tormey argues that while solidarity and allyship can be important drivers to end structural violence and engender justice, the limitations must be examined and addressed, that include 'understanding and challenging the privileges that allies embody that maintain structural violence' (p.890). Rosemarie Schade provides an example of what she sees as a community that successfully fulfils the goals of being in a harmonious state with 'self, nature and other humans' (p.737). For her, the contemporary practices of a Benedictine convent of nuns in Fulda, West Germany, and the Rule of St Benedict demonstrate these qualities. On an interpersonal level, Tatiyana Bastet assesses yogic practice to be a nonviolent part of a 'complex system of philosophies and practices that coalesce in a life that is full of variety and conscious choice' (p.28). Jessica Senehi explores constructive storytelling for nurturing positive peace 'through promoting empowerment, mutual recognition and awareness of self in context.' (p.1150) and Marianella Sclavi advocates humour as a key to assist people to be able to live 'happily in the complexity of the contemporary world (p.61). Katerina Standish also argues that personal peacebuilding has been missing from the literature, and that tackling the violence inside of ourselves, our anger, fear, and insecurity might help in contributing to a world of positive peace (p.43).

Expanding out to the global, women have written on a variety of topics concerning international politics and theoretical philosophical concepts in the *Handbook of Positive Peace* that includes unarmed civilian peacekeeping (Furnari et al p.295) and international conflict transformation (Reimer and Schmitz p.329). There are suggestions for international measurements of positive peace, where gender equity as well as racism are included as factors (Lindsay, Figueredo and Byrne p.371). Chapters on theoretical concepts of justice by women authors have included retributive justice (Spencer), restorative justice (Devere and Te Maihāroa), inclusionary justice (Opotow), transformative justice (Jolly), procedural justice and trust (Sagherian-Dickey), and food justice (Tribe). Besides the rights of women (Frain), are chapters by women on disability rights (Francis Watene), refugee rights (Joudi), the rights of children (Carroll) and the right to peace (Devere). Global environmental issues are also covered by women that include environmental sustainability

(Sharifi and Simangan), ecocide, speciesism (Afana), a new ethics for the era of ‘capitalocene’ (Serafimova), and the importance of ‘centering land’ in the relationships of ‘our human family’ (Rice). Regional and local environmental issues are examined by women authors in small communities in Aotearoa (Tribe; Van Gelder) and in the North American Great Lakes Region (Skarlato). While most of the chapters in the *Handbook of Positive Peace* were completed before the COVID 19 outbreak, we are reminded by several of the authors, including Standish, how women have been negatively impacted by ‘the gender fault line’ exposed by the Covid pandemic (p.54).

Decolonising Peace

Māori scholars have inspired work on the knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples. Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s seminal work on Decolonising Methodology (1999) has challenged academics throughout the world to reflect on how they are approaching research. Renowned lawyer and scholar, Moana Jackson (2017 p.vi) also believed that this knowledge and practice can make a very significant impact on peace as ‘Indigenous Peoples have … possessed profound understandings of the metaphysics of peace and its moral imperatives to honor and restore any damaged relationships’.

Indigenous women, writing of their own heritage, conflict resolution, and peace traditions are prominent in the publication *Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies*. Kelli Te Maihāroa (Waitaha, Ngāti Rārua, Te Atimawa) acknowledges her debt to scholars such as Tuhiwai Smith and Jackson in her chapter ‘affirming an indigenous approach to peace and conflict studies’. Her account of her ancestors’ establishment of a nonviolent tradition within the Waitaha iwi is part of healing ‘from the scars of colonization, that reminds us that we are peaceful warriors, not worriers, able to navigate our way towards the light out of the negative darkness and hopelessness’. She talks of the need for Māori ‘to take control of our own stories, recording our own pūrākau to reflect our own experiences’ which helps to reclaim the position of Indigenous Peoples whose tales for too long been told by the colonizers (p.69).

The ancestry of Maata Wharehoka (Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Tahinga, Ngāti Apakura, Ngāi Te Rangi) reflects the pan-iwi (pan-tribal) community of Parihaka, in Taranaki that she calls ‘a place of peace, a place of conflict, a place of justice with freedom of the oppressed’ (p.118). She tells of the history of Parihaka as an example of fortitude, resilience, courage, and peace. As settlers from overseas were taking over Māori land in the nineteenth century, war broke out in many places in Aotearoa. When the New Zealand government started building a road into the territory of Parihaka, a nonviolent resistance campaign as an alternative to warfare was launched ‘which became the lasting symbol of Parihaka’ (p.119). The men laid down their weapons of war, and instead repaired the fences removed by the armed constabulary, and when surveyors plotted out the land for settlement, Parihaka men removed the survey pegs and ploughed their own land. This culminated in an invasion of the village in 1881 by British militia, where Parihaka leaders instructed their people to ‘patu te hoa riri ki te rangimarie’ – fight the enemy with peace. The women sat confronting the canons aimed at the village which were not fired, but the armed troops arrested the men, destroyed the village and raped the women. The people of Parihaka nevertheless have rebuilt their community and continue to practise ‘peaceful living’.

Camille Nakhid from Trinidad Tobago describes a diverse culture where the people enjoy 'celebrating each other's festivals, eating one another's food, and marrying across religious, cultural and ethnic lines'. The ideologies and practices of 'colonialism, slavery and migration' have also combined to shape culture and cultural practices (p.89). It is the storytelling, political discussion, and sharing food and drink, known as 'liming' and 'ole' talk, informal gatherings of people that are focused on renewing relationships, that can help resolve some of the displays of xenophobia that typically occur around election times. Nakhid has also challenged the concept of 'decolonising' introducing the terminology of '*affirming* Indigenous methodology' (see also Fernandez 2020) that was also adopted by Te Maihāroa in her chapter in order to avoid the 'shadow of a colonial or decolonising framework' (Nakhid and Farugia 2021).

As an Indigenous researcher undertaking Palestinian research in Israel, Nijmeh Ali's work in a context of conflict was aimed at 'decolonising knowledge and exposing hidden power structures' (p.76). She reports on the 'struggle for place' that is fundamental in the Palestinian resistance project and the personal challenges for someone belonging to the oppressed group to address her own internal censorship. As an insider she saw the advantages of enhancing the 'ability to identify marginalized, subjugated and silenced views in oppressive contexts' where speaking and writing are 'hidden or encapsulated' (p.78). Faced with conducting field research at the same time as the Israeli authorities were conducting mass arrests of activists, meant that there were dangers for both Nijmeh and her participants. Some of them withdrew from the research, while others regarded doing the interviews (*moukableh*) as part of their activism. For her, 'indigeneity means a research approach that should be recognized to bring values of justice in our journey after researching the "truth".' (p.85).

Professor Polly Walker is a prominent scholar in peace and conflict studies who has been working for some years to address issues of the marginalization of indigenous perspectives and worldviews in the discipline. She is of Cherokee descent and a member of the Cherokee South-west Township and has as her life goal living 'together in peace, in balance and harmony with the flux of the cosmos' (p.41). Her chapter draws on the work of Indigenous scholars in Turtle Island (North America) and in Australia where she has 'lived and worked throughout her life' and where she has 'been guided by generous Indigenous elders and knowledge holders' (p.43). Professor Walker reminds us of the numerous ways that non-Indigenous researchers 'have perpetrated violence toward Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems' as their data and analyses have been 'appropriated, commodified, and/or assimilated as raw data into Western analyses, thus distorting and obscuring the peoples and knowledge systems from which the data arose' (p.53).

In support of Indigenous peoples, acknowledging marginalised communities, taking responsibility for racism and injustice, exposing colonisation and coloniality, as well as respecting and elevating Indigenous peoples, is the work of allies. And there is evidence of this in the work of some of the women scholars also in the *Handbook of Positive Peace*. As Lacey Sloan and Catheryne Schmitz argue (p.99) racial, social and economic injustice are responsible for conflict and, by claiming of voice by marginalised communities and sharing this knowledge, lessons can be learnt about engendering positive peace. It is clear that injustice and violence will remain while colonisation, white supremacy, patriarchy and neoliberalism determine where the power and wealth lie. Tatiyana Bastet agrees that 'what Quijano calls the coloniality of power', and the colonial legacy of modern Western

corporate culture, need to be understood to establish an equitable workplace. She recommends changes in business to bring about 'understanding, collaborative communication, and cooperative competition to a de-colonized workplace as the standard' (p.142). In Ann Macaskill's chapter on forgiveness as a nonviolent resolution of interpersonal conflict, she addresses also the issue of national and group apologies, commenting on the dearth of research on the effectiveness of national apologies by governments for a range of injustices such as 'the treatment of indigenous populations, for slavery, for apartheid …' (p.159). Heather Kertysia's analysis of peace education raises critiques about the Western moral dimension of peace education programs that 'are founded on essentialized conceptions of human rights and positivist perceptions of truth based on modern white Western notions' (182). Also on peace education, Cheryl Duckworth looks at what kinds of policy and pedagogy 'seem to be best equipped for our divisive, misogynist, racist, and xenophobic times' (p.195). She discusses the 'Trump Effect/and the impact of 'the patriarchal culture and racist, nativist values that he campaigned on' as well as his 'overt encouragement of violence against opponents' that impact on schools and school culture (p.199). Laura Reimer and Catheryne Schmitz see the necessity for conflict transformation of learning to honour and elevate indigenous voices in Canada following the example of the Kenyan Green Belt Movement (p.342).

Conclusion

Women are given a voice when there are opportunities provided, often by other women, for them to contribute to the academic literature on politics and peace. This article points out that, like a lot of other disciplines related to politics, women's roles, actions, resistance, and knowledge are not widely acknowledged in the literature. Even within the discipline of peace and conflict studies, the significant input from women working for positive peace that transcends the negative results of war and conflict has been minimised or ignored. In addition, the discipline, like a lot of other disciplines, has been very light on, and late to recognize, Indigenous knowledge as vital for engaging non-violently in efforts to encourage peaceful interaction.

Two recent publications from the field, Standish et al (2022) *The Handbook of Positive Peace* and Te Maihāroa et al (2022) *Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies through Indigenous Research* have made attempts to rectify this by providing sites for the voices of scholars to be heard and perspectives to be aired on some of the contributions to positive peace by women and Indigenous Peoples. A feminism that is concerned for intersectionality can be traced through these books that highlight issues of marginalization, racism, ableism, classism, heteropatriachy, privilege, discrimination and injustice. Gender mainstreaming of academic scholarship is also evident in these works that are not exclusively by women and does not speak exclusively of women. Women's contributions range from global politics to the building of peaceful communities; from theoretical concepts of justice to examples of peace education; from philosophical reflections about peace to peacebuilding; from radical critique to pragmatic recommendations for practice. As the editors of the *Handbook for Positive Peace* state: 'Positive peace seeks to reimagine and reincorporate fragmented humanity – to reconnect marginalized and collateral aspects of ending aggression that incorporate the more-than-human world of nature' (Standish et al p.5). The aim to advance the cause of peace, social justice and equity is

reiterated in *Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies through Indigenous Research:* as a 'continual search' that 'needs an understanding of the complexities of interactions between human beings and the quest for… harmony, tranquility and the divine' (Devere et al p.327).

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A poem for Sophie (and my other beautiful female friends)

Georgie Silk

I'm the type of person who goes out to dinner with each of my friends once a month. I run my social calendar much like getting a blood test or warrant of fitness. We routinely schedule our dose of validation and connection.

Yet I've formed some of my strongest female friendships in the years I've extracted myself from relationships with men.

It's wahine that approach me when I've become dishevelled and buckled on the tracks. They patiently sit beside me. Watch me wobble, stagger upright and brush the dirt off my shins like a baby foal on new legs. They appear unperturbed by my embarrassment and apologies.

Sometimes they bring me carrots or help me pop out the twisted bits when I don't have the strength to do it myself.

They calmly fill the space some dude left.

They stay, they continue to stay.

And it is a woman's kindness I need right now and it suits her just fine because she's satisfied in the warmth of being needed.

So I heal, through our morning voice messages, and texts, and walks and our trips to the gym. We buy clothes online and send each other pictures of what we've ordered. When we see them on each other in person we say 'you're beautiful'.

She reminds me life exists. Reminds me to get out of bed each morning. To eat. To brush my teeth. Her tenderness slowly nudges me until I buy myself flowers and place them beside my bed. I buy two bunches and give the other to her.

We've kissed before but it wasn't right. Instead, I hold her hand or squeeze her arm or watch her look at me with immense kindness as tears stream down my face. It's a different kind of intimacy.

We say 'I love you' and it's not grand gesture. It's just the truth.

Sometimes she tells me things she's 'yet to tell her husband' and I, in return, share my deepest

fears.

As I heal, I notice more when she wobbles. I hold onto her a bit so she doesn’t slip.

I too, remind her of her strength. I feel delight for her when she’s happy and I tell her she is still magic when she is sad.

Contributors

Zohreen Ali is completing her Postgraduate Diploma in Bioethics and Health Law through the University of Otago. She holds both a Bachelor of Laws from the Auckland University of Technology and a Bachelor of Biomedical science from the University of Otago. Zohreen is interested in the application of laws around fair access to medicines and medical care both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. Her research interest also includes the regulation of artificial intelligence in the health sector. She applies a legal framework as well as an intersectional, decolonising, feminist lens to her work and hopes to inspire lawyers, students, and activists to challenge patriarchal and colonial structures in their lives.

Barbara Bedeschi-Lewando is a climate change and disaster resilience practitioner in New Zealand and Asia-Pacific. Her research focuses on the nexus between climate action, resilience, and sustainable development, and policy innovation. She is particularly interested in democracy and human rights. Currently on the Editorial Board of Women Talking Politics journal.

Tara Brabazon is the Professor of Cultural Studies at Flinders University in Australia. She is the author of 20 books including The University of Google, City Imaging, Digital Dieting, Trump Studies and The Creative PhD, and over 250 refereed articles and book chapters. She has won six teaching awards and is a columnist for the Times Higher Education. Tara has run a podcast series since 2008, and vlog series since 2016. She lives in Palmerston North.

Monica Carrer is co-founder of the Everyday Peace Initiative and the creator of the Everyday Peace Community, a digital platform and mobile app dedicated to peace and social change that crowdsources knowledge for peace and social change action, connecting researchers with activists, practitioners and communities. She is the author of the book How People Respond to Violence: Everyday Peace and the Maoist Conflict in India and co-recipient of the Sonja Davies Peace Award 2020.

Heather Devere's research in the fields of politics, ethics and peace and conflict studies spans several decades. Until recently she was Director of Practice at Te Ao o Rongomaraeroa (National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies) at the University of Otago. The history of the philosophy of friendship has been the thread binding her work on gender issues, media, indigenous peace traditions. Dr. Devere values working collaboratively and has recently edited several books with other scholars, including The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace, Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies, and Friendship Studies: Practices Across Cultures.

Elle Dibova is a third-year PhD candidate in Politics at the University of Otago and holds degrees in Sociology, Philology, and International Communication. Elle's doctoral research examines the othering of LGBT+ people as part of national identity in contemporary Russia and explores the

current situation in the country with the help of partial collaborative autoethnography as the primary research method.

Negar Partow is a senior lecturer at the Centre for Defence and Security Studies, Massey University. She is a New Zealand Institute of International Affairs board member and United Nations Association of New Zealand special officer, and publishes on religion, politics, security studies, human security and gender equality.

Nashie Shamoon recently graduated with her Master of Arts in Political Science from Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington. Her thesis focused on the role of persecution within the self-identification of young Assyrians in New Zealand and Australia. Her research interests include ethno-religious diasporas, postmemory, identity-formation and -maintenance, Middle East politics, Syrian refugee communities based in the Middle East, refugee-background communities in New Zealand, and ethnic minority representation in politics.

Georgie Silk, 28, does many things related to creativity and mental health. She is an adolescent counsellor, teacher, poet, artist and theatre maker. Her most recent project is an academic Master's thesis studying secondary students who have used a creative medium to explore personal mental distress. Prior to training as a counsellor, she made two theatre productions under her company Sunlight Liquid Collective. These productions used physicality, metaphor and poetry to explore the mental health concerns her peers were facing at the time. Once her thesis is completed (and has slept for many months), she plans to continue her counselling practice and is plotting another theatre show with Tāmaki Makaurau based poet, Sarah Krieg. She is also slowly acuminating enough poems for her own collection. She never posts online so her work feels a little secretive. She only reads her poems at open mic evenings or on request when friends come over to her house for tea.

Katerina Standish is Senior Lecturer at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago, and also teaches at the University of Winnipeg in Manatoba, Canada. She has expertise in peace education and non-violent alternatives for conflict resolution. Dr. Standish is also a community peacebuilder, certified conflict coach, somatic trainer and trauma informed instructor. Dr. Standish is the Editor-in-Chief of Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice and has authored, co-authored and co-edited several books including Suicide Through a Peacebuilding Lens, Yogic Peace Education, and was the principal editor of the two volume Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace.

Kelli Te Maihāroa (Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Taranaki, Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Rārua) holds the role of Kaihautū: Te Kahui Whetū (Executive: Capable Māori) at Te Kura Matatini ki Ōtāgo (Otago Polytechnic). As a mokopuna of Te Maihāroa, the last southern Māori prophet and tohuka (expert tribal specialist), she is an active member with her whanau, iwi and local Māori community. Her PhD thesis focuses on Waitaha peace traditions, and she has co-edited several books including Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies, Peacebuilding and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Our Sacred Māori Voices.

Heather Tribe is a PhD student at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago, where her thesis examines gendered experiences of natural crises in Aotearoa and reflects on a future dictated through the impacts of climate change. She is based in Waitākere, Tāmaki Makaurau where she works within issues of food rescue, food security, and food aid. The intersectionality between environmental threats and social experiences is the thread that weaves throughout Heather's research and practice. Her work is driven by the urgent need to address social inequities and empower individuals to create community level resilience to prevent disproportionate harm from climate change

Hafiza Yazdani is a gender and peace education specialist with several years of experience working with international bodies such as the World Bank, UN Women, USAID and the Swedish Embassy in Kabul to promote human rights, gender equality and peace in Afghanistan. Her doctoral research in Peace and Conflict Studies investigated peace education in Afghanistan.

Contact

The WTP Editorial Board

wtp.nzpsa@gmail.com

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https://nzpsa.co.nz/women-talking-politics

admin@nzpsa.co.nz