

Women Talking Politics



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From the Editorial Board

Barbara Bedeschi-Lewando, Shirin Brown, Heather Devere, Nashie Shamoan, and Heather Tribe

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

Welcome to the latest edition of Women Talking Politics, where we continue to push boundaries and amplify voices at the forefront of feminist discourse. This is in a context where women continue to be affected disproportionately in terms of abuse, war violence and the effects of climate change and yet struggle to have a seat at the decision-making table. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Gaza where the death toll has now past 27,000 and two million people are facing starvation, continuous bombing, and a lack of political will for an immediate ceasefire.

In this issue, we've curated a dynamic collection of articles, poems, and perspectives that delve deep into the intersection of feminism, climate change and human rights.

Our commitment to inclusivity shines through as we feature a diverse array of voices from various disciplines, each offering unique insights into the complexities of gender dynamics. From exploring the nuances of race, culture, and class to confronting issues of violence and sexuality, our contributors fearlessly tackle pressing issues facing women today. By actively working to address these issues, we can create a more equitable and inclusive society where the contributions of women and gender scholars and activists are valued and celebrated.

In a world reshaped by the pandemic, we've embraced remote collaboration, innovation, transcending geographical barriers to bring you this journal from four separate locations across continents. This innovative approach not only underscores our adaptability but also highlights the power of connectivity in driving meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

As editors, we take pride in curating content that challenges the status quo and sparks critical conversations. We invite you to engage with our thought-provoking articles and poems, knowing that your perspectives contribute to the rich tapestry of feminist discourse.

At Women Talking Politics, we're more than just a journal—we're a community dedicated to empowering scholars, activists, and students alike. Join us in our mission to elevate voices, bridge gaps, add depth and richness to the discourse.

We particularly welcome contributions by early career researchers and from underrepresented groups.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Ka kite anō,

The Women Talking Politics Editorial Board

A Transformative Feminist Foreign Policy for Aotearoa New Zealand

Forough Amin and Camille Nakhid

Introduction

Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) is a relatively new concept in International Relations (IR). Although the emergence of feminism in the traditionally masculine area of foreign policy might appear revolutionary and promising, in its current state feminist foreign policy does not seem to have the capacity to bring about a meaningful transformation in the gendered power relations and structures of global politics. Many scholars believe that states operationally misinterpret FFP and have yet to adequately include feminist ethical guiding principles into their foreign policy practices (Aggestam, et. al, 2019; Scheyer & Kumskova, 2019; Thompson et. al, 2021; True, 2017; Zilla, 2022). As Robinson (2021, p. 21) asserts, “a feminist foreign policy can be a critical, alternative to *realpolitik* (including ‘hyper-masculine nationalism’), but not if it defines itself as a return to the neo-liberal, interventionist, governmentalities of post-Cold War liberal internationalism.”

Given the pioneering role of Aotearoa New Zealand in women’s rights, gender equality, and humanitarian approaches to foreign policy, it seems possible for the country to play a leading role in the formulation, implementation, and practice of a transformative feminist foreign policy.

We begin this paper by presenting a brief overview of the historical context of feminism in international relations before examining the criticisms directed at existing feminist foreign policies. Subsequently, this paper offers recommendations for Aotearoa New Zealand on formulating a transformative feminist foreign policy by outlining key feminist principles relevant to foreign policy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The emergence of Feminism in International Relations

From the late 1980s, feminist ideas were introduced into the academic discipline of international relations, an area which has long been criticised by feminist scholars for being male-dominated and for reproducing hegemonic masculinity, patriarchal power relations, and gender inequality (Elnoe, 1990, 2004; Fritzsche, 2011; Shepherd, 2014; Tickner, 1992, 1997, 1999). Realism that has been the dominant school of thought in international relations is ontologically based on an understanding of human nature as self-interested. According to a realist vision of international relations, since there is no overarching or dominant power in the system of international relations, anarchy is the ultimate situation, and due to this anarchic nature, determining factors guiding relations among states are “pursuits of self-help, survival, security and their maximisation of national interests defined in terms of power” (Aggestam, 2019, p.25). As such, realism views states as situated within a security dilemma and relying on the principle of sovereignty to serve their national interests. Achilleos-Sarll et al, 2023 rightly argue that the realist understanding of international relations is contradictory to foreign and security policies that are defined in terms of ‘ethical considerations’ and/or ‘emancipatory messages’.

The current environment of international relations, structured around masculine principles of power and self-interest, has given rise to a hierarchical system that is shaped by masculine perspectives, predominantly governed by men, and perpetuates male dominance and superiority. This masculine culture, referred to as hegemonic masculinity by scholars, is a producer of, and is itself produced by the global historical patriarchy (Connell, 2020; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Donaldson, 1993). However, until recently, this system was rarely perceived as problematic because, as Scheyer & Kumskova (2019) argue, it is difficult to recognise gender imbalances when only one gender (the masculine) is present. Therefore, men’s monopolistic presence and power were normalised. This means what appeared to be a “gender-neutral” foreign policy, in fact, maintained gender inequality. Not only did the gender-neutral system fail to take adequate account of the different gender-specific perspectives, but it also reinforced the unjust and unequal

status quo (Zilla, 2022). As McGlen and Sarkees (2018) noted, a realist definition of international relations as a kind of politics in which conflict, competition, and use of force are central has resulted in perceiving women as 'ill equipped' for positions in this field. Women who do reach the high-level decision-making positions in international relations often feel pressured to perform according to norms and discourses which "reflect a historically male-centered perspective" (Aggestam & True, 2020, p. 147).

In response to the prevailing hegemonic masculinity within international relations, feminist perspectives aimed to, first, problematise the gendered nature of the system of global politics that had led to power imbalances, and second, to provide an alternative approach to international relations by redefining the concepts and principles of the international relations such as security, peace, conflict, national interests, diplomacy, and sovereignty. Feminist international relations believes that principles of equality and justice should be applied within the structures, norms, relations, and ideologies of global politics (Acker, 1992; Sjoberg & Via, 2010).

Feminism in international relations began with questions about the place of women within global politics (Elnoe, 1990, 2004; Tickner, 1992, 1997, 1999). Feminist scholars such as Cynthia Elnoe and Ann Tickner argued the value and importance of women in IR and opened the space for women's experiences and voices. Elnoe's famous question, "Where are the women?" ignited the path for feminist scholars to critically examine and explain the absence of women in the theory and practice of international relations. Tickner (2005) writes that feminist knowledge comes from asking feminist questions; constructing knowledge from women's lived experiences; being reflexive during the process of research; and believing in civil society and activism for changing the situation of women. Peterson (2004) also criticises the gender-blindness of international relations and consider the purpose of feminism to "reveal how women, activities associated with women, and/or constructs, identities, practices, and institutions associated with femininity are rendered invisible by IR's preoccupation with men and masculinized activities" (p. 3).

In general, the aim of feminism in international relations is to offer an alternative vision of the world that would achieve a gender-just system of global politics by drawing attention to the absence of women's experiences and voices in this field. Achilleos-Sarll et. al (2023) states that feminist school of thought is 'emancipatory,' 'egalitarian,' 'internationalist,' 'anti-hegemonic,' and aimed at transforming the patriarchal structures of the world.

However, this shared understanding of feminism should not imply that feminism is a unitary concept. Several perspectives exist within the feminist school of thought with each drawing on a specific ontological and/or epistemological foundation. These include liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical/revolutionary feminism, postcolonial feminism, postmodern feminism, intersectional feminism, etc. Depending on their underlying ontological/epistemological understandings, these feminist perspectives offer different solutions for ending gender injustices in international relations ranging from reformists' focus on achieving equality in rights and representation to revolutionary attempts for changing the entire structure of global politics.

Politicians and policymakers who adopt and practice feminist principles might be more inclined towards one or more of these approaches depending on their own perspectives, the domestic and organisational cultural environment, and the structural limits under their governance. In the following section, we review feminist approaches to foreign policy.

Feminist Foreign Policy in International Relations

One of the areas of international relations that has been traditionally considered a male domain is Foreign Policy. Even though the UN Security Council's resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) was issued in 2000, foreign policy still failed to "digest or to take heed" of such developments (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018, p. 35), with the mainstream Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) maintaining its gender-blind approach (Hudson, 2005). As such, 'feminist foreign policy' is a rather novel phenomenon in international relations with less than a decade since its official emergence.

In 2014, Sweden, through its centre-left government, brought the issue of gender to mainstream global politics by introducing the world's first Feminist Foreign Policy founded on women's Rights, Representation, and Resources. This was short-lived as, just seven years later in 2021, the newly elected centre-right government abandoned this feminist foreign policy on the basis that the label 'feminist'

overshadowed Swedish values and interests in foreign policy (Walfridsson, 2023). However, Sweden's pioneering work paved the way for other countries to institute their version of feminism in foreign policy. Since Sweden's introduction, countries including Canada (2017), France (2018), Luxembourg (2019), Mexico (2020), Spain (2021), Libya (2021) and Germany (2021) have announced their adoption of a feminist approach to foreign policy.

The FFPs introduced by these different countries mostly draw on the UN Security Council's resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (i.e. goal No. 5 is Gender Equality). All these conventions and resolutions, in turn, have their origins in the three World Conferences on Women held during the United Nations Decade for Women in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985) as well as the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) which produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Zilla, 2022).

Like feminism in general, feminist foreign policy is a contested concept. Countries that describe their foreign policy as feminist perceive and implement feminist goals and principles in different ways. Some of these differences as well as their shortcomings are discussed in the subsequent section.

Critiques of Current Feminist Foreign Policies

Many feminist scholars and activists have been critical of the use of the term 'feminist' in current foreign policies. Scheyer and Kumskova (2019) argue that the existing feminist foreign policies suffer from three crucial shortcomings - inconsistency in approach; peripherality of gender in decision-making; and neglect of deeper structural issues. They further claim that:

“in many situations, gender considerations are not being put at the center of all of the foreign policy decisions that these countries undertake... every single policy ... focuses disproportionately on the situation of women, their rights, and needs, instead of addressing gendered power structures, identifying silenced groups, building empathic communities, and rethinking important concepts, such as sovereignty, militarism, and nationalism. In the majority of countries, however, a feminist foreign policy becomes nothing more than a label (p.64-65)”.

Zilla (2022, p. 5) also criticises certain aspects of current feminist foreign policies including “the gap between rhetoric and practice”, “the tension between FFP and other policy areas”, and “the discrepancies between the heterogeneous demands of different feminist perspectives”.

The concepts of feminist foreign policy, according to feminist scholars diverge significantly from the practices of states which brand their foreign policies as feminist. According to Thompson et al., feminist foreign policy is when the policy of a state:

“defines its interactions with other states, as well as movements and other non-state actors, in a manner that prioritizes peace, gender equality and environmental integrity; enshrines, promotes, and protects the human rights of all; seeks to disrupt colonial, racist, patriarchal and male-dominated power structures; and allocates significant resources, including research, to achieve that vision. Feminist foreign policy is coherent in its approach across all of its levers of influence, anchored by the exercise of those values at home and co-created with feminist activists, groups and movements, at home and abroad” (Thompson et. al, 2020).

Cheung et. al (2021) propose a definition of FFP from a value-based and context specific standpoint that includes intersectionality, empathetic reflexivity (self-critical awareness of one's own position and needs of others), substantive representation and participation, accountability and active peace commitment.

These definitions demonstrate how feminist foreign policy can be a comprehensive and inclusive framework covering all areas of foreign affairs and utilising the available measures and tools to help create a fairer world. FFP as defined here is not limited to women, but takes a nonbinary, gendered lens which

recognises and seeks to correct historical patriarchal and often racist and/or neo-colonialist imbalances of power. Feminist foreign policy calls for “rethinking and re-envisioning gender structures of institutions and governance systems” rather than merely aiming to ensure equal representation of women in positions of power or their participation (Scheyer & Kumskova, 2019, p. 59).

Nevertheless, feminist foreign policies formulated by countries are far from such transformative practices and are stated only in theory. One of the constraints of the feminist foreign policy in general is that it is a state initiative (i.e., a form of state feminism) rather than a civil society movement or an academic endeavour. As such, the feminist foreign policy is carried out within the context of the neo/liberal domestic structures of countries and the realist international system. The transformative essence of feminism, as an ethical and emancipatory theory of international relations, has thus been mitigated in adverse ways and this has led to contradictory outcomes and policies.

One of the main ways in which the transformative nature of feminism in foreign policy has been diminished is through its focus on women’s descriptive representation as opposed to a more substantive representation. This approach renders “gender equality as an aim in itself not as a means for sustainable development or more peaceful, just and prosperous societies”. (Cezilly Fernandez De Liger, 2023, p.28). Another concern with current feminist foreign policies is the inconsistency in decisions made within the foreign policy sector and across different sectors of the state which are often in contradiction with “the explicit ethical ideals and gender-just principles” that form the core essence of feminist foreign policy (Aggestam et al., 2018, p. 28).

Cezilly Fernandez De Liger (2023) examined the feminist foreign policies pursued by three European countries - France, Germany, and Spain. She identified five themes within their policies including understanding of gender equality, gender transformative ambition, intersectionality and inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups and the act of listening, human-centered approach and ethics of care, and intersectionality. Cezilly Fernandez De Liger’s analysis of gender equality revealed that, despite their differences, these countries’ approaches to gender equality mostly relied on a liberal perspective of equal rights and representation without challenging the structural causes of inequality or disturbing power relations. Germany was, to some extent, an exception in that the country mentioned the oppression of marginalized groups as a root cause of gender inequality in its policy document. Similarly, with gender transformative ambitions, Germany referred to ‘entrenched’ power structures that needed to be addressed. In terms of inclusion and intersectionality, the feminist foreign policies of Germany and Spain indicated an awareness of the diversity among women and the multiple of forms of discrimination enacted against them. While Germany and Spain’s policy documents referred to women and all other marginalised groups, French feminist foreign policy, known as Feminist Diplomacy, focused only on women and girls. The ethics of care was again most visible in German and Spanish feminist policies compared to the French version.

Similar findings have been shown with Sweden and Canada’s feminist approaches to foreign policy. Morton et. al (2020) criticised Canada's feminist approach, known as Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), for being limited to the aid and development sector and neglecting the areas of diplomacy, trade, and defense. According to Thompson et. al (2020), Canada has adopted a mainstream liberal feminist approach that focuses only on women’s economic empowerment and avoids any transformative goals that would disrupt the existing economic structures. Moreover, by failing to incorporate a comprehensive and intersectional approach, Canada’s feminist foreign policy excludes many peoples and groups from the core of its aid projects.

Despite its pioneering role as the first country to announce a feminist foreign policy, as Walfridsson (2023) mentions, Sweden also followed a liberal reformist approach to its feminist foreign policy that resulted in a binary gender perspective which neglects LGBTQ+ communities. Sweden has also been criticised for the inconsistency in its policies as it is one of the top arms exporting countries and this goes against feminist anti-military and disarmament goals.

The above-mentioned countries have formally pledged to include a feminist perspective in their foreign policies, yet they continue to operate entirely within an economic order that promotes neoliberal market values while failing to consider underlying structural inequalities. In addition, feminist approaches are often confined to the aid and development sectors of foreign affairs, which could be ironically described as “cost-free” areas as they are typically defined, supported, and implemented according to market values aligned with neoliberal economic growth. This is also referred to as ‘market feminism’ which is described as

promoting gender equality through market-based principles and strategies (Kantola & Squires, 2012). These acts of beneficence, while enhancing the reputation of donor states as a humanitarian and aid providers, do not require them to venture beyond their comfort zones and implement structural and costly changes, especially in diplomacy and defense. In fact, they are seldom pursued with the goal of fundamentally transforming the unjust gendered structures within international relations (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018; Aggestam & True, 2021; Lee, 2018; Parisi, 2020). As Scheyer and Kumskova (2019, p.70) state, “current approaches to feminist foreign policy do not seem to have the capacity to challenge political economies of war, exclusion, militarized security, sovereignty, and hierarchy. The focus remains on increasing gender equality through representation, leaving no commitment for structural change”.

A Transformative Feminist Foreign Policy for Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand, an island in the Pacific Ocean with a population of slightly more than five million, has managed to pursue an almost independent foreign policy. Aotearoa New Zealand holds a unique position in the international arena in terms of human rights and gender equality being the first nation in the world where women earned their right to vote in 1893, and among the first signatories to United Nations’ human rights and women’s rights treaties and resolutions. Significantly, Nanaia Cybele Mahuta, an Aotearoa New Zealand former politician who served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand from 2020 to 2023, received international recognition as the first woman (and first Māori woman) to hold the Foreign Affairs portfolio. Aotearoa New Zealand’s political history casts it as a ‘good international citizen’ that is willing to pursue an alternative vision of global politics which promotes human rights and multilateralism, cares for the needs and wants of ‘others’.

Given these factors, it is an opportune moment for Aotearoa to embrace a feminist foreign policy that will enhance its credibility as an ethical member of the international community.

It is important to note, however, that adopting a feminist approach to foreign policy presents a formidable challenge as it demands a shift in how policy makers within the foreign policy system view the world of international relations, make political decisions, and set priorities. In spite of that, it can be a successful and rewarding endeavour if such a foreign policy is able to go beyond the liberal focus on gender representation and participation and undertake transformative measures to change the masculinised structures of the foreign policy (Scheyer & Kumskova, 2019). A transformative Feminist Foreign Policy works towards “developing a Gender transformative policy that changes structures of power and roots of subordination, inequalities, lack of representation”. It is a transformation that “challenges the roots of inequality and gender norms... as opposed to increasing women rights into patriarchal and male hegemonic systems” (Cezilly Fernandez De Liger, 2023, 12).

Considering the shortcomings of current feminist foreign policies, the process of infusing a feminist perspective into foreign affairs requires a careful approach particularly within neo-liberal dominated countries such as Aotearoa. Since the 1980s in Aotearoa, the negative impact of neo-liberalism on the state's policies and practices for women has been evident, revealing itself in the Ministry for Women’s tendency towards market values and principles in its discourses, priorities, relations as well as ministry’s avoiding responsibility for programs and service delivery and offering limited funding to support women’s movements (Kantola & Squires, 2012).

To safeguard the transformative nature of feminism in the neo-liberal context of New Zealand, it is essential to adhere to principles of feminist foreign policy that are embedded in definitions given by the scholars mentioned earlier. These principles can serve as a solid basis upon which to construct a feminist foreign policy for Aotearoa New Zealand. Moreover, the weaknesses observed in the current feminist foreign policies can offer valuable lessons for Aotearoa. Three fundamental principles of feminist foreign policy highlighted by feminist scholars (see the section on critiques of FFP), but not adequately addressed by countries pursuing feminist approaches to foreign policy are substantive representation, comprehensiveness and intersectionality, and ethical commitment. Feminist foreign policies that are developed on these principles will be transformative and aim at changing unjust gendered structures/relations through intersectionality and inclusion, human security and disarmament, solidarity, empathy, and an ethics of care (Robinson, 2021).

Substantive Gender Representation

As many feminist scholars have asserted, merely striving for gender parity and increasing the presence of women (i.e., descriptive representation) in international relations fall short of achieving a truly feminist foreign policy. Such an approach usually leads to the assimilation of women within the existing patriarchal framework and is unable to address the fundamental gender norms and highly masculinised system of international relations (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018; Scheyer & Kumskova, 2019). Likewise, looking at a few exceptional women in prominent political positions and assuming that this reflects meaningful gender representation is far from an accurate understanding of substantive participation (Stienstra, 1995).

Substantive representation can be achieved when women's diverse experiences and perspectives are valued, considered, and reflected in decision making processes and outcomes. The need for substantive representation arises from the fact that gender has an impact not only on the individuals who formulate policies but also on the policies themselves, as well as the institutions and processes that facilitate their development. In the current patriarchal realist context of international relations, foreign policy choices and diplomatic approaches are often perceived through a gendered lens resulting in prioritising policies and actions associated with masculinity such as those linked to state security, and the marginalization of others in areas such as gender-based violence, regardless of whether women hold positions of influence (D'Aoust & Châteauvert-Gagnon, 2021; Rossone de Paula, 2019).

Transforming and balancing the masculine culture of foreign policy involves incorporating feminine perspectives into its decision-making processes and outcomes, not merely increasing the number of females involved. Adding women to a masculine system of international relations has often resulted in having female politicians and policymakers who act upon the same masculine, militarised, and power-politics perspectives in foreign policy as their male colleagues.

Comprehensive and Intersectional Approach

If Aotearoa is to move beyond a tokenistic feminist foreign policy, it is essential for the country to formulate a comprehensive policy that encompasses, not only the aid/development sector, but also the diplomacy, security, defense, and trade sectors. Failure to do so is likely to produce eloquent and utopian ideals on paper but pragmatic liberal 'business as usual' actions. It is also important to implement a cohesive approach so that feminist principles and values are considered at both policy formulation level and policy implementation level and are operationalised in terms of specific strategies, actions, measures, and decisions.

Intersectionality is another key factor that distinguishes transformative feminism from mainstream liberal feminism (Mason, 2019). Intersectionality in foreign policy recognises and addresses diversity by examining how multiple factors of gender, race, and sexuality interlock and influence the process of policymaking as well as the production of policies. The principle of intersectionality in foreign policy would allow for a "transformative approach and disruption of business-as-usual, going beyond liberal feminism and white-gender centric traditional approach towards a more inclusive Foreign Policy" (Cezilly Fernandez De Liger, 2023, p.13). As Nylund et. al, (2023) indicate, an intersectional lens will avoid the essentialisation of women as a homogeneous group with similar experiences and needs, and include other social factors that interlock with gender, and embrace groups marginalised on the basis of race, ethnicity, disability, migration, etc. The adoption of an intersectional sensitive approach to foreign policy provides for a greater understanding of the gendered logics and intersectional power relations present in foreign policy processes (Aggestam, 2019) while offering space for the diverse groups in the policymaking process and in the resulting policies.

Human-Centred and Ethical Commitment

As Aggestam et al. (2019) observe, "embedded in feminist notions of foreign and security policy is an ethical commitment to the care and nurturing of distant others, who reside beyond the confines of one's own political community" (p. 30). In fact, feminist foreign policy is interwoven with ethical concerns such as "gendered discrimination, inequalities and violence as well as the lack of inclusion and representation of

women and other marginalised groups” (Aggestam et al., 2019, p. 24). A foreign policy grounded in these transformative ethical norms and principles should be demonstrated in the practices of the New Zealand Ministry for Foreign Affairs as well as in the policies it formulates and decisions it makes. Such a foreign policy cannot be apathetic to global injustices and crises. Feminist foreign policy that takes a human-centred perspective towards security rather than a state-centred one is sensitive to the security of individuals including women living under theocratic states, migrants, and stateless people (Shepherd, 2014).

Currently, there are a number of prominent global humanitarian movements to which Aotearoa New Zealand can showcase its commitment to a feminist human-centred foreign policy by responding on principles of ethics. This can include supporting Palestinian people’s efforts for their homeland to be recognised as a state, standing by Iranians’ Woman, Life, and Freedom movement against a theocratic regime, and responding to Afghan women’s struggle under the Taliban. Recognising Palestine as a state, designating Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation, and declaring the Taliban as a Gender Apartheid regime are three measures that Aotearoa can take as a part of its ethical human-centred feminist foreign policy. The benefits of such measures for Aotearoa New Zealand go way beyond their costs. There may be potential repercussions for such actions including condemnations and the summoning of ambassadors in the case of recognition of Palestine and the expulsion of ambassadors and the closure of embassies in the case of designating IRGC as a terrorist organisation.

The benefits, however, both self-interest and value-driven, will be more rewarding and long term. By taking these measures based on a transformative feminist foreign policy, Aotearoa can present an ethical and human-centred vision for international relations, promote gender equality on a global scale, and contribute to the transformation of unjust patriarchal structures of global politics. Through these principles, Aotearoa can demonstrate, on an international level what a genuine feminist approach to foreign policy looks like in practice, and its attendant benefits to the countries involved. This can enhance Aotearoa’s global reputation as a country committed to its feminist principles and enable the country to forge new alliances and build coalitions with countries that follow similar principles.

Conclusion

Feminism has opened new horizons in international relations by offering an alternative vision of the global politics that rests on human-centred and ethical principles of gender equality, inclusion, intersectionality, and justice. However, as briefly discussed in this paper, the practical application of these principles in the foreign affairs of countries, known as feminist foreign policy, has so far been unsatisfactory. It can be argued that one of the main reasons for this failure in practice is the contradiction between the transformative nature of feminist foreign policy and the neo-liberal and realist contexts of domestic and international politics in which these principles are implemented. In an attempt to address this tension, countries have often sought to minimise the transformative underpinnings of feminism by adapting it to neo-liberal market values. This has resulted in greater attention being given to increasing the number of women in the foreign policy sector or economically empowering individual women through aid/development programs of foreign policy while avoiding to address the underlying structural causes that have perpetuated gender inequality and injustices.

Given Aotearoa New Zealand’s history and reputation in relation to gender equality and human rights, we believe this country can exemplify genuine feminist foreign policy and thus showcase ethical principles of feminism by appropriately responding to some of the current global movements impacting on gender equality. As stated earlier, the application of a feminist approach to Aotearoa’s foreign policy can yield numerous benefits particularly in the long term. However, it requires a major shift in the vision and views of policymakers and politicians, from realist interest-driven and neo-liberal market values to more human-centred, ethical, and transformative policies and strategies.

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The Challenges of Climate Change: Women bringing solutions - Me aro ki te hā o Hine-ahu-one

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National Council of Women New Zealand: Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Action Hub

The members of the National Council of Women New Zealand (NCW) Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Hub who have co-authored this article feel privileged to have it included in *Women Talking Politics*. We hope, given the urgent need for action, that it will lead to further interest and discussion on the issues that will determine our future and that of future generations.

It is our intention that this article will be shared by NCW with a number of key stakeholders in order to highlight our deep concern about the escalating climate crisis, its disproportionate impact on women, and the future of our children. It is time for words to be transformed into climate action.

The roles women can play are many and varied: in policy making, as members of decision-making bodies nationally, regionally, and locally, by contributing to advocacy and action, and creating greater understanding and change in their workplaces, homes, and communities. We hope too that its publication and our ongoing work through NCW might also encourage women and women's organisations, to collaborate on new initiatives as key stakeholders, with unique perspectives, knowledge, and skills.

Summary

Women and girls are a key to climate action. There is an urgency at every level to effectively mitigate the devastations of the Climate Crisis. Collectively women must be at the decision-making table to help find strategic solutions through influencing climate change policy and legislation and to engage at grass roots. Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) values need to be centralised in our relationship with whenua (land). The vision of New Zealand's National Council of Women's Climate Change and Environmental Hub is that the government act on the Climate Emergency declared in 2020 to embrace a new paradigm centred on human rights, care, and redistribution based on the promotion of women's leadership and decision-making in climate change adaptation and mitigation for the good of all people and the planet.

Our Vision

1. We envision a new paradigm centred on human rights, care, wellbeing, and redistribution based on effective participation of all women and girls in critical decision-making processes. This includes leadership, decision-making, and action for mitigating and adapting to climate change.
2. We envisage an Aotearoa New Zealand where Indigenous values and knowledge are centralised in the way the climate crisis and its effects on women are addressed.
3. We foresee a robust space for civil society to genuinely engage, decide, participate, and demand justice and accountability.
4. We participate in this space because we believe in a just and inclusive world where adaptation to the climate crisis is equitable.

Women are key to climate action

“If we took away barriers to women’s leadership, we would solve the climate change problem a lot faster,” Mary Robinson, UN Climate Summit 2014.¹

5. There is no longer time for rhetoric. The impacts of global crises associated with climate change, including health threats, displacement, conflict and socio-cultural risks are not gender neutral. Women and girls suffer disproportionately from huge, wide-ranging consequences.
6. We must learn from COVID-19. The pandemic cost women jobs, opportunities, health, and economic security. Economic stress, increased domestic violence, mental health and vulnerability are exacerbated by pandemics and climate disasters.² We also know that women perform more housework, carry additional family responsibilities, and lose employment sooner than men. We have seen women's economic participation decline for the first time in years.³ In 2021, Human Rights Council resolution 48/13 unequivocally recognised the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all.⁴ This paves the way for the effective incorporation of this right into international law and stronger implementation everywhere.
7. Urgent action is required at every level. Flooding events in Nelson and elsewhere, and the devastation from Cyclone Gabrielle show that residents, local councils, and emergency services are on the frontline in the face of climate related disasters. This includes many short- and long-term impacts on people's lives and well-being. Governance, structures, and action at global, national, community and business levels continue to fail to recognise the urgency and enormity of this, including widespread displacement and how to effectively mitigate the rapidly expanding devastations of the climate crisis.

The climate crisis impacts disproportionately on women and girls

“Climate change is not gender neutral – it disproportionately impacts women and girls. Already, the climate crisis amplifies existing gender inequalities and poses a serious threat to women’s livelihoods, health and wellbeing,” Razan Al Mubarak, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP28.⁵

8. Climate change increases existing inequalities. Globally, women are more impacted by climate change than men due to various factors, including inequalities in access to and ownership of resources, inequalities in access to credit and technology, and disproportionate unpaid family and household responsibilities.⁶
9. We must work together to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi,⁷ the Zero Carbon Act,⁸ the National Adaptation Plan,⁹ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),¹⁰ Universal Human Rights Conventions, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals,¹¹ the Sendai Agreement,¹² the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,¹³ the Paris Climate Agreement,¹⁴ and the COP 26 Glasgow Women's Leadership Statement.¹⁵
10. Aotearoa New Zealand declared a Climate Emergency in 2020¹⁶ and embraced the Living Standards Framework.¹⁷ Now we must bring about real change. Climate change increases existing inequalities. Globally, and in Aotearoa New Zealand, women are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Unequal access to resources and decision-making positions continue to restrict women's individual and collective power, preventing them from achieving equality, decision-making, and wellbeing.¹⁸ These crises should not be allowed to turn women into victims but rather equip and encourage them to play a strong leadership role.
11. It is expected that government and ministries recognise the roles and responsibilities of wāhine Māori as crucial to Te Ao Māori, iwi, hapū, marae and whānau.¹⁹ The Te Tiriti o Waitangi Mana Wāhine Kaupapa

Inquiry was initiated in 2018 to hear outstanding claims alleging the Crown's treaty breaches affecting wāhine Māori, including environmental and cultural losses. Significant adversity affecting generations of women and children's wellbeing is now being highlighted and condemned.²⁰

12. Climate change also exacerbates the already untenable position of women, children, wāhine Māori, disabled women, those who are gender diverse, and those from ethnic, refugee and migrant backgrounds, in both urban and rural settings. Giving agency to women in ways that grow resilience is essential. With the intensifying climate crisis, pandemics such as COVID-19 are not only more likely, but also impact even more severely on these groups.²¹
13. Women must be part of decision-making solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We need to ensure that financial investments provide equitable benefits to build families, communities and societies that are resilient to climate change and natural and subsequent disasters. That time is now, to ensure that Aotearoa New Zealand's international climate change commitments are met. Change is critically urgent for the wellbeing of our tīpuna, and for present and future generations.

Women need and want climate justice

"Climate action must include investing in women activists, human rights defenders, and civil society organisations," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, 166th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, March 2022.²²

14. Climate change solutions and disaster prevention must include women. NCWNZ promotes the involvement of women at the centre of decision-making and as protagonists of policies that empower women as agents of social reform and environmental stewardship.
15. NCWNZ recognises that crises can also be opportunities to discuss strategies, re-establish the social contract, address inequalities, and empower women as agents of change and environmental stewards. They can transform social and environmental spaces, working with their whānau and communities.

History has taught us that women are a powerful force for change

"When unique voices are united in a common cause, they make history," Gloria Steinem.²³

16. Too often climate change is cause for further division in our stressed society, but women have proved they can come together to unite movements for change. Women in Aotearoa New Zealand were the first women in the world to win the vote. Since then, they have advocated for major legal and policy reforms and achieved these goals. Women have led changes in legislation and policy, including Prostitution Law Reform; Anti-nuclear, Anti smacking and same sex marriage legislation. We have marched "to reclaim the night" and to "halt all racist tours", and to decriminalise abortion. Women have led political parties and governments, and served as Governor General, Chief Justice, and Prime Minister. We have been mayors and city councillors, led government agencies, and major businesses. Yet our collective power to influence policy and legislation related to climate change remains limited. Similarly, women are still outnumbered in the governance of companies and government agencies.

Women and girls must be front and centre

“The rights of women and girls must be at the centre of climate action... We must ensure that women have a seat at the decision-making table. We must strengthen inclusive decision-making so that the voices of feminists, youth, indigenous and other grassroots movements can be heard loud and clear from the local to the global level,” UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous, UN Women Executive Director, COP28.²⁴

17. At all stages of climate change and disaster prevention, mitigation, response, recovery, and adaptation, CEDAW promotes and protects women's human rights. This includes women's leadership, representation, and participation, essential to the development and implementation of effective climate resilient programmes and policies.²⁵
18. Research at the intersection between gender, education and climate change offers potential to advance the role of women and girls in climate action.²⁶ Investing in girls' education can support climate participation and leadership and expand our capacity to identify solutions to the climate crisis as well as addressing gender inequities impacting on unequal outcomes for women and girls.
19. Women's expertise and talents are central to the achievement of a climate-resilient future. To achieve short-, medium- and long-term solutions, it is necessary to recognise and enable women's expertise, capacities and essential contributions as decision-makers, experts, educators, and volunteers.

The Pacific Region is at the forefront of climate action

A logo tai, ua logo uta. When it is felt towards the sea, it is felt toward the land and forests. Samoan proverb.

20. The global climate is rapidly changing. The Blue Pacific Ocean is at the forefront of this and is already at tipping point.²⁷ Pacific people, especially women, face climate adversity, and the global economy, storms, and climate impacts drive inequality. Pacific women are using Indigenous knowledge to lead climate change action and adaptation.²⁸ International research on climate and gender justice for Indigenous women finds that a lack of meaningful representation in decision-making by indigenous women constrains our ability to address the climate crisis and advocate for policy reform.²⁹
21. Indigenous women are vital to climate change action as custodians of the environment and intergenerational knowledge.³⁰ Adequate funding can empower women to lead transformational social and environmental change by applying traditional and community knowledge to national governance, regional, and international leadership.

Indigenous values and knowledge are central to the solution

*Ki uta ki tai. From the mountains to the sea.*³¹

22. NCWNZ “supports the development of a Tiriti-based, sustainable, multicultural future that acknowledges the mana of tangata whenua.”³² The NCWNZ Climate Change and Sustainable Environment Hub has begun this journey. As part of this, we had the opportunity and privilege of receiving shared Indigenous knowledge to gain a greater understanding of Māori beliefs about the natural world and Papatūānuku (Mother Earth), and the significance of this knowledge in addressing climate solutions in Aotearoa New Zealand.
23. Indigenous values and knowledge such as Mātauranga Māori, of guardianship, kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and the importance of Manaakitanga (care) and Papatūānuku, need to be put at the centre of our relationship with whenua for humanity not only to survive, but to flourish through living in

greater harmony with the natural world. Conversely, these relationships would be undermined by any moves by the government to reinterpret Te Tiriti.

24. Understanding that the health of our natural ecosystems is integrally connected with the health of our people is a critical element in addressing the climate crisis. 'Ki uta ki tai' (from mountains to the sea) recognises the interconnectedness of the whole environment. We must recognise that kaitiakitanga is exercised in ensuring climate solutions, with respect to current and future generations. Exercising these values must, first and foremost, come from a paradigm and leadership within Te Ao Māori. The Māori world view acknowledges the interconnectedness and interrelationship of all living and non-living things. The cultural richness of tangata whenua (Māori, people of the land) and tangata tiriti (non-Māori people who settled in New Zealand after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi) is inclusive of diverse cultural communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.
25. Government strategies and legislation to protect freshwater provide valuable examples of how Te Ao Māori concepts are embedded in environmental thinking. Examples include the Whanganui River with legal personhood and the Essential Freshwater National Policy Statement and regulations³³ based on the fundamental concept Te Mana o te Wai (the authority/status of the water). The principles of the agreement – mana whakahaere, kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, governance, stewardship, and care and respect³⁴– offer a blueprint for engagement with Te Ao Māori. The aims of the agreement, to halt degradation, improve resource quality and reverse damage, can be applied more widely to the impacts of climate change.
26. The 2022 National Adaptation Plan recognises indigenous knowledge as an essential part of adaptation processes, not only for Māori, their families, and communities, but also for wider society. Yet the Plan does not acknowledge the roles of women in adaptation and resilience building.³⁵ Embedding Indigenous knowledge and women's leadership would bring significant value across all sectors of policy, including structures, connectedness, and engagement. This requires urgent uptake by the Minister for the Environment, at Ministerial and official levels.

Building collaborative, integrated, and connected climate action and alliances

“Meta problems don't always require meta solutions. Small actions in the same direction together make a difference,” Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and UNDP Administrator.³⁶

27. Collaboration at all levels is imperative to give effect to our national obligations. Our dysfunctional systems urgently require new policy, structures, systems, and resourcing. Women have a critical part to play in devising new systems for transformational change to behaviours and values.
28. We must also find new ways of working together to achieve the Global Sustainable Development Goals and create a more sustainable world. Women have crucial roles to play if we are to deliver the 2030 Agenda locally, nationally, regionally, and globally, ending poverty, promoting peace, sharing resources, and protecting the planet, so that no one is left behind.
29. A feminist approach facilitates connections across silos, consensus-building, and collaboration. It is vital to ensure diversity in decision-making including more women in positions of influence to change Aotearoa New Zealand for the better, ensuring a safer, liveable environment for all.
30. Effective gender equality, co-production and co-decision making require the commitment of the government to fully recognise its women and gender diverse citizens alongside men; trusting relationships, systems, and structures are needed to achieve climate justice. The willingness of the government to share resources and share decision-making is fundamental to this.

31. We join the global feminist call for collaborative climate action at all levels of government, sectors, and stakeholder groups. This is critical to achieve the urgent transformation towards sustainable and resilient communities. Women’s leadership is essential, founded on direction, inclusiveness, delivery, and Te Ao Māori concepts integrated into environmental stewardship.

Policy coherence: integral to whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach

“We Are the First Generation that Can End Poverty, the Last that Can End Climate Change,” Secretary General Ban Ki Moon receiving an honorary degree at Catholic University of Leuven, 28 May 2015.³⁷

32. NCWNZ calls for policy coherence, transparency, and the creation of new dynamics for collaboration throughout policy cycles, across sectors and between levels of government. We urge a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach across Aotearoa New Zealand as part of the advancement of women’s rights, climate action, and delivering on the 2030 Agenda. The 2019 Voluntary National Review,³⁸ the 2019 People’s Report,³⁹ and the 2021 Auditor General’s report on New Zealand’s implementation of the SDGs⁴⁰ clearly indicate there is much more to be done at every level. Again, women have key roles to play.

Investing in Women and girls

“Gender inequality in times of climate change is a matter of life and death,” Mafalda Duarte, Executive Director Green Climate Fund.⁴¹

33. Globally, and in Aotearoa New Zealand, there is a lack of research and data that provides for gender analysis in relation to the climate emergency. This includes a lack of gender analysis of women’s representation in leadership, funding and decision-making, and a lack of gender analysis in identifying the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on women and girls. Data collection and analysis is vital for understanding and developing policy and action across the whole of government and whole of society.
34. It is essential that significant funding is allocated to climate action and enabling women to bring solutions and foster an approach to climate finance that promotes more equitable funding for women-led climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

NCWNZ Te Kaunihera Wāhine o Aotearoa – Recommendations to the Prime Minister

Our Vision

1. That the government act on climate change to embrace a new paradigm centred on human rights, care, and redistribution based on the promotion of women’s leadership and decision-making in climate change adaptation and mitigation for the good of all people and the planet.

Women are key in climate action

2. That the Prime Minister take urgent action with Crown Ministers and officials to increase and improve women’s leadership and representation in climate action. We urge investment in leadership opportunities, particularly for Māori and Pasifika women and girls, feminists across generations, those from ethnic, refugee, and migrant backgrounds, disabled women, young people, and those who are gender diverse.
3. That the Prime Minister advocate across all government sectors to create effective mechanisms to enable diverse women and girls’ participation in decision-making, design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the context of climate change, disaster prevention, mental health, and wellbeing and

create relevant evidence-based data for policy, implementation, outcomes and for targeted budgeting. This includes ensuring Ministry for Women is represented in key policy and planning fora, for example for the Emissions Reduction Plan.

4. That the Prime Minister enables full and equitable participation of women and girls in climate change policy and solutions, strategic decision-making, and collective action at all levels, to enable a sustainable, more equal future.
5. That the Prime Minister ensures delivery through all education sectors of understanding of the complexity of many causes of climate change affecting all aspects of our lives, wellbeing, and the environment, and the need for an interconnected response.

Indigenous values and knowledge are central to the solution

6. That the Prime Minister fully acknowledges the centrality of Indigenous knowledge in solutions to climate change and provide a budget to effectively engage in partnerships with tangata whenua.
7. Following findings from the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Enquiry that the Ministry provide a budget to empower wāhine Māori to apply traditional and community knowledge at grass roots level in ways to combat climate change, to build resilience and to foster community wellbeing. Further, to support wāhine Māori in co-governance and the corporate and financial sectors to lead a change in values, policy and structures that address environmental and societal wellbeing outcomes.
8. That the Prime Minister work to ensure Pacific women's extensive skills and knowledge in natural resource stewardship be acknowledged and valued in developing mitigation and adaptation strategies in Aotearoa New Zealand and in our international development work, particularly in conjunction with our Pacific partners.

Building collaborative climate action

9. That the Prime Minister actively engage across all sectors of government and society, and provide co-funding to achieve policy and solutions that address climate change and resilience building, by engaging women's diverse leadership to tackle inequalities.
10. That the Prime Minister actively advocate and co-fund new, deeper forms of collaboration at every level to put gender equality at the forefront of climate action and disaster prevention to achieve transformative change.

Policy coherence for a whole-of-government and all-of-society approach

11. That the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister for Climate Change, and Minister for Women actively advocate for all government sectors to commit to budgets to ensure a gender lens in policy formulation and implementation and recognise and engage with women as critical agents of positive change. The absence of this gender lens in the National Adaptation Plan is a significant deficit, undermining intended outcomes.

Investing in women and girls

12. That the government, through the Minister for Climate Change, provide co-funding for projects putting gender equality at the heart of climate change, across civil society, including business, academia and government agencies. This will support climate-positive planning, policymaking, data collection and analysis, reflecting needs while encouraging employment and entrepreneurship possibilities for women.

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The Economic-Security Nexus in New Zealand's Climate Change Cooperation with China

Mengdi Zhang

Economic ties arguably influence both non-traditional and traditional security interests (Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998; Gilpin, 1977). New Zealand's climate-related security interests in its policy discourse are related not only to the impacts of the climate crisis on humans and society but also to the readiness of defence forces to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change. The links between economic ties and security interests, especially traditional security interests, in New Zealand's climate change cooperation with China have not gained widespread attention. How does New Zealand's climate-change-related security or climate cooperation with China interact with growing economic ties with China in New Zealand's policy discourse?

The article aims to understand the links between New Zealand's economic ties with China and the security discourse of climate change cooperation. The article is structured as follows. After reviewing different understandings of security interests, the second section investigates New Zealand policymakers' depictions of the links between economic ties and climate cooperation with China. The policy documents reviewed include New Zealand's strategy documents, public statements and reports of climate change cooperation released by Prime Ministers, Ministers and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Ministry of Defence and Defence Force from 2008 to 2023. The third section discusses how the positive nexus between economic ties and climate-change-related security would expand to traditional security cooperation before concluding three main findings.

Climate Change and Security Interests

Climate change is a security issue. Traditionalists and non-traditionalists define security differently in security studies. Traditionalists equate security with the absence of military threats and the use of force (Ullman, 1983). Non-traditionalists, such as scholars from the Copenhagen School or international political economy, use a "deepening" and "widening" approach to study security issues (Buzan, 1983; Buzan et al., 1998; Ullman, 1983). Non-traditional security is more than the absence of military threats; it is also about social, economic, and environmental safety. Climate change is commonly regarded as a non-traditional security issue and involves discussions about its impacts on the environment, society, culture, or economy.

However, climate-change-related security interests are also relevant to geopolitics and the involvement of military forces (Hansen, 2022; Hossain, 2021). In order to respond to adverse climate effects, a state needs policies for military planning, preparing for geopolitical and regional tensions, securing military bases, critical infrastructure and increasing border security against climate migrants, integrating development aid and military action, increasing deployment of disaster response operation and enhancing resilience measures (Briggs, 2012; Von Lucke, 2020). New Zealand's *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018* recognised climate change as one of the "underlying drivers" of military operations for the first time (New Zealand Ministry of Defence, 2018b, p. 37; Tarte, 2022). The follow-on document, *The Climate Crisis: Defence Readiness and Responsibilities*, suggested that climate change would be integrated into "defence activities and decision-making processes" (New Zealand Ministry of Defence, 2018a, p. 3). New Zealand's first *National Security Strategy 2023* states that the effects of climate change will increase tensions "both within and among countries" as countries attempt to secure interests. In addition to the non-traditional security threats of climate change to food, energy, human health and wellbeing, the strategy lists traditional security issues related to climate change, including resource competition and conflict, conflict over cross-border migration and displacement, land and maritime disputes, strain on militaries' resources and readiness, and exacerbated geopolitical tensions (New Zealand Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2023, p. 33). Among them, issues of maritime disputes, militaries' readiness to cooperate with militaries from other countries, and geopolitical tensions have gained more attention in New Zealand's relationship with China.

An important part of climate change cooperation can integrate with traditional military exercises.

Although climate change threats are commonly framed with a non-military character, military power is indispensable (Łuszczuk, 2016). Military collaboration and cooperation are considered for environmental protection, infrastructure, joint exercises and maritime domain awareness (Łuszczuk, 2016). With climate change, New Zealand policymakers have also noted that “disaster relief operations” and “humanitarian assistance” will increase (New Zealand Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2023, pp. 32-33), and the New Zealand Defence Force and counterparts will be called upon “more frequently to respond” to “potential conflicts resulting from resource competition or disputes” (New Zealand Ministry of Defence, 2018a, pp. 3, 8).

The Virtuous Cycle Between New Zealand’s Economic Ties with China and Non-traditional Security Interests in Climate Change Cooperation

New Zealand’s economic conditions and economic ties with China influence its resilience and capabilities to respond to security threats caused by climate change. The interactions between economic ties and responding to climate change can be mutually beneficial. This mutually beneficial nexus is similar to the virtuous cycle in the conventional “perpetual peace” or “liberal peace” theory (Russett & Oneal, 2001). In Sohn’s and Goh’s studies, the virtuous cycle refers to “virtuous spillover effects between security and economic relations” which create “a self-reinforcing feedback loop” (Goh, 2019; Sohn, 2019). In the context of climate-related security, the virtuous cycle between economic and security interests can be interpreted from two aspects. First, at the domestic level, an economic surplus can mean an increase in military spending and then an increase in New Zealand’s military capabilities. In other words, the increased military costs associated with climate change require better economic conditions. In turn, responding to climate-related security enhances New Zealand’s economic resilience because of its developed infrastructure and reputation. In comparison, developing countries with unstable economic conditions and limited trading ties are believed to be hit first and harder than developed countries because of the lack of necessary means and financial capabilities (Hansen, 2022, p. 53).

Second, at the bilateral level, the structure of a state’s trading relationship could lead to preferences regarding cooperation partners on security issues (Shirk & Twomey, 1996, p. 8). Dolye argued that economic exchange promoted “greater contact and communications” between governments and private sectors, thereby contributing to political and security cooperation (Doyle, 1997). For example, New Zealand’s and China’s increasing participation in international economic institutions could socialise elites from the two countries and facilitate compromises to sustain cooperation and prevent conflicts (Goldstein & Mansfield, 2012, pp. 4, 15). Because crisis and disaster management is often the combined effort of civilian and military actors, economic ties between countries could increase networking between militaries or military and civilian actors. For example, in constructing critical climate infrastructure such as water systems, mature economic ties between New Zealand and China would increase the funding sources for the programme from both government and non-governmental organisations. Economic ties can also facilitate militaries from New Zealand and China to work together in the same programme. The military programme transforming to more environmentally friendly is another example of the virtuous economic-security nexus as more green energy equipment trading between countries contributes to military aims. Closer military cooperation in climate-related projects is less sensitive. It can in turn help New Zealand maintain both economic and security exchanges with non-security partner China since the US-China power competition has intensified.

Tackling climate change is the common goal for both New Zealand and China, and climate change cooperation between the two countries is still developing. However, climate change is where New Zealand and China have “like-mindedness” in the words of former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (Ardern, 2020), and “interests and values align” according to Nanaia Mahuta, former Foreign Minister (Mahuta, 2023).

New Zealand-China climate change cooperation is based on the development of economic ties. *The Environmental Cooperation Agreement 2008* acts as the main framework for bilateral environmental cooperation with China (New Zealand Ministry for the Environment, 2008). This agreement was signed as one of the “side arrangements” of the New Zealand-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA). New Zealand government signalled the intention to build up market mechanisms with China, including “carbon markets” and “emission trading”, to tackle climate change issues in this agreement (New Zealand Government, 2014).

Bilateral economic ties would further develop these market mechanisms.

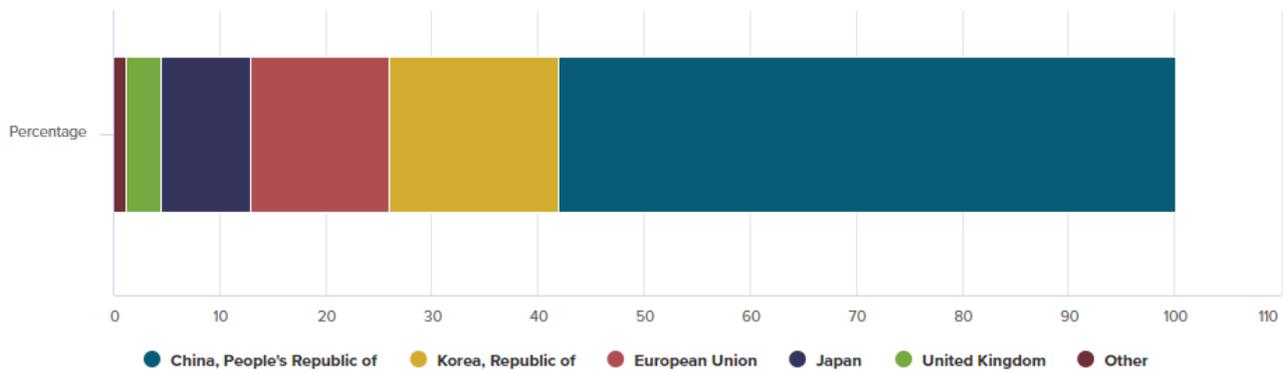
With the development of bilateral trading volume, New Zealand and China have cooperated on climate change more deeply. After China became New Zealand's biggest goods trading partner in 2013, the two countries signed the *Arrangement on Climate Change Cooperation* during President Xi's visit to New Zealand in 2014 (Key, 2014). This arrangement established an institutional communication channel—Ministerial Dialogue on Climate Change. This dialogue was held for the first time in 2017 (Bennett, 2017), and both countries have held four dialogues until 2022 (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2022a). The main topics of these dialogues include energy and greenhouse gas research, which are commonly regarded as non-military issues. New Zealand and China also renewed the *Antarctic Cooperation Arrangement* signed in 1999 during President Xi's 2014 visit. The New Zealand government intended to “work constructively together with China” in Antarctica (New Zealand Government, 2014). Based on the arrangement, the Chinese research vessel “Snow Dragon” visited New Zealand on its way to the Antarctic in 2015 (The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in New Zealand, 2015).

Public concerns about China's military intentions have not influenced New Zealand policymakers' depictions of the virtuous cycle between climate change cooperation and economic ties. New Zealand scholar Anne-Marie Brady voiced concerns about New Zealand's cooperation with China in the Antarctic given China's increasing economic capabilities and strategic intentions. Professor Brady advised New Zealand policymakers to rethink their assessment of Antarctica. She claimed the opposite vicious cycle between China's economic capabilities and the Antarctica cooperation between the two countries by stating that China's economic growth had funded a dramatic expansion in military capabilities. These growing capabilities directly affected New Zealand's broader strategic interests and those of New Zealand's strategic partners in Antarctica (Brady, 2017a). In her view, China's economic power would bring security threats to Antarctica and would not benefit New Zealand (Brady, 2017b). Unlike Brady's view, New Zealand policymakers' depictions of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief cooperation with China have been predominantly positive.

Building on the virtuous cycle, New Zealand and China signed the *Climate Action Plan 2017* (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017b) when China became New Zealand's top good and service trading partner in 2017 (NZ Stats, 2018). The action plan develops the focus on carbon markets and emissions trading schemes, agricultural greenhouse gas mitigation and the development of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure. Stable economic ties and supply chains underpin cooperation on emissions trading systems and electric vehicle trading.

The New Zealand-China FTA upgrade in 2019 also contributed to the development of climate change cooperation. The upgraded FTA includes a new chapter on environment and trade which builds up the institutional arrangement for dispute settlement and communication, i.e. the FTA Joint Commission (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2022b). Before the FTA upgrade negotiation concluded, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Chinese Premier Li announced the *Leaders' Statement on Climate Change* in 2019 (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). This statement reaffirms commitments to climate cooperation from technical, scientific, and economic aspects. This statement also praised China's establishment of a national carbon emission trading system and announced the Electric Vehicles Initiative between the two countries. After the leaders' 2019 statement, New Zealand and China co-led the Nature-Based Solutions Pillar, which was part of the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Summit 2019 (New Zealand China Council, 2019).

Growing renewable energy, carbon and electric vehicle markets enhance the virtuous cycle between economic ties and climate security as New Zealand's imports from China have continued to increase since 2020. Alistair Crozier, Executive Director of the New Zealand China Council, argues that New Zealand should support China's climate change engagement as China is the world's largest producer of solar and wind energy components and is important for supply chains of necessary products supporting New Zealand's transitioning economy. An example is the strong demand for electric vehicles in New Zealand (Crozier, 2023). As Figure 1 shows, the imports of electric vehicles have accounted for more than 50% in the last year as of March 2023. Trading with China supports New Zealand's transition to a green economy.



Source: NZ Stats

Figure 1: Percentage of electric vehicle imports by country of origin, 12 months to March 2023

In summary, the growing economic ties between New Zealand and China facilitate and develop climate change cooperation. Climate change cooperation agreements are normally signed along with economic agreements and expanded to cooperation in Antarctica, which is strategically important to New Zealand. In addition, the mature economic ties support New Zealand’s imports of energy components and electric cars from China, which are necessary for New Zealand’s transition to a green economy

The Implications of The Virtuous Cycle on Traditional Security Interests in New Zealand’s Relations with China

New Zealand policymakers mainly emphasised non-military issues in New Zealand’s climate change cooperation with China, but the positive views about China’s economic capabilities in non-traditional security issues open room for more conventional military exchanges between the two countries. New Zealand defence’s priorities in humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and search and rescue have become key issues discussed in the New Zealand-China Bilateral Military Strategic Dialogue since 2007, and they are the main areas for military personnel from the two countries to cooperate. Based on the *New Zealand-China Environmental Cooperation Agreement* and growing trade relations, New Zealand also became the first country to develop tripartite water infrastructure with China in the Cook Islands in 2013 (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017a).

Furthermore, New Zealand and the Chinese military have participated in multilateral and bilateral military exercises that prepare militaries for climate-related natural disasters. The Cooperation Spirit Exercise and other military cooperation exemplify that the positive economic impacts on climate-related issues can bring traditional military forces from New Zealand and China together.¹ Australia and China started the exercise in 2011 and New Zealand joined it a year later. Since the American militaries joined in 2014, the annual exercise has become an important military exercise for the New Zealand Defence Forces to get ready for natural disasters and search and rescue, such as the search for Malaysian aeroplane MH370 (Beilby & McLay, 2014). In the exercises from 2012 to 2019, New Zealand and Chinese militaries shared information on planning and managing operational responses. These exercises involved health personnel, Navy and Air forces from Australian, New Zealand and Chinese militaries and were designed to “enhance military-to-military relationship” and “mutual understanding” (Air Force News, 2014; Blackmore, 2012). New Zealand and Chinese Air Forces also joined the Exercise Sky Train in June 2018. Moreover, the latter observed and joined the New Zealand Air Forces’ humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training in 2019 (Mark, 2019).

Business people and military personnel were mixed up in these military exercises. In another series of Tropic Twilight Exercises, New Zealand and China have shared their experience of humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and critical climate infrastructure development. The New Zealand Defence Force led the exercise each year in different Pacific countries, and China joined the training in 2015. New Zealand and Chinese militaries, in particular, jointly held the Tropical Twilight 2018 in Vanuatu. Militaries from the two

¹ Cooperation Spirit Exercise was named as Phoenix Spirit Exercise in 2013.

countries have cooperated in building climate infrastructure in Cook Islands' Penrhyn fuel depot in 2015 (McCully & Brownlee, 2015), Tonga's water collection and storage in the Ha'apai group in 2016 (McCully & Brownlee, 2016), building Vanuatu's two medical staff houses and an aid post and training Tongan engineer soldiers in 2018 (Army, 2018; RNZ, 2018). In addition to New Zealand's military personnel, "trades people" also worked alongside military engineers from participant countries in the exercise (Army News, 2016).

Positive views about the economic impacts on climate security mitigate tensions in the bilateral relationship at a time when New Zealand policymakers' are concerned about China's growing military presence. New Zealand policymakers have complimented China's role in the climate change issues because of its economic significance in the world more often since 2018 than before. The *Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018* toughened New Zealand's criticisms of China's security activities in the South China Sea (SCS) (New Zealand Ministry of Defence, 2018b). However, the virtuous cycle between economic ties and climate-related security has offered New Zealand policymakers room to talk with China. After this statement, Prime Minister Ardern talked about the "like-mindedness" (Ardern, 2020) between New Zealand and China on climate and environmental issues in contrast to her tougher security stance on China over the SCS disputes. After concerns about China's security agreement with the Solomon Islands, Foreign Minister Mahuta acknowledged China's greater influence on the Pacific region and suggested that New Zealand and other countries would engage with China on climate change issues in 2021 (Mahuta, 2021). Positive depictions of China's roles in tackling climate change issues coexisted with New Zealand policymakers' emphasis on differences between New Zealand and China, especially after 2018. Their positive depictions of climate change cooperation with China have prevented New Zealand's relations with China from further deteriorating to some extent.

As opposed to the concerns about China's military presence in the Pacific region, readiness for climate-related natural disasters justifies New Zealand's bilateral and multilateral military exercises with China because climate-change-related military exchanges focus more on the practical and operational aspects of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. New Zealand's economic ties with China facilitate military operations between the two countries. Climate change cooperation has motivated the virtuous cycle between economic and traditional security interests because climate change is a widely recognised security issue and less sensitive from a strategic perspective.

Conclusion

Climate change is often reframed as a non-military issue, but military forces and responses are indispensable. There is a virtuous cycle between economic ties and security interests in climate change cooperation at domestic and bilateral levels. Economic ties with China can contribute to New Zealand's financial capability to respond to the adverse impacts caused by climate change. Military departments can make use of communication channels built through economic ties with China to tackle climate change. The increased costs and communication between New Zealand and China would be more likely to motivate peaceful foreign policy and peaceful responses to resource competition or disputes caused by climate change between the two countries.

After investigating climate change cooperation between New Zealand and China from 2008 to 2023, the article has three main findings. First, the virtuous economic-security cycle is predominant in New Zealand's climate change cooperation with China. Preparing for natural disasters and resource competition is a major goal of New Zealand's military planning for tackling climate change. Consistent with this goal, New Zealand's economic ties with China facilitate cooperation on electric vehicle trading, humanitarian assistance, natural disaster relief and water infrastructure building. Second, the virtuous cycle between economic ties and non-traditional security issues increases opportunities for the two countries' militaries to work together. New Zealand's priorities in disaster relief operations and humanitarian assistance work as a less controversial bridge that brings militaries from New Zealand and China together from 2008 to 2023. Third, the virtuous economic-security cycle mitigates tensions in New Zealand's relationship with China on traditional security issues, such as China's military activities in the SCS and its increasing engagement in the Pacific region, especially from 2018 to 2023.

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Matrilineal Lines: Artist Reflections on the Role of Women in the Indian Diaspora

Mandrika Rupa, Mandy Rupa-Reid, and Tiffany Singh

Introduction

Matrilineal Lines is a new work formed by three artists: Mandrika Rupa, Mandy Rupa-Reid and Tiffany Singh. It creates a mother line of matrilineal descent that integrates film with installation, to evoke mysticism through the ceremony of ritual. This ode to domestic and global migrations is loaded with cultural nuance and a deep sense of fragility, as the altar offered by Singh (installation artists) serves as a shrine for the moving image work of Rupa (film-maker) and Rupa-Reid (classical dance). For this article, we described the creative work, the bonds that bring it together and the political and social justice messages embodied in the art forms. Each of us reflects on our own experiences as women, offering insights into the challenges to the religious hierarchy that has subjugated and made women invisible.

Synthesising Matrilineal Lines

A field of fine single threads reiterates the power of experience, threaded together from multitudes of time and place. These masses of ribbon assembled by Singh become the conduit for frequencies to traverse the ether, resulting in a dynamic play of movement, as image and narrative merge together. The film by Rupa-Reid focuses on the hand movements in classical Indian dance. These are ritualized gestures called mudras. In many cultures these ancient energy forms are used for communicating with other frequencies and dimensions, with healing and vibrational themes. In Rupa's narrative film, the little girl, Laxmi, receives this energy from across material and maternal lines, empowered by the mudras that have cosmic significance. The energy flows through matrilineal lines as it accompanies Laxmi's family in the new land, guiding Laxmi with their invisible and spiritual language. This multi perspective, multi narrative experience shares stories and draws on different mediums to communicate alternative knowledge structures of our ancestors.

As artists, we synthesize feminine energy with the maternal lines to create a work of social concern for those whose work has been absent, whose voices have been unheard, and those who have been excluded from the dominant narrative. As religious hierarchy has excluded our lineages from practising women's rituals. Over time the voice of many women became quiet underground, subjugated and banned from visibility. Our projections on an altar-like offering becomes a spiritual experience that weaves stories through matrilineal lines and brings to light the invisible narrative of women's ritual. First shown as part of a joint exhibition on Invisible Narratives in Te Whanganui a Tara, Wellington, Matrilineal Lines is held by Tara Art International (TAI).

Reflections

Mandrika Rupa

As an independent filmmaker working within the South Pacific and International Indian diaspora, The diaspora enabled those who sought to be amongst other traditions, cultures and spirituality, to mix – a reality that was not afforded to us within the social culture of India. My first ancestors were embraced and adopted by the Tangata Whenua of this land. I was allowed to mix with resident cultures when I arrived in 1960. Subsequent generations were models of social freedom for me. There were many other cultures living in Auckland when I arrived with my mother. My father, as I was growing up, often had Chinese, Jewish, Spanish, British, European and Indigenous Peoples from Pacifica in our home, at our dinner table.

When I started to write films, it was essential for me to collaborate with various cultures. My family married into other cultures, a rarity in India. Breaking taboos of class, caste, religion and race. This was frowned upon by Indian people in Aotearoa as well. That is why my work has defied tradition. I grew up with Indians telling me I was unlike them, in the tradition of Hindu India.

My films illustrate stories and themes which stand outside of religion, nationalism, and separation, exposing the many invisible narratives of these new immigrant families. As my mother's and father's matrilineal lines were very spiritual, we kept our own mystical, cosmological spirituality which was our lineage. My mother woke at 5 a.m., performed a ritual at her altar, before waking the children. She was praying to the vibrational forces, invocations that would assure our well-being and safety, as our grandmothers had always done in India.

I started to document my family/clan who have been in Aotearoa New Zealand for over a hundred years. A film collaboration, *Taamara/Sangam*, depicted the history of those early people who welcomed my ancestors to live and work alongside them. It was important to record the elders' memories in classical te reo (Māori language) of Indian and Māori living together, long ago, in their communities.



When I visited India, having been away since the age of four, it was important to capture on camera how my family there lived. I documented my grandmothers' stories, in the Ayurvedic artisan culture of the villages. I returned to the ancestral lands to gather information on why our family left India. I realized that ritual bonded us. The old ways brought us together spiritually. We who left India for the diaspora, married into all different cultures and faiths. Here in Aotearoa we introduced Ayurveda, the practice of holistic health through diet and lifestyle (see *Inheritance: A Lament*).

I became interested in women's issues through my social work in the UK and I documented the struggles of women. Through narrative drama my characters re-contextualised their identities into new ideologies that were outside the expected social norms of Indian tradition. I grew up with stories of the Second World War in New Zealand. A family in the diaspora was expected to earn money and help with resources for food back home. Wartime rationing and poverty experienced by an immigrant family in the colony of New Zealand was a theme I chose for a short drama, *Laxmi* (screened onto the *Matrilineal Lines* installation) told through the eyes of a young Indian girl.

Through my research of the international Indian diaspora, I discovered the widespread incidence of egalitarian clans having left India as self-exiles. These early diasporic clans were still throwing off a caste-based identity given to them by others. They left India to flee that system of graded inequality. Yet today they experience discrimination brought to the diaspora by different religious groups holding onto hierarchy. I

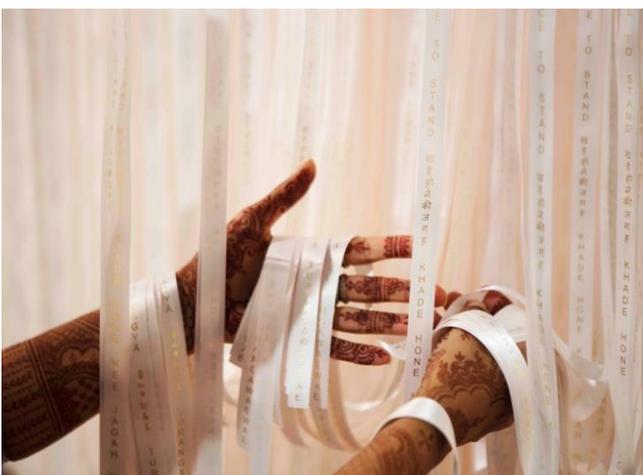
documented a Hidden Apartheid, the film facilitated by the clan/communities who gave us awards for exposing invisible narratives. Some members of the early diaspora continue to excavate their heritage, are healing from the collective trauma of past oppressions, living a spiritual cosmology apart from religious prejudice.

Tiffany Singh

I was born in Aotearoa of Indian and Pacific descent. My fine art practice explores the intersection between arts, education and wellbeing. *Matrilineal Lines* is a work that has been on the brink of materialization for a very long time. My ancestral connection to India is a deep knowledge and philosophy that has been percolating in isolation in Aotearoa after my journey back to my motherland well over a decade ago. Like many of the diaspora community, whether first or second generation, our kinship to ancestors is irrespective of place and rises to the surface, often in unexpected ways. India taught me the powers of faith and inclusion, the small rituals of life that become significant frameworks for existence: getting water, lighting incense, giving thanks. I learnt that the social part of ritual has a lot to do with resonance and how we relate in reciprocity with not only each other, but also the world and her universal lore that surrounds us.

Far reaching into the heart of my practice, these teachings enabled me as an artist to prioritise the voice of other individuals alongside larger communities so that collaboratively we could draw the audience towards a consideration of multiple rather than singular perspectives. This position inadvertently merged the often-siloed sectors of arts, health and education to create artworks that were not intentionally positioned to be political, yet highlighted the important relationships between democratic public life, education and politics to inform and encourage an audience pedagogy to enter the sphere of the political.

By drastically shifting my academic art school framework from self to others and repurposing my practice I was able to draw audiences towards seeking and sharing hard-to-find counter narratives to the all too common status quo opinions. This was a lesson in the teachings of inclusiveness, where the value of the arts provides proactive alliances between the sectors. This provided for cross pollination, networking and advocacy for increased public awareness and a deeper understanding of the role the arts play in national health and within our own diasporic communities.



Matrilineal Lines articulates many of these teachings in one creative moment, distilling the invisible narratives around women and poor people in India who are not permitted in temples. Women, who found their own spiritual practices through integrating themselves into the cosmos and Gaia earth spirit, Gaia herself has her own Matrilineal ancestry. Utilising the scent of the four directions, this gendered discourse is taken a step further with an examination of the spaces in which women live and work. Although largely relegated to the domestic, this work explores how women work within these limitations and how they are perceived when they move outside of them.

A ritual act of offering, the spirit of the mother holds, protects and is portrayed from subjective experiences for those they resonate with, whose own stories have been silenced and urgently need to be told.

Mandi Rupa-Reid

Born in Aotearoa New Zealand, and growing up in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland, I am a sixth generation Indian, European, and feel a strong connection to my Indian heritage. Having also lived and been schooled in Gujarat, India, I gained access to knowledge that crosses cultures. From a young age I had a fascination with dance, and the way dance connected people. Even though we may be disconnected in our verbal language, dance enables communication across cultures.

Bharantanatyam, the Indian Classical Dance I learnt was performed in many multicultural festivals and concerts where Irish Dance, Chinese Classical, Pasifika Dance, Māori Haka and Poi Dance were all on the same stage, embracing unity with diversity.



The global movement of artistic activism influenced me to make connections between the classical performance, experimental and contemporary dance, and universal and spiritual themes. The ancient stories and pantomimes of Bharantanatyam and the choreography of the hand gestures of mudras are blended with contemporary theatre. My documentary, *Indian Classical Dance: Mudras and Storytelling* that is screened along with Tiffany Singh and Mandrika Rupa on our moving art installation presents new ways of seeing and listening to political and social concerns, telling stories that have often been invisible, and demonstrating a new interpretation that emerges from the Indian diaspora.

Matrilineal Lines has particular significance to me as Mandrika's daughter, being part of the lineage and hidden narrative where women taught the younger generations through ritual and spiritual narratives. Dance activism allows a new way of story-telling, revealing social issues, human rights and equality through theatre, to help raise awareness. The opportunity for three women to frame our art individually yet show it as a unified installation shows the power of collaboration and social practice and presents a political statement, which is important for understanding and sharing.

Summary

As activist women we are working together to thread messages through our artistic offerings, providing a space for the spirituality of Indian women to be made visible as some of the contributions over generations of life in the global diaspora. Centred for the moment in Aotearoa New Zealand, we discuss how we explore links between the diverse cultures encountered, weaving together stories and narratives to give voice to female rituals that can serve to empower women in far-flung places in the world. These messages have political and social justice implications as they counter the domination of hierarchical powers to expose inequality and discrimination exported from the Indian homeland. We offer our *Matrilineal Lines* in solidarity with the women of Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally who struggle with similar challenges.

Note: This Issue's cover image, representing 'Matrilineal Lines', was kindly and specially created by Tiffany Singh, Mandrika Rupa, Mandy Rupa-Reid. All Rights Reserved, 2024.©

“What can you do? Capitalism exists.” Sex work and the contemporary work system in Aotearoa New Zealand

Peyton Bond

Introduction

This project interviewed 28 brothel, agency, and/or independent sex workers from across decriminalised Aotearoa New Zealand, where sex work has been decriminalised, about their workplace experiences. This thesis makes use of two frameworks (structural and post-structural) to explore beyond the exploited/empowered binary that radical (exploited) and liberal (empowered) feminism often uses to discuss sex work. I use Marxist feminism to situate sex work within a reproductive labour framing as well as to illuminate the wider gendered relations of labour and the labour market. I use a post-structural approach to interrogate the gendered, patriarchal, capitalist, and neoliberal norms (‘contemporary work system’) that participants both resist and acknowledge in their work. The introduction further explores literature that details pre-Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) Aotearoa New Zealand, the formation of the Aotearoa New Zealand Sex Workers’ Collective (NZPC), the PRA itself, and post-PRA Aotearoa New Zealand.

Literature Review

The literature review first reviews empirical literature of indoor sex workers at work and points out the differences in research and experience in different jurisdictions/under different legislative models, including in the US, UK, and Canada. This section reviews the ‘mainstreaming’ of sex work in certain sectors, across different legislative models (Bernstein, 2007, 2010; Brewis & Linstead, 2000; Maher, Pickering, & Gerard, 2012). Discussions on ‘mainstreaming’ of sex work often centre on empirical analysis around the affect and emotions sex workers are increasingly expected to perform within bookings and in online spaces. It is noted that alongside affect and emotions there are new discourses of acceptability, different and hierarchically based experiences of stigma, and further stratification of who is targeted by police/other violence. The literature review then moves to specifically discuss indoor sex workers working under a decriminalisation model. Since decriminalisation as a policy model is still rather rare, the review included research from the Prostitution Law Reform Committee in Aotearoa, studies from Australia (particularly New South Wales, with some comparative studies included), and more recent Aotearoa studies that focus on bylaw difficulties, management overreach (though improved with decriminalisation), and the rise of the ‘internet economy’ (Abel 2021) for sex workers in New Zealand. Research of this area further notes high mobility in the sex industry and critiques neoliberal economic policies for the spaces where poor work conditions exist (it is emphasised this is not unique to the sex industry, see Gall (2016) and Weeks (2011)). Research also emphasises that stigma continues to exist (Armstrong, 2021). The literature review further addresses the move in sex work research to challenging the labour conditions within which sex work (and all work) exists, especially that of patriarchal capitalism.

This section draws heavily from Smith and Mac’s *Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers’ Rights*, among other texts critical of the broader labour market and work conditions, such as those from Berg (2021) and Cruz (2013), among others. Next, I outline research that uses concepts such as ‘emotional labour’ and ‘body work’ to assess the labour of sex work. This section of the literature review is especially important, as it is most closely aligned with the critical perspective this thesis takes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chapter first explores the use of Marxist feminism in this thesis. Marxist feminism is largely used to locate the findings of the thesis within a framing of gendered and feminised (reproductive)

labour. Marxist feminism aids in not only identifying sex work as work but can also be used to challenge the structures of ‘work’ as they exist today [particularly drawing from scholars such as Kathi Weeks, Katie Cruz, and Heather Berg]. I then detail the use of poststructuralist thought in this thesis, particularly in defining ‘worker subjectivities’ and the contemporary work system. I use worker subjectivities to organise the findings of this thesis, arguing that the norms that govern workers in the workplace produce certain subjectivities (the affective worker, the commodified worker, the responsible worker, the compensated worker, the flexible worker, and the stigmatised worker). The contemporary work system is defined as the neoliberal, gendered, and precarious condition of modern work, within which sex work exists.

Methodology

The methodology outlines the feminist methodologies that shaped this research project, including sex worker-inclusive feminist methodologies/methods and feminist standpoint methodology (Haraway, 2020; Harding, 1987; Holt, 2020; Oakley, 2013; Reinharz & Davidman, 1992; Weeks, 2004). I outline the importance of the ‘subjective’ rather than the objective in research and do not pretend that I am a separate entity to this research. I explain why I chose semi-structured interviews, that interviews sought truths rather than ‘a truth,’ and the usefulness of standpoint theory when interviewing people about their work experiences. I detail the ethical considerations in this section and outline the literature I drew on for best-practice ethics when interviewing workers who have been historically and presently marginalised and stigmatised, often by researchers.

I then outline the process of fieldwork. Recruitment began during the first COVID-19 lockdown, and the majority of interviews took place over Zoom during Level 4 lockdown. A small number of interviews took place in-person during Level 2. I interviewed 27 full-service indoor sex workers, one dominatrix, one former brothel receptionist, and one agency manager. While not quoted in this thesis, the interviews with the former brothel receptionist and agency manager provided helpful background to the thesis. Recruitment was primarily over Twitter and then through word-of-mouth, or snowball. Some recruitment for this fieldwork was done through prior contacts from my Masters research. After interviews, I transcribed and coded in NVivo software using thematic analysis. It was during thematic analysis that I noticed that participants often used comparisons and contrasts with other forms of (predominantly feminised service industry) work and structured the thesis and worker subjectivities accordingly. I am now framing the findings a bit differently. Rather than framing in six different worker subjectivities, I frame the comparisons/contrasts with straight work (non-sex work) that participants explained as being grounded in a ‘subjectivity of critique.’ That is, sex workers, because of the marginalisation, stigmatisation, and historical criminalisation of their work, are uniquely placed to (and did, during interviews), critique the state of modern work, both straight and otherwise.

Analysis chapters were structured in ‘worker’ sections based in experiences described in interviews

Affective worker:

The ‘affective worker’ discusses the emotional and affective labour that sex workers describe, in crafting an experience for clients, in advertising, and in online spaces, including the production of a sex worker persona. Also discussed in this section is burnout and the rising demands on performance as online spaces become more necessary to the labour.

Commodified worker:

The ‘commodified worker’ frames the hierarchies participants articulate existing in the sex industry as a product of broader commodification of social traits (whiteness, class, gender, sexuality) for profit and branding. This section includes discussions on aesthetic labour, erotic capital, anti-fatness, and ‘ideal’ femininities.

Responsible worker:

The ‘responsible worker’ traces the uneven distribution of power in the labour market. In the context of

neoliberal reform and capitalism, workers are made responsible not only for their own safety in the workplace, but also for their survival. That is, people must work if they are to survive, let alone thrive; without employment of some form, there are little safeguards for people to turn to. Within work, either management or financial need/capital have disproportionate power over workers.

Compensated worker:

The ‘compensated worker’ explores the factor that participants most highlighted about the best/most satisfying part of their work: the pay, which (usually) is significantly higher than similar jobs participants had in the past (or were still working in). Critiques participants make around higher compensation include the rising demand for labour online and the precarity of income.

Flexible worker:

Connected closely to the compensated worker, the ‘flexible worker’ explores how participants conceptualise the flexibility of sex work as a favourable contrast to other work. Participants who have life obligations such as study or childcare, or disability and/or chronic illness especially highlighted how inflexible straight work is with other parts of life. Sex work offers a sufficient income without requiring inflexible and long hours that other work requires. However, participants outlined how flexibility and compensation/sufficient income in sex work was not always entirely reliable; the precarity of the sex industry meant that an income could not always be counted on.

Stigmatised worker:

The ‘stigmatised worker’ discusses the stigmatisation that sex workers continue to face from family, friends, partners, and wider society – as well as the impact that this stigma may have on day-to-day life, future work, and safety. This chapter also discusses hierarchies that participants experience (and sometimes reproduce) when resisting social stigma.

Conclusion

The thesis concludes that sex workers offer a striking critique of modern work conditions, systems, and structures. Although changes such as higher welfare payments, increased flexibility for workers, and higher wages across industries could be useful, this thesis concludes that, following Weeks and her ‘reasonable utopia,’ a feminist demand for basic income could prove impactful for shifting both material and discursive conditions for workers, especially workers in feminised industries. A basic income provides a ‘floor beneath which workers cannot fall’ (Cruz, 2013, p. 484) and could make significant impacts in terms of workers’ rights. If workers have a basic income and thus a space to agitate from, power could shift from management/capital to workers and improve work conditions. If the imminent threat of poverty, an inability to afford food/housing, and/or provide for whanau is significantly lessened with a basic income, there is space, time, and resources to make the labour market a ‘workers’ market.’ What people find most beneficial about the sex industry (the comparably high compensation and flexibility) could be replicated across other industries, at the same time as the stress of precarity and inconsistent incomes that (sex) workers experience is reduced with the net of a basic income.

After completing this thesis, I believe that further research could be useful in the following areas:

- The changing landscape of online worker post/during COVID19 pandemic (especially on stigmatisation and wages as more people move into the sex working space through platforms like OnlyFans).
- Targeted interviews about hierarchies and commodification (see Angela Jones (2015a, 2015b, 2020) for some really fascinating work out of the US, especially about Black online sex workers and trans masculine online sex workers – as well as an excellent piece about sex workers with disabilities).
- Sex workers’ thoughts on basic income proposal (especially based on the work of Katie Cruz (2013) and Kathi Weeks (2011)).

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Navigating a Support System That Doesn't Exist: A personal reflection on experiencing the university sector as a student mother

Charlotte Bruce Kells

In 2019, I was 23 and a few months into my Master's thesis when I found out I was expecting my first baby, Imogen. My pregnancy was a surprise, and my partner Duncan and I quickly went about figuring out how to make life with a baby work. We were both students at the time and Duncan had recently left his farming career to return to tertiary education. We discussed our options and decided that he would see out the academic year and return to farming while I finished my postgraduate study. Working in the farming industry at the level my partner does comes with decent pay and accommodation provided, meaning it was a secure option while we found our feet as parents. Once we were more financially stable, he would return to study himself. I felt excited to start our family, ready to become a mother (despite the timing), and supported by my partner, wider whānau, and friends. What I didn't anticipate was how little support there would be from the academic institution or the government for me as a student mother.

The first—and most enduring—barrier I encountered as a student parent was financial, quickly discovering that there was no welfare support designed for students who are the primary carers of children. Having found out I was pregnant while enrolled full-time in my Master's, I had not been doing paid work, and by continuing to study up until Imogen was born, I did not qualify for government paid parental leave (PPL). I was on a University of Otago Postgraduate scholarship, which had to be deferred while I took maternity leave and was not enrolled in my study.² I had not anticipated having no form of income for the duration of my maternity leave, so I looked into taking Studylink payments for financial support. However, because I had to defer study to take maternity leave, I could not claim the weekly living costs loan from Studylink. I then turned to the wider welfare system, believing I would be entitled to some kind of unemployment support for the duration of my maternity leave. However, because Duncan earned above their income thresholds, I was unable to claim any financial aid from the welfare system.³

I did find some financial relief from the Working for Families Tax Credits (WFF). WFF payments are a government payment administered by the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) to parents with dependent children under the age of 18. The entitlements are based on yearly income and family circumstances. There are four kinds of tax credit available to families: family tax credit (paid regardless of where your income comes from); in-work tax credit (available to families who have some income from paid work each week); minimum family tax credit (available when parents work a required number of hours for salary or wages each week); and Best Start (a weekly payment of \$69 for the first 12 months of a baby's life regardless of parents income)⁴ (Inland Revenue, 2023). At the time I was receiving this payment in 2020, our entitlement based on having one child, our total family income (with me having no paid income), and the Best Start payment, totalled \$116 per week.

When Imogen was 10 weeks old, I presented my research at our departmental postgraduate symposium. When she was 12 weeks old, I was back studying full-time, and by the time she was six months old, I handed in my MA thesis. Some of the push to head back into study was wanting to get my MA thesis completed, but the main driver was financial – I needed to get myself off deferral so that I could start

² The University of Otago does not offer any form of parental leave payment/stipend to postgraduate students who need to take parental leave.

³ It is important to note that although above the threshold for welfare support, Duncan's income was (and continues to be) well below the living wage for a family household.

⁴ Although the Best Start tax credit is widely advertised as a weekly payment for the first year of a new baby's life, you are not eligible to receive it while receiving a government paid parental leave. As a result, for a large number of families, the payment is only made for 6 out of 12 months of their baby's first year. This means that many families receive roughly \$1,794 total in their baby's first year, rather than the total \$3,588 advertised.

receiving my scholarship stipend again. Those six months were a haze of sleepless nights, stress, and frustration. She wasn't yet enrolled in an early childhood education (ECE) centre, so I finished my thesis working from home with her in my care, cramming bits of writing between naps or while she played in her jolly jumper, and writing late into the night as she slept. I managed to complete my thesis as a student mother, despite the lack of structural support that would have helped me care for my family. I could only achieve this because my partner did what he could around his paid work, my mother-in-law came to stay with us for days at a time, and my incredibly supportive supervisor offered to take her own annual leave so she could come and look after Imogen while I wrote. Even with all this support, looking back, I don't know how I managed to finish the thesis and I can't imagine how anyone who doesn't have support from a personal network could get through it.

At the beginning of 2021, Imogen was able to start at the University affiliated campus ECE. She was enrolled for 26 hours a week at a total of \$220 per week. This meant that after daycare, petrol and parking, these costs were greater than what I was receiving in wages as a casual tutor and stipend payments from my PhD scholarship.⁵ I was, again, only able to continue studying because I was financially supported to do so by my partner. We managed to make it work, and I was able to gain some independence again while Imogen was in care, and I could focus on starting my PhD. At that point in time, there were no daycare subsidies available to us from the state/government, and the University did not offer any financial support to subsidise daycare fees for parents who are students⁶. We applied for the Childcare Subsidy through Work and Income, but received a letter back saying that we were \$2 over the threshold to receive any support with daycare costs. To put this sum into context, at this time, students were able to claim up to \$270 per week in loan or allowance costs when studying full-time.⁷ Full-time study while looking after children means there is very little room to do extra paid work on top of this. For a majority of student parents, this means the student loan/allowance is their only revenue stream and that part-time daycare costs at a similar rate to mine would take up to 80% of their weekly income.

We were also unpleasantly surprised to receive a huge bill to pay back to IRD at the end of the 2021-2022 financial year. The WFF tax credits, it turned out, were not the saving grace we thought they had been. WFF works on a system where it calculates your entitlement from your income for the financial year (1 April - 31 March). When you sign up for WFF you have two options: 1) to provide your estimated income for the year and start receiving your payments weekly or fortnightly; 2) to opt for a lump-sum end of year payment, which is paid directly to you after IRD has calculated the total income you earned for the financial year. At the time we signed-up for WFF, I had no income, and we desperately needed the weekly payment. So, I entered our total family income into the system and started receiving the weekly payments. Over the next 10 months, whenever I had extra part-time paid work, I immediately updated our household income with IRD, and our payments went down to reflect this.

WFF does not work like other welfare in Aotearoa (which provide financial support while you have no/low income and are removed when your income increases) and at the end of the financial year our total income was calculated, and we were sent a bill from IRD for \$1,323. Apparently, we had been 'overpaid' during the time I had no income, despite how much we needed the financial support at the time, and we were required to pay back the support we received. To unexpectedly owe over \$1,000 after receiving much needed (minimal) financial support was a huge blow. It felt like the small amount of paid work I had done on top of my study and parenting, had been a waste of time, and that the welfare we thought was there to support us had instead become an expensive burden. Unfortunately, the flaws of the WFF system is not an experience unique to us. Each year from May-July, Facebook 'Mum Groups' are flooded with posts from distressed parents confused after receiving similar bills from IRD totalling thousands of dollars, panic-stricken about how they are going to find the money to pay it back.

⁵ It is important to note that scholarship stipends from the University of Otago Postgraduate Scholarship themselves are not enough for students to live on (let alone financially support dependents). At the time of writing this paper, the monthly stipend for a full-time PhD candidate is \$2,558. This equates to roughly \$590 per week untaxed (or \$14 per hour untaxed based on a 40 hour week). To put that sum into context, when both Imogen and Edie were enrolled in daycare part-time at the University ECE Centre fees were \$440 per week: 75% of my stipend.

⁶ At the time of writing the University of Otago still does not offer any form of financial support or subsidies for student parents.

⁷ At the time of this publication student loan/allowance costs has risen to \$302.32 per week.

When I found out I was pregnant with my second baby, Edie, at the end of 2021, I was a few months into my PhD and had figured out how the system worked. Having found that I wasn't eligible for any PPL or financial support after Imogen was born, I wanted to make sure I would qualify for PPL with Edie so that we could make it work financially, so that I could step away from study for six months to focus on my growing young family. In order to do this, I made sure I was doing as much paid work as possible on top of my PhD. I was tutoring, guest lecturing, and doing research assistant work from the time I found out I was pregnant, sometimes for up to 30 hours a week on top of my full-time PhD thesis to ensure that I would receive enough PPL to be able to defer my scholarship for maternity leave and not risk our family's financial stability. Despite pelvic pain, intense COVID, and health anxiety as we moved back to in-person teaching, and severe morning sickness and exhaustion that lasted most of my pregnancy, I felt unable to stop paid work in case it risked my family's precarious financial situation. In the end, after weeks of urging from Duncan, my supervisor, midwife, and friends to step back from both paid work and study, my body made the choice for me. At 37 weeks, I suffered chronic migraines requiring medical attention and prescribed bedrest.

I have the privilege of a supportive partner who works in an industry that pays relatively well and comes with the benefit of free housing. Even with both emotional and financial support, studying while being pregnant and mothering has been an incredibly difficult and, at times, isolating experience. For mothers and parents who don't have the same support systems and financial stability as I have, studying would be an impossibility. If we had to pay rent or a mortgage (like the vast majority of parents in Aotearoa), continuing with my study would not have been a viable option for our whānau.

We know that the majority of the unpaid childrearing labour is done by women and mothers, and mothers are more likely than fathers to leave paid work or reduce their hours to take on this unpaid and often invisible labour. In heterosexual parenting relationships, even when mothers do full-time paid work outside of the home, they are still more likely than male counterparts to do the majority of the domestic, emotional, and mental labour that is required when raising children (Waring, 2018; Flynn & Harris, 2015; Statistics New Zealand, 2016). The argument, then, can be made that out of the population of students who are also parents, mothers – not fathers – are more likely to be doing the majority of childcare responsibilities and (potentially) drop out of or reduce their study in order to care for children. Therefore, student mothers are disproportionately impacted by the lack of financial, structural, and social support available to student parents in Aotearoa.

Despite knowing from my own perspective that the experience of being a student mother is one that comes with a distinct and unique set of challenges, and that there are many out there having the same experience as me, there is very little information available about student parents in Aotearoa. From my position as a student at the University of Otago, who became a mother while studying, there is no available information about resources and support for student parents, nor groups to engage with other student parents on campus. Searching for information about how to find support during my pregnancy and upon preparing to return to study, I found that the University doesn't even have a webpage with information for student parents, let alone systems and safeguards in place to provide any kind of meaningful support.

If there is targeted support for student parents available (either emotionally or financially) there is a clear lack of communication concerning the availability of this support. The University's failure to make this information available shows that, as was the case in my experience of navigating being a student mother, "when there is a lack of collaboration between members of the academic community, the village may appear invisible, leading mothers to believe that no support is available" (Kesinger & Minnick, 2018, p.132). On a broader scale, during the course of writing this piece, I searched extensively for data on how many students enrolled in tertiary education are also parents/caregivers and was unable to find any data on student parents. If it does exist, it would need to be sourced from an Official Information Act request to CensusNZ, Studylink, and universities themselves. At both the university and state level, it seems that student parents are an invisible population, pushing through an incredibly unique and challenging set of circumstances, unseen and perhaps even unable to reach out and connect with each other in this shared experience due to the difficulty of finding the time to do so while parenting, studying, and doing paid work.

Key reports from Census New Zealand that focus on mothers in the workforce only have two categories, employed and unemployed (Flynn & Harris, 2015; Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Student mothers fit into neither of those categories and therefore are not recognised in government studies looking at closing

the gender pay gap and removing the ‘motherhood penalty.’ Much analysis and discussion exist around policy that will address the gender pay gap and the motherhood penalty, but much of this discussion is based on the assumption that mothers have already completed their education and are in paid employment. We will not close the gender pay gap if there is an entire population of women who are blocked from entering higher paid professions (such that require a tertiary education) because they are not supported as mothers at the state or university level to participate in education. In Aotearoa today, tertiary level study is often required to enter specialised careers and earn a higher salary (Pearce et al, 2008). Due to the high cost of university and the low weekly payments available through student loan and allowance, it is difficult to get by financially without either extra financial support or working part-time on top of study (Bond, 2023). If we accept that mothers are more likely to be taking on the majority of the childcare burden, then we can see that the financial need to do part-time work on top of full-time study puts student mothers in a particularly unique economic position. It is an enormous ask that student mothers should do the majority of the childrearing labour, study full-time, and also have to undertake paid part-time work to supplement their income in order to make ends meet. To engage in such amounts of labour means that mothers often have to sacrifice personal relationships (which also serve as an emotional support system) and/or put their overall health and well-being at serious risk (as I did when I was pregnant, caring for a toddler, studying full-time, and doing paid work to ensure I received PPL).

Nationally, there is scarce information, data, or academic studies available on the challenges and needs of student parents in Aotearoa New Zealand. The same stands for academic studies globally, with most research engaging with the experiences of student mothers who are still completing their secondary education. From the international studies that exist, we can see that some of the biggest factors in mothers not completing their studies are lack of affordable childcare and other financial barriers (Kessinger & Minnick, 2018); that the support from academic faculty is vital to a positive and successful tertiary education for mothers (Dickson & Tennant, 2018); and that greater flexibility with study, financial support, and the ability to connect with other student parents will increase the ability for student mothers to achieve educational equity (Madden, 2019).

I want to close out this piece by drawing attention to the University of Otago parental leave policy, which outlines the University’s ‘family friendly’ and ‘whānau centred’ approach to supporting staff members who are parents:

“The University recognises and celebrates the importance of whānau by providing a comprehensive and inclusive parental leave policy which aims to support all parents appropriately. The parental leave policy is based on the principle of manaakitanga (generosity of spirit) and should be implemented in a way that:

- normalises a positive approach to childbirth and parenting, an acceptance that parents are an integral part of our society and working environment: a whānau approach;
- supports all staff to achieve a satisfying and productive life/work balance;
- bases all decision-making on the principles of equity, transparency and social justice;
- is as flexible as possible, focussing on finding creative solutions that will work for individuals while at the same time safeguarding the interests of the department and the University;
- minimises the impact of parenthood on career development and ensures that all staff regardless of their family circumstances have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential;
- is culturally appropriate; and is inclusive and recognises changing social norms” (University of Otago, 2023).

My experience as a postgraduate student mother does not align with what the university claims are their whānau centred values. Apparently, these values are reserved for those in the university community who have a permanent contract (as I know from experience of being a contract worker for the University). The university as an institution does not provide any meaningful policy, safeguards or support for student parents. Manaakitanga is not implemented when considering or responding to the very distinctive needs of student

parents. If I have experienced any of these whānau centred values in adjusting to and living out roles as both student and mother, it has been through the individual relationships I have nurtured with departmental staff and my postgraduate peers. The policy (or lack thereof) does not recognise changing social norms, where mothers are more likely to engage in higher education and student fathers keener to take a more active role in raising their children. Instead, the current model sits on the historically patriarchal structure of university education, one that was designed only for men who have woman at home to ensure the domestic labour is taken care of. A model that women and mothers were never meant to engage with. Despite a pretence from the state and university institution of being willing to adapt to and accommodate to the changing nature and form of relationships within the family, “neoliberal economists and legal theorists wish to reestablish the private family as the primary source of economic security and a comprehensive alternative to the welfare state” (Cooper, 2017, p.9).

From lived perspective, I and others know that more needs to be done to support parents in Aotearoa – regardless of their status as students, workers, or unwaged stay-at-home parents. More specifically in this piece, I have looked to student parents like myself who are struggling to continue with their education due to a lack of structural and systemic support. I wholeheartedly believe that more *can* and *should* be done to support them. However, the experience of living in a culture so steeped in individualist and anti-welfare neoliberal norms makes it hard on a personal level to continue hoping and imagining a different system, a more supportive structure. The neoliberal, capitalist, and patriarchal norms of appropriate life trajectories and family structures are pervasive, and at times I find myself thinking: of course being a student and being a parent is hard, I *chose* to have children before I completed my education, before I had a stable income, before I owned a home. *It's my own fault that it's hard. I made this choice.* But we can, and we need to, collectively break through this way of thinking and push to change the system and ensure there is support for student parents in Aotearoa.

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Political Science in Aotearoa New Zealand. What about the Women?

Heather Devere

Introduction

In her Presidential Address to the Canadian Political Science Association in 2015, Professor Jill Vickers addressed the issue of the ‘considerable resistance to change’ towards the inclusion of gender in the discipline, particularly in Anglo-American universities (p.748). Political science is labelled by Vickers as ‘a laggard regarding gender’ that ‘resists diversity more than most other social sciences’ (p.749). She claims that ‘despite significant increases in the number of women professors and the growth of feminist political science, transformative change hasn’t occurred in how conventional political scientists think about politics.’ This would require ‘the successful mainstreaming of gender-focused knowledge and the use of “gender” as a category of analysis in studies of politics.’ (p.749).

Other feminist scholars have attributed this to a deeply rooted ‘ontological maleness’ (Keränen 1999) and ‘masculinism’ as part of the foundation of the politics discipline (Eichler 1984). As Marian Sawyer (2004) puts it, after decades of effort to change how traditional political scientists think ‘feminist scholarship remains additive rather than transformative of the discipline’ (p.564). In a study of New Zealand, Jennifer Curtin (2013) found that few political scientists acknowledge contributions by feminist scholars. Feminist methodologies and knowledge are seen as very disruptive to mainstream political science and Vickers considers that it is most likely that ‘differences in experience of women and of race, ethnic and minority sexualities’ will be ignored. She is concerned that ‘until the discipline changes how it thinks about diversity and gender, it will remain ill-equipped to solve some of the century’s most pressing political problems’ (p.767).

This commentary will take a brief look at two politics publications in Aotearoa New Zealand, *Political Science* and *Women Talking Politics*, to analyse the coverage of issues that relate to women and those of minority sexualities.

Political Science: Journal for Aotearoa New Zealand

In Aotearoa New Zealand, there is only one journal devoted to political studies and international relations. *Political Science*, now published by Taylor Francis and established in 1948 by the Politics department of Victoria University of Wellington, is one of the longest surviving journals in political science globally. In a recent report from the journal, it is stated that ‘the editors have a commitment to encourage New Zealand-based scholars and articles that cover all aspects of New Zealand politics, with particular attention to new and innovative areas of inquiry’ (*Political Science* 2012–2022 p.1). In their report there is reference to the journal’s commitment to indigenous politics and a breakdown of articles on Māori politics and by Māori authors, but there is no mention of gender.

The first fifty years of the journal’s history were analysed for the visibility of women in 1998. Rae Nicholl and Margaret Cousins had an article published in *Political Science* entitled ‘Brief Encounter? Women and Political Science’. After reviewing the 96 editions of the journal between 1948 and 1998, they found that ‘numerically women have been treated badly by the journal’ over its first 50 years (p.39). Only 8.9 per cent of the 560 articles were written by women and of the 12 articles written about women, just 57 per cent were written by women. The authors list the significant political events, especially since the second wave of feminism, that have remained ‘unheralded’ (p.39), and the range of significant political changes that have gone ‘unnoticed’ by the journal (p.40).

While Nicholl and Cousins do not encounter overt sexism in the second 25 years of its existence,

they find Political Science guilty of ‘covert, or thoughtless, exclusion’ (p.48) and conclude that it is ‘not a desirable state of affairs’ that ‘women are still largely invisible in ... the gatekeeper journal for the New Zealand profession’ (p.48). Several recommendations were made to encourage a greater presence for women including a women and politics prize, commissioning ‘well-regarded feminist writers’, greater use of the work of female students, and a mentoring system to encourage women into the field of political studies. For Nicholl and Cousins, ‘the hope here is that when women study women, new, non-sexist, insights into the field of women’s political activity will continue to emerge’ (p.50).

So, has anything changed in the subsequent twenty four years? It took from 1998 to 2004 before there was another article on issues related to women published in Political Science, although there were 16 book reviews by women of books authored or edited by women on topics related to gender and politics, 6 of these in 2001. An important Special Issue on Women in Politics in 2013 included five articles by women on women’s issues, as well as a review and a research note, the most in any issue in the journal’s 74-year history. There are a lot more women-authored articles, but in the last twenty-four years, apart from the special issue, only five articles on the political concerns of women and gender have appeared. And notably, in the last 6 years, since 2016, there have been no articles or book reviews with a focus on women or gender. All contributions on women and gender-related topics, mostly by women (apart from 2 articles by men) are listed in Table 1.

Women Talking Politics: A Research Magazine for Aotearoa New Zealand

While Political Science is announced on the NZPSA website as ‘Aotearoa New Zealand’s only disciplinary political science journal’ there is another a smaller, less prestigious publication that focuses on women, gender, and politics in Aotearoa. Established in 1987 as the research vehicle for work on, for and by women in political science, the publication has evolved into what is now Women Talking Politics: The Research Magazine for the New Zealand Political Studies Association/Te Kāhui Tātai Tōrangapū o Aotearoa (<https://nzpsa.com/women-talking-politics>). This newsletter turned research journal has kept the voice of women and diversity in political science alive in this country.

The editors over the years of this publication have been Bronwyn Hayward (1987-1994 and 2009); Heather Devere (1995-1997); Kate McMillan (1999-2003); Janine Hayward (2004-2006); Valentina Cardo (2014); Lena Tan (2015); Greta Snyder and Priya Kurian (2016); Priya Kurian and Gauri Nandedkar (2017); Sylvia Nissen and Jean Drage (2018); Sarah Hendrica Bickerton (2019); Lara Greaves and Jennifer Curtin (2020-2021); In 2022 it moved to an editorial team including Barbara Bedeschi-Lweando, Heather Devere, Nashie Shmoon and Heather Tribe (2022-2023), with the addition of Shirin Brown in 2023. There were no issues published between 2007 and 2013. At some stages editors were supported by an editorial board (2014-2017). Each issue names those who supported the publication, both women and men. Originally named as the Aotearoa/New Zealand Women and Politics Network Newsletter, when Bronwyn Hayward initiated this research outlet, the title of Women Talking Politics appeared first under Kate McMillan’s leadership.

There are too many articles and pieces to be able to list individually each item focused on women, gender and politics in the thirty-five years of the publication now titled Women Talking Politics. Back copies are available on the NZPSA website going back to 1992. Topics covered since 1992 related to women in academic, body politics, women and civil society, the Covid pandemic, women and development, women and employment, women and the environment, women in general elections, women’s representation and participation, women and voting, gender voting patterns, feminism and ideology, decolonization and feminization, indigenous politics, gender and international relations, gender and the media, poverty for women and children, protests and social movements, rights of women and LGBTQ+, gender and violence. Table 2 provides some of the sub-topics included. Countries covered in addition to Aotearoa New Zealand include Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, India, Iran, Mexico, the Northern Marianas, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, USA, West Papua.

While there were no articles nor book reviews related to gender in politics published between

2016 and 2022 in Political Science, Table 3 shows that there were plenty of political issues facing women in those years. In *Women Talking Politics* during this period, there were 20 peer-reviewed articles on women or LGBTQ+; there were 10 pieces that include commentary/reflections/election analysis/presidential address/award winning essay; there were 9 research briefs on student's work that related to gender and politics; there were 6 creative pieces including visual essays and a play, as well as poems: there were 7 book reviews (including 4 on New Zealand women MPs), as well as TV, film and exhibition reviews; and 5 editorials commenting on gender issue in politics.

Discussion

Further research would give a clearer picture of where women have penetrated into the halls of power of the discipline. Identified are only articles and other writings that were directly referencing gender as a concept to include in political analysis. Articles that were not focused explicitly on women and gender are not included in this study. The number of articles written by women in Political Science has likewise not been identified in this commentary. It is acknowledged that a brief review indicates that there has been an increase in women-authored pieces.

What is clear, however, is that there are dozens of topics that are political and relevant to women, that deal with issues of gender and identity, that could be integrated into a mainstream political science journal. Whether the lack is due to gatekeeping, whether there is overt sexism, whether it is 'covert' exclusion, or just thoughtlessness, whether the discipline is inherently masculinist, whether it is about paternalism, or misogyny, or whether women are not submitting these kinds of articles to Political Science, it is an indictment of our political studies/political science area of academia that there is so little on these topics in the only officially recognized publication that represents research and academic debate on politics, international relations and peace and conflict studies from a New Zealand perspective. This is particularly of concern as we witness an increase in blatant misogyny towards women globally (see for example Banet-Weiser 2018; Castillo Díaz and Valji 2019; Loewen 2022; Wilson 2022).

Throughout its 35 years, the small and inconspicuous publication *Women Talking Politics* that represents the work of the relatively few women academics in political science has kept going, with some stumbles, propped up by the extra and voluntary work of women students. Without it, it could be argued, women's voices would be almost entirely invisible, as would be the voices of non-binary persons. We could list the numerous recommendations made by academic scholars, feminists, authors, and activists that could improve this situation. Most of these have, however, been tried, implemented for a short period, to fall back to another stasis. However, we do have this small vehicle for our diverse voices, so while we battle for our places in the mainstream, let's continue to work in this space, as women have always done, from the edges, in communities, in collaborative groups, to keep this going.

The age-old debate about equity and equality, gender-mainstreaming and integration versus gender-specific approaches is one that feminist political scientists need to grapple with. Can we reform the Political Science journal and how long will it take? Do we need to upgrade *Women Talking Politics* to academic journal status and attempt to raise its status? How do we get equality in the discipline of Political Science? What 'counts' as politics? How long will the focus on 'publish or perish' last in academia? We know that resources are limited and so is our energy, so where should we concentrate our efforts?

Conclusion

In the light of on-going evidence that the discipline of political science has been slow to deal with gender issues, a brief study was undertaken of the two academic politics publications in Aotearoa New Zealand. The long-standing journal *Political Science's* 96 editions had been reviewed from 1948 to 1998 by Nicoll and Cousins. This current study looked at the next 54 editions from 1999 to 2022. The smaller more recent research output for political scientists is *Women Talking Politics*. Originating in the late 1980s,

and known by different names, to give women 'a voice' in the discipline. This is reviewed from 1987 to 2022. This study is limited to only items that are explicitly linked to gender issues. Back copies for both Political Science and Women Talking Politics are available on the New Zealand Politics Association (NZPSA) website.

The findings of Nicoll and Cousins related to Political Science are confirmed, to a degree, in this 2022 study, with most gender focus in book reviews rather than in full articles. Significant issues that have impacted on women in particular have been absent from the pages of Political Science, with the last six years having nothing that pertains specifically to gender concerns.

On the other hand, Women Talking Politics has kept gender concerns in the forefront with coverage of multiple articles that engage with topics such as women's political campaigning, impact on and role of women in elections, gender voting trends, women in academia, in development, in employment, in climate change, in the media, in research. Feminist analyses have been added to issues of the pandemic, disasters, environment, indigenous politics, violence against women, misogyny and sexual assault, child and women's poverty, women's rights, sexual and reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ rights, electoral reform, restorative justice, refugee and migrant women. As illustrated in the items published in Women Talking Politics for the years between 2016 and 2022, there was substantial content appropriate for publication in Political Science.

In 2017, women heralded the election as 'a win for women's representation' with an impressive young woman at the helm. Women's electoral success in the 2019 local elections was considered as a possible 'womenquake', the Me Too Movement, and Black Lives Matter, brought these issues to the forefront. Academia was being 'decolonised' and LGBTQ+ rights were on the agenda. However, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's term of office has been a challenge for her and for women and minority groups generally, with climate change escalating, the ongoing consequences of the Covid pandemic, misogyny on the rise, gender-based violence still very present, indigenous and migrant women at risk, cost of living increasing and wars impacting all of us around the world. These are issues that are important not only for women, but for Aotearoa and its place in the world. Second wave feminists demanded that the experience of women should be recognized in political debate. Current feminism, now intertwined with intersectionality, continues to expose white male privilege. However, the voices of the non-privileged are unheard in mainstream journals. Publications such as Women Talking Politics are vital to maintain the challenge of gender-based privilege in the political realm.

Appendix 1: Items by and about women in *Political Science* (1998-2022) and *Aotearoa/New Zealand Women and Politics Network Newsletter* and *Women Talking Politics* 1992-2022

Table 1: Items by and about women and gender in Political Science 1998-2022

YEAR	AUTHOR/S	TITLE	
2022			
2021			
2020			
2019			
2018			
2017			
2016	Alison Plumb	The substantive representation of women on ‘morality politics’ issues in Australia and the UK	Article 68:1, pp.23-35
2015			
2014	Kerryn Baker	Explaining the outcome of gender quota campaigns in Samoa and Papua New Guinea	Article 66:1, pp. 63-83
	Jennifer Curtin	Book Review of Alison McCulloch (2013) <i>Fighting to Choose: The Abortion Rights Struggle in New Zealand</i> . Wellington, Victoria University Press.	Book Review 66:1, pp. 86-88
2013	Hilde Coffe and Kate McMillan	Introduction to Special Issue on Women in Politics	Introduction 65:1, pp. 4-7
	Julia Schuster	Invisible feminists? Social media and young women’s participation.	Article 65:1, pp.8-24
	Hilde CoffÉ	Gender and party choice at the 2011 New Zealand general election	Article 65:1, pp 25-45.
	Petra Meier and Emanuela Lombardo	Gender quotas, gender mainstreaming and gender relations in politics	Article 65:1, pp. 46-62
	Jennifer Curtin	Women and political science in New Zealand	Article 65:1, pp. 63-83
	Claire Timperley	Women in the academy: Key studies on gender in political science	Review Article 65:1, pp. 84-104
	Marian Sawyer	Misogyny and misrepresentation: Women in Australian Parliaments.	Research Note 65:1, pp. 105-117
2012			
2011			
2010	Anna McMartin	Book Review of Kate McMillan, John Leslie* and Elizabeth McLeay (eds) (2009) <i>Rethinking Women and Politics: New Zealand and Comparative Perspectives</i> . Wellington, Victoria University Press	Book Review 62:1, pp. 105-106
2009			
2008	Colin James*	[In Special issue on NZ: Independence and prime ministers 1947-2007] Norman Kirk, Robert Muldoon, David Lange, and Helen Clark – and John Key	Article 60:2, pp. 95-101
2007			
2006			
2005	Marion Tremblay	Women’s political representation: Does the electoral system matter?	Article 57:1, pp. 59-75
2004	Jesse Nichols	Helen Clark: A pragmatic strong Prime Minister	Article 56:2, pp. 99-109
	Jacqui True	Book Review of Louise A. Chappell (2002) <i>Gendering Government: Feminist Engagement with the State in Australia and Vancouver</i> . Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press	Book Review 56:2, pp. 136-138
	Louise Chappell	Book Review of Jacqui True (2003) <i>Gender, Globalisation and Postsocialism: The Czech Republic after Communism</i> . New York, Columbia University Press.	Book Review 56:2, pp. 138-139
2003			

2002	Melanie Nolan	Book Review of Deborah Montgomerie (2001) <i>The Women's War: New Zealand, 1939-45</i> . Auckland, Auckland University Press.	Book Review 54:1, pp. 92-93
2001	Celia Briar	Book Review of Mary Daly (2000) <i>The Gender Division of Welfare: The Impact of the British and German Welfare States</i> . Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.	Book Review 53:2, pp. 64-65
	Mary Murray	Book Review of Birte Siim (2000) <i>Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark</i> . Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.	Book Review 53:2, pp. 76-77
	Deborah Russell	Book Review of Kristin Waters (ed) (2000) <i>Men and Women Political Theorists: Enlightened Conversations</i> . Oxford, Blackwell.	Book Review 53:2, pp. 78-80
	Christine Cheyne	Book Review of Melanie Nolan (2000) <i>Breadwinning: New Zealand Women and the State</i> . Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press.	Book Review 53:1, pp. 85-86.
	Joanna Goven	Book Review of Judith Squires (1999) <i>Gender in Political Theory</i> . Cambridge, Polity Press.	Book Review 53:2, pp. 93-94
2000	Margaret Tennant	Book Review of Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie (eds) (1999) <i>The Gendered Kivi</i> . Auckland, Auckland University Press.	Book Review 52:1, pp. 181-182.
	Caroline Daley	Book Review of Caroline Daley, Robin Law, Hugh Cambell and John Dolan (eds) <i>Masculinities in Aotearoa/New Zealand</i> . Palmerston North, Dunmore.	Book Review 52:1, pp. 86-88.
1999	Stephen Levine*	Book Review of Carol Rankin (1993) <i>Women and Parliament 1893-1993: 100 Years of Institutional Change</i> . Wellington, Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives.	Book Review 51:2, pp. 202-204
	Christine Cheyne	Book Review of Rian Voet (1998) <i>Feminism and Citizenship</i> . London, Sage Publications.	Book Review 51:2, pp. 206-208.
	Bronwyn Hayward	Book Review of Rosemary Du Plessis and Lynne Alice (eds.) (1998) <i>Feminist Thought in Aotearoa New Zealand: Connections and Differences</i> . Auckland, Oxford University Press.	Book Review 51:1, pp. 84-86
	Kosuke Shimizu	Book Review of Sally J. Kenney and Helen Kinsella (eds.) (1997) <i>Politics and Feminist Standpoint Theories</i> . New York, The Haworth Press.	Book Review 51:1, pp. 86-87
1998	Rae Nicholl and Margaret Cousins	Brief encounter? Women and Political Science.	Article 50:1, pp. 38-52

*he/his

Table 2: Topics on women and gender in *Aotearoa/New Zealand Women and Politics Network Newsletter* and *Women Talking Politics* 1992-2022

Academia	Women in International Relations, gender in Peace and Conflict Studies, women in Political Science, decolonising political science, decolonising peace and conflict studies, academic women in Nigeria.
Body politics	The politics of reproduction, hyperandrogenism in female athletes, identity, LGBTQ+ in Russia.
Civil society	Civic friendship and women, gender in restorative justice, migrant and ethnic women, positive peace and gender.
Covid pandemic	Jacinda Ardern's handling of COVID and lockdowns, pandemic interregnum.
Development	Research and development, women and development
Employment	Women in Trade Unions, women in NZ energy sector, unpaid work, prostitution reform,
Environment	Women and climate change, infant feeding during crises, women and the environment.
General elections	1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2017, 2020
Ideology	Women and the New Rights, feminism and neoliberalism.
Indigenous politics	Māori and Pasifika, census reports, First Nations women in Canada, Indigenous women in West Papua
International relations	Women and international security, trafficking of women, Afghanistan, the Taliban and women, cultural conflict
Media	Cyber-politics, gender and the media, media representation of women
Poverty	Women and welfare, child poverty
Protest and social movements	Women's March, #Me Too campaign, Climate change, Everyday Peace, Women, Life, Freedom.
Representation and participation	Local government, women MPs, maiden speeches, empowering adolescent girls, younger women in politics, Jacinda Ardern and Prime Minister.
Research	Methodologies, gendered research
Rights	Women's rights, sexual and reproductive rights, gender equity, LGBTQ+ rights, health and access to medicine.
Violence	Gender-based violence, violence and feminism, misogyny, sexual assault, poems for Juliana.
Voting	Electoral reform and women; voting patterns, women's suffrage.

Table 3: Items by and about women and gender in Women Talking Politics: 2016-2022

YEAR	AUTHOR/S	TITLE	
2022	Zohreen Ali	Access to medicines as a human right: Is it to be or not to be?	Article pp.65-77
	Tara Brabazon	The Medusa is not laughing: place of ignorance in a (post) pandemic interrgnum.	Article pp.37-53
	Heather Devere, Katerina Standish and Kelli Te Maihāroa	Women talking positive peace: Gendering, feminising and decolonising peace and conflict studies in Aotearoa New Zealand.	Article pp 84-95
	Elle Dibova	Imagined traditions versus real lives: explaining the link between hegemonic national identity and the othering of LGBT+ people in contemporary Russia.	Article pp 12-34
	Heather Tribe	Infant feeding during social instability: future climate disruptions based on crises in Aotearoa's present and recent past.	Article pp 54-64
	Monica Carrer	Gendered experiences and the gap between everyday and organized activism.	Commentary pp. 79-83.
	Negar Partow and Editors	WOMEN. LIFE. FREEDOM – Calling on our Prime Minister to stand with Iranian women and all women.	Commentary pp. 5-6
	Hafiza Yazdani	Afghan women and Taliban: An individual experience and story	Commentary pp. 9-11
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*he/his

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Has better female representation resulted in better canvassing of women's issues in the 2023 New Zealand General Election?

Shirin Brown

The Sixth Labour Government (26 October 2017 to 27 November 2023) with Dame Jacinda Ardern as Prime Minister until January 2023, popularised kindness as part of the political discourse and was described as [a breath of fresh air](#) in New Zealand and world politics. For the 2020 election, The NZ Labour Party ran a “50/50 by 2020” campaign to promote equal representation of Labour women on the Labour list. In 2022, for the first time, [female MPs outnumbered male MPs](#), as a direct consequence of this policy. In 2023, Carmel Sepuloni, [a Pacifica woman became deputy prime](#) minister. The gender pay gap has now been reduced to 8.6% and pay equity of nurses was addressed in July 2023 through [pay negotiations](#) with the Public Service Association (PSA).

Can women then feel comfortable that they will be heard in decision-making arenas, that their needs will be discussed and represented equitably within the political discourse and that they will feel safe in performing their role? While some progress has been made, there is still work to be done to put issues of concern to women at the forefront of the political debate, and to challenge the public and media perceptions of women politicians.

The bread and butter budget proposed by the Labour Party for the 2023 elections did put family budgeting and concerns at the forefront of the discourse. Families and the cost of living were less prominent for the NZ National Party, although they did reference the “squeezed middle” which seemed to be an empty signifier as illustrated by [the Spinoff article](#), perhaps representing the disgruntled National Party voter.

While the media coverage of the election included a constant barrage of political discussion and interviews on issues such as tax, debt, and crime, with some discussion on housing, health care and emissions trading, there were, far fewer conversations on mental health provisions, use of drugs and alcohol, or addressing family violence. Climate change, which internationally is shown [to affect women and children disproportionately](#) was barely discussed. The burden of poverty which also predominantly affects women was also oddly absent from the political discourse. While much was made of school lunches and whether they would continue to be funded, there was little conversation on concrete steps to further reduce the gender and ethnic pay gaps which would create long term material benefit for those struggling with poverty.

In terms of representation, the minor party debates provided an interesting insight into the perceptions and positioning of female leaders by the media. In the first one, the [NewsHub Nation Powerbrokers' Debate](#), Marama Davidson of the Green Party was described as the most informed and credible voice, and both she and Debbie Ngarewa-Packer of Te Pāti Māori spoke about poverty and housing. However, there was little recognition of this in the analysis that followed the debate. Visually framed within the protective arms of their male counterparts, the women were accused of constantly high-fiving (they did this once) and being in a “bromance”. Overall, their behaviour was frowned on for bringing female humour into the political discourse. In terms of percentage of words spoken the two female candidates contributed [approximately half as much](#) to the debate as their male counterparts. To his credit, commentator Simon Wilson reflected that the camaraderie between the women shows their potential to work together.

In the [second minor parties debate](#), there were surprisingly no women speakers at all, with four men answering questions of a male presenter. The debate then deteriorating into personal point scoring, creating a vibe of locker room towel snapping.

Women candidates also seemed to struggle to achieve comparable popularity in spite of their political experience and acumen. Marama Davidson and Debbie Ngarewa-Packer scored sixth and eighth out of nine in terms of likeability in the pre-election [votecompass poll](#) of party leaders. Even the relatively unknown TOPS leader (Raf who?) scored more than Ngarewa-Packer who is already in Parliament. This could reflect

the bias against female candidates, where female assertiveness and strength continues to be associated with being power-hungry, whereas male politicians who display this same feature are regarded as charming and competent ([Okimoto & Brescoll 2010](#)).

On the campaign trail women candidates were increasingly and disproportionately targeted by negative behaviour. Angela Roberts reported being slapped by a member of public and a [trespass notice](#) was served on a man entering the home of Te Pāti Māori candidate Hana Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke. At a recent Kerikeri debate, Willow Jean Pryor was subjected to [racist heckling](#). Dame Jacinda Ardern left office abruptly in January 2023, citing [occupational burnout](#). She has remained adamant that [threats and abuse](#) were not the reason for her resignation. However, it is reasonable to think that the constant barrage of negativity directed at her on social media and the heightened security around her and her family contributed to the stress she felt in the role. Given the higher levels of personal attacks experienced by younger, female and often ethnically non-European MPs, it would be interesting to see whether these MPs experience the same longevity of career as those who do not have these characteristics and do not experience systematic abuse.

The above suggests that while women are increasingly represented, there is some way to go in terms of representation, action on issues that affect women disproportionately, the safety of women candidates, and their acceptance as credible political actors. There is an opportunity here for the media and the public to recognise our own biases and to challenge our perceptions of what is appropriate political behaviour. The expectation that debates need to be confrontational does not serve our ability to see how candidates align on policy for example.

The [2023 election results](#), also illustrate the fragility of the representational gains. While women make up 45.1% of MPs, the National Act and NZ First government has 34.5% female representation. Aside from gains by Māori, descriptive representation in MPs has also dropped for Pacific, non-Pacific and Māori ethnic communities.

Aside from the obvious comment that women hold up half the world and deserve to be represented equitably, what is now required is a greater valuing of female leadership qualities and the support of female candidates. Given the importance of addressing women's needs in creating more just societies, it is vitally important that we nurture women's voices, and create the conditions for us to feel safe, heard and effective once elected.

Neurodiversity, a poem

Glenda Lovell

That's what I am, a little bit quirky, a little bit anxious, a little bit uncomfortable in my own skin...
Society confuses me, it's like the worlds rushing by and I can't jump on...

Over stimulated and LOUD is how I find life sometimes, those things that you don't see, hear or feel...
I do,
That flickering light,
That high pitch noise,
That vibration,
It all builds to spin me off my access.

Overwhelm is what I feel when,
I'm with too many people,
I'm in a noisy place,
I'm in a busy environment,
I become too stimulated by all the above, which has added up throughout my day...

Stimming or tic's are my way to self-regulate my way back to calm my internal stress and nervous system...

Everyone is different, everyone deals with all the above differently,
Sometimes I need medical intervention to control these and other times just taking the pressure and stress away is what I need.

Meltdown, that's what I have when all the above gets too much, it can range from...
Full inconsolable shut down of ALL my senses,
Partially having to escape, cry, scream, move, spin, fiddle, flap or just sit...

We don't like to be isolated (unless we chose to be) or stared at.
Understanding is what we need,
Sometimes our families need this also,
Someone who understands and listens as sometimes its massive and hard and scary...

I am a mum of a neurodiverse person,
Just being there, a hug... that's what we need.
Advice is gratefully accepted IF you are also in the same place as us...
Please don't tell me my child is naughty, disruptive, or disrespectful,

I know my child is dealing with the most overwhelming life challenges the can face...

Please be kind, we all need kindness, patients and understanding.

A few words from Glenda...

My name is Glenda Lovell, and our son was diagnosed with autism & ADHD at 7 years old. He is now 19 and life has been tough, school and now finding a job with his diagnoses is even tougher.

We were lucky and qualified for ORR's (ongoing reviewable resourcing scheme) funding, this meant we at least had some teacher aides help for what was granted at 30 hours per week. Sadly, though by the time the TA's hourly rate and holiday pay, and moderation is complete this then adjusts to only approx. 5 hours per week. This needs to change, and the ORR's application process needs to be investigated to be fairer for more children with high needs.

I have worked in the school system in the past as a student support teacher and TA also, I found a huge lack of information and other recourses available not only for teachers but for parents like me...

Newly diagnosed and in a confused state of "what next" there are so many resources available but very little specialized help. We need specialized case workers to help navigate newly diagnosed families to what is available to them and where.

I have helped multiple families navigate through the red tape and where and how to find services and funding that they are not only entitled to but need.

These families are so relieved to have someone to advocate for them and who can direct them to the services available... I really wished I had someone when I was feeling lost and vulnerable through all that red tape!

As an advocate for these families, I would like to see the government set up more services to help newly diagnosed families through the first few years of their child's diagnosis and continue beyond into employment.

We ourselves have missed out on lots of funding and benefits because we just didn't know it was available to us, or how to access it.

I believe the government's priority should be to employ some specialty case workers to help families like us.

To fund teacher aids into every class and school in NZ and specially make funding available in the new entrant and junior years to help these kids and others gain good grounding and learn strategies to navigate not only the school system, but the world as adults.

No, Thank You, a poem

Kathy Voyles

(on democracy) mockery!

No Thank You
said the woman at the supermarket

I know your sort

You want me to vote
to talk
to you
you, a stranger

You say
vote

I say Up Yours

Bondage I say
Sid Vicious quick

What do I say?

Um, I am a candidate

I don't even know you people
she says

I am one
A candidate

I try and make eye contact

I am not bloody voting
for strangers
Says she

I wonder

if she'd

want to be my friend

Betcha not

I'm too green

too liberal

plus I loved
last year's fossil fuel free
Chrissie parade

I think she's unhappy
a lot of us are

I want to ask her why

is it loneliness
social isolation
unhappy in love
never loved
wasn't loved
is she ill
chronic fatigue?

I'm not voting
I don't know you

I wonder, why so mean?

makes me realise

that
under the long white cloud
beside
our glistening seas
beneath our tui filled trees

there's a darkness
benighting the people and we are nowhere near
being the bees
knees

Let's do a bit
of healing
a lot of chatting

and try and be
devastatingly kind

A Mediocre Poem

Kathy Voyles

About campaigning and hate

Well that doesn't sound very positive does it?

But it had to be written.

I am trying
Unsuccessfully to write a poem
A mediocre poem will do
About voting
About campaigning outside Countdown on
Waiheke

And then I stare
At my twitter feed

Because I suspect
Twitter might die

And I need to know
What Julie Fairey

Thinks
Because she is a very fine human being

I think about her being on the Auckland Council
With those who claim to seek
Accountability
(in a climate emergency - cmon!)
When that is possibly not their main ideology

Oops, this is starting to sound like
An article

Not a poem

So let me
Tell you what happened

What happened when I stood
Twitter go away
I stood
I stood
Not alone but with friends
And I asked
"Have you got your voting papers?"
A harmless enough question, right?
I wore my Green Party T-shirt

And gave out my cards
And sung the praises of others
I am better at that

I spoke of Efeso Collins
And of Kylee
And the Greens

I met lots of people
Who had worked with me
Eaten my food
Knew me
Mostly it was good....

Older and young women were the best to talk to
Sorry men

But sometimes it bit into my soul
And I came home to breathe
And smell the lemons from my tree
And the mint in my garden

Knowing how lucky I am
To have a home
And a garden
And a bed, and a washing machine

To recover from
The misery of hate

One man, tall and over 40
Wanted to hang me
Because all the Greens
Needed to be hung

Apparently we had to go to Nuremberg first
(has he seen the price of international travel?)

I felt like he would explode
Like a Dr Who monster
Full of wind and flatulence
I see him standing on the ramp
At Countdown

Extinguishing all hope
flooding the car park with darkness
With oily pools of despair
I try & think up some kindness
To explain
Maybe he has bad hemorrhoids

I come home with my basket
Stuffed full of Efeso brochures and my recipes
And think about the tall man

With 10 bottles of Coke
Who said he
Wouldn't vote for Efeso
Because of "RACE"
I said
Rather strongly
We are ALL in the Human Race

He said that
Out loud
On my island
To my face
While looking
At the face
Of a Good man
Running for Mayor

I came home
I sat
My hands laid upon my smooth table
That wood does me so much good
I thought about the next election

And Jeanette Fritsimmons
Attack the policy, not the person
There you go

There's lots more
But that's enough for now

Let me make this clear
You are all needed

We will need to counter the hate
The darkness
The need to attack
Those oily pools

Let's be clear
We must stop it

Vote as if it was your last vote
Vote for your loved ones & your kids
You will know what to do
Don't vote for hate.

Vote for warmth and lemons and honey
Basil & good.

Note: The 2023 election saw Efeso Collins stand as the first Pacific candidate for Mayor in Auckland. Julie Fairey was the elected Councillor for the Albert Eden ward and was standing for re-election.

A few words from Kathy...

The poems emerge from my experience of returning to Aotearoa New Zealand who returned here after spending much of my life in the Hague. Returning to the beautiful island of Waiheke felt like quite a relief - both being away from the hotspots in the world, and living on a beautiful island with a strong sense of community and a “Slow Down You are Here” mentality.

However no sooner had I arrived than a private business called Kennedy Point Boat Harbour Ltd that was demanding 19 hectares of precious public sea space to develop a marina. So began a stressful 4 year battle to stop a private business making a whole lot of money for nothing in the environment court. I was pretty shocked about the soft corruption of it all as I had firmly believed that NZ was quite a fair go sort of place.

Oh, how silly was I? Suffice it to say, our community led group lost and we spent a huge amount of community money fighting it while a group of peaceful protestors are still faced with many charges including being trespassed from the sea. So, a rude awakening for a returning New Zealander alerted me to the fact that not all was well in Aotearoa. Of course this unwellness is symptomatic elsewhere in the world, but this is my space and I am determined to fight it. Hence I ran for the local board as a candidate for the Green Party.

Anyway, to cut a long story short I know that it's all about the luck of the draw, having the right passport and not being in countries run by despots and dictators. It's about the rule of law and having some food and drinking water in the kitchen. And it's about doing the Good. We have a lot of good things happening in our country and we certainly have enough food to feed us all. We do however need to be hyper vigilant to those forces uniting to divide our little country that really isn't so kind. I know we like to tell ourselves that we are a kindly little place but talking to people outside the supermarket on Waiheke while standing for election and seeking a vote was a scary experience. I try and share the strangeness of the campaigning experience in the poems.

Contributors

Dr. Forough Amin has a PhD in Discourse and Communications from AUT. She is the founder and chairperson of Iranian Women in NZ (IWIN), a community organisation advocating for women's rights. She has been a passionate voice for Iranian women since the start of the Woman Life Freedom movement in Iran.

Barbara Bedeschi-Lewando is a member of the National Council of Women of New Zealand, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Hub for six years representing Business and Professional Women, is a climate change and disaster resilience expert, feminist, and women's rights advocate. She served as vice-president of United Nations Women New Zealand and has held leadership positions in Business and Professional Women. Additionally, she is a member of the Women Major Group and represents gender constituencies at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Her research and advocacy work now focuses on migrant rights and the intersection of climate change, innovation, and legislative solutions.

Dr. Peyton Bond's primary research interest is gendered labour, particularly in feminised service industries. Affect, commodification, workers' rights, hierarchies, and resistance to neoliberal/capitalist norms are key themes of her work in this area. She uses feminist qualitative methodologies in her research and is especially interested in people's stories of their working lives. She is also interested in post-work imaginaries and wishes to pursue more research in this area, including friendship and camaraderie as resistance to contemporary systems of work. Peyton teaches into sociology, gender studies, and criminology courses and is further interested in prison/police abolition and alternative justice futures. She has a small dog & a small cat that bring her much joy.

Shirin Brown, of Indo-European and British descent has lived in New Zealand since 2000. She was elected to the Waiheke Local Board in Auckland Council from 2013 to 2019. She is currently finishing a PhD on local government in Auckland which focuses on representation and diversity in elected representation.

Charlotte Bruce Kells is a PhD candidate in the Sociology, Gender Studies and Criminology programme at the University of Otago. Her thesis is titled 'Analysing the 'Mother' Identity Through Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Postpartum Period'.

Christine Caughey, convenor of National Council of Women of New Zealand, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Hub for seven years, has a professional background in planning, and environmental and community sustainability including a Māori/Pasifika focus. She is a feminist. Community advocacy led to her election as an Auckland City Councillor with a successful campaign to stop a motorway along Auckland's Waterfront. She held governance positions on the boards of the New Zealand Transport Agency, and Waterfront Auckland where she chaired the urban design subcommittee championing the sustainable redevelopment of Wynyard Quarter. Christine is a board member of Citizen's Advice Bureau Auckland City.

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 *Friendship, Peace and Social Justice*, *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Peace*, *Decolonising Peace and Conflict Studies*, and *Friendship Studies: Practices Across Cultures*.

Gill Greer CBE, MNZM, PhD, DLit, has been a member of the National Council of Women of New Zealand, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Hub since its formation. Her work has focussed on women's rights in her roles as AVC Equity and Human Resources, Victoria University of Wellington—Te Herenga Whaka, CE of Family Planning New Zealand, CE of the National Council of Women, and Director General of International Planned Parenthood, where she was closely involved in work related to climate change, particularly in Africa, and Asia. As CE of Volunteer Service Abroad New Zealand these issues remained central to her work, particularly in relation to the Pacific. She has attended the UN on numerous occasions, most recently in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals, and was co-editor of the New Zealand "People's Report on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: An alternate report for New Zealand (2019)".

Emma Hughes has been a member of the National Council of Women of New Zealand, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Hub for six years. She completed her PhD at the Institute of Development Studies at Massey University with a focus on tourism and sustainable development. Subsequent research has focussed on how the tourism industry is engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals. She now works for Allen + Clarke with recent work focusing on the impacts of climate change in the Pacific.

Glenda Lovell is a qualified group fitness and Pilates teacher, and an ex-Teacher Aide specialising in children with special needs and spectrum disorders. She helps motivate people, both physically and mentally, to have more self-belief as well as to find happiness within themselves through movement and mindset. She runs her own studio gym in the stunningly beautiful town of Motueka. She is a Mum of two (one with autism spectrum disorder and ADHD) and is also Nonna of two gorgeous grand-babies.

Catherine McNally was a founding member of the National Council of Women of New Zealand, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Hub with the National Council of Women of NZ. Dedicated to the health of all and gender equity, Catherine, with a nursing background, embraces Te Ao Māori and the fundamental concept that if we look after our planet we look after all people.

Camille Nakhid is a professor in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at Auckland University of Technology.

The **National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ)** is an umbrella group representing over 200 organisations affiliated at either national level or to one of our 14 branches. In addition, about 450 people are individual members. Collectively our reach is over 450,000 with many of our membership organisations representing all genders. NCWNZ's vision is a gender equal New Zealand and research shows we will be better off socially and economically if we are gender equal. Through research, discussion and action, NCWNZ in partnership with others, seeks to realise its vision of gender equality because it is a basic human right.

Mandrika Rupa is an independent film artist, born in Gujarat, India. She came to New Zealand as a child in 1960 to join her family who had come to New Zealand in the early 1900's. Her artistic sense developed out of social and community work, a desire to document stories of coming to a new land. Her films depict individuals from the South Pacific and the Indian diaspora, particularly the UK and USA who were some of India's poorest peoples that left India to carve out lives outside of traditional frameworks. Mandrika's work has been recognized at an international level with several screenings in London, New York, and Paris. Museum exhibitions include Cambridge UK, the permanent collections at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) NY, and presentations at the University of California at Berkeley; Columbia Film School, Chicago; Otago University NZ; and Columbia University, New York. Her work has also been shown at the Indian High Commission, Nehru Centre, Mayfair and ICA The Mall, London, UK. Mandrika's films are distributed worldwide by ProQuest, an imprint of Alexander Street Press, to the Academies, and through the MoMA.

Mandi Rupa-Reid is a sixth generation Indian, European. Her mother came to Aotearoa New Zealand where she joined her larger family who had settled here in the 1900s. Her father's family were some of the

earliest English and Scottish migrants to settle in Christchurch in the 1850s. Mandi feels very strong ties to her Indian heritage, having lived and schooled in Gujarat, India when she was younger and then became a student of Indian Classical Dance in Auckland. She has a 30-year history of dance performance including at Aotea Centre, The Civic, Auckland Town Hall, and Bruce Mason Centre, and numerous museums, galleries, festivals and even spaces around New Zealand. Her tertiary studies include an Arts Degree in Film and Media Studies from the University of Otago as well as qualifications in Documentary Directing, Presenting and Journalism. She has experience working in film, television, advertising, and the performing arts industries in India, London and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Nashie Shamoon is undertaking her PhD in Political Science at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington. Her research is focused on the 21st Century Assyrian identity, as seen by young Assyrians based in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and Sweden. Her research interests include ethno-religious diasporas, postmemory, identity-formation and -maintenance, diasporic youth identities, Middle East politics, Syrian refugee communities based in the Middle East, refugee-background communities in New Zealand, and ethnic minority representation in politics.

Tiffany Singh was born in Aotearoa New Zealand of Indian and Pacific descent. Her practice explores the intersection between arts, education and wellbeing. Since graduating Elam School of Fine Arts with a BFA (Hons) in 2008, Singh has worked on sustainable community outreach, exploring engagement in the arts through social practice methodologies. Her interest in cultural preservation combined with an integrated social discourse has seen her use the arts as a vehicle to engender policy and advocacy of social justice, mobilizing the strength of small artisan communities and social resources for stronger socio-economic development at local and international levels. Tiffany has represented New Zealand at the 18th Biennale of Sydney 2012, the Contemporary Asian Arts Biennial 2011 at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, and the 12th Taehwa Eco Arts Festival in Korea in 2018. She represented New Zealand at the World Women's Art Exchange Festival in Taiwan in 2022. She has her work held in the permanent collections of Te Papa Tongarewa, Museum of New Zealand; Dunedin Public Art Gallery; Mater Hospital, Brisbane, Australia; The Sunshine Coast Hospital, Australia; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand. In 2017, Tiffany Singh was the recipient of the New Zealand Arts Foundation – New Generation Award and has received a Human Rights Award for her social justice project Fly Me Up To Where You Are. Indra's Bow was a finalist in the 2017 New Zealand Design Awards and Total Internal Reflection won the gold pin for special lighting category in 2018.

Heather Tribe has recently completed her PhD with the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago, where her thesis examined gendered experiences of natural crises in Aotearoa and reflected 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.

Kathy Voyles is a poet and activist living on Waiheke Island. She spent about ten years working for the UNPO in the Hague, a sort of shadow United Nations set up for non-Sovereign entities (peoples and groups) and monitoring human rights violations in some of the most war-torn regions of the world. Through this work she met people who had survived the generals in Myanmar, Twa who had hidden under hen houses to escape the machetes in Rwanda, set up press conferences for HH The Dalai Llama and various Nobel Peace prize winners, heard and documented many tales of the most brutal and horrific abuses against other humans you could ever imagine. She stood as a Green Candidate in the local elections for the Waiheke Local Board of Auckland Council in 2022.

Ki te taha o tōku pāpā no Hokianga, no Hauraki, no Sweden ahau. Ki te taha o tōku māmā no Te Waipounamu ki Kaikōura, no Te Taihū, no Horowhenua, no Whanganui-ā-tara, no Wairarapa, no Scotland me Spain ahau. E noho ana Te Raki Pae Whenua ahau. Ko Challen Wilson ahau.

Challen Wilson has been a member of the National Council of Women New Zealand, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Hub for six years. She is a strong advocate for mana wāhine and brings a strong understanding and lived experience of Te Ao Māori with grassroots knowledge and extensive networks in Mātauranga Taiao. She has worked with communities in Aotearoa and abroad, for example, partnering as two playwrights with Inupiaq playwright Tagnak Catherine Rexford to discuss global environmental issues from an indigenous perspective through the epic theatre piece Winter Overture. She currently works for Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau as the Manager of Co-Governance Communications, and is the business owner of boutique integrated communications, marketing, and PR firm, The Sisters Consultancy.

Mengdi Zhang is a final-year PhD candidate in International Relations at Victoria University of Wellington. Her PhD thesis researches the oscillating logic of the economic-security nexus in New Zealand's relations with China in a two-level framework. She is also a part-time analyst at the Xiamen University New Zealand Research Centre (China).



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