

Racism and Employment: A Narrative Review of Aotearoa New Zealand and International Qualitative Studies

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Abstract

In Aotearoa New Zealand, employment inequities exist for minoritised ethnic groups (Māori, Pasifika, Asian, racialised migrants and refugees) in the forms of barriers to employment, occupation inequities, differences in promotion to leadership roles, ethnic pay gaps and discriminatory experiences at workplaces. In this review, we compiled Aotearoa qualitative studies to depict the dynamics of racism alongside other intersectional forms of prejudices that disadvantage the employment processes and career progression of minoritised ethnicities. Literature gaps in Aotearoa research were identified through reviewing international literature published between 2016 and 2021. Reviewed Aotearoa studies were categorised into three themes: unemployment and underemployment, workplace discrimination, and strategies for navigating racism. Drawing upon a framework that recognises racialised processes as spanning across micro- (individual), meso- (organisational) and macro- (institutional) levels, we found most Aotearoa studies analysing racism in the workplace focus on micro-level experiences. Compared with international literature, research in Aotearoa has yet to consider the roles of organisations and technologies as racialised structures that engender employment inequities, and the interaction of individuals in response to meso- and macro-structures that build on settler colonialism and racism. Our review echoes the call of Aotearoa scholars to name racism as the overarching oppressive mechanism embedded within organisations and to use anti-racism praxes such as te Tiriti o Waitangi as a way forward to promote employment equity.

Keywords: employment; racism; racialisation; Aotearoa New Zealand

Introduction

Racialised inequities in employment and income are a persistent feature of labour markets that have individual, community and intergenerational effects (Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Rollock, 2022). Structural forms of racism generate such inequities internationally, emanating especially from centuries of European imperialism and colonialism, as well as taking specific shape in relation to the characteristics and populations of particular contexts, such as the Indigenous, settler colonial and multi-ethnic makeup of Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter, Aotearoa) (for example, Reid et al., 2019; Simon-Kumar et al., 2022). In Aotearoa, there are significant differences in average wages between ethnic groups: Māori earn 82% and Pasifika peoples 77% of average hourly wages of Pākehā employees (The Treasury, 2018). Moreover, Māori and Pasifika peoples are disproportionately employed in occupations at the lower levels of organisations, which come with less decision-making power (Public Service Commission, 2021). These racialised inequities in employment and income have long-lasting individual, familial, community and intergenerational impacts

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(Hergenrather et al., 2015). While multiple individual and societal factors impinge upon employment, international research highlights that the effects of racism mean that minoritised ethnicities experience worse social outcomes due to low income, underemployment and unemployment, and precarious employment conditions (Ahonen et al., 2018; Carr et al., 2021).

A substantial feature of employment inequities is the discrimination that results from institutional and interpersonal racism, alongside intersecting effects of systemic and individualised prejudice towards gender, class, age and other social differences (Tarshis, 2022). These are not new insights in Aotearoa. A nationally representative survey found Pākehā employees had worse attitudes to the growing ethnic diversity in workplaces relative to minoritised ethnicities (Houkamau & Boxall, 2015). The New Zealand General Social Survey and New Zealand Health Survey revealed that Māori, Pasifika and Asian peoples and those born overseas were all more likely to report racism at work or in recruitment (Daldy et al., 2013; Ministry of Health, 2018; Statistics New Zealand, 2012).¹ Experimental research has also shown that racism plays a role in recruitment processes whereby applicants with English/European names are given more opportunities than other applicants even when they have similar qualifications (Ward & Masgoret, 2007).

While there is substantial international research examining the relationship between racism and employment (Ray, 2019; Wingfield & Chavez, 2020), the focus on these matters has only recently begun to gain traction in Aotearoa and has often taken the shape of documentary evidence from government enquiries rather than in-depth social science research. Treasury (2018) analysis of ethnic pay gaps in 2017, for example, correlated differences with educational level and occupation but stopped short of considering the impact of racism in the labour market. By contrast, drawing from evidence-based literature and interviews with Māori experts in the field of anti-racism, the 2022 *Maranga Mai!* report (Human Rights Commission, 2022b) concluded that the inequalities and inequities in employment outcomes for Māori are the repercussion of institutional racism. Simultaneously, the Human Rights Commission (2022a) launched the Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry, which highlighted the significance of racism in finding work, the recruitment process, negotiating pay and seeking promotion for Pasifika peoples. And even the New Zealand Productivity Commission (2021) is now recognising discrimination as part of the cycle of social and economic disadvantage.

This article seeks to examine the extent of social science knowledge on racialised inequities in employment in Aotearoa and to identify gaps and directions for future research. Our discussion is based on a narrative review of qualitative research in Aotearoa that is situated in relation to recent international scholarship on racism and employment. We find that there is good evidence for heightened rates of discrimination that minoritised ethnicities face in Aotearoa (Cormack et al., 2018), but there is a paucity of research that examines the dynamics of racism and other intersectional forms of prejudices in disadvantaging the employment processes and career progression of these groups. In other words, research demonstrates that racism impacts on employment in Aotearoa but is limited in terms of addressing how racism operates to shape the inequities in jobs, conditions and incomes that are observed. This review integrates the insights from existing research in Aotearoa alongside the large body of international research on racism and employment in order to identify gaps in existing knowledge and highlighting the specific characteristics of these issues in Aotearoa. Our narrative analysis and discussion are part of the WERO:

¹ Our usage of the umbrella ‘Māori’, ‘Pasifika’ and ‘Asian’ terms for ethnicities follows the Stats NZ classification. Indigenous *Māori* refer to tangata whenua (people of the land) in Aotearoa that are warranted tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) through te Tiriti o Waitangi. *Pasifika peoples* are a diverse population made up of cultures from many different Pacific Islands. The eight main Pasifika groups in Aotearoa are Samoan, Cook Islands Māori, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and Kiribati. *Asian* comprises diverse populations with genealogical links in East Asia (for example, Chinese and Korean), South Asia (for example, Indian and Bangladeshi) and Southeast Asia (for example, Malaysian and Filipino).

Working to End Racial Oppression research programme and serve the function of establishing the state of knowledge on racism and employment in Aotearoa and laying the foundation for future research aimed to reveal and then transform the social structures that sustain racialised inequities in employment.

In order to place particular emphasis on the operation of racism in employment, our review of current research and research gaps in Aotearoa is informed by an emphasis on the insights that emerge from Racialised Organisation Theory (ROT; Ray, 2019). ROT posits that organisations are key to understanding racialisation processes spanning multiple (interconnected) levels such as macro/institutional (for example, racialised law and expropriation), meso/organisational (for example, wage differentials), and micro/individual (for example, in-group favouritism) (Ray, 2019). In understanding the central role of organisations in reproducing (and challenging) racial inequality, scholars need to recognise that social processes are “multiply-determined” as racial processes across micro-, meso-, and macro-levels are not necessarily mutually exclusive, including how individuals (micro) interact in response to institutional imperatives (Ray, 2019, p. 28). This article is informed by ROT (Ray, 2019) to help conceptualise the analysis of racism on multilevel experiences of minoritised ethnicities in employment settings.

Following this introduction, the article continues with a methodological overview and the identification of themes within both Aotearoa and international literature on employment and racism. The review of international literature offers insight into the research gaps that future research in Aotearoa could address. Then, the article is drawn together through a discussion that highlights key gaps and future potential areas of research to advance understanding of the operation and effects of racism on employment.

Methodological overview

This article draws on an understanding of racism developed by critical race researchers (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) who define *racism* as an organised system, based on an ideology of superiority and inferiority, that discriminates, segregates, persecutes or mistreats individuals based on their membership in a particular ethnic group. Racism occurs through and reinforces *racialisation*, or the process of constructing race of different ethnicities (Hochman, 2019). Racialised minorities are exposed to the negative effects of institutional and interpersonal racism that reproduces the social stratification of populations that racialisation is based upon. Grosfoguel (2011) further describes racism as a global power hierarchy that is politically (re)produced through colonialism, capitalism and imperialism; thus, labour relations and employment outcomes of minoritised ethnicities are structured through a world-spanning system of racism. In Aotearoa, these international accounts of racism need to be read as one manifestation of the broader phenomenon of oppression that includes settler colonialism, which maintains material and political privilege for Pākehā as colonial settlers and marginalises the interests of Indigenous Māori (Cormack et al., 2018). Moreover, racism is also inextricably linked to the intersectional racialisation of migrants in relation to nationality and economic potential (Simon-Kumar, 2020).

The article focuses on the enactment of racism in workplaces via a framework of three conceptual levels (Reid & Robson, 2007): 1) *institutionalised racism*, evident in the differential distribution of resources and barriers to meaningful participation across ethnic groups; 2) *interpersonal racism*, the differential treatment towards others based on ethnicity; and 3) *internalised racism*, the internalisation of negative messages for structurally oppressed populations and expressions of White supremacy (the presumption of the superiority of Whiteness including culture and norms; Bonilla-Silva, 2001). International literature commonly uses umbrella terms such as “People of Colour”, “ethnic minorities” and “racial minorities” to lump together people who are non-White, which risks obscuring the particular disadvantages experienced by these groups (Mahony & Weiner, 2020) and the processes through which people are racialised (Hochman, 2019). It may also be problematic to refer to Māori as ethnic minorities given that they once constituted a dominant group in Aotearoa; racialisation of Māori thus articulates with settler colonialism that has subjected Māori to land

confiscations and discriminatory legislation and policies that impose Pākehā philosophies to the detriment of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) (Human Rights Commission, 2022b).

In this article, we use the term *minoritised ethnicities* to accentuate the racialisation of a collective group comprising Māori, Pacific, Asian, racialised migrants and immigrants, and refugees who may share similar experiences of navigating the racialised terrain of accessing employment. (See Rollock (2022) for further discussion of the importance of naming the process and effects of racialisation). The term minoritised ethnicities is used alongside specific reference to the people are reported on in particular pieces of research. This is especially important in relation to Māori as Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, negotiated in 1840 between hapū rangatira (leaders) and representatives from the Queen of England (Came, O'Sullivan, et al., 2020; Matike Mai Aotearoa, 2016). It recognises Māori as tangata whenua (Indigenous peoples) in Aotearoa and that Māori tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) should be upheld over lands, settlements and taonga (all that was and is valuable). Therefore, it is crucial to not homogenise the experiences of Māori within the larger minoritised ethnicities group, and where possible, we pay specific attention to the experiences of each group to understand their specific barriers to achieve employment equity.

This exploratory article is informed by a *narrative review method* (Ferrari, 2015) that seeks to identify and summarise key themes in qualitative research on racism and employment conducted in Aotearoa and internationally. A narrative review offers the advantage of scoping relevant studies in the field while not being restricted by the defined query, search terms and selection criteria. Our reporting of the literature search process followed the criteria listed in Ferrari's (2015) article: searching strategy; inclusion/exclusion criteria; verify the availability of all the selected studies; and citing and listing the researched references. Due to the limited number of studies on racism in employment practices, particularly in Aotearoa, no typical criteria for inclusion and exclusion were pre-defined for our narrative review to allow for a wider scoping of relevant studies including grey literature. The initial NZResearch database search for the term racism returned 287 results; however, we only retained those that involved a discussion of employment. Three-hundred and eighty-six articles were located through the Scopus database search of two key terms: racism and employment. These studies were filtered for abstract and full text, and we further identified relevant studies for inclusion through a backward reference check. We restricted the international literature search to the last five years as we were interested in characterising the field's current theoretical advances and emerging issues and because there is a much longer and larger body of scholarship on racism and employment internationally. The final number of studies included in our review is 49 (including 31 from overseas).

Broader literature, such as that involving experiences of ethnic minorities in employment (for example, Pio, 2005) and Indigenous and ethnic minority leadership and wellbeing at work (Roche et al., 2018), and that do not explicitly outline the processes of racism and racialisation of minoritised ethnicities, fall outside of the remit of the present review. Similarly, the review did not extend to publications based solely on quantitative research. While quantitative research can offer evidence relevant to understanding the relationship between racism and employment (for example, by presenting ethnic wage disparities such as those mentioned in the introduction), it is more limited in generating a nuanced understanding of how racism operates in creating differential employment outcomes. This review, however, is part of a larger multidisciplinary study of racism wherein insights are gathered across quantitative and qualitative measures to examine the extent and operation of systemic racism and pathways to challenge racism.

The located literature was synthesised to identify recurring themes in response to the two overarching research questions: 1) What does Aotearoa literature tell us about the operation of racism in employment settings and its impacts on tangata whenua (Māori), tangata moana (peoples from the Pacific), and other minoritised ethnicities (including racialised migrants and refugees)? and 2) What does international research tell us about the common issues that constitute racism affecting minoritised

ethnicities' access to employment? The presentation of the remaining article is structured into three parts: 1) themes of racism within employment in Aotearoa; 2) themes from international research on racialised processes and outcomes within employment; and 3) a discussion of the gaps in both local and international research regarding the relevance of racism in employment.

Racism and employment in Aotearoa New Zealand

Existing literature that focuses explicitly on the relationship between racism and employment in Aotearoa is relatively limited, despite the growing recognition of income and occupational disparities across ethnic groups. In this section, we present three themes that emerge from the Aotearoa literature: unemployment and underemployment, discrimination in the workplace, and strategies for addressing racism in employment (including in relation to te Tiriti o Waitangi). Many of the studies included in this review covered a much wider range of experiences of racism than just employment, and in many cases provided insights across more than one of these themes.

Unemployment and underemployment

Studies of racism and employment in Aotearoa observe that minoritised ethnicities face numerous barriers to securing employment (Dobson, 2012; Nachowitz, 2015; Omura, 2014). These barriers include overt racism in hiring decisions, claims of lack of experience, under- or overqualification, discrimination, and being offered jobs or pay that do not align with qualifications or experiences (Huang, 2015; Majavu, 2015; Tuwe, 2018). In her research on resettlement processes, Lepina (2003) highlighted how refugees experience intersectional forms of discrimination due to their skin colour, religions, beliefs and customs, and refugee women (particularly young mothers) are particularly underrepresented in the labour force. Compared with minoritised ethnicities born locally, those born overseas were also more likely to express difficulty in finding suitable employment (Nachowitz, 2015), a factor related to claims of limited local experience as well as their own need to gain employment to secure migration status (Omura, 2014). Studies report that many minoritised ethnicities remained unemployed even after sending out hundreds of job applications (Tuwe, 2018). The hiring process can be biased as employers tend to hire those who fit into the (predominant White) organisational culture (Ray, 2019), even though on paper, candidates have similar credentials (Mesui, 2019).

Underemployment is another key employment-related challenge which has emerged within studies in Aotearoa, with different studies documenting the diverse experiences of racism occurring for Indigenous, migrants and refugee groups. Tuwe's (2018) research with African communities, for example, revealed qualified medical doctors and accountants being employed in low-paying and contract-based jobs, while Nachowitz (2015) found that some members of the Indian diaspora in Aotearoa were underemployed after spending many years seeking employment relevant to their qualifications and experiences. These experiences relate to individual racist practices (such as outward prejudice in hiring and human resource management) as well as the broader organisational and institutional positioning of minoritised ethnicities. Majavu (2015) noted that refugees have social networks primarily with other people from refugee backgrounds, which significantly limited their ability to secure high-paying jobs that rely on social capital (for example, existing connections in workplaces). Pack (2016), who interviewed Māori participants about their employment experiences, found evidence of internalised racism in that some participants expected themselves to be in manual jobs, and Revell (2012) has identified that having a moko (Māori skin adornment) was a barrier to employment for Māori due to associated stereotypes. These diverse experiences reveal some of the ways in which racism operates in employment settings as well as the significance of social positioning in processes of employment that maintain settler colonial racial hierarchies.

Discrimination in the workplace

Even after gaining employment, there is no guarantee of job security as minoritised ethnicities continue to face racial discrimination in the workplace (Tuwe, 2018). Several studies have highlighted how processes of racialisation contribute to the establishment and maintenance of organisational cultures that privilege Whiteness and that justify the uneven positioning and treatment of minoritised ethnicities. For instance, experiences of objectification wherein racialised identities were judged according to stereotypes and preconceived notions were common amongst immigrants in their workplaces (Graham, 2001). Research involving migrants and Pasifika participants (Huang, 2015; Tuwe, 2018) similarly found diverse instances of discrimination because of a perceived lack of English oral proficiency, understanding of 'New Zealand' culture and work experience in Aotearoa, as well as personality traits (appearances and manners), education or qualification, country of origin (and associated accent and surname), cultural stereotype (work ethic), and lack of social capital (networks and connections).

As a settler colonial society with expectations to assimilate to the Pākehā (White) culture, Whiteness has been established as an invisible but powerful and pervasive norm across many employment settings in Aotearoa (Mesui, 2019; Ofe-Grant, 2018; Pack, 2016). As a consequence, minoritised ethnicities are sometimes discouraged from exploring their identities or even conversing in their languages (Omura, 2014). An observed consequence is that minoritised ethnicities report having to juggle two separate cultures and values side-by-side in the workplace and to regulate their behaviours to fit in with organisational cultures driven by Pākehā norms (Ofe-Grant, 2018). Monoculturalism operates as a major barrier for Māori to participate meaningfully in employment (Boulton et al., 2020). In some cases, these values are diametrically opposed to one's belief system and identity, as seen in misinterpreted social interactions in team meetings and dialogue that were reported in Ofe-Grant's (2018) study of career advancement for Samoans.

There is also evidence of a glass ceiling related to organisational culture, policies and processes that can hinder minoritised ethnicities from advancing their careers (Mesui, 2019; Ofe-Grant, 2018). Such policies and processes are related to institutional racism that creates racial bias around the type of person who will be promoted and workers' agentive capacity, even in senior roles (Mesui, 2019). Mesui's and Ofe-Grant's research with Pasifika women in senior management roles showed that participants felt that their organisations recognised their Pasifika identity as valuable only in tokenistic ways, filling a quota to appear inclusive. The "brown glass ceiling" that manifests here is shaped around racial stereotypes that are expressed in White perceptions of the ideal manager that exclude Pasifika women as potential leaders (Mesui, 2019). Likewise, Māori participants in Pack's (2016) research reported being passed over for promotion when competing with a Pākehā applicant with similar qualifications. In this instance, racism in promotion practices serves as evidence of the normalisation of Whiteness within organisations (Ray, 2019). These studies also highlight a reproductive dimension that extends well beyond individual experiences of career advancement or barriers: the lack of visibility for minoritised ethnicities in senior roles affects the confidence of others to seek advancement (Mesui, 2019), reinforcing the racialised character of organisations (Ray, 2019) and the racialisations that structure settler colonial society (Rotz, 2017). When recognised as a pervasive feature of employment in Aotearoa, the consequence of these processes is the reinforcement of racialised inequities both in the economic resources that accrue from work as well as in the social and cultural capital generated within employment.

Strategies for addressing racism in employment

While the majority of the Aotearoa literature we reviewed focuses on experiences of racism, some studies also identify strategies used to respond to racism in the workplace. The reviewed studies summarised seven such strategies: adopting an English surname to avoid racial profiling, meeting the employer face-to-face, condensing the CV by removing overseas qualifications and experiences, accepting an undesirable job offer,

seeking a niche in the job market (for example, choosing a position less attractive to others), “knitting the web” (Huang, 2015, p. 98) by building up social networks with local connections, and transforming one’s self by assimilating to New Zealand (Pākehā) norms (Marete, 2011; Nachowitz, 2015; Omura, 2014). Yusuf (2015) also observed that some migrants overcame the employment barrier by retraining and up-skilling themselves into career choices that were more in demand and had a greater chance of landing them a job. While each of these strategies are agentive and have potential to address individual experiences of racism and create opportunities for advancement despite discrimination, we observe that the strategies also have the effect of occurring within and thus reproducing existing systems of racism. The pressure to conform to White norms and standards has ramification on migrants and refugees to spend additional time and cost to achieve a modicum of equity (Huang, 2015; Yusuf, 2015). Such adaptive strategies also create unequal futures in incomes and livelihood over time that reinforce rather than challenge racial injustice. (See also Collins (2020) on racially differentiated durable inequalities for temporary migrants.)

A particular avenue for addressing racism in the context of Aotearoa exists through the obligation that public sector organisations are compliant with te Tiriti o Waitangi, including in relation to hiring and workplace cultures. Unlike individual strategies noted above, te Tiriti compliance, underpinned by “critical Tiriti analysis” (Goza et al., 2022), has the potential to challenge organisational systems and processes that regularly hold to settler colonial, White-centred norms (Camfield, 2019; Ray, 2019). Māori remain under-represented within senior leadership roles across Aotearoa public sectors, indicative of institutional racism and breaches of te Tiriti over many decades. Goza et al. (2022) examined the chief executive appointment and the performance review processes across the public service used by Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission to determine whether these processes are te Tiriti compliant. The authors found no explicit evidence of engagement with te Tiriti and/or te ao Māori in any aspect of recruitment and/or performance review processes (Goza et al., 2022). While observing these enormous shortcomings currently in the public service, their findings also point to the transformative potential of enabling Māori governance over the appointments process and more broadly “embracing wairuatanga (spirituality) and tikanga (protocols) within the public service” (Goza et al. 2022, p. 55).

International research on racism and employment: 2016–2021

In this section, we present common themes identified in our review of international research on racism and employment between 2016 and 2021. As expected, there was a much larger number of studies internationally that addressed quite diverse instances of racism and employment. There was also a heavier emphasis on racism experiences occurring at meso- and macro-levels that perpetuate employment inequities. We identified four themes, two that are similar to research in Aotearoa—unemployment and underemployment, and workplace discrimination—and two others that reflect foci and findings that are not yet apparent in studies from Aotearoa—racialised structures and institutions, and the use of technology in hiring processes.

Unemployment and underemployment

Several international studies on unemployment and underemployment present evidence of what Mirchandani and Bromfield (2021) describe as a “colour coded labour market” (p. 25) whereby minoritised ethnicities are over-represented in traditionally low-paid occupations which leads to earning disparities compared with White counterparts (see also Briones-Vozmediano et al., 2020). Minoritised ethnicities are sometimes subjected to the platitude of “beggars can’t be choosers” when it comes to seeking employment (Henson, 2022, p. 17). For instance, when minoritised ethnicity workers do not move up the occupational hierarchy or get a job, they perceive themselves as lacking cultural capital or other positive attributes (Li, 2019); they can also have limited social networks to support job seeking compared with Whites and

advantaged locals (Mwanri et al., 2021). Minoritised ethnicities' initial economic insecurity and need to gain a more secure foothold in the labour market often leads them to take "any job available" (Kosny et al., 2017, p. 490) and this sometimes means putting up with racism or poor working conditions (Cooney-O'Donoghue et al., 2021; Loyd & Murray, 2021; Mwanri et al., 2021). Moreover, welfare regimes often reinforce racial injustice in insecure employment through making it mandatory for welfare recipients to accept any employment they are offered (Mwanri et al., 2021).

Underemployment or under-utilisation of people's skills and expertise exemplifies "putting square pegs into round holes" (Gatwiri et al., 2021, p. 487); this means minoritised ethnicities are not often employed in positions for which they have expertise or skills (Kosny et al., 2017; Lacombe-Duncan et al., 2022; Uдах et al., 2019). The process of racialisation that underpins underemployment experiences, entails the assumption that migrants and other minoritised ethnicities lack competence regardless of their educational background and qualifications (Uдах et al., 2019), a finding that resonates considerably with research in Aotearoa (Tuwe, 2018). Employers often appear not to know how to assess overseas qualifications, leading to a situation where hiring a racialised migrant is treated as a risk that many employers choose not to take (Kosny et al., 2017) and professional accreditation for occupations like engineering and medicine can privilege migrants from Western and anglophone countries over those from other nationalities. Some studies have found that racialised migrants are consequently advised to discount their qualifications (including overseas qualifications) as a way of gaining entry to the workforce, albeit often in positions that they are overqualified for or not suited to (Cain et al., 2021). Migrants felt the necessity to obtain local experience through volunteering, which serves as a gateway to enter the field that they wish to work in (Cooney-O'Donoghue et al., 2021; Kosny et al., 2017), although as Peucker (2021) notes, volunteering within ethnic communities can also be a barrier to employment. Refugees and asylum seekers are also encouraged to pursue employment in low-skilled areas that have less job security and are susceptible to exploitation, a pattern that effectively treats these workers as surplus labour during economic booms that can be discarded during downturns (Cooney-O'Donoghue et al., 2021).

As in Aotearoa, there is relatively little international research on Indigenous peoples' experiences of racism in employment. Guimond and Desmeules (2018) argue that the position of Indigenous workers in Canadian resource development projects is indicative of wider unequal relationships with non-Indigenous people, a reflection of settler colonial structures. In particular, they note an ambiguity in Indigenous workers' sense of place because they are concentrated in undervalued jobs and yet simultaneously perceived by non-Indigenous workers to have the upper hand because of policies that assert to address racism and improve inclusion. They also observe a high turnover rate amongst Indigenous workers in these sites, one that is influenced by rigid routines, long shifts and work cycles, and strict hierarchy and supervision that clash with the notions of work, culture and lifestyle for Indigenous peoples in Canada (Guimond & Desmeules, 2018). These findings echo Camfield's (2019) aforementioned assertion that studies of labour in settler colonial contexts need to take more seriously Indigenous conceptions of work as alternative framings of the value of employment and the ways in which norms around work can play a role in reinforcing Whiteness in organisations and society.

Discrimination in workplaces

Workplace discrimination occurs through what Nguyen and Velayutham (2018) describe as an "ethnic habitus" (drawing on Bourdieu's social theory of practice), a term that signals how workers are positioned differentially in the workplace depending on their ethnicity and their location within social hierarchies. In their research in Australia, Nguyen and Velayutham argue that workplaces are dominated by a White habitus, which is linked with the nationalistic notions of cultural capital and the normative cultural framing of daily life. Workplace discrimination emerges in this context, whereby differences in ethnic habitus lead to

workplace tension and guide individual workers' everyday actions in a way that leads to social exclusion of minoritised ethnic colleagues (Nguyen & Velayutham, 2018). Ethnic habitus can also lead to cross-cultural discomfort among minoritised ethnicities (the uncomfortable feeling related to a lack of sense of belonging) in the workplace when disengaged from social conversation or subjected to insensitive racial comments (Guimond & Desmeules, 2018; Nguyen & Velayutham, 2018). Contemporary racism is a pervasive part of life (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) with studies demonstrating frequent experiences of microaggressions and covert racism (for example, negative cross-cultural interaction) amongst minoritised ethnicities that are meant to hurt the intended victim in a deliberate manner (Asey, 2021; Briones-Vozmediano et al., 2020; Gatwiri, 2020). The ambiguous nature of covert racism places the burden of interpretation on those at the receiving end (Gatwiri, 2020). In the context where perpetrators' intentions are difficult to discern, minoritised ethnicities are left to resolve whether an encounter was discriminatory, irrespective of intent (Sahraoui, 2020).

Workplace discrimination can take the form of suspicions about the competence, value and ethics of minoritised ethnicities (Asey, 2021), a hypervisibility that entails near daily encounters with excessive surveillance and scrutiny at work, including being expected to provide intrusive details and superfluous updates in support of mundane requests (Gatwiri, 2020). Excessive targeted monitoring is a form of workplace harassment that reflects a framing of minoritised ethnicities "through a deficit and criminal lens" (Gatwiri, 2020, p. 668) that suggests they require more guidance, given the inferiority of their labour status (Asey, 2021). Having a non-native accent is also seen as a deficit marker that provides grounds for accentism and subsequent disentanglement in employment (Dryden & Dovchin, 2021; Gatwiri, 2020; Kosny et al., 2017; Li, 2019; Nkimbeng et al., 2021; Udah et al., 2019). There are reports from non-native English speakers of being mocked for the way they speak or stereotyped based on their country of origin and culture (Dryden & Dovchin, 2021). Racialisation can exclude minorities from promotional chances that come with proximity and visibility with decision-making executives (Asey, 2021; van der Heever & van der Merwe, 2019); for example, some minoritised ethnic employees described becoming sceptical of their immediate supervisors in supporting their career mobility as most would not furnish them accurate references (Asey, 2021).

Minoritised migrant workers are exposed to specific forms of exploitation due to the institutional insecurity generated by migration policies. The chances of migrant exploitation are heightened when migrants are dependent on their employer who may also be from the same ethnic community (for example, requiring assistance with visa application and accommodation arrangement) (Sahraoui, 2020). For instance, there is evidence of racialised migrants working extra hours and performing additional tasks with no increase in salary or corresponding compensation in what has been termed modern slavery (David et al., 2019). The vulnerable position of migrant workers provides opportunities for employers' arbitrariness given the very low probability that their exploitation would be sanctioned (Sahraoui, 2020). The continued existence of racism will undoubtedly affect the career progression and income of minoritised ethnicities as they deploy strategies such as changing jobs, moving across departments, and quitting to escape from discrimination (Cain et al., 2021; Naseem & Adnan, 2019; Nkimbeng et al., 2021; van der Heever & van der Merwe, 2019).

Racialised structures and institutions

Accounts of inequalities in hiring and discrimination in the workplace highlight the kind of racialised structures and institutions that shape differential employment experiences (Ray, 2019). Entering such racialised organisations can be challenging, not least when workers feel that they are the first minoritised ethnicities to be employed (Lloyd & Murray, 2021). Despite the existence of numerous policies and programmes to assist migrants and refugees in finding jobs, studies continue to report difficulties for these

groups in securing employment (Gatwiri et al., 2021). On the surface, a job position may appear open to everyone based on equal opportunity regardless of racial backgrounds. In practice, however, research suggests that employers may have their own prejudices that reflect a racialised social system (Li, 2019). Organisations usually only place much greater value in managing cultural diversity when hiring minoritised ethnicities is mandatory (Caron et al., 2019). The tokenistic hiring process that results is unlikely to overcome racism at the organisational level and may cause some minoritised ethnicities to perceive or be treated as though their recruitment is only needed to meet a quota (Lloyd & Murray, 2021).

One potential response to the experience of racialised organisations is various kinds of anti-discrimination legislation but these are often out of reach for minoritised ethnicities as their experiences fall short of scrutinising the factors that foster racism at the institutional level (Sahraoui, 2020). Some minoritised ethnicities also discussed how Whiteness is safeguarded when complaints of racism are made because there are rarely any meaningful follow-up actions (Mahony & Weiner, 2020). Due to fear of retaliation, employees who have been victimised by racial discrimination rarely report these incidents. The ways in which decision-makers choose to respond to complaints of racism may also amount to racial discrimination. For instance, there is evidence of minoritised ethnicities being requested to change department after reporting a racist incident; such response obscures the roles of perpetrators and victims and further marginalises the positions of affected employees (Sahraoui, 2020).

Access to employment support services is crucial for migrants and refugees to effectively integrate into their country of resettlement (Madut, 2019). However, career training programmes for these groups often impose a process of 'Whitening' and compel participants to conform to hegemonic norms of Whiteness and acculturate to local ways of speaking, knowing and living (Maitra, 2017; Mwanri et al., 2021). A unidirectional process of integration neglects the importance for the host community of developing an understanding of culturally diverse values (Mwanri et al., 2021). Furthermore, there is a lack of customised cultural and social programmes for migrants of different ethnicities and staff members are rarely equipped with sufficient cultural competency to identify specific employment barriers for racialised migrants (Madut, 2019). By urging migrants to self-modify to adapt to norms in the new host nation, these programmes downplay the racism that prevents minoritised ethnicities from accessing and progressing in employment. In doing so, a monocultural training programme may reinforce the ongoing operation of racialised organisations and racist structures in society more generally.

Technology for hiring

Technological systems such as talent acquisition software and hiring platforms are increasingly used to meet organisational labour requirements (Mann & O'Neil, 2016). For instance, some organisations refer to the platform LinkedIn, which implements predictive analytics to screen through job profiles and provides recommendation of eligible candidates for specific roles. The driving forces for the shift in favour of algorithmic decision-making are savings in both costs and times, increased perceived objectivity in making hiring decisions, and enhanced productivity of human resource practices (Köchling & Wehner, 2020). However, the development of technological systems is not race-neutral (Benjamin, 2019), as there is evidence of biased algorithmic decision-making processes that create an unfair advantage for applicants based on ethnicity (Yarger et al., 2020). Even if developers responsible for data input have no intention of discriminating, studies suggest that algorithmic output is informed by implicit human judgements or unconscious biases (Köchling & Wehner, 2020; Yarger et al., 2020).

The systematic disadvantage of minoritised ethnicities is related to employment of historical data that underrepresent minoritised ethnicities to inform algorithm design, developers not having an adequate understanding of conditions needed to create equitable employment outcomes, and a lack of diverse representation during the development of software that hinders minoritised ethnicities from raising

questions and checking for implicit biases (Köchling & Wehner, 2020; Yarger et al., 2020). It is problematic if companies implement algorithms without considering the applicability of their three core elements: transparency (how algorithms are used to support the decisions of human), interpretability (how algorithms are being understood by people), and explainability (how people make sense of results to derive conclusions) (Köchling & Wehner, 2020). To improve equity in hiring through algorithms, Yarger et al. (2020) urged for an intentional design justice approach that: a) removes identifying information from the resume; b) offers a blind skills-based test; c) conducts anonymous technical interviews; d) uses a welcoming tone in job advertisements; and e) seeks feedback from job applicants on their perception of fairness of the recruitment process. As Benjamin (2019) notes, however, even these kinds of design features do not alter the racial injustice that automated processes can amplify because of the ways in which racism operates through structural positioning of applicants and their recorded experiences of discrimination in other sectors, such as within housing, health and criminal justice systems, which can influence progression in employment.

Discussion

Our review of Aotearoa and overseas research reveals that racism articulates with employment in a range of ways that need to be accounted for and challenged in any effort to create more socially just labour market and societal situations. There is only limited existing literature in Aotearoa that explicitly addresses mechanism of racism in employment, particularly those at meso- (organisational) and macro- (institutional) levels (see Table 1). While being mindful that there are different terms employed to describe similar mechanism of racism (with overlapping nature), what we have identified in this review does reveal similarities with the much broader and more diverse international literature. That said, the lack of literature in Aotearoa is likely a reflection of the institutional racism that permeates not only every stratum of society, but also research design. If researchers cannot name and address racism in research, then it is not possible to understand the operation and effects of racism nor to establish insights that can lead to meaningful transformative responses to challenge racism. Table 1 provides an overview of the racialised experiences of minoritised ethnicities (including Indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees) in employment, which are grouped into a three-level framework, encompassing individual, organisational and institutional levels.

This multilevel analysis of racism in employment highlights the geographical and historical contingency of racism, its embeddedness within organisations, and its intersectional and relational characteristics. This framework aligns with Racialised Organisational Theory's (ROT) claim that organisations constitute and are constituted by racial processes across micro-, meso-, and macro-levels and (Ray, 2019) racial structures at micro- and meso-levels can transform as people interact in response to institutional imperatives. A multilevel analysis of insights highlighted in Table 1 offers us a tool to identify unique issues in the context of Aotearoa as well as international perspectives that signal areas for future research on racism and employment in Aotearoa.

Table 1. A framework of understanding employment experiences of minoritised ethnicities

| | Micro/Individual | Meso/Organisational | Macro/Institutional |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Aotearoa/New Zealand research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discrimination due to race/ethnicity ● Discrimination due to religion ● Multiple and intersectional discrimination ● Stereotypes ● Limited access to social capital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unemployment and barriers to secure employment ● Hiring bias ● Underemployment ● Brown glass ceiling ● Lack of cultural diversity ● Forced assimilation ● Tokenistic policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Racialised occupation and labour market ● Recognition of overseas education qualifications ● Te Tiriti o Waitangi compliance |
| International research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discrimination due to race/ethnicity ● Discrimination due to religion ● Multiple and intersectional discrimination ● Stereotypes ● Limited access to social capital ● Equity in hiring ● Cross-cultural discomfort ● Ethnic in-group favouritism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wage disparity ● Poor working condition ● Unemployment and barriers to secure employment ● Underemployment ● High turnover ● Predominantly White ethnic habitus ● Deficit framing ● Excessive targeting ● Forced assimilation ● Migrant exploitation ● Complaint management system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Racialised occupation and labour market ● Recognition of overseas education qualifications ● Talent acquisition systems ● Migration policies ● Refugee policies ● Equal opportunity policies ● Anti-discrimination legislations ● Career training programmes |

Racialisation and biculturalism in Aotearoa

While a comparative international analysis allows us to capture a broader picture of the manifestation of racism in organisations and understand the experiences of minoritised ethnicities from more nuanced theoretical perspectives, the generalisation of overseas findings to the bicultural, settler colonial and increasingly ethnically diverse context of Aotearoa cannot be made without caution. There are two particularly unique themes found within the Aotearoa literature. First, Goza et al. (2022) reported te Tiriti non-compliance in the recruitment and performance review processes of public sector chief executives. Te Tiriti compliance was determined based on a staged process of critical Tiriti analysis (CTA; Came, O'Sullivan, et al., 2020) that rates the degree of engagement of a particular policy with te Tiriti elements; these comprise preamble (identification of how te Tiriti commitments are represented), kāwanatanga (mechanisms in place to warrant equitable Māori leadership), tino rangatiratanga (inclusion of Māori philosophies in influencing policy processes), oritanga (platforms available for Māori to exercise citizenship), and wairuatanga (recognition of Māori customs). As an anti-racism praxis, CTA serves as a useful tool for employers who wish to improve employment outcomes for Māori through measurable goals. Second, Pasifika people face specific challenges related to their ethnicity when advancing their career to senior management roles, which scholars identified as a brown glass ceiling (Mesui, 2019; Ofe-Grant, 2018). These challenges stem from racial stereotypes emergent within colonialism that imply Pasifika people (especially women) do not fit into the White ideal of a leader.

These insights speak to the specific formulation of racism in Aotearoa that has taken shape through White settler colonisation, its detrimental effects for Māori, the stratified incorporation of minoritised ethnicities into society and the workforce, and the potential for transformation through centring te Tiriti and prioritising Māori responses to racism. Aotearoa's settler colonial context is racialised in relational ways with racisms manifested in ongoing colonisation and prioritisation of Pākehā norms and institutions at the expense of Māori sovereignty operating in relation to external colonisation of the Pasifika (directly historically and indirectly through development and border control in recent years; Barber & Davidson, 2021). Pasifika people are racialised both through the brown glass ceiling (Mesui, 2019; Ofe-Grant, 2018) and by the New Zealand Government which simultaneously excludes migrants from the Pacific from migration outside of seasonal work programmes and limits quotas in ways that reflect colonial hierarchies.

Alongside these racialisations are the earlier identified experiences of Asian, African and other minoritised ethnicities who are positioned in distinct ways in relation to the bicultural notion of ethnic group relations that affirms Māori as tangata whenua. Racialisation of Asian, African and other minoritised ethnicities are reflected through construction of "model minority" and "grateful refugee" models (Thiruselvam, 2019), workplace and institutional norms (Omura, 2014), migration policy (Collins, 2020) and claims to diversity and inclusion (Lee et al., 2021). Research in Aotearoa on racism and employment, then, needs to take account of both the insights that emerge in international theories of racism (such as Racialised Organisation Theory and Critical Race Theory) as well as the contextually and culturally specific insights that can be generated through analyses of arrangements and experiences here.

Gaps in employment literature for minoritised ethnicities in Aotearoa

As existing studies tend to focus on individual experiences of racism and discrimination, there is an opportunity for Aotearoa research to explore racism experiences at meso- and macro-levels as the main sites of production of racial inequality. An analysis that includes scrutiny of racialised structures, alongside other power hierarchies produced through colonialism and capitalism, offers potential for transformative responses such as those identified in CTA (Came, O'Sullivan, et al., 2020). Organisations are commonly grounded within a predominant White ethnic habitus (Nguyen & Velayutham, 2018) that views Whiteness as a credential in distributing organisational resources, legitimising racial hierarchy, and restricting the

agency of minoritised ethnicities (Ray, 2019). While Aotearoa research has documented evidence for individual-level employment discrimination due to ethnicity (as well as intersectional forms of prejudices) for Māori (Chittick, 2017; Pack, 2016), Pasifika (Mesui, 2019; Ofe-Grant, 2018), migrants (Graham, 2001; Huang, 2015), and refugees (Majavu, 2015; Yusuf, 2015), there are insufficient linkages made to the role of organisations as bureaucratic structures that racialise groups and generate stratified experiences for minoritised ethnicities (Ray, 2019) and even fewer that situate such critiques in relation to capitalism and colonialism. Below, we discuss racialisation examples relevant to employment practices at the institutional level that have been under-researched in Aotearoa.

The presence of formal policies and regulations to address racism within organisations has been found to promote fairer and more equitable employment practices (Li, 2019). In Aotearoa, an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy is a formal document that outlines an organisation's commitment to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion. EEO is mandated in legislation for employers in the public sector while those in the private sector are encouraged to voluntarily do the same. A few overseas studies (Li, 2019; Ray, 2019; Sahraoui, 2020) noted the constrained capability of EEO in addressing institutional racism and inequity in workplaces, except when these discriminatory practices occur in blatant forms, which can in turn be reported to a commission (for example, the Human Rights Commission in Aotearoa). Some organisations in Aotearoa also rely on diversity policies to promote employment equality. For example, Spark NZ (a nationwide telecommunication company) introduced a Diversity and Inclusion Policy to express its commitment to "pay parity as well as attracting, recruiting, developing, promoting and retaining a diverse group of talented individuals" (Spark NZ, 2016, p. 1). Scholars such as Ahmed and Swan (2006), however, critique the "management of diversity" as a form of human resources to portray an organisation as inclusive. Doing diversity work that masks the underlying issues of institutional racism risks (re)producing social privilege that sustains the interests of the Pākehā majority. There have been several Aotearoa studies (for example, Lee et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2017) that have examined how diversity management policies can be used to create culturally appropriate institutions and manage cross-cultural workforces. As Lee et al. (2021) note in relation to employment in health, however, diversity and inclusion policies are also characterised by conflicting agendas between diversity, equity, te Tiriti commitments and addressing racism. Thus, future studies are required to connect the roles of these institutional interventions with the discourse of racism (Ray, 2019).

Another example of racialisation at the institutional level is migration policy (Sahraoui, 2020). In recent years, migration policy in Aotearoa has shifted from a primarily long-term settlement-oriented programme towards various kinds of temporary visas (Collins, 2020). The shift has led to certain industries having a higher proportion of migrants on temporary visas following the desirability of particular occupations and availability of domestic workers with relevant skills. Similar to overseas research (Briones-Vozmediano et al., 2020; Sahraoui, 2020), there is evidence of precarious employment conditions and employer exploitation of migrants as a consequence and extension of the racialisation of different people in Aotearoa (Collins & Stringer, 2022; Huang, 2015; Tuwe, 2018). The distribution of income for racialised migrants is also connected to their nationality as employed migrants from anglophone countries receive higher wages than those of other nationalities across almost all occupations (Collins, 2020).

In Aotearoa, some empirical evidence (for example, Soleimani et al., 2021) exists in identifying cognitive biases in the development of artificial intelligence recruitment systems. However, there has been little attention paid to how the use of technologies in human resource practices can perpetuate racism by hampering the recruitment of a diverse pool of applicants, which as we have noted earlier is likely to be exacerbated by technology-enhanced racism in other domains such as policing and criminal justice. A focus on how racism is embedded in the construction of technology is crucial to avoid individualising the issue of systemic bias as a matter that only emerges within specific recruitment teams. While overseas studies demonstrate that most companies do not intentionally engage in discriminatory hiring practices, there is a

misconception that algorithm-based decision-making is race-neutral and can screen candidates objectively (Benjamin, 2019; Mann & O'Neil, 2016). When algorithms are not responsibly designed to foster equity in the hiring of minoritised ethnicities, or when no proactive steps are taken to address racialised bias built into the automated processes, there is a high risk of sustaining employment inequity through the creation of a homogenous work environment (White habitus) that systematically benefits certain ethnic groups at the expense of others (Yarger et al., 2020).

Roth (2014) highlighted how most workplaces in Aotearoa do not operate in accordance with Māori cultural values, which may create barriers for Māori to access employment. That being said, there are some positive observations in some parts of the public sector (for example, hospitals and universities) in Aotearoa incorporating or at least naming Māori values (for example, manaakitanga or hospitality) and health models to care for employee wellbeing. However, more research is required to examine the effect of 'grafting' Indigenous values onto Pākehā-centric institutions (Ahenakew, 2016). Compared with taiuiwi, Māori are more likely to experience burnout from engagement in aronga takirua or double-shift roles while negotiating their ethnic identities and upholding mātauranga Māori in Aotearoa workplaces (Rauika Māngai, 2020). Studies with Māori scientists and researchers found Māori are sometimes expected to carry out cultural labour (for example, performing official welcomes such as karakia) and act as a conduit between employer and other Māori stakeholders, which are not compensated appropriately (Haar & Martin, 2022; Rauika Māngai, 2020). More research is needed to understand the effects of racialised structures on the work experiences of Māori, including the corresponding institutional responses, to address the employment inequities and severe under-representation that Māori experience across sectors. (For a discussion of this issue in academic settings, see McAllister et al. (2019).)

While accounts that identify individual experiences of discrimination in employment are important, these need to be understood as systemic features of labour regimes that have deep histories in European colonisation, and the expansion and establishment of modern capitalist relations and its concomitant socio-spatial divisions of labour. The Aotearoa literature outlined in this review has signalled the place of different minoritised ethnicities in labour regimes (Māori, Pasifika, racialised migrants and their descendants, current temporary migrants) but currently stops short of an integrated analysis of racial capitalism in labour markets (Bhattacharyya, 2018). Such an approach is important not only for revealing White supremacy in employment and labour markets but also in laying foundations for social relations that are alternative to the racist colonial labour structures that persist today.

The articles included in our analysis are restricted to those with the two keywords of 'racism' and 'employment'. The drawback of using this search criterion is the exclusion of articles that utilise other key terms to depict the employment barriers faced by minoritised ethnicities. Relative to overseas literature, we found that there has been insufficient dialogue around racism and its relevance to employment practices in Aotearoa/New Zealand. We acknowledge that many Aotearoa scholars have explored unjust employment conditions amongst minoritised ethnicities (including wage disparities and unemployment) but many of these studies fail to explicitly name racism as the overarching oppressive mechanism manifested within organisations. Naming racism is a crucial preliminary step to understand precisely how different minoritised ethnicity groups are racialised in recruitment and workplace environments, and how it can be disrupted through the collective use of anti-racism praxes (Came, Badu, et al., 2020). Further, a literature search with a less restrictive guide may reduce the replicability for other researchers to track the development of studies on racism in employment (Ferrari, 2015).

The small number of studies found on Indigenous populations suggest future reviews should expand the search by using relevant key terms such as Indigenous and colonisation, and scanning through journals with Indigenous themes. Although our review has touched on settler colonialism to highlight the specific employment issues that Māori face (Pack, 2016; Revell, 2012), future research could consider a

decolonial approach as a system thinking to explore how organisations can dismantle racialised structures to reduce employment privilege ascribed to the White habitus that reproduce inequities for Māori.

Conclusion

This review drew on Aotearoa and overseas research to illuminate how racism operates within employment. Despite seemingly appearing to be race-neutral, organisations are heavily embedded within racial structures as our review revealed the existence of racist employment practices across micro- (individual), meso- (organisational) and macro- (institutional) levels. The analysis of racism and employment that we undertook has revealed a range of under-researched areas in Aotearoa. Most existing studies have focused on micro-level understandings of racism and have not delved into the interdependent relationship of different processes of racialisation, discrimination and privilege. The international studies reviewed in this article further highlight the need to examine ethnicity as a social construct and that employment experiences of minoritised ethnicities are influenced by settler colonialism alongside racism and other forms of oppression (for example, sexism and classism) that generate barriers to equitable employment.

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Note: the studies involved in the narrative review are bolded.

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Generational Conflict and Middle-Class Decline in Higher-Density Housing Debates

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Abstract

Utilising the pragmatic sociology of critique, this article qualitatively analyses how middle-class housing activists publicly oppose or support higher-density housing or intensification in the Auckland Unitary Plan. With growing concerns about inter-generational housing inequalities and the impacts of intensification, there has been a rise in resident opposition groups and pro-development activists who clash in public debates. While these groups are often in conflict with each other, this article seeks to understand how they both invoke public justifications to go beyond their personal interests in housing and to also reveal the broader political and economic drivers of the housing crisis, which are not widely discussed by these activists. Exposing the broader issues underlying intensification and the housing crisis, such as middle-class decline, helps contribute to a less divisive public discourse that highlights the shared concerns of housing activists while going beyond polarising generational narratives.

Keywords: generational conflict; housing activism; intensification; middle class; sociology of critique

Introduction

The rising cost of housing and living has “squeezed” the middle class (Curtis et al., 2020; Mishel & Shierholz, 2013; Quart, 2018) and is contributing to inter-generational inequalities, conflict and public debate (Eaqub & Eaqub, 2015; Holleran, 2021, 2022; Hoolachan & McKee, 2019). However, when middle-class citizens publicly debate what to do about housing issues, they often avoid discussing the broader economic and political drivers behind housing, such as low wages, inequality and the financialisation of housing, which contribute to middle-class decline (Holleran, 2021, 2022). They tend to favour narrower generational explanations or urban planning arguments, which do not fully address the causes of middle-class decline and unaffordable housing (Holleran, 2021). Urban planning arguments tend to focus on housing as a technical issue (such as increasing supply through intensification) while leaving untouched the wider economic and political drivers of the housing crisis (Madden & Marcuse, 2016; Malva, 2016; Richardson, 2022; White & Nandedkar, 2021).¹ Furthermore, generational explanations, as Hoolachan and McKee (2019, p. 212) argue, emphasise the agency of Baby Boomers, which “deflects attention from the political structures underpinning these inequalities”.

Intensification or urban consolidation is a recent example that has generated disagreement between middle-class citizens. Their concerns are reported in the news media and contribute to public discourses on the housing crisis in a way that avoids broader economic and political explanations (Holleran, 2021; Hoolachan & McKee, 2019). In Aotearoa New Zealand, as I will discuss, higher-density housing proposals have sparked conflicts between younger (Millennial-age) citizens who are pro-growth and older (Baby Boomer) homeowners who oppose intensification. These conflicts tend to centre on technical arguments

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¹ The “housing crisis” is a contested term, especially in Aotearoa New Zealand, as some people (like investors and some homeowners) benefit from rising house prices while other people are unable to afford a house or the cost of rent (Malva, 2016). When house prices started to significantly increase in the 2010s, the conservative National-led government denied there was a crisis while the opposition parties increasingly mobilised the term to discuss unaffordable housing (White & Nandedkar, 2021).

relating to the negative impacts of intensification, the (undemocratic) planning process and generational arguments, which are used to draw attention to the challenges younger people have in buying affordable housing.

In this article, I focus on how the pragmatic sociology of critique can contribute to critical theories of middle-class housing activism that go beyond inter-generational conflicts and focus on the wider economic and political drivers of housing inequality (Cole, 2017; Holleran, 2021; Hoolachan & McKee, 2019; Madden & Marcuse, 2016). Middle-class housing activism is a relatively under-researched form of political action (Polanska et al., 2019) and is increasingly important with the growth of *YIMBY* ('yes in my backyard') social movements (Holleran, 2021, 2022) and the declining prosperity of the middle class, both in Aotearoa New Zealand (Cotterell, 2017; Curtis et al., 2020; Eaqub & Eaqub, 2015; Rashbrooke, 2013, 2021) and internationally (Davey, 2012; Derndorfer & Kranzinger, 2021; Koch et al., 2021; Mishel & Shierholz, 2013; Quart, 2018). I demonstrate how the pragmatic sociology of critique can reveal how housing activists go beyond their personal interests by invoking public justifications and how it can also be used to connect their disparate concerns to a shared, broader issue in society; namely, middle-class decline. Identifying the shared concerns of middle-class activists reveals the broader issues in housing debates, which are not often publicly debated by these activists, and contributes to a less-divisive public discourse on intensification and housing that goes beyond polarising generational arguments that blame the Baby Boomers for unaffordable housing (Cole, 2017; Holleran, 2021; Hoolachan & McKee, 2019). I also add to a growing literature that is applying justification theory and the sociology of engagements, both of which are approaches within the pragmatic sociology of critique, to urban sociology (Blok & Meilvang, 2015; Eranti, 2017; Hamlin, 2022). My research reveals how an individual interest's mode of valuation can be used strategically by supporters to gain support for intensification; that is, this mode of valuation does not always describe opponents as being self-interested or making self-interested claims, as previous research suggests (Eranti, 2017).

Empirically, I examine the claims made in the news media for and against intensification in the proposed Auckland Unitary Plan from late 2015 to early 2017. This period marked the mobilisation of generational arguments by housing activists as they engaged in debates relating to the implementation of the Unitary Plan. To analyse the housing activists' arguments, I utilise two approaches within the pragmatic sociology of critique: Eranti's (2017) modes of valuation framework, and justifications analysis (JA), a complementary methodology recently developed for analysing public justifications in disputes (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). This is an important case study because it marks the starting point of a conflict between middle-class housing activists in a city that is experiencing urban sprawl and a housing crisis.

Opponents and supporters raised awareness of intensification as a public issue that went beyond *NIMBY*ism ('not in my backyard') and their personal interest in housing: opponents of intensification focused on urban planning arguments and an undemocratic planning process while supporters focused on affordable housing and the collective benefits of intensification. Neither group questioned the underlying drivers of the housing crisis; nor did they address housing as a political and economic problem (Madden & Marcuse 2016). However, the arguments of both opponents and supporters reveal a shared concern with declining middle-class prosperity. Young people express concern based on housing affordability and difficulties they face becoming homeowners (Holleran, 2021), while homeowners are concerned with the value of their house, a focus linked to beliefs about threats to their socioeconomic status and the role of their neighbourhood as a place that aligns with their identity (Matthews et al., 2015).

I begin by reviewing the literature on middle-class housing activism as it relates to housing intensification and the generation of conflict. Next, I outline my theoretical approach, methods and case study. I then examine my findings in terms of how opponents and supporters of intensification justified their claims and how their arguments reveal a concern with middle-class decline. I conclude by discussing

how the pragmatic sociology of critique can be used to understand middle-class activism and housing issues in a way that connects their concerns with the wider political and economic forces in society.

Middle-class housing activism and intensification

Urban intensification is now a widely adopted planning strategy (Ruming, 2014), but recently it has become an issue for middle-class citizens. To understand middle-class activism over intensification, I briefly outline resident opposition to it, the meaning of middle-class activism, and the emergence of pro-development housing activists.

Resident opposition and middle-class activism

Citizens often have mixed views on intensification (Ruming, 2014), and in the anglosphere, there is still a preference for low-density standalone houses, which helps explain why residents might oppose higher-density (medium- and high-density) housing (Bryson, 2017; Doberstein & Li, 2016). There is a range of factors that influence the acceptability of intensification, such as people's understanding of community and their "aspirational norm of owning a detached dwelling and large section" (Opit et al., 2020, p. 124); citizens' policy knowledge (Ruming, 2014); class identity (Matthews et al., 2015); perceptions of affluence, safety, privacy and space (Doberstein & Li, 2016); and "social, cultural, and financial attachments to the home" (Cook et al., 2013, p. 133).

Opposition to intensification tends to come from middle-class housing activists. Like previous research on middle-class housing activism, I use the term 'middle class' in the broad sense of people who are either homeowners or live (or want to live) in wealthy suburbs, are well connected and who work in professional occupations (such as urban planner) (Holleran, 2021; Matthews et al., 2015). The *middle class* can be defined as people who are in the middle of a class structure that consists of the capitalist class who own the means of production and who have high levels of capital (economic, social and cultural) and the working class who have lower levels of capital and expertise (Ongley, 2011; Savage et al., 2013). People who are middle class do not own large businesses or the means of production, but are "materially advantaged" professionals, lower-level managers or small business owners (Ongley, 2011, p. 150) who also have moderate amounts of economic capital (such as a house or savings), and higher amounts of social and cultural capital and higher education levels than working-class people (Savage et al., 2013). I expand on the meaning of middle-class activism in the rest of this section.

Middle-class housing activists are often homeowners who are concerned about the value of their homes (Cook & Ruming, 2021) or residents who feel that a new housing development would threaten their attachments to their home or community (Cook et al., 2013). Opponents to intensification are also middle class in the sense that they are often well-connected, affluent and/or live in wealthy suburbs (Holleran, 2021; Matthews et al., 2015). In the context of financialisation, where homes are increasingly seen by investors, homeowners and potential homeowners as investments, homeowners sometimes become involved in activism against intensification or other threats to their investment, which makes them middle-class housing activists or "investor-activists" (Cook & Ruming, 2021). Matthews et al. (2015, p. 68) claim that homeowners see their homes as a reflection of their socioeconomic position, which means that they would likely oppose any development that would threaten their class identity and their neighbourhood's identity as a place for "people like them". The importance of class position means that adding conditions to a development to make it more attractive to existing residents who do not materially benefit from it (such as employment opportunities, public parks, leisure and/or educational, healthcare or transport facilities) is usually not sufficient to stop opposition or gain acceptance from homeowners (Matthews et al., 2015).

In spite of the importance of class position, opponents mobilise arguments that are not class-based, even though the homes they are protecting are a significant financial asset. One reason for the mobilisation of these arguments is that the homeowners are seeking to distance themselves from NIMBYism and arguments based on self-interest (Ruming et al., 2012). Indeed, residents and homeowners regularly argue that intensification negatively affects urban character via increased traffic and reduced privacy (Matthews et al., 2015; Ruming et al., 2012; Williamson & Ruming, 2017). In other cases, opposition groups do not oppose intensification directly, but oppose planning processes and the perceived “loss of urban democracy” (Ruming, 2014, p. 41). In other words, opponents usually invoke common good principles that are not based on class or individual self-interest (Eranti, 2017).

Pro-development housing activists

In contrast to opponents, intensification is being supported by some citizens and groups who seek more affordable, market-rate housing options close to public transport and/or the inner city where there is often easier access to employment compared with suburbs on the edges of cities (Holleran, 2021). The phrase YIMBY is often used as a self-styled term by activists who are pro-development and as a label in popular and academic discourse (Holleran, 2021; Wyly, 2022). Pro-development citizens and groups are often called YIMBYs as, according to Lake (2022, p. 331), they advocate “the removal of regulatory constraints on housing production” to help increase supply and improve affordability. The YIMBY movement tends to be middle class in the sense that it emerged in the early 2010s from Millennial renters who wanted more market-rate housing (not public housing) in wealthy suburbs (Holleran, 2021). YIMBYs appeal to middle-class groups concerned with homeownership rather than homeless people or people excluded from market-rate housing (Holleran, 2021). YIMBYs also tend to be “well-paid professionals” (Wyly, 2022, p. 319) with a university education and some have urban planning backgrounds (Holleran, 2021).

While pro-development activists advocate more market-rate (middle-class) housing to help improve affordability by increasing supply, they also tend to mobilise arguments that are not class-based. Holleran (2021) notes that homeownership is class-based, but housing debates are framed by YIMBYs as generational battles between older Baby Boomers and younger Millennials. In general, scholars agree that there are two reasons why pro-development activists do not use class-based arguments. First, Holleran (2021, p. 848) claims that YIMBYs tend to use a generational framing as a strategic move because “universal middleclass-ness is a cherished fantasy frequently drawn upon in political debates.” Second, as Teresa (2022, p. 310) argues, the YIMBY “deregulatory project misrecognises NIMBYism as a cause of housing problems rather than a symptom of them”. That is, a deregulatory approach aligns with “capitalist land development” (Teresa, 2022, p. 308). Such alignment means that NIMBYs and other actors seeking to restrict intensification are targets for pro-development activists rather than the underlying problems within society, like low wages, income inequality, the financialisation of housing, neoliberalism or gentrification (Malva, 2016; McLeay, 2022).

Methodology

The surfacing of generational arguments over a proposed intensification plan provides an opportunity to utilise the pragmatic sociology of critique, which refers to a broad research programme initially developed by Boltanski and Thévenot in the 1980s (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991). The *pragmatic sociology of critique* focuses on the critical capacities of ordinary people as they engage in disputes, justify their actions and critique other people (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). Specifically, I utilise Eranti’s (2017) *modes of valuation framework* (based on the sociology of engagements and justification theory) and *justifications analysis* (JA; based on justification theory) as the method of analysis (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). The *sociology of engagements* was initially developed by Thévenot (2007, 2014) and is partially based on his earlier work on justification

theory with Boltanski (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991). Urban scholars using justification theory have argued that effective arguments in urban planning disputes often involve combining justifications in strategic ways (Holden & Scerri, 2015; Holden et al., 2015). Actors often combine justifications or make justifications compatible with each other to anticipate critiques from others (Luhtakallio, 2012). For example, Holden et al. (2015, p. 464) claim that during the planning process for Melbourne's Docklands redevelopment, there were public arguments that it needed to provide community services and facilities (civic justification), take on board the views of the community (domestic justification), and to be designed in a way that was not a "soulless place" (inspired justification). As a result of these criticisms, the supporters of the project combined their market justification for the redevelopment with civic, domestic and inspired justifications to gain support for it. The sociology of engagements extends justification theory by outlining three modes of valuation (common good justifications, individual interests and familiar affinities) that actors commonly draw on when they engage in a conflict or dispute (Eranti, 2017, 2018).

To understand the modes of valuation framework and JA, I outline Boltanski and Thévenot's (1991) original justification theory as it underpins these methods of analysis. *Justification theory* has been used to examine disputes where people justify their arguments or criticisms by referring to common good principles that are relevant to the dispute (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999). Common good principles allow actors to "converge towards a common definition" of a situation and to assess the value of relevant people and objects (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999, p. 361). Boltanski and Thévenot (1999, p. 359) originally identified six commonly used justifications (from their reading of classical political philosophy texts), which they called "orders of worth". These orders of worth are "market" worth (based on price), "industrial" worth (based on productivity and/or efficiency), "civic" worth (based on collective or public interest), "domestic" worth (based on esteem and/or reputation), "opinion" worth (based on renown), and "inspired" worth (based on "grace, nonconformity, creativeness") (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999, p. 368). In later developments of the theory, they also identified a "green" order of worth, which is based on the environment or ecology (Thévenot et al., 2000, p. 241).

The sociology of engagements, including Eranti's (2017) modes of valuation framework, is underpinned by the ideas of engagement and valuation. *Engagement* can be understood in terms of how people engage with their environment or world in various ways (Thévenot, 2014). This form of engagement is understood in terms of communication—not only in the narrow sense of exchanging information, but in terms of participation in a "common matter" (Thévenot, 2007, p. 411). There are three main forms of engagement identified within the sociology of engagements: publicly justifiable action oriented to the common good; familiarity or the expression of emotions and the valuing of emotional connections to people, places and things; and individual interests (Eranti, 2018). Eranti (2017) explains that engagement is also based on a mode of valuation—a way of valuing people and things in a situationally correct way. These are not the only forms of engagement or modes of valuation (Centemeri, 2017; Thévenot, 2014), but they have been identified by Eranti (2017) as being relevant for understanding land-use disputes.

The pragmatic sociology of critique can also be used to understand processes of *politicisation*, that is, how people contest the meaning of an issue or depoliticise it by limiting opportunities for contestation (Luhtakallio, 2012; Thévenot, 2014). In justification theory, politicisation is understood in terms of arguments that raise an actor's personal concerns to a more general or abstract level—the level of the common good and the conflict between principles (Eranti, 2018). In the sociology of engagements, politicisation is understood as not only a conflict between principles, but also a conflict of interests or preferences that are articulated and contested by actors (Eranti, 2018). For example, an actor might claim to represent the interests of a local community, which is an "interest-holding actor" (Eranti, 2018, p. 59). While familiar affinities are sometimes used to politicise land-use disputes (Blok & Meilvang, 2014), they are not widely used (Eranti, 2017). In my case study, familiar affinities were not used as a mode of valuation. There could be many reasons why familiar affinities were not invoked by the actors, but one possible reason

is my focus on claims made in news items, which could, as Eranti (2017) suggests, make it difficult for actors to make claims based on their attachments.

Method of analysis

My analysis focuses on news items for several reasons. First, the news media continues to be an important part of the public sphere (Luhtakallio, 2012) and this is where the claims by opponents and supporters were primarily publicised. Secondly, news items provide a valuable source of information for examining conflicts over intensification (Raynor et al., 2017). As Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio (2016) note, the mass media are an important discursive field where competing claims are presented and justified based on moral principles. Finally, there is precedence in sociology for the utilisation of justification theory in the analysis of news media content (Gladarev & Lonkila, 2013; Luhtakallio, 2012; Ylä-Anttila & Kukkonen, 2014).

To analyse the arguments in the news items, I combined JA with Eranti's (2017) modes of valuation framework. My first step was to identify 'claims', the basic unit of analysis in JA (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio define a *claim* as a public act. Such an act "can be a statement to a reporter, but also, for instance, a speech, a published report, a letter to the editor or a demonstration. Thus, a typical newspaper article contains numerous claims by different actors" (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016, p. 4).

This article is primarily based on a qualitative analysis of 72 online news items on the proposed Unitary Plan from 2015 to 2017.² As I discuss below in the case study section, I selected 2015–2017 as this was when opponents began to publicly oppose Auckland Council's decision to allow for further intensification and it was also when supporters of the Unitary Plan began to critique the opponents. I analysed the claims made by supporters and opponents of the proposed Unitary Plan. As my focus is on middle-class citizens and housing activists, I excluded politicians who voiced a political opinion on the Unitary Plan. I identified six groups (consisting of eight representatives or individuals aligned with these groups) who opposed intensification, and 12 groups (consisting of 24 representatives or individuals aligned with these groups) who supported it. There were 31 claims made by opponents in 28 news items and 52 claims made by supporters in 44 news items. While the number of opponents is lower in the news items, many of them are representatives of large resident associations or opposition groups.

As part of a larger research project on housing opposition in Auckland, this article also draws on data collected from interviews with residents and activists who were opposed to the Unitary Plan (Hamlin, 2022). My research for this article includes interviews from 11 participants. Seven of the participants were opponents and residents who engaged with consultation processes or were part of neighbourhood associations or opposition groups; the remaining participants were residents who had opinions on the Unitary Plan/intensification but were not active members of an opposition group. Ethical approval for the research and interviews was approved by The Open Polytechnic's Ethics Committee. Using snowball sampling, interviews were used to triangulate the concerns of respondents with the claims made by opponents in the news items. The concerns in the interviews were selected by closely reading the interviews in relation to the themes identified from the media items. Additionally, I used the various public documents from the Independent Hearings Panel and legal proceedings to understand the controversies evident in the claims from supporters and opponents of intensification.

I used the modified coding framework outlined by Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio (2016) to analyse the claims. This involved closely reading the news items to identify the modes of valuation within each claim (Eranti, 2017). I initially coded the claims with descriptive labels and grouped them into categories and themes (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). The claim-maker (speaker) and addressee were also identified.

² I used Google's news search engine to create a list of news items. I then read through this list to identify the news outlets (seven in total) and to exclude any items that were from blogs or other types of websites. I then searched the individual news sites to double check for any news items I might have missed using Google's news search engine.

Then I conducted deductive coding, which is an interpretative process, by labelling a claim with a relevant mode of valuation and taking notes on it. For the public justifications, I labelled the claims with one or more of the seven predefined theoretical categories/orders of worth. Selecting a relevant order of worth involves taking notes on how the claim relates to the elements within an order of worth and making a note on whether the orders of worth are referred to in a positive (+) or negative (–) way (Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio, 2016). The elements within an order of worth are outlined by Thévenot et al. (2000, p. 241) and they provide a framework for understanding each order of worth and how they are used to evaluate people, things or situations. For example, the market order of worth evaluates worth based on “price”, “cost” or the “economic value of goods and services” as the mode of evaluation (Thévenot et al., 2000, pp. 240–241). A relevant form of proof in the market order of worth is money and people are “qualified” within this order of worth as “customers”, “consumers” or “sellers” (Thévenot et al., 2000, p. 241). The final step involved performing a quantitative overview of the claims to identify the predominant justifications and main themes from the online news items. I counted the claims within each theme from the online news items and the orders of worth I had coded. An overview of the claims (combined into themes) and orders of worth from the opponents and supporters are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Case study

Auckland is Aotearoa New Zealand’s most populous city, with a population of approximately 1.7 million. In 2012, the newly amalgamated Auckland Council released a 30-year strategy called the Auckland Plan, which predicted a need for 400,000 new houses to be built in Auckland by 2040 to accommodate an expected population increase of one million people (Auckland Council, 2012). To support the vision of the Auckland Plan, the proposed Unitary Plan, which is the long-term planning document for the amalgamated Auckland Council, was developed with public consultation. A hearings process on approximately 80 topics began in 2014 and concluded in July 2016.³ The hearings process was carried out by the Independent Hearings Panel to make recommendations on the proposed Unitary Plan to Auckland Council and to ensure the public could provide input (*Albany North Landowners v Auckland Council*, 2017). The Independent Hearings Panel was appointed by the Minister of Conservation and the Minister for the Environment and was independent from Auckland Council (Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel, 2024). During a hearing on the topic of urban growth, two expert groups found that the number of dwellings in the proposed Unitary Plan was not enough to meet the projected population growth; that is, they predicted that 400,000 dwellings would be needed, not 213,000, which is what the proposed Unitary Plan had identified (*Albany North Landowners v Auckland Council*, 2017). The difference between the 400,000 dwellings identified in the Auckland Plan and the 213,000 identified in the proposed Unitary Plan appears to be based on the different methods used for estimating residential capacity. According to the Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel (2016a, p. 49) the proposed Unitary Plan used a method that “relied on the theoretical capacity enabled by the Unitary Plan, rather than on a measure of capacity that . . . appears commercially feasible to supply”. In response, Auckland Council filed evidence to allow for greater intensification than in the proposed Unitary Plan as initially notified by Auckland Council, which would increase the number of dwellings (*Albany North Landowners v Auckland Council*, 2017).

Auckland Council’s decision to allow greater intensification after the hearing on urban growth in December 2014 became an issue at the hearing on residential zones in October 2015. Resident groups argued against further intensification as “out of scope” and supporters argued that Auckland Council’s decision was “in scope” (*Albany North Landowners v Auckland Council*, 2017, p. 26). Ultimately, when the

³ The topics were based on the structure of the proposed Unitary Plan and a coding framework used by Auckland Council (Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel, 2024).

Independent Hearings Panel released its report in July 2016, it recommended allowing increased residential intensification as the provisions of the proposed Unitary Plan would not be sufficient for Auckland's projected population growth as outlined in the Auckland Plan (Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel, 2016a, 2016b). Opponents disagreed with the Panel's recommendations and engaged in legal action against Auckland Council's decision by appealing to the High Court, which released its judgement in early 2017. The High Court dismissed the appeals regarding further intensification being out of scope.

The issue of out-of-scope changes to intensification was reported in the news media. Many opponents and residents from the affected suburbs were concerned that the public were not able to voice their concerns through a consultation process on the proposal to increase intensification in their suburbs. The opposition led to supporters of intensification critiquing the opponents in the news media and publicly supporting greater intensification in the proposed Unitary Plan.

Opposition to intensification

In popular and academic discourse, opposition to intensification is often characterised in terms of NIMBYism (Ruming et al., 2012), but my analysis reveals that opponents mobilised public justifications that avoided arguments based on individual interest. They mobilised public justifications that focused on the planning process and the impacts of intensification on urban character and infrastructure. However, while they avoided using self-interested modes of valuation, the justifications reveal a concern with declining middle-class prosperity. This concern manifested through comments relating to protecting property values and perceived threats to middle-class identity and belonging.

Intensification and the planning process

When the proposed changes to increase intensification were released publicly, opponents mobilised public justifications to critique the (un)fairness of the process and the inadequacy of public consultation processes. While some opponents expressed concerns about the status of urban character, the majority of claims related to the planning process. Participant five explained that they focused on the process as they believed that community consultation was a reasonable expectation to have as the proposed changes would shift their suburbs from having a "predominantly suburban character to something that was an apartment block/urban character". This concern with the process is not unique to this case and reveals how opponents attempt to distance themselves from the NIMBY label by utilising what Ruming (2014, p. 39) calls "complex points and modes of resistance which extend beyond NIMBYism".

In the news items, opponents primarily mobilised civic justifications to critique the planning process as undemocratic. Some claims were combined with domestic (urban character) and industrial justifications that focused on whether the planners had adequately researched the impacts of intensification or overestimated their population projections (see Table 1). However, the primary focus was on what they believed was an undemocratic process. Some residents were surprised to learn about out-of-scope changes that did not allow for further public submissions; that is, only people who submitted evidence in the earlier process were able to submit on the out-of-scope changes. Claims that these out-of-scope changes were undemocratic were underpinned by civic justifications that focused on inclusivity or fairness (for example, informing or consulting residents of the changes) and the right to an official or legal challenge that was being denied to citizens through the out-of-scope changes. These claims emphasised that urban planning should be democratic or inclusive of public input.

Table 1. Justifications and denunciations in the news items

| Claims coded | Justifications invoked | Denunciations invoked |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| Undemocratic planning process (24 claims) | Civic: 24 Domestic: 6 Industrial: 3 | Market: 2 |
| Impact of intensification (7 claims) | Industrial: 4 Domestic: 3 Civic: 2 | Market: 1 |

The impacts of intensification

There were some claims that went beyond the planning process by primarily critiquing the impacts of intensification via domestic/heritage and industrial/infrastructure justifications (see Table 1). In the domestic order of worth, reputation and heritage are highly valued, and as such, changes to a suburb's character, especially when residents oppose the changes, can be a justification to oppose intensification. Urban heritage matters also connect with industrial or urban planning justifications in the sense that rules and regulations for protecting heritage (including design guidelines) can dovetail with domestic justifications. Opponents claimed that building multi-storey buildings in suburbs that are predominantly made up of older single-storey houses could change the character of the suburbs if it was done inappropriately or in an unplanned manner. My interviewees raised similar issues by describing how the Unitary Plan's proposal for intensification did not consider heritage and visual character concerns in certain suburbs. As visual character was perceived as a significant change for residents, some interviewees believed that it required careful planning and consultation with residents.

Beyond the heritage arguments, a small number of opponents focused on the negative impact intensification could have on infrastructure. These claims used an industrial justification to point out the constraints in the existing infrastructure and whether intensification beyond what was earlier planned for could be justified on planning grounds. There was a concern among opponents (including the participants I interviewed) that intensification would increase the number of residents in a suburb, which would increase pressure on such local infrastructure as roads, traffic and wastewater. This concern with infrastructure helped to highlight that additional intensification could either not be justified or would have a negative impact on residents.

Housing affordability is a topical issue in Auckland, but only one opponent made this claim. They claimed that intensification would not necessarily lead to more affordable housing as the supporters of intensification were claiming. As land is expensive and the building process is costly, they stated that housing would remain unaffordable for many people. This type of argument potentially opens for debate critiques of the high cost of housing and is connected to issues like the financialisation of housing and associated concerns around housing inequalities (Madden & Marcuse, 2016). However, the critique of market-based justifications for intensification and affordability was only one claim, and it was combined with a heritage/domestic-based critique of intensification. As discussed below, opponents might be reluctant to draw on affordability arguments if they are concerned about the value of their home decreasing.

Intensification and middle-class decline

Opponents mobilised public justifications that did not challenge the political and economic drivers of the housing crisis, but their arguments reveal a concern with declining middle-class prosperity, an issue based on the belief that intensification will affect property values. The objections to the planning process can be understood in the context of affected citizens wanting to protect the value of their homes through a democratic consultation process that is responsive to the concerns of residents. Homeowners are often

concerned that intensification will have a negative effect on house prices in their area due to smaller houses being built, which can attract renters or change the suburb's reputation, and the possibility of affordable or social housing being built by the government or community providers for lower-income residents (Cook et al., 2013; Ruming, 2014). If the consultation process was democratic, homeowners could potentially halt or influence intensification in their suburbs, which they believe would protect the value of their house (Cook & Ruming, 2021).

The connection between the opponents' critique of an undemocratic planning process and house values was revealed in their concern that the process favoured the government and property developers who wanted to increase intensification. For example, when the High Court revealed its judgment on the out-of-scope issue, one opponent claimed that, although they accepted the findings, they believed "the council reacted to the massive pressure it was under from the development lobby and denied 29,000 ratepayers any form of natural justice" (Hughes, cited in Collins, 2017, para. 12). There were no other claims that decision-makers were being influenced by property developers or other vested interests. Such interests can, however, be understood as a critique of commercial interests (a critique of the market order of worth) in a planning process that was perceived to be democratic (civic worth). The issue of commercial interests from institutional actors taking priority over the concerns of residents was not widely discussed publicly, but it was an issue that surfaced in my interviews with opponents and homeowners. For example, participant five believed that "vested interests, council and central government wanted to put a lot more intensification into Auckland and they were going to do it in the quickest way they possibly could." Opponents might not have had evidence to pursue this belief regarding vested interests from institutional actors, but it suggests that homeowners are concerned about the value of their homes and are advocating a consultation process that is not influenced by actors who have a commercial interest in intensification (that is, the government and property developers). Homeowners could also have a commercial interest in intensification in the sense that they could financially gain by redeveloping their land with higher-density houses or selling their property (Cook & Ruming, 2021). However, my participants wanted to continue living in their low-density homes and so their main concern appeared to be with large-scale intensification from institutional actors negatively affecting their suburbs, which could lower the value of their house.

The issue of declining middle-class prosperity is linked both to declining property values and to perceived threats to residents' middle-class identity and sense of belonging. As discussed above, some opponents claimed that intensification would have negative impacts on their neighbourhood's character and infrastructure. While identity and belonging were not explicitly discussed by opponents, these antagonists did link the negative impacts of intensification with threats to middle-class identity and belonging. Issues like increased traffic and a change in the visual character of a neighbourhood were accepted by respondents as being a disruption to a middle-class lifestyle that low-density living enables. As Cook et al. (2013) explain, privacy, sunlight, lower traffic congestion and other values associated with low-density housing are often perceived by residents as being threatened by higher-density housing. When neighbourhoods change too drastically, some residents can feel like they no longer identify with their home's location; that is, it no longer aligns with their socioeconomic position or how they see themselves (Matthews et al., 2015).

Support for intensification

Like the opponents to intensification, the supporters primarily invoked civic justifications and tended to avoid market or class-based critiques of the existing housing crisis—even though they were making housing affordability claims. The supporters were also concerned with declining middle-class prosperity, a focus expressed through concern with affordability and homeownership and not the protection of house values. Rather than focusing on the planning process, the majority of the supporters of intensification concentrated

on the benefits intensification would provide by invoking civic and industrial justifications. The supporters also mobilised generational arguments, which can be understood as an interests-based mode of valuation. The interests-based valuation was used to strengthen their claims for affordable housing and compact cities by politicising intensification as a generational conflict and by labelling the opponents as uninformed and self-interested NIMBYs.

The benefits of intensification

I identified two primary arguments from the supporters: an affordable housing argument and an argument for compact cities. Some supporters also made claims regarding green justifications for compact cities and market justifications regarding how intensification might improve housing choice and economic growth. However, these were positioned within affordability and compact city arguments that avoided critiquing market-based justifications of the housing crisis. An outline of the justifications in the news items is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Justifications in the news items

| Claims coded | Justifications invoked |
|---|--|
| Affordable housing (13 claims) | Civic: 13 |
| Compact city (8 claims) | Industrial: 7 Market: 2 |
| Combined benefits of intensification (11 claims) | Civic: 9 Market: 8 Industrial: 6 Green: 3 |
| Public participation in the planning process (2 claims) | Civic: 2 |

Supporters invoked a civic justification to claim that enabling intensification through the Unitary Plan would increase the number of dwellings, which would help improve affordability. The basic idea underpinning their affordability argument was supply and demand and how more housing relative to demand would help lower prices by making housing less scarce (these pro-market arguments are outlined at the end of this section). Supporters also acknowledged that intensification and the proposed zones would allow different types of houses to be built on smaller sections of land compared with the existing zones, which would also help lower prices. Underpinning these claims was a civic justification that valued housing in terms of equality and collective well-being. Supporters claimed that the proposed plans for intensification and zoning would improve equality in the housing market in the sense that more people could afford to own a house or have access to more affordable rents in the city compared with the existing zones that restricted intensification and helped keep house and rental prices high. This would also help improve the collective well-being of Aucklanders who would not have to be homeless, leave the city, or accept poor or unhealthy housing conditions. For example, as the Coalition for More Homes (2016, para. 7) put it: “Everyone deserves a safe, healthy, and affordable place to live. But housing options in Auckland are becoming too scarce and too expensive.”

The second primary argument for intensification, which was underpinned by an industrial justification, focused on the benefits of Auckland becoming a compact city. Supporters claimed that intensification provided a long-term plan for Auckland that would benefit future generations by increasing the number of dwellings close to where people want to live—specifically, jobs and amenities—and transportation hubs. There were a couple of market-based claims within this compact city theme that

pointed to greater housing choice in suburbs zoned for intensification compared with low-density zones. However, the primary focus was on evaluating intensification in terms of it being suitable for long-term planning and providing houses that meet the needs of citizens in the future.

To further support their affordability and compact city arguments for intensification, some supporters incorporated market and green justifications. These justifications focused on how the housing crisis might be mitigated without addressing the market-based inequalities or wider economic drivers of unaffordable housing (such as commodification or financialisation of housing). Supporters claimed that intensification would help improve affordability by increasing supply while providing greater housing choice compared with low-density zones. Supporters also claimed that intensification would help grow Auckland's population and its economic productivity. Some other claims also included green justifications that highlight how intensification can help reduce traffic congestion and urban sprawl.

Intensification as a generational battle

To reinforce their affordability arguments, supporters politicised intensification as a generational battle, which can be understood as an interests-based mode of valuation. This generational battle theme consisted of 18 claims. It was used to construct the issue of intensification and the planning process as a conflict between the housing preferences of younger (Millennial-age) supporters who want more affordable housing in low-density areas and older (Baby Boomer) opponents who want to maintain the status quo of low-density housing. The primary argument from opponents was that the planning process was undemocratic, but supporters framed this argument in terms of individual interests by claiming that the consultation process favoured older homeowners over younger renters. Some supporters believed that opponents criticised the democratic aspects of the planning process to resist change and delay intensification. These claims, therefore, created an interests-based argument that was based on a 'generational battle' theme about housing preferences and the perceived generational conflict during the public meetings.

While invoking the generational theme, some supporters claimed that the voices of younger supporters in the planning process were drowned out by homeowners and well-resourced groups who had more time than younger people did. While this would appear to be a civic-based public justification, supporters did not critique the process per se. Rather, they criticised the older homeowners who did participate, and voiced support for young people agitating for affordable housing and compact cities. They claimed that many young people did not have the time to participate as they were trying to find additional income to pay for high rents. For the young people who did participate at the public meetings, some experienced heckling when they commented on the age issue and the issue of housing affordability for young people.

Supporters also politicised intensification as a battle between Aucklanders who support intensification and self-interested NIMBYs who oppose it. The issue of NIMBYism helped to politicise supporters' call for more affordable housing and planning for a compact city by highlighting that, fundamentally, opponents to intensification did not want Auckland to change. As one supporter claimed:

The city they're fighting for is one that essentially remains the same. That would suit them. Many already own quarter acre museum piece villas. But it would essentially erect a NO VACANCY sign above the city, beaming directly into the eyes of the young and the poor; anyone who doesn't already own a home here. (Grieve, 2016, para. eight; capitals emphasis in original)

NIMBY arguments like this helped supporters bring attention to the affordability issue by framing it in terms of a battle between the interests of well-resourced NIMBY homeowners and non-homeowners who aspire to own a home in the city.

Opponents were not only labelled as NIMBYs who did not want change, but also as having uninformed views on urban planning. Some supporters invoked NIMBYism to criticise opponents as lacking evidence for their claims. This helped to reinforce the need for intensification by stating that the claims for conserving low-density housing were based on NIMBY self-interest and not urban planning evidence. For example, one supporter stated that “homeowners revealed themselves as significantly misinformed about the effects of zoning past, present and future” and that “it’s time that the voices of the informed . . . are heard and valued” (Sayes, 2016, para. 13). While there were only two media items that explicitly claimed that opponents were not basing their arguments on evidence, they fed into the broader theme of opponents being self-interested NIMBYs who were trying to conserve their preferences for low-density housing.

Conclusion

With the rise of YIMBY housing activism, sophisticated forms of community opposition to intensification, and concerns with middle-class decline, it is important to understand how middle-class housing activists are contributing to the public discourse on intensification and the housing crisis. Middle-class decline is one shared concern faced by housing activists seeking to either protect their property’s value or to advocate affordable housing. However, these groups tend to mobilise a generational framing or technical, urban planning arguments, which downplays the broader political and economic drivers of the housing crisis, such as financialisation, inequality and low wages (Madden & Marcuse, 2016; Teresa, 2022).

My research demonstrates that the pragmatic sociology of critique can help understand how middle-class activists debate intensification. My findings highlight that an individual interests mode of valuation is not always based on the self-interest of the actors making the claims (as we might expect in NIMBY conflicts) (Eranti, 2017). Rather, intensification was constructed by its supporters as a conflict over individual interests to gain support for intensification from young citizens or renters who want more affordable housing in low-density suburbs. These suburbs are perceived to be dominated by older (Baby Boomer) homeowners and NIMBYs. This finding highlights the different ways that intensification can be effectively politicised as a public issue depending on the system of valuation that is used (Centemeri, 2017; Eranti, 2017). In this case, individual interests dovetailed with civic and pro-market justifications for intensification in the sense that the people demanding affordable housing (young people and renters) were being denied this by older (Baby Boomer) homeowners, who are perceived as restricting the supply of housing.

My findings add to critical theories of middle-class housing activism by revealing that while supporters and opponents have different aims, both groups are raising public awareness of intensification in ways that do not challenge the broader political and economic drivers of the housing crisis. By avoiding broader political and economic arguments, the relationship between housing and societal issues is obscured in public discourses on intensification. For opponents to intensification, it is understandable that critiques of market-based justifications were not mobilised as these activists have an interest in protecting their middle-class identity and property values in their neighbourhood. Moreover, opponents often distance themselves from the NIMBY label and attract wider support by critiquing the planning process (Ruming, 2014). However, focusing on technical, urban planning arguments does not clearly reveal opponents’ concern about potentially declining property values from intensification and wider issues associated with this, such as middle-class decline. For supporters who are concerned with affordability and an eroding middle-class (Holleran, 2021), invoking broader economic and political arguments could be more effective

for explaining their concerns. As Madden and Marcuse (2016) argue, unaffordable housing is not simply linked to the economics of supply and demand, as it relates to a range of broader issues in capitalist societies (such as financialisation and class conflict) and the politics of housing.

My findings also add to critical theories of middle-class activism by revealing how both supporters and opponents of intensification have shared concerns with declining middle-class prosperity. As urban intensification is a complex issue, arguments on middle-class decline help raise awareness about the broader political and economic drivers of unaffordable or commodified housing (Madden & Marcuse, 2016). Highlighting the connections between housing and broader societal issues helps to reveal the shared concerns between housing activists with opposing positions and contributes to a less divisive public discourse on intensification that goes beyond polarising generational debates.

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Making Sense of Neoliberalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand: A Response to Nicholls, Duncan, Neilson, and Foucauldian Governmentality

Brian S. Roper*

Abstract

This article provides a new and original consideration of the contemporary relevance and usefulness of approaches that deploy conceptions of neoliberalism to make sense of Aotearoa/New Zealand's changing economy, society and polity since 1984. In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, an article of mine focused on the Fifth National Government was published in *New Zealand Sociology*, with responses to the article from Duncan, Nicholls and Neilson appearing in the following issue. Among other things, this symposium discussed whether: (1) conceptions of neoliberalism were about to become less relevant, (2) the entire period of New Zealand's political history from 1984 to the present is best understood using a conception of neoliberalism as an analytical lens, and (3) there are foreseeable future developments that might bring the dominance of neoliberalism to an end. These issues frame my consideration of the contributions by Duncan, Nicholls and Neilson, as well as those who use Foucauldian governmentality as an analytical lens to analyse neoliberalism. The key takeaways are: there has been a large increase in scholarship focused on neoliberalism, Foucault, capitalism, Marx and Marxism since 2008; historical materialism continues to provide sound heuristic guidance for analysing neoliberalism; New Zealand's political history from 1984 to the present is best understood as centrally involving the rise, modification and entrenchment of a neoliberal policy regime; and neoliberalism is likely to remain entrenched despite resistance from the left and challenges from the far right.

Keywords: neoliberal; neoliberalism; New Zealand politics; political economy; Marxist; governmentality

Introduction

The global financial crisis (GFC) marks a turning point in world history, ending the period of triumphant cosmopolitan neoliberalism and economic growth from 1982 to 2007 while ushering in a period of polycrisis from 2008 to the present (Callinicos, 2023, pp. 5–7; Tooze, 2021, p. 6). In the aftermath of the GFC, many commentators on both the right and the left thought that the neoliberal era might be coming to an end. An article of mine focused on the neoliberal policies of the Fifth National Government (FNG) was published at this time in *New Zealand Sociology* (Roper, 2011a), with responses to the article from Duncan, Nicholls and Neilson appearing in the following issue (Duncan, 2011; Neilson, 2011; Nicholls, 2011).¹ The long delay in providing a published reply to these responses has proven to be intellectually useful for three main reasons. First, among other things, this symposium discussed the future prospects for

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¹ David Neilson passed away on 2 November, 2022. David was a good friend of mine and I found it emotionally challenging to write a response to his typically generous, insightful, constructive and thought-provoking criticism of my analysis of neoliberalism and the Key-English Fifth National Government. The last time I saw David was in Kakanui where we discussed some of the issues traversed in this article while walking my dog (Lisa) on the beach at All Day Bay under a blue sky in bright summer sunshine. It saddens me that I won't get a chance to hear David's response to this article, but I suspect he would have agreed with most of it and that we would have continued to agree to disagree about some points in a mutually enjoyable conversation punctuated with smiles and laughs. For illuminating obituaries of David, see <https://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/130635899/squatter-professor-warmhearted-leftie-dr-david-john-major-neilson-19572022> and <https://tumblestoneblog.wordpress.com/2022/12/09/a-warm-hearted-leftie-who-relentlessly-pursued-his-vision-of-a-better-world-ten-kakanui-stones-in-memory-of-david/>

neoliberalism and considered whether conceptions of neoliberalism were about to become less relevant. In fact, since 2008, ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ has become even more deeply embedded within the political economies of advanced capitalist countries, rapidly developing countries in East Asia—most notably China, South Korea and Vietnam—and countries in the Global South (Cahill, 2014). There have been major outbursts of resistance from the left, and complexities generated by the rise of the far right with its toxic mix of nationalism, reactionary social conservatism, racism, conspiracy theories, online disinformation campaigns, and so forth. But the general trend seems clear: neoliberal policy regimes remain entrenched throughout the world. Second, a related trend is clearly evident in intellectual history. ProQuest Academic One searches were used to provide a ‘satellite view’ of patterns and trends in the international literature. These searches reveal a large increase in scholarly output focused on neoliberalism from 1 January 2009 to 1 October 2023, with 152,483 books, dissertations, conference papers, journal articles and working papers identified using ‘neoliberal’ as a keyword. The searches also show substantial increases in output focused on capitalism, Foucault, Marx and Marxism, with declines or very small increases (depending on the measure used) of output focused on neoconservatism, poststructuralism and postmodernism (see Tables 1 and 2 below). Finally, with respect to New Zealand’s political history, the issues canvassed by Duncan, Neilson and Nicholls in their 2011 articles can be given further consideration by reference to the National and Labour governments in power from 2008 to 2017 and 2017 to 2023. The 2023 election resulted in the formation of a National-ACT-New Zealand First coalition government committed to an obviously neoliberal policy agenda. This further enhances the importance of the debate.

This symposium raises three important sets of questions: 1) Is the entire period of New Zealand’s political history from 1984 to the present best understood using a conception of neoliberalism as an analytical lens? As a matter of fact, have the key features of a neoliberal policy regime remained entrenched since 1984? 2) Why and how have neoliberal policy regimes persisted for such a long period of world history, despite the polycrisis that they have generated? and 3) What developments might bring the dominance of neoliberalism to an end? What are the prospects for far-right challenges and left resistance to neoliberalism? These questions frame my consideration of the contributions by Duncan, Nicholls, Neilson and those who use Foucauldian governmentality to analyse neoliberalism.

A central theme of my research and teaching is that New Zealand’s political history from 1984 to the present is best understood as centrally involving the rise, modification and entrenchment of a neoliberal policy regime. My explanation of the historic shift in economic management, policymaking and politics from Keynesianism to neoliberalism is related to this interpretation. In essence, in *Prosperity for All? Economic, Social and Political Change in New Zealand since 1935* (hereafter, *Prosperity*), I argue that in order to develop an intellectually sophisticated and empirically sound explanation, the analysis must encompass economic, societal, ideological and political factors (Roper, 2005a). Although my analysis did not draw upon Polanyi’s (2001) concept of embeddedness, this explanation identifies most of the key factors underpinning the entrenchment and durability of the neoliberal policy regime. This article provides an opportunity to consider and respond to criticism of this approach, reflect self-critically on my earlier work in this area, highlight its unique qualities, and identify how it can be improved and extended into new areas.

The article considers the arguments of Nicholls (2011), Duncan (2011, 2014), and Neilson (2011) in Section 1. Following this, Section 2 situates my research on neoliberalism via a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the Foucauldian governmentality approach and ‘poststructuralist political economy.’ Possible futures of neoliberalism, including a continuation of the turn towards economic nationalism associated with the far right, are considered in the final section as part of the collective endeavour of making sense of the longevity of neoliberalism and what may lie beyond it. Those who are unfamiliar with my previous writing on neoliberalism and/or who want to better understand my theoretical approach and methodology, should read Supplementary Note 1 which provides a definition of policy regime, incorporates the concept of policy regime within an empirically grounded Marxist theory of the state, briefly describes

the Keynesian and neoliberal policy regimes, briefly recaps my explanation of the historic shift from Keynesianism to neoliberalism, and discusses the embedding or entrenching of actually existing neoliberalism.²

Is New Zealand beyond or post neoliberalism?

Kate Nicholls, "Beyond neoliberalism: Response to Brian Roper."

Nicholls's "response to Brian Roper" makes some interesting points which helpfully prompted me to investigate several issues in greater depth. Nicholls begins by claiming that the term neoliberalism is not widely used outside of New Zealand and Marxist circles in the United Kingdom as a focal point of academic discussion. To ascertain the accuracy of this claim, I conducted a series of ProQuest One Academic searches in all languages using the following keywords: 'neoliberal', 'neoliberalism', 'neoconservative', 'neoconservatism' and 'Hayek' (see Table 1 below). Three different filters were used: all sources; books, conference papers, dissertations, encyclopaedia, mags, journals, working papers (hereafter, 'books, etc.');

and peer reviewed (mainly journal articles). The results of these searches paint a dramatically different picture of the prevalence scholarly attention given to neoliberalism within the global academic landscape to that sketched by Nicholls. First, if neoliberal is used as a keyword for the period from 1 January 1990 to 1 of October 2023, then the results in all languages are as follows: 340,182 all sources; 192,653 books, etc; and 92,974 peer reviewed. Second, if the search is limited to the period following the GFC from 1 January 2009 to 1 October 2023, the results are: 290,310 all sources; 159,755 books, etc; and 79,101 peer reviewed. This clearly indicates the vast scale and large increase of scholarly interest in neoliberalism since the GFC, and it contrasts with a relative decline in research focused on neoconservatism. Third, the geographic distribution of scholarly interest in neoliberalism is remarkably broad and dispersed across the entire globe, including all major parts of Asia and the Global South, while being most heavily concentrated in Europe (including the UK), North, Central and Latin America, and China. Relative to population, scholarly interest in neoliberalism is comparatively high in Australia (1591 books, etc. since the GFC) and New Zealand (637). Fourth, a qualitative reading of a sample of these sources quickly shows that, unfortunately, a substantial majority are non-Marxist. Therefore, the arguments of Nicholls and, as we shall see, Duncan in 2011 that the world was moving beyond neoliberalism, that the concept was becoming decreasingly relevant and intellectually useful, have not been borne out by the subsequent trajectory of world intellectual history.³

² "Supplementary Note 1—The Neoliberal Policy Regime: A Brief Overview." Available at https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Roper_Neoliberalism-in-New-Zealand_NZS-391-2024_Supplementary-Note-1.pdf

³ This quantitative meta review is supplemented by a select bibliography of international and New Zealand sources focused on neoliberalism (Supplementary Note 2). Available at https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Roper_Neoliberalism-in-New-Zealand_NZS-391-2024_Supplementary-Note-2.pdf

Table 1: Neoliberalism and neoconservatism sources 1990s, 2000s and 2010s

ProQuest Academic One Search: All sources

| Decade | Neoliberal | Neoliberalism | Neoconservative | Neoconservatism | Hayek |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1990s | 8,907 | 3,288 | 5,483 | 1,156 | 15,255 |
| 2000s | 49,112 | 24,892 | 29,587 | 5,082 | 56,482 |
| 2010s | 152,627 | 86,046 | 21,313 | 4,377 | 85,236 |
| Total | 210,646 | 114,226 | 56,383 | 10,615 | 156,973 |

ProQuest Academic One Search: Books, conference papers, dissertations, encyclopedias, magazines, journals, working papers

| Decade | Neoliberal | Neoliberalism | Neoconservative | Neoconservatism | Hayek |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1990s | 4,959 | 2,792 | 3,372 | 818 | 5,581 |
| 2000s | 33,570 | 22,126 | 11,851 | 3,259 | 18,206 |
| 2010s | 107,032 | 70,870 | 10,404 | 3,282 | 30,826 |
| Total | 145,561 | 95,788 | 25,627 | 7,359 | 54,613 |

ProQuest Academic One Search: Peer reviewed

| Decade | Neoliberal | Neoliberalism | Neoconservative | Neoconservatism | Hayek |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1990s | 1,958 | 1,137 | 687 | 175 | 1,633 |
| 2000s | 14,276 | 9,242 | 2,661 | 871 | 6,851 |
| 2010s | 50,200 | 31,985 | 1,969 | 648 | 13,850 |
| Total | 66,434 | 42,364 | 5,317 | 1,694 | 22,334 |

Date of search: 6 October 2023.

Note overlap between neoliberalism and neoconservative; they are not mutually exclusive.

Nicholls’s main criticisms of my analysis of neoliberalism are two-fold: 1) I am wrong to argue that “neoliberalism has dominated and continues to dominate the policy programmes of successive governments in New Zealand since 1984”; and 2) that using neoliberalism as an analytical lens is not “the best way to understand the programmes of recent and current governments” because by the mid-1990s “neoliberalism’ had more or less done what it set out to do” (Nicholls, 2011, pp. 77, 86). Perhaps the most perplexing aspect of Nicholls’s “response to Brian Roper” in relation to these points is that it doesn’t actually consider and respond to my scholarly writing on the shift from Keynesianism to neoliberalism, apart from skimming over my 2011 article on the FNG. In particular, her response makes no reference to my book *Prosperity*. This is a pity because I do in fact address a number of points that Nicholls claims I have missed in my book. The points Nicholls makes regarding the usefulness of a conception of neoliberalism to make sense of New Zealand’s political history and contemporary politics are mainly, but not entirely, factual, since to support her critique she argues that “the heyday of neoliberalism in New Zealand was over, if not in 1996 as a result of the shift to a proportional electoral system and coalition government, then certainly by 1999 with the election of the Fifth Labour Government” (Nicholls, 2011, pp. 77–78). This argument is supported by a very narrow definition of neoliberalism in which it is understood as “the unrestrained application of market-based logics to all or most arenas of state activity” (Nicholls, 2011, p. 77). The use of the term unrestrained is troubling since the implementation of neoliberalism during the period from 1984 to 1999 was hardly unrestrained. Indeed, I have written quite a lot focusing on how its implementation was restrained in various ways by, among other things, the scale of actual and potential

resistance to neoliberal policies (Roper, 2005a, pp. 88–116; 2018), the lobbying activity of business associations (Roper, 1992, 1993, 2006), the electoral constraints on government including the shift from ‘first past the post’ (FPP) to mixed-member proportional (MMP) representation from 1993 to 1996 (Roper, 2005a, pp. 199–201), the impact of global forces on New Zealand’s nation-state autonomy (Roper, 2005b), and the role played by agencies within the state that successfully opposed some elements of the neoliberal agenda (Roper, 2005a, pp. 169–170). But this is a minor point. Of much greater concern is her failure to provide convincing empirical and historical evidence to support her contention that specifically neoliberal “market-orientated reform ... had run its course by the mid-1990s” (Nicholls, 2011, p. 78).

The bulk of Nicholls’s critique of my analysis of the FNG actually focuses on the Fifth Labour Government (FLG) that preceded it. In this respect she argues that “the agenda of the 1999–2008 government led by Helen Clark can best be understood as an effort to shift from the first phase of market-led economic reform to a second phase that was necessarily accompanied by something other than an orthodox neoliberalism” (Nicholls, 2011, p. 78). Nicholls describes this second phase of market-oriented reform as “constructive and creative”, and in this regard she is clearly positioning herself as an academic defender of Labour’s Third Way. The neoliberal phase of “market-oriented reform involved the dismantling of the state-centric development model, including the unleashing of market mechanisms, statutory deregulation, privatization of state assets, financial market opening, reduction of tariff barriers among other measures, and thus in many senses can be considered the ‘destructive’ phase of market-oriented reform” (Nicholls, 2011, p. 79). In contrast, the second phase “is about not only offsetting some of the social costs that resulted from Phase One but also adopting new strategies that will enhance knowledge-based growth” (Nicholls, 2011, p. 80).

Although I agree with Nicholls that the FLG’s Third Way constitutes a new phase of market-oriented reform, her contention that this involved a fundamental break from the “orthodox neoliberal agenda” that preceded it is much less convincing. She cites examples to support her contention such as the Employment Relations Act, Working for Families, Kiwibank, social policy aimed at closing the gaps, and so forth, as if this is policy change that I fail to consider. The FLG is considered at length in Chapter 10 of *Prosperity*: “The Fifth Labour Government: A Third Way beyond Keynesianism and neoliberalism?” The chapter carefully ascertains which features of the neoliberal policy regime were retained and which were abandoned or modified “in order to determine the extent to which it really is charting a third way between and beyond Keynesianism and neoliberalism” (Roper, 2005a, p. 229). My central argument, which both Duncan (2007, 2011) and Neilson (2011) accept but which Nicholls rejects, is that the FLG retained the central pillars of the neoliberal policy regime while at the same time implementing a broad programme of policy change. Following a section in *Prosperity* that focuses on the FLG’s approach to macroeconomic management, taxation, social policy, employment relations, paid parental leave, growth and innovation, and Working for Families, I make the following argument.

The hard core of the neoliberal policy regime remains in place. So, for example, the 1991 benefit cuts have not been reversed; the overall taxation system is not markedly progressive by international standards due to the retention of GST and comparatively low tax rates on high incomes and corporate profits; the Employment Relations Act retains the central features of the industrial relations system created by the Employment Contracts Act (ECA); and students still face high fees, inadequate living allowances, and incur high levels of debt while studying. With the exception of the ECA, all of the legislative ‘lynch-pins’ of this policy regime remain in place: the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986, Reserve Bank Act 1989, Fiscal Responsibility Act 1994, and the Public Finance Act 1989 (the last two essentially incorporated within, rather than being fundamentally changed by, the Public Finance Management Amendment Act 2004). Therefore, although it is the case that the Government’s broad approach combines elements of Keynesianism and neoliberalism, the neoliberal elements predominate. (Roper, 2005a, pp. 234–5)

The main problem with Nicholls’s argument regarding Phase One and Phase Two is, therefore, its weak empirical basis. Nicholls’s (2018, p. 160) illuminating application of a Varieties of Capitalism theoretical lens to explain New Zealand’s economic underperformance acknowledges that “New Zealand is rightly assumed to reflect a near pure example of a free-market Liberal Market Economy”, so perhaps her position has shifted. But to effectively rebut my argument, factual evidence needs to be provided showing that the central features of the neoliberal policy regime that were constructed by successive governments from 1984 to 1999 subsequently have been dismantled. Nicholls cannot do this for the simple reason that, in reality, these features remain firmly in place. Far from dismantling the neoliberal policy regime, the FNG clearly extended it from 2008 to 2017. The Sixth Labour Government also retained the central features of the neoliberal policy regime, while formulating and implementing its own distinctive variant of Third Way social democracy. The National and ACT parties’ 2023 election campaigns received record funding from corporations and the rich (\$12.4 million from 2021–2023 compared with \$1.1 million for Labour) (Hancock, 2023). Their central campaign promise was to fund tax cuts by downsizing the state, suggesting a return to a more fundamentalist variant of neoliberalism (Boraman, 2023). This will be difficult to sustain politically as the Government is confronted with large-scale opposition to its policies on te Tiriti o Waitangi, use of te reo within the public service, dismantling of Te Aka Whai Ora | Māori Health Authority, and promised cuts to the unionised public service combined with cuts in other areas of public expenditure such as climate change mitigation, higher education and water infrastructure.

Grant Duncan, “Scratching the essentialist itch: Comment on Roper.”

Duncan (2011) provides a thought-provoking response (see also Duncan, 2014). Given Duncan’s use of the term ‘essentialism’, it is surprising that nowhere does he actually criticise my work for being essentialist. Assuming that the term is taken to imply some kind of simplistic economic determinism and/or class reductionism, he is unlikely to find anything of that nature in my work, thanks to a serious engagement with Marxian dialectics and Gramsci’s writings in my youth. The same can be said with respect to my theoretical and methodological approach to analysing state formations, which explicitly rejects vulgar instrumentalist conceptions of the capitalist state (Supplementary Note 1; see also McKenna, 2014; Roper, 2013).

Second, in my article I briefly mention that the FLG had softened and entrenched the neoliberal policy regime, while referring to the chapter in my book that focuses on the FLG’s Third Way. Duncan agrees that the FLG softened and entrenched the neoliberal policy despite its use of social democratic rhetoric that apparently suggests otherwise (see also Duncan, 2004, pp. 213–241). Duncan (2011, p. 60) suggests, however, that my depiction needs to be qualified since “he could have mustered more evidence in favour of it” and then does so by referring to various points that I cover in the relevant chapters of *Prosperity*. A reading of those chapters should suffice to address this point. Note, also, Perry Anderson’s (2000, p. 11) kindred argument that the Third Way’s “winning formula to seal the victory of the market is not to attack, but to preserve, the placebo of a compassionate public authority, extolling the compatibility of competition with solidarity. [Although] the hard core of government policies remains further pursuit of the Reagan–Thatcher legacy ... it is now carefully surrounded with subsidiary concessions and softer rhetoric. The effect of this combination, currently being diffused throughout Europe, is to suppress the conflictual potential of the pioneering regimes of the radical right, and kill off opposition to neo-liberal hegemony more completely.”

Finally, Duncan provides some thought-provoking speculation about the future. He correctly raises the possibility that the economic crisis could provide governments with “a convenient rationale for austerity measures, rolling-back of welfare policies, privatisation, attacks on unionised public servants, and the like” (Duncan, 2011, p. 64). Unfortunately, this is what happened in most countries after an initial fiscal

stimulus had been applied to keep the system afloat from 2008–2010.

We disagree, however, on two key points. The first concerns a misreading of the conclusion to my article. Duncan alleges that I assert “without evidence”, that “challenges and alternatives to neoliberalism *can only arise from* [my emphasis] ‘a major upsurge in working class and social movement struggle’”. This is simply not what I actually argue. My view was that “the future direction of government policy-making in New Zealand will depend crucially on developments within the domestic and global economies” and “will also depend on a broad range of other related factors, the most important being the level of working class and social movement struggle both within New Zealand and internationally” (Roper, 2011a, p. 37). Note the reference here to the global economy and the level of international working-class struggle, the emphasis I place on the crucial influence of the prevailing economic orthodoxy upon the thinking and policymaking of New Zealand governments earlier in the conclusion, and my observation that “the extensive integration of New Zealand’s financial markets and institutions within the global financial system, especially in view of the very high levels of New Zealand’s offshore debt, has also tightly constrained the policy-making options of this Government” (see also Richards, 2010). In view of this, it is hard to see much justification for Duncan’s claim that my “views about the potential sources of change are rather too local, and do not take account of the global horizons of what are essentially globalizing forces of capitalism” (Duncan, 2011, p. 65).

Related to this, is the second point, where Duncan contends that I failed to notice that “We have not seen much working-class or social-movement struggle in New Zealand lately.” He missed the point earlier in my conclusion that sadly remains relevant today: “The level of working class and social movement struggle remains historically low, while business continues to lobby government intensely for the retention and further implementation of neoliberal policies and employers remain militant in conflicts and negotiations with workers over wages and conditions of employment. Putting it over-simply for the sake of clarity, the balance of forces within society in recent years weighs heavily in favour of the continued implementation of the neoliberal policy agenda” (Roper, 2011a, p. 36). At this time, I underestimated the extent to which challenges to neoliberalism might arise from the far right, but my focus was on the prospects for a progressive left alternative, hence the reference to working-class and social-movement struggle. My point is that an upsurge in working-class struggle is likely to be a necessary factor in a shift towards a politically progressive alternative, either placing pressure on governments to dismantle the neoliberal policy regime in order to quell a rising wave of unrest from below, in which case the alternative might arise from within elite circles, or alternatively it could emerge as a reformist or revolutionary programme in the context of an international upturn in working-class struggle. (For an account of the last upturn of working class struggle in Aotearoa, see Roper, 2011b.)

David Neilson, “Making history beyond neoliberalism: Response to Roper.”

Neilson provides an intellectually sophisticated response that is the most generous of the three, based on an accurate reading of my published work in the area, and provides typically constructive criticism. It is particularly difficult to provide a concise response because his article makes a series of points that can only be discussed fully by reference to relevant debates within the Marxist tradition. Some brief remarks will have to suffice here. One way to briefly summarise the differences in our interpretations of neoliberalism and possible progressive left alternatives to it, is by reference to our different locations within the Marxist tradition. My Marxism is grounded in classical Marxism as it developed from the 1840s to the 1930s, particularly the revolutionary wing of classical Marxism associated with Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky, Lukacs, Gramsci and many others, and the Marxists who reinvigorated that classical Marxist tradition from the late 1960s onwards. Whereas I became critical of the Frankfurt School critical theory, the structuralist Marxism of Althusser and Poulantzas, and the French Regulation School in my twenties

(Roper, 1991, pp. 52–62; 1996), David Neilson’s neo-Marxism starts in the late 1960s with these thinkers, together with an engagement with Marx and Gramsci. Although a friend once joked that ‘neo-Marxist’ means ‘not really Marxist’, this would be an unfair depiction of Neilson’s neo-Marxism, which retains genuinely Marxist elements, not least of which being a recognition that capitalism is an exploitative, class-structured and crisis-prone system, which is destroying the natural environment upon which humans depend for their continued existence.

As a social and political theorist working within the fields of the sociology of class and political economy, Neilson (2020, p. 94) contributes an original advancement of Regulation School Theory (RST), arguing that its central conceptions of mode of regulation, regime of accumulation, and model of development need to be revised and updated to take account of the extent to which neoliberalism has been successfully promoted by “trans-national agents within trans-national forums [who] design, implement and manage a [neoliberal] model of development in order to achieve calculated national-trans-national regulatory and accumulation effects”. Nation states have been transformed into competition states forced by intense international economic competition to operate “export-led national accumulation strategies driven not just by higher productivity but also by lower wages” (Neilson, 2020, p. 98). The alternative to the neoliberal model of development that has delivered “recurring global accumulation crises, deepening ecological instability, destructive zero-sum competition between unevenly developing nation-states, and escalating social insecurity and inequality” is a counter-hegemonic model of development “offering a stable and progressive localised alternative energised by international cooperation” (Neilson, 2020, p. 104). This requires a “blueprint, with location sensitive variations, of a dynamically efficient, locally sustainable, and cooperative national model of production” supported by the democratisation of the main institutions for global governance such as the UN (Neilson, 2020, p. 104; compare with Roper, 2011b).

Writing from the perspective of this third-generation RST, Neilson makes several points that are important and illuminating. First, he correctly argues that “the policy direction pursued in the 1980s integrally connected, and thus permanently reordered and constrained, nation state priorities and capacities to the on-going global neoliberal project” (Neilson, 2011, p. 66). Second, the conception of the “competition state” affords a key insight (Neilson, 2011, p. 68). Successive governments in New Zealand since 1984 have clearly premised their approaches to economic management and policymaking on the taken-for-granted and mainly implicit understanding that “for nation states to be economically viable they must become ‘competition states’ that like ‘hostile brothers’ contest with each other to attract and retain capital” (Neilson, 2011, p. 68).

Less helpful is the related conception of the transnational state, according to which the nation state merely functions as “a transmission belt from the global to the domestic economy” (Neilson, 2011, p. 68). This is problematic because it underestimates the extent to which domestic sociopolitical forces impact upon the state, as I hope my account of New Zealand’s political history in *Prosperity* shows. But it is also problematic for some of the reasons outlined by Callinicos (2009, pp. 73–93), Harman (2003), Harvey (2003, pp. 26–86) and Wood (2003, pp. 137–142), namely that the “political form of globalization is not a global state or global sovereignty” but rather relies heavily on a “global system of multiple states and local sovereignties, structured in a complex relation of domination and subordination” (Wood, 2003, p. 141). This is because although the capitalist economic system has become increasingly globalised, “the state continues to play its essential role in creating and maintaining the conditions of capital accumulation; and no other institution, no transnational agency, has even begun to replace the nation state as an administrative and coercive guarantor of social order, property relations, stability or contractual predictability, or any of the other basic conditions required by capital in its everyday life” (Wood, 2003, p. 139). In a similar vein, Harman (2003, pp. 43–44) observes that “the world’s biggest companies have *both* expanded beyond national boundaries on a scale that now exceeds the internationalisation of the system before the First World War *and* remain dependent to a high degree on their ability to influence ‘their’ national government.

This is because, at the end of the day, they need a state to protect their web of international interests, and the only states that exist are national states.” This suggests that the issue of nation-state autonomy in relation to global forces is highly complex since global capital depends heavily on the nation state to, among other things, ensure the security of its investments within the sovereign territory administered by a particular nation state while at the same time seeking to influence and shape the policy regime maintained by this state so as to allow freedom of foreign investment, international financial capital mobility and foreign trade. In a nutshell, this means that to perform these vital functions, nation states cannot be powerless and largely lacking domestic autonomy.

Fourth, Neilson (2011, p. 70) provides a compelling and illuminating account of why it is that social democrats have become neoliberals since 1984, arguing that “key aspects of the neoliberal project have also become embedded in ‘common sense’”, appearing as a natural order and as simply the way things are. Fifth, Neilson makes an interesting, and for the most part convincing, argument for a counter-hegemonic project as an alternative to the modified variants of neoliberalism associated with Third Way social democracy. The big question is how such a counter-hegemonic project is likely to come about. Like cosmopolitan social democrats, Neilson has surprisingly little to say about the question of agency (Roper, 2011c). Furthermore, it is problematic to argue that “a counter-hegemonic project seeks a mid-range transformative path that operates between the scenario of a spontaneous revolutionary rupture and capitalism-reinforcing social democratic reform. A counter-hegemonic project seeks to deliberately construct another world on the basis of a clear alternative design or model of development and political/ ideological strategy” (Neilson, 2011, pp. 73–74). There is no ‘middle way’ between reform and revolution for reasons I have outlined at length elsewhere (Roper, 2011c, 2013, 2017). But we can agree that there does need to be a coherent left social democratic alternative to neoliberalism, which might be something like an eco-socialist political programme that is more clearly critical of capitalism and neoliberalism, and more explicitly pro-working class, than is evident in the policies of the Green Party of Aotearoa (Roper, 2023a).

The insights and limitations of a Foucauldian governmentality perspective

This article provides an opportunity to situate my work on the historic shift from Keynesian to neoliberalism in relation to the Foucauldian governmentality approach and ‘poststructuralist political economy’. The Foucauldian governmentality literature is huge and, perhaps unsurprisingly, the first draft of this section was 6000 words long. The following is thus just a few selected remarks. Although this literature is a treasure trove of stimulating thoughts, well-crafted arguments and illuminating insights, Foucauldian governmentality, encompassing Foucault’s closely related consideration of historical mutations in the nature of power, is fundamentally problematic if adopted as *the* primary theoretical perspective being used when thinking about and researching, among other things, state, government, policymaking, neoliberalism and resistance. As Dean (2018, p. 21) observes, “For a multitude of important thinkers, [Foucault] has become the starting, not the end, point for coming to grips with the problems and problematizations of our present.” In this brief discussion, I highlight some of the more important insights afforded by the governmentality literature, while outlining some of the main weaknesses.

Foucault is a major theorist of power whose substantial body of work defies easy exposition, especially in view of the shifts in his thinking about power during his career, including his late preference for focusing on governmentality rather than power with its ubiquitous, amorphous and ambiguous qualities (for example, Foucault, 2003, pp. 134–135). In its most general sense, Foucault’s study of *power* focuses on “‘the total structure of action brought to bear’ on the actions of others in particular cases, and of the resistance and evasions encountered by those actions” (Hindess, 1996, p. 101). His substantial intellectual influence within English-speaking countries during the 1980s and 1990s was due, in part, to the publications of a group of talented interlocutors (see, for example, Barrett & Phillips, 1992; Butler, 1990; Gordon, 1980,

1991; Dean, 2010; Hindess, 1996, 1997; Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose, 1999; Rose et al., 2006). The resulting theoretical literature has generated a large array of methods and concepts, such as archaeology and genealogy; sovereign, disciplinary, pastoral, and liberal/bio-political modalities of power; domination, freedom, reason of state, art of government and governmentality; practices, mentalities, rationalities, strategies, and techniques of government, apparatus of security, regimes of practices and programmes; formation of subjective identities; and problematisation and resistance.

It is worth highlighting three of the more important insights that this approach provides with respect to analysing neoliberalism. First, Foucault (2007, 2008) was one of the first to argue that neoliberalism is not simply a revived version of classical liberalism but something quite different and, through a consideration of German ordoliberalism and Chicago school neoliberalism, that there are distinctive varieties of neoliberalism. Second, the governmentality literature provides an array of concepts that are illuminating and useful for critical policy analysis. Third, it is illuminating to think of neoliberalism as an art of government and its effects understood in terms of conduct of conduct, subjectivity, subjection and submission (see, for example, Stringer, 2014).

Weaknesses

Poststructuralism and the governmentality approach have some substantial weaknesses that have been widely discussed in the literature. These pertain to intellectual blind spots arising from the vehement anti-Marxism of many poststructuralist writers; the effective disappearing of capitalism, class, crisis and class struggle from the focus of scholarly attention; weaknesses with respect to governmentality as an approach to policy analysis; problematic conceptions of resistance and agency; and the hostility of poststructuralism towards radical and global alternatives to the status quo. A further point is not generally emphasised, which is that Deleuzian and Foucauldian conceptions of neoliberalism are often applied in an over-extended manner in investigations of a wide range of different aspects of 'neoliberal society'. One of the strengths of Foucault's analysis of power is an emphasis on power operating throughout society rather than being confined to the state per se. As an art of government, neoliberalism does centrally involve "government at a distance" in which "authorities of various sorts have sought to shape, normalize and instrumentalise the conduct, thought, decisions and aspirations of others in order to achieve the objectives they consider desirable" (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 32–35). But conceptualising power and neoliberalism as pervasive within society can lead to a problem with some poststructuralist accounts in which neoliberalism has become a conceptual master key that is used to try to open too many doors and windows. It is important to avoid overestimating the extent and success of governmental crafting of, among other things, neoliberal subjectivities in maintaining the neoliberal ordering of society (Davies et al., 2021). Too much weight is placed on neoliberalism as a result of too little attention being given to, among other things, capitalism, social structure and long-term societal dynamics.

The large body of work produced by poststructuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Jean-Francois Lyotard is by no means entirely anti-Marxist, with there being important instances of affinities, influences and appropriations (Choat, 2010; Peters, 2001; Thoburn, 2001). It is, however, more straightforward when one considers the English language interlocutors of Foucault mentioned above—Mitchell Dean, Colin Gordon, Barry Hindess, Peter Miller, Paul Patton and Nikolas Rose. All consistently refer to alleged failings of Marxism to promote Foucauldian poststructuralism. They were influenced by the wider historical context in which they were writing in ways that they often failed to recognise and acknowledge.

This context was a "great moving right show", as Stuart Hall (2017) puts it in a brilliant analysis of the shift to the right in British politics associated with Margaret Thatcher's rise to power. He argues that in order to develop a convincing analysis of the crisis of social democracy and emergence of neoliberalism, it

is necessary not only to understand the economic dimension of the shift, but also its cultural, ideological, intellectual and political dimensions. During the 1980s and 1990s, the intellectual cultures of the advanced capitalist societies moved rightwards. This was simultaneously propelled by developments in the wider society and, in turn, was a contributing factor in many of these developments. The rise of poststructuralism was one of the two most important aspects of this; the other being the growing influence of neoliberal schools of thought within mainstream economics, and the growing influence of economics within and outside the Western academy. As Heller (2016) and many others have pointed out, poststructuralism is kindred with neoliberalism in its shared animosity towards Marxism. Hence, the rise of poststructuralism contributed in powerful ways to the declining presence of Marxism within academic settings during the 1980s and 1990s. Terms such as ‘essentialism’, ‘economism’, ‘reductionism’, ‘determinism’, ‘totalising’, ‘meta-narrative’ and ‘monolithic’ were used extensively by academics for more than two decades to dissuade students from engaging seriously with Marxism. Little mention was made of the robust critiques of poststructuralism by Marxists, socialist feminists and critical theorists, nor of the defences of Marxism by Marxists (see, for example, Bryson, 2003; Callinicos, 1989; Dews, 1987; Eagleton, 1996; Geras, 1990; Habermas, 1991; Harvey 1989; Hennessy, 2000; hooks, 2000; Jameson, 1991; Norris, 1990, 1993; McNally, 2001; Palmer, 1990; Wood, 1995). Little encouragement was provided to check the factual and textual accuracy of the anti-Marxist claims being made by reference to key works in the Marxist tradition and the historical record. There was little need to do so given that it was considered common knowledge that Marxism was fatally flawed.

A lot has changed since then. First, the crisis and decline of Marxism during the 1980s and 1990s has been followed by its renaissance and rise during the opening decades of the twenty-first century. Associated with this is a qualitative shift in the nature of scholarly writing with a focus on Marxism and Marx, there being less outright critical rejection and more positive application of Marxist ideas to address a broad range of pressing issues. Second, there is clear evidence of a large quantitative increase in scholarly interest in ‘Marxism’, ‘Marxist’, ‘capitalism’, and ‘Marx’ in the twenty-first century, as Table 2 shows.

Table 2: Poststructuralist and Marxist sources 1990s, 2000s, 2010s

ProQuest Academic One Search: All sources

| Decade | PSism* | PSlist* | PM* | Deleuze | Foucault | Marxism | Marxist | Cap* | Gramsci | Lenin | Marx |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1990s | 6,108 | 8,344 | 38,982 | 5,828 | 33,006 | 45,100 | 103,522 | 179,849 | 8,515 | 51,585 | 116,121 |
| 2000s | 13,667 | 19,505 | 82,903 | 21,756 | 89,359 | 73,075 | 182,819 | 351,323 | 20,806 | 70,085 | 232,529 |
| 2010s | 14,035 | 20,922 | 80,926 | 44,151 | 132,929 | 88,672 | 227,417 | 512,725 | 30,039 | 138,744 | 342,641 |
| Total | 33,810 | 48,771 | 202,811 | 44,151 | 255,294 | 206,847 | 513,758 | 1,043,897 | 59,360 | 260,414 | 691,291 |

ProQuest Academic One Search: Books, conference papers, dissertations, encyclopedias, magazines, journals, working papers

| Decade | PSism | PSlist | PM | Deleuze | Foucault | Marxism | Marxist | Cap | Gramsci | Lenin | Marx |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1990s | 5,982 | 8,182 | 33,411 | 5,508 | 26,619 | 30,291 | 46,832 | 78,620 | 8,036 | 15,470 | 50,215 |
| 2000s | 13,377 | 19,064 | 72,180 | 20,000 | 81,119 | 56,237 | 89,443 | 176,552 | 19,045 | 28,878 | 116,048 |
| 2010s | 13,788 | 20,534 | 71,755 | 40,945 | 120,407 | 65,782 | 103,252 | 242,749 | 25,689 | 41,601 | 177,328 |
| Total | 33,147 | 47,780 | 177,346 | 66,453 | 228,145 | 152,310 | 239,527 | 497,921 | 52,770 | 85,949 | 343,591 |

ProQuest Academic One Search: Peer reviewed

| Decade | PSism | PSlist | PM | Deleuze | Foucault | Marxism | Marxist | Cap | Gramsci | Lenin | Marx |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1990s | 1,617 | 2,293 | 11,621 | 1,224 | 7,693 | 7,191 | 10,663 | 22,935 | 1,521 | 2,526 | 11,001 |
| 2000s | 3,400 | 5,201 | 23,531 | 6,341 | 27,209 | 15,054 | 25,055 | 62,338 | 4,752 | 6,453 | 37,690 |
| 2010s | 3,287 | 5,159 | 22,821 | 15,619 | 44,207 | 18,630 | 28,471 | 93,885 | 7,723 | 13,799 | 70,747 |
| Total | 8,304 | 12,653 | 57,973 | 23,184 | 79,109 | 40,875 | 64,189 | 179,158 | 13,996 | 22,778 | 119,438 |

Date of searches: 27 September 2023 to 6 October 2023.

* Poststructuralism / Poststructuralist / Postmodernism / Capitalism

The scale of scholarship focused to varying degrees on Marx and Marxism is surprisingly large. Despite four decades of neoliberal and poststructuralist anti-Marxism, the volume of Marxist scholarship is actually larger than poststructuralist scholarship, even once the substantial increase in work referring to Deleuze and Foucault during the 2010s is considered.

Third, the period since the GFC has given rise to increased international scholarly interest in Marx and Marxism because this intellectual tradition provides strong foundations for considering issues such as the global economic slowdown and instability from 2008 to the present, capitalism's role in causing and accelerating the ecological crisis, rising tensions between the major powers including Putin's war against Ukraine and the intensifying rivalry between the US and China, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rise of the far right.

Another weakness worth unpacking concerns policy analysis. Poststructuralism, for the most part, generates policy analysis with some major limitations. There is much theory-driven emphasis on complexity, heterogeneity, multiplicity, fluidity and so forth, but no clear conceptualisation or ranking of neoliberal policies in terms their relative importance. Yet some policies are much more important than others. Determining the relative importance of policies requires the application of theory, methodological rigour and empirical research. For example, Marxist conceptualisations of capitalist class interests, plus empirical research focused on the lobbying activity of business associations, strongly suggests that, from a capitalist

vantage point, fiscal and monetary policy, tax, employment relations, welfare, housing, health and education are more important than policy in other areas such as firearms legislation, the national flag, crime and punishment, creative industries and so forth (Davidson, 2018; Roper, 2006).

In contrast, poststructuralist “assemblage analytics” contends that neoliberal policymaking is best understood as involving the “composition of heterogeneous elements”, “assembling entities and practices that may be ‘diffuse, tangled and contingent’”, inviting “analysis of how the elements of an assemblage might—or might not—be made to cohere” (Higgins & Larner, 2017, p. 4). “Rather than foregrounding the ‘commonality, coherence and resilience, and incremental advance’ of neoliberalism”, assemblage analytics aims at “building process-oriented accounts of the multiplicities, complexities, and contradictions at work in situated instances of political-economic processes” (Higgins & Larner, 2017, p. 5). Given the complete absence of a critical analysis of capitalism, the composition and interplay of class interests and class-based interest groups, and much else, there is no rigorous basis on which to determine and demonstrate that tax is much more important to business lobby groups than, for example, the design of the national flag or firearms legislation. Nor is any clear sense given of who the winners and losers are in relation to the political projects considered. Yet it is well-established in the literature that high-income groups, with a disproportionate concentration of cis-gender White men, have benefited far more from neoliberal policy change than low- and middle-income groups in which women, Māori, Pasifika and members of LGBTI communities are disproportionately concentrated.

Furthermore, poststructuralist opposition to ‘totalising’ and ‘monolithic’ accounts means that clear historical turning points and periods cannot be accurately identified, analysed and explained. Systematic periodisation of history is rejected in favour of randomisation and a radical indeterminacy (Anderson, 1984, pp. 50–51). Indeed, any meaningful attempt to identify causes of policy change is ruled out on a largely a priori theoretical basis. This is exemplified by Larner et al.’s (2007) poststructuralist analysis of the FLG’s policymaking in the areas of globalisation, knowledge economy, sustainability policies, creative industries and social development. No clear sense is given of which of these areas of policymaking might be more significant and why. The best we are offered is that these political projects were chosen because they have “political prominence”, which is not defined or substantiated. In so far as there is anything at all holding together “these diverse political projects”, it is “a new emphasis on performance indicators across all domains” and “a post-facto consolidation of these political projects into a globalizing governmentality in which the new ‘common sense’ is a global connectedness, institutional reflexivity, and active citizenship” (Larner et al., 2007, p. 243).

This interpretation is so far removed from, and contra to, what the bulk of the relevant secondary literature has established with respect to the implementation and entrenchment of neoliberal policies since 1984, that it is hard seeing it as much more than a selective rehashing of ideas derived from poststructuralist theory with a few illustrative ‘factual’ examples being cherry-picked from the ‘empirical research’, which mainly amounts to a textual analysis of official policy documents.⁴ No rigorous distinction is drawn between the rhetoric, ideology and official policy discourse the FLG used in its self-presentation as a Third Way social democratic government rolling back elements of neoliberalism, and the real core features of the neoliberal policy regime that it kept firmly institutionally entrenched. Thin and patchy in its engagement with the scholarly literature on neoliberalism in New Zealand, poststructuralist analysis is heavily laden with concepts derived from Foucauldian governmentality and Deleuzian poststructuralism. It is hard seeing anyone who is not heavily invested in these particular currents of poststructuralism finding much of value in the analysis since it obfuscates more than it reveals with respect to New Zealand’s political economy.

According to Foucault, power generates resistance. Typically, struggles against authority “attack

⁴ See Supplementary Note 2—A Select Bibliography Focused on Neoliberalism.

not so much such-and-such institution of power, or group, or elite, or class but, rather, a technique, a form of power” (Foucault, 2003, p. 130). Wherever and whenever there is power, there is freedom, and where there is freedom, there may be resistance. Such resistance may assume a vast variety of forms characterised by complexity, heterogeneity, multiplicity, fluidity, hybridisation, contradictions and so forth. Resistance involves “actants” who “may be singular or multiple, large or small, within or outwith the assemblage, and their operation may be sudden or gradual” (Anderson et al. 2012, as cited in Higgins & Larner, 2017, p. 7). *Assemblage (agencement)* is a concept developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* to “denote the multiplicities of heterogeneous elements ramifying to infinity and spilling over into each other, forming the plateaux whose very form the book seeks to mirror” (Callinicos, 1989, p. 4). From this perspective, “neoliberalism itself is assembled from diverse and multiple elements”, but one cannot identify causes within the processes of composition that produce durable neoliberal orderings because “of the ontic indeterminacy of what might ordinarily be thought of as totalizing practices and processes” (Higgins & Larner, 2017, p. 3). Much the same can be said of the processes that generate resistance. As Callinicos (1989, p. 84) observes, “Whatever the undeniable splendours of many passages in Deleuze’s writings, as a corpus they suggest mainly that the only escape from Foucault’s dilemmas lies in adopting a modernized variant of Nietzsche’s ontology of the will to power.”

An obvious problem this poses is that after a lot of highfalutin theoretical huffing and puffing, this approach ultimately results in a form of empiricism whereby it is possible to describe but never convincingly explain the instances of resistance being observed. In contrast, perspectives such as radical anti-racism, socialist feminism, class-struggle anarchism, Marxism and neo-Weberian sociology can systematically identify sources of resistance in a manner that is theoretically informed, historically accurate and empirically grounded. Examples include analysis of, among other things, White settler colonial appropriation of land and other resources from Indigenous peoples and the ensuing proletarianisation of Indigenous peoples; capitalism, class structure and class interests; social structure; social reproduction including the bearing and rearing of children; economic and ecological crises; and imperialism and war. Poststructuralists repeatedly raise questions focused on difference, diversity, multiplicity and complexity—but what about commonality, unity, solidarity, resilience and simplicity? In other words, why is mass collective resistance so common in White supremacist, patriarchal, racist, environmentally destructive capitalist societies? What interests, conditions and experiences do workers/women/People of Colour/Indigenous peoples/trans-people share that are sufficiently powerful to propel them into collective forms of organisation, action, radicalisation and resistance? What social structural sources of power enable workers and the oppressed to struggle and, albeit much less often than we hope for, occasionally to win? Poststructuralism fails to provide convincing theoretical and methodological foundations for emancipatory thinking focused on these questions.

Finally, as Dean (2010, p. 46) points out, Foucauldian analytics of governmentality turn “away from ‘all projects that claim to be global or radical’”. The absence of a collective agency capable of bringing about progressive social, economic and political change, combined with “the suspension of value judgements, has certain political implications. These are that Foucault’s analysis of power and subsequently governmentality loses its critical potential and becomes a theory of social reproduction rather than of transcendence” (Kerr, 1999, p. 177). This wouldn’t matter so much if it could be safely assumed that neoliberalism and capitalism will continue to exist in something like their present forms for centuries to come. Yet in the long-term, humankind is unlikely to have a choice between piecemeal incremental change to the prevailing neoliberal advanced capitalist status quo or a global radical project of societal transformation. The overwhelming weight of available scientific evidence supports the view that if there is continuation of business as usual for another 30 years, with carbon emissions continuing to rise at or above the top end of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s most recent scenarios, societal transformation is going to happen as a result of catastrophically abrupt climate change and the closely related mass extinction of flora and fauna. The collapse of advanced capitalist civilisation and historical retrogression to some form of

barbarism, in Luxemburg's (1970, p. 269) sense, is a realistic possibility before the end of the twenty-first century. In light of this, the question then becomes not whether radical and global change is possible, since in the historical long-term it is inevitable, but rather what the nature of this change will be? Intellectual approaches to governance that, despite their glittering displays of conceptual cleverness, rule out global and radical projects of progressive change are the last thing humankind needs in the twenty-first century.

The contested future of neoliberalism: Maintaining the status quo, Far Right reaction, Progressive Left resistance

As noted above, the GFC constitutes a turning point in world history. Following a brief moment in 2009 and 2010 when it seemed possible that there might be a shift towards a technocratic form of Keynesianism, in most countries neoliberal policy regimes remained entrenched and the pursuit of fiscal austerity prevailed for the remainder of the decade. Although the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a sharp rise in state intervention in some countries, neoliberalism remains entrenched in the wake of the pandemic, with a generalised adoption of monetarist high-interest-rate monetary policy settings and fiscal austerity being the preferred policy responses of most capitalist states to the sharp rise of inflation in the early 2020s.

Nonetheless, as Callinicos (2021) convincingly argues, the GFC gave rise to a crisis of cosmopolitan neoliberalism, with its emphasis on free trade, that continues to the present day. Barriers to free trade increased in the wake of the GFC leading the *Economist* to claim that the world economy was trending in the direction of “deglobalisation” and “slowbalisation” (“Slowbalisation”, 2019). The election of Trump in 2016 further fuelled the rise of economic nationalism and the far right—both internationally and within the US. But there have also been major upsurges of resistance to neoliberalism since the GFC, such as the Arab Spring and Occupy Movement, along with the serious unrest that occurred in many countries during 2011, the climate strikes, Me Too Movement, Black Lives Matter and so forth. Associated with this resistance, there have been significant collective expressions of political opposition to neoliberalism such as Melenchon's strong performance as a socialist candidate in the first rounds of French presidential elections, Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns and growth of the Democratic Socialists of America, and the unexpectedly strong performance of the British Labour Party in the 2017 election when it was led by Jeremy Corbyn and promised a left social democratic alternative. Disgruntlement with the neoliberal policy agenda of the Key-English-led Fifth National Government was a major factor contributing to National losing the election in 2017. Struggles in Aotearoa during the period following the GFC include the Occupy protests, protests against state-owned asset sales and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, rise of the Mana Movement, important protests by Māori such as those at Ihumātao and Shelley Bay, large protests throughout the country opposing the anti-Māori policies of the Sixth National-led Government, increased strike activity from 2018 to 2023 including large-scale strikes by teachers and nurses, climate strikes and climate justice protests, and mass opposition to cuts to university staff, courses and degrees resulting from chronic government underfunding.

In view of these developments, how can we best prognosticate regarding the future of neoliberalism? What developments might bring the dominance of neoliberalism to an end? What are the prospects for progressive left alternatives to neoliberalism? Providing answers to these questions from within the Marxist tradition, combining Marxian dialectics, critical realism and historical materialism, entails a high degree of thematic continuity from explaining the rise of neoliberalism in the past and its entrenchment in the present to prognosticating about its possible passing in the future. In other words, it entails, among other things, a focus on the changing state of the capitalist economic system and the crises capitalism generates (including pandemics, war and ecological devastation); shifts in the balance of power between the sociopolitical forces on either side of the capital/labour divide; shifts in the prevailing orthodoxy within economics and the influence of neoliberal ideas, research and policy advocacy on

policymaking elites; and developments within the polity including electoral politics and the institutional configuration of the state apparatus. Future crises, with global impacts, may emanate from different sites within capitalist societies as illustrated by the GFC, as well as the narrowly averted financial crisis that arose from the Silicon Valley Bank collapse, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war against Ukraine, and increasingly severe weather events resulting from climate change. The latter reminds us that material factors can have real societal impacts. Young people, in particular, are having to live with the increasing likelihood of catastrophic abrupt climate change if carbon emissions are allowed to continue rising in future at the rates of the past 40 years.

My assessment would be that the most likely scenario is a continuation of the dominance of neoliberalism, in the form of entrenched neoliberal policy regimes. Should the far right continue to make political gains and successfully take power in a sufficient number of countries, including several of the world's most powerful states, then beyond neoliberalism may be a future for humankind even worse than a continuation of the neoliberal status quo. More hopefully, major outbursts of resistance to neoliberalism, and the associated rise of campaigns, movements and political actors promising progressive political alternatives, are also likely to occur. The future is so hard to predict precisely because we are likely to see complex and often rapidly changing configurations of these developments occurring concurrently on a global scale, recurrently propelled by rapidly emerging crises.

Conclusion: Implications for future research

Debating neoliberalism is important for three reasons. First, because New Zealand's political history from 1984 to the present is best understood as centrally involving the rise, modification and entrenchment of a neoliberal policy regime, deploying a conception of neoliberalism enables a more intellectually sophisticated and robust analysis of New Zealand's society, political economy and politics than one is likely to find in mainstream media commentary, the publications and briefing papers produced by policy ministries, political party policies and the rhetoric of politicians. One source of confirmation of this view has been the experience of teaching, and learning from, several groups of highly talented master's students. It has been inspiring to witness the extent to which these students have been able to use their understandings of neoliberalism to analyse a broad range of different aspects of New Zealand politics that would have been largely inexplicable in the absence of these understandings. Second, it is important because academic work that fails to use the analytical lens of neoliberalism thereby comes to play the ideological role of obscuring and legitimating the neoliberal policy regime and its effects, including high levels of socioeconomic inequality. Third, academic work that effectively makes neoliberalism disappear makes it harder to argue for progressive alternatives, because such work contributes to, rather than challenges, the entrenchment of the neoliberal policy regime as the 'taken for granted' and only partially publicly visible intellectual, institutional, regulatory and legislative underpinning of economic management, policymaking, political discourse, parliamentary debate, and media reporting and commentary.

My central argument is that those who want to argue that neoliberalism ended in New Zealand in 1996 with the first MMP election, or in 1999 with the election of the FLG, or most recently, in 2017, with the election of the Sixth Labour Government, need to provide an empirically grounded account of policy change showing how the neoliberal intellectual underpinnings and central legislative, regulatory, institutional and fiscal features of the neoliberal policy regime have been dismantled and replaced by another qualitatively and quantitatively different intellectual paradigm and policy regime. This they cannot do because empirically rigorous policy analysis supports the view that the neoliberal policy regime remains firmly in place and is likely to remain so in the short to medium term. The 2023 election resulted in the formation of a National-ACT-New Zealand First coalition government committed to a fundamentalist neoliberal approach to economic management and policymaking, centrally involving tax cuts funded with

large public expenditure cuts, which strongly indicates that the neoliberal policy regime is likely to remain entrenched for the foreseeable future.

I have always considered my work to be part of a collective endeavour to make sense of neoliberalism, formulate alternatives, and work out what possible futures may lie beyond it. We still have much to do, and so this article concludes with suggestions for future research. First, due to government underfunding of tertiary education for most of the neoliberal period, and the discouragement of New Zealand-focused research by the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) assessment criteria and university administrations, New Zealand universities have a greatly reduced capacity to provide independent critical analysis of government policymaking and the societal impacts of this policymaking. Yet there clearly needs to be future research focused, among other things, on neoliberal policy change pertaining to key areas of the political economy and society, such as: economic management including fiscal and monetary policy and taxation; employment relations; welfare; all levels of education and healthcare; housing; local government, public transportation and water infrastructure; industry, agriculture, forestry and fisheries; Treaty settlement claims and outcomes; climate change, renewable energy generation, the environment and conservation; socioeconomic, gender and ethnic inequality; the media; and New Zealand foreign policy.

Second, the bulk of the New Zealand literature focused on neoliberalism is in print form and not generally available online. Scholarly review of this literature requires old-fashioned library work.

Third, existing neoliberalism has not actually involved a reduction of the size of the state when measured in quantitative terms, and ‘deregulation’—although it has emphasised ‘self-regulation’ by business and often diminished the effectiveness of regulatory control over business activity—is better understood as ‘re-regulation’ in which neoliberal regulation replaces what came before. As exemplified by the environmental impacts of the poorly regulated dairy industry, cruelty to animals such as live animal exports and so-called winter grazing, and the deaths of 29 workers in the Pike River Mine disaster, the ineffectiveness of pro-business neoliberal ‘regulation’ contributes to workplace death and accidents, is detrimental to animal welfare, and often prioritises profits over the environment. Inadequate neoliberal regulation of business activity, therefore, needs to be a focus of ongoing analysis, critique and activism.

Fourth, as Gowan (1999), Kelsey (2015), Richards (2010) and McNally (2020) have shown, financialisation and the integration of New Zealand’s financial and so-called ‘capital’ markets within the Dollar-Wall Street Regime, including the removal of capital controls and high levels of offshore debt, has helped to lock in the neoliberal policy regime. Duncan (2011) and Neilson (2011, 2020) also point to the need to investigate further the impact of global forces on the domestic economy, society and polity.

Fifth, critics of neoliberalism in Aotearoa need to develop a clearer understanding of the drivers and sociopolitical effects of asset inflation in the housing market. Among other things, by offsetting stagnating low and middle incomes, capital gains in the housing market have helped to quell popular opposition to neoliberal policies and have become a significant factor determining the popularity (or lack thereof) of governing parties.

Sixth, when viewed as an intellectual tradition, neoliberalism has developed and diversified since the initial implementation phases of neoliberal policy agendas in the 1980s and 1990s. The ongoing development of neoliberalism viewed as elite ideology and intellectual paradigm requires regularly updated analysis.

Seventh, as Bhattacharya (2017) and Welch (2015) have shown, neoliberal policy regimes have generally promoted ‘lean reproduction’ as well as lean production, in which employers and the state minimise the costs to them of social reproductive labour. But there are other respects in which neoliberalism has been able to accommodate progressive policymaking that has ameliorated gender inequality. More work is required to make sense of the complexities, tensions and contradictions with respect to the impacts that neoliberal policies and practices have had on gender inequality.

Eighth, much the same can be said of the impacts of neoliberal policies on ethnic inequality. There

clearly needs to be further consideration of the way in which neoliberalism has failed effectively to remedy socioeconomic disparities between Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā, while simultaneously reinterpreting the principles and role of te Tiriti o Waitangi and seeking to incorporate them within, among other things, an increasingly neoliberalised public sector.

Ninth, further work needs to be done to strengthen our understanding of the sources of the durability of neoliberalism and what may lie beyond it in the future. This includes considering why there has not been a wave of working-class struggle in opposition to various aspects of neoliberalism. There have been recurrent outbursts of mass collective resistance to neoliberalism, both internationally and in Aotearoa, but nothing on the scale that many Marxists expected to occur earlier in the period of neoliberal hegemony. What has caused the longest downturn in working-class struggle in the history of capitalism? Pointing to mass unemployment, anti-union legislation, with its entrenchment of free-riding and curtailment of the right to strike, government at a distance fostering neoliberal subjectivities, and so forth, is necessary but not sufficient to provide a convincing answer to this question. It is an open question requiring further collective investigation.

Finally, for critically minded social scientists and humanities scholars, research on neoliberalism should always aim to provide intellectual resources of hope. “To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing” (Williams, 2022). The intelligent young people whom we are lucky enough to teach and learn from are dealing with the negative effects of neoliberalism on their daily lives now, and also experiencing mounting eco-anxiety. We owe it to them to contribute to collective thinking about how and why better policies and a better world are necessary, feasible and possible.

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PhD Thesis Summaries 2024

This section showcases recently completed PhD theses in sociology and associated disciplines in Aotearoa.

Reimagining Social Activism with Intersectional Subaltern Activist Consciousness

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PhD completed: 2023

Summary

In the Sri Lankan post-war context, young activists are beginning to articulate and redefine the understanding of social activism both by their self-criticisms, dominations within the movement, and the pressing questions they are asking of other movements. Aspects of divisions and fractures strategically turned into points of connection that discretely address these divisions. On the one hand, due to troubling legacies of difference, communities remain divided and fractured. On the other, social activists come together into spaces to address these differences and antagonisms, to negotiate them around manifest purposes. Often, the activists are part of communities that are significantly fractured, yet deeply connected by their experiences of various forms of marginalisation. Their activism is one of the main pillars of resistance and resurgence against different forms of oppression.

Hence, I explored the textures and contours of social activism organised by young trans, intersex, and women activists from the margins who seek social justice in post-war Northern Sri Lanka. I analysed the diverse forms of social activism emerging from these contexts, encompassing dialogues, lived experiences, and significant events that shape activist consciousness. I searched for voices and experiences pushed to the margins by hegemonic and destructive powers and structures of society.

I aim to augment knowledge production from the Global South by advocating for subaltern voices and experiences on the margins guided by the following main research question: *In contexts of historical violence and the troubling legacy of social, cultural, and ideological divisions, how do young activists sustain their consciousness to work for social change in post-war social justice movements even as divisions and difficulties persist?*

I developed an analytical framework that helps us to better understand the intertwined, complex everyday experiences of marginalised activists that are often overlooked by dominant norms, values, and practices. By treating the activists as credible knowers, I co-weave a metaphorical mat of activist consciousness to argue several findings. The findings are supported by conceptual frameworks rooted in the Global South, as well as in subaltern contexts and histories. For instance, the subaltern theories developed by the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group scholars—inspired by Gramscian ideas—argue for an epistemic standpoint to evolve from the subaltern perspective (Chakrabarty, 2015; Chaturvedi, 2000;

Guha and Spivak, 1988). As noted earlier, Spivak (1988) eloquently points out that researchers, knowledge producers, and practitioners ought to be constantly self-reflexive and self-critical when representing the West's Other (the Third World) and the Third World's Other (the subaltern). I use Spivak's concept of the subaltern to emphasise how particular experiences of young activists in the highly controlled—both by the community as well as the state—post-war context of Northern Lanka¹ bring nuances to intersectional subaltern identities (i.e., how they influence the understanding of social activism by young women) and occupy a unique place in the context of the Global South (Collins, 1990; Combahee River Collective, 1979; Crenshaw, 1991). This is a novel contribution to theory and practice.

My thesis contributes to scholarly debates on the search for social justice by demonstrating how political praxis founded on collective consciousness and action is nurtured by the unlikeliest of solidarities in the context of post-war society. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand's sociological and decolonial scholarship, subaltern theories can help to deepen our understanding of social activism and activist consciousness within the unique dynamics of power hierarchies and interconnected forms of marginalisation.

[Link to thesis](#)

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¹ I use the name Lanka, the most ancient (Jayewardene, 2017) and, I believe, the Indigenous name of this unique island with many potentials.

Technocracy Ascendant: Central Banking and Ideology after 2008

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PhD completed: 2022

Summary

This thesis explores technocratic economic governance as a form of power in contemporary society. Technocracy is an ‘ideology of method’ that claims technical solutions can be found for political problems (Bickerton & Invernizzi-Accetti, 2021; Centeno, 1993; Fischer, 1990). The rise of technocracy in economic governance has dovetailed with the rise of neoliberalism as a political project that seeks to encase market economies against democratic interference (Biebricher, 2015; Gill, 1998; Slobodian, 2018). Technocratic economic governance is thus characterised by the depoliticisation and de-democratisation of economic policy, and by the weight given to technical authority in legitimating the status quo.

This thesis examines how technocratic economic governance has evolved following the financial crash of 2008. Attention is focused on central banks of the capitalist core, which played outsized roles as crisis managers and guarantors of the neoliberal order during this period. The thesis develops a novel conceptualisation of central banks as public–private governors who govern primarily in the interests of, and are penetrated by, finance capital. It also interrogates the social function of central bankers. I argue that central bankers function as organic intellectuals of and for finance capital: they are organically connected to this class fraction, develop the mental frameworks by which it can recognise, interpret, and promote its interests, and are active in reproducing a biased terrain that favours finance capital.

This theoretical work is substantiated through case studies of the Federal Reserve System, the European Central Bank, and the Bank for International Settlements from 2007–2020. Empirical chapters explore instances of extraordinary central bank intervention, placing these in the context of neoliberalism’s broader authoritarian drift. I argue that emergency central bank intervention is a form of economic governance appropriate to the spatial compression and temporal acceleration engendered by globalisation and financialisation. This analysis contributes to the sociological understanding of how actually existing neoliberalism works and how it is reproduced in crisis.

The empirical chapters analyse the intellectual and ideological resources developed by central bank(er)s in response to the political and intellectual disorientation of the post-2008 world (Foster & el-Ojeili, 2023; Tooze, 2018). This work generates sociological insights into processes of (attempted) elite consensus formation. It also illuminates the technocratic project at the heart of modern central banking. This is characterised by the development of sophisticated conceptual frameworks through which the complexity of the global financial system can be rendered intelligible; the relentless collection of data on financial flows that enable (or provide the illusion of enabling) real-time market surveillance; and continual policy innovation to enable central banks to manage financial systems.

By foregrounding and theorising the entanglement between central bank(er)s and finance capital, the thesis contributes to the sociological understanding of the porous boundaries between technical knowledge, political ideology, and structures of power in neoliberal capitalism. By focusing attention on

technocracy as an ideological and intellectual force in economic governance, the thesis also challenges the idea—dominant in sociology—that neoliberalism is a form of governance that pivots around the idea that the market is unknowable and that active, centralised economic planning is therefore quixotic. In contradiction to this view, the thesis shows how, in their quest to stabilise an unstable world, central bank(er)s seek to constantly improve their understanding of, and their ability to control, financial systems. In this respect, the stability of actually existing neoliberalism rests precisely on the kind of active, centralised economic planning that neoliberal ideology repudiates (Jones, 2020).

A comparative research programme could be opened up to further substantiate the idea that central bankers perform a function as organic intellectuals of and for finance capital. This could focus on the differences in intellectual leadership between central banks and how and why particular systems of thought develop within, and are disseminated from, these institutions. While this thesis, and most of the other sociological research on central banking, focuses on the major central banks of the capitalist core, it would be valuable if future work examined countries of the periphery and semi-periphery. In particular, a sociological analysis of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, and its role in New Zealand capitalism, is yet to be written.

[Link to thesis](#)

Associated publications

Foster, J. (2022). Envisaging global balance-sheet capitalism: The Bank for International Settlements as a collective organic intellectual. *Capital & Class*, 46(3), 401–425.
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Abolitionist Justice: Towards an Abolitionist Theory of Justice and the State

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PhD completed: 2023

Summary

Taking the necessity of prison abolition as its starting point, *Abolitionist Justice* asks what an Aotearoa without prisons could look like. As a work of political sociology, it invokes imagination for a radical social, economic, and constitutional transformation of Aotearoa, centring *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. Its objective is to provide answers to the consistent challenge from abolition's critics: what should we do instead of prisons?

Abolitionist Justice begins by situating abolitionist thought within the Aotearoa context, demonstrating the inefficacy of imprisonment in achieving public safety, (re)habilitation of people who cause harm, and justice for victims, as well as imprisonment's profoundly deleterious social and political consequences, particularly for Māori, working class people, people with disabilities and other multiply marginalised people. Synthesising decades of abolitionist thought, the thesis offers a framework for abolitionist alternatives to imprisonment, providing a guide for assessing the appropriateness of a non-prison alternative in an Aotearoa without prisons.

In its specific context, *Abolitionist Justice* draws together international abolitionist praxis with a vision for constitutional transformation outlined in *Matike Mai* (2016). Instead of offering a vision for abolition to be imposed on Māori, it suggests a path to abolition from within the Tangata Tiriti sphere, hand in hand with a Tino Rangatiranga sphere. It asks what Aotearoa could look like if *Te Tiriti* was honoured and there were no prisons.

In grappling with the possibilities of abolition in Aotearoa, the thesis forces a confrontation between contemporary abolitionist thought and debates about informal justice from the 1970s and 1980s. In the contradictions of these debates, the thesis argues that contemporary abolitionist praxis too often ignores the tyrannical possibilities of 'community' or informal justice. By ignoring the lessons of earlier scholars and activists, contemporary abolitionists risk repeating them. Instead, the thesis contends that a specifically abolitionist system of justice would require a state, as well as formal mechanisms of control, oversight, and regulation. It is in a mixed model of both community and state-based justice systems and procedures that an abolitionist system of justice without prisons is possible.

Accepting the inevitability of state involvement in justice, *Abolitionist Justice* mines the contradictions of restorative justice philosophy and practices, drawing out deeper insights for an abolitionist system of justice. While providing fundamental critiques of restorative justice, and particularly its operation in the settler colonial justice system, restorative justice philosophy, nonetheless, provides a useful stepping stone for abolitionist theory. The thesis argues that restorative justice's proponents' attempts to resolve the contradictions of informalism provide insight into how abolitionists could do the same. It takes the radical kernels of possibility within restorative justice philosophy, taking them to their abolitionist conclusion. By synthesising the contradictions of formal, informal, and restorative justice, the thesis proposes an abolitionist justice: a system, and an underpinning philosophy, that responds to harm when it occurs, using a mixture of state and non-state responses, which does not include prisons, and has mechanisms for the oversight and control of abuses of power in both state and non-state systems.

The thesis provides a challenge to international abolitionist and restorative justice scholarship. It contests the anarchist or ‘folk politics’ impulse that dominates abolitionist thought, demonstrating that this approach ignores the lessons of informal justice from the 1970s and 1980s. It challenges restorative justice proponents to find its radical potentiality. Finally, it contributes to an emerging body of abolitionist thought in Aotearoa, which sees liberation on the horizon. Ultimately, the thesis provides a framework for abolitionist justice that requires considerably more research to provide a fully realised vision for an Aotearoa without prisons. Adopting an abolitionist justice framework, this could include a critical re-examination of discrete alternatives, including victimisation insurance, therapeutic justice, day fines, and the expansion of restorative practices in schools and other organisations.

[Link to thesis](#)

Associated publications

- Lamuse, T. (2022). Doing justice without prisons: A framework to build the abolitionist movement. *Socialism and Democracy*, 35(2–3), 300–322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08854300.2021.2092985>
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Climate Activist Knowledge-Practices and Radicalism in Extinction Rebellion Aotearoa New Zealand

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PhD completed: 2023

Summary

In a time of global climate crisis, and a surge in radical climate activism, the ways in which activists undertake the work of social change matters. This ethnographic research focuses on a significant player in that surge, Extinction Rebellion (XR), as enacted in Aotearoa (New Zealand). I critically examine the process by which activists adopted, and adapted, this social movement in order to enact it in Aotearoa.

This research draws on the relationships between two key concepts: radicalism and knowledge-practices. Radicalism is the ways that activists conceptualise their goals and performances in transformational terms. Knowledge-practices are situated, embodied, and concrete practices that enact knowledge. Radical knowledge-practices not only inform activism, but are also imbued with power, as activists make claims to ‘truth’ to justify their arguments. I therefore analyse how the power attached to knowledge affects radical performances as activists discover, learn, and teach, but also direct and dominate social movements.

I bring together these two concepts to address five research questions:

1. What are the origins of activist knowledge, how does it travel, and how is it adopted in new locations?
2. How are radical activist identities informed by knowledge and theories of change?
3. How does knowledge influence the choices that activists make in their activism?
4. How do activists conceive of, use, reject, or redefine radicalism in their work?
5. What is the significance of XR to climate and broader social movements?

I draw four main conclusions. First, I argue that XR in Aotearoa, over time, adapted XR’s globalised knowledge-practices in ways that are responsive to the local context and its colonial past and present. In particular, the work of a group of Māori activists and Pākehā allies were key to challenging and decolonising XR. Second, I argue that a movement ecosystem with a diversity of knowledge-practices supports activists engaging with alternative approaches to social change, particularly climate and decolonial justice. I therefore highlight the ways in which activists think carefully about their role within the movement ecosystem, adapting their understandings and role in response to it and other actors. Third, I suggest that thinking broadly about radical activist identities can reduce conflict and facilitate social change. Rather than ‘disciplining’ how other individuals perform their activism, activists should accept that a diversity of approaches to the activist identity is appropriate. Finally, I trace a series of protests in which activist understandings about likely police responses were confounded, which meant that protesters struggled to achieve their objectives. I argue that when activists make assumptions about how police respond to protest, activists’ actions can be less effective.

This research sheds light on the intersection of knowledge and radical activism. In particular, it provides a practical framework for assessing how social movements think of and use radicalism in their work. It challenges the colonising nature of social movements by examining the ways that radical activism is shaped by knowledge-practices drawn from multiple locations, culture, and activist dynamics. It also advances our understanding of how knowledge, and what is deemed truth, affect activist identities, theories of change, and activist performances. Lastly, it provides a unique perspective from a settler colonial state on XR, a new climate activist group that has reinvigorated climate activism, but which raises significant questions about the ways that social movements adopt and adapt knowledge-practices.

[Link to thesis](#)

Associated publications

Matthews, K. R. (2020). Social movements and the (mis)use of research: Extinction Rebellion and the 3.5% rule. *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*, 12(1), 591–615.

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Music as Critical Social Theory: Developing Intersectional Feminist Praxis Through Music in Aotearoa (New Zealand)

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PhD completed: 2023

Summary

Equally theoretical provocation and relational enquiry, my thesis asks how music may be understood as critical social theory. Drawing on intersectionality, critical race theory, queer and feminist notions of musical affect, and decolonial and Indigenous scholarship, I enquire how music as critical social theory may resonate in the context of neoliberal, settler colonial hegemonies continually permeating Aotearoa society. Engaging with the radical musical practices and praxes of four local artists, Sam Howard-Tawhara, Nikau Te Huki, Marika Pratley, and Cee Te Pania, I conceptualise how intersectional feminist praxis might be developed through music in Aotearoa (Collins, 2019). I deploy a range of methods for exploring how these artists' practices constitute each of their modes of critical social theory, guided by feminist notions of relational reciprocity and art as affective enquiry (Allen, 2012; hooks, 1994; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Nagar, 2016). For Collins and Bilge (2016), intersectional feminist praxis is about seeing both scholarship and everyday practice and action as interconnected and co-constitutive. I illustrate this multidimensionality throughout the thesis, writing in the spirit of solidarity and co-conspiratorship as a singer, listener, tangata Tiriti, intersectional feminist, and sociologist (Barber, 2020; de Saxe & Ker, 2023; Garza in Santana, 2016).

Inspired by Sam, Nikau, Marika and Cee's modes of musical critical social theory, I explore how intersectional feminist praxis might develop through music by considering the two interrelated and generative questions:

1. How might music be simultaneously a site to resist and a site of resistance?
2. How might the university be simultaneously a site to resist and a site of resistance?

Each part of the thesis continuously orbits these questions with the aim of cultivating praxis-oriented ways of theorising.

Alongside what I learned from each artist's mode of critical social theory, the two above questions guide the key intervention of the thesis—my conceptualisation of developing intersectional feminist musical praxis in Aotearoa. I discuss six key aspects of this praxis in reflective meditations that bring the artists' modes of critical social theory in dialogue with the literature. The first meditation affirms the concept of musical whakapapa in Aotearoa, and its potential to resist the racial politics of commodification and erasure (Henderson, 2018; Morrison, 2019). The second meditation discusses the significance of affective love politics for nurturing one's musical whakapapa or genealogy. The third explores resonance and hope, as a musical expression of love politics and solidarity for a restoration of Aotearoa (Jackson, 2020). Fourth, I look at how honouring and deepening Te Tiriti relations strengthens the resonant work of hope in music (Matike Mai, 2016). This sets up my fifth meditation, a consideration of intersectional ethics of care in

Aotearoa as rooted in the relational tenets of intersectionality and praxis (Collins, 2019). The sixth meditation considers music education and pedagogy as one location where the work of developing intersectional feminist musical praxis might be carried out, what it might look like, and what would continue to be at stake. Here I echo Cheng's (2016) call for a redefining of musicological and pedagogical relationalities along the lines of active listening, care, and slow scholarship (cf. Eidsheim, 2019; Kidman et al., 2018).

Building on the six tenets of intersectional feminist musical praxis in Aotearoa, I propose several directions for both future research and flourishing praxis. These include, but are not limited to:

- A deeper exploration of the acoustemological interrelationship of musical praxis and connections between peoples, lands, seas, rivers, and animals (Feld, 2015). Within Aotearoa, such an inquiry could benefit the relational aspirations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and constitutional transformation work by illuminating further dimensions of knowledge and possibility (Forster, 2022; Matike Mai, 2016).
- Ongoing kōrero between tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti about the cultivation and nourishing of musical whakapapa in an Aotearoa context, relational potentialities, and the limits of positionality.
- Future research on how music as critical social theory works in tandem with extra-musical features in Aotearoa (and/or elsewhere), such as community-driven safe space initiatives at gigs and festivals, or at venues run by music collectives who aim to honour tino rangatiratanga and uphold intersectional values (Collins, 2019; Douglas, 2014; Garcia, 2020).

[Link to thesis](#)

Associated publications

de Saxe, J. G., & Trotter-Simons, B.-E. (2021). Intersectionality, decolonization, and educating for critical consciousness: Rethinking praxis and resistance in education. *Journal of Thought*, 55(1/2), 3–20. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27082272>

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Toates, F. & Coschug-Toates, O. (2022). *Understanding Sexual Serial Killing*. Cambridge University Press, 450 pages, ISBN 978-1-316-51759-8

Reviewed by James Oleson*

The public is interested in crime, but it is *fascinated* by murder. “Our newspapers are filled with murder, and murder streams from our radios. Murder transfixes us when we go to the movies, when we read novels, and when we watch television” (Oleson, 2013, p. 57). And serial murder is particularly compelling. As Beckman (2001, p. 62) notes, “[T]he serial killer constitutes a mythical, almost supernatural, embodiment of American society’s deepest darkest fears. We are compelled by the representation of this figure because he allows us to project our fears onto a clearly delineated villain.” Indeed, the American Film Institute’s number one villain, Hannibal Lecter, is a serial killer; the world’s most successful horror franchise, *Saw*, is about a serial killer. Today, many serial killers exist in a pantheon of celebrity (Schmid, 2005): Jack the Ripper, Charles Manson, John Wayne Gacy, Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy are all iconic. Correspondingly, criminologists (and many armchair detectives) pore over true-crime biographies, striving to understand the origins of these seemingly inexplicable crimes. Coding official documents and true-crime books is how the Radford/FGCU serial killer database (Aamodt, Leary, & Southard, 2020) was generated.

Not all serial killers are motivated by sexual desire: Billy the Kid (who is reported to have killed 21 men) and Al Capone (implicated, both directly and indirectly, in as many as 700 murders) would satisfy the FBI’s (2010) definition of serial murder: “The unlawful killing of two or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events”. Some serial killers kill for money, others for revenge. Yet many serial killers *are* motivated by psychosexual drives. It has long been so. Gilles de Rais, lieutenant to Joan of Arc, confessed to sodomy and the murder of 140 children; ‘Blood Countess’ Elizabeth Báthory was imprisoned for life for the murder of as many as 600 young women. By the time of the Weimar Republic, the sexually motivated serial killer was an acknowledged phenomenon known as the *lustmord* (Tatar, 1997). Today, the very stereotype of the serial killer is a middle-class white male *who kills for sexual gratification*.

The study of serial murder, consequently, often employs a psychological approach. This is an interesting exception to criminology’s general reliance on sociological—not psychological—variables. As Wright and Miller (1998, p. 2) have noted, “during the 1930s, American sociologists waged a successful turf war against biologists, psychologists, and physicians, wresting criminology from its biological roots, to make the growing field a specialty within the larger discipline of sociology”. But the traditional—sociological—explanations for crime (e.g., poverty, racism, urbanisation and the like) seem ill-suited to the explanation of serial murder. Serial killers are not disproportionately poor, are not disproportionately from ethnic minorities, and do not come from disorganised inner-city neighbourhoods. So criminologists often look to psychopathology in an attempt to understand serial homicide. In *Understanding sexual serial killing*, however, Frederick Toates and Olga Coschug-Toates augment their psychological study of sexual motives with reference to biological science and a trenchant analysis of sociological factors and the result is impressive.

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It allows the authors to answer fundamental questions such as “why are [serial killers] not restrained (‘inhibited’) by” “capture, ostracism and life in jail?” (p. 87) or “why do some cultures produce relatively many lust killers and others appear to produce almost none?” (p. 7). The book remains unquestionably psychological at its core—Frederick Toates is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Open University UK—but the multi-disciplinary nature of the book’s research base makes it a work worthy of careful study by sociologists, criminologists, and lawyers.

Understanding sexual serial killing organises 33 chapters into three parts. The first part, examining the factors that underlie lust killings, explores foundational questions around the definition of serial murder (as opposed to mass and spree killers), the mad/bad debate, psychopathy and sociopathy (chapter 3), motivation for lust murder (chapter 6), thrill seeking (chapter 10), paraphilias (chapter 11) and addiction to sexual homicide (chapter 12). Part one also includes chapters that focus on the individual (chapter 2) and—of particular interest to sociologists—on the social context of lust murder (chapter 4). Chapter 4 explores questions around the sociohistorical emergence of serial murder, victim selection and sex and ethnicity of serial killers. Although it privileges the role of motivation, this part of the book provides a comprehensive and up-to-date general overview of the scholarly literature on serial homicide.

The second part of the book, consisting of 20 biographical sketch chapters, is organised by motivational themes. For example, chapter 15, entitled ‘A focus on the (ex-)wife’, provides sketches of the killer Faryion Wardrip and Mikhail (“The Cleaner”) Popkov, and concludes with a “signposts” section that highlights common elements across the cases. Other chapters in part two are related to adoption (chapter 16), mother’s behaviour (chapter 18), revenge (chapter 19), being gay (chapter 20), sexual fetishes (chapter 21), cross-dressing (chapter 24) and problems with sexual potency (chapter 28). There are two chapters that describe paired killers: one (chapter 29) on male-male pairs such as Leonard Lake and Charles Ng; one (chapter 30) on male-female pairs such as Ian Brady and Myra Hindley or Fred and Rose West. There are also chapters that examine the impact of powerful events (chapter 22), drugs and addiction (chapter 31) and the desire for child victims (chapter 26). These pithy biographical sketches are an effective mechanism to examine the similarities (and differences) in motivation among lust killers, but they should not be understood as representing fixed categories. For example, the infamous “Gray Man” killer, Albert Fish, is included in the chapter on powerful events (since he was sexually excited by being whipped at a young age) but, alternatively, he could have been listed in the chapter on fetishes (since he fantasised about whipping teenaged boys, drinking urine, and eating faeces) or the chapter on child victims (since he whipped boys and girls and murdered a 10-year-old girl—the one victim with whose murder he was formally charged). That the 71 biographical sketches included in part two can serve as data points for multiple categories (e.g., Albert Fish standing in for powerful events *or* for fetishes *or* for child victims) means that different arrays of cases could be configured and that the “signposts” of common themes might therefore look slightly different. This should not be understood as a deficiency in the authors’ analysis—it is simply a consequence of interpreting ambiguous data (see, e.g., Oleson, 2019, for an analogous discussion of interpretation in the context of social control theory). Another important aspect of part two is that the biographical sketches include a number of cases from the former Soviet Union. Here, Olga Coschug-Toates’ experience as a translator allowed the authors to incorporate novel cases within their analysis. The value of extending an analytical sample beyond the set of now-familiar US and UK cases examined by other scholars must not be underestimated. It allows us to better disentangle the phenomenon of sexual serial killing from its socio-political context and from the Anglophone accounts in which it is reported. It defines the boundaries of our knowledge since “in the criminological encounter, who we ask, and what we ask them, shapes what we learn” (Oleson, 2018, p. 48).

Part three of *Understanding sexual serial killing* consists of just one concluding chapter that draws the book’s elements together. This key chapter builds upon the foundation of the 32 chapters that precede it, making important points. For example, the authors conclude that for many lust killers, sexual violence is

an addiction, similar to opiate addiction: “Rather than opiates, they discover aggression as a means of regulation and are sensitized to cues of sexual violence ... Stress, particularly of a social kind, accentuates this process, creating a pressure to kill” (p. 467). They explain how dissociation allows two systems of behavioural controls to operate, allowing the lust killer to shift between normal social activity and forms of sexual violence. This shift helps to explain why some serial killers report feeling like they are compelled by a powerful force. After combing the available biographical accounts, the authors also identify recurring factors that appear to predict sexual serial killing. These include familiar factors such as cruelty to animals, bedwetting, fire starting (collectively known as the Macdonald triad: see Macdonald, 1963), as well as low IQ, childhood abuse, neglect, addiction to pornography and stalking. Lack of attachment to any parental figure also appears to be important. Yet according to Toates and Coschug-Toates, “the closest to a universal factor is the presence of bullying and taunting of the future killer” (p. 469). This has implications for understanding the stresses that trigger episodes of sexual violence, and in the book’s final pages, the authors identify a range of interventions that might help to inhibit the association between violence and sexual pleasure.

On the book’s Amazon page, one reader hails *Understanding sexual serial killing* as “a masterpiece of vital importance” and another, serial homicide researcher Stephen Giannangelo, lauds the book as “a resource to the field that’s new, timely and impressively comprehensive and is long overdue”. One of the reasons that the book is praised by experts and lay readers alike is that it deliberately eschews jargon. Its reliance on plain language while still accounting for the scholarly literature makes it simultaneously accessible and scholarly. Doing this, and doing it well, is *incredibly* difficult. I know this is true: one of my own books was once reviewed as reading like a 400-page journal article. Another attractive feature of *Understanding sexual serial killing* is its price. Hardback monographs from university publishers are notoriously expensive, and *Understanding sexual serial killing* is a big book. Yet the recommended retail price on the Cambridge University Press site is less than \$45.00 USD (\$72.95 NZD in New Zealand). This places the book within financial reach for students and curious lay readers as well as experts. For this reason, I endorse Giannangelo’s appraisal of the book as “a fine addition to anyone’s research library”.

Although written from a psychological perspective, Toates and Coschug-Toates have incorporated a range of relevant work from biology, law, and sociology. The curious sociologist will find much of value here, particularly in the chapter that locates the psychology of the individual offender within his wider social milieu. This sociological foundation could be extended using fundamental constructs such as anomie, hegemonic masculinity, class inequality, and discrimination. This line of sociological inquiry, coupled with the motivational analysis provided so ably by Toates and Coschug-Toates, has the potential to identify new etiological factors, thereby enhancing prevention efforts and saving human lives.

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**Aarons, H. & Willis, E. (2022). *The Sociological Quest: An Introduction to the Study of Social Life*. (6th Ed.)
Routledge, 188 pages, ISBN: 9781932327099.**

Reviewed by Edgar A. Burns*

The sociological quest has long been used as a concise introduction for students wanting a discipline overview in undergraduate sociology classes, as background to weekly lectures on specific topics and issues. This 6th edition brings some changes in content while continuing to overview the discipline of sociology in a brief compass. The baton passes to Evan Willis' colleague Haydn Aarons as lead author. Repeated editions of this text—it is more than 30 years since the first edition in 1991—have served to deepen understanding of sociology for undergraduates wanting to take sociology further in their BA. It also serves as a convenient heads up for students in other fields in which sociology is often set as a compulsory foundation subject, in fields such as social work, planning, social policy, or health communication.

Through successive editions, an important though less obvious use of *The sociological quest* has been its use by postgraduates teaching first-year students, in making the effort to synthesise their own understanding of sociology and communicate that in tutorials. Most of us have had the experience of needing to anchor what sociology opens up for us personally within what sociology more broadly is and does. For my own teaching as a doctoral student, I regularly used my copy of this book to brush up on main theoretical perspectives, examples, or medical issues drawn from Willis' involvement in health sociology. This helped re-learn and gain proficiency in broad sociological principles and ways of thinking, including the summary of Mill's (1959) oft-quoted "sociological imagination".

Maintaining relevance over time is a challenge for any multi-edition text. There is a two-fold interest for both new and experienced teachers communicating the possibilities and excitement of sociology—how will examples in this new edition of *The sociological quest* speak to new generations of students? First, the addition of the new content about contemporary issues of importance such as climate change, digital and social media technologies and reference to Covid-19 is important and relevant. Climate and environment examples could be foregrounded more strongly. Students today 'get' the serious urgency of environmental damage and the rapidity of global heating and its consequences that will affect their lives. I think we sociologists need to more fully develop our examples and critique of governments and corporations and of our roles as consumers causing this impending calamity. The balance of that in an introductory text can be debated, but for a new generation this is not an off-putting seriousness; students are ready, even hungry, for this. Second, academics who began careers when textbooks were the main information source remember book lists and textbook pop-up shops on campus. This has significantly reduced today, with books fading as journals and other sources have come to predominate. Yet, like the digital availability of journals, textbooks are once again becoming conveniently available as ebooks and downloadable chapters, a further twist of the story.

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I have always found Willis' five-question set (consistent across editions) as a method of inquiry a gem for class discussions, opening up any topic, effectively neutralising fixed views or simplistic thinking. I might even have referenced "How could it be otherwise?" to raise a counterfactual point in writing my PhD thesis. Simple yet fundamental:

- What's happening?
- Why?
- What are the consequences?
- How do you know?
- How could it be otherwise?

This compact focus demonstrates the decades of undergraduate teaching of the two authors, enhanced by the examples they use throughout showing how pursuing these straightforward questions illuminates any topic from a sociological perspective. For some students these ideas are exciting and enable them to think in new ways. A strength of *The sociological quest* is that it offers non-combative ways of challenging/disrupting and broadening students' understanding through its framing and use of examples. The authors pursue their mission of bridging between sociological newcomers and the rich hinterland of sociology by providing heuristic sets like these five questions and other pairs or triplets of ideas that point to complexities without inundating the discussion with abstract language or too many references. For instance, the difference between a social problem and a sociological problem (p. 10) is a helpful concept pair for extending students' understanding. So, too, is the pairing of continuity and change (p. 22). Sociology can operate at multiple levels from micro, meso, and macro (p. 16). C. W. Mills' (1959) phrase "the sociological imagination" is elaborated to organise chapters into structural, historical, cultural, and critical perspectives. The authors reprise Mill's distinction between personal troubles and public issues (p. 17).

Climate change makes its first appearance in Chapter 3 (p. 34) and follows the authors' agenda of not overwhelming their overview with the absolute urgency of this or any one issue. However, since this chapter considers where sociology sits in the academic world, the discipline's lack of theorising environment and climate could have greater emphasis. Different approaches of scientific and humanistic forms of sociology are sketched (p. 35), including ideas like the social construction of human society, which are introduced, again, using examples from a variety of countries (p. 37). Sociological explanation is distinguished from metaphysical or faith accounts of why things happen or how things should be in society (p. 39). The authors differentiate sociology from journalism by its more academic consideration of issues and specialised language (p. 40). Everyday language can be loaded with assumptions and biases that sociology aims to avoid in describing how the social world is constructed (p. 43).

The book makes several disciplinary contrasts that are helpful to undergraduate readers who are mapping their studies and alternative perspectives in political science, anthropology, history or social work (p. 46ff). Durkheim's (2007[1897]) *Suicide* is used as a telling example of how sociology analyses something that is commonly assumed to be inherently individual. Distinguishing sociology from psychology is useful for undergraduates who are often taking both subjects (p. 44ff), noting, for instance, contrasting uses of the idea of socialisation in the two disciplines. In my own teaching, I have often used this example, feeling the sharp attention in the classroom by first-year students to what I am saying.

At the heart of the book is the application and expansion of the previously introduced idea of the sociological imagination. Chapter 4 details historical and cultural sensibilities and demonstrates how these interact with reference to a new timely example: water recycling in a globally warming and drying planet (p. 79). Sociology instructors will find the logic of combining the sensibilities—here history and culture—to

unpack Mills' sociological imagination, helpful in responding to questions or assertions in classes, bringing a consistent sociological framing to discussions that can otherwise go sideways.

Chapter 5 sketches the second two takes on Mills' sociological imagination—identifying structural aspects of any situation or phenomenon being investigated, and then bringing a critical assessment to that topic. These bread-and-butter elements of doing sociology are clearly set out for a newcomer. The relationship between structure and personal agency is outlined (p. 87). This is a great gain for students who have grown up within ideologies of personal individualism in modern western societies. Understanding structural causes can move students beyond blaming explanations. The second idea introduced, critical sociology, makes clear that the work of sociology is about analysis of ideas, not personal criticism (p. 99). Why should we believe official accounts and the claims of those with vested interests? The authors draw from their quintet of questions: “How do you know?” and “What’s your evidence?” to test claims individuals or institutions make to bring the structural and critical themes together.

Chapter 6 applies the four sensibilities of the sociological imagination—historical, cultural, structural and critical—to links between the social and biological worlds. I might have used ‘natural’ rather than ‘biological’ in the chapter title to include greater emphasis on the environment and climate change. The authors elucidate contemporary issues of genomics (and implicitly epigenetics) to raise important questions about the social shaping of what was once thought to be people’s biology: the transition from childhood to adulthood, basic distinctions sociologists make between gender and sex, and major consequences for people according to prevailing, and changing, definitions. The discussion touches on Furze’s (2008, p. 120) axiom: “environmental problems are at their base social problems”, but without going further. Biological determinism produces ideologies about what are the real causes of things that sociology challenges across all areas of life: race, gender, disability, sexuality and socio-economic status. Greater emphasis about nature and impending environmental climate heating would have given a more contemporary feel to the text.

Chapter 7 invites readers to see theories as keys for doing sociology: “introducing the idea of sociological theories or perspectives, each with their own way of conceptualising relationships” (p. 125) in social analysis. Having personally taught social methods classes with Evan Willis, the links between social theory and methods come naturally out of this discussion of how sociology is actually done. Chapter 7 considers “what is theory?” And what is its relationship to ‘facts?’ “What are facts?” And anyway, “how do you ‘know?’” Technical language like ‘epistemology’ is introduced with a light touch. Sociology has no single theoretical framework, but three orienting perspectives in sociology—functionalism, conflict theories and interactionism—are outlined for students.

The discussion of research methods in Chapter 8 describes gathering and interpreting data in sociological ways. For many students the idea of empirical evidence is new since we all ‘know’ about people in an everyday sense. Generating evidence to confirm or reject what is said to be the case is a critical function of sociology that challenges commonsense ideas of facts and truth. This material is set out in a way that is suitable for students to get a sense of sociological inquiry.

In the final Chapter 9, Aarons and Willis “make a case for Sociology as an academic discipline with a set of skills that has a range of excellent applications for future career” (p. 160). Students considering going further in sociology but concerned about careers after university will find this helpful. The chapter lists quantitative skills (p. 169) and qualitative skills (p. 170) that student can apply in many fields.

The sociological quest steers between opening doors of intrigue and a brisk walk through major elements of the discipline of sociology. Instructors using the textbook will doubtless add their own expertise and preferences. For example, I have found first-year students are fascinated by learning the differences between criminal and deviant behaviour they had not thought about before. The text usefully rides the line between simple but not too simple. I appreciated updated references to climate change though I suggest the next edition will give even more prominence to the significance of new digital technologies, and

environment and climate change (Carolan, 2022; Urry, 2015) in line with Furze's (2008) quote above, as global environmental damage and climate change impact society more and more severely.

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Anderson, S. (2023). *The Devil's Haircut: My Life Before and After the Raurimu Massacre*. Urban Druid Press, 367 pages, ISBN 9781001187604

Reviewed by Lynda Hills*

On February 8, 1997, Steve Anderson shot and killed six people, including his father, and attempted to kill four others in the small New Zealand settlement of Raurimu. Ten months later, in the Hamilton High Court, it took a jury less than two hours to find him not guilty by reason of insanity. Anderson's autobiography, *The devil's haircut: My life before and after the Raurimu massacre*, is terrifying, not simply because of the killing described within, but because his story confronts the reader with the dangers of psychotropic medications (see Breggin 1994; Healy, 2003) and the failings of psychiatry in a way that sociological literature cannot. Anderson does this by using a first-person account showing how the institution of psychiatry operates in one life over a prolonged period of time. This book raises concerns about the efficacy and safety of the institution of psychiatry as a whole and challenges the assumption that the Raurimu massacre occurred because of failings of individuals involved in the management of Anderson's mental health care leading up to that day.

The devil's haircut is divided into three parts: Part One: Before; Part Two: Raurimu; Part Three: After. Part One begins with Anderson's self-described normal life and family and quickly introduces experiences of bullying, abuse, police brutality and lies, and an experience where, as a child, he nearly took his own life. It also discusses Anderson's life experiences in detail, including his thought processes throughout, and concludes prior to the shooting at Raurimu. Part Two: Raurimu is a difficult and painful read as it is Anderson's firsthand account of the shooting. It makes up only five of the forty chapters of the books. The first two of these chapters are direct copies of the handwritten account he made about his experience of the time surrounding the shooting for his lawyer, prior to his eight-day trial. His diary entries are italicised to distinguish them from the body of the book and the only changes he made to the original diary were to omit some aspects of his psychosis "because they were too humiliating to recount" (p. 203) and to correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Part Three: After is in some ways just as difficult to read as Part Two. Again, in italics, Anderson weaves through excerpts from his diaries following the shooting, creating a real-time reading experience that is hard to describe. He takes us through the High Court trial and his subsequent psychiatric detention, sharing again the distress of forced incarceration, but contrasts that suffering with the peace he has found through Buddhist teachings and the generosity and kindness of friends.

The devil's haircut furthers a user-led critique of psychiatry by centring Anderson's lived experience as a forensic mental health patient and recipient of forced treatment with antipsychotics. Though lacking a thorough bibliography, he weaves a significant body of critical mental health literature throughout. Anderson introduces, among others, the work of Robert Whitaker, investigative journalist, author of *Anatomy of an epidemic: Magic bullets, psychiatric drugs, and the astonishing rise of mental illness in America* (2010) and founder of Mad in America; physician and medical researcher, Peter Gotzsche, author of the *Critical*

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psychiatry textbook (2022); psychiatrist, Peter Breggin, author of *Toxic psychiatry* (1994); and Bruce Cohen, sociologist and author of *Psychiatric hegemony* (2016). Despite the necessity of engaging critically with psychiatry's role in the Raurimu massacre as shown in *The devil's haircut*, one cannot read this book without considering the effect such a publication would have on the victims. Anderson himself states:

I have tried to be respectful and sensitive to those affected by what I've done, and to preserve as much as possible the privacy of the other families of victims killed and injured that morning, yet still provide the reader with some insight. (p. 239)

Anderson deeply regrets his actions (p. 1) and asks the reader to engage with a "kind heart and compassionate mind" (p. 2). *The Devil's Haircut* is a book you want to put down, but cannot, and should not. It politicises the institution of psychiatry and shows in detail, through one life, how psychiatry and its allies function primarily as a form of social control. The devil's haircut provides valuable Mad knowledge to critique the institution of psychiatry. In personal communication between the book reviewer and the author, Anderson describes his entry into the mental health system:

My first encounter with a psychiatrist was when I was 22 years old. This occurred after the encounter with the police which shook me up, December 1994. Medication came early 1995, then a period of sporadic use and not taking medication completely, and then psychosis in August 1995. I had never had questions raised over my mental health by others until I couldn't handle the police encounter, and never had a psychotic break until I got mixed up with psychiatrists and stopped taking anti psychotics. (personal communication, February 7, 2024)

The detail Anderson provides of his experience with psychiatry is unsettling. "I was thoroughly retraumatised by the August 1995 committal, when twice in the first few days, I was injected with antipsychotics without my consent." (p. 47). He says, "On a bad day, I feel I am being tortured" (p. 34). The impact of the violence Anderson experienced prior to entry into the mental health system and the shootings reverberates in his words over 20 years on. "It may sound weak but I still feel traumatised by the events in the police station and the avalanche of experiences since" (p. 112). With approximately 10,000 patients forcibly incarcerated and treated in New Zealand each year under the Mental Health Act (Ministry of Health, 2016), Anderson's account supports abolition scholarship and the concerns raised by scholars around the legality and morality of our current Mental Health Act.

Through this book, Anderson shows how psychiatry has operated in his life as a form of social control since his teenage years, monitoring and disciplining his social deviance. One form of social deviance Anderson has displayed is his belief that he is taunted by powers operating at a high level within the mass media. However, Anderson's ideas surrounding the media only started after his experience of police brutality and lies.

At first I thought the media was on my side. Then I quickly realised the media is the system's mouthpiece and I got scared thinking I was being teased, intimidated and bullied by certain aspects of the content as a consequence of getting in trouble with the cops. (personal communication, February 17, 2024)

When Anderson began writing, he was living in Porirua Hospital on a medication regime including Risperidone and Aripiprazole. These are antipsychotic medications known to cause dangerous side effects such as akathisia, proven to lead to suicide and homicide in some people (see Breggin, 1994; Gøtzsche, 2022). The variety of dangerous 'treatments' Anderson has received to date for his 'schizophrenia' are based on a label and diagnosis that John Read (2004), Professor of Psychology at the University of East London, argues does not exist, and one that Anderson and even his own mother doubt as well.

Since the diagnosis, I haven't altogether gone along with the idea that I have the condition. Just by begging to differ, I am taking a big risk with my liberty, physical health, and mental well-being. I open myself up to extra unwanted and unwarranted scrutiny and I risk forced medication increases, which come accompanied by negative side effects. (p. 34)

By refusing to accept that he has schizophrenia, Anderson is signalling to the psychiatrists that he is really mad and not making 'progress'. In the book, Anderson mentions the threat he faced by psychiatry of being given injectable medications. At the time of writing this review, that threat has become realised. Despite no longer being a special patient, Anderson has been receiving forced intermuscular injections every two weeks for the last 18 months. One of the justifications used for this treatment, according to Anderson, is that he admits to cannabis use and "psychiatrists believe this is a risk factor in the management of my mental illness that is mitigated by the surety of the injection" (personal communication, January 29, 2024/February 6, 2024). This book, however, offers user-led critiques which support the critical scholarship that challenges the connection between cannabis use and schizophrenia (Dolphin & Newhart, 2022).

The devil's haircut reads as a real-life horror story showing the necessity of thinking critically about the dangers of psychotropics. Anderson describes the antipsychotics as leaving him feeling "vacant, restless, and socially numb" (p. 42) and raises the question of whether psychotropics work as advertised. This question has been answered by several scholars. Breggin (1994) claims psychotropics do not work by correcting a 'chemical imbalance', rather, they create a chemical imbalance, and Götzsche (2022) confirms one of the primary ways that psychotropics work is by numbing you so that you are less distressed by your circumstances or surrounding environment.

Prior to the shooting, Anderson had been placed on amitriptyline, thioridazine, paroxetine, pimozone, haloperidol, and stelazine. All these medications have serious negative side effects (Götzsche, 2022). Anderson shares how he was often not 'medication compliant' in the time leading up to the shooting and states the reason he would start and stop medication or avoid taking it altogether was because he would feel "zonked" on them (p. 65).

In summary, *The devil's haircut* is a gripping, painful, and necessary read for academic audiences in sociology, psychology, critical disability studies, mad studies, and critical indigenous studies. By examining one life in detail, scholars can see how the legal system and psychiatry work in collaboration to incarcerate and torture and kill. *The devil's haircut: My life before and after the Raurimu massacre* is challenging to its core and leaves the reader asking the question: If Anderson is not guilty then could the institution of psychiatry be the one with blood on its hands?

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