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Mapping Digital Citizenship Among Resettled Refugees' Social Media Use in New Zealand

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Abstract
In an increasingly digital world, refugees heavily rely on modern communication technologies to navigate many aspects of their lives. In this article, we specifically explore how resettled refugees in New Zealand use social media in their everyday lives. We present the findings drawn from a national survey (n = 592) in six languages, exposing the benefits and limits of social media use among this cohort of people. Using a multivariate model, we show how refugees' social and political activities enable civic participation and a sense of belonging. Our study also charts the barriers constraining their everyday social media use, including financial cost, security concerns, and low technical and digital literacy levels. By centring the impacts of sociodemographics and sociotechnological factors, we interrogate the meanings and outcomes of digital exclusion, which is crucial for informing digital citizenship and settlement policy among resettled refugees.

Keywords: refugee; resettlement; social media; participation; information communication technologies

Introduction

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2023) acknowledged that over 108 million people are currently forcibly displaced worldwide, while less than 1% of the total number of refugees having opportunities to resettle in places like Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand and across Europe. In an increasingly digital era, refugees heavily rely on modern communication technologies to navigate many aspects of their lives. Their everyday digital practices highlight how communication technologies are becoming more available, affordable and usable for refugees—in resettlement contexts and across their transnational networks (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2016). These communication tools and social media platforms are now used to forge and establish personal, familial and social connections that deeply shape the lives of refugees from local to transnational domains (Aléncar, 2017; Gillespie et al., 2018; Leurs, 2019; Marlowe & Bruns, 2020).

This article specifically explores how resettled refugees in Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter, New Zealand) use social media in their everyday lives.[1] We foreground this focus through a digital citizenship

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lens to outline the opportunity and ability of individuals to participate in society online and benefit from it by exploring the associated barriers and enablers. Many studies have shown the implications of social media use among refugees across the world. On the one hand, social media use allows refugees to forge and maintain connections among their local and transnational networks while navigating their everyday lives in sites of displacement and resettlement (Aléncar, 2017; Hill, 2023; Leurs, 2019), but on the other, refugees also experience communicative challenges as shaped by access, competencies and broader concerns on surveillance and control (Dekker et al., 2018; Glasius, 2018).

Our work focuses on refugees who have settled in New Zealand, particularly underlining the factors shaping their positive and negative experiences in using social media. Since 1989, New Zealand had committed to resettle up to 750 refugees annually, and the government increased this quota to 1500 people in 2020. Alongside this formal commitment, over the last decade the country has accepted an annual average of 178 asylum seekers as refugees (Ferns et al., 2022). When conducting this study, there were eight settlement sites across New Zealand where refugees initially settled: in the Auckland region, Christchurch, Dunedin, Manawatu region, Waikato (Hamilton), Invercargill and Wellington region. These settlement sites are generally characterised by digital ubiquity, where opportunities to connect are publicly available (schools, libraries, council sites) and privately, if people can afford it. Despite this digital availability, several New Zealand studies have highlighted how refugees experience barriers to access, particularly those who have non-English speaking backgrounds (Hua, 2021), and how digital inequality is exacerbated by financial burdens of being able to connect online (Leurs, 2014; Marlowe & Chubb, 2021).

Our work deploys a digital citizenship lens (Millard et al., 2018) in the context of refugees' embodied, lived and negotiated experiences. For these scholars, *digital citizenship* refers to the ability of individuals to participate in society online. Digital access, competencies and support networks have all been noted as key to enabling online participation. In the case of refugees in immigration detention, Leung (2018), utilising the lens of cultural citizenship, highlights how digital access, competencies and environments can both enable and impede refugees to access and engage in a range of social and cultural activities in mediated spaces. By applying a digital citizenship perspective and focusing specifically on refugees' social media usage, we focused on three aspects: (1) communicative patterns, (2) demographic characteristics, and (3) the determinants shaping social media use. The findings are based on an online and paper-based national survey (n = 592) in six languages, the first-ever social media survey conducted in New Zealand with resettled refugees. Using a multivariate model, we describe the main social media platforms resettled refugees in New Zealand use, with the refugees' associated demographic characteristics, to address two research questions:

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[1] We use the term 'refugee' in this article to acknowledge people who have a refugee background in New Zealand. This includes quota and convention refugees and asylum seekers who are still awaiting a determination on their claim.

(1) What are potential barriers for accessing social media, and what contributes to these barriers?
(2) Do refugees use social media to communicate their social or political viewpoints, and what factors are associated with being socially or politically active?

Social and political activities were established by asking the participants if they had participated in an associated group, posted content, looked for information about rallies/protests, or encouraged others to take action. By illuminating the positive and negative experiences of social media use among refugees and unravelling the differing factors that shape them, the study contributes to advancing a deeper understanding of digital inclusion and its associated policy implications in New Zealand.

The following sections present the scholarly terrain on digital inclusion and refugee studies to unpack the possibilities and limits of social media use in resettled refugees' personal and civic lives. We conclude by summarising the study's key insights and offer reflections and recommendations for digital inclusion in New Zealand.

Social media and refugee settlement

The rapid uptake of social media has had profound implications for the daily lives of resettled refugees through its multifaceted potential to meet a range of needs, including accessing essential information for personal and social purposes (Aléncar & Tsagkroni, 2019; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Gillespie et al., 2018; Wilding et al., 2020). For refugees, connecting with local and transnational networks reflects the "compulsion for proximity" (Diminescue, 2008, p. 572). In this case, these digital connections negotiate proximity across distance through sustaining political affiliation within the host country's homelands (Glasius, 2018; Marlowe, 2019), supporting a sense of emotional belonging (Kneer et al., 2019), developing confidence and self-esteem (van Eldik et al., 2019), and maintaining cultural ties and identity (Neag, 2019). Pottie et al.'s (2020) scoping review supports this literature in illustrating how young people from refugee backgrounds use social media in resettlement contexts to improve their self-esteem through self-presentation, accessing health information, and building supportive social networks. Similarly, Dekker et al. (2018) reported that resettled Syrian refugees predominantly used smartphones to access the internet—especially during migration. In particular, their use of social media platforms depended upon the type of information they sought and their familiarity with that platform, highlighting these digital tools' contextual, technological and relational elements.

Given the prominence and widespread uptake of ubiquitous modern communication technologies, the 2016 UNHCR report *Connecting Refugees* clearly illustrates a trend showing how numerous displacement sites now offer new forms (though not necessarily stable) of mobile connectivity that have fundamentally shifted how people can bridge distance and sustain social interaction. Such shifts have thus been labelled (and critiqued) as "digital lifelines" (Aléncar et al., 2019; Maitland, 2018; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2016), underlining how social media can facilitate ongoing connection and potentially ensure safety by informing of safe asylum pathways, notifying people of disaster events through transnational networks, and supporting settlement in local places (Aléncar, 2017; Marlowe, 2018). As digital technologies and, specifically, social media platforms become deeply embedded into the lives of the refugees, it is worth noting that digital media access and use represent basic human rights in a digital world (Leurs, 2017).

We approach the benefits of social media use among refugees as crucial for digital citizenship. According to Millard et al. (2018), digital citizenship is influenced by key factors such as digital access, competencies and networks, which enable individual users to communicate, connect and engage in a range of social, cultural, economic and political activities. Complementing Millard et al.'s work is Leung's (2018) study that extends and examines refugees' citizenship in a mediated and cultural context. For Leung,

participation in a mediated society necessitates access, competencies, finances and a safe environment. Examining the case of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia, she highlights the crucial role of mobile phones in enabling these individuals to connect to their family members and peers locally and transnationally, particularly via various social media platforms. Through mediated practices, refugees living away from their family members and networks achieve what Diminescu (2008) referred to as establishing a sense of "co-presence" when physical proximity is not possible. Through 'telecocooning', people can maintain intimate ties and various activities through these technologies to transcend traditional geographical and time-based barriers (Cabalquinto, 2021; Habuchi, 2005). As a result, connecting at a distance through social media platforms supports a transnational habitus (Nedelcu, 2012) and affective capital (Leurs, 2019), paving the way for a sense of belonging. Thus, everyday mediated practices are integral for digital citizenship, redefining and reshaping the distances between 'here' and 'there' and enabling new forms of social, political and cultural interaction in the "age of the connected migrant" (Diminescu, 2008).

However, the use of these tools is not just one of ICT-enabled optimism. Studies show that refugees experience digital exclusion where inequalities are reflected in people's lack of access, competencies and social inequalities (Hargittai, 2022; Helsper, 2021; van Dijck, 2020). Digital exclusion among refugees often results in constrained availability, access and usability, frequently hindering their ability to engage in everyday life (Leung, 2018). In some cases, the feeling of being tracked and controlled through surveillance systems curtails social media use among refugees (Aziz, 2022; Dekker et al., 2018; Glasius, 2018; Leung, 2018). Furthermore, refugees have been found to disconnect from using social media because of surveillance fears deployed by their host and home countries (Witteborn, 2014), highlighting how refugees can be tracked and controlled (Ajana, 2019). For instance, the study by Leurs (2019) productively captures how refugees' desire for proximity with transnational networks has created an "affective paradox", showing social media use in enabling both connection and new forms of surveillance. On a transnational scale, Glasius (2018) cautions how a state can use social media as tools for "extraterritorial authoritarian aggressions" to surveil and control people beyond its borders.

In response, refugees may disconnect from or modify social media use (Aziz, 2022; Leung, 2018; Leurs, 2019; Marlowe, 2019). Thus, alongside the promise of these communication technologies and various social media platforms for connection, we support caution against a techno-deterministic and utilitarian focus that renders power, structural oppression and asymmetrical forces less visible (Awad & Tossell, 2019). Gillespie et al. (2018, p. 6) referred to this digital environment as "unstable assemblages that regimes of control and care can simultaneously occupy". This conception complements Witteborn's (2014) contention that the digital practices of refugees should be situated within a larger sociopolitical context.

Despite this growing literature that illustrates the various and textured ways refugees use social media, some studies have also located and recognised the agency of refugees in using mobile devices and social media. For example, scholars have critiqued how dominant discourses portray refugees as unprepared and incompetent users of digital technologies (Gifford & Wilding, 2013). McCaffrey and Taha (2019) challenged this assumption in their study of migrants and refugees in New Jersey to highlight their deft use of smartphone technology. In some cases, refugees select information to share on social media and choose a secure channel such as an email to sustain connections among family members overseas (Witteborn, 2014). These studies highlight the nuanced ways that refugees use these tools and associated social media platforms to illustrate how they are digitally discerning. Consequently, researchers increasingly acknowledge the sophisticated strategies that refugees employ to navigate these mobile, communicative networks (Díaz Andrade & Doolin, 2016; Gifford & Wilding, 2013).

In response to these rapidly evolving technological, social and political environments, this article showcases how resettled refugees in New Zealand use social media in social and political domains and the factors that enable—and constrain—their use of these platforms. In doing so, we contribute to unpacking the meanings and practices of digital citizenship in a forced migration context.

Study design

To examine how refugees across New Zealand use social media, we designed a survey in English and piloted it with more than 30 individuals with refugee backgrounds and with people who work in the resettlement sector. Once the survey was finalised, we translated it into five additional languages: Arabic, Spanish, Dari, Nepali and Burmese. These languages were chosen as representing some of the largest country of origin numbers of resettled refugees—Arabic being common in numerous countries in the Middle East and Africa, Spanish for Colombians, Dari for Afghans, Nepali for Bhutanese, and Burmese for Myanmarese (see Immigration New Zealand, 2024). To ensure consistency across these language groups, we instigated a process of establishing functional equivalence to ensure that the meanings were compatible (Jin & Nida, 2006). We used protocols established by Gable and Wolf (1993) for judgement valuation to compare each target language with the English version by first having the survey translated and checked by bilingual translators in each target language. Bilingual facilitators guided this process by placing each of the 29 questions and associated responses in the English and target languages next to each other. We developed a scoring sheet to ascertain the confidence that each target language was functionally equivalent to the English version with at least four bilingual community members (two males and two females). These community members scored each item from 1 (low agreement) to 4 (high agreement) to achieve a score usually of 4 and sometimes of 3. Every item in the survey across the five target languages achieved a score of either 3 or 4. The study received university ethics approval from the authors' associated institution.

Recruitment was done through third parties, social media channels and announcements at community events. Participants could elect to enter a prize draw (by providing an email address) to win one of ten $100 grocery vouchers drawn at the end of the survey. Over four months starting in September 2019, 702 participants who identified as refugees responded to a self-paced survey about their social media usage. Fifteen research assistants who have strong links to communities from refugee backgrounds facilitated these activities and delivered the survey in both paper-based (n = 184) and online (n = 518) forms. Nearly all the research assistants were from refugee backgrounds, and one or more of these colleagues covered all the six languages in which the survey was developed. The research assistants played a central role in implementing the surveys by presenting the study at various community events and on social media channels.

Before accessing the survey, participants had to confirm they were from a refugee background, lived in New Zealand, and were at least 18 years of age. We did not ask the participants if they were citizens, permanent residents, residents or on a visa to remain in New Zealand. This decision arose from advice given during the pilot phase, which suggested that such a question would likely cause participant reluctance to engage. We checked IP addresses for duplicates to help ensure that there was no doubling-up of responses, and this was further supported by checking we received unique email addresses for the prize draw. It is necessary to acknowledge that only those active on social media and proficient in one of the six main languages could participate. Thus, this study does not represent people from refugee backgrounds who have highly constrained access to, or do not use, social media or those who might be using social media but are not proficient in one of the six languages of the survey.

The number of surveys completed in each of the six languages were:

English (n = 383)
Arabic (n = 231)
Spanish (n = 33)
Dari (n = 19)
Burmese (n = 19)
Nepali (n = 17).

Two research assistants manually inputted the paper-based responses into SPSS and then randomly checked 20% for accuracy; no errors were found.

Social and political activities

To unpack digital citizenship among the participants, we chart the prevalence of social or political activities on social media by creating a binary variable with people saying 'Yes' to any of the following four questions asking whether they had engaged on social media in any of the following activities:

- participated in a group that shares an interest in a political or social issue
- posted content on a social media site related to a political or social issue
- looked for information about rallies or protests, and/or
- encouraged others to take action.[2]

It is important to acknowledge the limitations related to the question related to 'political or social activity' within the survey as individual perceptions of what politically and socially active means or what constitutes an 'issue' can have significantly different interpretations. For some, following the news in their home countries, engaging in political discussions with family and friends, or voting constitutes these activities. For others, political activity could mean engaging in transformational activism and a high engagement with the political situation in their country of origin or elsewhere. Finally, it is worth noting that the survey does not ask participants to nominate where these activities were focused; that is, whether in New Zealand or outside it. This is because other literature has shown how people participate in a range of political activities in various countries (see Marlowe, 2019), making this difficult to isolate for the study. Despite the anonymous survey, the decision to keep the 'political' and 'social' terms together was made following consultation with individuals and groups from refugee backgrounds during the pilot phase. This group strongly advised that separating the political and social questions would make participants too nervous about participating because of previous experiences of political persecution, echoing studies that surveillance compels refugees to use digital devices and online channels in a range of political and social activities related to their home countries (Wall et al., 2019). In the following discussion, we provide suggestions that respond to this limitation alongside the possible policy implications arising from this study.

Barriers

In unpacking digital citizenship as undermined by both social and technical barriers (Leung, 2018; Millard et al, 2018; Ritchie, 2022), we created binary variables related to three barriers to accessing social media: 1) financial barriers, 2) concerns about privacy and confidentiality online, and 3) technical barriers.[3]

For financial barriers, we considered that respondents had this concern if they responded 'Always' or 'Frequently' to one or both of the following questions:

- Does paying for this internet access place you under financial stress? and/or
- Do the 'financial costs of using social media' create access barriers?

For security concerns, if a participant identified with any of the following three concerns, they were considered as experiencing security/confidentiality barriers: 'Concerns about privacy and confidentiality

[2] See "Appendix S3: Social and political activity" in the Supplementary Notes for the survey questions in the six languages. Available at https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Marlowe-et-al._Mapping-Digital-Citizenship_NZS-Vol.39-No.2_Supplementary-Notes.pdf

[3] See "Appendix S4: Barriers to accessing social media" in the Supplementary Notes for the survey questions in the six languages. Available at https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Marlowe-et-al._Mapping-Digital-Citizenship_NZS-Vol.39-No.2_Supplementary-Notes.pdf

online', 'Safety and security concerns for you', or 'Safety and security concerns for your friends or family'. If a participant identified with either 'Difficulty in understanding how to use social media' or 'Unreliable internet connection in overseas countries', they were considered as having technical barriers.

Findings

To respond to the potential problems caused by missing data, we removed respondents whose key demographic information was missing from the data set. This step left a final sample of 592 participants. The statistically non-significant results of Little's MCAR test ($p = 0.317$) suggest that the remaining missing data were completely at random. It is also necessary to acknowledge that this survey is not representative of all refugees in New Zealand—it only targeted those who used social media, and it was predominantly completed by those who could respond in English and Arabic. This means that certain groups are far more likely to have participated in the survey, limiting our ability to extrapolate to other groups.

Table 1 provides an overview of the participants' demographics. As is shown, slightly more than half of the participants (55.5%) were female, a majority (76.2%) were below 45 years of age, and most (73.5%) had been residents in New Zealand for more than three years. Geographically, the participants were mainly from Asian countries and were distributed across the eight major resettlement sites in New Zealand.

To better understand the participants' social media usage, we kept the top two platforms with a large-enough sample of people who used them frequently—Facebook (66.6%) and YouTube (61.3%)—as separate platforms. We then grouped other social media platforms with similar features to make binary variables based on the frequency of use: frequently (always or almost always), infrequently (sometimes, not very often) or none (none-almost none). From this, we developed three groupings:

- WhatsApp, Viber and SnapChat—texting, photo sharing and video sharing and interactive options in more private groups
- LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter—enabling a stronger public profile, and
- Skype, Imo and Facetime—real-time, video and audio interaction

We used chi-square tests of association to evaluate the potential associations between these platform groupings and key demographic variables (age, gender, length of stay in New Zealand, country of origin, and/or settlement regions). For countries, the preference was to keep any single country with a large-enough sample separate and then group other countries with smaller samples in the same region. The sample of participants was large enough for Bhutan, Afghanistan and Syria. We placed the only two South American countries (Colombia and Chile) into one category and all African countries into another category. We then divided the rest of the Asian countries with smaller samples into three categories: (1) East/Southeast, (2) Middle East, and (3) South Asia and Other Asian countries.

For both political or social activities online and each barrier variable, we first used chi-square association tests to evaluate their potential associations with key demographic variables. Next, we employed logistic multivariate regression models to identify factors associated with any of these outcomes. Age and gender were adjusted for in all models. All statistical analyses were conducted with SAS version 9.4.

More than 86% of the participants used four or more social media platforms. Still, the frequency of use varied from one platform to another,[4] with some platforms (such as Skype) predominately used infrequently (24.8% infrequent versus 5.1% frequent users). In contrast, YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp were used more frequently.

[4] See "Table S1: Frequency of use for different social media platforms" in the Supplementary Notes. Available at https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Marlowe-et-al._Mapping-Digital-Citizenship_NZS-Vol.39-No.2_Supplementary-Notes.pdf

Table 1: Participant demographics (*N* = 592)

	Count	Percentage
***Gender* (*n* = 533)**		
Male	236	44.3 %
Female	296	55.5 %
Gender diverse	1	0.2 %
***Age* (*n* = 587)**		
16–25	154	26.2 %
26–35	147	25.0 %
36–45	147	25.0 %
46–55	89	15.2 %
> 55	50	8.6%
***Length of stay in New Zealand* (*n* = 567)**		
Less than 1 year	44	7.8 %
1–2 years	106	18.7 %
3–5 years	184	32.5 %
6–8 years	59	10.4 %
More than 8 years	174	30.7 %
***Countries/regions of origin* (*n* = 590)**		
Syria	133	22.5 %
Afghanistan	122	20.6 %
Bhutan	49	8.3 %
East/South East Asia	32	5.4 %
Other Middle East	90	15.2 %
All Africa	72	12.2 %
South America	34	5.7 %
South Asia/Other Asian	59	10.0%
***Religious belief* (*n* = 588)**		
Yes	545	92.7%
No	43	7.3%
***Religion* (*n* = 544)**		
Islam	346	63.6 %
Christianity	144	26.5 %
Hinduism	30	5.5 %
Buddhism	18	3.3 %
Other	6	1.1 %
***Location in New Zealand* (*n* = 586)**		
Wellington region	169	28.8 %
Auckland region	129	22.0 %
Dunedin	76	13.0 %
Christchurch	69	11.8 %
Nelson	68	11.6 %
Waikato	57	9.7 %
Invercargill	10	1.7 %
Manawatu	8	1.4 %

Notes. 1. The discrepancies between full sample (*N*) and subsample (*n*) are due to participants' missing responses.
2. South East Asia comprises Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and Indonesia; Other Middle East comprises Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey and Jordan; All Africa comprises Cameroon, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Burundi, Eritrea, Egypt, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Congo, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Liberia; South Asia and Other Asian countries comprises Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia;

Social media access and use

In this section, we present the descriptive statistics pertaining to overall social media usage and report the chi-square test results of the association between key demographic variables and refugees' social media usage.

First, as for *social media time usage in the past week*, 159 participants (27.0%) indicated using social media less than two hours per day, with 207 (35.0%) spending two to four hours daily, 135 (23.0%) reporting four to seven hours, and 87 (15.0%) eight or more hours.[5] Overall, the majority (n = 432; 73.0%) indicated that they spend more than two hours per day on social media platforms.

YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp were the most popular platforms with frequent usage by the participants of this study. As shown in Table 2, female gender, settled region and country of origin were associated with usage of WhatsApp-Viber-Snapchat and LinkedIn-Instagram-Twitter groups ($p < 0.05$ for both groups). Younger age was significantly associated with a higher prevalence of LinkedIn-Instagram-Twitter and YouTube usage ($p < 0.001$ for both). There were also significant differences between people's choice of platforms to connect by the country/region of origin ($p < 0.01$). The prevalence of YouTube usage was higher among those with a shorter length of stay in New Zealand (< 2 years; $p = 0.001$).

The most common device respondents use to connect to their family/friends on social media daily is the smartphone (n = 542; 91.6%), with only a handful (n = 8) using other devices daily, and not smartphones.[6]

Barriers to access to social media

Participants also reported frequent barriers to accessing social media (Table 3). Concerns about privacy and confidentiality (n = 353; 59.6%) was a leading barrier to social media use. This finding complements a range of studies that have highlighted how resettled refugees feel unsettled in environments of mediated control (Aziz, 2022; Dekker et al., 2018; Leung, 2018). The second leading barrier for our participants was difficulties understanding how to use social media and/or the reliability of connection with overseas countries (n = 230; 39.0%). Lastly, the participants identified financial burdens (n = 259; 43.7%) as a hindrance to social media use, complementing studies that expose financial capital as a constraint in everyday digital media use (Hill, 2023; Leung, 2018; Leurs, 2014). Age, country of origin, and length of stay in New Zealand contributed to these barriers (see Table 3).

As shown in Table 4, in multivariate models, older age (> 46 years old compared with 18–35 years old) was associated with higher odds of technical barriers. Also, those from Afghanistan and Bhutan were more likely to report technical barriers than Syrians. Those who had stayed in New Zealand for 3–5 years or less were more likely to report financial barriers than those with 6+-years' stays. The odds of reporting financial barriers by respondents from Afghanistan were four times those of respondents from Syria (OR = 4.05; 95% CI = 2.15, 7.62). Country or region of origin was the only contributing factor for stating concerns over security or confidentiality with access to social media, with higher odds of this barrier reported by Afghan, African, South American and Middle Eastern refugees than Syrians.

[5] See "Appendix S2: Social media use patterns" in the Supplementary Notes for the survey questions in the six languages. Available at https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Marlowe-et-al._Mapping-Digital-Citizenship_NZS-Vol.39-No.2_Supplementary-Notes.pdf

[6] See "Appendix S1: Device use patterns" for the survey questions in the six languages and "Figure S1: Device use pattern to connect with family/friends among New Zealand refugees" for the results. Both are in the Supplementary Notes, available at https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Marlowe-et-al._Mapping-Digital-Citizenship_NZS-Vol.39-No.2_Supplementary-Notes.pdf

Table 2: Characteristics of refugees who frequently used social media platform groups versus infrequent users

		Viber-WhatsApp-Snapchat (*n* = 426)		χ2 (*p*-value)	LinkedIn-Instagram-Twitter (*n* = 192)		χ2 (*p*-value)	Skype-Imo-FaceTime (*n* = 111)		χ2 (*p*-value)	YouTube (*n* = 394)		χ2 (*p*-value)	Facebook (*n* = 363)		χ2 (*p*-value)
		n	**Row%**		***n***	**Row%**		***n***	**Row%**		***n***	**Row%**		***n***	**Row%**	
Gender	**Male**	156	66.1	5.1 (0.02)	58	24.6	11.6 (0.006)	37	15.7	3.01 (0.08)	157	66.5	057 (0.45)	155	65.7	2.39 (0.12)
	Female	222	75.0		114	38.5		64	21.6		206	69.6		175	59.1	
Age groups	**16–25**	111	72.1	6.4 (0.09)	102	66.2	126.6 (< 0.001)	27	17.5	0.41 (0.93)	131	85.1	36.7 (< 0.001)	89	57.8	4.4 (0.21)
	26–35	116	78.9		50	34.0		30	20.4		100	68.0		98	66.7	
	36–45	106	72.1		22	15.0		28	19.1		82	55.8		95	64.6	
	46+	91	65.5		17	12.2		26	18.7		80	57.6		79	56.8	
Settled regions	**Auckland**	97	75.2	64.8 (< 0.001)	50	38.8	13.8 (0.03)	26	20.2	10.6 (0.10)[1]	81	62.8	4.5 (0.60)	66	51.2	37.7 (< 0.001)
	Christchurch	58	84.1		27	39.1		14	20.3		46	66.7		59	85.5	
	Dunedin	63	82.9		18	23.7		14	18.4		47	61.8		48	63.2	
	Manawatu region[2]	14	77.8		6	33.3		2	11.1		11	61.1		8	44.4	
	Nelson	22	32.4		13	19.1		7	10.3		48	70.6		47	69.1	
	Waikato region (Hamilton)	45	79.0		23	40.4		18	31.6		43	75.4		23	40.4	
	Wellington region	123	72.8		52	30.8		29	17.2		115	68.1		108	63.9	
Country/ regions of origin	**Afghanistan**	98	80.3	92.6 (< 0.001)[1]	46	37.7	19.6 (0.006)	31	25.4	19.2 (0.008)[1]	84	68.9	2.4 (0.93)	77	63.1	29.9 (< 0.001)
	Bhutan	12	24.5		8	16.3		3	6.1		34	69.4		39	79.6	
	All Africa	57	79.2		31	43.1		21	29.2		44	61.1		35	48.6	
	Colombia/Chile	28	82.4		9	26.5		4	11.8		21	61.8		19	55.9	
	East/South East Asia	17	53.1		11	34.4		13	24.1		21	65.6		20	62.5	
	Other Middle East	65	73.0		32	36.0		15	16.7		59	66.3		49	55.1	
	Syria	115	86.5		30	22.5		17	12.8		91	68.4		96	72.2	
	South Asia/Other Asian	32	54.2		24	40.7		7	19.4		38	64.4		27	45.8	
Length of stay in New Zealand	**less than 2 years**	116	77.3	5.4 (0.06)	54	36.0	1.3 (0.51)	27	18.0	0.79 (0.67)	107	71.3	13.0 (0.001)	92	61.3	0.09 (0.95)
	3–5 years	136	73.9		58	31.5		32	17.4		137	74.5		114	62.0	
	6+ years	156	67.0		71	30.5		48	20.6		137	58.8		141	60.5	

Notes: 1. Fisher exact *p*-value is reported.
2. Due to the small counts in both Invercargill and Palmerston North, the data have been merged and results shown only as the Manawatu region.
3. Discrepancies between full sample (*N*) for each platform and subsample (*n*) are due to participants' missing responses.
4. See Note 2 under Table 1 for a full list of the countries within each region of origin.

Table 3: Prevalence of having any barrier/financial barriers to accessing social media

		Financial barriers (*n* = 259)	χ2 (*p*-value)	Security/ confidentiality concerns (*n* = 353)	χ2 (*p*-value)	Technical barriers (*n* = 292)	χ2 (*p*-value)
Gender	**Male**	104 (44.1%)	0.04	142 (60.2%)	0.16	115 (48.7%)	0.77
	Female	128 (43.2%)	(0.85)	173 (58.5%)	(0.68)	148 (50.0%)	(0.79)
Age (years)	**16–25**	57 (37.0%)	8.49	91 (59.1%)	0.23	62 (40.3%)	27.5
	26–35	58 (39.5%)	(0.04)	86 (58.5%)	(0.97)	59 (40.4%)	(< 0.001)
	36–45	70 (47.6%)		88 (59.9%)		76 (51.7%)	
	46+	72 (51.8%)		85 (61.2%)		93 (66.9%)	
Country of origin	**Afghanistan**	80 (65.6%)	42.3	94 (77.1%)	62.4	86 (70.5%)	47.8
	Bhutan	21 (42.9%)	(< 0.001)	18 (36.7%)	(< 0.001)	33 (67.4%)	(< 0.001)
	All Africa	22 (30.5%)		56 (77.8%)		34 (47.2%)	
	Colombia/Chile	10 (29.4%)		26 (76.5%)		20 (58.8%)	
	East/South East Asia	8 (25.0%)		24 (75.0%)		9 (28.1%)	
	Other Middle East	46 (48.3%)		37 (41.6%)		38 (42.2%)	
	Syria	57 (42.9%)		62 (46.6%)		47 (35.3%)	
	South Asia/Other Asian[1]	17 (28.8%)		36 (61.0%)		24 (40.7%)	
Length of stay in New Zealand	**≤2 years versus 6+ years**	76 (50.7%)	6.6	87 (58.0%)	15.3	78 (52.0%)	0.26
	3-5 years	84 (45.6%)	(0.037)	90 (48.9%)	(0.0005)	82 (44.6%)	(0.25)
	6+ years	88 (37.8%)		158 (67.8%)		121 (51.935)	
Hours of social media activity	**< 2 hours/day**	64 (40.2%)	7.1	100 (62.9%)	1.1	86 (54.1%)	0.38
	2–4 hours/day	82 (39.6%)	(0.07)	119 (57.5%)	(0.77)	99 (47.8%)	(0.39)
	4–7 hours/day	71 (42.6%)		80 (59.3%)		68 (50.4%)	
	≥ 8 hours/day	42 (47.7%)		52 (59.1%)		38 (43.2%)	

Note: See Note 2 under Table 1 for a full list of the countries within each region of origin.

Table 4: Factors influencing barriers to accessing social media

		Financial barriers				Security/confidentiality concerns				Technical barriers			
Variables	**Level**	**Odds Ratio**	95%Confidence Intervals (CI)		*p*-value	***Odds Ratio**	95%Confidence Intervals (CI)		*p*-value	***Odds Ratio**	95%Confidence Intervals (CI)		*p*-value
Gender	**Female vs Male**	1.06	0.72	1.55	0.74	0.87	0.59	1.29	0.51	1.13	0.77	1.66	0.51
Age	**18–25 vs 46+**	0.56	0.33	0.96	0.08	0.93	0.54	1.66	0.99	0.38	0.22	0.66	0.001
	26–35 vs 46+	0.72	0.42	1.23		0.95	0.55	1.66		0.40	0.23	0.68	
	36–45 vs 46+	1.02	0.60	1.75		0.98	0.56	1.70		0.74	0.43	1.27	
Length of stay	**less than 2 years vs 6+ years**	2.44	1.44	4.14	0.004	1.06	0.63	1.80	0.20	1.50	0.89	2.52	0.15
	3–5 years vs 6+ years	1.70	1.03	2.83		0.71	0.42	1.18		0.95	0.57	1.56	
Country/ regions of origin	**Afghanistan vs Syria**	4.05	2.15	7.62	< 0.001	3.10	1.65	5.85	< 0.001	3.81	2.02	7.18	< 0.001
	All Africa vs Syria	1.16	0.56	2.41		3.43	1.58	7.46		1.57	0.76	3.24	
	Bhutan vs Syria	1.28	0.61	2.69		0.56	0.26	1.20		3.38	1.55	7.40	
	Colombia/Chile vs Syria	0.52	0.19	1.38		2.88	1.08	7.62		1.59	0.65	3.94	
	East/South East Asia vs Syria	1.02	0.38	2.74		3.74	1.31	10.67		0.81	0.30	2.19	
	Middle East vs Syria	1.37	0.73	2.55		0.78	0.42	1.45		0.99	0.53	1.87	
	South Asia/Other Asian vs Syria	0.77	0.37	1.57		1.72	0.87	3.41		1.30	0.65	2.60	

Notes: 1. Adjusted odds ratios are reported.
2. See Note 2 under Table 1 for a full list of the countries within each region of origin.

Social or political activity on social media

As shown in Table 5, about 37% of respondents indicated some social or political activities on social media. Significantly fewer Syrians (18.8%), Bhutanese (28.6%) and people coming from other Middle East countries (28.1%) reported conducting social and political activities on social media relative to people from other regions such as Africa (61.1%) or Southeast Asia (59.4%) ($p < 0.001$).

According to Table 6, in multivariate models, females had a 0.61 odds ratio of being socially or politically active on social media than males (95% CI = 0.40, 0.91; $p = 0.02$). Being settled less than two years in New Zealand was associated with less social media activity than six years settled and longer (OR = 0.53; 95% CI = 0.31, 0.93). However, there was no statistically significant difference between those who had stayed for between three and five years and those who had stayed for six years or longer. Being from Africa, South America and East/Southeast Asia or other Asian countries (e.g., Nepal, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan) increased the odds of reporting social or political activities on social media compared with Syrians. There were also direct associations between those who used LinkedIn, Instagram or Twitter and those who had social or political activities (OR = 1.84; 95% CI = 1.11, 3.03). Finally, having security concerns was associated with social or political activities on social media (OR = 2.22; 95% CI = 1.45, 3.39).

Discussion: Negotiating social, political, and relational settlement

The accelerating trend of forced displacement further underscores the potential of social media to connect family, friends and wider communities across distance. Indeed, the uptake and use of digital technologies and social media among mobile subjects such as refugees and their benefits in terms of civic participation demonstrate the formation and embodiment of digital citizenship (Millard et al., 2018). In this article, we present the implications of the survey findings for connecting people, settlement support and enacting social and political lives within countries of resettlement and beyond.

Before outlining these implications, it is necessary to reinforce that the study presents the findings of people from refugee backgrounds who use social media. The respondents predominantly chose to complete English or Arabic versions of the survey, highlighting that the study findings do not reflect all groups. Thus, while our findings suggest commonalities in how refugees use and experience social media, they also highlight important differences related to gender, country of origin and time settled in New Zealand. These determinants are fundamental to articulating digital citizenship's meanings and outcomes for resettled refugees.

Facilitating communication and connection

A clear finding of this study is that the smartphone is by far the most common communication tool. This aligns with the forced migration literature that shows that, while access remains uneven, the increasing accessibility of these devices is making them more interwoven into everyday lives—within New Zealand and beyond (see Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; McCaffrey & Taha, 2019; UNHCR, 2016).

Within this, participants noted using YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp as the three most common social media platforms. Facebook and WhatsApp are already used in a range of contexts to assist with settlement support, access to information and to convey important public health messages from everyday to emergency messaging. An interesting observation from other studies shows that refugees often did not trust or choose to use government and NGO-led websites and platforms designed to assist them (Dekker et al., 2018). These studies, alongside this survey, highlight the importance of ensuring that any communication strategy engages on the platforms where communities are already active. Furthermore, the possibility of fear among refugees when accessing state-run services and channels, which are often understood as spaces for surveillance and control is necessary, needs to be considered (Witteborn, 2014).

Table 5: Prevalence of social or political activities on social media

Variables	Level	Political or social activity				
		Yes (*n* = 219)		No/Not sure (*n* = 373)		χ2 (*p*-value)
		n	Row%	*n*	Row%	
Gender	**Male**	93	39.4	143	60.6	1.2 (0.27)
	Female	103	34.8	193	65.2	
Age group	**16–25**	63	40.9	91	59.1	2.3 (0.49)
	26–35	56	38.1	91	61.9	
	36–45	55	37.4	92	62.6	
	46+	45	32.4	94	67.6	
Country of origin	**Afghanistan**	50	41.0	72	59.0	49.5 (<0.001)
	Bhutan	14	28.6	35	71.4	
	All Africa	44	61.1	28	38.9	
	Colombia/Chile	13	38.2	21	61.8	
	East/South East Asia	19	59.4	13	40.6	
	Other Middle East	25	28.1	64	71.9	
	Syria	25	18.8	108	81.2	
	South Asia/Other Asian	28	47.5	31	52.5	
Resettled region	**Auckland**	73	56.6	56	43.4	40.6 (<0.001)
	Christchurch	31	44.9	38	55.1	
	Dunedin	17	22.4	59	77.6	
	Manawatu region	4	22.2	14	77.8	
	Nelson	17	25.0	51	75.0	
	Waikato region (Hamilton)	24	42.1	33	57.9	
	Wellington region	50	29.6	119	70.4	
Length of stay in New Zealand	**less than 2 years**	42	28.0	108	72.0	23.8 (<0.001)
	3–5 years	53	28.8	131	71.2	
	6+ years	113	48.5	120	51.5	
Hours of social media activity	**2–4 hours/day**	80	38.7	127	61.4	4.2 (0.24)
	4–7 hours/day	57	42.2	78	57.8	
	< 2 hours/day	50	31.5	109	68.6	
	≥ 8 hours/day	30	34.1	58	65.9	
Security/ confidentiality concerns	**Yes**	162	45.9	191	54.1	29.7 (<0.001)
	No	57	23.8	182	76.2	
Facebook user	**Yes**	143	39.4	220	60.6	2.3 (0.13)
Viber/WhatsApp /Snapchat user	**Yes**	170	39.9	256	60.1	5.5 (0.02)
LinkedIn/Insta/ Twitter user	**Yes**	92	47.9	100	52.1	14.5 (0.0002)
Skype/Imo/ FaceTime	**Yes**	46	41.4	65	58.6	1.2 (0.28)
YouTube user	**Yes**	46	41.4	65	58.6	2.2 (0.14)

Notes: 1. See Note 2 under Table 1 for a full list of the countries within each region of origin.
2. Due to the small counts in both Invercargill and Palmerston North, the data have been merged and results shown only as the Manawatu region.

Table 6: Determinants of social or political activities among refugees in New Zealand

		Model 1 (without social media platforms and security concerns)				Model 2 (with social media platforms used and security concerns)			
Variables	**Level**	**Odds Ratio**	**95%Confidence Intervals (CI)**		***p*-value**	**Odds Ratio**	**95%Confidence Intervals (CI)**		***p*-value**
Gender	**Female vs Male**	0.66	0.44	0.97	0.04	0.61	0.40	0.91	0.02
Age	**16–25 vs 46+**	1.66	0.95	2.91	0.32	1.19	0.63	2.25	0.87
	26–35 vs 46+	1.50	0.85	2.66		1.22	0.67	2.23	
	36–45 vs 46+	1.29	0.73	2.29		1.22	0.68	2.20	
Country of origin	**Afghanistan vs Syria**	2.76	1.41	5.40	0.0003	2.07	1.03	4.18	0.02
	African countries vs Syria	5.20	2.39	11.29		3.87	1.72	8.67	
	Bhutan vs Syria	1.15	0.47	2.77		1.66	0.64	4.31	
	Colombia/Chile vs Syria	2.96	1.13	7.73		2.73	1.02	7.29	
	East/South East Asia vs Syria	3.35	1.28	8.75		3.08	1.12	8.45	
	Other Middle East vs Syria	1.53	0.75	3.14		1.52	0.72	3.21	
	South Asia/Other Asian vs Syria	3.37	1.61	7.06		3/50	1.59	7.70	
Length of stay in New Zealand	**less than 2 years vs 6+ years**	0.56	0.32	0.95	0.05	0.53	0.31	0.93	0.06
	3–5 years vs 6+ years	0.59	0.35	0.99		0.63	0.37	1.07	
Security concerns	**Yes vs No**	—	—	—		2.22	1.45	3.39	0.0003
LinkedIn/Instagram/Twitter	**Yes vs No**	—	—	—		1.84	1.11	3.03	0.02
WhatsApp/Viber/Snapchat	**Yes vs No**	—	—	—		1.57	0.95	2.61	0.08

Notes: 1. We did not include both regions settled and countries of origin in one model due to the higher conceptual relevance of country of origin.
2. Adjusted odds ratios are reported.
3. See Note 2 under Table 1 for a full list of the countries within each region of origin.

This study also found gender differences in using social media platforms, with women using the Viber/WhatsApp/Instagram grouping more than men. This finding complements the study by Ritchie (2022), showing how Somali women refugees in Kenya use WhatsApp to carve spaces for social, cultural and entrepreneurial connections. In contrast, Merisalo and Jauhiainen (2021) conducted a study on asylum seekers' settlement journeys and found men were significantly more likely than women to use YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that discrepancies in digital access can stem from factors such as availability and skill levels (Alam & Imran, 2015), alongside conservatism (Ritchie, 2022) and discrimination (Witteborn, 2014), which can hinder the digital practices of female refugees and other demographic groupings. These differences suggest the importance of locating the sociocultural and relational factors that inform any given study or policy intent.

Since conducting this study, the New Zealand government has identified five additional settlement sites: Levin, Masterton, Blenheim, Ashburton and Timaru. Social media can play a role in connecting communities separated by physical distance and may potentially help people feel 'in place' if they can connect with cultural and language communities based elsewhere in New Zealand. This has already been shown, for instance, for Muslim women from refugee backgrounds who maintain WhatsApp groups across various geographic places within the country (see Marlowe, 2019). This study also demonstrated that women, more than men, prefer WhatsApp/Viber/SnapChat to connect with friends and families. In addition, factors such as accessibility to basic services, which are usually located in urban centres (hospitals, city councils, social welfare support), also play an important role in social media use due to the link between the necessity of connection with certain services and limitations to access these services. This potential has already been demonstrated during New Zealand's COVID-19 lockdowns—as various video-enabled platforms allowed mental health clinicians to work with refugees to provide support when physical proximity and travel were not possible (see Mortensen, 2020).

Communications in a crowded environment

This survey found 86% of respondents used four or more social media platforms. While social media can be used to assist with settlement support, it is also necessary to recognise the unstable media environment through which information flows. The echo chambers resulting from these platforms can become powerful sources of misinformation and disinformation (Marlowe, 2019; Wall et al., 2019). Thus, the use of these tools underscores the need to improve digital information literacies and competencies to ensure cybersecurity. This training would include understanding what might constitute misleading or suspicious content, such as fake news and scams. Furthermore, developing strategies for communicating through social media channels is increasingly important in engaging with refugee groups as an important, though not singular, approach to conveying key messages. This could relate to important policy announcements and responding to extraordinary events such as disasters. The latter was clearly the case during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and various lockdowns, when ensuring timely, accurate and trusted communications was paramount (O'Brien et al., 2018). Thus, understanding what platforms particular communities are using is essential to ensure that communications have reach into targeted groups.

Political and social activity as sites of belonging and meaning

This study suggests that country of origin approaches to surveillance and transnational authoritarian aggression significantly influence refugees' opportunities and decisions to be socially or politically active, within New Zealand and beyond. Thus, it is possible that people will feel safer becoming politically active after several years. As some states (such as Syria) have higher levels of surveillance, it is perhaps not surprising that participants from these countries are less likely to report political or social activity (possibly due to risks to themselves or their networks back in their country of origin). In some cases, the fear of

being tracked from afar by the home country compels refugees to avoid participating in political discussions or online mobilisations (Witteborn, 2014).

It also suggests that people are more likely to be socially and politically active after a certain time in New Zealand (more than six years). For people resettling in the first few years, such activities may also be affected or minimised due to the combination of elements that recently arrived refugees have to navigate, such as housing, language acquisition, work, education and health. Families with a length of stay of six years or more are more likely to have adjusted to these settlement tasks and may have more time and capacity to participate in conscious political and social spheres.

Finally, it is worth acknowledging that opportunities for social and political action, within and beyond national borders, also create possibilities for a sense of belonging. Social media can foster spaces where people can mobilise various forms of capital that are otherwise difficult to access or utilise. While the survey shows that most of the participants use social media for more than two hours a day, it is also arguable, for some, that these platforms could potentially foster fellowship and social capital that may be limited in settlement contexts (see Aléncar, 2017; Dekker et al., 2018). Understanding how refugees negotiate the social, political and relational settlement in these digital spaces has accelerated salience as the distinctions between 'here' and 'there' become increasingly blurred in this rapidly evolving landscape.

Subsidising access and training

As already presented, numerous studies have demonstrated how social media platforms assist refugee and migrant groups in overcoming isolation and loneliness and can facilitate a sense of well-being (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). However, financial barriers can constrain digital access (Leung, 2018). Considering the high prevalence of economic difficulty in paying for internet access (43.8%) and the popularity of smartphone use among respondents, proximity to libraries, museums and other public spaces with free internet access also plays an important role in the accessibility of refugees to social media. When internet access is considered alongside how important social media is for people's sense of well-being and connections to family (see Marlowe & Bruns, 2020), it becomes clear that social media represents a critical bridging tool with transnational networks and provides flows of critical resources—something that Wilding et al. (2020) refer to as the "circulation of care".

Recognising the association found in this study between less than two years of settlement in New Zealand (compared with six years or longer) and financial barriers, it is also arguable that providing subsidised internet access in the first year or two of settlement could help connect people across distances and improve well-being, which in turn could support positive settlement outcomes. In New Zealand, telecommunication companies already offer complimentary basic Wi-Fi access during the first year of settlement for newly arrived refugees. Another notable example includes the Computers in Homes initiative which provides families with access to a computer, internet access and associated training (Díaz Andrade & Doolin, 2016) and how this access and support can enhance well-being and societal participation (Díaz Andrade & Doolin, 2019).

While subsiding access could reduce the barriers, it is necessary to recognise the limitations of this approach and that our suggestion is not one of complete digital optimism. Here, we follow the contentions of scholars arguing how social inequalities must be identified and considered in examining how people and communities experience and navigate digital exclusion (Helsper, 2021; Warschauer, 2003). One of the notable findings from this study is the high prevalence of security and confidentiality concerns among refugees (nearly 60% of participants) associated with their country of origin. Other studies have highlighted how oppressive regimes can use social media for surveillance and maintain influence beyond geographical borders (Glasius, 2018). In some cases, the fear of surveillance among refugees reproduces disconnection (Witteborn, 2014). Thus, we recommend culturally and contextually sensitive (Warschauer, 2003) digital

literacy programmes to teach people how to access digital resources effectively and mitigate possible risks or safety issues. Such training would also include understanding what digital traces particular social media platforms leave behind and how to keep individuals, families and transnational networks safe.

Conclusion

Digital communications through social media are reconfiguring how forced migrants experience displacement on social, cultural, economic and political levels. The rapidly evolving landscape presents opportunities and cautions for providing settlement support and the potential to connect people who are separated by distance. We highlight how digital citizenship is engendered and undermined based on demographics, financial resources and literacies. These findings underscore the importance of situating refugees' everyday digital practices within a broader sociopolitical context (Witteborn, 2014).

While this study was conducted just before the COVID-19 pandemic, its findings are arguably more salient than before as societies grapple with the implications of social distancing and remote forms of interaction. The various forms of immobility that arose from the associated lockdowns created new forms of dislocation and separation but also gave rise to new ways that forced migrants could respond to such challenges.

The considerations of time settled, country of origin, age and sociopolitical contexts are necessary to acknowledge alongside a broader recognition of the risks and affordances of engaging online. Thus, studies could explore how the utilisation and availability of these online platforms influence digital citizenship practices as it intersects with various socio-political contexts. The accelerating development of a rapidly evolving technological and communication landscape signals a fundamental shift that will continue to inform refugees' opportunities for integration and a sense of belonging from local to transnational scales.

These conclusions warrant cautious consideration. First, the study findings only represent refugees already using social media (as explained in the Methods section) and not those who did not have any internet access or were not using any social media platforms. Secondly, the predominant respondents completed the survey in English and Arabic, with much smaller numbers for the other language groupings, limiting the ability to make general comments about refugee-background communities. Finally, we were limited in being able to conduct comparative analyses across language groupings because it would have meant smaller power to establish effect sizes with much larger co-variance. Despite these limitations, this study provides an important overview of how social media users from refugee backgrounds use these platforms to communicate, connect and participate in political or social actions. Future surveys could focus on those language groups of lesser diffusion to see if there are differences between these groups' length of time in New Zealand. As already acknowledged, interpreting what constitutes social and political activity can have significant variations. Qualitative studies provide further insights into the specificities of these various activities and interactions where building—or even undermining—trust and safety is possible (Cabalquinto, 2024; Leurs, 2019; Wilding et al., 2020). Future studies could help further address these queries by exploring how those less active or inactive on social media forge and sustain connection and political activities from local to transnational spaces, particularly as digital communication becomes increasingly part of everyday life.

While using information communication technologies and social media opens a range of possibilities for connection and support, it poses questions about the quality of those relationships and presents concerns about safety, security and exclusion. The fact that digitally mediated interactions are becoming increasingly ingrained into daily life shows the importance of digital citizenship and the critical awareness and an appreciation of the various contexts and consequences that include or marginalise people in the digital social nexus.

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Wacquant, L. (2023). *Bourdieu in the City: Challenging Urban Theory*. Polity Press, 288 pages, ISBN: 1509556443

Reviewed by Anthony Richardson*

This latest work from Loïc Wacquant has the sense of a writer taking stock of a journey so far: revisiting his body of work on urban marginality and the precariat; neoliberalism and the creation of the 'penal state'; the focus on a 'carnal' or embodied sociology; and the problem of racial domination. In *Bourdieu in the city*, he responds to criticisms of his earlier work, situates some of those earlier works into an integrative schema, and embarks on an ambitious new attempt to reinvigorate and reframe urban theory. This book is successful in all three goals. For the reader unfamiliar with either Wacquant's earlier work or Bourdieu's intellectual and practical engagement with 'the urban', this book is an excellent overview to both. It is, however, more a culmination of what has come before than an introduction, as Wacquant embeds his own work on territorial stigma and urban marginalisation within a call for cities to be understood as sites of temporally and spatially embedded sociological contestation. As such, this book makes a strong argument for the possibility of a new Bourdieusian approach to urban sociology and is a timely and valuable addition to current debates over the direction of urban theory. The chapters offer cogent outlines and summaries of various aspects of Wacquant's work and his intellectual and methodological relationship to Bourdieu, and each chapter will be addressed in turn.

The prologue operates as a critical overview of the field(s) of urban studies, categorising the various disconnected siloes of academic endeavour. In that sense, this chapter neatly defines the problem of intellectual disjunction to which Bourdieu's methodology and theory are offered as a possible remedy. This tour through the forest of theoretical and methodological assumptions and approaches is brief but bracing, and it sets the stage for Wacquant's key aim for this work, namely to both provide an overarching framework for his body of published work and demonstrate Bourdieu's integrative capacity to:

> …range along levels of abstraction and to travel smoothly across empirical scales to link large structures of power (a country, state, or metropolis) to the meso level of institutions (such as fields of cultural production, science, journalism, policy, and politics) to the minutiae of everyday interaction. (p. 19–20)

Chapter 1 provides an overview of Bourdieu's engagement with the urban, beginning with a clear exploration of the ways in which Bourdieu understood how power and capital operate and interact across and within space, both socially and physically. Through his discussion of Bourdieu's earliest work in Algeria, Wacquant identifies the development of his understanding of the city as both the generative site of capital in its numerous forms and power, and the arena for their deployment and reproduction by numerous actors across a range of scales; from individuals and families, through agricultural modes of production and urban/global markets, to military camps, informal settlements and the city itself. Wacquant pays particular attention to the generation and operation of symbolic power within the city, its connection to both social

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and physical space, and its relationship to spatially based marginalisation. For both Bourdieu and Wacquant, cities are hubs for powerful symbolic authorities like religious, political, legal, media, artistic, academic and scientific institutions, and their power to consequentially categorise people, activities and space directly impacts material urban reality.

The second chapter provides an excellent overview of Wacquant's conceptualisation of the (re)production and diffusion of territorial stigmatisation and marginalisation in the neoliberal city. For the reader unfamiliar with either of these concepts, or Bourdieu's integral part in their creation and ongoing value as explicatory tools, the value of this chapter cannot be overstated. Wacquant's presentation and discussion of the trialectic of symbolic, social and physical space through which the urban becomes both the object and site of social struggle, although conceptually dense, is concisely presented. This chapter is a valuable exploration of the concept of territorial stigma, and the example of the Red Belt of Paris successfully "highlights the structural logics of territorial stigmatization and offers a flexible framework for the comparative study of its fabrication, dissemination, and effects across social space – and not just in the neighborhoods it targets" (p. 89). Wacquant's topology of the production and impact of territorial taint (p. 82), in particular, clearly enunciates the interactions between the three components of this approach.

It is in Chapter 3, dealing with the analytic triad of class, ethnicity and penality, that Wacquant's criticism of siloed academic expertise is perhaps the most relevant. He convincingly argues for the necessary removal of the academic, theoretical and professional siloes between these three currently disconnected fields. Furthermore, as an integrative chapter, seeking to construct an overarching narrative across three of Wacquant's earlier substantial works, this is the most valuable section of the book. Wacquant manages to situate these works, and the development of his thought and practice that they represent, in a valuable "analytic cartography" (p. 115) which nonetheless deftly avoids any sense of theoretical structuralism or determinism.

To turn, at the end, to one minor criticism from the prologue: Wacquant's brief discussion of "the prophets of 'urban science' surfing the ocean of big data newly released by cities" (p. 3) dismisses Bettencourt (2021) as an exemplar of a positivist complex adaptive systems approach to cities, which uses big data to identify deterministic and decontextualised laws behind the growth and character of all cities. This rejection is no surprise, given Wacquant's argument that "Bourdieu rejects economic determinism, the search for foundations, and the neo-Hegelian notion that history is endowed with a directional logic" (p. 34). However, Wacquant's understandable rejection of this sort of epistemic certainty, or 'arrogance', does overlook a more 'humble' (Ogilvy, 2013) systems approach which, although less influential, does exist. It is part of an intellectual heritage (Morin, 2007) that understands that no predictive understanding of emergent complex systems is possible, and thus it stands in strong opposition to the positivist claims of Bettencourt and others of his ilk. It is nonetheless also distinct from Latour's (2005) actor-network theory (ANT) due to its inclusion of a metabolic aspect within the urban; a paradigm in which cities are complex socioecological (subsuming the political, cultural and economic into that 'social') and dissipative systems which are emergent through time (for a recent example, see Isendahl and Barthel, 2018). This tradition should be acknowledged as distinct, even if Wacquant then chooses to dismiss it.

This would be too minor a criticism to raise in such an ambitious and important work except that this omission becomes relevant elsewhere in the book. The first occasion is when Wacquant discusses the multiscalar aspect of Bourdieu's approach:

> Accordingly, one should grasp urban constellations, categories, and practices as the products, weapons, and stakes of struggles waged over multiple temporalities, ranging from the *longue durée* of secular macro-structures to the mid-level tempos of political cycles and institutional gyrations to the short-term phenomenological horizon of persons at ground level. (p. 34)

It is clear that a Bourdeusian sociology of the city allows for such a multiscalar view, both temporally and spatially, but is this insight unique to this approach? Likewise, Wacquant's point that "the boundaries of the urban are vaporous, like those of a cloud" (p. 161) is a commonplace understanding in the complex systems field (Giampetro, 1994; Gunderson & Holling, 2002; Haberl et al., 2019). Seeing the urban through a complex systems lens, as a non-reified, porous-bordered and ever-emergent network of social, economic and political contestation, embedded in both ecological and dissipative systems and temporal and spatial space, also allows for an understanding of urban reality as existing at different spatiotemporal scales. These are minor points to raise to be sure, but there is perhaps some ground here for these similarities to be acknowledged and explored further.

In conclusion, though, the question raised by this book is whether it does achieve its stated aim of demonstrating the "the heuristic potential of Bourdieu's sociology for invigorating and reframing urban studies" (p. 17). The answer must be in the affirmative, as this ambitious and well-reasoned book requires its readers to consider Bourdieu seriously in terms of proposing an integrative paradigm for a disparate and disjointed field of academic study. In that sense it is an important entry into this long-running debate.

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Livi-Bacci, M. (2023). *Over Land and Sea: Migration from Antiquity to the Present Day.* Polity Press, 163 pages, ISBN:978150955 (translated by David Broder)

Reviewed by David Pearson*

Massimo Livi-Bacci is a prolific demographer with a reputation for tackling large questions in a very concise fashion. Several of the author's previous books—for example, *A concise history of world population* (Oxford, 1996), *The population of Europe* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000*),* and what might be seen as a companion volume to this latest book*, A short history of migration* (Polity, 2012)—all traversed expansive geographical areas and spanned extensive historical periods within very short formats. *Over land and sea* does not stray from this pattern. In a volume falling well short of 200 pages, Livi-Bacci relates a wide variety of stories describing and analysing 15 journeys that cross several centuries and encompass numerous terrains.

Many readers might applaud the author's brevity when confronting challenging, complex and often politically emotive subjects. Others, particularly academic area and period specialists, may consider these ventures overly superficial if not imprudent. So, it is important to recognise the caveats the author marks out in his introductory chapter. From the outset, Livi-Bacci sees migration as a biodemographic phenomenon with an important emphasis on that prefix. Hence, he sees people's migratory movements as more than particular social, economic and political actions and events; rather, they are viewed as a fundamental quality of being human. This universality, or so the author asserts, defies general paradigms or models, although these assist us in making sense of multifaceted and wide-ranging contexts. Thus, Livi-Bacci states, the stories he has chosen to convey:

> …do not and cannot constitute an embryo of a history of migrations and are not integrated into any systematic, chronological or geographical treatment of my subject. They are, however, interconnected by a criterion that allows us to compare different eras, peoples and contexts. For if the inclination towards mobility is intrinsic to human nature, it is also true that migrations are not necessarily a voluntary act, a matter of free choice, resulting from an individual decision. (p.2)

Indeed, most of this volume is concerned with varying forms of forced migration since the author avers free movements are a rare and recent phenomenon. Livi-Bacci's chosen vignettes sometimes include much-debated topics like Indigenous peoples, slavery and diasporas, but they often only get a fleeting mention. Mainly because, as the author reasonably points out, there are abundant sources on these topics for readers to peruse, which include his many previous publications. Yet footnotes are noticeably absent, and the endnotes are hardly copious in this work.

The bulk of the text is divided into four parts that each appraise different forms of non-free migration with illustrative cases. First, in a section called "Antiquity", drawing mainly on the writings of ancient scholars, Livi-Bacci convincingly argues how thousands of years ago human mobility was in many ways not vastly different from what it is today, given many similarities between the causal factors that provoked forced and unforced population movements within ancient empires and contemporary national

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states and globalisation and despite major differences in sources and destinations and the balance between voluntary and involuntary journeys. The author shows how the boundaries of Greek and Roman city-states exemplified short-range individual and familial free movement within largely homogeneous ethnic settings. But just as evident were the signs of organised longer-range mobility caused by economic, political and military cross-border conflicts and ties with diverse peoples, as well as environmental and demographic upheavals.

The depiction of selected facets of antiquity neatly expresses the difficulties of conceptualising voluntary and involuntary movement and distinguishing individual and familial motivations from wider structural causal influences like the forces of militaristic centralised authorities. The fate of migrants is even more graphically described in the "cases of expulsion, displacement or deportation" (p. 28) contained in Section II of this book, "In the Hands of the State". Here, while recognising the obvious importance of debates and extensive literature about slavery in the Americas and other continents, we are presented with other interesting cases of forced transplantation. Movements of Inca peoples in Peru, the displacement of populations in the fading years of the Ottoman Empire, and the resettlement of millions of persons in the Stalin era of the Soviet Union are concisely described and analysed. Thus, demonstrating the power of states to provoke forced transfers of population that ranged from "reasonably orderly" to "brutal deportations" (p. 54).

Section III, on the "Misdeeds of Nature", still focuses on forced migration but zeroes in on ecological and medical states as prime causes of significant population movements. Once again, the author seeks to show how climactic and bodily conditions are not only major concerns in the current world but were also evident in earlier periods of history, with varying degrees of public and scholarly recognition. On the one hand, he appraises the well-known exodus from the USA Dust Bowl in the 1930s and the similar effect of the Irish potato famine almost 100 years earlier as cases of natural trauma that provoked massive population upheavals within and across continents. And on the other, we are presented with illuminating less-familiar portrayals of drought in the 1870s in North Eastern Brazil and the effects of Malthusian overpopulation in Haiti since the 1940s, which had results of similar magnitude.

We get closer to home in Section IV, "Organised Migration", where the author examines cases of migratory movements promoted by institutions—which might be "a lord, a corporation, a religious order or a state" (p. 77) who provide incentives and modes of travel for people to leave their homes. These vary greatly in intensity, motivation and impact, ranging from what might be called demographic engineering to economic and political expansionary aims. The former focuses on a small group of young women (the *Filles du Roi*) sent to Quebec by Louis XIV in the seventeenth century to procreate with male settlers to enable them more effectively to restrain and economically exploit the Indigenes and contend with British interests. Striking increases in fertility proved highly successful, at least for the monarch and his distant subjects. In contrast, the other cases stretched over much longer periods and territories with often far more expansive results. Extending over three centuries (beginning in the eleventh) the "drive to the East" of Germanic families in Europe (p. 78) demonstrates how religious and monarchical elites organised planned migrations that resulted in millions of people resettling. Similarly, Catherine the Great's efforts to bring large tracts of land between the Rhine and the Volga under European influence are explored by examining her encouragement of large-scale German immigration in the eighteenth century.

As noted earlier, one of Livi-Bacci's major themes is his stress on the relative recency and rarity of voluntary population movements in human history, although he fully acknowledges the lack of consensus on what constitutes freedom and unfreedom. This reappears as a key focus in the final section of the book, which addresses "Free Migration" (p. 103). This concept is exemplified, he argues, in the internal countryside-to-city migrations that could be seen in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and more graphically, in the overseas mass migrations from Europe to the Americas, North and South, a century later, with parallel movement from East to West in the United States. Australian immigration only

gets a brief mention, but the author firmly demonstrates how the freedom to move across oceans and perceived "empty territories" (p. 125) is inextricably linked to the unfreedom of dispossession of earlier human inhabitants.

Of course, this fateful irony is still playing out politically in Aotearoa and beyond, and this is fully recognised in the author's concluding "Reconsiderations". The book has a memorable image on its cover, showing a newly arrived migrant family looking across at the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island. Yet, this icon is a somewhat misleading portrayal of what this book is about. The author wants us to consider many examples of migration that we are less conversant with. He also reemphasises in his final pages that recent decades have seen personal motivations increasingly entangled with "rules that decide who is entitled to migrate, regardless of individual inclinations" (p. 133). As the author wryly notes, the highly politicised, often emotive and factually suspect assumptions that now influence public policy and personal opinions on international migration make estimations of success as difficult to judge as what is freedom.

Overall, does Livi-Bacci succeed in seeking to "prompt reflection" on these weighty questions (p. 129). *Over land and sea* is enhanced by an excellent translation, appealing illustrations and a pleasing lack of jargon and surfeit of numbers. This accessible survey of highly varied cases is aimed, in the very best sense, at non-specialist academic audiences and those apocryphal intelligent laypersons. Local students, despite the absence of Aotearoa New Zealand in the index, should benefit from its comparative focus. Doubtless, they will be encouraged to turn to other sources that sociologically analyse migration at greater length and depth (see, for example, De Haas, 2023), but this book is an engaging and thoughtful entrée which fully merits consideration for their course lists.

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New Zealand Sociology *Special Section: Towards Sociologies of Hope in Aotearoa New Zealand*
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Editorial Introduction: Towards Sociologies of Hope in Aotearoa New Zealand

Alice Beban with Warwick Tie and Matt Wynyard*

> Hope, today, does not come easily.
> (Lockie, this issue)

At a time marked by environmental crisis, social inequalities shaped by rapacious capitalism, colonisation, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is easy to be consumed by dread or resignation. In response, contributions to this special section of *New Zealand Sociology* explore sociologies of hope. Through theoretical exposition, poetry, photography and reflections on research and teaching, the contributions ask what hope looks like in a world of crises, what role sociology plays in fostering hope, and what the theoretical contours of sociologies of hope in Aotearoa New Zealand may be.

This special section comes at a time when sociology globally is rediscovering hope and its theoretical possibilities. Theorisation of hope flourished in the utopian scholarship of post-World War II, but sociology neglected hope in the latter half of the 20th century, to the extent that Swedberg could observe in 2017: "Sociologists have paid very little attention to hope, and what they have said is fragmentary in nature. It would seem that the classics were more interested in hope than modern sociologists have been" (p. 37). Part of this neglect could perhaps be attributed to the theoretical dominance of other related terms in sociology—action, social change, empowerment, social justice, emancipation (Scribano, 2024). But it also reflects the rejection of the "totalising" impulse of Marxist thought on the left in the latter half of the 20th century, as the failures of socialist experiments paralysed utopian imagination, naturalising an ever-more totalitarian capitalism (Lockie, this volume). This "undercurrent of pessimism" in sociology (Lueck, 2007) positions academic cynicism as a realistic understanding of society, where a focus on hope may be condemned as naïve (Johnson, 2005).

However, hope is making a resurgence in sociology internationally. Academic articles using the keywords 'sociology' and 'hope' have steadily increased over the past decade and have doubled since the start of the pandemic (Figure 1). Health sociology led the way in critiquing individualised, psychological notions of hope, situating it within broader social frameworks (Petersen & Wilkinson, 2015). Recent publications, including a 2023 special issue in *The American Sociologist* and an upcoming volume edited by Gili and Mangone (in press), focus on re-establishing a broad sociology of hope, rooted largely in the utopian sentiments of Bloch and other post-World War II European theorists (Gili & Mangone, in press; Scribano, 2024). Why the emphasis on hope now? As Georgia Lockie argues in this volume, the current moment is marked by a hegemonic crisis of capitalism; while structurally dominant, neoliberal ideology can no longer capture and guide the social imaginary. This moment of rupture that is seeing the rise of ugly authoritarian impulse also offers opportunities for new political and emancipatory possibilities.

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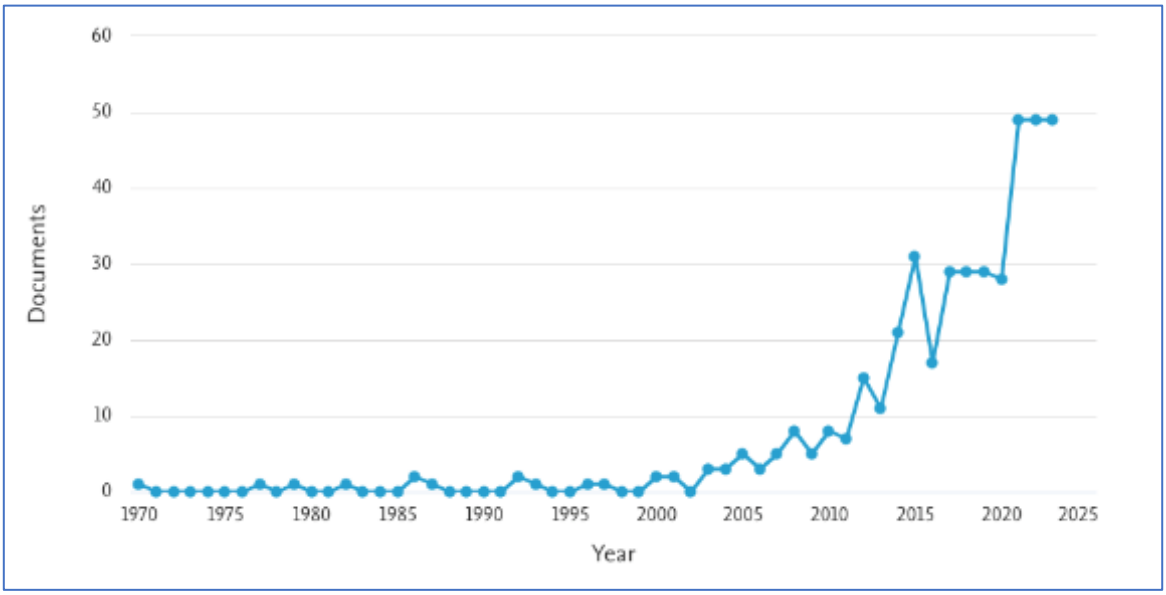
Figure 1: Publications in peer-reviewed journals and books with keywords 'hope' and 'sociology' between 1970 and 2023



Source: Data from Scopus

Articles in this special section

Contributions to this special section share similarities with the international literature on hope but also develop conceptions of hope distinctly rooted in Aotearoa New Zealand. Georgia Lockie's article "Hope dialectics" provides a theoretical foundation for hope drawn from the Marxist tradition and Bloch's work, exploring how dialectical utopian thinking can offer immense resources for hope in the current moment. Susan Wardell's contribution, "Bees hope: Poetic reflections on theorising hope in a more-than-human world", asks: "How human is hope?" Reflecting on her experiences as a beekeeper, Wardell's poetry and accompanying exegesis challenge anthropocentric views of hope and invite us to consider our relationships with non-human actors in shaping hopeful futures. Beban et al.'s "Grounding education in practices of hope: a case study of He Kaupapa Tūmanako" reflects on a team of Massey University sociologists' engagement with high school students. Their initiative, He Kaupapa Tūmanako/Project Hope, draws from theoretical traditions in Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School to approach hope as a practice grounded in connection.

Contributions by three postgraduate sociologists first presented at the SAANZ 2022 student plenary reflect on hope in the relationship between academia and social change. Terina Kaire-Gataulu's "The discipline of hope" draws on a legacy of scholarship from Marx to Moana Jackson to argue that hope must be disciplined—that is, channelled into sustained efforts for social transformation. Byron Williams, in "(Re)applying the radical tradition of sociology to urban racism", looks to radical anti-racist scholarship, arguing that sociologists have concrete roles to play in anti-racism by conducting research that exposes racial inequalities, and using research methods that work collaboratively with communities. And Hafsa Tameez's "Sounds pretty hopeful to me: Hope for sociology in fostering social change" reflects on her experiences working in conservation to ask how hope can be cultivated within sociology when the agency and impact of much sociological research is less than we expect.

The final two contributions focus on youth and hope. The collection "Practising hope through slam poetry" features 10 slam poems written by high school students from across Aotearoa New Zealand. The poems reflect on a range of issues from climate change to bullying and AI, and serve as calls to action. Bonnie-Estelle Trotter-Simmons' review of the recent book *Fierce Hope* (Nairn et al., 2022) explores how

youth activists in Aotearoa sustain collective action through hope, highlighting the ways in which hope, collectivity and care are central to social change efforts.

Toward sociologies of hope in Aotearoa New Zealand

As a collection, this special section gestures toward sociologies of hope that are attuned to the social, ecological and political contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. The authors emphasise that hope is not an abstract concept nor a fleeting feeling; rather, hope is intimately tied to material conditions, racialising capitalism, the legacies of colonialism, and relationships with humans and more-than-human worlds rooted in diverse knowledges and worldviews. As such, we do not propose a singular sociology of hope for Aotearoa New Zealand, but instead recognise the multiplicity of ideas and practices of hope that are emergent here.

Within this multiplicity, several themes are evident throughout the contributions. First, the authors conceive of hope as collective; it is not merely an individual state, but a collective practice grounded in relationships within and beyond academia. This emphasis on relationality connects with utopian traditions, anti-racist and community-centred research, and Mātauranga Māori conceptions of hope as relational and rooted in whanaungatanga and whakapapa. The contributions in this section also draw strongly on hope as a dialectic that insists on holding together both the positive and the negative. In this way, the authors go beyond a naive optimism to recognise the challenges of present conditions while remaining attuned to other possible futures persisting through, or brought into being by, those conditions. Thirdly, this dialectical orientation demonstrates that hope is not simply about imagining a better future but about actively working towards it. The authors in this special section urge sociologists to consider their roles and responsibilities in enacting social change through their work. In this sense, this collection aligns with the emerging international scholarship that seeks to reclaim hope from neoliberal co-optation. Hope is a contested terrain—one that can either reinforce the status quo or serve as a catalyst for radical change. A challenge for sociologists in Aotearoa New Zealand, then, is to remain critical of how hope is mobilised in both discourse and practice, while also recognising its potential as a force for collective social change.

With this collection, we seek to open up new avenues for thinking about hope in sociology and invite readers to join us in exploring what hopeful sociologies in Aotearoa New Zealand might look like.

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Hope Dialectics

Georgia Lockie*

Abstract
Ours is a time of accelerating social, political, economic and environmental crises. In this conjuncture, dread, despair and resignation dominate the affective terrain; hope is urgently necessary, but in short supply. This article draws upon a utopian current of Marxism, especially the work of 'philosopher of hope' Ernst Bloch, to offer a theoretical optic for the maintenance of hope in hopeless times. As Bloch draws out, the dialectical core of historical materialism offers a utopian structure of thought, attentive to the open multivalence of the world, how that that is destructive holds creative potential, how the future is in emergence in the present. Bringing the immanence of utopian possibility into view, this is an orientation capable of sustaining hope in otherwise hopeless times. Finally, I put this optic to work to offer some gestural reflections on the utopian valences of our current conjuncture, of the hopeful prospects of 'the end of the world'.

Keywords: hope; crisis; dialectic, Ernst Bloch, utopian Marxism

Introduction

Hope, today, does not come easily. We live in an era of accelerating polycrisis, civilisational dissolution looming on the horizon at the intersection of economic instability, social fragmentation, heightening political and geopolitical conflict, escalating violence and environmental collapse. This is a conjuncture that tends to evoke dread, or worse, resignation, but that urgently requires an orientation that the 'philosopher of hope' Ernst Bloch termed *militant optimism*: hope insistent that a future other than catastrophe is available to us. Drawing upon Bloch, and upon the broader utopian tradition within Marxist thought that Bloch makes explicit, I wish to offer here a theoretical optic for grounding such an orientation today—a theoretical infrastructure for hope.

Against the twentieth-century totalitarian rendering of Marxism as a utopian project and mode of thought bound up with dystopia, characterised by rigidity and closure, I emphasise the open utopian structure and ontology of historical materialism as a dialectical orientation. Critically attuned to contradiction, contingency and emergence—to the simultaneity of positive and negative, creative and destructive tendencies, and to the porous boundaries between past, present and future—this is an understanding of the world as open and multivalent, containing always already the seeds of its own transcendence.

A key strength of this dialectical utopian orientation is its insistence on holding together, at once, the positive and the negative—to lose sight of neither the urgency and severity of the political challenges of a given conjuncture, nor the emergent traces of other possible futures persisting through, or indeed brought into being by, those conditions. This is a necessary orientation, then, for maintaining hope today, when a sense of the end of the world has become a dominant structure of feeling. In the final section, I put this optic to work to gesture towards the hopeful prospects of 'the end of the world,' the clarity it offers and the openings it creates—demonstrating that, when we know how to look, the evidence of utopian immanence and emergence comes firmly into view. Insisting that utopia is available to us, this orientation

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thus offers a critical and imaginative infrastructure capable of sustaining hope even, perhaps especially, in hopeless times.

Utopia/dystopia

Marxism is a utopian tradition in a double sense. As Fredric Jameson summarises, Marxism offers both a utopian *project*, a political vision of a transformed future, and a utopian *ontology*, "a conception of historical dynamics in which it is posited that the whole new world is also objectively in emergence all around us" (Jameson, 2009, p. 416). Our focus here is on the latter, how the ontology of historical materialism offers an optic attentive to the seeds of the future in the present, the "allegorical stirrings of a different state of things … the subliminal and subcutaneous eruptions of whole new forms of life and social relations" (p. 416)—a utopian orientation rooted in notions of potentiality, emergence, openness.

However, it is necessary first to note that this particular dimension of Marxist utopianism, this open utopian optic, sits uncomfortably with a certain anti-Marxist common sense, in which the Marxist utopian impulse is synonymous with rigidity, closure, a fixed teleology; that it leads inevitably to dystopia. This common sense is a product of the twentieth century, bound up with the trajectory of the Marxist political project into the communist regimes, with the ideological battles of the Cold War, with the ascendence of neoliberalism, and finally with the collapse of the Soviet bloc, symbolising as it did the collapse of Marxist aspiration as such and, in Fukuyama's infamous thesis, ushering in the "end of history". And it is a distinctly twentieth-century concept that condenses the complexity of this history into a simple 'truth' about the inevitably dystopian implications of Marxist utopianism: the concept of totalitarianism.

The historical development of the idea of totalitarianism, its conceptual problems, the ways it has functioned ideologically, is terrain that has been well-traversed elsewhere (see, for example, Christofferson, 2004; Fleron, 1968; Losurdo, 2004; Suny, 2006; Traverso, 2017; and Žižek, 2001), but is worth briefly canvassing here. First emerging from the antifascist politics of the 1920s and 1930s, as a "tentative and suggestive" term intuiting a new kind of authoritarianism in the regimes of fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia (Christofferson, 2004, pp. 4–5), "totalitarianism" took on much greater significance later, as a key concept, or rather "fighting word", of Cold War anti-communism (Traverso, 2017). Two ideas were central to the conceptual elaboration and then ideological power of the concept through the second half of the twentieth century. The first was a running comparison between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, asserting an inherent likeness between national socialism (self-evidently evil) and communism (rendered equivalently evil in the parallel). The second was that at the core of totalitarianism, the originating cause of its dystopian outcomes, was a utopian, salvational ideology. In the concept of totalitarianism, then, Marxism is rendered as a totalitarian *structure of thought*.

These ideas are expressed consistently from early proto-neoliberal texts like Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* and Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies*; to the defining texts of totalitarianism scholarship in the 1950s—Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*— and carrying all the way through to the end of the century, as the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted much post-mortem work on the failures and atrocities of communism—most famously in the bestselling *Black Book of Communism* (see Arendt, 1958; Courtois et al., 1999; Friedrich and Brzezinski, 1956; Furet, 1999; Hayek, 1945; Malia, 1994; and Popper, 2002). These texts are far from uniform, but cumulatively they insist that a key characteristic of totalitarianism as such, and of the communist totalitarianism of the Soviet Union specifically, was a utopian, messianic, chiliastic ideology, a totalising worldview—here, Marxism—claiming to have unlocked the secret of history (class struggle) and prophesising the ultimate teleological destiny of humanity (communism). Blind, prophetic faith in this utopian vision not only produced a closure and rigidity of thought but also, the logic went, functioned to justify hideous violence and oppression, as totalitarian regimes attempted to

force their vision into being—inevitably inverting utopia to dystopia. Thus, in the theory and common sense of totalitarianism, the dreams of Marxism were directly responsible for, and thereafter irrevocably tainted by, the nightmares of Stalinism.

The history of Marxism, central to emancipatory history for a century, is much bigger and more multifaceted than its reduction to the Soviet experiment (just as the history of the Soviet Union itself is of course much more complex than its reduction to Stalinist totalitarianism). But this broader history was effectively buried from social consciousness as the totalitarian theory of communism developed into a more diffuse common sense by the end of the twentieth century, accepted, eventually, even on the left. Thus central to the postmodern, post-Marxist turn in left thought in the 1970s and 1980s—to the theoretical work of Foucault, Lyotard, Deleuze and Guattari, Laclau and Mouffe, for example, emphasising ontological, epistemological and political pluralism, horizontality and contingency, 'waging war on totality'—was a rejection of the 'totalising' impulse of Marxist thought (see Jameson, 1989; Sim, 2000; Tormey and Townshend, 2006; and Žižek, 2001). Marxism's total critique of capitalism, here, was stigmatised as rigid, dogmatic class essentialism and economic determinism, blind to other vectors of oppression; Marxism's aspiration to a world beyond capitalism understood as a fixed utopian teleology antithetical to democratic openness and plurality, the outcome of which was necessarily terror. Turning anti-communist logic into left common sense, the "general feeling", in the post-Marxist turn, was that "the revolutionary, Utopian, or totalising impulse [was] somehow tainted from the outset and doomed to blood by the very structure of its thoughts" (Jameson, 1989, p. 35). The result was a broad repudiation of Marxism on the left, "extinguish[ing] Marxist memory" (Traverso, 2016), shrouding socialist history in shame and disillusionment, and containing what remained of left aspiration within the imaginative limits of liberal (capitalist) democracy.

This was a deep rupture in emancipatory history, giving rise to an affective atmosphere Wendy Brown labelled "left melancholy", a left culture "most at home dwelling not in hopefulness but in… marginality and failure' (Brown, 1999). The left, once sustained by faith in the real possibility of a different world, now suffered "an overwhelming heaviness paralysing the utopic imagination" (Traverso, 2016, p. 4). These imaginative conditions were only heightened as neoliberalism, an ideology and politics built on "demolish[ing] non-capitalist avenues of hope" in service of market fundamentalism (Davies, 2016, p. 126), completed its ascendance to hegemony, now effectively unopposed—"the most successful ideology in world history" in Perry Anderson's assessment at the turn of millennium (Anderson, 2000). The power of this hegemony, of course, has been to naturalise an ever-more totalising and totalitarian capitalism.

This history, of the discourse of totalitarianism and its diffuse ideological afterlife, is relevant to our purposes for two reasons. First, it is critical background to the broad closure of the utopian imagination, of the ability to envisage and aspire to a different world, by the end of the twentieth century and carrying into the twenty-first. For a generation, with emancipatory alternatives discredited, capitalism occupied the entire terrain of the possible—captured in Mark Fisher's concept of capitalist realism (Fisher, 2009), or the cliche, attributed variously to Jameson and Žižek, that it had become easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. There was no outside, there was no beyond, there was no challenge. This imaginative closure has ongoing implications for the problem of hope today. In these especially hopeless times, the common sense of the turn of the millennium no longer holds; incapable of addressing the mounting social, political, economic and environmental crises of our time, which cannot be solved by the invisible hand of the market, neoliberal hegemony has become increasingly unstable (Babic, 2020; Stahl, 2019; Therborn, 2022). But while this opens up new imaginative space, as we will return to below, the generational break in the transmission of left culture, critique and aspiration has ongoing impacts for the utopian imagination, which remains weak from disuse.

Second, it is necessary to set out this history, to address the common sense it brought into being, in order to emphasise just how starkly at odds this common sense is with the utopian dimension of Marxist

thought that I wish to draw out here. Far from the dystopian proto-totalitarian image of rigidity, domination and closure, this is a utopian orientation grounded in notions of possibility and openness, oriented to discovering the glimpses of another world prefigured and emergent in this one. In the past, this utopian orientation has offered critical imaginative and indeed spiritual resources for the sustenance of emancipatory hope in the bleakest of social and political conditions. These hopeless times call for its rediscovery.

The utopian dialectic: An optic for hope

The utopian core of the Marxist tradition is, as indicated earlier, ontological, rooted in the dialectical ontology of historical materialism. While this utopian dimension is implicit in Marx's own thought, as we will return to shortly, it received its most explicit and expansive expression in the work of the philosopher of hope Ernst Bloch. A heterodox and singular thinker, Bloch was a contemporary of the Frankfurt School. But unlike Adorno, Horkheimer and Benjamin, for example, for whom the experience of fascism embedded within their thought a deep and enduring pessimism (captured in the oft-quoted Adorno-ism that there can be no poetry after Auschwitz, or Benjamin's articulation of history as "a single catastrophe … piling wreckage upon wreckage"), the experience of fascism only reinforced Bloch's commitment to an understanding of the world as remaining always open to the good, to the possibility of an emancipated future, even in the darkest of times. Thus, it was while exiled from Nazi Germany that Bloch wrote his magnum opus *The Principle of Hope*, a three-volume encyclopaedic exploration of the utopian prefiguration and anticipation to be found in the archives of civilisation, discerning desires and impulses toward a richer, freer, more human existence everywhere from art and religion, science and architecture, fairy tales and folklore, and even through to commodity culture itself. Enabling this investigation—this orientation to "find[ing] a red path weaving through history, revolting against alienation, exploitation, and oppression, struggling for a better world" (Kellner & O'Hara, 1976, p. 16)—is a dialectical utopian ontology.

Bloch's "speculative materialism" (Moir, 2019), or Left Aristotelianism, in his own terms, is rooted in an understanding of the nature of being as essentially open and incomplete—an ontological prioritisation of possibility and latency "over actuality and necessity" (Kellner & O'Hara, 1976). From the subject to society and history, to matter itself, existence is not static or fixed, but radically unfinished, containing within itself, and partially constituted by, the latent traces of the future (Bloch, 1983, 1986). From this ontological foundation emerges a theory of utopia as a dialectic between the subjective and the objective: the relationship between subjective human impulses or desires for a richer mode of being, and the objective possibilities for their fulfilment in "the properties of reality which are themselves utopian, i.e. contain future" (Bloch, 1986, p. 145). Operating in the tension between the actual and the possible—what was and what could have been, what is and what is Not-Yet—it is with this insistence on the objective openness of the world to a richer mode of being, to freer, more egalitarian, more expansive social relations, that Bloch places his theory of utopia on materialist footing. Utopianism, here, is not fanciful or idealistic, politically impotent or compensatory.[1] It is, rather, a (politically indispensable) orientation attentive to the material, concrete possibilities for an emancipatory future already latent in the world. This is the "intelligence of hope", "transcendent without transcendence" (Bloch, 1986, p. 146).

[1] This was Marx and Engels' critique of what they called "utopian socialism"—the fanciful visions of, for example, Henri de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier and Robert Owen, seeking to change the world through the power of ideas, but totally disconnected from real political struggle. For Marx and Engels, the visions of utopian socialists, of harmonious societies achieved peaceably, were little more than compensatory fantasies, distracting from the necessarily conflictual work of politics, of class struggle (Ollman, 2005). Against this, Marx and Engels distinguished their own project of "scientific socialism", or socialist politics grounded in concrete analysis of real, objective possibilities for social transformation. Of course, in their own expansive desires for social transformation, Marx and Engels were undeniably utopian—their critique of the 'utopian' socialists engages the term pejoratively. Their distinction between 'utopian' and 'scientific' socialism might more accurately be rendered as a distinction between idealist and materialist socialism—or, indeed, idealist and materialist utopianism, the latter being Bloch's central focus.

Bloch's thought was asynchronous with his own time. His integration of theological and romantic influences, the often mystical, dreamy quality of his analysis, his devotion to hope, sat uncomfortably with not just the pessimism of Western Marxism, but also the anti-dialectical vulgarisation of Marxist political thought under Stalinism (for which hope was superfluous to the unfolding of the future through the iron laws of history). In Bloch's own conception, however, these ideas were firmly rooted in the Marxist project. For Bloch, "the very power and truth of Marxism consists in the fact that it has driven the cloud in our dreams further forward, but has not extinguished the pillar of fire in those dreams, rather strengthened it with concreteness" (Bloch, 1986, p. 146). Historical materialism itself, he insisted, was a dialectical synthesis between "two ways of being red": the "cold stream of Marxism", its insistence on rigorous, critical analysis of concrete objective conditions, mutually reinforced by the "warm stream", the dreams and desires of an emancipated future that were the very purpose and driving force of socialist praxis (Bloch, 1986, pp. 208–210). Indeed, behind the temporally heterodox features of Bloch's project lies a more fundamental orthodoxy: a fidelity to dialectical thought. It is in this fidelity that Bloch simply renders explicit the utopian dimension or structure implicit in historical materialism as a dialectical orientation.

The notion that the traces of the future can be found in the present, for example, is not an idea peculiar to Bloch. It is common sense to a dialectical orientation, in which the world is understood not in terms of static, independent *things*, but as a dynamic totality made up of *processes* and *relations*, whereby any particular 'thing' can only be understood as part of the larger whole, constituted by its relations to other parts of the totality, and, crucially, by its own "history and possible futures" (Ollman, 2003). Dialectical thought is thus particularly attuned to social complexity, and especially contradiction: able to hold together, at once, what is both positive and negative in a given development, dynamic, conjuncture; able to see how that which is negative may hold positive possibility, "can also be imagined positive in that immense changing of the valences which is the Utopian future" (Jameson, 2009, p. 423). And it is particularly attuned to social change: to the traces of the past in the present, and by extension, the traces of possible futures; an awareness that social conditions appearing fixed and closed in fact already contain emergent possibilities for their own transcendence (Bloch, 1983; Jameson, 2009; Ollman, 2003, 2008).

From this perspective, Marx's own utopian orientation can be understood as primarily methodological, rather than prescriptive. Although motivated by specific utopian *desires*—for a world beyond alienation, dehumanisation, exploitation, towards community, equality, solidarity—Marx was perpetually reluctant to "write recipes for the cookshops of the future" (Marx, 1876/1990), to offer any prescriptive visions for a socialist world,[2] which would only emerge through collective self-emancipatory struggle and could not, therefore, be determined in advance or from on high. The concern of historical materialism, he reflected, was not "with the construction of the future or with organising it for all time". Rather, its task was to "attempt to discover the new world through the critique of the old", through "the *ruthless criticism of the existing order"* (Marx, 1843), grounding political struggle for a better world always in the world as it really is, in its historical specificity.

This synthesis of critique and anticipation (or the cold and warm impulses identified by Bloch) underpin Marx's analysis of capitalist society, attentive to its dynamic dialectic contradictions, its simultaneous destructive and creative tendencies. Thus, for example, just as the dynamics of proletarianisation, industrialisation and technological development dissolved traditional social bonds, damaged the natural environment, and intensified the exploitation of labour, so too did these dynamics bring together masses of people with shared class interests, capitalism creating its own potential gravediggers in the industrial working class; and so too did these dynamics increase production to unprecedented levels, capable, if put to work by a different set of social relations, of creating collective

[2] He did, of course, offer some fragmentary speculations on what a socialist future might look like, what it might offer. For analysis of these, see Beilharz (1992), Manuel and Manuel (1979), and Ollman (1979).

abundance in the place of artificial scarcity. The key insight, here, is that the sources of misery under capitalism are the very same sources of emancipatory promise, offering objective, concrete possibilities for a different future. This is how the new world is discovered in the ruthless critique of the old, and how, as Bloch argued, Marx strengthened and enhanced the 'fire' of socialist desire by grounding it in concreteness.

These are, critically, utopian ways of seeing: historical materialism *is*, as the ideology of totalitarianism insisted, a utopian *structure of thought*, and this *is* connected to its attention to totality. But it is precisely these features of Marxist thought that give it an *open* utopian structure, a sense of the world itself as open and multivalent, characterised by contradiction, contingency and possibility; precisely the features that reject the dogmatism and closure of thought attributed to Marxism by the ideology of totalitarianism. It is in this context, as well, that the redemptive or salvational sense of history attributed to Marxism must be understood: not as a teleological certainty in the inevitability of the socialist future,[3] but rather a form of political faith in its real, concrete possibility, in a world remaining open to its own transcendence.

This dialectical utopian orientation offers immense critical, imaginative and spiritual resources for hope, especially in times, such as ours, of crisis and catastrophe. To understand the world in these terms is to take up "a more receptive and interpretive stance in which … we may detect the allegorical stirrings of a different state of things" (Jameson, 2009, p. 416), possibilities for different futures in a present that might otherwise feel unassailably, fixedly bleak. In Bloch's work especially, and in turn developed by Jameson, this is expressed as a utopian hermeneutic, through which the social and cultural terrain comes into view not only as a site of calamity but also as a repository of "untapped emancipatory potential" (Kellner & O'Hara, 1976, p. 15). To take up this optic is thus to find, "little by little, wherever we look", a "vital presence" of utopian desire and latency—anticipating a fuller, richer, freer existence—which, "behind whatever distortions, beneath whatever layers of repression, may always be detected, no matter how faintly, by the instruments and apparatus of hope itself" (Jameson, 1971, p. 120). The utopian hermeneutic thus engages a "conversion mechanism", a "changing of the valences", uncovering and deciphering the "figures of hope" (Jameson, 1971, p. 120), the good and hopeful core concealed in conditions that otherwise appear hopeless.

Critically, however, this is not an exercise in "facile optimism", as Jameson highlights (Jameson, 1971, 1981). Although this is an optic oriented to discovering latent traces of utopia, the good and the hopeful, this does not mean losing sight of the negative, that which stands in the way of emancipatory promise. It is, rather, a matter of holding them together, as contradictions in a dialectical unity. This, for Jameson, is the necessary mode of Marxist cultural analysis, joining together in a unified perspective both the negative hermeneutic of critique (Marx's "ruthless criticism of the existing order") and the positive hermeneutic of utopian discovery (Jameson, 1981).

It is precisely by this holding together of positive and negative that this approach offers a theoretical optic for hope adequate to the challenges of the present, including the challenge of dread and despair, in what I will describe in the following section as our conjuncture's end-of-the-world structure of feeling. This dialectical or unified perspective insists, both, that it is only with a very clear and sober understanding of the realities of our conjuncture that hope is to mean anything at all, and also, by the very same gesture, that hopelessness itself rests on a certain blindness, an inability to see the utopian immanence or latency that persists through, or indeed is brought into being by, 'the end of the world'. It is by holding these impulses together that a position of militant optimism, insistent on the availability of a future other than catastrophe, becomes available, allowing us to read the present with hope. In the remaining discussion, I put this optic to work to offer some gestural reflections on the utopian valences of the end of the world.

[3] As Jameson highlights, "It was never socialism that was inevitable, but the implosion of the contradictions of capitalism", which could just as well lead, in Marx's words, to the "mutual ruin of contending classes" (Jameson, 2009, p. 286).

Hope in the ruins

Something has shifted in the last decade: we have grown accustomed to crisis. Here are some highlights.

Since 2016, populist and far-right currents have become a consistent feature of political life in the West and beyond. A major flashpoint, signaling the emergence of this new right-wing constellation, igniting the dystopian imaginary, was the 2016 American presidential election: the shock win of a crude, irreverently racist, misogynistic billionaire and former reality television host, darling of the most vitriolic currents of American right-wing culture. Trump's tenure saw, among other things, a Muslim travel ban, White supremacist terrorism (e.g., Charlottesville 2017), armed militias forming in backlash to the George Floyd uprising, and the storming of the Capitol in January 2021—events that all, as they unfolded, began to feel bleakly predictable. The cultural and political success of new far-right currents, in the United States and elsewhere, fractured for many the fantasy of a rational, liberal status quo grounding a shared and coherent social life, bringing to the surface social, cultural and economic conflict repressed in the era of consensual neoliberalism. But while these developments have brought a new sense of dread to political life, they have also often been attended by a certain kind of surrealism or absurdity. Was Trump, for example, inaugurating the fall of American Empire because he'd gotten bored of hosting *The Apprentice*?

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) set a 12-year deadline for avoiding climate catastrophe: emissions would need to be halved by 2030, through "rapid and far-reaching transitions" in global energy systems and infrastructure, "unprecedented in terms of scale", to have any prospect of limiting warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and preventing irreversible climate catastrophe (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018). We are now halfway towards this deadline and such measures have not been implemented, nor do they appear to be a genuine or urgent priority for most governments. In February 2024, climate monitors reported that the 1.5 °C warming limit had been exceeded over a 12-month period for the first time. Meanwhile, reports of record-breaking temperatures, heatwaves, wildfires, floods and droughts have become a regular feature of the news cycle. Climate change is no longer a future prospect: we are living in it. Moreover, with aggressive mitigation and adaptation measures absent, we are on a path to its worst possible outcomes—and, absurdly, helplessly, we go on with our day-to-day lives as normal.

In 2020, the first global pandemic in a century emerged suddenly and viciously. Its immediate effects included mass illness and death, mandated lockdowns, overrun health systems, and unprecedented border closures. The experience of absolute rupture in those surreal, panicked early months soon gave way to, and was rendered mundane by, a duller kind of drudgery as the pandemic dragged from months into years, its diffuse effects rippling out to every corner of social life to produce a kind of combined and uneven misery, including, but not limited to, long-term disability, social isolation, mental ill-health, economic uncertainty, emboldened conspiracy milieus, and a heightening of social fragmentation and mistrust. Much more suddenly than the climate crisis, the pandemic highlighted our immense vulnerability to the natural world, underscoring how ill-equipped our societies are—after decades of neoliberal rule cementing the supremacy of the market and the interests of capital over all else, including basic human well-being and care—to address the unique and urgent challenges of this century.

Crisis, then, has become ubiquitous in the last decade. But it has also become much more immediate, every new bleak or bizarre development appearing instantaneously and relentlessly before our eyes, "horror find[ing] us wherever we are" (Greenfield, 2017, ch. 1). Unique to our conjuncture, current affairs are mediated, today, less by the dependable rhythms of broadcast television or newsprint than by the endless, overflowing streams of news websites and social media feeds, a product of the internet's now near-total penetration into everyday life. The experience is of an overstimulating deluge of information, some consumed intentionally, much absorbed via osmosis, as horrifying headlines, images and videos—from devastating storms and wildfires to police brutality and now literal genocide—sit alongside, formally

undifferentiated from, targeted advertisements, celebrity gossip, images of the day-to-day lives of friends, acquaintances, influencers, and memes attempting to sublimate the doom into humour. All of this occupies the same boundaryless, endlessly clickable and scrollable space, an over-proximate and undifferentiated excess in which meaning itself becomes increasingly fragmented and unstable, while horror closes in.

So, we have grown accustomed to crisis and horror—it is rarely, any longer, shocking. The tropes of dystopian science fiction (pandemics, extreme weather events, resurgent fascism, technological domination) have become, for us, simply mundane realities. This is the structure of feeling of our time:[4] the end of the world, rendered banal. Psychically onerous, frequently surreal, and increasingly impossible to repress, the end of the world is nevertheless a utopian opportunity.

Of course, we are not the first to anticipate the end of the world: it was not long ago that the social imaginary rippled with fears of nuclear annihilation, to take just one recent example. But in distinction from the nuclear imaginary, the end of the world we anticipate today is not the rupture of sudden, total apocalypse, nor does it appear as an external threat. It is, instead, a slower, cumulative, more creeping sense of endogenous disintegration. Each of these key coordinates in the consolidation of our end of the world sensibility—the resurgent far-right, the climate crisis, the pandemic, the semiotic instability of digital hyper-mediation—are bound up with the contradictions of our contemporary world-system, the social, environmental and economic ramifications, or "Frankensteinian creations" (Brown, 2019), of the systemic prioritisation of capital over all else. They are not external to our mode of life, but rather its ultimate consequences, appearing before us as unambiguous signals of the absolute unsustainability of the status quo, marking the end of the world, of *this* world, this mode of life, not as a possibility but as an inevitability, a process already in motion.

As Gramscian scholars have identified, neoliberal capitalism is in a state of hegemonic crisis. Although still structurally dominant, neoliberal ideology is no longer capable of exercising intellectual and moral leadership, of capturing and guiding the social imaginary—a decline that began with the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) and ensuing austerity measures, but has been amplified in our end-of-the-world conditions (Babic, 2020; Foster & el-Ojeili, 2021; Stahl, 2019). The legitimacy and coherence of neoliberal common sense, the notion that the market is the best and only basis for social, economic and political organisation, singularly capable of ensuring freedom, democracy and prosperity, is no longer tenable in the face of accumulating crisis and shrinking aspiration, democratic unresponsiveness and extreme wealth inequality. Offering no real solutions to any of the urgent challenges of present, capitalism today is "a system that no longer seeks credibility in the way hegemonies used to do" (Davies, 2016), rarely, any longer, even pretending to offer prospects for the good life. And having given up its utopian coordinates, capitalism today, "fragile, volatile, violent capitalism" (Holloway, 2022, p. 185), takes on increasingly totalitarian signification, the 'end of the world' making clear that our societies are being run into social, economic and environmental oblivion for little more than the supremacy of shareholder value.

This disintegrative moment is a critical opportunity. With the clarity that this world is ending, for better or worse, a much more open horizon comes into view; the imaginative closure of the 'end of history', the limits placed on emancipatory desire by capitalist realism, no longer holds. These vectors of crisis have thus also seen the emergence of new, and newly militant, progressive and emancipatory movements and horizons, often anti- and post-capitalist in aspiration, desiring beyond the limits of the present.

The 2018 IPCC report, for example, released amidst one of the hottest Northern Hemisphere summers on record, had a galvanising effect, crystallising a qualitative shift in climate imaginaries (Hickel,

[4] Raymond Williams's (1977) concept of the structure of feeling involves a "cultural hypothesis" much more fluid and contradictory, drawing out the "emerging sentiments, feelings, attitudes" (Wayne, 2021, p. 45, footnote 17) of a given period, while being lived than the systematisations we construct in retrospect. 'Structure' specifies the social nature of such formations, collective and connected to broader social, political and economic currents, while 'feeling' recognises their emergent, informal qualities, their location "at the very edge of semantic availability" (Williams, 1977).

2020; Stuart et al., 2020). The same month the report was released, Greta Thunberg staged her first, solo 'school strike for climate'; a year later, the youth movement she inspired led the biggest globally coordinated climate protest in history, with millions taking to the streets in solidarity with the young for a livable climate future. As the climate has, finally, become a central political concern, climate movements are growing increasingly militant. Escalating tactics—from Extinction Rebellion's repertoire of civil disobedience, to calls, as in Andreas Malm's *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*, that the time has come for the direct sabotage of fossil fuel infrastructure—are bound up with a newly militant systemic critique at the core of climate politics, an increasing willingness to identify unfettered global capitalism, and the capitalist class specifically, as both responsible for, and a barrier to ameliorating, the climate crisis (Stuart et al., 2020; Therborn, 2022). Just as importantly, new horizons of militant optimism have also emerged. Consolidating around visions, for example, of green social democracy, or the more radical prospect of degrowth, the proximity of the climate crisis has clarified how the urgent transformation of the human–nature relationship, necessitated by the end of this world, might in fact be a utopian prospect, a crucial opportunity for far-reaching, transformative change to the structure and values of our societies (see, for example, Hickel, 2020; Pollin, 2018; Soper, 2020).

Older emancipatory horizons have also been rediscovered. The language of socialism, culturally prohibited since the end of the twentieth century, has become articulable again at the end of the world. Class consciousness, anti-capitalist critique and post-capitalist desire have unfurled memetically through the social imaginary in recent years, brought into the political mainstream by the social democratic electoral wave, especially the movements behind Bernie Sanders in the USA and Jeremy Corbyn in the UK since 2016, but tapping into a much broader and diffuse disenchantment with contemporary capitalism, a dynamic of generational intellectual and moral reform and shifting common sense, the seeds of which were planted as far back as the 2008 GFC (Milburn, 2019; Stahl, 2019). As Hochuli et al. (2021, pp. 12–13) observe, it was as if, almost overnight, "everyone was suddenly a socialist", an astonishing shift from just a decade earlier, when "calling oneself a 'socialist' … was like being a model plane enthusiast, a stamp collector, a big fan of ragtime: legible from the outside only as an irrelevant but vaguely embarrassing anachronism" (Adler-Bell, 2020, p. 115).

This re-emergent socialist imaginary is a distinctly twenty-first century formation. Carried predominantly by those too young to remember the Cold War, but who instead came of age in the atmosphere of contracting aspiration in the aftermath of the GFC—for whom capitalism's claims to utopia make little sense in our disintegrative present, while socialism returns less as a defunct or dystopian tradition than an intuitive optic for making sense of the contemporary world—socialism is being rediscovered today with fresh eyes, oriented not by the concerns and debates of the twentieth century but by the urgent and multifaceted challenges of the present. Here, socialist history and tradition appear not as baggage to be overcome, but as a repository of emancipatory hope and courage available to an emergent left constellation characteristically forward-oriented, pragmatic, non-sectarian and dynamic (Milburn, 2019; Therborn, 2022; Traverso, 2021). Thus, while the social-democratic moment may have dissolved, the more diffuse return of socialist critique, imagination and desire, buried for a generation, remains—a key imaginative opening that will continue to shape the political terrain of this century, the longer historical sequence instituted by the end of the world.

The disintegrative texture of the end of the world, all these signals of social breakdown, are thus the very same set of conditions enabling the clarity and freedom for new and more expansive political and emancipatory horizons to come into view, for the first time in a generation. If this world is ending, and it seems that it is, the future can be, and is being, imagined anew. Hope, then, emerges through the ruins.

Conclusion

In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, in an interview for the *New Yorker*, the late great utopian Marxist Mike Davis offered reflections capturing the position of militant optimism, the perpetual insistence on hope even, indeed especially, when the world feels doomful (Goodyear, 2020):

> This seems an age of catastrophe, but it's also an age equipped, in an abstract sense, with all the tools it needs. Utopia is available to us. If, like me, you've lived through the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, you can never discard hope. I've seen social miracles in my life, ones that have stunned me—the courageousness of ordinary people in a struggle.

Davis, like Bloch, reminds us that despair rests on a certain blindness. When we know how to look, the evidence of utopian immanence and latency, the availability of utopia in a world remaining open to its own transcendence, is brought suddenly and clearly into view. This is the strength of a dialectical utopian orientation, providing a theoretical optic for sustaining hope in conditions of hopelessness, insisting that a future other than catastrophe is available to us yet.

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Bees Hope: Poetic Reflections on Theorising Hope in a More-Than-Human World

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Abstract

Theorising hope in the Anthropocene must take into account the agencies and social actors of the more-than-human world. Here I present a poem that employs a creative and speculative approach to the idea of beekeeping as an assemblage of hope. This emerges from several years of personal/autoethnographic and academic engagement in the topics of ecological distress and climate emotion, through which I also became interested in honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) as a mobile symbol of both hope and loss in global environmentalist discourse, amid rising rates of hobbyist beekeeping, both globally and here in Aotearoa New Zealand. The poem, and following reflection points, considers the degree to which hope is shared between different (human and non-human) social actors in the assemblage of beekeeping. It explores the ways hope might be temporalised, embodied, relational or political; recognising unequally distributed and shifting agencies, or stakes, in the futures, at a bodily level, both within the colony and between bees and beekeepers. This poetic exploration of the epistemologies and ontologies of hope, based on the overarching question "How human is hope?", spurs a call for critical attention to new ways of both understanding and relating to non-human others, as potential kin and co-participants in world-making, amid uncertain futures.

Keywords: multispecies; more-than-human; hope; beekeeping; creative

Figure 1: Images from the author's backyard apiaries, left to right: bees flying into the hive entrance; queen cell on frame held by author; bees 'festooning' between hive frames; worker bee with tongue out, on rosemary flower; author in beekeeping suit looking towards hives; bees on the front of a brood box.

Photo credit: Susan Wardell.

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Bees hope: Honey

bees excrete and build hope hexagonal
bees excrete hexagonal hope and build
space to grow into space to fill
with a rainbow of granular hope

queens hope on behalf lead
journeys leave virginal return
heavy with futures with genetic hope
held heavy in their abdomens

workers make queens hope
strong queens hope fat glistening brood
to tuck in with wax caps hope
to replace them selves with fat hope

drones hope less lie hopeless
stagger on autumn's doorstep
find no space leave hope
to live elsewhere find death instead

colony hopes spring hopes
bloom hopes flow to last long
enough to last winter
hopes offspring to see spring

(or is it only) beekeepers who
seek hope build hope taste
hope with their own bodies
with their many boxes with their
own boxed bodies of
hope

Bees hope: Reflections

Many of the questions (and challenges) of theorising hope, in the contemporary context, centre on the massive scales of environmental change and loss associated with the Anthropocene. These same challenges have generated urgent and vibrant scholarship on multispecies relationality and the more-than-human world (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010). This poem emerges from several years of personal and academic engagement in the topics of ecological distress and climate emotion (Wardell, 2020), through which I also became interested in honeybees as a mobile symbol of both hope and loss in global environmentalist discourse. This led me to employ 'patchwork' (Günel et al., 2020) ethnographic and autoethnographic techniques, over a period of approximately three years, to analyse my own affective attachment to honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) within context of my positionality as a settler-mother in Ōtepoti | Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand, and as a beginner beekeeper, amidst rising rates of hobbyist (or backyard) beekeeping in both Aotearoa New Zealand (Taunton, 2021) and globally (Kosut, 2013).

In this poem, I employ a speculative approach to the idea of beekeeping as an assemblage of hope. I consider the degree to which hope is shared, between different (human and non-human) social actors in this assemblage, and drawing on some of the interests of sociologists and anthropologists, in what ways hope might be temporalised, embodied, relational or political? Poetic techniques provide a different way to probe at some of these questions about the epistemologies of hope in the context of more-than-human worlds, based on the overarching question: "How human is hope?"

Decentering human ontologies: How might bees hope?

Liisberg et al. (2015) describe hope as a "conjectural" mode of understanding, that involves not just a perspective on but a *feeling towards* the future. Feeling, however, is both affective and embodied. Ways of sensing the movement of time, storing knowledge of the past, imagining or anticipating the future, are linked to physiological, sensory and embodied capacities. The poem considers that the way non-human others feel towards the future might be related to their own differently embodied sensuous capacities and biologies, including reproductive biology. This recognises questions that cross-pollinate between fields like critical disability studies, science, technology and society (STS) studies, cyborg anthropology and multispecies anthropology, regarding the relationship between (different forms of) embodiment and subjectivity.

Recent work in the social sciences has also emphasised hope as economically and politically situated (Miyazaki & Swedberg, 2016). But do honeybees have something akin to politics, within their own collective lives? Alternatively, what is their role in, or orientation to, human political or economic enterprise? Critical scholarship on the multispecies has challenged assumptions about who 'counts' as a political being, and suggested ways that the acts, presence or movements of animals might be considered forms of political agency (de Bondt et al., 2023). Kosek (2010, p. 669) has been even more specific about this, suggesting that *materiality* should be recognised as part of politics, and an expression of the forms of "nonhuman intentionality" that may exist among insects and other non-human others. In focusing on the more transitive modalities of hope (Jansen, 2016)—i.e., what would bees hope *about,* or hope *for*—the poem aligns with Kosek in the suggestion that what bees hope for might be read in what they make/build/do in a material sense. This is furthered by the structure of the poem, which echoes the structure of the hive, in which workers, drones and queens have distinct roles, based on distinct physiological capacities. At the same time, I speculatively consider the idea of the colony (rather than the individual bee) as the organism—and thus the locus of agency, and perhaps affect—an ontological reframing which new beekeepers are often taught.

The final verse re-introduces the role of the beekeeper as part of the multispecies assemblage, intervening, materially, in the productive, reproductive and material cycles of the hive, across seasonal

cycles. In recognising the *different* roles and agencies of these different social actors, and the moments these may contradict—such as when drone bees are ejected from the hive in autumn, or when the beekeeper harvests honey—the poem also recognises unequally distributed and shifting agencies, or stakes, in the futures, at a bodily level. It thus acknowledges potentially shared, and potentially diverging, forms of hope.

Speculative epistemologies: How human is hope?

Honeybee colonies have often provided symbolic fodder for contemplating human social structures. It is perhaps especially important in theorising human concepts like hope in a more-than-human space, to consider bees as not only as metaphors or conceptual tools—but to take seriously the question of hope, within the bees' own ontological paradigm and as part of our material entanglements with them. Or, to use de la Bellacasa's (2012) terms, consider how to "live with" as well as "think with" them.

Why does it matter if bees hope or not? If hoping is constitutive of a sort of agency (Cook, 2018), the process of recognising hope among other species could be seen as recognising and honouring their social capacities, both within and beyond human assemblages of economic practice and meaning-making. This, in turn, could be a basis for the "kinning" that Donna Haraway (2015) calls for as an urgent task, in a damaged world. But to what degree might our ability to connect or 'kin' across species be based on assumptions about shared experiences or capacities (such as the capacity to hope)? Put otherwise, how might we practise ontological decentering in recognising the role of non-human others as active, agentive, responsive co-participants in world-making (Haraway, 2015), without necessarily searching for similarities or projecting human traits upon them, in order to do so? Certainly, if bees hope, it may look (and smell and taste) different to the way humans hope. But how might we let our different ways of hoping cross-pollinate, and what asymmetries might have to be critically reckoned with to do so?

Careful and critical reflexivity is needed, about both possibilities and risks for social scientists approaching theoretical explorations of 'hope' via a more-than-human lens. This includes reflexivity around the role of creative and/or speculative work, for exploring possibilities for new sets of relations in an age of "great planetary undoing" (Chao & Enari, 2021, p. 34). As one expression of this, and without presupposing an answer, asking the question "How human is hope?" might have relevance for both how hope is theorised, and how it is enacted, through shared agencies, in a shared world.

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Grounding Education in Practices of Hope: A Case Study of He Kaupapa Tūmanako

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Abstract
In 2020, in response to the growing expressions of anxiety and hopelessness we saw amongst young people, a team of social scientists at Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa | Massey University, Aotearoa New Zealand created an initiative with high school students: "He Kaupapa Tūmanako/Project Hope". He Kaupapa Tūmanako draws from theoretical traditions in Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School to approach hope as a practice, grounded in the understanding that connection is an antidote to the struggles of our times: connection with other young people, connection with communities, and connection with whenua/land. Over the past four years, we have focused on building He Kaupapa Tūmanako into a suite of courses supported by student mentors that connect young people from around the world. In this article, we reflect on what our experiences are teaching us about engaging hope as a transformative practice in sociology.

Keywords: hope pedagogy; Frankfurt School; Mātauranga Māori; sociology education; sociology of hope

Introduction

Over the last few years, the world has witnessed unprecedented disruptions including climate change, COVID-19, and the resurgence of radically nationalist demagoguery, aggravating social inequalities created historically by a racialising capitalism in the guise of imperialism, colonisation and widespread environmental depletion. Emblematic of those recent disruptions, the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped the ways in which young people experience the world around them, increasing their levels of anxiety and stress (Gasteiger et al., 2021; Siegert et al., 2023). As a team of sociologists at Massey University, we have noticed our students frequently anxious and overwhelmed about growing up in an uncertain world shaped by climate change. Our experiences mirror research that finds many young New Zealanders are feeling hopeless about the prospect of a climate-altered future (Nairn, 2019). In response to what appears as a growing sense of hopelessness among younger cohorts, we sought to address the following question through our teaching: "What does hope look like in a world of spiralling crises?" Given the disparate anxieties experienced among our students, we quickly

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realised that we would need to call upon a diverse array of critical tools to help us make sense of the present and to help young people navigate it.

In 2020, our team from Massey University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences had the opportunity to develop a non-credit short course for high school students, with the aim of providing them with the skills they need to act in the context of social disruption. He Kaupapa Tūmanako/Project Hope is an educational initiative that aims to empower young people to envision and create futures for themselves. The philosophy behind this initiative focused on how periods of uncertainty hold the potential to generate transformative form. In He Kaupapa Tūmanako, we tried to push back against the idea of individualistic hope or religious notions of hope as salvation (Kordela, 2012; Thompson, 2013). Contemporary narratives of hope are framed by neoliberal orthodoxy and often align with market logic, where hope is commodified and operationalised within frameworks of capitalism (Thompson, 2013). This privatisation of hope contrasts sharply with earlier collective notions, focusing instead on individual success metrics as the primary indicators of hopeful outcomes (O'Malley, 2009).

An individualised notion of hope has profound implications for how sociology introduces new audiences to the normative collectivism of the discipline. Educators and activists grapple with the dual task of informing people about critical issues—such as environmental crises and inequality—that are central to sociology courses, while fostering hope and agency. Re-conceptualising hope within educational contexts is necessary to enable learners to engage critically with their circumstances and to envision shared pathways forward. The notion of hope that we think appropriate to the present is the antithesis of individualistic and atomising practices of hope. This approach aligns with critical pedagogical frameworks that emphasise transformative learning and collective action as essential components of education (Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2014, 2017). Through He Kaupapa Tūmanako, we have sought to challenge students to think more broadly about hope as realised through forms of connection. Our approach is captured powerfully and succinctly in the words of Angela Davis: "It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism" (Davis, 2016, p. 49). Our desire was to recapture collective ideas of hope using a distinct theoretical underpinning informed by both Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School.

In this article, we explore the theoretical underpinnings of the course and discuss how it has developed in unexpected directions over four years. Drawing on student evaluations and our team reflections, we discuss a puzzling outcome: students engage strongly in the interpersonal aspects of the course and outcomes have far exceeded our expectations, even as coursework completion remains low. In making sense of this conundrum, we argue that the course can tell us something important about how this cohort may be learning in the face of accumulating global crises.

Theorising hope

When we developed He Kaupapa Tūmanako, the critical tools that seemed most appropriate came from two traditions that are well-suited to responding to moments of disruption and uncertainty: Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School. *Mātauranga Māori*, the Māori knowledge system, has deep roots in Aotearoa New Zealand (hereafter, Aotearoa) and has developed in response to the myriad challenges Māori face, including two centuries of settler-colonialism and the violence and suffering that has accompanied it, while the *Frankfurt School* emerged in response to the rising fascist tide of 1930s Germany. As we worked to ground the course in these different knowledge systems, we were very fortunate to have the input of Māori colleagues in Philosophy and Environmental Planning. This input informed our understanding of Mātauranga Māori and of the crucial role it may play in connecting our participants to one another, to our natural environment, and to the past and

potential futures. In this section, we explore these theoretical traditions and discuss how they formed the initial theoretical framework through which we came to understand hope as a set of practices.

Mātauranga Māori conceptions of hope

The relation between Mātauranga Māori and Western sociological perspectives offers a rich dynamic for exploring the play of disparate concepts of hope within contemporary Aotearoa sociology. Mātauranga Māori emphasises holistic understanding and interconnectedness (Hikuroa 2017; Smith et al., 2016). This knowledge system foregrounds relationships between people, the environment and the cosmos, encapsulated in the concepts of *whakapapa* (genealogy) (Graham 2009; Royal 1998) and of *whanaungatanga*, of relations between family, community and the non-human environment (Le Grice et al., 2017). Together, whakapapa and whanaungatanga encompass connections and relationships with humans and the non-human world, and their importance for the maintenance, enhancement and advancement of well-being (Winiata, 2005). Whakapapa also highlights relations of obligation both to the past and to the future, whereby hope becomes an act of duty to future generations. He Kaupapa Tūmanako centres both whakapapa and whanaungatanga as crucial mechanisms for establishing and maintaining the sense of connection on which the course hinges.

The array of relationships that become visible, through mātauranga, with one's ancestors, place and community, are never static. Mātauranga Māori encompasses "theories, practices, protocols for being *in* the world" (Smith et al., 2016, p. 2, emphasis added), which challenge the notion of a separation between humans and the non-human world. In expression of this, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and colleagues note that mātauranga is borne from a relationship between peoples and their geographies, in which (human) survival cannot be assumed: "There is a seascape, landscape and mindscape that has informed and constituted the legacies of language, the storying of peoples and the understandings of human endeavour and survival that is written into the veins of what we now know as mātauranga" (Smith et al., 2016, p. 134). Mātauranga Māori ensures that knowledge production remains deeply embedded within the web of these human and non-human relationships. This embeddedness equips this knowledge system to responsively navigate periods of significant change without resorting to idealism (Smith et al. 2016). Unlike the detached stance often associated with positivist fantasies of academic expertise, mātauranga is actively involved in the same disruptive forces that it seeks to understand.

In He Kaupapa Tūmanako, the course-development team of three sociologists (Alice Beban, Warwick Tie and Matt Wynyard) worked closely with Senior Lecturer in Māori Resource and Environmental Planning Dr. April Bennett (Tūwharetoa, Waikato, Tūhoe, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga) to design a course structure that is based in a Mātauranga Māori approach to hope centred on the connections between individuals, their communities and their wider environments. As Naepi and Barber (2022) note, the history of encounters between mātauranga and Western-informed social science knowledge has been fraught, with Māori worldviews often ignored or suppressed (see also Forster, 2023). We are painfully aware of the potential for the project to appropriate concepts out of context and to thereby further the colonisation of knowledge. In part, we sought to protect concepts from appropriation through the collaborative relation with Dr April Bennett and later with Associate Professor Watene (Ngāti Manu, Te Hikutu, Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei, Tonga) (who was a Massey senior lecturer in Philosophy at that time and is now an associate professor at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland). From Dr Bennett we learned of the importance of connection to the natural environment and from Professor Watene we learned of the importance of whakapapa and the sense of connection to generations past and future. As the course developed, these ideas became central to the project.

Frankfurt School conceptions of hope

Key studies on hope from sociologists and philosophers in the mid-20th century were written during and following the extreme violence and social breakdown of World War II, and amid the looming threat of nuclear conflict during the Cold War era. These writers contrasted hope with fascist leaders' use of fear and sought to create pathways towards a common sense of humanity (Bloch, 1998; Fromm, 1968). In this period, the theorisation of hope was tied to a utopian belief that emancipation could be achieved through collective actions (Marcuse, 1964). The Frankfurt School writers recognised hope as potential rather than mere optimism. This tradition emphasises open-endedness; a disposition towards being surprised; and the recognition that things are not foreclosed, and that the unexpected will happen (Benjamin, 1940, as cited in Jameson, 2022; Bloch, 1998; Marcuse, 1964). Bloch argued that hope is not the opposite of fear but of memory, as it involves moving out of the past, as given in memory, towards the ability to think into the future. Hope in this sense is labour—as Freire (1994) noted, it requires active practice. Hope as embodied practice is something that is not situated in the individual but in intersubjective encounters; it is a labour of imagining with others, of generating alternative futures from both the materials at hand and those that might yet be imagined, and of how these might inform each other (Adorno et al., 1950; Adorno & Horkheimer, 1972; Bloch, 1998; Marcuse, 1964).

An approach to hope that diverges from that of Bloch within the Frankfurt School was offered by Walter Benjamin. His account of hope embraces an uneasy mix of theological and socialist commitments (Jameson, 2022). Benjamin drew upon messianic themes, suggesting that hope comes from the future, and that it is shaped by class position. He believed that the bourgeois classes, with their attachment to education, have a different relationship with hope than the working classes. The tension between Benjamin's theological and socialist inspirations splits his understanding of hope. On one hand, he stated, "Only for the sake of the hopeless have we been given hope", acknowledging that hope is conditioned by class. This implies that hope is not something the educated middle class can simply impart to others, as they do not share the "sense of living your life at the front", a feeling Benjamin associated with the true proletariat. While on the other hand, when asked if hope could exist outside bourgeois culture, Benjamin wryly replied, "Oh, plenty of hope, an infinite amount of hope—though not for us" (Jameson, 2022, p. 175). These two ideas—hope as something given to the hopeless and as an infinite resource unavailable to "us"—illustrate Benjamin's view of history as a process where modern narratives of progress often stall, creating periods of interregnum. In these times, new possibilities arise alongside troubling symptoms of societal stagnation.

For Benjamin, the capacity to sustain hope involves letting go of attachments to a painful past or a specific vision of the future. Instead, it requires the ability to reconfigure hope in new forms. This involves a "weak messianic power" that self-consciously restricts itself (Jameson, 2022, p. 177). This power does not impose new definitions of hope from a position of superiority but works pragmatically, engaging with immediate realities. Through this practical engagement, a vision of a radically different future can emerge, pieced together from present elements and their potential to resonate across diverse contexts (Jameson, 2019, p. 331).

Recent writing on hope as collective practices resonates with Benjamin's approach. Dawney et al. (2017) argue that alternatives to conceptions based on particularist visions of a 'good life' require hope to become an indeterminate set of actions in the present: these are actions "that do not train our attentions on impossible futures but instead serve to amplify joy in the present" (p. 6). Researchers working on understanding and fostering hope among young people emphasise the importance of collective embodied practice (Nairn, 2019; Russell & Oakley, 2016; Verlie et al., 2021). Joy emerges in this approach not as a frivolous emotion but, rather, part of what connects us to others, augmenting our collective capacities. Practices of hope in this way can "produce ways of thinking, acting and being together that generate previously unimaginable futures"

(Dawney et al, 2017, p. 7). Collective practices require "an attentiveness to the moments when 'islands of hope' are established and [to] the social conditions that makes their emergence possible" (p. 8). Key to the possibility of hope here, then, is an attunement to current conditions and to the creation and strengthening of relations with others.

Working between traditions of hope

Between these two traditions we do not anticipate a coming together, as if our small group of sociologists have the power to create a synthesis that overcomes the historical tendency of Western thought to appropriate other's ideas, if not to dominate them. In our attention to the insights available from both Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School for how 'learning hope' occurs in He Kaupapa Tūmanako, we wish to sustain a gap between the traditions such that each remains within their own orbits, even as they each contribute insights to our project. We find the precedent for this in the Oceanic notion of *vā*, of practices among Pacifica cultures to ensure recognition of personal mana in the context of people's participation in collectively significant events (Eteuati & Young, 2021). Such practices also protect *vā* as an object – the *vā* being "a space between two objects that is treated as if it were an object itself" (Kaʻili, 2005, p. 90). Recognition of the *vā* sustains a gap that enables social connections to function anew as circumstances require. As Kaʻili notes (2005, p. 105), "Because *vā* can be organized and reorganized, it is dynamic and fluid, changing all the time in response to other formations of space." In our process of drawing upon Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School, our goal, in keeping with awareness of the *vā*, was to draw upon both while preserving their respective analytic abilities to adjust independently to new socio-historical situations.

Methodology

In this article, we draw on high school students' evaluations of two years of He Kaupapa Tūmanako, together with our team's reflections over the past five years of developing and teaching the course. As described below, we began teaching the course in-person at one school in Manawatū, and we have now run the course online with students from around Aotearoa (Manawatū, Tāmaki Makaurau, Taumaranui, Hawke's Bay, the West Coast) as well as internationally (Reykjavik (Iceland), Nadi (Fiji) and Suzhou (China)). Working with a teacher representative at each school, we recruited students for He Kaupapa Tūmanako by advertising via posters and announcements from teachers. Interested participants then attended an information session online to learn more about the course. The course itself has been run entirely outside formal learning hours (initially, students attended in-person lunchtime sessions, and the online course was run in the evening). There is no formal grading, connection to classroom curricula, nor compulsion to participate.

We used an anonymised survey to evaluate the course, inviting students to comment on their engagement with the course material and how the course has shaped their thinking and practices of hope. Massey University Human Ethics Committee approved the project as low risk (notification number: 4000027070). The primary ethical concerns that required mitigation related to matters of confidentiality and the fact that the participants were young people. An information sheet and consent form were produced as part of this process, using appropriate language for young people. The research was explained in person, and we stressed that participation in the research was completely voluntary and was not a requirement of doing the course. Parental consent was secured for students under 16 years of age. Anonymous survey links were provided at the completion of the course and the survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Ninety students completed the survey over three iterations of the course (a response rate of 48%). All the survey participants were located within Aotearoa. The survey collected both open-ended qualitative

responses and answers to quantitative questions. The rich data that were generated enabled us to undertake a thematic analysis of students' responses. We also frequently met as a team, both during the course and after it, to reflect on the lessons we were learning and to adjust our teaching practices. The ideas and questions generated in these discussions also inform the reflections in this article. We recorded the main points of our reflection sessions in written form on a Google Doc after each team meeting, with one person nominated to be a scribe and others adding anything missed after the document was shared with the team. We analysed these notes by reading back through the reflections and eliciting key themes and moments in the evolution of the course, which we draw upon in the following sections.

Developing He Kaupapa Tūmanako/Project Hope

In this section, we discuss the evolution of He Kaupapa Tūmanako over the past five years, showing how the initiative has developed in response to student requests for new opportunities. Laying out the timeline of the initiative in this way allows us to first discuss the foundational course that was organised around three practices of hope (2020); then to demonstrate how we moved from in-person to online delivery (2021); added student mentors (2022); and developed a Leadership Certificate (2023). Presenting the course evolution in this way demonstrates how our theoretical commitment to grounding the course in Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School entailed not only developing course material that drew from these theoretical traditions, but also the organic way that the course has developed as relationships with students, teachers and community partners have grown over time.

2020: Beginnings

We began developing He Kaupapa Tūmanako in April 2020, under the shadow of the first COVID-19 lockdown and amid questions the pandemic raised about what the future might look like. We approached the course from its inception with a commitment to collaborative course design, bringing together theories and practices of hope from across the social sciences and humanities to create a course that is distinctly rooted in Aotearoa.

The course initially started as a face-to-face, six-week course with students at a Manawatū high school, beginning in August 2020. This was an unsettling time: students were back at school after the first COVID-19 lockdown, but still uncertain as to what the future might hold. We worked with a group of 28 students over a lunchtime once per week, with two sociologists leading the sessions. Our presence was broken up with the use of short talks (video or in person) from colleagues from multiple disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. We developed a course structure consisting of three course modules corresponding to three practices of hope (thought/whakaaro, relationships/whiti and action/ātetenga) that engaged students in individual and group exercises, enabling them to build individual–community–environment connections.

Module one, 'Practices of whakaaro/thought', drew from Mātauranga Māori, particularly the concept of whakapapa. Whakapapa teaches us to gain strength from the past as we look to the future: Te tōrino haere whakamua, whakamuri (At the same time the spiral is going forward, it is going back; at the same time it compels us towards, it is returning). In this, our students were guided by Associate Professor Krushil Watene. Students wrote about people from their past who have influenced them and shared these stories with other students; then together, they created a group legacy that they would like to be remembered for. The second session of this module focused on whanaungatanga, and how to build relationships with people to take collective action on an issue. Students learned from international peace campaigner Thomas Nash about "building a room of the possible" with people who might have very different views to their own, through practices such as

developing relationships based on friendship, checking in with people along the way, reframing issues away from views that attempt to maintain the status quo, being vulnerable, and being bicultural. Students then worked in groups to think about how they would use these practices to build a room of the possible on an issue they cared about.

Module two, 'Practices of whiti/connection', introduced students to the practice of connecting to the environment around them. They learnt about how to find out about the everyday items around them that are connected to people and places around the world, and they shared images and stories of their favourite places and objects that are meaningful to them. Then they practised how simple acts of noticing things can be a powerful way to move, reflect and feel with intention. Dr. April Bennett conducted a session outside, where students drew on Mātauranga Māori relationships with plants, and learnt how to tune into the life in the ngāhere (forest) using all their senses. This is a practice that Dr. Bennett learned from Manaaki Whenua ecologist Mahuru Wilcox (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Ranginui). In the second session of this module, students worked together to trace the commodity chain of a common food item they eat for breakfast, to learn about how, through food, we are connected to things and places around the world. Dr. Carolyn Morris led the students in a practice of 'utopian food thought', which resonates with Frankfurt School conceptions of hope that seek to understand power relations in the present, and then work collectively to re-imagine these. Dr. Morris noted to students, "The first step is understanding the food world as it is currently arranged so that we can think about whether we want things to be this way, imagine the ways it might be different, and together think about what we can do."

In the third and final module, we looked at practices of ātetenga/action. Students learned from Dr. Elspeth Tilley how to actively practise hope through resistive creativity. Dr. Tilley explained that feeling angry or sad about big issues like climate change is normal and healthy, and practising 'active hope' (Macy & Johnstone, 2022) involves embracing these feelings as valid, and "seeing with new eyes by exploring perspectives that increase a sense of possibility". Students worked in groups to collectively construct a short protest ('slam') poem on an issue that they care about. (Several student poems are featured on pages 79–91 of this issue of *New Zealand Sociology*). The second session in this module focused on whanaungatanga, stressing the importance of building relationships and learning from diverse people and ideas. This session also drew on the Frankfurt School's emphasis on recognising current relations of power that shape our relationships with others, so that we might re-imagine relationships based in more equitable social structures. In this session, students listened to Dr. Shine Choi's conversation on hope with her Senegalese collaborator and learned from Dr. Choi about how building relationships with people from different geographical and social locations can be a practice of hope. The students then worked in groups to draw maps of where they might go and who they might meet on a 'gap year' after high school, re-imagining travel as something that could be grounded in equitable relationships.

2021: Moving online

As with so many things during the pandemic, COVID-19 forced changes in how social situations were managed. For He Kaupapa Tūmanako, this saw us adopt a streamlined (four-week) online version of the course. An unanticipated advantage came from this change, in that the adaptation allowed us to reach an audience of students across Aotearoa and overseas. Through the adoption of an online format, we have created an interactive learning environment that blends synchronous and asynchronous activities, using both individual and collaborative activities.

We collaborated with e-learning specialists to create engaging and emotive learning experiences. Research in teaching and learning emphasises the importance of capturing students' attention early on, which is crucial for retention. This can be achieved through priming activities that spark curiosity and immediately highlight the personal relevance of the course while also modelling collaborative work (Barkley & Major, 2020).We continued to centre the course around the three modules (whakaaro/thought, whiti/connection and ātetenga/action), building cumulatively into more involved forms of group engagement as the relationships between students grew. This began with students posting comments on each other's creative work using an online whiteboard (Module 1), moving to the co-creation of a video of their environment (Module 2), to the collaborative creation of a group slam poem (Module 3). Weekly group Zoom sessions provided students with opportunities to work in real-time together. Each group created a website where they showcased their work.

Many of the activities we had developed for the in-person course had to be re-thought to enable students to complete them online. For example, when we shared stories about places we are connected to, students chose objects nearby that were personally significant. Another switch we made from our in-person course to online was how we shared difficult or personal topics. For the in-person course, we could build trust in the room and created exercises that allowed students to share anonymously. On Zoom, we tried to achieve a similar sense of safe sharing with ample use of phrase-cloud tools, where students could anonymously share their thoughts and then discuss in groups some of the common themes that arose. For example, in Zoom sessions we asked students to anonymously reflect on the things that make them feel hopeless. Collectively and in real time, students inputted their answers into a word cloud, sharing some of their fears, worries and anxieties.

By using the word cloud, students could see, feel and relate to the experiences of their peers. After completing the word cloud activity, students went into breakout rooms and talked through some of the big themes coming up. By being vulnerable with one another, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and listening to each other intently, the foundation for trust amongst students was laid.

2022: Bringing in student mentors

After our first cohort of students graduated from the online course, several of them came to us and said they wanted to do the course again. We were concerned they would get bored doing the same thing twice, and after talking with them, we decided to add an opportunity for mentoring, which has become a key aspect of the course architecture. After the completion of a course, students can return as graduates to further develop their practices of hope through leadership and care through a mentorship (tuakana/teina) relationship. We assigned mentors to a small group of students, and mentors assisted students in Zoom sessions and collaborative exercises. This change enabled students more freedom to work together in guided groups without the presence of us adults 'in the room'. The mentors were trained in mentoring practices before the course began, and they engaged together in weekly team reflections after each course Zoom session to talk over how the session went, what they might do next time, and to offer support and encouragement to each other.

Figure 1: Word cloud used to enable students to reflect on the things that make them feel hopeless

2023: The Certificate of Leadership for Troubling Times

In 2023, a group of students who had completed the course and had also mentored came to us and said they wanted to do more. We met with the students and together came up with the idea of a course that would help them to enact practices of hope in their school or community through working in small groups, planning and carrying out initiatives with the guidance of our team. We first held what we called the Certificate of Leadership for Troubling Times in 2023, and we are now holding it again in 2024. This was co-created with students as it developed, with the underlying foundations of the course based on connecting as small groups and with people acting on issues they care about in the community. Every week we meet as a group over Zoom, with the small groups using 'break-out rooms' to work on their projects and reflect on sticking points or things that are not working.

The sticking points are opportunities for trying new things; in this way, the course recognises that in uncertain times, young people need to be able to be flexible when things don't go right, and to learn from failure. This vision of learning through sticking points is at the root of our model of collaborative action. Students record their sticking points and how they worked through them as they plan and carry out their actions. Then, at the end of the course, they publicly present their projects, identifying what the sticking points were, how they worked through them, and what they learned through this process. In this way, the course is centred upon the process of learning to take collaborative action, rather than focusing only on the outcome. Examples of actions the students have done include working towards opening a sustainable bookshop, creating a mentorship programme for young women to connect with industry professionals, engaging school senior leadership teams to develop a proposal for solar panels, engaging with the local Palmerston North Council with a tree-planting proposal, raising awareness about endangered species in the Rangitikei region, and presenting student concerns on vaping to public health policymakers.

What do students gain from the course?

Student feedback

Student evaluations suggest that the course is a transformative learning experience that helps young people become hopeful and resilient in the face of current challenges. In the evaluation survey used across the three most recent iterations of the four-week foundation course (two in 2023 and one in 2024), 98% of the students who responded (from a total of 90 respondents) said they would recommend the course to friends. Ninety-seven per cent of students detailed their plans to use practices of hope as they look ahead to the future, including practices of "regular reflection and gratitude", "connect[ing] more to the spaces around me", "to be more present" and to "take greater action and initiative about the things of importance". Students planned to practise the lessons from the course when they feel stressed or face challenges at school and elsewhere: "Whenever any challenge arises, or I find myself frustrated. So, in every aspect of life" (T4, 2023).

Furthermore, 94% of the students said they feel more knowledgeable about the role of hope-based practices in uncertain times. When we asked the students how they understood hope at the end of the course, many of the responses resonated with the course's core principles of hope as practice and connection:

> One key learning I'll take away is how to reframe hope. It's become more of a sense of connection, a look into the future, and a goal for me now. (T1, 2023)
>
> Not only a feeling but a process of thought and action that we can use to see positive change. (T4, 2023)
>
> Instead of just wishing for things to be different, I think of different perspectives and thoughts. Hope is not only based on our future but our past and ancestors. (T4, 2023)
>
> A way to connect with people. (T1, 2024)

Course evaluations showed that students responded positively to the course activities that drew from the Mātauranga Māori concepts of whakapapa and whanaungatanga, and from the Frankfurt School ideas of reckoning with the present to re-imagine potential futures. For example, students noted that the practices of whakaaro/thought in Module 1 enabled them to think about themselves and their relationships with others in new ways:

> I had never really thought about the legacy I wanted to leave behind. (T4, 2023)
>
> Writing to someone from my past made me think about a lot of people and what they have done/do for me. (T1, 2024)
>
> Hearing about everyone's influences, the people special to them, I could get to know them in a new way. (T4, 2023).

These comments reflect the course focus on building, enhancing and developing networks of relationships. Collectivism, based on the positive maintenance of enduring relationships, is at the heart of a Mātauranga Māori approach. Moreover, the emphasis on whakapapa suggests an obligation to generations past and future. The maintenance of these crucial connections is, then, not a matter of individual endeavour but rather a generational project of connection that exists in sharp contrast to the short-sighted individualism characteristic of late-capitalism.

Furthermore, what Mātauranga Māori furnishes us with specifically is a form of collectivism that incorporates not only ourselves but also the non-human natural world that surrounds us and nurtures us. Several students said that Module 2 (whiti/connection) was their favourite, and pointed to the ways that sharing objects that are meaningful to them allowed them to connect with others and their environments:

> I looked around the table and spotted the mug beside me. I went like 'Yes! That's the one!' I think this course lets you find what's been special to you, but you never paid attention to. (T4, 2023)

Many students also talked in their evaluations about how profound the experience of sensing the ngāhere (forest) was for them. Indeed, we were able to experience the transformative power of this exercise during our first face-to-face course. While Dr. Bennett, who led the session, wanted to take the students to a nearby park, they were not allowed out of school so we headed to the nearest stand of trees we could find—the row of trees on the school driveway. At first, it didn't bode well for deep reflection; cars were whizzing past on the road outside and we had to move every time a teacher wanted to drive past. But as we stood learning about the trees —and smelling, feeling and listening around each of them—April suddenly said excitedly, "It's a kūmarahou!" A small shrubby tree was nestled near a shed on the driveway; this was the kūmarahou, a significant tree in rongoā Māori (the traditional Māori healing system) and one that is difficult to find in Palmerston North. Since that session in 2020, we have continued to hear from students that the school driveway is now a different place to them, one that harbours treasures including the kūmarahou. In this way, students learnt about how Mātauranga Māori creates an obligation for us to foster and maintain healthy connections to one another and to the earth that sustains us.

The evaluations also suggest that students were able to build relationships with other students as the course progressed. In the course design, we aimed for each successive module to invite greater collaboration and sharing among the group, so that students could build trust in each other. This culminated in the creation of a group slam poem in Module 3 (ātetenga/action), which required students to confront difficult issues, talk about things they were concerned about and work together to respond to the issue through creativity. In this way, the exercise drew on the Frankfurt School attention to the injustices of the present and collectively re-imagining the future, and from Mātauranga Māori, a focus on whanaungatanga. Seventeen students in recent iterations (24% of the survey respondents) noted that the slam poem was their most memorable aspect of the course. Their responses suggest that this exercise allowed them to talk about difficult things they had experienced and that they loved the act of creating something together:

> Writing the poem about bullying with my group, it was really great to see us all come together with ideas and talk about what we had been through. (T4, 2023)
>
> When we talked about slam poetry ideas and seeing all the different things that people were passionate about. (T1, 2024)
>
> The poetry was my favourite because it gave people (including myself) ways to express problems we are currently facing or watch happen to our society [sic] so it's good when voicing things like that. (T1, 2024)

The addition of student mentors further enabled students to build trust with each other. In evaluations, students consistently noted how mentors encouraged them to share:

> The Zoom calls were engaging, and the mentors really made me and probably even others to feel confident and safe enough to share their thoughts and views. (T1, 2023)

Students noted that one of the reasons they were able to gain confidence and feel so connected with other students was the atmosphere in the course. The combination of mentors, teaching staff and other students created a community where they could share things in anticipation of being accepted:

> Being able to share my opinions without the fear of criticism. (T4, 2023)
>
> Getting to share and talk about stuff without feeling judged. (T1, 2024)

Coursework completion statistics

He Kaupapa Tūmanako consists of weekly Zoom sessions as well as an interactive course website, where students work asynchronously by themselves to watch short videos and complete weekly exercises. Students upload their completed work to the course site, but it is not graded. The completion rates of coursework in He Kaupapa Tūmanako have been modest. Across the four courses that ran during 2022 and 2023, only 20% of students completed all the coursework. Yet anecdotally (because we did not regularly keep records of weekly attendance for all iterations of the course), the rate of participation in the course's online sessions has remained high throughout. For example, in 2022 when we did keep Zoom attendance records, of 131 students who participated:

- 18 students (16%) completed all individual coursework, with all but two of these students also attending Zoom sessions.
- 58 students (51%) completed at least one of the three main individual coursework activities, with all but five of these students also attending Zoom sessions.
- 55 students (49%) only participated in the Zoom sessions.

These data show that the participation in Zoom sessions was high among all the participants during the 2022 iteration of the course, with 124 students attending at least one Zoom session (95%). However, coursework completion was low, with around half of the participants only attending the Zoom sessions and not completing any coursework exercises. Low completion rates are nothing new in the world of online learning platforms (Jordan, 2015), and, indeed, the completion rates for He Kaupapa Tūmanako exceed those associated with MOOC-type courses by a considerable margin (Fu et al., 2021). That point aside, our experience with students' engagement raises a question as to how the course functions as a site of learning for participants, where we see high levels of student participation even though they may not formally complete the courses.

One answer to this puzzle of high Zoom participation and low coursework completion lies in students' responses to the survey question as to their most memorable aspect of the course. Of 70 students who responded to this question in 2023–2024, 32 students (46% of responses) talked about connecting with other young people as the most memorable aspect:

> No doubt my group. Even in the first week we just got along so good and were all taking part in discussions it was so awesome. I really felt by the end of today's session that my group are my friends. (T1, 2024)
>
> Getting to communicate with others, and getting to hear their thoughts (which help expand my knowledge and be more open-minded to others' ideas). (T4, 2023)
>
> Hope is easier with other people :) sometimes I came into the class a little low, but once meeting with my group and completing the activities I instantly felt more hopeful! (T1, 2023)

> [I learnt] that connecting with different people from different countries or ethnicities is a really good thing. (T1, 2023)

These responses often showed the importance of being able to hear about similar experiences, problems and concerns that other young people were going through, which enabled students to understand others and feel less isolated:

> That there is so many people going through the same thing as me at the same time, and as much as that is distressing, it is really comforting to know I'm not alone. (T4, 2023)
>
> I think hearing people's different stories and backgrounds. There were some that really made me think and I got to see people's other experiences and how different their lives are to mine. (T4, 2023)
>
> …just knowing I'm not alone. (T1, 2024)

As shown in these responses, the sharing of common experiences and learning about people from different backgrounds allowed students to connect with people from across schools, countries and cultural backgrounds. This is the learning that happens in Zoom sessions, rather than through the asynchronous individual coursework elements. In the next section, we reflect further on a contradiction that has confounded us as we have developed the course: In a course with no formal assessment and no recognition through formal qualifications, what is it that keeps students coming back, and what does this tell us about the contemporary moment?

Learning through 'bootlegging' hope

He Kaupapa Tūmanako came together and has adapted organically. We began in 2020 as a reaction to COVID-19 and the isolation created by the pandemic. We had no expectations of the course besides perhaps being a one-off in-person experience of us reaching out to a younger cohort, perhaps fulfilling a desire that we too had to connect in the aftermath of the first lockdown. That the course did not end with this first iteration, but has continued to grow, was due to something that the course sparked among students, as well as among senior managers at Massey University who saw in this initiative a chance to position Massey as a university that responds to the zeitgeist of our time through community engagement.

We have sought to walk something of a tightrope as the course has unfolded. On one hand, the openness and freedom we have experienced from the normal restraints of formal assessment and the bureaucracy of university administration has enabled us to embrace a reflective pedagogy that has seen the course change in new, and unexpected, ways each year, responding rapidly to student desires and new ideas within the teaching team. But on the other hand, the lack of formal assessment and recognition means that the course doesn't constitute the kind of object that is recognisable to an institution that delivers State-validated qualifications and is thus difficult to sustain financially. We have resisted attempts to charge students fees to undertake the course as we want it to be accessible to anyone, and in this, we have been fortunate to receive support first from our College, and then from outside sponsorship. We have also resisted suggestions that the course be more formalised, with assessment that would tie into high school curricula or university credits, because this would necessitate a change to the model of flexible course development. But the lack of formalised measures of achievement also means that there is little external reward encouraging students to complete.

Our analysis of student evaluations and coursework completion rates in the previous section revealed a puzzling outcome. On the one hand, we found that students engaged strongly in the interpersonal sessions

of the course, and this is matched by enthusiastic evaluations of the course offerings. This suggests a desire to connect. But, on the other hand, completion of coursework activities was relatively low. This suggests that students are interacting with the course content in ways that diverge from the intended focus on practices of hope. One way to understand how students learn within He Kaupapa Tūmanako is through a return to the two ways of viewing hope that we identified in the literature review: the juxtaposition between hope as release from a painful past or hope as attachment to a preferred future. Student experiences in He Kaupapa Tūmanako suggest that hope instead requires a human capacity to move the coordinates of hopefulness into forms that are simultaneously the same and different. We term this a 'bootlegged hope'; that is, students taking lessons from the course and the materials involved and creating their own meanings of hope.

We see this bootlegged hope in the reflections from mentors who talk about the unexpected conversations and connections that emerge in break-out rooms, and the student evaluations that speak to the ways the course has sparked new ways of seeing themselves and others around them, rather than any specific course exercise or teaching. We also see it in the concerns students reveal about the current historical situation near the end of the course, when their insights into what personally threatens their hope exceeds the socially approved responses with which they first introduced themselves. Rather than leaving the course with a more hopeful outlook, some students may leave more open with others about their feelings of anxiety. This aligns with the concept of "weak messianic power" from Walter Benjamin, which contrasts with our usual approach as educators who hope to instil practices of hope in our students. For us as teachers, weak messianic power means simultaneously holding the idea of hope-as-practices that framed the course design, and letting that formulation alter as it is put to work by students. By doing so, we can witness how students develop their own forms of hope, often in ways we couldn't have anticipated.

Conclusion

Our process of course development in He Kaupapa Tūmanako demonstrates how collaborative practice grounded in relationships across the social sciences and humanities can create a course that is distinctly situated in Aotearoa. By way of conclusion, we look outward to muse upon the fraught process of working with diverse theoretical approaches, and to what our small initiative can offer to the larger project of knowledge production in Aotearoa sociology.

In our process of drawing upon Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School, we did not aim to merge their insights into a single framework. Instead, we have sought to allow each to stand alongside the other. Mātauranga Māori has continually adapted over centuries to changing circumstances and the profound uncertainty and violence of settler-colonialism, and offers critical tools that allow young people to deal with the myriad challenges from the past, playing out in the present and constitutive of the future. Frankfurt School social theory emerged against a backdrop of ascendant fascism and offered versions of hope that stood in stark contrast to the brutalism of its age. Together these tools provide young people with exactly the kinds of critical skills necessary to navigate a world plagued by uncertainty.

Our analysis of learning within He Kaupapa Tūmanako emphasises the practice of allowing each thought tradition to remain within its own orbit, even as both contribute insights. The writings on hope by the Frankfurt School help us articulate a gap that students' experiences have revealed in our understanding of hope—a gap between hope that moves away from the past and hope that comes from the future. Mātauranga Māori provides confidence that we don't have to resolve this gap. It teaches us that both forms of hope, and the temporalities they inhabit, are always in play. The difference between these visions of hope can thus remain open, with the understanding that future challenges will determine which vision periodically matters.

One key challenge in drawing from diverse theoretical influences is ensuring that Western thought traditions, which have historically sought to dominate and appropriate Indigenous knowledges, may instead walk alongside them. The Frankfurt School has the potential to be a reflective co-traveller in the contemporary "mayhem" of knowledge production in which Māori scholarship finds itself (Smith et al., 2016)—in which the legitimacy of scientific knowledge depends upon recognition of Mātauranga Māori, even as the administrative architecture of science undermines mātauranga. The Frankfurt School can help highlight how the contradictions facing Māori knowledge are not of its own making but stem from the racial capitalism of colonisation, much like how insights from the Frankfurt School supported Māori scholarship in the 1990s in critiquing the contradictions in Māori education, where providers had to choose between autonomy and adequate funding (Smith, 2015).

In the case of He Kaupapa Tūmanako, it is not immediately clear what exactly constitutes the gap to be nurtured—the relational sphere of *vā*—between Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School. This gap is as much a product of our project as it is an outcome of previous interactions between practitioners of the two traditions. The uncertainty surrounding the nature of this gap does not diminish its importance. Rather, ongoing encounters between traditions that take the *vā* as a guiding principle—to which the present account of He Kaupapa Tūmanako contributes—can allow the historically contingent relationship between Mātauranga Māori and the Frankfurt School to evolve into one of mutual support. This could involve practices of translation between the two, with careful attention to the relational space of *vā*. Such translation wouldn't be controlled by an imagined synthesis that dictates the correctness of interactions but would operate through mutual support in addressing the socio-political challenges each tradition faces.

Writing this article together has allowed us to reflect on the unexpected directions He Kaupapa Tūmanako has taken over four years, and that it continues to take in response to students' ideas and desires. We suggest that the course can tell us something important about how this cohort may be learning in the face of accumulating global crises. More than anything, our students appear to value the connections to their peers and to the world around them that the course provides. It is precisely notions of connection and collectivity based on whanaungatanga and whakapapa that students repeatedly tell us are crucial to their reinvigorated sense of hope. The unanticipated, creative ways students engage with the course have produced outcomes that go far beyond our expectations as educators. Our experience suggests that hope is not something that can be neatly taught or contained within formal structures, but something that emerges in unpredictable yet powerful ways as students create their own forms of bootlegged hope. As sociologists we find this to be at once both interesting and indeed hopeful, particularly in the face of 40 years of individualising neoliberal orthodoxy exacerbated by atomising technologies and the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

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The Discipline of Hope

(SAANZ 2022 Student Plenary Paper)

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Abstract
To the average person, academia has often felt disconnected from everyday life, with academics simply offering an interpretation of the world. Yet, as Karl Marx has suggested, an interpretation of the world is simply not enough - academia must encourage and generate change. Exploring Mariame Kaba's concept of hope as a discipline, hope can provide the foundation necessary for academics to generate positive societal change. Academic activists like Moana Jackson and Angela Davis exemplify this concept and show what is possible when academics use critique to generate positive change that transcends community boundaries. If academics wish to continue this legacy of change, then their academic work must be transformative rather than merely descriptive and to continuously practice hope as a discipline.

Keywords: academics; academia; activism; hope

To the average person, academia is perceived as a voyeuristic pursuit, one that comments on the nature of society and yet has little relevance to people's daily lives. I was speaking with my dad who has worked in blue-collar jobs since he was 14 and I asked him what it is that he thinks academics do, to which he replied: "They go to the office, muck around on the internet, get paid lots to complain about everything and do nothing about it." His response supports Marx's perspective that an interpretation of the world is simply not enough, and that academia must encourage and generate change. Academics cannot afford to separate themselves from the communities in which they live and remain behind closed doors writing in isolation. Activist and prison abolitionist Mariame Kaba (2021, p. 26) has stated that hope is a discipline, and I believe that thinking of hope in this manner has the potential to make Marx's iconic statement a reality.

When thinking and talking about hope, we often describe it as a feeling, a desire and a wanting for something to happen. However, hope in its emotive state can sometimes struggle in the face of adversity. Hope without action remains nothing more than a nice idea that can easily collapse under the weight of reality. In comparison, discipline requires action, it requires practice, it requires control. Yet these connotations seem sterile, and I fear that thinking of discipline as relating to controlled behaviour encourages separating oneself from community and continuing the isolation so often seen in academia. Without discipline, hope risks simply being an emotion. Without hope, discipline remains an aimless action. Hope can provide the guidance necessary to use discipline to generate change.

I believe that there are many contemporary academics who already practise hope as a discipline, and it is evident in their work. Many of them have inspired me on my academic journey so far. They not only write about the oppressive structures that exist in their communities but are actively working towards constructing a more inclusive and better society. As someone who is tangata whenua, I think of people like Sir Mason Durie (2005), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and the late Moana Jackson whose mahi have contributed to helping the communities which they are part of. Moana Jackson was not only openly critical of the legacies of colonialism in Aotearoa, but he also played a fundamental role in the development of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007), showing that it

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is possible to use critique to generate positive change that can reach beyond the scope of one's respective community. His example shows how when hope is used as a discipline, critique can be used to create something better for the most vulnerable within our society.

I have had the privilege of living in Hawai'i for the past three years, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and during this time I have been exposed to the writings of those who made their home there and on other motutere within te moana nui a kiwa. One academic that has influenced me is Epeli Hau'ofa, whose writings are embedded with hope, challenging the limiting ways that many of us from the Pacific often see ourselves**,** as belonging to these small, isolated islands in a vast ocean and limited in our potential. Hau'ofa (1994)'s famous essay "Our Sea of Islands" helped me to realise that I am not restricted to the boundaries of our islands but am part of the wider moana and that its vastness holds a world of possibilities. Living in Hawai'i, I have witnessed the legacy of Native Hawaiian academic and activist Haunani-Kay Trask (1993), whose work confronts the legacies of settler colonialism**,** drawing attention to the exploitative nature of tourism**,** and asserting the necessity of resistance in oppressive circumstances. Her work has helped to inspire many of those outside the academic setting to challenge the legacies of settler colonialism. Her writings empower Native Hawaiians to challenge the continued exploitation of their land and their communities. Trask did not stay isolated, hidden behind university walls—she joined her Native Hawaiian people in protest and often stood on the front lines of demonstrations, delivering rousing, heartfelt speeches of defiance against the settler colonial state that has caused so much harm in Hawai'i. Haunani-Kay Trask's academic work and legacy shows how practising hope, using it as a discipline, can help to inspire ordinary people to challenge oppressive structures and empower communities to generate change.

Although some of the academics I have spoken about so far have passed away in recent years, there are still many academics today who use hope in their work, who actively engage with their communities, and who shine a light on the systemic oppression that exists in those communities. I think of Vivek Shraya (2018), Imani Barbarin (n.d.) and Cornel West (1993), just to name a few. I think of Angela Davis (2016), whose writings have encouraged many to see the interconnected nature of systemic oppression across societal lines. Her academic and activist work encourages us to recognise that freedom for one marginalised community requires us to fight for the freedom for all those who are marginalised by the various systems that benefit from our division and our ignorance of the struggles of our neighbours. Davis (2016) has said that you have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world and you have to do it all the time. This quote is a reminder that it is not enough to just hope to make the world a better place, nor is it enough to just write about the issues that exist in the communities which we are part of. Like Angela Davis, like Haunani-Kay Trask, like Moana Jackson (2020), and like so many others, we have an obligation as academics to radically transform the world and not remain isolated, separated from the communities to which we belong.

Marx's legacy is undeniable—I mean, here we are today still discussing his work 177 years later. I believe that to truly make Marx's statement a reality, we as academics should look to Marx and his contemporaries less and instead focus more on the academics in our recent past and in our present. The numerous academics that I have spoken about so far have shown that it is possible to interpret the world and actively work towards changing it for the better. Their example helps to challenge the common perspective, like the one my dad has, that academics are paid to complain about everything and do nothing about it. Any work that we do as academics should contribute to some sort of positive change—whether it be through legislation, making our work more accessible to those who do not have the luxury to attend university, or encouraging those around us to believe that radical transformation is possible and necessary to ensure that our communities, our society and our world is better for everyone, not just a select few.

This is not to say that Marx has no relevancy in our modern era. On the contrary, Marx feels as important as ever, with younger generations embracing more Marxist thought than previous ones. Rather, it is important to understand that his work is part of the wider whakapapa, or genealogy, of philosophy and

that it is one of the many works we can look at for inspiration in the whakapapa of academia. To understand and interpret the world, we must recognise and remember who has come before us—as academics, we should continue to look to our past to remember the risks of social isolation and see what we can achieve when our work seeks to change and better the world we live in. We must also recognise the continuation of the genealogy of ideas as they pass into new generations, new thinkers and new contexts. This idea of looking at the past and the present reminds me of a whakataukī that my grandfather used to say to me as a kid: "Kia whakatomuri te haere whakamua—I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on the past." I didn't think much of it at the time, but now as an adult beginning my academic journey, I see it as incredibly important to look to the past and the present to help guide my future. I believe that we as academics must look to our past, to see the errors and successes and remember the whakapapa of the disciplines in which we belong**,** to ensure that what we do moving forward ultimately helps our communities. We are links in a continuous chain, in an enduring legacy of love, of speaking truth to power, and of lifting up those around us.

The academics that I have spoken about today, many of whom have inspired me deeply, are examples of what it looks like to practise hope as a discipline, and I believe that we should keep this in the back of our minds with any work that we do. We as academics have an obligation to engage with our communities rather than limit ourselves to words on a page. We as academics have the potential for our work to be transformative rather than just descriptive. It is all too easy to remain isolated in a world where misinformation is rampant and divisions seem too deep to repair; however, we owe it to ourselves and to each other to remember to practise the discipline of hope.

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(Re)applying the Radical Tradition of Sociology to Anti-Racism: Utopia, Hope and Anti-Racism

(SAANZ 2022 Student Plenary Paper)

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Abstract
The unique role sociology has played in offering hope and visions for a future is well documented. From Marx's critique of capitalism to liberation sociology, the discipline has offered visions of the future relying on empirical research and theoretical analysis. While some of this work has been done by anti-racist scholars, the discipline has been slower to offer hope for ethnic minorities who face racism in their day-to-day lives. In this article, I explain the role sociology has played and must continue to play to better offer hope for racialised bodies. By understanding White supremacy and racism as foundational to our modern world, I argue that sociology has a lot to offer when it comes to framing anti-racist futures. I also use my own doctorate research as an example of how qualitative, narrative-based research can contribute to the development of an anti-racist future and offer hope to racialised bodies.

Keywords: racism; hope; critique; anti-racism

Introduction

Our contemporary social moment is characterised by the overt expression of racist far-right politics, an exacerbating climate crisis, the rolling back of hard-fought political and social rights, and a growing economic crisis which has seen wealth increase at the top 1% and pushed the poor further into desperation. For some, the lived experience of our contemporary societies is characterised by hopelessness, precarity, anxiety and depression. Literature and media (Blake, 2023; Ngwenya et al, 2021; Tonkus et al., 2022) across parts of the world have detailed that some people feel anxious, depressed and hopeless. Writing for CNBC, Abigail Johnson Hess (2021) notes that 51% of young Americans say they feel down, depressed or hopeless and Bradley Blankenship (2022) of the Global Times writes that war, COVID-19 and climate change have contributed to feelings of distress and depression. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Eliesha Foon, writing for Radio New Zealand, notes that poor mental health has increased in the past decade, resulting in a "silent pandemic of psychological distress" (Foon, 2020). Feelings of hopelessness are characteristic of the various crises faced by people in our contemporary society. For ethnic minorities across the globe, already existing feelings of hopelessness are exacerbated by and exist in addition to racism, discrimination and ethnic generational trauma. There are numerous psychological effects of racism on ethnic minorities including depression and anxiety as well as physical health effects such as diabetes. Exposure to racism is a common experience for ethnic minorities in settler-colonial countries like Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, and former imperial countries like the United Kingdom (UK) or France. Ethnic minorities experience racism in addition to the crises of contemporary society, making hopelessness a cultural and ethnic phenomenon, too.

This article focuses on the role of sociology and sociologists in offering hope in the context of the racialised experiences of ethnic minorities. In the sociological tradition, hope is characterised by utopic understandings of radicalism and social change, though it has been slower to apply these principles to

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anti-racism. For social theorists like Charles W. Mills (1997), White supremacy is a fundamental organisational feature of the modern world which shapes and influences social interaction, institutions and social change through racism. In Mills's words, "White supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today" (p. 1). By understanding and explaining White supremacist racism as foundational to the modern world, sociology can better framework hope for ethnic minorities. Therefore, I argue that if sociology is to offer hope to ethnic minorities, it must follow the lead of anti-racist social scientists that have addressed racism and White supremacy effectively, detailing its systemic and institutional nature. If sociology is to take its radical and transformational tradition seriously, it must effectively apply its utopic visions for a better racial future for ethnic minorities.

This article comprises three sections. First, I discuss how hope has featured with anti-racist literature and movements. Second, I discuss the role sociology has played, currently plays and can continue to play in the production of hope for ethnic minorities. And third, I discuss my own doctorate research in producing hope in an anti-racist context. In this third section, I discuss how my method, research questions and analysis is anti-racist and thus offers hope for ethnic minorities, with a specific focus on Africans. The article finishes with a conclusion that explains how anti-racist research within sociology fits into a broader history of sociological radicalism and utopic aspirations.

Hope and anti-racism

In sociology, hope is grounded in a contemporary critique, vision of the future, and the subsequent pursuit of said future. For many thinkers, it serves a utopic function. In Ruth Levitas's *The Concept of Utopia,* she addresses the work of Ernst Bloch (1986) and writes a chapter called *Utopian Hope: Ernst Bloch and Reclaiming the Future* (Levitas, 1990). In it, she explains that Bloch's Marxism is concerned with change. For Bloch, utopia is wrapped up in dreams of a better life and viewed through a functional lens. For him, utopia is a force that propels individuals and societies forward, serving as inspiration to challenge the status quo and to work towards a better future. For oppressed peoples and anti-racists, the belief that there is a world beyond the now is essential. People will always fight for their own and others' liberation, and through the constant structuring and restructuring of colonial White supremacy, hope inspires a continued fight against oppression. In this sense, hope is a tool that has been used and continues to be used by countless peoples in refusing to accept the status quo and forge something better. This is not to dismiss the reality that for many people hope has been a falsehood, and many have given in to despair and found solace in it. It is more to say that, as a collective, looking for hope has served as a powerful tool to create change. Refusal to accept conditions viewed as 'natural' has been one of the reasons oppressed ethnic groups still fight to this day.

This Blochian view of hope and the future has been part of anti-racist movements, thinkers and literature throughout history. History is filled with hopeful critiques and action against established structures of racial oppression aimed at envisioning and creating a better future, including the anti-apartheid movement, civil rights movement in the United States, the Haitian revolution, various slave rebellions throughout history, and anti-imperialist movements (see, for example, Ciment, 2006; Gonzales, 2019; and Gordon, 2010). Odds that were and are insurmountable are partially overcome through the belief that oppression must end and a better future is possible. For these groups and movements, the belief and hope that a future different than what they were living in relied on the belief in their success. Although many individuals died and were systematically disabled from this vision, as a collective, oppressed racial minorities are still here, have fought for their futures, and continue to do so. The marches and calls for an end to systemic racism following the murder of George Floyd are testaments to the utopic vision of anti-racists. Hope helps people reclaim their own futures and for the generations to come. Contributing to these

movements has been sociology. Sociology has been a tool used by anti-racists to fight oppression and sociologists have already provided useful frameworks to resist racial oppression.

The role of sociology in hopeful anti-racism

While hope has been fundamental to past and existing anti-racist movements, sociologists face the challenge of imagining a world that does not exist. In an interview by Johanne Jean-Pierre, Prudence Carter, 2021–2022 President-Elect of the American Sociological Association (ASA), explained that many sociologists who write about an equitable and anti-racist future have no models to base this world on. In a world where capitalism is the overarching model of normative economic and social relations, it is difficult to be confident in laying out a blueprint for a different world. Our contemporary world is one in which White supremacy is viewed as the dominant and only racial structure of the world, and conflict and empire are understood as the natural outcome of human complexity and society. In response, sociologists must use research to propose and action new and better worlds. Following in the tradition of C. Wright Mills, transformative sociology uses the sociological imagination to grasp and understand what our contemporary world is, but more importantly, like W. E. B. Du Bois and Jane Addams, use that imagination to envision a new world that can occur through empirical research, social activism, social action and policy sociology, among other methods (Feagin et al, 2016; Jean-Pierre & Carter, 2023).

One contribution of sociology in offering hope to ethnic minorities is by conducting empirical research that aims to critique contemporary racial structures, as well as understand and challenge racism. In sociological research, unpacking how racism functions, evolves and oppresses has been important work. Arun Kundnani (2023) argues that there are two major traditions of anti-racism. One, which he labels the "liberal tradition of anti-racism", focuses more on individualistic understandings of racism and offers to solve it through more diversity training and representation nearer the top of already existing hierarchical structures. The other, Kundnani labels the "radical tradition of anti-racism". He argues this tradition is rooted in an understanding of racism as structural and systemic. It is, therefore, dismantled through understanding and breaking down the structures and fundamentally altering the day-to-day function of social organisation. Instead of understanding racism, then, as a set of irrational beliefs solved by diversity training, racism is researched and understood as a social structure that fundamentally organises modern societies on the basis of White supremacy.

Within this research, it is important to understand that White supremacy and racism is a fundamental structure of modern societies and has been an ongoing process of colonial imperialism. Bonilla-Silva (2018) argues, for example, that the racial structure of the United States is and always has been White supremacy. Likewise, Feagin (2020) argues that the United States was founded upon systemic racial oppression and White supremacy characterised by the exploitation of Black labour and the theft of Indigenous land. He posits that this has produced structures and social organisation that upholds White supremacy through a racial hierarchy shaping everything from day-to-day interactions and access to education, healthcare and adequate housing, through to wealth accumulation. For Bonilla-Silva and Feagin, vital institutions, social and political norms, and organisations of modern society are structured by White supremacist racism that shapes their everyday function. This sociological research and critique of contemporary society is utopic in nature and follows the tradition of a radical anti-racism. Sociology can have a fundamental role in frameworking new and radical worlds beyond the now. This can be done through empirical research which informs policy suggestions and can be expressed through various mediums like conferences, public speeches or social media.

There are ways sociology can framework and communicate work beyond strict academic mediums. As a discipline, sociology has become much more engaged with public and policy life. X (formally known as Twitter) has a growing number of sociological accounts, with the International Sociological Association

(ISA) and the Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (SAANZ) both holding accounts. These pages share recently published work and analyses about current social and political issues as well as keep followers up to date with where to find further sociological information. Prudence Carter argues that one of the challenges of sociology is that many sociologists rely on discourse that is highly theoretical and full of jargon (Jean-Pierre & Carter, 2023). She explains that due to the backlash toward analyses and recognition of structural racism, sociologists must persist and strategise to continue the explanation and analyses of structural racism in accessible ways (p. 327). Sociologists must explain racism through different mediums, which can include both academic and non-academic spaces. This can help to provide language and frameworks for groups to use in their activism and resistance of racism. Sociology must also continue to push the envelope in generating new theories and innovative ways to understand and address racism. It is true that models of an anti-racist future do not exist and there are no models to exemplify what a society free of White supremist imperialist capitalism looks like, but by standing on the shoulders of previous theorists, there are exciting opportunities to find out. Sociology must also reflect the worlds and lives of ethnic minorities if it is to be true to its radical tradition. Materially, ethnic minorities need access to educational facilities and be immersed in an education system that reflects them and their cultures. Sociology must advocate a restructuring of the tertiary education sector to greater reflect the anti-racist potential of the discipline.

My own research

My own doctorate research focuses on African stories of racism within Wellington's rental sector. The research proposes to address the role of interpersonal, institutional and internalised racism in shaping Africans' rental experiences. As such, it is part of the larger story of African resistance and creating a life in spite of discriminatory barriers. Africans and the African diaspora have a long history of being oppressed, resisting oppression, and finding hope to continue asserting their rights and humanity. Africans have been part of slave rebellions (Childs, 2009; Iverson, 2021), asserted their rights and freedom during the decolonisation across the African continent (Cooper, 2008; Howe, 1966; Worger et al., 2000; Zuberi, 2015), established Haiti from a slave-led revolution (Gonzalez, 2019), and through Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress, maintained hope towards their long walk to freedom (Ciment, 2006; Mandela, 1994). Hope is a fitting place for individuals and groups who face mountainous challenges. The African continent and the African diaspora are overrepresented in rates of poverty and deprivation, with Africans being part of exploited labour across the world and facing various economic crises, resulting in poorer access to adequate housing, poorer education outcomes, and limited opportunities to turn education into meaningful employment. Despite these barriers, Africans and the diaspora continue to produce activists, academics, poets and others that advocate a different, better future for all Africans.

My doctorate research aims to be anti-racist in analysis and methodology, and thus fit into the hopeful academic work laid out by some sociologists. The research endeavours to give voice to a marginalised group that is often neglected in an Aotearoa New Zealand context. It also aims to comment on the role of White supremacy and anti-Black racism and how this comes to bear on housing experiences. To understand these experiences, my study poses four primary questions:

1. What are the experiences of African renters in Wellington?
2. How do interpersonal, institutional and internalised racisms shape the rental experiences of Africans?
3. How do systems of racism operate to shape the geographical patterns and housing biographies of Wellington-based African renters?
4. What is revealed about the broader operations of institutional racism through observing these patterns and experiences?

Currently, there are few studies in the extant literature on housing research across Aotearoa New Zealand that have directly discussed racism. A study by Adele Norris and Gauri Nandedkar (Norris & Nandedkar, 2022) used a critical discourse analysis to examine how ethnicity and race are represented in New Zealand housing research published between 2013 and 2019. Their analysis found only one article from a sample of 103 that referenced the concepts of racism and institutional racism to explain institutional barriers that adversely affect ethnic minorities in the housing sector. Although Norris and Nandedkar's paper focused primarily on homeownership, it did identify a lack of research regarding migrant communities within scholarship. In her report *The People's Review of Renting,* written for the housing advocacy group Renters United, Howden-Chapman (2017) identified four major themes: 1) quality of housing issues, 2) limited options, 3) the struggles to create a stable home, and 4) powerlessness to challenge landlords. The report illuminated some major issues in renting across the country and identified individual stories of renters. However, it failed to represent and speak to the voices of ethnic minorities as in the study, 74% of the participants identified as Pākehā, 16% as Māori, 14% as European,[1] and 16% as Other ethnicities, made up predominantly of Pacific Peoples.[2] This is a misrepresentation of the rental population as there are lower homeownership rates among Māori and other minorities, which means these groups are more likely to be renting. By missing their stories, research is missing crucial racialised elements of renting in Aotearoa New Zealand. My research aims to address this gap and tell the stories of people affected by racism in their rental experiences.

The research also aims to be anti-racist in its methodology. I employ a counter-storytelling methodology that aims to tell the stories of historically marginalised peoples. *Counter-storytelling* is defined by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) as "a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told" (p. 32). The research aims to include and analyse the stories and narratives of African renters in Wellington through a counter-storytelling qualitative methodology, which has the potential to disrupt dominant narratives of housing experiences while providing a space for marginalised voices to be heard. Qualitative and counter-storytelling methods are important for ethnic minorities and Africans in particular as Africans have a contemporary and historical emphasis on cultural narratives rooted in the oral tradition. In Kudakwashe Tuwe's (2018) doctoral study analysing employment experiences of Africans in Aotearoa New Zealand, he incorporated four community group interviews consisting of six participants. Tuwe used what he terms the "African oral tradition of storytelling" and a group setting to express experiences and narratives of Aotearoa New Zealand-based Africans. Tuwe argues storytelling was more appropriate for African participants as collective oral traditions and storytelling are common among African communities. Qualitative storytelling serves two major functions for anti-racist research: first, it tells stories of groups whose stories are seldom told and roots knowledge in their voices, and second, it decentres European traditions of ethnography as occurring from the voice of the researcher.

[1] Although the term Pākehā is commonly used to describe White New Zealanders of European descent, I assume that in this instance, Howden-Chapman has differentiated between Pākehā and migrant European communities and individuals. This is an important distinction within the housing/rental setting because even though displaying as 'White', migrant Europeans still experience differential treatment due to xenophobic attitudes.

[2] In Aotearoa New Zealand, it is common for people to have the option to identify with more than one ethnicity. This option was likely made available to the participants in Howden-Chapman's (2017) study, resulting in these numbers totalling more than 100%.

Academically, the research offers hope in two ways. First, it is one of few studies based in Aotearoa New Zealand that focus on Africans; specifically, focusing on Africans in the rental sector. Currently, more than 60% of African households do not own or part own their property (Stats NZ, 2020), Africans are more likely than Pākehā and Europeans to be living in social housing and poorer conditions, and literature has detailed Africans face racism in their lives living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Secondly, the research aims to provide an avenue for future research. It aims to inspire future researchers to conduct further research that centres the voices of Africans in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For participants, this research has undergone a series of questioning and concerns guided by hope. Prior to taking part, some participants queried what the aims of the research were and what potential help it could bring to the members of Wellington's African community. While I cannot be certain of the outcomes of the research, I think their questioning points to the concerns of Africans in the Wellington region. It demonstrates their understanding of racism in their lives and the barriers they face to attaining and maintaining rental properties. It also demonstrates the desire for hope amongst Wellington's African community. Research has the potential to speak to these desires. While any research has the potential to be exploitative, the methodology I have chosen aims to highlight the voices of marginalised groups. By working collaboratively with marginalised communities, research can address their concerns and subsequently offer hope for a better future.

Conclusion

Sociology has always been hopeful, transformative and utopic. From Marx's call for transformative sociology through to liberation sociology, sociology has long challenged the status quo and aimed to progress a better future for people. Contemporary society is characterised by various crises which contribute to feelings of hopelessness. Racism both exacerbates existing experiences of hopelessness and creates its own forms of subsequent depression and anxiety. Experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally have demonstrated experiences of racism are common amongst ethnic minorities and these experiences have negative effects on those at the receiving end of racism. Systemically, racism limits the accessibility of ethnic minorities to essential human needs like meaningful employment, housing and education. To combat these feelings of hopelessness, both systemically and psychologically, sociology has a lot of hopeful potential to offer. Sociology's tradition of transformation and resistance can contribute to the anti-racist battle against oppression. While sociology has demonstrated its hopeful and utopic nature, it has not applied it heavily to anti-racism. Understanding White supremacy and racism as a foundational ideology and concept of the modern world is essential to combating racism and subsequently offering hope through imagining a new world. Hope is fundamental to anti-racist movements, both past and present. As a discipline, sociology must find a way to reflect the lives and identities of ethnic minorities into the structure of universities and sociological learning, incorporate ethnic minority voices into the academic canon, and advocate making universities and other learning institutions more accessible. Since sociology is a tradition of radicalism, hope and change, anti-racism is a natural fit. Part of sociology's role of asking "So what?" and "Now what?" is a way of reclaiming hope. One of the criticisms of hope is that it is a frivolous pursuit, better left to the imaginations of children. Some thinkers even argue it should be abandoned in favour of pessimistic nihilism, while Slavoj Zizek argues that hope should be abandoned and instead hopelessness be embraced as a transformative tool (Boucher, 2020). While these arguments have their merits, abandoning hope is unhelpful to certain populations, especially ones that have overcome insurmountable hardships—specifically, Africans. Africans and the African diaspora have a long history of being oppressed, resisting oppression, and finding hope to continue a fight that asserts their rights. Sociology can reclaim hope for all peoples by offering people an understanding of what the problems are, the scale of the issues, and ways to create social change. Sociologists can, through their research, demonstrate what is possible and provide

frameworks for people to create change and to move the concept of hope away from criticisms of childlike naivety. Even though sociology can be a tradition of radicalism and some prolific sociologists have been anti-racist in their sociological imagination and practice, the discipline as a whole must pay closer attention to race and racism. Sociology, as a discipline, must engage deeper with the role racism has played in the formation of our contemporary societies. White supremacy and imperial colonisation have dramatically shaped local and global politics, the ideological structures that shape our social and political imaginations, and the disproportionate availability of resources between core and periphery nations.

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Sounds Pretty Hopeful to Me: Hope for Sociology in Fostering Social Change

(SAANZ 2022 Student Plenary Paper)

Hafsa Tameez*

Abstract
Sociology today is critical about its role in bringing about social change. It pays attention to nuances and the context-bound particularities of the world around us. In popular thought, changing the world seems to require identification of the root cause of what needs to be changed but causal relationships are tricky, to say the least. Sociologists need to ask questions that focus on *how* change happens: What agents are responsible for generating change? Who does change benefit? And what role can academia have in this? During my professional experience as a cultural conservationist, I attempted to use academically connected research to generate social change. As a result, I learned to explore these questions of the role and impact of academia in real-world applications. Through this, I have become aware of the connection between hope and change and the responsibility that sociology as a discipline has towards society. I explore these connections here through a debate conducted among my students in a foundation-level sociology course. The idea of change gives purpose to academia, a way to combat the bleakness of what research often points out about the world we live in. As the students concluded, change is indeed necessary but maybe we need to rethink our inquiry. Is the value of academia related to the expectation that it generates change, or in its ability to reflect on its relationship with social change during a period in which such change has become increasingly rapid?

Keywords: social change; sociology; academia; causal relationships

Up until my current position as a doctoral candidate in Sociology, I worked in cultural heritage management, historical research and cultural conservation. My foray into teaching at a tertiary level has been at Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington in undergraduate sociology courses covering the foundational concepts of sociology and social theory. It is a role that has prompted me to critically reflect on the nexus between academia and society, and the responsibilities incumbent upon sociologists to bring about social change. Much of this reflection is guided by the awareness that education in sociology often highlights critical debates about the role of sociology itself, the extent of the influence the discipline has in bringing about meaningful social change, and more crucially, whether the responsibility to generate social change is even a part of sociology itself. Drawing from my professional experience has made me increasingly aware of the frequent misalignments between academic sociological research and the practical applications of research in professional settings, plunging me into a sense of hopelessness about the entire discipline. Yet, my emerging exposure to academia has emphasised the symbiotic relationship between academia and societal change. There remains an opportunity to cultivate hope within sociology. Such cultivation requires us to re-evaluate the evolving roles and responsibilities within the discipline at the university level.

My starting point in the consideration of these roles and responsibilities was a module in an introductory sociology course on the classical thinkers. While teaching that module, I organised a debate among my students regarding the historical discourses of Marx, Weber and Durkheim (Morrison, 2006). Centred on the role of sociologists in effecting societal change, the question I posed to the students concerned the role of sociology itself. As sociologists, is our role to follow the footsteps of Marx in his

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advocacy of transformative action and for the bringing about of societal change? Or, building on Weber's and Durkheim's understandings of causal plurality and of the near impossibility of identifying the single specific factor that would solve society's problems, is the role of the sociologist simply to study and document the social in the most objective way possible? The class was split into two groups, each group debating for one of the two viewpoints.

Initially, the allure of a Marxist advocacy of transformative action captivated the students' aspirations, even scuttling the enthusiasm for the debate in the group assigned to support Weber's and Durkheim's argument. In the students' understanding, academia was a catalyst for change. Sociology as a discipline held the promise for emerging sociologists like themselves to become the vanguard of societal transformation. In the twenty-first century, an era beset by constant social upheaval rooted in underlying structural issues in our societies, if sociology was not equipped to address these problems of living, then why were any of the students here at all?

That is a very hopeful narrative about the role of sociology; however, my professional encounters as a researcher in the Middle East now leads me to question this narrative. My job before teaching was to research historic sites in the Middle East, to evaluate their cultural value, and then develop strategies for how to best preserve that value. It was necessary to both understand the belief systems and interpretive frameworks of the societies in which I worked regarding their own culture and heritage, and to engage with these beliefs and frameworks in a way that matched the goals of the conservation projects I was working on. The conservation strategies I was responsible to develop arose through extensive research with the local community, with archaeologists, conservationists and other academics. While academic research was imperative in designing how conservation work would proceed, the extent to which academia actually helped that work was fairly minimal. My experience did not support the students' Marxist-inspired perception that academic sociological research plays a significant role in catalysing meaningful change in a real-world setting.

The role of research-based academia was minimal in directing governmental agencies in making the big decisions about the future of cultural assets. The publications by experts in the field that I presented to decision-making bodies for incorporation in cultural and social policy had a limited role in bringing about the desired outcomes for which I was advocating. Rather than based on the betterment of society, the majority of the decisions taken were made based on financial grounds, political agendas, marketability, timing and so on. Academia's limited influence in policymaking unveiled a disconnect between scholarly insights and real-world decisions that were governed primarily by finances, politics, market forces and other factors.

The point my students were debating, that academia has the responsibility and ability to implement change, has, in my experience, limited application. At a governmental level, the disconnect was often framed as a schism between academia and the so-called 'real world'. This was indeed the point that the other team presented in the class debate, and in response, the discussion adopted a more nuanced position on academia's potential as a change-agent. The Marx-inspired team presented a proposal that if sociological academia were not directly responsible for bringing about change, by nature of its capacity to conduct research in the study of society, the discipline was still the best suited for providing decision-makers with the information necessary to bring about social change in the best way possible.

While this is a comparatively more realistic outlook on the role of sociology, the misalignment between academia and decision-making bodies that I had experienced in my professional work also extended to a misalignment between scholarly pursuits and practical application. At many points, my research team would often need to turn to academic institutions and scholars for specialised help. One particular conservation site, for example, required research to be undertaken into the history and development of aviation and communication networks, the social and geopolitical factors that guided early civil aviation, and the evolution of the technology that made it possible. We needed historians and aviation

specialists to help us contextualise our site within the global narrative of early air travel, and as a result, we travelled to numerous seminars and conferences on the history of aviation.

The unpleasant discovery we uncovered was that much of the scholarly research we encountered was not very applicable. Most of the time, the research topics were too niche to be easily implemented at a practical conservation level. In the example of our aviation site, the research we encountered at conferences included topics like the evolution of pilots' rations, the design of facilities for the storage of canned beans in 1930s airport hangars, or the development of white paint pigment for the marking of early airport runways. The more practical research we needed for our work was often missing from research. The topics we were looking for included the impact having an airport in the 1930s had had on local communities, the influence local cultural influences had on airport construction and design in non-European settings, the effect foreign travellers in remote regions for the first time had had on international and regional relations, the impact early aviation had on modern urban development, and so on. In the end, I had to conduct much of this research from scratch, which was both costly and very time consuming. Collaboration with academia highlighted the mismatch between practical applications of research and scholarly pursuits, further consolidating the perceived schism between academia and the so-called real world.

This point was also presented in the students' debate. Not only were the students already beginning to doubt the agency and impact of sociology and academia, but that scepticism now also extended to the relevance of the discipline itself. Marx's optimism for sociology's ability to make society better kept drifting further out of reach, tempered with the growing understanding that the realities of bringing about social change are complicated. Social theory, in general, today echoes this developing understanding. Sociology itself is much more critical about the nature of what we call change. The discipline today pays a lot more attention to nuance and the context-bound particularities of why things have come to be the way they are in particular places. Sociological pedagogy and contemporary sociological discourse have underscored the imperative to dissect the nature of change, scrutinising the complex interplay of multifaceted causalities within social dynamics. My students came to the same understanding and to an associated sense of disillusionment with sociology's capacity to drive societal change. The debate transformed, shedding light on the intricate relationship between academia and societal transformation, and the many ways this relationship was misaligned.

The revelation that academia might not be the direct harbinger of change called for great introspection among the students. What devolved into a distinctly hopeless stance regarding the role and future of sociology ultimately re-emerged with a new understanding through the debate exercise. The objective to bring about change was not the problem. The possibility that the students discovered was that as sociologists, maybe we are asking the wrong questions. Maybe we should be asking what agents are responsible for bringing about change rather than simply assuming that the responsibility lies with academia. After all, what evidence exists that disciplines like sociology are the 'best suited' to influence policy and decision-making? We should ask instead who is affected by the research that we as academics produce? But more than that, maybe it is worth asking what relationships exist between academia and change? It is worth questioning whether we give value to academia simply because we expect it to generate change. That ability to drive direct social change may have been the case for the discipline of sociology at the time of the classical thinkers, but social contexts and structures have changed since then (Bulaitis, 2020). Instead, it might be worthwhile to shift the emphasis from an expectation for academia to effect change to instead understanding how the symbiotic relationship between academia and social change has evolved and what that relationship looks like now in our rapidly changing society. It necessitates evaluating sociology's evolving role and its impact on an ever-evolving social world.

The idea sociology can incite social change gives purpose to the discipline. Alternatively, perhaps it gives the discipline hope, in the face of the sometimes bleak discoveries about the world we live in that we uncover in our own research. The pursuit of change, albeit complex, beckons us to refine our inquiries.

If societal change is the goal and hope of sociology, then we should be asking better questions about the role and impact of the discipline. Part of this exercise is scrutinising the schism that prevails in some circles between the world of academia and the real world. It is important to question when this gap arose, and whose actions facilitated the delineation of these separate spheres of influence?

Sociology in our current world needs to be redirected away from prevailing expectations that it generates change and instead towards a better understanding of its intricate relationship with social movements. Embracing this paradigm shift would offer a chance to rekindle the academic beacon of hope. It would propel us towards a deeper comprehension of sociology's academic responsibilities and of the interconnection of those responsibilities with societal transformation. It prompts a re-examination of the roles, responsibilities and expectations of sociology as an academic discipline in shaping a better world.

In conclusion, while academia's ability to bring about societal transformation might be contested, the acknowledgement of its nuanced understandings of societal complexities fosters a hopeful vista for the future of sociology. If tertiary education allows the next generation of sociologists to arrive at the same place of critical inquiry and realignment that my students did, then that sounds like a pretty hopeful place for the future of sociology and academia, if you ask me.

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Practising Hope through Slam Poetry

Nicolette Trueman, Alice Beban, Heather Meikle, Warwick Tie and Matt Wynyard,* with Lucca Jordan, Gauri Ramesh, Klara Van Den Berg, Abby Bleakley, Oscar Wright, Daniel O'Sullivan, Manit Desai, Elise Fouhy, Kuravainga Ngataa, Kaela Alderson, Shuhan Cao, Elysse Brandon, Connor Menthony, Nao Matsuda, Ava Gilbert, Sajani Dissanayake, Scarlett Baker, Maitê Abrieu, Alicia Kovacs, Thu Mai, Grace Beissel, Angela Du, Shuhan Cao, Sajani Dissanayake, Max Skates, Stellan Port, Angela Yamamoto, Jerry Tran, and Francesca Haddon

Think of an issue you care about. What makes you angry, or passionate about this issue? What should be done about it? Responding to these questions through slam poetry can allow people to express their understandings of contemporary issues that feel too big or difficult to articulate (Muhammad & Gonzales, 2016). As Somers-Willett (2009) notes, slam poetry enables us to "become agents of resistance with hopes of not only surviving the adversities in the world but also working toward self-empowerment and self-determination".

In the final module of the *He Kaupapa Tūmanako Project Hope* course that Massey University Sociology programme runs for high school students, students engage in the practice of active hope through slam poetry. Professor Elspeth Tilley (playwright at Massey University) guides students through the process of creating poems. Working individually and in groups, students reflect on an issue they care about and creatively articulate what the issue is and why it is an issue, and end with a call to action or vision for change.

Students have written about a range of issues, including climate change, technological change, social media, racism, bullying and inequality. Students often say that this is their favourite part of the course: as one recent graduate noted, "The most memorable aspect of the course for me was definitely when we did the poem activity! I loved talking about world issues and how we carried that message into a poem" (student, Term 1, 2023). Others note that doing this as a group helps them connect over shared experiences: "Writing the poem about bullying with my group it was really great to see us all come together with ideas and talk about what we had been through" (student, Term 1, 2023).

Below is a collection of poems written by students during the 2022, 2023 and 2024 iterations of the course.

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Why did you say that?

Lucca Jordan†

Why did you say that?
Was it a slip of the tongue, or a subconscious thought?
Why did you say that?
Were you aware that it could offend me?
Why did you say that?
Have you got no control? Do you know how your words sound?
Why did you say that?
I feel hurt and excluded, discriminated against.
Why did you say that?
How would you feel if someone said that to you?
Why did you say that?
Are you aware of how your racist comments make you look?
Why did you say that?
Are you so insecure that you would take it out on other people?
Why did you say that?
Your words are degrading, spiteful and meaningless. They only reflect your small-mindedness and immaturity.
Why did you say that?
Unless you have something nice to say, your opinion means nothing to me.
Why did you say that?
Racism is the discrimination of people on the basis of their racial or ethnic group.
Why did you say that?
Even the smallest acts of racism can affect people immensely and leave them feeling hurt and insecure.
What can you say about that?
Everyone must make an effort to keep racism out of their community. Shut down a racist comment as soon as you hear it.

† **Lucca Jordan** was a student at Long Bay College in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland when they wrote this poem.

Life is life

Gauri Ramesh‡

Life is like a road
Life can be anything you want it.
So long as you decide the purpose.
It can be long, or it can be short.
It can be easy, or it can be hard.
It can be fair, or it can be harsh.
Yet we chose the way we perceive reality.
The obstacles can be a test of karma.
The gifts can be the results of luck.

Life is like a book
Life can be anything you want it.
So long as you decide the purpose.
Weather you choose to read or scroll
Write or read
Quantity or quality
There is always a possibility.
People come into our lives just to sign out in memory.
While the chapters of guilt fill the pages,
For what seemed like an eternity.
Flipping the pages of days to reveal the number of years.
Another chapter another step into a number of fears.

Life is like a watch
Life can be anything you want it.
So long as you decide the purpose.
Time goes quickly when having a rest
While time strains as you watch the clicks
Seconds fill the time
As hours fill the years
The lost time cannot be rewinded
The time spent with never go back.

‡ **Gauri Ramesh** is a student at Long Bay College in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland.

So why
Why travel a road with no end?
Why read a book with no truth?
Why wait a time with no change?
Because that's what life is
Life is what we make of it
Life is the light we choose to see at the end of the road,
the end of the book,
the end of the hour,
the end of the tunnel.
Life is filled with so much,
Seek the end, truth and change in all to come
After all, life is life.

"Boys will be boys"

Klara Van Den Berg[§]

Boys in school,
Boys that drool,
Boys are cruel,
Here's the new rule.
Don't show skin,
Be super thin,
Be the dream,
This is his scheme.
Don't touch my hair,
Don't hold my hand,
Don't say my name,
This isn't a game.
Teachers don't care,
They say it's rare,
Boys always stare,
No, we're not a pair,
It was just "a dare".
"Boys will be boys." Isn't an excuse. And no, he doesn't pick on me because they like me. Stop these sexist comments and jokes, report immediately.

§ **Klara Van Den Berg** is a student from Paraparaumu College in Pōneke | Wellington.

#SucksToBeYou

Abby Bleakley[**]

#SucksToBeYou
Did I do something wrong?
#SucksToBeYou
Everyone says it, maybe it's true?
#SucksToBeYou
We all hear it everyday
#SucksToBeYou
The pressure it causes
#SucksToBeYou
#They'reJustBullies, it's not you, it's them

[**] **Abby Bleakley** is a student from Palmerston North Girls' High School in Te Papaioea | Palmerston North.

"AI"

Oscar Wright, Daniel O'Sullivan, Manit Desai, Elise Fouhy, Kuravainga Ngataa, Kaela Alderson, Shuhan Cao, Elysse Brandon, Connor Menthony and *Nao Matsuda*††

Technology has broken us
It tears us apart, taken our lives
Technology has broken us
It has made us addicted, but we can't stop
Technology has broken us
It's taken our jobs, ruined the economy
Technology has broken us
It's taken our art, oh how our heart throbs
Technology has broken us
So, before we lose it all, can we please restart?

†† **Oscar Wright, Daniel O'Sullivan, Manit Desai, Elise Fouhy, Kuravainga Ngataa, Kaela Alderson, Shuhan Cao, Elysse Brandon, Connor Menthony** and **Nao Matsuda** are students from Kuranui College in Māwhera| Greytown, Paraparaumu College in Pōneke | Wellington, Palmerston North Girls' and Freyberg High Schools in Te Papaioea | Palmerston North, and Rangitīkei College in Tutaenui | Marton.

Capitalism and its consequences

Ava Gilbert[#]

Birth, school, work, death
The inescapable cycle of life
Birth, school, work, death
Slaving away for the very knife that kills us
Birth, school, work, death
The endless empty faces echo as one
Birth, school, work, death
Why has everyone stopped looking up?
Birth, school, work, death
The realisation of our hopeless future begins as a dull ache
Birth school work death
Until even the brightest candles have ceased to burn
Birth school work death
Joining hands in solidarity is all we can do

Ava Gilbert is a student at Palmerston North Girls' High School in Te Papaioea | Palmerston North.

Social media

Sajani Dissanayake[§§]

Behind screens, chasing validation in vain
Likes and comments, but they don't ease the pain
Behind screens, chasing validation in vain
Masks of joy, hiding inner disdain
Behind screens, chasing validation in vain
Comparison's grip tightens, driving us insane
Behind screens, chasing validation in vain
Genuine connection beckons, breaking the chain.

[§§] **Sajani Dissanayake** is a student at Palmerston North Girls' High School in Te Papaioea | Palmerston North.

Behind smiles

Scarlett Baker, Maitê Abrieu, Alicia Kovacs, Thu Mai, Grace Beissel, Angela Du, Shuhan Cao, Sajani Dissanayake, Max Skates, Stellan Port and *Angela Yamamoto*[***]

Behind smiles, declining mental health hits hard,
Hidden cards held close to hearts,
Behind smiles, declining mental health hits hard,
Leaving souls scarred, feeling emotionally marred,
Behind smiles, declining mental health hits hard,
Pressure piles on and on and on…
Behind smiles, declining mental health hits hard,
Sleepless nights with racing thoughts,
Behind smiles, declining mental health hits hard,
It is fine to reach out, we don't judge – there is no need to guard.

[***] **Scarlett Baker, Maitê Abrieu, Alicia Kovacs, Thu Mai, Grace Beissel, Angela Du, Shuhan Cao, Sajani Dissanayake, Max Skates, Stellan Port** and **Angela Yamamoto** are students at Palmerston North Girls' High School in Te Papaioea | Palmerston North, Long Bay College in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland, Rangitīkei College in Tutaenui | Marton, and Paraparaumu College in Pōneke | Wellington.

A greater feat

Jerry Tran[†††]

I miss the days where we didn't have to eat in this heat, though, it is a feat that we can eat in this heat.
It is a feat that we can swim in this ocean full of heat with our sweaty, sweaty feet.
It is a feat that we can walk in this heat even with sweat rolling down our backs and down our legs, to our feet.
It is a feat that we can breathe in this
hot,
humid
heat.
It is a feat that we can sleep without rolling in our sheets in this heat,
for the a/c releases no heat inside. Outside, is where the a/c releases all of its heat.
It is a feat to live for as long as we have in this heat, but not a feat if we live no longer than
today,
tomorrow,
and the days after tomorrow in this heat.
It is a feat to uphold the world of our past and perhaps our dreams and,
because we know no miracles,
we cannot
reverse
back
time.
We can only put a stop to this heat in our lives, reflected in our eyes.
The flames have not yet reached our doors, and brought inferno to our dreams, but give it time and the impossible will happen.
How can we live for another day if there is no struggle to survive, no struggle to achieve the feat not ever achieved before – the feat to stop our world from burning into flames as
one mind,
one body,
and
one soul?
Yes, it is a feat to live and adapt to this heat, but would it not be a greater feat if we as one were to stop this heat?

††† **Jerry Tran** is a student at Long Bay College, in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland.

In the minds of too many

Francesca Haddon[###]

In the minds of too many, a checklist resides.
A prism through which others are defined
But in these checkboxes, our truths are denied
And culture is left behind.

A brush too broad paints colour too dull
Reducing vibrant hues
I am smothered in grey

While constantly being reminded of the heritage to which I lay claim
I struggle in settings when I'm prompted to say
Where I'm from, my culture, who I am
I want to be proud
But stereotypes and expectations
Pull
Me
Back
Am I an imposter? Do I look like I belong? I need to prove it

Tugging at my shirt
Looking at the floor
I run through the list, hoping I can check boxes
When I know they don't define
Who I am.
Or who I think I need to be

Francesca Haddon is a student at Long Bay College, in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland.

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Reviewed by Bonnie-Estelle K. Trotter-Simons*

> Hope is a tool, a defence against giving up. And hope itself is produced through action. Rather than naivety, critical hope is both a weapon and balm.
>
> (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 212)

Fierce Hope provides a multifaceted account of hope as a driving force for youth activism in Aotearoa between 2018 and 2020. Borne out of curiosity at what "motivates young people raised under neoliberalism to act collectively" in the face of multiple crises—including but not limited to White supremacist violence, climate dangers and the COVID-19 pandemic—Nairn et al. (2022) asked six youth-led and/or youth-majority activist groups to share their experiences with activism towards "enacting a vision for a socially just Aotearoa" (p. 3). The six groups whose stories feature in *Fierce Hope* are Protect Ihumātao, JustSpeak, ActionStation, InsideOUT Kōaro, Thursdays in Black (University of Auckland), and Generation Zero (Auckland). In dialogue with members from these groups, the authors powerfully counter the idea that youth in Aotearoa are politically apathetic and individually oriented.

In this review, I focus on three intertwined threads that Nairn et al. (2022) continuously return to in conversation with their participants: hoping critically, collectivity, and care. These shape the life force of each group's fight for a socially just Aotearoa: through reclaiming stolen Indigenous land, fighting colonisation, abolishing prisons, eliminating sexual violence and gender-based violence, fighting for LGBTQIA+ liberation, and implementing a zero-carbon future. *Fierce Hope* illuminates how hoping critically, engaging collectively, and enacting care might strengthen solidarities between different groups working towards common goals of social justice and transformation.

Chapter One establishes the context for *Fierce Hope*, engaging with the questions "Are [youth activist] visions grounded in hope? Determination? Joy? A search for community? What is the ultimate point of activism? In the context of a bleak present, what does it take to imagine—and work for—a brighter future?" (p. 2). The authors also acknowledge that while applying the 'youth' label to a social movement can risk reducing it to being an age- or generation-specific issue, it is still useful to privilege youth perspectives across each of the activist groups which are "addressing a wide range of structural injustices" and wanting to "make the world a better place for everyone" (pp. 6–7). Indeed, many of the groups' visions build on those of earlier movements while simultaneously being future oriented.

Chapter Two focuses on the first of the six groups, Protect Ihumātao, a campaign to reclaim and protect Ihumātao from Fletcher Building's proposed development to build 480 high-price houses on the whenua. Protect Ihumātao, led by six cousins who share ancestral connections to the land, is connected to an ongoing fight for tino rangatiratanga and a history of Māori-led resistance to colonisation (cf. Harris,

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2004). They spearheaded a diverse political movement comprised of Māori groups and tauiwi groups working together under the kaupapa of peaceful occupation, a vision set by mana whenua.

Chapter Three details the strategic shift from lobbying to community engagement of JustSpeak, a group which also emerged in part due to a "breakdown of the Treaty relationship, and the impact of colonisation" on the justice system in Aotearoa (Julia, JustSpeak, quoted in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 58). By focusing on connecting with young people in Aotearoa, particularly rangatahi Māori, JustSpeak aims to change dominant discourse about incarceration, a step towards their long-term goal to see the last prisons close by 2040, at the bicentenary of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This chapter focuses on challenges facing the group as they experience this shift in direction towards meeting their longer-term goals, such as how, as a group, they may work effectively as Treaty partners given that the majority of JustSpeak members are Pākehā: "People are where the power is … but it takes a bit of shepherding to get everyone to … focus and concentrate their power … and [discover] what pressure we can apply when we get together" (Tamatha, JustSpeak, in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 68).

Chapter Four further explores collaboratively focusing and concentrating people power through looking to ActionStation's use of a mixture of online campaigning and real-time actions to respond to diverse and interconnected social justice issues. The Tauiwi Tautoko project, among other examples, is detailed in this chapter as part of ActionStation's wider core campaigns to dismantle racism. Beginning as a pilot in late 2018, the Tauiwi Tautoko project trained groups of tauiwi (people who are not Māori) to combat racism and colonial rhetoric online over a two-month programme, as a response to the disproportionate emotional toll of this work on tangata whenua activists. It serves as a potent example of how ActionStation enacts a participatory democratic model in a way that speaks to constitutional transformation in Aotearoa through directing tauiwi efforts towards reconciliation and restoration, so that tangata whenua are "free to be able to do the work … to re-indigenise…" (Laura, ActionStation, quoted in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 106). By noting how Tauiwi Tautoko training evolved since its inception (for example, new training was introduced in 2019 to tackle Islamophobia online in response to the Christchurch mosque killings), and describing concurrent actions and initiatives, Nairn et al. (2022) trace how the Tauiwi Tautoko project realises "multiple actions and campaigns [that] contribute to ActionStation's goals", primarily to "address racism and honour Te Tiriti of Waitangi" (p. 109).

Chapter Five introduces the journey of InsideOUT Kōaro, an influential nationwide organisation which seeks to create safer spaces for young rainbow people through educational outreach as well as wider community engagement by holding events for youth, such as the annual Shift hui. Shift hui is a three-day event held at Horouta Marae in Porirua where "rangatahi participate in a range of workshops and activities designed to help them understand themselves and rainbow issues in Aotearoa" (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 131). By cultivating spaces for rainbow young people to freely explore who they are in a caring, safe and empowering environment, "InsideOUT Kōaro's modelling of the world it envisioned has inspired rainbow young people that such a world is possible" (Nairn et al., 2022, p.117; cf. Pottinger, 2017).

Nairn et al. (2022) also emphasise how InsideOUT Kōaro embodies care for its rangatahi and members through its organisational structure and relationships, as described by group member Abby: "The whole self-care thing … they look after you and make sure that you're looking after yourself, because that can be so much easier said than done" (quoted in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 134). Drawing on Abby's insights and other members' experiences of Shift Hui, as well as field notes from the event, the authors highlight self-care as integral and integrated into collective care. They build space for growing conversations within and beyond Aotearoa on politicising care, crucial to the flourishing and maintaining of relationships of solidarity (see Forster, 2022; Hadi, 2020; Lorde & Sanchez, 2017).

Chapter Six is about the work of Thursdays in Black at Waipapa Taumata Rau |the University of Auckland, the only university-based group in the study. Thursdays in Black faced difficulty sustaining its membership, due to the high turnover of students, as well as having fewer resources at their disposal. This

chapter focuses on how, in spite of these challenges, the group works towards their goal of tackling rape culture and patriarchy through engaging in the university structure and making change at the policy level to increase community responsibility for preventing sexual violence: "While the institutional work has been less visible, it is nonetheless another teaspoon of water out of the ocean of rape culture and victim-blaming" (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 171). The authors illustrate that the community and visibility of the group on campus also has substantive impact, showing the importance of change happening at multiple levels: "Every conversation started, every survivor supported, every student served by the new campus support system is one more teaspoon removed from the ocean" (Narin et al., 2022, p. 172).

The story of Generation Zero in Chapter Seven also exemplifies a plurality of approaches to making change. The group self-identify "pretty openly [as] lobbyists" as well as and in addition to "activists" for targeted political change to climate issues, as summed up by member Hamish:

> If our actions on a certain matter are largely done internally … submitting on council plans or meeting with officials, I can say that's lobbying. Whereas when we try to empower the public and get people to vote or sign a petition, or get the public to submit on the same thing, it's shifting from lobbying to activism. (quoted in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 181)

Taking myriad approaches, from lobbying to activism, is how the group seeks to create structural change. One of the biggest wins for Generation Zero was their work towards the Zero Carbon Bill, passed into law in 2019. Nairn et al. (2022, p. 189) also focus on how Generation Zero seeks to deepen their approach to effectively tackle colonisation as the root of the climate crisis.

Chapters Eight and Nine bring the authors' learnings from all of the groups together in conversation. Chapter Eight focuses on the emotional work of activism, community and of sustaining hope, while Chapter Nine analyses the complexity of sustaining collective action through ahi kā—the work of tending a fire to keep the embers burning (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 230; cf. Harris, 2004). This final chapter also explores how each group approaches building solidarity and highlights the centrality of strong female leadership across each of the six groups—who tend to face "extra pressure and critique" yet inspire others with their mana and effectively "guide a collective through the process of social change" (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 254).

In these final chapters, the authors introduce the concept of "hoping critically", which situates hope as entangled with other emotions, such as despair, or generative anger which "fuels" activists' continued action: "Every news story … it just fuels me … anytime I see news about all of these injustices, I just want to fight back more" (Jemima, InsideOUT Kōaro, quoted in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 222). In weaving together voices from Protect Ihumātao, JustSpeak, ActionStation, InsideOUT Kōaro, Thursdays in Black and Generation Zero, the authors illuminate how each group's practices of activism resonate myriad forms of critical hope, both against the dangers of cruel optimism—such as burnout—as well as avoiding naive hope by setting unattainable goals (Berlant, 2011; McGeer, 2004).

> We argue that hoping critically can be helpful in reducing the tension produced by the duelling emotions of urgency and futility. This is because it can hold them in equilibrium, by explicitly acknowledging the various obstacles (such as government inaction) as well as the incremental victories (such as the protection of Ihumātao, the Zero Carbon Act, more cycleways, and the growth of climate activism). (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 220)

Nairn et al. (2022) show that hoping critically is about affirming collective commitment to movements for change by celebrating progress already made while simultaneously paying attention to the challenges that lie ahead —and addressing these step by step while "keeping an eye on the prize" (p. 212; cf. Harris, 2004; Elkington et al., 2020).

Hoping critically aligns well with Freire's (2015) conceptualisation of hope as a humanising force to respond to oppression because it exemplifies the simultaneously affective and intellectual nature of hope in youth activism across these six groups in Aotearoa. It also interconnects with earlier writing from Kidman et al. (2018) on the usefulness of an "educated hope" in Indigenous resistance (p. 235). Quiane, from Protect Ihumātao, described that while hope is collectively experienced in waves—sometimes thin on the shore and other times coming in big swells—it provides new ways for her extended whānau to speak back to colonialism. For example, through becoming "so empowered in their own mana motuhake", during the second week of occupation, fifteen wāhine and two tāne received moko kanohi (facial tatoos):

> Some of my aunties [had] believed that you had to be really old or do something to 'deserve' a moko kauae, without actually just accepting that having Māori whakapapa is enough. And on that second week, they were content that being wahine Māori is enough. And they used this as an opportunity to cement this movement into who they are. (Quiane, Protect Ihumātao, quoted in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 212).

Hoping critically engages directly with the scale of emotional work involved in activism, enabling activists to see transformation already in action as well as living the values they wish to see in the world, as members of InsideOUT Kōaro do. It also fosters collectivity in multiple ways, as hoping critically centrally involves building and sustaining groups, communities and relationships.

One way in which collectivity dovetails with critical hope is through place, and the importance of both local and international relationships. Each group's "theory of change" is multifaceted and embedded in the global as well as and in tandem with the local, as they are informed by "the histories and legacies of indigenous, feminist and queer resistance" (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 23). For example, the cousins of Protect Ihumātao situate their struggles as sharing a "kaupapa of peaceful [community] resistance … against the forces of the state" with earlier movements like Parihaka and Takaparawhau (Bastion Point) (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 234). Some actions that sustained their protest reflected their relationships with and connection to the practices of contemporary Indigenous protests outside of Aotearoa, such as Standing Rock and Mauna Kea. Indigenous Hawaiian members of Mauna Kea gifted a tree to Ihumātao to show their solidarity with the reclamation of land, affirming the collectivity and local-global resonance of Protect Ihumātao:

> Once they [the tamariki] planted that plant, that signified, I think, especially to the police … "Okay, we've got to let this paddock go." … [We now] have this paddock for people to come to, and just being able to sit there and touch the grass, take their shoes off and put their feet in the whenua … I'm so grateful to our tamariki for reclaiming that paddock on the second day. (Tongaporutu, Protect Ihumātao, quoted in Nairn et al., 2022, p. 236).

Much of the work carried out by activists from other groups was also driven by shared hopes for a better world, enacted in ways that resonate with constitutional transformation values of Aotearoa: "ActionStation, JustSpeak, and InsideOUT Kōaro tried to integrate te reo Māori in non-appropriative ways to describe the values that guide their work, as one step towards being more rooted in the culture of, and their responsibilities to, *this* place" (Nairn et al., 2022, p. 268; italics in original). Further to this, each of the groups' enactions of care, for self, each other, the whenua and wider communities, are important to sustaining collectivity—building and strengthening relationships being as much at the heart of organising as achieving political goals (Garza, 2020, p. xii; Nairn et al., 2022, p. 245). Future scholarship that may build on *Fierce Hope* could focus on how youth activists in Aotearoa are sustaining relationships of care in ways that may be mutually mana-enhancing, honouring the relational possibilities within He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti (Forster, 2022). Not only would this branch of conversation build on nuanced discussion of self- and collective care as intertwined, but it also potentially could deepen both activists' and scholars' understandings of how relations of care drive collective capacity to hope critically in Aotearoa.

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