# Jacinda Ardern, Gender, and the News Media Reportage of her Political Leadership

Danielle Selman Julian

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2024

School of Communication Studies

# Abstract

This thesis examines the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern during her inaugural term as the 40th Prime Minister of Aotearoa, New Zealand (2017-2020). By examining the interplay of gendered behaviour, the performance of political leadership, and conventions of political reporting, this thesis underscores the significance of gender as a performative phenomenon (Butler, 1990). Moreover, it posits that politics, like gender, is a performative and communicative phenomenon. Citizens comprehend and interpret political events and messages through the lens of news media reportage and social media activity (Craig, 2016; Trimble, 2017).

The research design takes a mixed-method approach and is structured around the interplay of gendered behaviour, the performance of political leadership, and political journalism. It employs a multi-case study method, incorporating quantitative content analysis of 125 online news media stories, including news stories that originated in print and broadcast radio and television. A thematic analysis was then performed on 121 written news stories. The units of analysis are news media stories from Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Five news events make up three case studies in this thesis: the first case study involves news media stories about Jacinda Ardern's motherhood status; the second case study is about Ardern's crisis leadership, which involves three news events, the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque attacks, the aftermath of the Whakaari White Island eruption, and the initial COVID-19 Outbreaks of 2020; and the third case study is Jacinda Ardern on the world stage, meeting other world leaders.

This study of Jacinda Ardern offers an analysis of the reportage of key political and cultural events in recent Aotearoa New Zealand history. The findings of this

research show that the journalistic formula for reporting on politics and other news sections is not one-size-fits-all but needs to be tailored to the specifics of the news events and news subjects. While the content analysis found that two-thirds of the news coverage held a positive news coverage stance on Ardern's performance of political leadership, the news framing of Ardern's leadership was still thick with essentialised gendered exceptionalism and preferences sexist and misogynistic viewpoints from the news sources' quotes. The research findings show that the cultural understanding of gendered behaviour and the role incongruity women in politics experience is imbued in both the critique and praise of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership. That is, the findings show instances of misogyny but also what is termed here, 'benevolent sexism,' where Ardern's political leadership is credited to her feminine gendered character virtues, as opposed to her agentic leadership decisions. As such, the marking of Ardern's political leadership as 'exceptional' (in both senses of the term) underscores how the foundations and conventions of political journalism privilege culturally hegemonic masculine perspectives over female and non-binary gendered experiences.

This thesis offers a theoretical contribution to the literature by providing a tripartite model of the gendered mediation of female political leadership, asserting that the relationships between the performance of political leadership and media reporting is understood through the lens of gender. Furthermore, through an understanding of Bourdieu's (2005) field theory, it is argued that both the media and political fields have masculinised norms that agents enact. In response, it is argued here that both politics and media should not be 'gender-blind,' but rather that gender be explicitly thematised in political and media performance in ways that critique existing frameworks while also establishing and normalising different ways of engaging in political practice and reportage, which this thesis refers to as a 'gender-consciousness'.

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# Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

Danielle Selman Julian

# Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my supervision team for helping me turn this thesis from the seed of an idea into a forest of knowledge. Thank you, Professor Geoffrey Craig, Associate Professor Vijay Devadas, Dr Jennie Watts, and Dr Rachel Peters, for your support, motivation, and inspiration. Drawing on your perspectives enriched my experience and the final product.

Although Dr Peters was only attached to this thesis officially for a brief time, she generously gave me insights into the PhD journey as a friend and colleague for the years we shared a workspace.

Thank you to Khairiah A Rahman, who was an immense source of moral support for me during research and teaching journey, and especially for her advice and thoughts on the Christchurch Mosque Attacks case study.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Professor Wayne Hope, Yulia Khan, Azaria Howell and Joshua Kirwan for kindly supplying me with a number of books and journal articles to complete the literature review of this thesis.

An extra special thanks to Dr Suze Wilson, who has encouraged me in my research and encouraged me to share my research at the 21st International Studying Leadership Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Thank you to Dinah from the Office of the Prime Minister for helping me with fact-checking.

Thank you to AUT for the Doctoral Scholarship award and the School of Communication Studies, which supported me financially as I completed this research.

In my personal life, I could not have completed my PhD without the moral (and financial support) of my whānau. Thank you, Mum, Dad, and my parents-in-law Debbie and Andy; I do not know where I would be without you all letting me work from the dining room tables, cluttering them with books and papers. Thank

you to my grandparents for your motivation and encouragement throughout my life.

To Nick, you have been my constant source of strength and number crunching. Thank you for listening as I discussed my ideas and shouldering the domestic labour when deadlines approached.

I also wish to acknowledge the lives lost in the tragic events detailed in this work. May you all rest in peace.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Research Approach

This thesis seeks to answer, 'how did the news media report on Jacinda Ardern's gender and political performance during her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister?' This is followed by the secondary question of 'why the news media focused on Ardern's gender to the extent of exceptionalisation when reporting on her political performance during her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand 40th Prime Minister?' Jacinda Kate Laurell Ardern was elected leader of the Labour Party eight weeks before the General Election of 2017 (Chapman, 2020). She served as the 40th Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand, from 26 October 2017 – 25 January 2023. The time period this thesis focuses on is between August 2017, when Ardern became Leader of the Opposition, to the General Election of 2020, 17 October 2020. The data collected for this research are news media stories from 30 news media organisations based in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Canada. To answer the research question, this thesis will look at five critical news events during Ardern's first term through analysis of three case studies:

- Motherhood: Covering Ardern's pregnancy, giving birth and her parenting journey of her daughter Neve
- Crises Events: The March 2019 Mosque Attacks, The December 2019 eruption of Whakaari White Island, The initial outbreaks of COVID-19 from March to October 2020
- Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage: Jacinda Ardern meeting with foreign leaders and attending international diplomatic events

These case studies will be examined through content analysis (Krippendorff, 2019) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The performance of a human-mediated content analysis allows for the patterns in the media reporting of the case studies to be identified and supply this thesis with quantitative weighting. The sample size across the five media events is 125 news stories in total from the genres of broadcast television, radio, print and online media. Following the content analysis, a thematic analysis of all written text will be conducted with the aid of the software NVivo. The computer-mediated thematic analysis aims to go deeper with a discursive analysis to uncover latent meanings and break down the themes of gender and social media to a more granular level through secondary theme coding. The analysis is performed by the researcher but the software NVivo allows for a more complex data sets to be stored and analysed.

The theoretical basis of this thesis is a tripartite structure with gender theory as the lens of which media reporting and the political field are understood by one another. This thesis asserts that Western societal understanding of gender informs beliefs and assertions in the political field, especially a politician's performance and media reporting. Figure 1 on the next page outlines how the theories of gender, media reporting, and the performance of political leadership intersect. This research takes a perspective on gender that aligns with Judith Butler (1990), who argues that gender is a performance, and all individuals are performers of gender. These performances have become so routine over time that society has developed a normative view of masculine and feminine genders, prescribing how men and women should not only behave but also what roles they fulfil in society within the public sphere (economic production) and private sphere (biological reproduction) (Waring, 1999). Meanwhile, Rai (2015) defines political performance as performances that seek to communicate to an audience one's goals and desires related to state institutions, policies and discourses that either reinforce or challenge dominant narratives of politics (pp. 1179-1180). Political performance forms an identity through the repetition of acts, akin to Butler's (1999) description of gender as a performance of repetitive socialised acts (Craig, 2016).

Media reporting is the product of the journalistic field. Media reporting includes written text disseminated in magazines, newspapers and online video content disseminated via television and/or online, and radio content disseminated via FM frequencies and online formats including podcasts. Most work in the feminist political communication space considers politics and the media both in tandem and separately as the primary fields that the campaign for women's rights has actively fought on (Ross, 2017). Feminist media theory and feminist political theory maintain that both gender and politics are performance-based concepts that individuals act out to form a society (Bryson, 2003; Steiner, 2014).

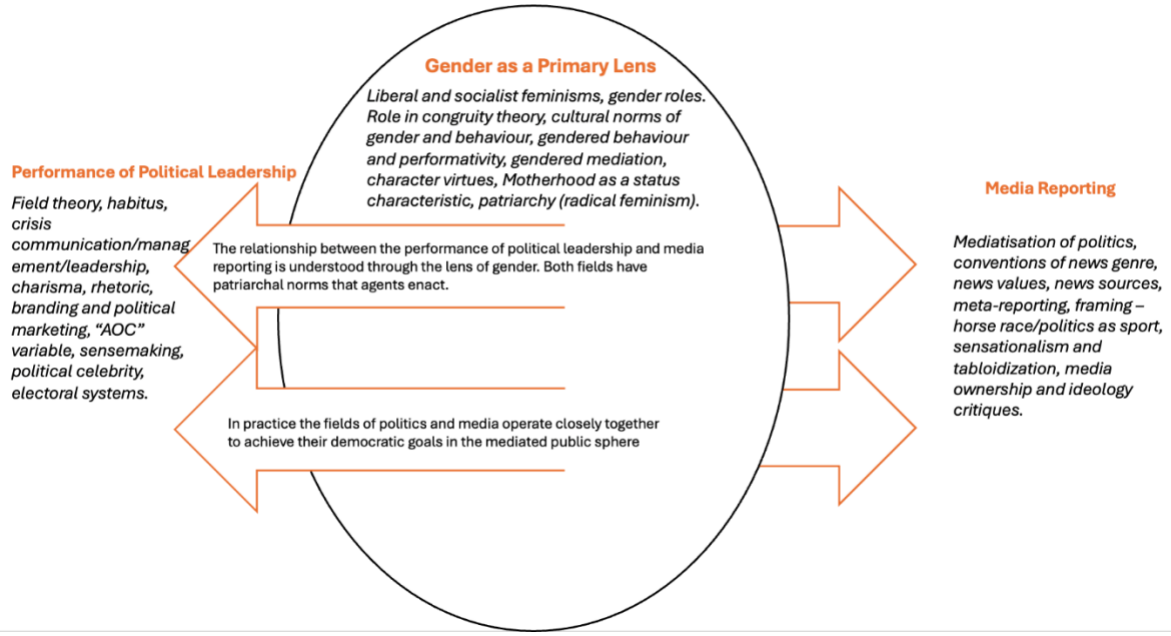


*Figure 1: The model of gendered mediation of political leadership.*

The epistemology of this thesis is based on the feminist schools of thought of liberal, and radical feminisms. The context of this thesis was born out the arguments put forth by liberal feminist scholars, and the social reality that was won through the activist movements grounded in liberal feminism, such as the suffragette movement, and the right for women to hold political office (Coleman, 2019). The radical feminist notion of the patriarchy as an organising structure of society is the most prominent application of this theoretical approach. This thesis argues that news media normalisation of Aotearoa New Zealand women in political leadership is yet to occur

(Trimble, 2017), the behaviour of a successful politician and leader, is ascribed to be masculine rather than feminine, to interrogate the phenomena of role-incongruity and its impacts on gendered exceptionalism in the news media, the work of Eagly and Karau (2002) and Wilson (2016; 2020) will be drawn on. The researcher has adopted a feminist research ethic (Ackerly & True, 2020), which requires constant reflexive thinking about how the author relates to the research through the lived experience and the intersection of her identity as a white presenting cis-gendered female who has Māori and Pākehā heritage, identifies as heterosexual and engaged to be married, experienced a middle-class suburban upbringing and university educated at a postgraduate level, reflexively interrogating the biases that she may hold. Through the use of the feminist research ethic, the 'relatability' of the researcher's life to the subject is not seen as wholly positive, and efforts have been made to incorporate viewpoints from those with different subjectivities into the research of this thesis. It is important to state that the focus of this thesis is on the reporting of Ardern's political leadership, and not of Ardern's leadership itself. Therefore, the thesis does not engage in sustained critiques of her leadership decisions and political policies.

## 1.2 Significance of research

This topic was chosen due to a keen interest in the relationship between journalists and political actors, having completed a master's thesis on the relationship between White House press secretary Sean Spicer and the White House press corps. In a professional capacity, I then did public relations work as a consultant specialising in media relations, crisis communications, and thought leadership for cybersecurity companies. Through my personal experience as a young woman working at the public relations consultancy alongside highly respected and distinguished male public relations experts, my curiosity in patriarchal hegemony and the work of feminist scholars grew as I was advising and working alongside men with more years of experience. The gendered assumptions and micro-discriminations that I experienced in the workplace heightened my awareness of the benevolent and malevolent sexism and misogyny in the media reportage of Jacinda Ardern being Aotearoa New Zealand's most prominent 'working woman.'

During my time at the consultancy, the massacre in the Christchurch mosques occurred; I was struck by the unique, empathetic approach to crisis leadership Ardern had taken and how gendered the reporting of her performance was as I composed client briefings to explain the delay in media relations projects. The gendered reporting and the public discussions were starkly different from reporting on former Prime Minister John Key's leadership after the Christchurch Earthquakes and American Presidents after any mass shooting. Prominent in the online and offline discourses on Ardern's leadership was praise for Ardern's empathy and emotional intelligence.

This research will contribute to the burgeoning field of literature in gendered mediation, particularly in the context of political leadership during crises during a single parliamentary term. This research offers novelty by tying together gendered mediation with crisis communications and leadership theory, particularly contrasting Ardern's

leadership in crisis situations that have been unprecedented in Aotearoa New Zealand, in this lifetime: a terrorist attack, a volcanic eruption, and a pandemic.

This thesis's findings include the need for journalism practice to reckon with the studies that show that the normative assumptions of professionalism in journalism are highly patriarchal (Reidl et al., 2022; Ross et al., 2013; Trimble, 2017). The ideal of journalistic neutrality is to side with the patriarchal status quo. Nancy Fraser (1995) talked of a public man/private woman binary in her critique of Habermas's (1989) public sphere, and this research has shown that Western society's penchant for Cartesian duality and reliance of understanding the social world through binaries like hard/soft, masculine/feminine, seriousness/frivolity, and what Former Prime Minister Bill English referred to as stardust/substance, construct an undervaluing of what society perceives to be feminine and relegates them to 'women's issues'. Through these binaries, the lives, experiences, and social understandings of half the world's population are deemed to be less important or consequential to the lives, experiences, and social understandings of other half. One of the specificities of Ardern's performance of political leadership, was her public display of feminine character virtues and behaviours. Unlike previous Female Prime Ministers like Helen Clark, who were instructed to change their voice and speech patterns, and Hillary Clinton adopting the sartorial style of pantsuits, Ardern performed her gender as unapologetically feminine. This is despite previous evidence that it is 'easier' for women to break through the glass ceiling if they can fit into the existing male-dominated parliamentary culture (McKay, 2011). Ardern wore dresses and skirts and shed a tear when emotional; she wore a hijab visiting mosques, and hugged mourners in the aftermath of the Christchurch terror attacks, all the while still holding the 'masculine' position as Prime Minister, enacted in an agentic but compassionate leadership style, showing that these gendered behaviours and performances are to be viewed as spectrums, where the political moment dictates what action and expression is appropriate. The praise for Ardern's performance of political leadership had an overwhelmingly positive coverage stance in the content analysis of this thesis; the praise of Ardern seen in these news

media stories was, in fact, imbued with benevolent sexism. The journalistic field seemed to fail to capture the complexities of Ardern's individuality and rely on benevolent and, sometimes, aggressive sexism and misogyny to mediate her performance of political leadership to the media consumer.

## 1.3 Thesis Structure

Chapter one includes this introductory chapter that introduces the research question, the theoretical framework, and the significance this thesis has in the academic field of political communication. This chapter will also provide contexts important to this thesis, such as a short biography of Jacinda Ardern, why the case study events were chosen for this thesis and their impact on the analysis.

The second chapter is the literature review covering the political and journalistic fields, women in politics, political leadership and performance, and political news reportage.

Chapter three covers the methodology of this thesis. This section consists of one chapter that will discuss the merits of content, case study, and thematic analyses, and how the selected approaches will contribute to the research. The chapter will then discuss the research design for this project.

Chapter four focuses on the motherhood case study, the chapter contains the results and analyses from the content and thematic analyses performed on the news stories relating to this case study. The chapter will synthesise the themes found in the case study's news media reporting, the news reporting conventions such as news coverage stance, news values, and how the news values highlighted gendered tropes

such as benevolent sexism. This chapter will employ the tripartite structure of analysis of gendered behaviour, the performance of political leadership, and the conventions of political journalism to address how Jacinda Ardern's gender was mobilised in the reporting of the motherhood case study.

Chapter five focuses on the crisis leadership case study, which draws on three different crises during the Ardern's first term as prime minister. The first crisis, (crisis A) is the shootings at Christchurch mosques on 15 March 2019. The second crisis, (crisis B) is the eruption of Whakaari White Island (Whakaari) on 9 December 2019. The third crisis (crisis C) is the response to COVID-19 in 2020 until the New Zealand General Election in 2020. This chapter will report the findings of the content and thematic analyses, synthesise the results across the three crises, and highlight the difference in the reporting seen across the different crises. This chapter will elucidate how Jacinda Ardern's gender was exceptionalised and mobilised in the news media reporting of her crisis leadership through the tripartite structure of gendered behaviour, the performance of political leadership and the conventions of political journalism.

Chapter six covers the world stage case study, which pertains to Jacinda Ardern meeting with foreign political leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand, and abroad on diplomatic and trade missions. This chapter will report the findings from the content and thematic analyses related to the world stage case study. This chapter will elucidate how Jacinda Ardern's gender was exceptionalised and mobilised in the news media reporting of her interactions with other world leaders and the comparisons made about her political performance through the tripartite structure of gendered behaviour, the performance of political leadership and the conventions of political journalism.

Chapter seven will examine how the genre of the news item, influences the themes in the news stories' narrative and journalistic evaluations from across the full thematic analysis sample, combining the results of the news events from the case studies holistically.

Chapter eight is the conclusion, which will highlight the findings and arguments made in this thesis and the significance of this research.

This chapter will now move on to providing background information to contextualise the case study events, and Jacinda Ardern's rise to being Aotearoa New Zealand's third female Prime Minister.

## 1.4. Background Information

Before the theoretical foundation of past scholarly work and the research design of this thesis is laid out, it is important to sketch the political and personal contexts that led to Jacinda Ardern becoming the Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand. This sub-section will first provide a short biography on Ardern's family, educational, and professional background. Secondly, this sub-section will outline New Zealand's electoral system of Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) and the key aspects of the 2017 general election, which resulted in the New Zealand Labour Party governing in coalition with the New Zealand First Party and a confidence and supply agreement with the New Zealand Green Party. This chapter will then briefly introduce the events covered in the case studies of this thesis. The case studies selected in this thesis all relate to one another as they were highly mediated political events that resulted in numerous headlines that shaped the public discourse. In discussions of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership, these events during her first term are often referenced in the praise and critique of her performance.

### 1.4.1 A Short Biography of Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern

Jacinda Ardern (full name Jacinda Kate Laurell Ardern) was the 40th Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand. She was born on 26 July 1980 in Morrinsville, Waikato, New Zealand. Ardern became the youngest Prime Minister of New Zealand in 150 years at age 37, in October 2017. During her childhood, her father, Ross, worked as a police officer throughout the Waikato region and in the small Bay of Plenty town of Murupara. He also served as the Administrator of Tokelau. Her mother, Laurell, worked in the lunch canteen of the secondary school that Ardern also attended, Morrinsville College. Ardern also served as the Student Representative for the Board of Trustees. During her time as Student Representative, Ardern successfully campaigned to allow female students to have long pants in their school uniforms (Chapman, 2020). Ardern joined the New Zealand Labour Party at age 17 because 'she wanted to help reduce child poverty' (Devaney, 2020).

After secondary school, Jacinda Ardern attended the University of Waikato and graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Communication Studies, majoring in public relations (Chapman, 2020). Ardern also completed some honours courses in political science at Victoria University Wellington but did not finish the qualification. She studied at Victoria University while working as a political staffer for the New Zealand Labour Party in Parliament (Gillard & Okonjo-Iweala, 2020). During her time as a parliamentary staffer, Ardern worked for then-Associate Minister of Energy, Harry Duynhoven, then-Minister of Justice Phil Goff, and then-Prime Minister Helen Clark. Ardern then moved to the United Kingdom where she worked for as a Senior Policy Advisor for Prime Minister Tony Blair before being seconded to Gordon Brown and the Home Office to assist on a review of policing in England and Wales (The University of Waikato, n.d.). Jacinda Ardern was also involved in the youth wing of the New Zealand Labour Party, Young Labour. Through her involvement with Young Labour, she became the International President of the International Union of Socialist Youth (Chapman, 2020).

Jacinda Ardern returned to Aotearoa New Zealand to campaign in the 2008 election. She entered Parliament as an Opposition List MP in 2008, after the Labour Party lost the election. In an interview with Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala for their book *Women and Leadership: Real Lives, Real Lessons* (2020, p.87), Ardern revealed that during the list ranking process, Grant Robertson (who went on to be Finance Minister) declared that he did not wish to be nominated for a list placing until 'Jacinda Ardern has been placed'. As a result, she was given a high list ranking and was elected to Parliament. Ardern notably contested the Auckland Central electoral seat twice against National Party candidate Nikki Kaye. The media dubbed their race 'the battle of the babes', which sparked some controversy (Holden, 2017). In February 2017, Jacinda Ardern won the Mt Albert electoral seat in a by-election. One month later, she became the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party after Annette King, the then-Deputy, announced her retirement from Parliament and would not contest the 2017 election. On 1 August, she became the Leader of the New Zealand Labour Party, seven weeks before the general election, after then-Leader Andrew Little resigned due to poor media polling (Gillard & Okonjo-Iweala, 2020).

Jacinda Ardern's relative youth (in comparison to other political leaders) and gender had a strong impact on the media reportage of Ardern's appointment to the leadership. Jesse Mulligan asked Ardern on live television if she wished to have children, as she did not have any children at that time. The conversation between Ardern and Mulligan over this sensitive topic was cordial. As Madeleine Chapman (2020) noted in her biography of Jacinda Ardern, Mulligan was a friend of Ardern's and had previously worked with her partner Clarke Gayford at the same radio station. The next morning, presenter of *The AM Show,* Mark Richardson, in an interview with Ardern, insisted that the country had the right to know about her family planning, likening it to employers needing to know about their prospective employee's family planning (Holden, 2017). He claimed that if she became Prime Minister, she would be like an employee to the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. This is despite the fact that asking such a question is illegal in New Zealand under section 22 of the Human Rights Act (Blue, 2017). Jacinda Ardern became the Prime Minister in October 2017, after a month

of negotiations with the New Zealand First Party to form a coalition government. Ardern became the third female Prime Minister in Aotearoa New Zealand. She announced her pregnancy to the media in January 2018 (Chapman, 2020).

Jacinda Ardern gave birth to her daughter Neve on 21 June 2018. This made Ardern only the second head of government in the world to give birth in office. Ardern was, however, the first elected leader to take a period of maternity leave, which saw Ardern gain considerable international media attention (Gillard & Okonjo-Iweala, 2020). During her tenure as Prime Minister, Ardern has also gained praise and international media attention for her leadership response to the Christchurch Mosque attacks in March 2019, the eruption of Whakaari/White Island in December 2019, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

### 1.4.2 The 2017 New Zealand General Election

The type of electoral system has a fundamental impact on a nation's political and social landscape (Miller & Lane, 2010). Electoral systems can be broadly separated into the categories of majoritarian or proportional. In 1993, a referendum on New Zealand's electoral system resulted in MMP replacing the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system in 1996. MMP as a plurality system is said to force parties to address the need for a representation of minority interests, such as women, Māori and Asian communities (Miller & Lane, 2010). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the adoption of this electoral system has seen more diversity in the demographics of the Members of Parliament. Aotearoa New Zealand has a Westminster style of parliament, but there is no Upper House. The House of Representatives consists of 120 members (Geddis & Morris, 2004). The general election for the 120 members occurs every three years, unless it is called for earlier by a sitting government (Geddis & Morris, 2004).

During the election, eligible voters (anyone living in Aotearoa New Zealand for more than a year over the age of eighteen or living overseas and who has returned to the

country in the past three years) have two votes to cast (Geddis & Morris, 2004). The first vote is the 'party vote': with this vote the person selects their preferred political party; the second vote is the 'electorate vote': with which the person selects who their preferred candidate to be the representative of their local area known as the electorate. Voters are able to split their two votes between parties, for example a constituent in the Epsom electorate may give their party vote to the National Party, but give their electoral vote to David Seymour, the leader of the ACT (Association of Consumers and Taxpayers) Party. These two votes together decide how many political party members enter Parliament. Usually, in total, there are 120 parliamentary seats. In Aotearoa New Zealand, there are 69 electorates, 62 general electorates, and seven Māori electorates. To be eligible to vote in the Māori electorates, voters must be of Māori descent and choose to be on the Māori electoral roll (Geddis & Morris, 2004). The remaining 51 members are called List MPs and do not have electorates for which they are responsible. These members enter Parliament based on the percentage of the party vote that their political party receives. All candidates are ranked, with the leader taking the first place. After the number of electoral MPs is accounted for in the voting percentage, the highest-ranked members on the list enter Parliament to make up the difference (Gillard & Okonjo-Iweala, 2020).

The 2017 general election had historic implications, as it was the first election where the political party with the largest voting majority did not form a government (English, 2018). Winston Peters (2018) and many other politicians, journalists and political commentators noted how 'the elevation of Jacinda Ardern changed the election dynamic' (p.41). The New Zealand Labour Party was polling at 24 per cent while Andrew Little was the party leader. His resignation and Ardern's ascension to the leadership saw polling figures rise by 19 per cent (Vowles, 2018). Ardern's leadership of Labour caused what media referred to as a 'youthquake' and 'Jacindamania' (akin to Beatlemania). More youth voted in the 2017 election than any previous election (Vowles, 2018). Another leadership change during the 2017 election was the resignation of Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei, who admitted to not disclosing income while on

a benefit and giving a false address to electoral authorities in 1993 to vote for her friend K.T. Julian of the McGillcuddy Serious Party in the election (Vowles, 2018). Public sympathy was lost when Turei admitted to past electoral fraud. Ardern also declared that Turei would not become a minister in a government she would lead, adding to the mounting pressure of two other senior Green MPs who were publicly pressuring her to resign (Vowles, 2018). This was seen as a hard-line leadership move from Ardern.

Ardern (2018, p.39) referred to the election results as creating the 'most genuine MMP government we've ever had.' The National Party received 44.4 per cent of the overall votes in the election compared to 36.9 per cent for The Labour Party (Elections.nz, 2017). This translated into the National Party having a total of 56 seats, while Labour was awarded 46 seats. New Zealand First received 7.2 per cent of the vote, which translated to 9 parliamentary seats (Vowles, 2018). A political party or a coalition of political parties requires 61 seats in the House of Representatives to form a government. On the election night, 23 September 2017, Labour, New Zealand First and the Green parties had a combined 61 seats (Ardern, 2018, p.39). After all the special votes (those cast overseas or those who voted before election day) were counted, the total became a combined 63 seats for Labour, New Zealand First and the Green parties. After a month-long negotiation, the government was formed in October 2017 (Ardern, 2018).

This chapter will now provide introductory summaries of the five news events that made up three case studies that form the corpus of the data of this study. These case studies all cluster around themes that contribute to the legacy of Ardern's political leadership in her first term as prime minister. Ardern pregnancy and her motherhood status were seen as a symbolic step in the fight for gender equality in the political sphere and for working mothers. The three crisis news events are all different in their nature. First, there was the terrorist attack on two Christchurch mosques in March 2019. Then, nine-months later in December 2019, the stratovolcano on Whakaari White Island erupted while cruise ship tourists and tourism operators were visiting the island. Thirdly, there was the initial COVID-19 outbreaks in 2020. All three of these crises were reported internationally, as seen in the samples of news media

stories. These news stories help shape the sense-making of Ardern's political leadership. The positive yet gendered journalistic critiques of her performance contribute to her leadership legacy. The third case study is titled Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage. This case study highlights not only the globalised nature of the political field but also shows in real-time the contrast between Ardern and her more role-congruent peers such as Australia's Scott Morrison and the United States' Donald Trump. This creates a holistic picture of the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership in her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister.

### 1.4.3. The Context of Jacinda Ardern's Pregnancy and the Birth of Neve Gayford

Jacinda Ardern announced her pregnancy via her social media platforms on January 19, 2018. Media coverage of this announcement noted that it meant Ardern conducted the coalition negotiations and created her cabinet of government ministers while experiencing morning sickness (*RNZ,* 2018). The baby's father is her partner (now husband) Clarke Gayford, a television show host and keen fisherman, which inspired the pregnancy announcement's fishing hook motif. Their daughter was born on 23 June 2018. In the following six weeks, Ardern took maternity leave when Rt Hon Winston Peters became Acting Prime Minister. Ardern garnered significant media attention globally, both with the announcement of her pregnancy and the announcement of Neve's birth. Ardern chose to announce the birth on social media, captioning her post, "Welcome to our village, wee one". A few months later, Baby Neve made history becoming the first infant to be on the floor of the UN General Assembly (Chapman, 2019), inspiring another flurry of media coverage. This was chosen as a case study due to it being seen as a symbolic milestone for women and the liberal feminist notion of 'having it all', (Jaggar, 1988). Motherhood, by nature, is a highly gendered phenomenon and, therefore, firmly belongs in a thesis about how the news media reported on Jacinda Ardern's gender and performance of political leadership.

### 1.4.4 Crisis A: The Christchurch Mosque Attacks

This thesis has chosen not to address the Christchurch Mosque shooter by name. This is in line with Jacinda Ardern's choice to focus on the victims and their families and not award the terrorist with notoriety. On 15 March 2019, a gunman assailed two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, consecutively during Friday Prayers. First, he attacked the Al-Noor Mosque in the suburb of Riccarton at 1:40pm, and then went on to the Linwood Islamic Centre at 1:55pm. The shootings were live-streamed on Facebook and copied, then shared, onto other social media sites such as Twitter. The shooter also wrote an 87-page manifesto, which was shared on the trolling internet forum *8Chan* (Gessen, 2019).

The video was classified by New Zealand's Chief Censor as objectionable, thereby making possession of the video illegal under the Films, Videos and Publication Classification Act 1993 (South, 2019).

In total, 51 people died, and 41 people were injured in the two shootings. New Zealand is considered a relatively safe country with a low homicide rate. Previous to this shooting, the deadliest mass shooting was the 1990 Aramoana shooting, where 13 people died (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2021).

The Christchurch mosque shootings resulted in The Christchurch Call, which was a voluntary agreement between social media tech giants and governments, including Emmanuel Macron's French Government and Angela Merkel's German Government (South, 2019).

On 26 March 2020, the shooter plead guilty to all charges. The charges were: 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder, and one count under the terrorism suppression act (*RNZ,* 2020).

Ardern was praised internationally for her response and leadership throughout the aftermath. She promoted kindness with the slogan 'They are us', and images of

Ardern wearing a hijab and hugging loved ones were broadcasted all over the world, even being projected onto Dubai's Petronas Towers, the tallest structure in the world (Gessen, 2019).

This case study was chosen due to the historic nature of being Aotearoa New Zealand's deadliest mass shooting, and it is also considered the first terrorist attack in the country. The focus on Ardern's compassionate leadership and her mode of dress in the news media reporting was striking, and as previously mentioned, was one of the catalysts for pursuing a PhD in this topic.

### 1.4.5 Crisis B: The Whakaari/White Island Eruption

Whakaari White Island erupted on 9 December 2019 at 2:11pm. The island is an active andesite stratovolcano off the North Island's Bay of Plenty coast. It has been a popular tourist attraction since the 1990s, with boats leaving to tour the island, and 10,000 tourists are estimated to visit each year (Stock, 2019, December 15). Forty-seven people were on the island at the time of the eruption, including 38 cruise ship passengers. The death toll was 21, including two bodies who could not be found and have been presumed dead. Twenty-six people were reported as injured. The nationalities of those on the island were Australian, American, New Zealand, British, Malaysian, German and Chinese (Whyte, 2019).

As happened after the March 15 attacks, images of Ardern hugging first responders were seen worldwide. According to *The New Zealand Herald* (Jancic & Walls, 2019), Elaine McKay, an Australian woman wrote on Twitter, 'What a class act Jacinda Ardern is. Her compassionate speech in regard to the volcanic eruption on White Island is something we in Australia would never experience under our cold, hard, hard-hearted government.' Many similar comparisons were drawn between Ardern and

Australia's then Prime Minister Scott Morrison, and his failure to act and mitigate the devastating bushfires that burned throughout Australia's east coast that year.

All those injured or killed in the eruption were covered by ACC New Zealand, regardless of nationality. ACC New Zealand is the country's no-fault accident compensation scheme that covers treatment (Graham-McLay, 2019). This was frequently addressed in the international media in the news media story sample. Jacinda Ardern regularly fronted the media with updates on the recovery operation, in this news event, Ardern acted mainly as an institutional voice.

### 1.4.6 Crisis C: The COVID-19 Outbreaks (March 2020-October 2020)

The Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19, is an ongoing worldwide pandemic that began in Wuhan, China, in late 2019. The virus rapidly spread throughout the world. Countries such as the United States and India have experienced high death tolls from the disease (Callahan, 2021; Sreedharan, 2021). The New Zealand government announced that the country was to enter a lockdown period, starting 25 March 2020 at 11:59pm, instructing all people to stay in their homes unless they worked in essential services such as healthcare, aged care, pharmacies, media, freight and supermarkets (*RNZ,* 2020). This initial lockdown period lasted for six weeks. When New Zealand first entered the lockdown period, there were 413,000 cases of COVID-19 worldwide.

While the lockdown was successful in minimising case numbers and deaths, with no detrimental impact on the health system, it was not without scandal. Then-Health Minister Dr David Clark was found to be breaking the government's public health orders to go mountain biking in his local Dunedin and take a walk along the beach with his family (Fedshun, 2020). This resulted in Clark resigning, referring to himself as 'an idiot'. Questions over Clark's competence were also raised when he chose to spend

the lockdown period with his family in Dunedin, rather than in Wellington (Braae, 2020). During the lockdown period, Ardern held daily press conferences with the Director General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield. Occasionally, Bloomfield was accompanied by Dr Clark's replacement as Health Minister, Chris Hipkins.

Ardern also received international acclaim for her leadership during the coronavirus crisis for her 'calm, decisive and above all else *clear'* decision making and communication style (Clench, 2020, *original emphasis*). In 2020, Aotearoa New Zealand had one hundred days without a reported COVID-19 case in the community until 11 August 2020, when four cases were discovered (Hollingsworth, 2020). Auckland, the country's most populated city, entered another lockdown period until 30 August 2020 (*Covid19.govt.nz,* n.d). Ardern then decided to delay the 2020 general election from late September 2020 to 17 October 2020.

The New Zealand public's trust in the Government's COVID-19 response has been heralded as one of the strongest in the world (Hipkins, 2020). With strategies such as managed isolation and quarantine at the border, in which all entering New Zealand must isolate in a hotel quarantine facility for 14 days, and the clear Alert Level system which was used until 3 December 2021 when vaccination levels were deemed high enough to make it safe to move away from using lockdowns (New Zealand Government, 2022). Alongside the health response, the New Zealand Government also instituted an economic recovery package that included:

1. $42 billion of infrastructure investments
2. Training incentives and job creation programmes
3. Wage subsidy schemes to assist businesses with maintaining their staff (Hipkins, 2020).

The 2020 general election saw another historic result, with half of voters casting for the Labour Party. This result is said to be a tribute to the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic (Mills et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, with the virus mutating to variants known as Delta and Omicron and continuing to affect New Zealanders throughout all facets of society. This case study is set within the parameters of March 2020- 17 October 2020, the date of the election and thus the end of Ardern's first term.

This case study was selected due to its impact on Aotearoa New Zealand society at large and the ongoing nature of the global pandemic. Ardern's pandemic leadership and crisis communications style during her first term was heralded as world-class and leading (Halliday, 2024).

### 1.4.7. The Context of Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage

The case study of Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage is made up of news media stories about Ardern meeting with other political leaders from foreign countries, such as Former Australian Prime Ministers Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison, Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Former US President Donald J. Trump. The events where Ardern and the foreign political leaders met included diplomatic and trade missions, summits and conferences. The news media stories in this case study include joint press conferences and reporting on the interpersonal exchanges between Ardern and the foreign leaders, both formal in their official duties and informal in the capacity of building rapport with small talk. An example of this is the news media stories that noted when Trump referred to Ardern, saying, "This lady caused a lot of upset in her country." Ardern retorted, "No one marched when I was elected." This case study shows Ardern's international reputation gaining positive traction. The case study also helps to capture the gendered mediation of Ardern's political performance compared to her contemporaries, who were older white men with greying hair.

The next chapter will be the literature review. It will lay out the theoretical foundations by assessing key scholarly works in the research areas of the political and journalistic fields, gender in politics and feminism, political leadership, performance, and image management, and finally, the theories of news construction and production of political journalism.

# 2. Literature Review

The following chapter will address and evaluate academic literature that will build the theoretical foundation to answer this thesis' central research questions: 1. How did the news media report on Jacinda Ardern's gender and political performance in her first term as New Zealand's Prime Minister? 2. Why the news media focused on Ardern's gender to the extent of exceptionalisation when reporting on her political performance during her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand 40th Prime Minister? The academic literature reviewed in this chapter comes from a range of academic disciplines, such as sociology, journalism studies and political communication. The main body of this chapter will be spilt into four sections to review the academic works thematically. Firstly, the political and journalistic fields that this thesis is investigating will be explained using Pierre Bourdieu's (1977; 2005; 2020) field theory. Field theory is a sociological explanation for the social spaces or structures that have a set of entrenched rules and expectations that interrelate to one another to create a functioning society. After a brief overview of the theory, the literature review will specifically assess how the theory is applied in journalism and politics through the works of scholars such as Benson and Neuve (2005), and Champagne (2005). Furthermore, the literature review will specifically explore the subfield of political journalism as this is the institutional site of which the data for this thesis is collected. The literature review will then assess works on how the performance of gender manifests and is regulated in both the journalistic and political fields. Both the journalistic and political fields are noted to be highly masculinised and aggressive spaces that have historically been dominated by men and were once seen as male-only professions. Academic works that discuss gender include Judith Butler's (1990) seminal work *Gender Trouble* as well as Ross (2002; 2017) and Stevens (2007) who specifically look at the relationship between gender, politics and the media.

Building upon investigating gender in the journalistic and political fields, this chapter will explore women in politics more in-depth. This section will start with an overview of the general history of women as politicians and related theories from around the Anglosphere and other Commonwealth countries. This is important as not only does this thesis concern Jacinda Ardern, a female New Zealand Prime Minister, but also New Zealand has had one of the highest numbers of female country leaders (Gillard & Okonja-Iweala, 2020) and was the first nation to implement universal suffrage. This section will then discuss feminist theories that guided the social movements that lead to women's inclusion in political life. This section will also discuss feminist media (Ross, 2017; Steiner, 2014) and feminist political theories (Bryson, 2003). It will also discuss liberal feminism which has led to the political reality that Ardern operates in and socialist and radical feminist schools of thought that this thesis will use to critique this political reality (Beasley, 1990; Jaggar, 1988).

The third section of this chapter will explore key scholarship around political leadership and performance. This thesis asserts that political leadership and the performance of politics are essential to the understanding of how the political field operates, especially to the voting layperson. This section will begin with an explanation of political leadership and its relation to Bourdieu's (1977; 2020) concept of habitus. Political leadership is a concept for explaining best practice for individuals who act as figurehead and are in charge of countries and political parties. Habitus, meanwhile, is a concept that explains the 'structural make-up' showing how an individual is situated and how they behave in the social world. One's 'structural make-up' includes grooming and fashion choices, educational achievement (as well as the schools they attended), accent, posture, and their general bodily deportment (Bourdieu, 2005). The importance of this section to the thesis cannot be overstated, because the research question concerns the news media's reporting of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership. The best-practice concepts theorised by the likes of Kasińska-Metryska (2021) and Wilson (2021), in tandem with habitus as an explanation of Ardern's personal background and journey to become New Zealand's Prime Minister, is integral to a successful

assessment of her political performance. From there academic works from the likes of Perloff (2022) will be used to create a theoretical base for how performance, rhetoric and charisma will be analysed in this thesis. Rhetoric encompasses verbal content, argumentation, symbolic components and stylistic features of public communication intended to persuade, spanning rhetoric in Ancient Greece and modern political speeches. For the rhetoric to be persuasive the politician must possess charisma. Jacinda Ardern was lauded for her charismatic strength and use of rhetorical devices during crises that are case studies in this thesis. Finally, the third section will explore academic literature around crisis communications. Crisis communications is a division of public relations that the author of this thesis practised in her career. It sets out best-practice ideas for what leaders can do to help their people through times of crises. A crisis can be a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, or a pandemic. All three of these examples occurred during Ardern's first term as New Zealand's Prime Minister and are case studies in the analyses of the thesis. Key scholars of crisis communications whose work is explored in this chapter include Coombs (1999) and Gigliotti (2016).

The final theoretical section of this chapter will review scholarship discussing the news reportage of politics. News media have, in recent decades, continued to become more entrenched as a central player in politics. News media can be found influencing institutions, performing strategic functions for political elites, and serving as the playing field on which politics is performed. The process of how this occurs is referred to as 'mediatisation'. Key theorists of mediatisation include Brian McNair (2000; 2018) and Jesper Strömbäck (2008, 2011). Mediatisation demonstrates the symbiotic relationship that the news media and the political class have with each other and highlights how politics in itself is a communicative and performative field. Mediatisation is a fundamental theory for this thesis, as it deals with the intersections of gender, media, and politics. This section will explore scholarship around news values, which is a study of newsworthiness and a tool used by journalists and public relations professionals/political media advisors alike to construct the mediated world presented to news audiences. The key scholarship on news values that this chapter will

investigate includes work from Galtung and Ruge (1965), Bendarek & Caple (2017), and Harcup and O'Neill (2001; 2017). This section will also discuss news genre, which is the classification of how an event is treated as a news. News stories about economic policy, a political crisis or a business merger are classed as 'hard news'. Meanwhile, news stories about celebrities giving birth to babies or getting married, and news stories about childcare and 'women's interests' are classed as 'soft news' (Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015). News genre also offers an explanation of editorial and opinion columns that offer a deeper analysis and opinion of current political and social issues. News genre is an important concept to this thesis as it explains how journalism operates in the sense of being a business offering a product. News genre will also help this thesis in the analysis of news stories about Ardern's pregnancy and motherhood, as well as the media treatment that Ardern received during these events. Finally, this section will review scholarship around framing theory. Framing theory is central to journalism studies and political communication, not just in theory but also in practice. Framing is the process of selecting aspects of an issue and making connections that will emphasis a particular political event or idea (Perloff, 2022). Framing theory and the works of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), and Perloff (2022) will provide this thesis a theoretical basis to analyse the gendered journalistic critiques of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership and performance.

This chapter will then conclude with further reinforcement of how the theories inform the analyses in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

## 2.1 The Political and Journalistic Fields

Field theory is a sociological explanation of the structured social spaces (or sites) that people interact within and with one another to form a functioning society. Bourdieu (1998) refers to these social spaces as 'fields' *(le champs* in his native French) and likens these social spaces to a rugby field and a force field between those who

dominate and the dominated. Fields include the family, medical, education, literature, media and political. Each field has its own unique set of rules, histories, star players and lore (Thompson, 2014). These occupational fields also exist within a wider field of power, known to most as 'society' (Davis & Seymour, 2010). In these fields, individuals, as well as institutions, which Bourdieu (2005) refers to as agents, must follow a set of rules that are often governed by their positions within the field. The analogy of a sports game is most helpful to explain how agents interact in their respective fields. Rugby fields have defined physical boundaries within which players can play the game, the conditions surrounding the field can also impact how the game is played. The rugby field, like Bourdieu's social fields do not stand alone but have other structures around them (Thompson, 2014). For example, rugby fields need seating, toilets, and refreshment booths for spectators to watch the game. The structures of the medical field cannot operate without the education field first schooling and training the pupils to become doctors and nurses.

The agents of fields interact with the structures and other individuals in the field with a consideration of power. Individuals gain their positions through power amassed by capital. Capital can be anything that has an exchange value. Bourdieu (2005) outlines four main kinds of capital: economic, symbolic, social, and cultural. Examples of these capitals include:

1. Economic capital: wealth, cash, property
2. Symbolic capital: honour, prestige, such as awards or titles
3. Social capital: connections such as family and friends
4. Cultural capital: education, qualification, style of dress (Bourdieu, 1986; Davis, 2010).

Agents in the field can lose or gain capital as they progress or lose status in a field's hierarchy. It also must be noted that the hierarchy of capital is unique to each field (Thompson, 2014). While the economic capital of wealth may be more important in the banking and investment fields, the cultural capital from one's education and

qualifications are more important in the medical field. Continuing the example from the medical field, a doctor possesses power/ is dominant over a nurse due to the prestige of the doctor's education and qualification, allowing them to make important decisions about the patient's medical care, such as what treatment to prescribe. Education is also a key component of another theory of Bourdieu's, habitus, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

The specific fields that this literature review and thesis will investigate are the journalistic and political fields. Bourdieu himself did not explicate his field theory directly onto the political field; however, he did discuss the symbiotic relationship between the political and journalistic fields (Thompson, 2014). From here, the chapter will first review literature on the political field, before moving onto the journalism field and the subfield of political journalism that brings the two fields to be in constant contact with one another. This section will finally conclude with a review of scholarship around how gender is performed in the political and journalistic fields.

The political field as defined by Bourdieu includes the structures of formal institutionalised politics. This includes political parties as a structure, as well as the behaviour of agents in the parliamentary debating chamber (Davis, 2010; Davis & Seymour, 2010). In New Zealand and other Westminster parliamentary systems, the debating chamber can often be referred to as the 'The House'. While this thesis is specifically analysing the political field in New Zealand, examples of scholarly work from the United Kingdom (Davis, 2010; Davis & Seymour, 2010) and Australia (Craig, 2013) can also show practical application of Bourdieu's field theory due to their similar parliamentary and party structures. In the political field, not only are political parties considered agents of field, but politicians are also the socially embedded actors who are influenced and bound by the social space and relational norms. Political parties gain the right to rule through the electoral system. It is important to note that the assessment of the political field made in this thesis is relating to the modern political

field, as opposed to the historical political field where agents often ruled as unelected hereditary monarchs (see Grenfell, 2014). This means that the hierarchy of forms of capital to achieve status of power in the political field has changed. Unique to the political field is that the power is given to people inside the field by individuals outside of it, the voters award power to politicians. In modern times, we have seen a professionalisation of democratic politics with an increasing number of policy and media advisors to assist politicians in crafting their polished political performances; the advisors are also considered part of the political field (Davis, 2010; Davis & Seymour 2010; Grenfell, 2014; Perloff, 2022). These advisors help politicians exchange their capital into votes from the electorate.

To go further, capital that politicians can sell themselves with includes economic/financial capital such as their own wealth. Individuals need to have enough money in their reserves to launch and fund their campaigns for political position. This also includes being able to take leave from/or resign their current occupation to campaign for office if they are not an incumbent (as noted by Perloff, 2022). Candidates can also possess the financial capital of status (Craig, 2013) through their former positions in the business field. For example, in New Zealand Christopher Luxon, the Member of Parliament for Botany, leader of the National Party, and current Prime Minister, was the Chief Executive Officer of the national airline, Air New Zealand, before gaining selection as candidate. Social capital refers to the social and professional connections that actors can leverage to achieve their goals. For example, before Ardern became a Member of Parliament she worked as a political staffer for former New Zealand Prime Minister, Helen Clark (Gillard & Okonjo-Iwealea, 2020). The third form is cultural capital, which can include their educational qualifications (Craig, 2013). An example of educational qualification could range from the fit for purpose degree for politicians from Oxford and Cambridge, Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (Davis, 2010) or receiving postgraduate degrees such as a Doctor of Philosophy or a Master of Business Administration or attending elite secondary schools in New Zealand, such as Kings College or Auckland Grammar. Cultural capital can also be expressed through a

politician's aesthetics and taste in their self-presentation, such as how they dress, how they groom themselves or how they speak. Politics is a communicative field; an actor needs to have crucial grasp of language in relation to their vocabulary and the examples from popular culture that they use in their speeches. Craig (2013) also argues this point by stating that the political field is a site of representational labour and struggle. Politicians use language to persuade others to agree with their vision and that they are the best representative for the community whether electorate, political party, or country.

A form of symbolic capital that is key to a politician being promoted through the party hierarchy is what Davis and Seymour (2010) call 'media capital'. Media capital can manifest in a variety of forms, in a quantitative sense of how often a politician is interviewed or mentioned by the media, this can also be referred to as 'media meta-capital' (Couldry, 2003). It can also be measured in a qualitative sense of the strength of relationships that a politician may have with journalists who report on politics (Craig, 2013). Davis and Seymour (2010) offer the example of former British Prime Minister David Cameron as a politician who successfully promoted himself as Conservative Party leader through this substantial media capital in the form of relationship-building with journalists. While many observers according to Davis and Seymour (2010) perceived Cameron to have become an overnight media success, Cameron had previously worked for Conservative Party senior leaders and as Head of Communications for television company; thus, Cameron had already formed relationships through numerous exchanges with journalists. Not only did these roles provide Cameron with internal media and social capital, but Cameron also possessed a strong understanding of how the media operates, which can be called 'media cultural capital' (Davis & Seymour, 2010).

The example of David Cameron makes it clear that the political field is highly reliant on the journalistic field for their agents to find success. This assertion is also backed by

the work of numerous scholars including Bourdieu himself. In *On Television,* an English translation of his divisive book *Sur la Télévision,* Bourdieu (1998) opens with the prologue entitled 'Journalism and Politics', which details how the journalistic field 'imposes' on the political field by journalists acting as influential agents of the political field while not being 'fully-fledged members' (p. 4). Bourdieu (2005) also stated in his essay *The Political Field, the Social Science Field, and the Journalistic Field* that fields interact with each other via individuals and are only semi-autonomous, as events in one field will affect others. Patrick Champagne, a research colleague of Bourdieu's, also suggests the term of a 'journalistic-political field' in his book *Faire L'opinions* (as cited by Couldry, 2003, original in French). Champagne (2005) also notes the journalistic field is heavily reliant on economic and political factors.

Alongside Bourdieu's (1998) *On Television,* the journalistic field has been covered in-depth in the edited book by Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu called *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field* (2005). While *On Television* focused on the French journalistic field, Benson and Neveu's volume offers a comparative perspective between the journalistic fields of France and the United States. While this thesis mainly focuses on the interaction of New Zealand's political and journalistic fields, part of its sample of news media outlets are from the United States, to analyse the foreign media coverage in comparison to Aotearoa New Zealand. The works of Bourdieu (1998, 2005), Champagne (2005), Marchetti (2005) as well as Benson and Neveu (2005) are still important to the theoretical grounding of this thesis when adapted to fit an Aotearoa New Zealand context. The journalistic field is a field of cultural production akin to the art and literature fields. Agents in the journalistic field are not only the journalists, but the media organisations that span across newspapers, radio, television and online. Bourdieu's (1998) *On Television,* directly focuses on television journalism because it was the dominant medium at the time the lectures were given in the 1990s. Bourdieu (1998) notes that the journalism field had a de-facto monopoly on information and that many in France used the television as their only source for news and information on current events. This is a similar sentiment to the claim that television was the cultural

arm of America, where Americans made sense of their social reality (see Gerbner et al., 1980). These assertions show the incomparable amount of cultural capital and influence that television and the news media have held for decades. Economic capital for the news media is derived from advertising revenue, readership circulation and audience-measuring metrics from companies such as Neilson (Bourdieu, 1998).

What makes the journalistic field a particularly interesting subject of study is its ability to influence the agenda of other fields and transform their power dynamics (Benson & Neveu, 2005). Field theory also offers a different ideological perspective to the Chomsky-esque assertion that news media organisations' behaviours are only guided by capitalist interests and controls (Bourdieu, 1998; Benson & Neveu, 2005). Field theory asserts that in there is a pole of economic-political power that produces constraints on the journalistic field (Benson, 2005), particularly in the case of publicly funded and state-controlled news organisations. Politicians and political party leaders have a similar power in being able to set the news agenda as much as a newspaper editor (Bourdieu, 1998, 2005; Perloff 2022). A key tension in the journalistic field's operations is that the reporting practices that best conform to a journalistic code of ethics are often not what is profitable. Bourdieu (1998) notes that journalism, especially television, operates in a reality that has a 'fear' of being seen as boring and with the goal of being entertaining and 'amusing at all costs'. Therefore, politics, which gives journalism its title of 'fourth estate' as the civic police officer holding the powerful to account (Sanders, 2009), is often seen as unappealing and kept out of television's prime time (Bourdieu, 1998). While there are economic imperatives that drive journalistic coverage, field theory also asserts the importance of cultural capital in the production of news. Cultural capital can be gained by news organisations by offering intelligent analyses and opinion, reviews of theatre performances, fine dining and literature (Champagne, 2005).

A decision in the New Zealand journalistic field that increased an organisation's economic and cultural capital was *The New Zealand Herald'*s decision to install a digital paywall for their online content called *The New Zealand Herald Premium (Premium)* in April 2019 (Myllylahti & Baker, 2019). *Premium* saw news stories about business, foreign affairs, investigative longform pieces, political and social commentary increase in production while being 'locked', accessible to paid subscribers only. Importantly, breaking news and other 'commodity stories' remained free for all to access online. The economic capital of *The New Zealand Herald* increased by its paid readership of 49,000 digital only *Premium* subscribers by November 2020 (Treadwell, 2020). This revenue also helped to fund more news stories that offered comment and analyses on current events from the journalists and columnists, often radio personalities from fellow NZME own radio brand *Newstalk ZB* (Myllylahti & Baker, 2019) who are claimed to have an astute knowledge of political and social issues and are relatable to the average New Zealander.

The journalistic field is a wide field that contains many 'sub-fields' divided by medium and topic of the news, commonly referred to by some as a 'beat' (Marchetti, 2005). Such sub-fields are business journalism, technology journalism and political journalism. This thesis focuses specifically on the sub-field of political journalism. The actors of political journalism are the same as those of the political field, as Bourdieu (1998, 2005) and Champagne (2005) note that political journalists have a different physical boundary of the sub-field as the rest of the journalistic field. Political journalists are more likely to spend more time around politicians and in the buildings of Parliament than their own organisation's newsroom. The sub-fields of journalism also have an internal hierarchy, Champagne (2005) states that although political journalism brings less advertising revenue than other topics, it nevertheless occupies a high status due to the prestige and cultural capital it awards news media organisations. Political journalists themselves can also be awarded an almost celebrity-like status (Craig, 2016). Champagne (2005) also notes that there are gendered perceptions of different 'beats'. For example, health and celebrity news is considered a 'feminine' journalistic

sub-field, while sub-fields such as sports, business and political journalism are seen as ‘masculine’. Furthermore, the political field is also viewed as a highly masculine field (Foley, 2013). This chapter will now discuss scholarship around gender in the political and journalistic fields.

### 2.1.1 Defining Gender in the Contexts of Political and Journalistic Fields

In beginning any discussion around gender, it is important to define gender and delineate it from the term 'sex'. A person's sex is defined by biological markers such as genitals, chromosomes, and hormonal biology; an individual's sex is defined at birth. In contrast, gender is widely believed to be a social construct by numerous scholars, such as Judith Butler (1990), Sheila Greene (2020), and Karen Ross (2002, 2017). This thesis asserts that gender is a social construct and that biologically there is nothing that can inhibit women from being as politically active as men. This assertion is also in line with other feminist media scholars such as Anne Stevens (2007) and Linda Steiner (2014). In their landmark feminist text, Judith Butler (1990) argues that gender is a performance, and all individuals are performers of gender. These performances have become so routine over time, society has developed a normative view of masculine and feminine genders, prescribing how men and women should not only behave but what roles they fulfil in society within public sphere (economic production) and private sphere (biological reproduction) (Waring, 1999). This essentialised division can be dated back to the Classical period of Ancient Greece, with Aristotle claiming that males are 'by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject.' Even centuries later, Roman Catholic philosopher Saint Thomas Aquinas deemed woman to be 'defective and misbegotten' (Greene, 2020). The socialised division of labour between 'women's work' of caring for the needs of the family and 'men's work' of earning money for the family through careers and in political life has seen an assumption that regardless of sex, all politicians possess masculine attitudes and behaviours (Stevens, 2007). Foley (2013) and Elgie (2017) both also note that women politicians often disguise or reduce their feminine traits in an effort to better conform and survive in the patriarchal environment of Parliament. In New Zealand, the first female MP was only elected in 1933, before then Parliamentary politics in New Zealand was only a profession for men (Coleman, 2019). Ross (2017) asserts that male dominance of the political field can be attributed to a fear of women's rule. She states that when female politicians rise through the ranks of their party to assume the top job,

they are portrayed by political journalists as 'treacherous, cold-hearted villains' (p. 2). When Helen Clark replaced Mike Moore as Leader of the New Zealand Labour Party in 1993, she was vilified in the media for unashamedly transgressing gender norms and was portrayed as a threat to the dominant political and social order. In interviews with several female politicians, Ross (2002) noted that the interview subjects were very aware of the gendered news discourse when they are referenced in the news. When a female politician is at the centre of the story, instead of solely focusing on policy issues, journalists will also discuss the female politician's hairstyle, clothing and domestic living arrangements.

The journalistic field has also historically been perceived to be a masculine field in both the Anglosphere (Hartley, 1990) and other parts of Europe such as France (Lévêque, 2017). Lévêque (2017) noted that in France when journalism was awarded professional status, most journalists were bourgeois men who classed themselves as "alpha males" that excluded women and their interests. When women did attempt to enter the profession, they were largely ignored by their colleagues, given less prestigious roles and topics such as childcare and welfare, as well as being stigmatised for having feminist ideals. Stevens (2007) also notes that female politicians are also regularly relegated to childcare and welfare roles and can sometimes avoid championing women's rights in parliament to avoid being seen as illegitimate. Interestingly, while more women are now in the journalistic field, which has been referred to as a feminisation of the journalism profession (Lévêque, 2017; Lobo, 2017), women are still absent from the decision-making process. This absence of women in positions of authority, also leads to the interests of women not being represented in news media content and patriarchal norms and views generally being upheld (Hartley, 1988; Lévêque, 2017; Lobo, 2017; Ross, 2017). Jacinda Ardern, as a female Prime Minister, can set a news media agenda that concerns women and places them at the centre of the story, rather than just playing the side character of girlfriend, daughter or mother. This thesis will show how Ardern has challenged the conventions of the

political and journalistic fields through her political performance and the performance of her gender.

## 2.2 Women in Politics

As previously mentioned in the political and journalistic fields section, politics is a masculine field that was designed by and for men. In Western culture, women sharing equal political and social rights was only granted after a long-fought battle by pioneering feminist individuals and organisations. The rights that Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) proclaims for women in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* to access education and political inclusion in society are now freely enjoyed by women in countries such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia. However, the patriarchal structures of society still impose barriers to success for women (as well as transgender and non-binary people) that men do not experience. Furthermore, it is important to note that structural barriers and prevailing attitudes towards women's competencies are not confined to just politics but are experienced throughout all fields of public life. Sectors of public life can include business, the judiciary, and other forms of state apparatus (Stevens, 2007). Women were traditionally confined to the world of the private sphere, which comprises the family and duties of domestic life. Public sphere discourse assumes that individuals participating in the public sphere were rational autonomous individuals who can make their own choices; if *he* could not, this was due to *him* being oppressed. Emphasis has been placed on the words *he* and *him* in the previous sentence because, as Stevens (2007) highlights, the individuals discussed in public sphere theory and discourse are always men. Historically, women have not held the rights of full citizenship, such as the rights to vote, own property, and the right to declare their income. Representative liberal democracies (such as New Zealand) and their institutions have regularly received criticism that they are patriarchal, restrictive, and stifling as they fail to satisfy the wants and needs of women (Stevens, 2007). Ross (2002) claims that women must convince the traditional polity

that they are competent politicians *despite* their gender, not *because of it* (p. 43, *original emphasis).* Furthermore, the history of democratic thought has generally ignored the role of, and consequences for, women. Lovenduski (2019) also notes that in a seminal textbook by George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory,* any mentions of women are absent from its 948 pages. Thus, politics is not only practised, but it is understood from a male perspective, leaving women and female politicians to be treated as 'other' or as a deviant (Curtin, 2011). Thus, it is important avoid the conflation that Jacinda Ardern's rise to Prime Minister means that politics in Aotearoa New Zealand is no longer a gendered phenomenon.

While New Zealand was pioneering as the first nation state to grant women the right to vote in 1893, the first female Prime Minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, was elected in 1960 (Wiltse & Hager, 2021). Nineteen years later, Margaret Thatcher was elected to become the first English-speaking female Prime Minister, in the Westminster-style of government (Curtin, 2011). These female leaders, and indeed all female elected representatives, must reconcile how their gender identity manifests in the behaviour of their role as politicians. Furthermore, there are several expectations that having women active in the political field will change the style of political performance. Stevens (2007) notes when research talks about 'women', it is referring to cis-gendered, white, upper- to middle-class, heterosexual women. These expectations and assumptions are heavily derived from gender stereotypes that cannot adequately explain every individual woman's behaviour and personality. The expectations and assumptions are as follows:

1: Politics might become less corrupt and more honest;

2: Politics might be undertaken more conscientiously;

3: Political style might become less aggressive and combative;

4: Policy might become more socially progressive;

5: The performance of politics through the act of speech might become different and more diverse.

However, MacKay (2008) notes that innovation is difficult in the existing institutions like the political field, but there are periods that institutional restructuring that can lead to actors in the political field promoting a contestation of rules for norms, values and ideals of how the field should operate and who should be a part of the field. Feminist scholars (see Ross, 2002, 2005, 2017; Trimble, 2014, 2017) argue that gender provides an integral structure, gender is present in the processes, practices, and ideologies along with the power dynamics of politics where men hold more power due to the historically masculine foundations of the political field (MacKay, 2008). Therefore, the contestations to change the political field are often gendered in themselves.

Somewhat surprisingly, Ross (2017) admitted in her book *Gender, Politics, News: A Game of Three Sides* that when interviewing Westminster women MPs, she found that even as an academic, her expectations of how and why women 'do' politics did not match reality. In asking the women MPs if they would champion policy in parliament about removing the tax from sanitary items, she received numerous replies stating that they have been elected to represent all their constituents, not just the *female* half (p. 13, own emphasis). Other scholars, such as Stevens (2007), have also claimed similarly that women's issues are seen as niche or special interest instead of policy ideas that could improve the quality of life for approximately half a population. Therefore, when female politicians promote and campaign for 'women's issues,' they could be seen as illegitimate politicians and dismissed as 'mere feminists.' This negates the four-party theory of politics of presence (Phillips, 1995, 1999), which argued that women's increased representation is needed because:

1. Women are role models who can encourage more women to believe that a political career can also be a possibility for them
2. It is fair and just
3. Only women can represent women's interests

4. It is the only avenue that political transformation is possible.

Despite Phillips' (1995, 1999) claims, having a critical mass of many female politicians in parliament does not translate to substantive representation that sees women being considered in policy matters and their benefits actively considered (Lovenduski, 2005). MacKay (2008) notes that the descriptive representation of women (the presence of women in parliament and achieving critical mass) may have complex effects, whether or not they bring different ideals or advocate for different interests.

These assumptions about female politicians stem from stereotypical masculine and feminine traits. Such assumptions can include women being more compassionate and progressive than men, whilst men are more likely to be aggressive and combative. This thesis agrees with scholars such as Ross (2002, 2017) that the delineation of masculine and feminine behaviours is too strict. These gender assumptions of behaviour strip politicians of their individuality and personality. A woman's approach to politics – their distinctive form of address when campaigning and the manner of presentation and content in speeches is more likely grounded in their understanding of the political climate and what will get them elected, as opposed to feigned 'feminine' traits such as 'honesty', 'amiability' and 'integrity' (Ross, 2002). These gender stereotypes adversely affect women when they exhibit feminised behaviour (Banducci et al., 2012) however Wasike (2019) claims that when American male politicians display feminine attributes, they are praised for it. Whereas, Mavin et al. (2010) have noted that in the United Kingdom, male politicians were belittled for embodying 'feminine' behaviours in the 2010 electoral debates, and certain news outlets claimed that they were being emasculated by female leaders in the debate appearing more masculine than they were. This discrepancy could be explained by either the culture of the different countries or the nine-year gap between publishing the two articles. Moreover, women who enter politics have already challenged normative assumptions about a women's role in society as they leave the private sphere of domestic work for public life (Ross, 2002; Stevens, 2007). Media and political rivals regularly rely on sexist tropes and framing to undermine female candidates and politicians, for example in the 2010

UK general election the UK media centred female candidates in elections around the male party leaders, in 1997 there was "Blair's Babes" and in 2009 the *Daily Mail* profiled 'Cameron's Cuties' (Mavin et al., 2010). These monikers delegitimise the achievements of these women, both in their selection and their achievements that led to it. One can argue that the women are not being seen as potential politicians in their own right but lackeys relegated to stand behind their Tony Blair or their David Cameron. The most outrageous of the terms was 'Nick Nymphets', referring to the women in the Nick Clegg-led, Liberal Democrat Party. Nymphet is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as 'a sexually precocious girl barely in her teens; A sexually attractive young woman.' Thus, the media were not only sexualising the female candidates but also infantilising them by comparing them to thirteen-year-old schoolgirls, or as Ross (2017, p.64) described the label, 'reducing them merely to a chorus line of sexy obsequious support.' These terms for groups of women politicians from a certain party are a product of the tabloid news culture in the United Kingdom, and this can also be seen as a conflation between the female politicians, and the 'Page 3 girls', topless models that appear in the British tabloid *The Sun* (see McNair, 2000).

Margaret Thatcher is a great case study that suggests the expectations and assumptions of a female representation (Phillips, 1995, 1998; Stevens, 2007), and even political leadership, does not guarantee material improvement for the societal standing of women. Thatcher did not see her ascension to leader of the Conservative Party as a victory for British women. As Ponton (2010) points out, she described her win of the party leadership to be 'a victory for *someone* in politics'. The use of the gender-neutral pronoun 'someone', along with a blunt rejection that her appointment was *not* a victory for all women in Britain, shows that Thatcher was not interested in being portrayed in the media as a feminist, as New Zealand's former Prime Minister Helen Clark did (Devere & Graham Davies, 2006). Furthermore, Thatcher did not promote any women to sit in her Cabinet (Ross, 2017). Thatcher did not see women as her peers, her name lends itself to the ideology of *Thatcherism* which mobilised against the spirit of egalitarianism and feminism (Campbell, 2015). Thatcher's political victory was solely a

victory for Thatcher herself, rhetorically she referred to women as wives and mothers, despite many women in the Britain being members of the workforce (Campbell, 2015; Ross, 2017). To legitimise herself as a prime minister, she referred to herself as 'a housewife' claiming that if a housewife could manage a household budget, she could manage a national budget (Ponton, 2010), thus undermining the feminist movements that had helped her gain this position. Ross (2002) states that these gender stereotypes are as reductive and unhelpful as the Orwellian four-legs good, two-legs bad dichotomy, valorising female politicians as feminine and compassionate progressive saviours of women, uncritically privileging women over men as leaders. However, Thatcher did not represent women's interests as Phillips (1995,1999) suggests female representation would. Thatcher's leadership oversaw large-scale privatisation of nationalised industries, union law 'reform', and the sale of the social housing stock (Ponton, 2010) which would especially lessen the welfare of single mothers and poorer families. Thus, policy did not become more progressive under Thatcher's leadership (Stevens, 2007). Stevens (2007) also highlighted an interesting dichotomy of Margaret Thatcher's political power. In 1982, while she declared war on Argentina over the Falkland Islands, legally she was unable to file her own tax returns nor declare her income. Thus Thatcher, just like other women during this time, was dependent on her husband to fulfill her economic duties as citizen. From this example, it is clear that gender is incorporated into the dynamics of the political and also that gender's effective use in the political field is determined by ideological and broader cultural considerations.

### 2.2.1 Social Movements and Feminisms: The Campaign for Women's Representation in Parliamentary Politics.

The path to women's representation in politics has not been a linear journey (Stevens, 2007). New Zealand is no exception to this. Women were granted the right to run for political office in 1919, but the first woman was not elected until 1933, when Elizabeth McCoombs won her seat in a by-election after her husband, who held the seat, died (Coleman, 2019). The first female minister was Mabel Howard, who was appointed as Minister of Health and Minister in Charge of Child Welfare in 1947 (McLeahy, 2009). Howard's ministerial positions reflect the belief that policy issues around health, children, and welfare are 'soft' or 'feminine' policy issues (Stevens, 2007). Approximately 50 years later, Marilyn Waring (1985) New Zealand's 15th female MP noted in her book *Women, Politics and Power* published after she left New Zealand parliament, that in 1984 only four out of 87 members of parliament were women. All the Cabinet Ministers and Undersecretaries were men, there were no female Cabinet Ministers during Waring's tenure in Parliament. Moreover, there was a parliamentary term when she was the only female MP in government. However, in 1987, Helen Clark became a Cabinet Minister, when the Labour Party became the opposition party, she became the first female leader of a major political party after challenging the incumbent leader Mike Moore for the role. Eventually Clark became the second female Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1999-2008 (Simms, 2008). The first female Prime Minister of New Zealand was Jenny Shipley. In 1997, she staged a 'coup' to replace then-Prime Minister Jim Bolger (Trimble, 2014). Both political events were treated as prime-time media spectacles, and the media coverage also created a gendered public branding of both women. As mentioned in the previous section, both the political and journalistic fields are masculine fields and politics is reported in a fashion that is determined by a 'male-agenda' (Trimble, 2014,p. 663). This also influences the public perception of female politicians. Female politicians frequently find themselves in a 'double-bind' or a 'double dilemma' (Mavin et al., 2010); if they appear 'too feminine'

and the media, their male peers and public will not take them seriously, but if they appear too masculine and they will be perceived as 'too dowdy' and not fit for power. This double-bind is perfectly captured by Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in *The Second Sex:* 'Misogynists have often reproached intelligent women for 'letting themselves go'; but they also preach to them: if you want to be our equals, stop wearing make-up and painting your nails.' (p. 723). Furthermore, female politicians can be viewed by the voting populace as a special sub-type of women: they are both seen as unfeminine and 'not real women' because their job as politicians that requires them to adopt masculine behaviours in a masculine environment, but they are also not seen as legitimate politicians because of their gender (Carson et al, 2019). Media critique of Clark was that she was a 'political dominatrix' and a cold-hearted villain (Trimble, 2014), too masculine with her voice, mode of dress, and not taking her husband's last name (Devere & Graham Davies, 2010). Meanwhile, her political opponent Jenny Shipley was constantly defined as a wife and mother, and it was seen that her femininity undermined her authority. Both Clark and Shipley's experience in politics and with the media express how female politicians are delegitimised as both neither fully female nor fully a politician (Brown et al., 2018), this dichotomy that female politicians experience could be explained by what Ross (2017) refers to as masculine fear of being 'ruled' by a women. Regularly, female politicians are portrayed as having 'stolen' their roles from 'more deserving men', whether through a leadership challenge (Ross, 2017), gender quotas: such as Canada having half the cabinet members being female due to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's policy (Lovenduski, 2019), or in Ardern's case, through an odd quirk of the electoral system that saw her become an 'accidental' Prime Minister with the help of 'an aggrieved leader of a minor party' (Hosking, 2021).

The social movement that saw women being awarded equal political and social rights as men was liberal feminism. Liberal feminism is considered the 'mainstream' form of feminism, due to its purpose of wanting to elevate women in society to the same position of men, as opposed to other strands of feminist thought that aim to overhaul societal structures completely (Beasley, 1990). According to Bryson (2003),

‘feminist’ is used to describe someone who views relationships between the sexes as one of women being oppressed and subordinated as a manifestation of political power, as opposed to nature. Liberal feminism has a ‘sex-blind ideal’ believing that there is only human nature and borrows its theoretical basis from welfare liberalism, as an extension of the moral beliefs about the equality of man (Jaggar, 1988). Liberal feminism does not reject the capitalist system, in fact it argues that it provides opportunity for women, or indeed any person who tries. However, liberal feminism does concede that women often must try twice as hard as men to have the same opportunities afforded to them (Freidman et al., 1987). Liberal feminism therefore believes that working class women can ‘work’ their way into a higher station and that one woman’s achievement has a net positive benefit for all women. This thesis asserts that Ardern’s tenure as Prime Minister of New Zealand is asserted in a liberal feminist reality, which upholds the capitalistic structures of society without questioning them.

Radical feminism offers a critique of liberal feminism, asserting that liberal feminism does not do enough to dismantle the androcentric structures in society that uphold gender inequality. There is no single definition of radical feminism, however the following two definitions have a conciseness and simplicity to them. Radical feminists are defined by Freidman and her colleagues (1987) as feminists who believed that liberal feminism did not go far enough and focus their attention on women’s reproductive freedoms. Meanwhile, Bryson (2003, p.163) states that the ‘radical’ in radical feminism refers to the ‘revolution’ in challenging values and lifestyles with ideas that often seem ‘both extreme and shocking’. A contentious issue around radical feminism is its prioritisation of biological sex, over gender expression (Jaggar, 1988). They believe it is also women’s biology, expressly their fertility, which results in rigid sex roles that oppress their gender (Rosewarne, 2020). Women’s sexuality, and by extension their personalities, are said to be constructed on men’s desires rather than the woman’s own needs. Radical feminism is identifiable as different from other strands of feminism through the following criteria:

1. A focus on patriarchy and male supremacy;
2. Recognition that male violence against women is the cornerstone of women's oppression;
3. The term 'violence against women' extends to pornography and sex work;
4. The use and promotion of autonomous women-only political organising (Mackay, 2015)

The patriarchal structures in the political and journalistic field can be astutely critiqued by radical feminism. Radical feminist scholars such as Sheila Jeffreys (2005) also offer critiques on the feminine beauty standards and fashion, which are often upheld in news media reporting by comments on female politician's clothing and grooming choices (Steiner, 2014; Ross, 2017). Radical, liberal and Marxist/socialist feminisms all offer critiques on 'the male gaze' which refers to how women are perceived by men through their appearance and action (Bryson, 2003; Jaggar, 1988), and these critiques also offer a foundation for feminist media theory, which is integral to the analyses conducted for this thesis. Feminist media theory is reliant on feminist theories, applying philosophies, concepts, and logic around articulating principles of feminism to media processes such as patterns of representation in the news and entertainment across media type and its reception (Steiner, 2014). Feminist media theory prioritises gender as a factor that structures one's identity and experiences, it does not assume permanent or static gender differences between men, woman, and individuals outside of the gender binary. Feminist media theory uses a nuanced language and set of analytical terms to interrogate the media and its messages. Most work in the feminist political communication space considers politics and the media both in tandem and separately as the primary fields that the campaign for women's rights have actively fought on (Ross, 2017). Feminist media theory and feminist political theory maintains that both gender and politics are performance-based concepts that individuals act out to form a society (Bryson, 2003; Steiner, 2014). This chapter will move on to review key scholarship around the performance of political leadership, include the importance of communication in a crisis for defining a political leader's legacy.

Furthermore, the argument that liberal feminism does not address how capitalistic structures can hold back women from enjoying the same rights as men in society, leads to the need for Marxist and socialist feminism. Marxist feminism explores how gender ideologies of femininity and masculinity affect production in capitalism and asserts that gender equality is best achieved by first dismantling the barriers of class structure (Armstrong, 2020). Marxist feminism derives from theoretical background of Marx and Engels' work around the states of production and reproduction between the 1840s and 1880s, thus the belief is that women are oppressed through capitalistic class structures and therefore, women's subordination was not a biological fact. Socialist feminism differs from Marxist feminism, particularly in its challenge to the idea that gender equality can only be achieved by overthrowing capitalist class structures. Furthermore, some socialist feminist scholars believe that the focus on class struggle is an unnecessary distraction and a betrayal for all women (Freidman et al., 1987). A bourgeois woman is still more oppressed than a bourgeois man, and upon reflection one could say often only viewed as a member of the bourgeois because of her relationship to her father and then husband. Private property was seen as a cause of women's oppression, and according to socialist feminism the nuclear family is a site of struggle for women, with the need for maternity leave, the right for women to own property on their own merit, and laws protecting illegitimate children (Armstrong, 2020). Jaggar (1988) refers to socialist feminism as the daughter of the later 20th century women's movement and is influenced by its 'elder sister' Marxist feminism. Meanwhile, some scholars such as Epure (2014) conceptualise Marxist and socialist feminisms as one theory, ignoring the different views on how the class struggle affects women's oppression. Furthermore, Epure (2014) also claimed that Marxist/socialist feminism has been made redundant by the collapse of socialist states in the late 20th century. This is an unfair statement, as socialist thought has continued to outlive socialist states, and is still found in countries that have socialist democratic influence in its governments, such as New Zealand. For example, in a parliamentary debate, New Lynn MP Dr Deborah Russell proclaimed, "I stand here as a very proud member of the great

socialist democratic Labour Party," (Marcetic, 2021). Furthermore, Jaggar (1988) believes that socialist feminism establishes a distinct approach to political life that offers the most theory and practice for women's liberation.

## 2.3. Political leadership and performance

Previous sections of this chapter have referred to the entanglement of the political and journalistic fields that creates a representation of politics that is easily understood by the layperson. This social phenomenon can also be referred to as a mediated democracy (Sanders, 2009) or a mediacracy (Norwina Konopka, 2021). In mediated democracies, politics is cast in the dramatic form, the leading roles are played by the political party leaders, while other politicians (and indeed political journalists) also become a part of the 'show' (Norwina Konopka, 2021; Sanders, 2009). Meanwhile some theorists such as McNair, (2018) compare politics to a 'mass spectator sport' such as basketball or rugby, yet the spectators ultimately decide the outcome. Politics is performed in front of the media who interpret the process of how the political leaders perform. This often comes at the expense of the substance of policy that is being debated in the house (see McNair, 2000). The purpose of this section is to analyse the key scholarship around the performance of politics that is enacted by the 'main characters' of political leaders. This section will begin by defining political leadership and how Bourdieu's (1975) theory of habitus offers a sociological explanation for how people gain access to these positions of power. Secondly, this section will outline theories of political performance, and the important concepts of rhetoric and charisma that political leaders enact to gain voters. Finally, this section will discuss literature around communicating during times of crisis, and how crises events allow political leaders to frame the success of their political leadership around the situation (Gigliotti, 2016).

Political leadership as a social phenomenon is said to be one of the most widespread and thus difficult to define (Kasińska-Metryka & Gajewski, 2021). Leadership is not only found in politics, but also in other parts of public life, however, for the purpose of this thesis there will be a tight focus on political leadership. Leadership is based on an asymmetrical relationship between an individual who exerts power over a group of individuals (for example, followers, constituents, congregants). However, political leadership in a democracy is in part decided by the constituents through an electoral process with the aid of the political media apparatus (McNair, 2018; Norwina Konopka, 2021). It must be noted that political leadership has an integral influence on how political events unfold, which is why leadership studies continues to grow as an important field (Levine, 2021). Traditionally leadership studies have focused on an individual's personality and competencies (Kasińska-Metryka & Gajewski, 2021); there is no formal algorithm or 'how-to' guide that can effectively be implemented by any political hopeful. Towards the latter end of the 20th century, the US presidential election campaign of Dwight Eisenhower saw the birth of 'marketing-orientated leadership', this style of leadership emphasises image management of the politicians and political hopefuls by hired specialists. Marketing-orientated leadership can lead to media treating political leaders as a 'brand' rather than a person in leadership (see Craig, 2013). While some scholars such as Kasińska-Metryka (2021) refer to these hired specialists as 'spin doctors', this thesis will avoid using this term due to the derogatory connotations. Marketing-orientated leadership rose to prominence alongside the professionalisation of communications industries, as well as politics (Kasińska-Metryka, 2021). The 2017 New Zealand general election campaigns for both the Labour Party and the National Party had a strong focus on the political party leaders in their messaging and subsequent media stories (Lees-Marshment, 2019), while in a mediated democracy, this focus on leadership seems unremarkable. The Labour Party's campaign centred around both Labour Leader Andrew Little, and Deputy Leader Jacinda Ardern referring to the party as 'A Fresh Approach', after the fifth National government had been in power for the previous nine years (Timperley, 2018). The Labour Party needed to capitalise on Ardern's mediagenic political personality as a strong leadership influence in the party to attract voters. In comparison, the National

Party solely used Prime Minister Bill English's image on their billboards, with the messaging asserting that English was an experienced and suitable leader for New Zealand. Little resigned from the leadership seven weeks before the election date, elevating Ardern to the position as Leader of the Opposition and formed a coalition government to become New Zealand's Prime Minister. By marketing Ardern as a youthful, female, and progressive identity at a time when #MeToo and numerous powerful men in the media and entertainment industry were being accused of sexual assault, Labour was able to differentiate themselves from their centre-right political rivals to gain the support of the electorate.

Technology affects social trends and influences how political leadership is managed and communicated (Gajewski, 2021). Leaders also adapt their leadership performance to be best suited to the communication technologies they utilise, and this has led Kasińska-Metryka and Gajewski (2021) to theorise a new style of political leadership they call neo-leadership, which encompasses the personal pre-disposition of individuals (traditional leadership) and the organisational efficiency of the political environment (market-orientated leadership), but moreover to also include technological advancements, such as social media as a key component for political leaders to communicate with voters and potential voters, as well as other politicians and political journalists. Craig (2016), highlights that successful communication from a political leader, does not derive solely from their demonstrations of policy and political truths, but from a presentation a habitus that encompasses their political authority via knowledge and experience.

While political leaders adapt their leadership performance best suited to communication technologies that is being used, the politicians' habitus is imbued in their performance. Habitus is a sociological concept coined by Bourdieu (1977, 2020) that works in conjunction with the field theory and capital to explain Bourdieu's theory of social practice. Park (2009) refers to habitus as the internalisation of field. Habitus

refers to an individual's 'structural make-up'. This includes the individual's manner of speaking and deportment, their grooming choices and style of dress, their upbringing, and professional background, all of which produce a chain of values around identity issues, such as gender, ethnicity and class. A political leader's habitus undergoes remarkable scrutiny during the leadership selection process by the political party, and by the public come election time (Craig, 2016). To explain the phenomena of habitus plainly, a politician's past effects how they perceive and operate in the social world, habitus can be used by sociologists and political scientists to explain a political leader's rhetoric and policy initiatives through their upbringing, family life, and education (Bourdieu, 1977). Interpersonal communication is informed by the habitus of all parties, thus by extension political communication is also grounded in the habitus of the agents (Bourdieu, 1977). One must note that although habitus may be long-lasting, it is not forever fixed. One's habitus may change throughout time, for example in times of strife or marrying a spouse who comes from a different socio-economic class (Craig, 2016). Bourdieu (2020) asserts that when a person has the ideal habitus for their field, it is like a fish swimming in water. The rules and forces of the field can be near impossible to analyse as they are so ingrained into the social structures of the field. Bourdieu (2020) utilises the metaphor of an orchestra member able to play a piece of music without the guidance of a musical director. Habitus can also help predict future actions of individuals, Maton (2014, p.49) gives the example of 'working-class kids taking working class jobs' and 'middle-class readers having an interest in middle-brow literature', however, there are no fixed set of rules dictating such practice. Importantly, while habitus may be likened to the traditional concept of 'character', habitus is a product of an individual's social circumstances, as opposed to an intrinsic nature one is born with (Bourdieu, 1977). In short, habitus is the source of our understanding, and it is one's histories and lived experiences that inform attitudes and behaviour.

### 2.3.1 Bourdieu's concept of habitus

Politicians, like other societal actors, have an expected habitus that can assist an individual in entering and operating successfully in the political field. One's habitus allows the individual to feel 'at home' and have an innate understanding of the field's 'rules of the game' (Maton, 2014). In relation to university, Maton (2014) suggests that working-class people may exclude themselves from pursuing tertiary education because the traditional university student does not have a similar class background and life experience to them, whereas middle and upper-class secondary school students see university education as 'rite of passage' or as 'an inheritance' (p. 57). Furthermore, Timperley (2018) notes that women and working-class people may see themselves as 'unqualified' for political office because they are not middle-class males, despite holding similar educational qualifications. Davis and Seymour (2010) note that in the United Kingdom the ideal habitus for a politician is a middle- or upper-class white male, who attended prestigious public schools and studied at renowned universities like Oxford. These politicians would have studied the specialised Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) degree that Davis and Seymour (2010) refer to as "fit for purpose" to enter British politics. The course allows for not only teaching the specific 'rules of the game' of the political field, but also allows students to foster important social connections that can benefit them in political life. As previously mentioned, politics is a communicative field and successful communication is reliant on astute relationship management, both on an interpersonal level between peers, and parasocially with constituents via the mainstream media and online social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Sander, 2009; Perloff, 2022).

In contrast to the United Kingdom's set expectation of the Oxbridge candidate, in Aotearoa New Zealand, Members of Parliament have often come from a variety of occupational and educational backgrounds before being elected. Geoffrey Miller and Mark Blackham (2018) have conducted research since 2010 tracking New Zealand MPs'

work and educational habitus. The habitus of politicians is highly suggestive of their personal values, which are an important factor in conscience votes on social issues such as the legalisation of both cannabis and abortion. Miller and Blackham (2018) found that in the 52nd Parliament (which is the institutional site for the topic of this thesis) MPs' professional backgrounds are diverging from the voting population. One in five of New Zealand MPs, have previously worked in a government job, such as party researcher. Meanwhile more have also been involved in party politics in New Zealand and continued as party volunteers and campaigners into their adulthoods. This is particularly dominant in the Labour Party of which Ardern was leader, 26 per cent of Labour MPs once worked in government and political staffer jobs (Miller & Blackham, 2018). Like the Oxford PPE, New Zealand MPs are learning 'the rules of the game' and fostering social connections through volunteering and involvement in the political party. This is true of several female politicians (see Waring, 2019), including Ardern who had been involved in the Labour Party's youth-wing and a was policy analyst for both Helen Clark in New Zealand and Tony Blair in the United Kingdom (Chapman, 2020). Thus, habitus is important to this thesis' theoretical foundation not only for understanding the values and moral basis of Ardern's political performance, but also how the news media represents and analyses her habitus, both in a vacuum and in comparison, to other politicians and world leaders.

### 2.3.2. Politics as a performance

Performance is not a term or concept solely confined to the dramatic arts. In the fields of business, science and technology, performance refers to carrying an activity to a certain standard of quality. In everyday vernacular, performance can refer to an individual putting on an act, being disingenuous, or to commonly speak positively of someone's prowess when completing a task (Micu, 2022). This plurality of meaning for the term performance can lead to performance in a political context being delegitimised and misidentified as shallow (Rai, 2015). Despite this misconception

political performance is rich in discursive meaning, and Rai (2015) defines political performance as performances that seek to communicate to an audience one's goals and desires related to state institutions, policies and discourses that either reinforce or challenge dominant narratives of politics (pp. 1179-1180). Political performance forms an identity through the repetition of acts, akin to how Butler (1999) describes gender as a performance of repetitive socialised acts (Craig, 2016). The stage on which political/leadership performance is performed is not only the physical space of the parliamentary buildings, but also through the mediated stages of print and broadcast media, along with social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook (Craig, 2016; McNair, 2018; Straus & Williams, 2022). The performance of politics through mediated audio-visual channels allows the political process to be more inclusive for members of society with lower literacy levels (Rai, 2015; McNair, 2018). Bills before Parliament are written in an inaccessible style, limiting their audiences to only those who have received a specialised level of education (McNair, 2018). This will be explored in further detail in the mediatisation of politics subsection.

Another term for political performance is dramaturgical communication. Sanders (2009) uses Burke's pendant to explain the dramatic structure of political communication through asking the following questions:

1. **Act:** What purposeful act has taken place? *For example, a reply to a question during parliamentary question time, a press conference announcing a new policy or during an ongoing crisis, or a campaign speech.*
2. **Agent:** Who conducted this action? *For example, a Prime Minister, Cabinet Minister or opposition member, a journalist, or a public servant.*
3. **Agency:** How or with what did they do it? *For example, the Prime Minister may call a press conference through the legitimacy of their election position.*
4. **Scene:** Where, when and in what context did this act take place? This includes not only the physical place, but also the cultural and social context. *For*

*example, the Prime Minister's press conference could operate in the physical space of the Beehive Theatrette, in the social context of the COVID-19 pandemic; public servants, such as the Director General of Health may also be standing next to the Prime Minister to imply endorsement of her decisions and depoliticise them (Craig, 2021). The scene (or stage) of political performance may also be the mainstream media or social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Rai, 2015; Straus & Williams, 2020).*

5. **Purpose:** Why did they do it? What was their intent? *For example, the Prime Minister may have called a press conference to announce that there is a new virus outbreak that was discovered in the community.*

In the speech acts of political performance, a politician's use of rhetoric and their charisma is what separates a successful performance to a mediocre performance. Rhetoric concerns symbols through language and visual cues to persuade their audience to believe the argument of their political message, rhetoric is also exhibited in written communication such as press releases and tweets (Perloff, 2022). The concept of rhetoric began in Ancient Greece and still has enduring relevance in the 21st century. Charisma is also theorised and referred to as 'charismatic leadership' (Bligh et al., 2004). Charisma was conceptualised by Max Weber, who borrowed the term from the Christian church, meaning 'gift of grace' (Breuilly, 2011). Charisma is a quality of personality that allows a political leader to be considered extraordinary in their power of persuasion. Wasike (2019) notes that the conceptualisation of charisma centres around a leader's ability to inspire awe and reverence amongst their audience of followers. Wasike (2017; 2019) also conceptualises charisma and rhetoric together as 'charismatic rhetoric' in his studies on Hillary Clinton and other presidential candidates from 2004-2016, and the Presidential State of the Union address from George Washington to Barack Obama.

Charisma and rhetoric (or indeed charismatic rhetoric) are seen in both the electoral process and throughout the parliamentary term. Wasike (2019) also notes a gendered nature of parameters of charisma. The parameters that Wasike (2019) refers to are used by the DICTION software which academics such as Bligh and her colleagues (2004) have also used in conducting their research to measure the effectiveness of charisma and rhetoric in speeches made by politicians. Although this thesis' research is not being conducted by this software, these parameters can still be used to analyse the charismatic leadership of Jacinda Ardern and its gendered nature.

The charismatic parameters are:

1. Action/ aggression: Use of assertive language to describe goals and a vision while, mobilising followers to action.
2. Collective focus: Building shared values and common identity with followers.
3. Similarity: Emphasising shared values with followers.
4. Adversity/ hardship: Articulating necessary action against enemies and those who favour an undesirable status quo.
5. Temporal orientation: References to the continuity of the past and present, and the emphasis of timeless values.
6. Tangibility: Articulation of an abstract future goals entwined in the speaker's vision while simultaneously de-emphasising tangible issues.
7. Values: Reference to universally accepted moral values with the invocation of religious and traditionalist themes.

The charismatic parameters of collective focus and similarity are categorised as feminine, while action/aggression and adversity are categorised as masculine. Gender-neutral parameters are temporal orientation, tangibility, and values (Wasike, 2019). These parameters and their gendered basis offer researchers a theoretical grounding of analysing news media and the public's reaction to women in politics and their use of charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership, like political performance is more than a shallow or a conceited part of the political field, despite claims from those outside

the field (see Rai, 2015). A politician's mastery of charismatic rhetoric in their political performance impacts organisational effectiveness (governments and political parties are organisations), perceptions of the leader's effectiveness, and increased satisfaction of the followers/constituents who are exposed to a charismatic leader (Bligh et al., 2004).

### 2.3.3 Charismatic leadership in times of crisis

There is a link between charismatic leadership and times of crisis (Bligh et al., 2004). Crises are unforeseen events that have a high/devastating impact on an organisation or population, which can threaten the working order of the organisation or nation and threaten or damage trust and reputations (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). After a crisis such as a terrorist attack, constituents can feel emotions such as shock, fear, sorrow, anger, and anxiety around safety and national identity, and all these emotions can lead to followers relying on their leader for guidance and reassurance, raising the leader's favourable reputation, known as the 'rally around the flag' effect. After the 11 September terrorist attack, President George W. Bush's approval ratings increased from 51 per cent to 86 per cent, according to a report by the Gallup Organisation in 2001. Bligh and her colleagues (2004) credit this astronomical rise in approval ratings to the change in the way George W. Bush used charismatic parameters of aggression, similarity, and values to talk to the American people. The communications discipline of public relations involves the best practice for the management of communication after crisis events, or as best practice guidance on how to mitigate the events from occurring. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is the theory that guides the best-practice principles that public relations professionals and political media aides use (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). There are multiple types of crises that political leaders can find themselves navigating; SCCT looks to identify these possible types and match the best crisis response to the situation. While Coombs and Holladay (2002, pp. 170-171) outline 13 different crises situations for business organisations, common crises

situations that a political leader can deal with include terrorist attacks, natural disasters, public health pandemics/epidemics and internal party struggles, such as politicians behaving in a scandalous fashion (Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Gigliotti, 2016). It is important to note that in Ardern's first term, she had to implement her charismatic leadership and rhetoric to manage crises from all these categories. This thesis will specifically analyse news media reporting about crises in the first three categories listed. The response to crises events is what makes or breaks the reputations of organisations (governments) and their leaders. Politically, crises are how leaders cement their legacies and assert their leadership styles (Bligh et al., 2004; Gigliotti, 2016).

The findings from Gigliotti's 2016 interview study on how four university presidents (vice-chancellors) from the United States responded to crises they faced are also relevant to understanding crisis responses of political leaders (Prime Ministers and Presidents). The crises events that the university presidents had to lead their institutions through included a natural disaster, an on-campus shooting, and the aftermath of a staff member's suicide. While all the study participants are male, the sensemaking process the leaders went through when navigating through their crisis responses was genderless. None of the men neatly fit into one discursive type of leader, nor were their responses the same. There are four discursive types of leaders in crises highlighted in this study:

1. Comforter,
2. Caretaker,
3. 'President as an institutional voice',
4. 'Man of steel' (could also be referred to as woman or leader of steel, but Gigliotti most likely used 'man' as all the participants were male).

The participant that Gigliotti (2016) identified as "President C" had to lead their university through the aftermath of an unprecedented on-campus shooting. The

leadership response of President C was akin to Ardern's response after the Christchurch Mosque attacks in 2019. President C dismissed the shootings as against the university's values and character. The university was also religiously affiliated, therefore President C suggested to Gigliotti (2016) in their interview that the shooting went against the university's self-image of being for the preservation of human rights and life, as well as being against violence. Gigliotti (2016) also notes that a leader's confidence and assurance in the face of uncertainty after a crisis shapes the shift in the reaction and tenor of those whom one leads. Meanwhile, Gigliotti (2016) identified Presidents A and E as exhibiting the caretaker-style role of leadership. Being a caretaker means to openly communicate and listen to the concerns of those you lead during a crisis. In their interview, President A spoke of their role in the crisis using paternal imagery. He suggested that an effective leader is one who is 'available, affectionate, and confident.' Gigliotti (2016) quotes President E saying, 'if you're not able to listen and hear what people have to say and hear what they're going through, you're not going to be a very effective leader.' It is important to emphasise the difference between the comforter and caretaker leadership styles. The comforter style focuses on the institutional mission of the university for the crisis, while the caretaker style emphasises the importance of having a personal relationship (albeit para-socially via mediated means) with those one leads (Gigliotti, 2016). The identities of comforter and caretaker are humanistic approaches to leading during a crisis, whereas the identities of 'institutional voice' and 'man of steel' address how leadership benefits larger enterprise. In 'institutional voice' leaders are only used as spokespeople when deemed strategically necessary by the organisation's public relations team. When something goes wrong, leaders must discursively frame the situation using language that will cast their organisation in a positive light. A leader that typifies the 'man of steel' identity is shaped by the leader's own self-image as a hero. In their interviews, Gigliotti (2016) found that the leaders described themselves as effective when they are confident – standing tall when all around them are crumbling. This theme follows a number of masculine stereotypes of a leader and reflects the hyper-masculinised nature that has historically been connected to leadership that has been addressed in previous sections.

The caretaker style of leadership and its importance in fostering a personal relationship with stakeholders/students/constituents through showing compassion, empathy and solidarity has been researched by scholars such as Coombs (1999), Coombs and Holladay (2002), Shabbir, et al., (2021). In a crisis, the care and compassion that a leader shows towards the victims has a direct effect on their reputation, both in their nation and internationally, thanks to the globalised media sphere. There is a defensive-accommodative continuum of crises responses that leaders can select from. Unless the crisis is an untrue rumour, the best response to take for minimal reputational damage is an accommodative one (Coombs, 1999; Shabbir et al., 2021). An accommodative response is one that acknowledges the victims' needs and seeks to make appropriate reparations to victims. This can be done through financial payments as well as framing the victims' plights as a loss or an attack the entire community. Shabbir and their colleagues (2021) refer to this framing as social solidarity. Social solidarity as a crisis leadership response reinforces the leader's image as a compassionated, inclusive, and transformational leader. An example of effective use of social solidarity in a crisis leadership response is Jacinda Ardern's use of rhetorical devices during the COVID-19 pandemic response that emphasise the importance of community and kindness (Shabbir et al., 2021). Rhetorical devices that were used in Ardern's initial speech announcing the 'Level 4' lockdown in March 2020 included 'be kind' 'we will get through this but only if we stick together', and 'we're a team of five million.' The repetition of we, highlights the nation as an 'in-group' and this is not only invoking a mere sentiment but encouraging social buy-in for the COVID-19 protection framework (alert level systems) and the lockdown of social and economic activity to 'flatten the curve' of the virus' infectious spread. Lilleker and their colleagues (2021) refer to this as 'imbued we-ness' which they say is essential for successful crisis communication in their edited book *Political Communication & COVID-19* which covers the government communication about COVID-19 that from a range of countries crisis leadership responses including Australia, Germany, China and the United States for the first six months of the crisis. Unfortunately, the edited book did not include an analysis

of New Zealand's crisis response to COVID-19, despite it receiving a vast amount of attention from international media. Despite this, the text is a great resource for this thesis as a comparative analysis between New Zealand and other countries. The best-practice suggestions that Lilleker and their colleagues (2021) make reflect the Ardern government's response plans and Ardern's role as a caretaker leader (Gigliotti, 2016). While at the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, this thesis focuses on the events of Ardern's first term as Prime Minister, which matches the same timeframe that Lilleker's volume was written in. This thesis seeks to highlight how the charismatic performance of political leadership in times of crisis impacts how a politician is portrayed in the media and how this shapes their legacy.

### 2.3.4. Compassionate Leadership

In recent years, following the outbreak of COVID-19, many leadership scholars have turned to studying and problematising the notion of compassionate leadership (Van Wart et al., 2022; Wilson, 2024). Ramachandran et al. (2023, p.2.), define compassionate leader as someone who has "a genuine interest in seeing people not just perform but thrive."

Compassionate leadership can also be referred to as emotional leadership and centres on leaders prioritising their follower's emotional well-being, as opposed to just autocratic leadership norms of the leader prioritising their views on how to most efficiently achieve their own/the organisation's end goals (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017). Compassionate leadership is most commonly exhibited by political leaders in times of crisis and contains feminised character attributes such as "kindness, empathy, and embodied acts of care" (Wilson, 2024, p.1). Ardern exhibits compassionate leadership in the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque attacks when she centred her crisis response to focus on the victims and their families, Ardern was photographed embracing mourners. *The New Yorker* reported that Ardern avoided centring the terrorist in her public speeches, instead addressing the Muslim community she said,

> "We cannot know your grief, but we can walk with you at every stage. We can and we will surround you with *aroha*, *manaakitanga*, and all that makes us us."

> She used Maori (sic) words that mean kindness, compassion, generosity. Again, it was the absence that was notable in Ardern's speech: the absence of a rhetorical pivot from "us" to "them," the enemy. (Gessen, 2019).

The comforting embraces can be seen as embodied act of care (Wilson, 2024) and an attempt to alleviate suffering (Van Wart et al., 2022; Ramachandran et al., 2023).

### 2.3.5. Authenticity

Authenticity is a much discussed and analysed concept in political communication, with burgeoning but fragmented body of research. Luebke (2021, p.636) notes that authenticity is can be used as a marker by the media, the public, and other politicians to measure if a politician is being 'true to themselves' in public life. Authenticity can be defined from the perspective of the communicator, media or the public, scholars have yet to agree on a clear conceptionalisation of political authenticity in communications research. Political authenticity should ideally be conceptualised as a social construct that is negotiated through communication processes amongst politicians, the media and the voting public. Luebke (2021) suggests that authenticity can be seen through three analytical perspectives: performed, mediated, and perceived political authenticity. It is said that authenticity in politics means to perform political actions congruent to the politician's political beliefs, this is closely related but separate to sincerity and integrity. Parry-Giles (2001, p.211) notes that authenticity is how political candidates and politicians are measured. Judgements on a person's authenticity therefore impact the effectiveness of their performance of politics, through their public persona.

Ceccobelli and Di Gregorio (2022) further advance the idea of authenticity as a judgement tool in the assessment of political performance by conceptualising the "The Triangle of Leadership" in political marketing. The triangle of leadership suggests that voters want to select the candidate who exhibits three qualities: competence

“someone better than me”, ordinariness “someone like me”, and authenticity “someone I can trust” (Ceccobelli & Di Gregorio, 2022, pp.114-116). Authenticity and ordinariness can often mobilised and perceived through the publicising of family life and the sphere of domesticity (Campbell, 2015). These images of public life can portray that the front stage of political performance and policy agenda is congruent to their ‘backstage’ life. Jacinda Ardern was able to tie her government’s bill on financial assistance for parents with newborns to the birth of her child, Neve Te Aroha. By holding her baby during the announcement, she is signalling to other working mothers that they can identify with her as a parent. It is important to note that the triangle of leadership emphasises that the ideal political leader exhibits the characteristics of authenticity, ordinariness, and competence at once.

An example for the crisis leadership case study from when Ardern can be seen mobilising the triangle of leadership was the COVID-19 daily press briefings in 2020, where she exhibited what Craig (2021) referred to as ‘kindness and control’. Ardern was competent in her delivery of policy changes in reaction to the crisis, as well as having control of the journalists from the press galleries’ questions, she also reassured and comforted citizens in a way that was congruent to previous crises, Ardern also used Facebook Lives to reiterate how her family was also sheltering in place with their toddler daughter.

This chapter will now move on to reviewing literature that explores how journalistic practices and principles affect the practice of politics through the mediatisation of politics (McNair, 2018; Perloff, 2022), how the hierarchy of news values affects what events become political news (Galtung & Ruge, 1965, Harcup & O’Neill, 2001, 2017), how the news story is treated through the classifications of news genre and the gendered nature of the classification (Patterson, 2000; Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015), and the framing of the political events which can alter the news consumer’s perspective on the situation (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Perloff, 2022).

## 2.4 News Reportage of Politics

This chapter will now move on to review key scholarship around the news reportage of politics and how politics can be regarded as a news product. Contemporary politics is a mediated phenomenon; politics is experienced by the constituency largely through the once removed lens of the news media.

Media consumers experience a representation of political events through the interpretation, biases, and frames of journalists, news editors, and news media organisations' proprietors (McNair, 2000, 2018; Strömbäck, 2011). Thus, politics is reliant on mass media to function and will tailor political activities and announcements to suit the news media agenda (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Perloff, 2022) by tailoring political actions to meet specific news values (Bednarek & Caple, 2017; Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001, 2009, 2017). The process of the politics becoming dependent on the mass media is called 'mediatisation'. This is a neologism akin to 'economisation, judicialisation, and politicalisation' (Marcinkowsi, 2014, p.6) and refers to the increasing importance of medial calculi (the general criteria attention, selection, and presentation used by news media professionals) onto non-media areas of activity in society. To put this succinctly, it is the process of increasing media influence (Strömbäck, 2011). Mediatisation, in contrast to mediated politics reflects the dynamic process through which media communication shapes and reshapes how society understands itself and through which the media have increased their influence (Strömbäck, 2011). The concept of mediatisation was popularised by Gianpetro Mazzoleni and Winfried Schulz's (1999) essay *"Mediatization" of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?* and has continued to be researched by scholars for over 30 years, as new technologies (such as the internet and social media) have allowed media content to be accessible beyond the parameters of time and geographical boundaries (Perloff, 2022). A. C. Grayling (2018) notes in their book that Plato believed that democracy

would only function well in city-states where all constituents are able to hear the messages of town-crier. The media – newspapers, radio, and especially television have now become democracy's town-criers with a booming voice providing a wider reach. Politicians and other political elites rely on the news media's reach and influence to deliver their messages both in times of campaigning and governing (Strömbäck, 2008).

### 2.4.1. The Mediatisation of the Political Field

Strömbäck (2008) in their journal article outlines the four phases of mediatisation and claims that mediatisation is 'an inherently process-orientated concept' (p.231). It is important to note that these phases are a part of a dynamic process that allows for variations across time and countries, and that Strömbäck (2008) restricts the model to analysis of Western countries in the period after World War II. The phases of mediatisation are as follows:

- The First Phase: This phase corresponds to the concept of mediated politics, which is the situation of the media being the most important source of information and the vehicle of communication between the politicians and their constituents. The media's power to influence the public's perceptions, opinions and attitudes to politicians and politics can also affect those who do not actively consume media through personal conversations with their family, friends and colleagues, as suggested by Lazarfeld et al. (1948) and Weimann (1994), in their two- or multistep flow hypotheses. The first phase is a precursor to the successive phases of mediatisation, which lead into each other in a linear fashion.
- The Second Phase: In this phase the media has now become more independent of governmental bodies, as media markets open to competition from commercial ownership. This sees media logic grow in its importance but does not yet exceed the importance of political logic of political communication. Political logic refers to the logic of polity (the system of rules

regulating the political process in a country, including the institutional structure), policy (the process of defining problems and forming and implementing policies within a specific institutional framework) and politics (the processes of garnering support for one's candidacy, party or ideas, including the performance of politics as discussed on the previous section). While news media logic has three dimensions of professionalism (the extent to which journalism is differentiated as a professional institution with a set of practices and norms unique to it, and especially separate from politics), commercialism (most media, especially in Aotearoa New Zealand are commercially driven; this has significant impact on the production, selection and presentation of news stories), and media technology (how different media platforms shape content in the production and reproduction processes, and the process of selecting and reshaping stories to fit the socio-technological specifications of different media forms), (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). It is during the second phase that we see politicians and the political elite engage in public relations and news management activities, resulting in the media not solely reporting government messaging without also approaching other sources for their messaging input into the story (Strömbäck, 2008). Thus, the media are beginning to gain some autonomy from government control, but the political elite still hold the upper hand in the relationship of mediated politics. They will, however, always be bound by the government's policies and regulations.

- The Third Phase: The media continues to be the dominant information source as it has been since the first phase. The difference between the second phase and the third is that the autonomy of the media has increased significantly, causing them now to hold the upper hand in the mediatisation process. Politicians and other social actors now must adapt to the media, rather than the reverse. Political actors must accept that the media will no longer accommodate them to publicise their messages, as they now must fight for column inches/airtime from other social institutions. During this phase, the media's account of events can become more important in

forming the public's perception than what actually happened in reality, Strömbäck (2008) calls this a 'mediated reality'. Strömbäck and Esser (2014) also highlight that the media and their influence on public opinion can also influence politician's policy decisions. While media logic holds more importance in mediated politics, political logic still has its place in guiding politicians.

- The Fourth Phase: Politicians and other social actors now adopt media logic and construct their communications and messages to reflect the media's *news values* and commercial priorities. One can argue that politics in this phase becomes a commercial media product. Outrageous and provocative statements from politicians are now reported on by the media, resulting in the 'spectacularizing' of political communication and political discourse (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). In this phase of mediatisation, the media and their outputs become inescapable, the media logic now affects empirical reality, in both the context of the campaign and governing, along with impacting politicians' reputations and opinion polls (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Strömbäck, 2008, 2011, 2021).

Scholars are divided over whether the mediatisation of politics 'dumbs down' politics and impedes on democratic ideals, or whether mediatisation makes politics more accessible to those with a lower level of education in countries that have both higher and lower literacy rates (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; McNair, 2017, Rai, 2015). As displayed in Strömbäck's (2008) phases of mediatisation, commercial media considerations become the governing logic to political communication, thus abandoning the (supposed) democratic function of a free press facilitating a political public sphere, à la Habermas' (1989) ideal of a space that provides free expression of differing political views and opinions (also see Perloff, 2022). Commercial media operates under both journalistic/democratic imperatives and commercial imperatives to return a profit to owners and shareholders (McNair, 2000, 2018; Strömbäck, 2008). The process of mediatisation now sees the media setting the political agenda, with

some input of news management activities from key individuals like the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition (McNair, 2018), or as Bourdieu (1998) poetically phrased it, 'seeing politics through the journalist's glasses.' Critiques of mediatisation argue that its preference for reporting on the process of politics and the competition between politicians from different political parties and with members of the media is to the detriment of reporting on policy, going as far as to say that distracting citizens with sleaze instead to gain their attention is debasing the public sphere and journalism's democratic ideals (McNair, 2000). McNair (2018) quotes former Australian Cabinet Minister Lindsay Tanner describing Australian politics as 'a sideshow driven by celebrity culture, marketing, and public relations' (page, 46), stating that 'public interest' ideals of political journalism is an illusion if citizens are choosing who to vote for through the same persuasion techniques that they pick their toothpaste. There is merit to the argument critics have that citizens are now consumers of politics, not only of their own country but internationally as a spectator sport. One can watch White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre deliver a press briefing in the same fashion they may watch basketball star Stephen Curry score 3-pointers. However, McNair (2018) likens this point of view to John Stuart Mill's argument against universal suffrage, saying that the masses should not be allowed to vote due to their inferior education and intelligence. Rai (2015) also agrees that the reportage of political performance is beneficial to the political public sphere, as it explains the political process and a surface view of policy announcements to citizens who may not have the educational qualifications to understand in-depth policy analyses across a wide range of issues such as public health, housing, social welfare, and finance. Moreover, the internet and social media has revealed to the citizenry more of the 'backstage' dealings between politicians and also with the media. Politicians and political parties use sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social media to communicate their messages directly to the public and the media simultaneously, as well as giving citizens the ability to reply and interact with politicians and journalists. Former US President Donald Trump popularised this trend, and also regularly used social media platforms to delegitimise unflattering media messages and promote alternative news sites that contained his messages (Scacco & Wiemer, 2020). These tweets and social media posts became

news media stories on their own merit, becoming what could be described as ‘a weapon of mass distraction’ (Julian, 2018 p.113). This thesis will argue that Western society has entered a fifth phase of mediatisation, where the internet has returned the press/politician relationship to a more even-handed relationship in setting the new values of newsworthiness. Moreover, highlighting how the construction of news values as a part of a journalistic field follows a masculinised logic as the perceived status quo. In the political field the perceived status quo is also based on a masculinised logic. One must also consider that as the attention economy grows and technological convergence means more competition as legacy media organisations now must also compete for web traffic from news organisations that originate from other media types, for example, legacy broadcast radio organisations are now competing with legacy newspaper organisations. Patterson (2000), McNair (2000; 2018), and Perloff (2022) suggest this as a reason for the ‘softening’ of political news.

### 2.4.2. News Values

Events do not become news simply on the virtue that they occurred. Hartley (1988) likens this to a football player not playing in the match just because they are on the team; the coach must select them to play. The questions of ‘who makes the news, what counts as news and whose interests does the news serve’ have been some of the earliest questions leading journalism and communications research (Hanusch & Maares, 2021, p. 93). Journalists and the journalism profession works as the institution that ‘makes’ the news that the general population consumes. O’Neill and Harcup (2009) note that many journalists claim that they learn what is newsworthy via ‘the college of osmosis’, meaning that they instinctively learn what events deserve to be covered as ‘news’ and what events are given priority over another. This can also be referred to as ‘journalistic gut feeling’ (Hanusch & Maares, 2021, p. 93). Journalism and communication studies academics have codified the ‘gut feelings’ into a typology that has been widely used in research. Galtung and Ruge (1965) developed a list of ‘news factors’ that give events a list of criteria for becoming news stories, they argued that events that could be clearly understood with unambiguous interpretations were more

likely to be selected as news. Galtung and Ruge (1965) devised a list of eight criterion for events to be selected as foreign news, they are as follows:

1. Frequency: the timespan taken by an event.
2. Threshold: The size of an event.
3. Unambiguity: The clarity of an event.
4. Meaningfulness: a) The cultural proximity. Events that align with the cultural background of the newsgatherers will be seen as more meaningful than others, so more likely to be selected. b) Relevance. Events in far-off cultures will nevertheless become newsworthy if they impinge on the newsgatherer's culture – usually in the form of a threat.
5. Consonance: The predictability of, or desire for, an event. If the media expect something to happen, then it will. Hartley (1988) notes a classic example of this is the media choosing to focus on the violence at anti-Vietnam War protests. Although there was very little violence, this media's focus on violence meant the issues that were being protested about were ignored.
6. Unexpected: The unpredictability or rarity of an event.
7. Continuity: If the event has been covered before, it is likely to appear in the news again.
8. Composition: The mixture of different kinds of events. If similar events are happening, they may be included in the round up.

In addition to these eight general news values, Galtung and Ruge (1965) also include a further four which are of the utmost importance to Western media. They are as follows:

1. Reference to elite nations: Stories about wars, elections and disasters are good examples of this tendency. Stories of the United States presidential election is more likely to be deemed newsworthy than elections in Sri Lanka or Uganda. Disasters in countries like Bangladesh need a higher headcount to be considered newsworthy, as a disaster in countries such as the United Kingdom or Australia.

2. Reference to elite people: It is assumed that the actions of elite people have an influence on the public's daily lives.
3. Personalisation: Events are seen as the actions of people as individuals. Individual people are easier to identify than institutions.
4. Negativity: Bad news makes good news – these events happen fast and are either unexpected or consonant with general beliefs about the state of the world.

Harcup and O'Neill (2001) found that stories that were often written unambiguously were in fact about complex and ambiguous events (such as policy debates in Parliament). Hartley (1988) also notes that news values are not neutral, and that the selection of news stories are all made with ideological, economic, or political considerations. Furthermore, there are suggestions that news values are fundamentally sexist, Hartley (1988) quotes journalist Anna Coote as saying:

> These [news values] have been developed, of course, by white, middle-class men, generation upon generation of them, forming opinions, imposing them, learning them and passing them on as Holy Writ. We have inherited a hierarchy of news values. What are the major stories of the day? The economy, industry, politics, foreign affairs, and so on down the scale (p. 80).

Therefore, not only are news values man-made in the colloquial term, but they are also made in the gendered sense of 'man'. The patriarchal ideology of news values in news selection and news production still remains, despite the 'feminisation' of journalism as women continue to enter the profession (Lobo, 2017). The gender balance in media content remains mostly unchanged, with men still being used as news sources more than women, and women regularly being centred and defined by their relationships to men and children. These attitudes are not only restricted to the Anglosphere that this thesis is investigating. Lobo (2017) also cites a Portuguese study that found that women are only the news subject in 23 per cent of news stories. There is a belief amongst female journalists that women could be better represented in news media stories if more women held management roles in the media organisations (Ross, 2017).

Over the proceeding decades, Galtung and Ruge's (1965) typology has been used extensively in journalism studies research. However, scholars ignored the ongoing societal and technological advancements that have revolutionised news selection, news production, and news consumption (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001, 2017; Mast & Temmerman, 2021). Scholars such as Hartley (1988), O'Neill and Harcup (2009) and Hanusch & Maares (2021) claim Galtung and Ruge's (1965) taxonomy only explains *how* journalists select news values, ignoring the ideological implications of *why* they are selected *(own emphases)*. Scholarship relying on Galtung and Ruge's (1965) original list also ignores the importance of visuals, particularly in television and online journalism, which most news consumers (63 per cent according to a 2015 Pew Research report) access through social networking sites such as, Facebook and Twitter (as cited in Bednarek & Caple, 2017; also see Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). On these sites, written communication is often minimal and the algorithms that set the hierarchy of posts give preference to visuals such as still images and videos (Bednarek & Caple, 2017). These technological developments led Harcup and O'Neill (2017) to a new schema of news values for researchers, public relations professionals, and journalists to consider. This thesis will use specific taxonomy in its analysis. They are as follows:

1. *Exclusivity:* Stories generated by, or available first to, the news organisation because of interviews, letters, investigations, surveys, polls, and so on.
2. *Bad news:* Stories with particularly negative overtones, such as death, injury, defeat, and loss (of a job, for example).
3. *Conflict*: Stories concerning conflict such as controversies, arguments, splits, strikes, fights, insurrections, and warfare.
4. *Surprise*: Stories that have an element of surprise, contrast and/or the unusual about them.
5. *Audio-visuals*: Stories that have arresting photographs, video, audio and/or which can be illustrated with infographics.
6. *Shareability*: Stories that are thought likely to generate sharing and comments via Facebook, Twitter, and other forms of social media.

7. *Entertainment:* Soft stories concerning sex, show-business, sport, lighter human interest, animals, or offering opportunities for humorous treatment, witty headlines, or lists.
8. *Drama*: Stories concerning an unfolding drama, such as escapes, accidents, searches, sieges, rescues, battles, or court cases.
9. *Follow-up*: Stories about subjects already in the news.
10. *The power elite*: Stories concerning powerful individuals, organisations, institutions, or corporations.
11. *Relevance*: Stories about groups or nations perceived to be influential with, or culturally or historically familiar to, the audience.
12. *Magnitude:* Stories perceived as sufficiently significant in the large numbers of people involved, or in potential impact, or involving a degree of extreme behaviour or extreme occurrence.
13. *Celebrity:* Stories concerning people who are already famous.
14. *Good news:* Stories with particularly positive overtones, such as recoveries, breakthroughs, cures, wins and celebrations.
15. *News organisation's agenda*: Stories that set or fit the news organisation's own agenda, whether ideological, commercial or as part of a specific campaign.

### 2.4.3. The Gendering of News Genres

Another part of journalism theory and practice that is intrinsically gendered is news genre. News genre is the classification of how news stories are treated, whether they 'hard news' or 'soft news' (Patterson, 2000). 'Hard' stories are deemed to be based on facts, regarding important spheres of society, such as economics, trade, politics, and foreign policy. Meanwhile 'soft' stories are based on description, human experience, and deemed to be 'unimportant,' covering topics like childcare and education or stories that have a strong element of positivity to them (Bednarek & Caple,

2017; Hartley, 1988; Patterson, 2000). Characteristics of soft news includes more sensationalised content that is personality-centric, less time-bound and more incident based (Patterson, 2000; Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015). Male journalists are more likely to be assigned to the more prestigious and better paid 'hard' news roles, while female journalists are assigned to cover the 'soft' news stories. Furthermore, research has also suggested that female journalists are given less opportunity to upskill in data journalism (Hanusch & Maares, 2021). Interestingly, Ross (2002, 2017) also notes that these topics as policy issues are also differentiated with a hard/soft binary, policy portfolios like economics, defence and foreign affairs are classed as 'hard' and traditionally held by male cabinet members, while female Cabinet members are left to run 'soft' issues such as childcare and education. While Ross (2002) and Steven (2007) class 'healthcare' as a soft policy issue, during the time of writing when there is the ongoing COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) pandemic, one can safely class healthcare as an important and 'hard' policy issue and news beat. The distinction between hard and soft news and its gendered considerations are important to this thesis as it will reveal in the analysis how Ardern, as a news subject, is treated as a woman, as a politician and as a female politician. Ross (2017) claims that the gendered binary of hard and soft news can be translated to mean emotion versus fact, meaning a stereotypical battle of the sexes, man versus woman. Much like how journalists claim to instinctively know what events are newsworthy, Patterson (2000) states that journalists also have a clear notion about hard and soft news. Whether they criticise it or defend it, journalists seldom offer a simple definition of soft news.

The popularisation of soft news treatment, particularly in political news coverage, has been accused of weakening the media's role to educate citizens (Otto et al., 2017). This is similar to the way trends of mediatisation of politics have led to the 'dumbing-down' of political discourse as previously mentioned. Buzzwords used in these criticisms include *sensationalism, tabloidisation* and *infotainment.* In considering the softening of political media content, it is important to consider the content type and the technology that disseminates the message, for example, if it's a political satire

television programme or a newspaper article about a politician's family. For television and radio programmes, consider whether the media organisations are public service or for-profit commercial entities. Newspapers that are funded by advertising revenue, subscriptions, or a combination of the two (Otto et al., 2017). This is important to consider, as it will suggest if the media organisation main priority is serving democratic interests or the shareholders' wallets. Otto and his colleagues (2017) created a multilevel framework to conceptualise the softening of political communication along with defining the previously mentioned buzzwords, by using a Matryoshka-doll principle. This means each higher level can encase the lower ones. The framework is as follows:

- *Within item:* Sensationalism
    - Coverage which makes use of journalistic strategies and verbal/visual production features, aiming to have an assumed effect on the audience.
- *Item:* Soft news
    - Coverage of non-political topics in the context of political communication, with personal rather than societal focus and/or non-detached style.
- *Genre:* Infotainment
    - Emergence of news genre by implementing characteristics of two genres, thus combining information and entertainment in a single outlet.
- *Type of media:* Tabloidisation
    - Adoption of characteristics of commercial broadcasting/tabloid newspapers by public service broadcasting/broadsheet newspapers.
- *System:* Eroding of boundaries
    - Blurring the line between journalism and other societal subsystems (public relations, economy).

The model shows that the differentiation of hard and soft news relates to the topic of the news media story. In political journalism, this can be characterised by

focusing on either policy aspects of an event or on the personal conditions of the event (Otto et al., 2017). The claim that soft news comes from an eroding of boundaries between journalism and public relations and marketing activities was also made over 15 years earlier by Patterson (2000). This is key in the analysis of this thesis' case studies, particularly the first case study regarding Ardern's pregnancy and motherhood status. While the topic of pregnancy lends itself to a 'lifestyle' soft news treatment, Ardern's status as an elite person and the novelty of her taking maternity leave while in office (as she was the first elected leader to do so), illustrates how female political leaders and their gender obfuscate the patriarchal norms of political news selection and production.

As previously mentioned, many news consumers receive their news updates through social media websites, with posts from both media organisations and politicians (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017; Scacco & Weimer, 2020). Steiner (2020) also highlights that a percentage of news consumers receive their news content from Facebook only. Thus, journalists are more likely to use emotive language to draw the reader into 'clicking' onto the news story. Similarly, this logic also applies to Harcup & O'Neill's (2017) news value of 'shareability', Hanusch & Maares (2021) suggest 'clickability' as another term for the news value. 'Shareability' also notes the ability on social media to reshare posts and content from other websites to a user's profile to be consumed by their 'friends' or 'followers', as media organisations face increasing commercial and economic pressures as technological convergence and internet media sees news organisations competing with outlets that traditionally were disseminated on a different type of media, for example Television New Zealand's *One News,* must now compete with *NZME's New Zealand Herald* for 'clicks' on their website (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). The criticisms that soft news, and the overreliance on social media logic (Steiner, 2020) leads to detrimental effects on the political public sphere and the perception of politics is not unfounded. Boukes and Boomgaarden (2015) found in their study that media consumers who watch more relatively soft news on politics, rather than hard news, were more cynical about politics. Interestingly, this relationship was not conditional on the participants' levels of political knowledge and interest.

Meanwhile, those who actively consumed hard news found the news consumption more enjoyable and stimulating than those who did not (Patterson, 2000). Patterson (2000) – who is a man – praises hard news as a snapshot of daily public life about stories that affect us all, whereas Stevens (2007) – a woman – points out that soft news usually relates to topics that mostly affect women.

### 2.4.4. Journalistic Framing

One of central concepts of political communication is framing, also referred to as framing theory, framing analysis or framing building (Entman et al., 2009; Perloff, 2022). Entman and his colleagues (2009) call framing a victim of its own success. Researchers consistently apply a variety of concepts under the term 'framing', thus there are multiple definitions for framing theory (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Moreover, the word 'frame' in the English language has multiple uses. Firstly, frame is a noun: a picture frame encloses the photo. Secondly, it is a verb: you can frame an innocent man. Framing is also a present participle: a shop can advertise it 'picture framing' services (Perloff, 2022). By breaking down framing theory in defining 'frame', 'frame building' and 'framing', one can succinctly understand the complexity and importance of the theory:

1. Frame: the central organising theme of a narrative on a political issue harnessed by leaders, media, and the public to explain events.
2. Frame-building: the process by which media and the broader political system coalesce around impactful and relatively enduring frames.
3. Framing: selecting aspects of an issue and making connections in ways that emphasise a particular political definition, evaluation, or remedy. (Perloff, 2022, p. 457).

It is important to specify the difference between 'frame' and 'framing' mean to coherently construct an experiment and analysis for a thesis (Entman et al, 2009). The origins of framing theory are said to have come from two different places; Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) note that Kahnenab & Tversky's (1982) experiments on word choices

impacting decisions in high-risk situations, while others cite Walter Lippmann's work on public opinion as the genesis of framing theory (Entman et al., 2009).

Framing theory is used in practice by journalists, politicians, political aides and public relations professionals. Perloff (2022) claims that framing is important to political communication research because it illuminates how to perform political communication in practice. Framing theory shows researchers:

1. How political leaders promote issues,
2. How the media discusses national issues,
3. How voters process political information.

As previously mentioned, citizens do not acquire their political knowledge from personal experience, but through mediated messages of political elites and journalists (Entman et al., 2009). To quote Lippmann (1922) 'Of public affairs, each of us sees very little, therefore, they remain very dull until and unappetising, until somebody, with the making of an artist, has translated into a moving picture' (p. 104).

There are two types of framing that this thesis focuses on, strategic framing and journalistic framing. Strategic framing involves both one's own frames, and the competition of other communicators' frames. Political leaders use framing as a powerful tool to shape public discourse and understanding (Entman et al., 2009). While it may be tempting to cynically paint frames and framing as 'spin' or 'spinning', framing is far richer in meaning than just trying to present one's actions in the best light. Perloff (2022) suggests likening frames to 'perspectives' (p. 215). In public relations practice (regardless of the context, whether political, commercial or not for profit), an indicator of public relations success is if the media has adopted one's frames in an unaltered fashion (Entman et al., 2009; Hallahan, 2011). Journalistic framing guides informational processing and text production by journalists. Frames are central to the tradecraft of

journalism as frames allow for complex and nuanced events and issues to be create an easily understandable account (Entman et al., 2009).

Framing plays a crucial role in reinforcing gender norms. As previously mentioned in the section about women in politics, the media regularly frame women politicians to be novel exceptions and are 'othered' for not being men (Wright & Holland, 2014). As previously mentioned, female politicians enter a double-bind when presenting themselves to the media, who in turn construct frames about their competencies and character (Ross, 2017). In political journalism, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) note the five most common frames used. They are as follows:

1. *Conflict frame:* This frame emphasises conflict between individuals, groups, and institutions as a means of engaging media consumers. Discussions in the media about complex and substantive policy debates between political elites are routinely framed simplistically as 'conflict'. This could be a reason why some accuse the news media of sowing mistrust in political leaders and inducing public cynicism and apathy about politics.
2. *Human interest frame:* This frame appeals to the media consumer's emotions in an effort to engage them with the story. Due to the competitiveness of the news media market, journalists and editors consciously construct their stories around people to 'humanise' abstract issues in order to be engaging and easily comprehensible. This frame was more common in sensationalist/soft news media products than in serious/hard news publications and television programmes.
3. *Economic consequences frame:* This frame reports events, problems or issues, such as a global pandemic or natural disaster, in terms of the fiscal impact it will have or has had on an individual, group, region or country. A gendered example of an economic consequence frame could be reporting on how a childcare leave scheme would impact an employer's profits.
4. *Morality frame:* This frame contextualises an event, problem, or issue via moral or religious tenets. It is important to note that as journalism aims to be

seen as objective, moral frames that make judgements on a subject are usually seen in quotes from sources. For an example, a journalist may quote Ardern claiming that it is sexist to ask a woman if she wants to have children, rather than the journalist making the claim themselves (see Bracewell-Worral, 2017).

5. *Responsibility frame:* This frame attributes who has caused an event, problem or issue and/or who the onus is on to fix it. For example, the issue of poverty, a poor woman receiving a benefit his held responsible for her fate, instead of the government and the patriarchal system it upholds.

Mediatisation, news values, news genre, and journalistic news frames all inform the analysis of this thesis on how gender impacts the news media reportage of Jacinda Ardern's performance as a political leader. Scholars such as Ross (2002, 2017) as well as Wright and Holland (2014) uphold that the news media is a gendered phenomenon. The journalistic profession (as was politics) was designed by men for men. Women find themselves having to adopt masculine characteristics to advance in their careers, and this also includes following patriarchal journalistic conventions (Hartley, 1988).

## 2.5 Conclusion

This literature review has drawn on academic works from key scholars across the communications disciplines of political communication, journalism studies and public relations, along with drawing on the sociological perspectives of Bourdieu's habitus and field, as well as seminal and contemporary works on feminism and gender studies. Extensive background reading of Mary Wollstonecraft's (1792) *A Vindication of the Rights of Women,* Simone de Beauvoir's (1949) *The Second Sex,* and Marilyn Waring's (1999) *Counting For Nothing* were undertaken to ensure the researcher had a strong understanding of intellectual perspectives in the women's movement, and in feminist scholarship.

This literature review outlined the specificity of both the journalistic and political fields that the topic of these thesis exists in (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1986, 2005, 2020; Benson, 2005, Benson & Neuve, 2005; Champagne, 2005). Both the political and journalistic field are highly gendered and have an ingrained set of patriarchal norms that women often have to adopt in an effort to be successful in these fields (Elgie, 2017; Lobo, 2017). When women are successfully elected, they are expected to fight for 'women's issues' and focus on improving women both materially and in the sense of well-being (Stevens, 2007). Despite this assumption, many female politicians do not routinely push policy that would better women's lives for fear of being seen as an unserious 'feminist'; and ignoring half of their constituents, men (Lovenduski, 2019). As previously mentioned, by researching the feminist movement and key texts around liberal, radical, and socialistic/Marxist feminisms, this thesis now has a powerful foundation of the historical transformations that sees the reality of a pregnant female Prime Minister who is able to be visibly pregnant to the media, both in New Zealand and overseas (Beasley, 1990; Epure, 2014). By studying key theories of leadership and political performance (including crisis management), one can assess how Ardern may construct her performance to reflect her ideal identity of a competent, progressive and empathetic female leader (Craig, 2016; Perloff, 2022; Wasike, 2019). On the other side of political communication, journalism, the theories discussed in this chapter show how Ardern's words and actions as Prime Minister are interpretated and mediated against a system designed to uphold patriarchal norms (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001, 2009,2017; Hartley, 1988; McNair, 2000, 2018).

This thesis seeks to draw together the 15 theoretical concepts from across the four sections of this chapter to analyse the reportage of Jacinda Ardern's gender and performance of her political leadership as New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister during the 52nd Parliament. Without understanding and acknowledging key literature in these fields, this thesis would fail in the mission to produce new knowledge in the field of political communication. This thesis aims to draw together often competing ideologies

of the journalism and political public relations professions to better understand how female politicians can navigate the mediated and masculinised political field.

This thesis will now move on to explaining the methodology and research design of the project in the next section.

# 3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and theoretical framework that grounds this thesis. Through preliminary research for the literature review of this thesis and previous research (Julian, 2018), the decision was made to conduct this study with a mixed-method approach using Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA), Thematic Analysis (TA) and Case Study Analysis (CSA). Content Analyses have long been employed to examine newspapers and other journalistic texts. Krippendorff (2018) notes that the first content analysis conducted on newspapers occurred in 1893. Case studies are commonly used in political communication research that focuses on a particular individual or a certain political event that are seen by researchers, the media and the voting public as unique or atypical (Wasike, 2019).

This thesis is grounded in a feminist epistemology via the lenses of liberal and radical feminisms, alongside some influences of Marxist/socialist feminisms. Liberal feminism acknowledges that women and men do not have equal liberties in society, including liberal societies such as New Zealand or Finland. Queer feminists question heteronormative and gender-conforming constructions of not only society but other feminist approaches to society. According to Ackerly and True, (2020) gender is a heteronormative binary, but a society that treats gender as such, treats heteronormativity as a form of power. Meanwhile, Marxist/socialist feminist thought highlights that women and men contribute different kinds of labour to production (even without taking into account women's reproductive labour of gestation, childbirth, and child-rearing, as well as the material conditions of reproduction as well as production to which the full extent of capitalist power is invisible (Ackerly and True, 2020). Marxist feminism is important to consider in this research, as it deals with how profit-driven media report on politics when gender is exceptionalised. Gender analysis is a conceptual tool that this thesis will use to unmask the important differences, inequalities, and domination constructs the language that society and individuals use to understand their experiences. This thesis uses an intersectional anti-essentialist feminism and the radical feminist conception of the patriarchy as an approach to studying what can be seen as a social phenomenon built on the foundations of liberal

feminism. The research will include deliberations on the radical feminism concept of patriarchy, and how that shapes the social order in Western hegemonic societies like Aotearoa New Zealand (Jaggar, 1988). Considerations of intersectionality, meaning the overlapping of gender, race, sexuality and class, as first conceived in by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, as cited in Ackerly & True, 2020) will also be applied to the analysis of this research.

The thesis adopts a feminist research ethic which Ackerly and True (2020) outline as a commitment to inquiry about how we inquire. The feminist research ethic requires attention to four key subjects when conducting research:

1) The power of knowledge, and the epistemology it originates from.
2) The boundaries, marginalisation, silences and the intersections that are happening in the studied phenomenon.
3) Relationships and their power differences – whether interpersonal or institutional.
4) The researcher's own socio-political location and situatedness.

(Ackerly & True, 2020, p. 20)

This research utilises a mixed method approach using content analysis as a quantitative exploratory method, to give empirical evidence of patterns of discourse in the news media reportage of the performance of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership. As Ackerly and True (2020, p.181) note 'Quantitative studies with a large number of observations can produce generalisations about social and political phenomena that can be used to contextualise findings form detailed studies.' By invoking a feminist research ethic further through qualitative thematic analysis to interrogate the relational power structures that form the boundaries and understandings of categorisations, resisting the commonplace interpretation of thematic patterns and how the patriarchal understanding of the political field affects the production and construction of news media narratives (Ackerly & True, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2022).

This chapter will first explain QCA, TA and CSA and justify why these three methods of analysis have been selected for a mixed-method approach. Secondly, this chapter

will sketch a step-by-step process of how the research will be conducted. Then, the chapter will discuss important theories that will inform the analyses section of the thesis. Finally, the chapter will conclude by summarising the key points of this chapter.

## 3.1 Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis has been used in this thesis as an exploratory method. Content analysis is a method that is considered by communication scholars to be central to the discipline, with Benoit (2013) claiming that communications scholarship is the birthplace of the research method. Benoit (2013) defines content analysis as

> The measurement of dimensions of the content of a message or messages in context. Content analysis can be employed to describe a group of related messages, draw inferences about the sources who produced those messages, or draw inferences about the reception of those messages by their audience (p. 269).

Content analysis as a technique provides new insights that increase the researcher's understanding of a phenomenon. These insights can be considered divorceable from the researcher's authority (Krippendorff, 2018). The results from a quantitative content analysis should be replicated as replicable results are reliable results. In contrast, qualitative content analysis is often not entirely replicable, as inferences are drawn from the researcher's understanding of socio-political contexts surrounding the texts.

This thesis will use quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic analysis that shall work in tandem with one another. As highlighted by Krippendorff

(2018) quantification cannot be a defining criteria of content analyses as texts are always qualitative works to begin with. Krippendorff (2018) therefore suggests that quantitative/qualitative content analysis is a false dichotomy. A combined method allows the wider socio-political context to be considered and will also halt the researcher from uncritically buying into the measurement theories of natural sciences, as well as commercial or political interests in large markets that this thesis wishes to dissect.

Texts such as news stories are analysed by researchers and recorded in a table format, in relation to how the text can provide answers to the research question, otherwise known as the purpose of the study (Belotto, 2018). In these tables are the 'codes' which are ideas expressed in words: arguments, claims, and themes. Content analyses use a defined sample to represent a wider range of materials, as reviewing all news media stories mentioning Jacinda Ardern is too onerous of a task for one researcher to undertake. Through sampling theory, a representative set of new stories have been selected from a range of ideological standpoints in order to counteract sampling bias (Krippendorff, 2018). The content analyses performed in this research will include both written and audio-visual texts in order to best capture Ardern's performance of political leadership.

## 3.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is an accessible and robust method of qualitative analysis through a systematic process of data coding to develop themes, which are the ultimate analytic purpose for this thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Terry and Hayward (2021, p.3) describe thematic analysis as being a rigorous, powerful and yet, "straight-forward" way of engaging with qualitative data. As a research method, thematic analysis is used across a range of disciplines, such as communications, counselling and psychotherapy, as well as other social and behavioural sciences (Braun & Clarke,

2022). This thesis is specifically utilising reflective TA as reflexivity involves the researcher critically reflecting on their role as the researcher and their research practice and process in a similar fashion to how Ackerly and True (2020) describe the feminist research ethic. The phases of reflexive TA involve:

1) Dataset familiarisation
2) Data coding
3) Initial theme generation
4) Theme development and review
5) Writing Up

(Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.7)

The above process applies to the method of reflexive TA to work with and make sense of the data. By using reflexive TA, the research hopes to unravel and understand the nuance, complexity, and often the contradictions through subjectivity found in the news media reportage of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership.

The final analysis in reflexive TA combines data extracts (quotes from news media stories) and analytic narrative to give the reader the researcher's interpretation of the data and their meaning, which goes beyond what is contained in the quote (Braun & Clarke, 2021; 2022). As opposed to other research methodologies that instruct the researcher to attempt to objectively "distance" themselves from their biases (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). There are some who claim that qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are one in the same, but Braun and Clarke (2021, p. 40) say they are "troubled by the (implicit) positioning of qualitative content analysis being atheoretical." They further note that qualitative research cannot be atheoretical because regardless of the purpose of the research, it always involves choices made on theoretical assumptions.

The TA in this research is more deductive, meaning that it is shaped on existing theoretical constructs (an intersectional feminist understanding of gender) which provides the lens to read and understand the performance of politics and the practices of news media narrative construction. In the focus of meaning, this reflexive thematic analysis will interrogate both the semantic (surface level) and latent (the underlying or implicit level) to build a rich analysis through a critical qualitative framework (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Furthermore, subjectivity is at the heart of reflexive thematic analysis practice, and subjectivity in the news media reportage is of keen interest to the researcher. The values of social justice and personal politics were the catalyst of this research, and reflexive thematic analysis as a method can be seen as one of the best ways to continue in this research in a qualitative fashion.

This thesis is a political intervention into the news media reportage of female political leadership, it is driven by a desire to see change and a move towards a gendered consciousness in political reporting. This gendered consciousness acknowledges the importance that gender plays in a politician's habitus but does not exceptionalise one's gendered performance to be the cornerstone of the female politician's political legacy. The epistemological underpinning of this thesis is interpretivism; social sciences, such as political science and communication studies, cannot be absolute (Ojansivu et al., 2022). The subjectivities of the researcher are not to be feared but seen as a strength in the author's approach to knowledge construction. The method of quantitative content analysis (while informed by choices) provides an empirical grounding for subsequent 'readings' of the texts (news media stories) by not only the particular theoretical constructs as documented in the literature review but also one's subjectivities and life experiences that is formed through the researcher's habitus – gender, education, ethnicity, social class, and citizenship of Aotearoa New Zealand. The experience of living through the case studies' news events in both a professional and personal capacity informed sense-making presented in this thesis. This research aims to break away from the fact/value dichotomy, investigating both the political reality of what was said in the news media stories, and theorising on what should be reported and how it should be reported (See Gerring & Yesnowitz, 2006).

## 3.3 Case Study Analysis

Case studies allow for complex issues and ideas to be investigated and explored through a real-life situation. Simons (2009) defines a case study as 'an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a real-life context." (p.21). The subject of a case study can also be referred to as a phenomenon.

The subject of a case study can also be a person or an event. The case study subjects in this thesis are about a person (Jacinda Ardern) performing as the Prime Minister of New Zealand during the 52nd parliament over the five events of her pregnancy, national crises, and Ardern's presence in the international political sphere. Case study investigates the how and why of the phenomenon, as well as the uniqueness of a phenomenon. These events create a variety of angles that will give the thesis a richer picture into Ardern's political performance. Foucault (2003) referred to this as a 'polyhedron of intelligibility.'

Case study is also useful in unlocking the specificity of the subject of study, as well as general findings that can benefit the topic's greater field of study. Case studies help to create a strong and reliable design for the research to be conducted, as well as offering a coherent narrative structure to the findings and analysis of the thesis.

Case Study analysis is separated into four types by Yin (2009). The four types are: holistic single case study, embedded single case study, holistic multiple case study and embedded multiple case study. Both singular case studies and multiple case studies (also referred to as multicase studies) deal with particularisation rather than generalisation (Stake, 2006). Single case studies are often utilised in extremely unique circumstances and/or if a researcher is lacking time and resources (Yin, 2009). The choice of whether to conduct a holistic or embedded case study is reliant on the phenomenon. Embedded designs can include a collection and analysis of quantitative data, whereas holistic designs take a more qualitative approach (Yin, 2009). Multicase studies are seen to produce more compelling arguments, the case studies are selected on the belief they will yield similar patterns to justify better how theory manifests in

practice. For this thesis, embedded multiple case study analysis has been selected. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the three case studies all have contextual specificities that cumulatively provide an overview of Ardern's leadership. The news events selected for the case studies and data collection are not contrasting replications of the same issue, but rather, they 'cluster' together around the singular feature of the exceptionalism seen in the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership. Their relation to one another is tied from the temporal political moment of Ardern's first term and provides an organising narrative the content and thematic analyses.

## 3.4 Research Design

The overarching research question of this thesis is: "How does gender influence the news media's representation of Jacinda Ardern's political performance in her first term as New Zealand's Prime Minister?" This is followed by the secondary question of why the news media focused on Ardern's gender to the extent of exceptionalisation when reporting on her political performance during her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand 40th Prime Minister? The choice of using mixed-methods research to answer this question arises from a desire to balance the explicitness and objectivity of scientific data processing that a quantitative content analysis provides, along with the freedom to reinterpret and redefine the research questions and the meaning of the answers to the data provides (Krippendorff, 2018). This is an important liberty needed when researching a contemporary subject. Content analysts can also use multiple contexts when drawing a variety of inferences from texts. For example, in this research, the author can draw on the political landscapes of New Zealand and the other countries in the sample to illuminate inferences and analyses in one text, especially from non-New Zealand media outlets. Thematic analysts also allow for quotes from the analysed texts to be weaved into their analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) instead of just relying on numbers that fail to give the reader a full, nuanced picture of the text and the context it resides in. The researcher's situatedness is also a part of the theoretical basis of this thesis, in an attempt to address the personal biases, particularly in sharing the identity intersections with the thesis' key person of case study, Jacinda Ardern. Like Ardern, the

researcher is also a cis-heterosexual woman and feminine presenting, who also has a tertiary education background in public relations and politics.

By using CSA in conjunction with content analysis and thematic analysis, a logical framework is provided for the research to occur. The case studies clearly outline the reported events that are to be analysed in this thesis. CSA helps to create a narrative that is easily understood by a reader. This is in line with what Woodside (2017) refers to as the major objective of case study research, which is develop a 'deep understanding' of the case study phenomenon and its subjective significance and uniqueness. The uniqueness of Jacinda Ardern and her representation in media reportage stems from her style of political performance, placing a high importance on compassion and kindness. When Ardern was first elected, she was the youngest female world leader in office. Her election coincided with a time where right-wing populist movements were gaining power in the United States and the United Kingdom, along with the social #MeToo movement, highlight the sexual harassment of women and non-binary people in the workplace. She was also the first elected world leader to take maternity leave.

CSA also seeks to highlight the underlying linkages that bring the phenomenon into existence (Woodside, 2017). In utilising a feminist research ethic, CSA also highlights the researcher's own situatedness and the power structures that are at play in the case study. Furthermore, the feminist research ethic can assist in countering biases and subjectivities of the researchers' relativity to the research topic, to ensure a robust analysis is performed. These power structures at play in these case studies can be identified as the patriarchy, the economic constraints and hierarchy of the for-profit media landscape, and the Westminster Parliamentary System. These methods of analysis are complementary and allow for quantitative scientific data to inform a contextualised qualitative analysis.

The quantitative techniques of content analysis are used to collect the embedded units of analysis in the embedded multicase study (Yin, 2009). This is how the CSA, content analysis, and thematic analysis work together in the research design stage to create a mixed method approach. Mixed methods allow researchers to

address broader and more complicated research questions than just using case study analysis alone. Case study helps to set the parameters of time and new story topic when collecting data for the content analysis (Yin, 2009). When integrated, these methods best reflect how theory manifests in real life.

There are five events during Ardern's first term as New Zealand's prime minister that will be used to analyse the three themed case studies of motherhood, crises leadership, and politics on the world stage.

A) Questions of Jacinda Ardern's fertility and family planning, the announcement of her pregnancy and the subsequent birth and raising of her daughter, Neve.
B) The Christchurch Mosque Attacks which occurred at the Al-Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre, on 15 March 2019, during Friday Prayer claiming the lives of 51 worshippers.
C) The eruption of Whakaari White Island, in Bay of Plenty on 9 December 2019 which claimed the lives of 22 people.
D) The COVID-19 pandemic response and the lockdown of New Zealand which commenced 25 March at 11:59pm, with businesses and schools remaining closed until 18 May, and then the ongoing COVID-19 crisis until the 2020 General Election on 17 October 2020.
E) The multiple occasions that Ardern has engaged and worked with other world leaders has been classed as one event, such as holding a joint press conference, or speaking to world leaders at the UN General Assembly.

News event one is the unit of analysis for the first case study "Motherhood", Ardern was the second elected world leader to give birth while in office. For millennia, women's purpose in society has been to bear and rear children, relegating women to the private sphere instead of engaging and leading in the public sphere (Stevens, 2007).

News event two, three, and four are the units of analysis the second case titled "Crisis Leadership". These events have been referenced by media both in New Zealand and overseas when assessing Ardern's political performance. While the business of everyday politics is discarded during the height of a crisis, this research will argue it is

during this time when communicative style is crucial to the success of a political leader. While these three events have unique circumstances, they also have similarities that allow the events to be scrutinised together as one case study.

News event five informs the third case study, titled "World Stage". In a globalised and hyperconnected world, how a politician performs abroad influences both the media and their constituents' perspective of the world leader. The country's reputation within the international community is also influenced by the political performance of country's leader. In this case study, comparisons and contrasts will be made about Ardern and past or present world leaders such as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

### 3.4.1 Sample of News Media Outlets For Content Analysis

| # | News Media Title | Medium | Corporate Owner | Country |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***1*** | *Newshub* (Defunct) | Television/Online/Radio | MediaWorks | NZ |
| **2** | The AM Show (Defunct) | Television/Radio | MediaWorks | NZ |
| **3** | The Project NZ (Defunct) | Television | MediaWorks | NZ |
| **4** | TVNZ 1 News | Television/Online | Television New Zealand | NZ |
| **5** | Breakfast on 1 | Television | Television New Zealand | NZ |
| **6** | Seven Sharp | Television | Television New Zealand | NZ |
| **7** | Q&A | Television | Television New Zealand | NZ |
| **8** | New Zealand Herald | Print/Online | NZME | NZ |
| **9** | Stuff | Online/Print | Stuff | NZ |
| **10** | National Business Review | Print/Online | National Business Review | NZ |
| **11** | Newstalk ZB | Radio/Online | NZME | NZ |
| **12** | RNZ (Radio New Zealand) | Radio/Online | Publicly Owned | NZ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **13** | Noted (Defunct) | Online | Bauer Media New Zealand | NZ |
| **14** | Newsroom | Online | Newsroom | NZ |
| **15** | The Spinoff | Online | The Spinoff | NZ |
| **16** | News.com.au | Online | News Pty Limited | AU |
| **17** | SBS | Television/Radio/Online | Publicly Owned | AU |
| **18** | ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) | Television/ Radio/Online | Publicly Owned | AU |
| **19** | The Sydney Morning Herald | Print/Online | Nine Entertainment | AU |
| **20** | The New Yorker | Print – Magazine/Online | Advance Publications | USA |
| **21** | CNN | Television/ Online | Warner Media | USA |
| **22** | Fox News | Television/Online | Fox Corporation | USA |
| **23** | Time Magazine | Print – Magazine/ Online | Time USA, LLC | USA |
| **24** | The Guardian | Print/ Online | Guardian Media Group | UK |
| **25** | The Independent | Online | Independent Digital News & Media Ltd | UK |
| **26** | BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) | Television/Radio/Online | Publicly owned | UK |
| **27** | The Telegraph | Print/Online | Telegraph Media Group | UK |
| **28** | CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation | Television/Radio/Online | Publicly owned | CAN |
| **29** | CTV News | Television/Online | CTV Inc. | CAN |
| **30** | The Globe and Mail | Print/Online | Globe and Mail Inc. | CAN |

*Table 1: Sample of News Media Stories for the Content Analysis Sample*

The content analysis sample comprises of 125 news media stories across 30 media outlets due to the fact that some news media outlets did not have reporting on the case study event available online from April – October 2020. The reason why 30 media outlets were selected is due to the concentration of media ownership and

syndication in Aotearoa New Zealand's mainstream media. Newspapers, television and commercial radio are all duopolies (Hope et al., 2023). During the time of data collection, the 15 Aotearoa New Zealand-based news media outlets were selected for their readership and viewer figures (Myllylahti & Baker, 2019). A further 15 news media outlets were selected to contrast the foreign political coverage from Aotearoa New Zealand's closest allies. A decision was made only have 15 international to not have the domestic political coverage and perspectives overwhelmed by the foreign affairs reporting. The news media stories were found and selected for the media sample by using the news media organisations' websites and searching for "Jacinda Ardern" and the news events that the case studies are based on, with the first story being selected. Types of media included in the sample are online newspaper articles, online magazine articles, interviews from television broadcasts, interviews from cable television, interviews from radio broadcasts, and exclusive online content for paid subscribers (such as *The New Zealand Herald Premium*).

The articles from these outlets will be coded using binary logic, 1 will stand for the coding category being present in the article. For example, a '1', will connote that the news story contains praise of Ardern's political performance, while a '0' will connote the absence of praise for Ardern in the news story.

The news stories in the sample will be identified on the tables as a letter connoting which event the news story reports (for example A= a story about Ardern's pregnancy/mothering Neve) and a number connoting which media outlet produced the story as listed in the table above. Thus, the identifier of A1 refers to the *Newshub* news story on Jacinda Ardern's motherhood journey. The tables are listed in the appendices of the thesis.

Media outlets in this sample mainly operate and exist to serve populations in the following countries: New Zealand (15 outlets), Australia (four outlets), United States (four outlets), United Kingdom (four outlets), and Canada (three outlets). All sample articles are in the English language, as that is the only fluent language of the researcher. These five countries were selected as all five countries are liberal democracies with a shared history of colonialism. Moreover, these five countries are close allies, with

Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, all sharing the same monarch. The political leanings of the international sample outlets are from across the political spectrum to ensure that the sample is representative of multiple ideologies' views on Ardern, as per sampling theory. It is important to note that Aotearoa New Zealand does not have a history of a partisan press as seen in other countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom.

### 3.4.2 Sample of Media Outlets in the Thematic Analysis Sample

After the content analysis, all the written text news stories (video and audio content only was omitted from this sample) from the content analysis sample were then uploaded onto NVivo to perform a reflexive thematic analysis. Then six supplementary news media stories that were mentioned or hyperlinked into the content analysis sample were also included to further the discursive quality of the thematic analysis.

| Media Outlet | Headline | By Line |
|---|---|---|
| *The New Zealand Herald* | Ministers' nannies can travel on the taxpayer under new rules | Claire Trevett |
| *The New Zealand Herald* | Heather de Plessis-Allan: Jacinda Ardern outshines Helen Clark and John Key | Heather du Plessis-Allan |
| *Newstalk ZB* | Leighton Smith: PM's baby is interfering with her job | Leighton Smith |
| *The AM Show* | Poll: Do you support Jacinda Ardern spending extra taxpayer money to attend the Pacific Islands Forum separately? | N/A |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *The Sydney Morning Herald* | Jacinda Ardern just proved typically 'feminine' behaviour is powerful | Jamila Rizvi |
| *Newsroom* | Ardern puts heat on NZ's 'frozen middle' | Anna Connell |

*Table 2: Supplementary thematic analysis news stories*

This resulted in a sample of 121 news media stories for the thematic analysis

### 3.4.3 Content Analysis Coding

The coding will group by six sets of categories: thematic, news values, news genre, news coverage, framing analysis, and news sources.

Thematic categories that will be coded for include:

1. Does this news story praise Jacinda Ardern's political performance?
2. Does the news story contain blatant references to Jacinda Ardern's gender?
3. Does the news story reference her 'response' as a leader?
4. Are there other world leaders referenced in the news story?
5. Is there any reference to government policy or the implication this event could have on policy decisions?
6. Does the news story make a reference to social media?

**News values** seek to explain what makes an event 'newsworthy', through merits which the event must have in order to be reported on. According to Rudd (2016), journalists can struggle to define what makes a good story, simply stating that 'it is.' News stories are selected by the journalists and editors with their readers 'interests and also the agenda of the media organisation in mind. Stories that are timely and local to the reader are most often selected for reporting. Elite people and nations, for example Her Majesty the Queen, or the President of the United States are often reported too, as they are seen as culturally relevant to New Zealand media consumers (Rudd, 2016). Socially, news values can outline what a society deems to be interesting in a news story. By including news values

in the analysis, there is an opportunity to highlight how Jacinda Ardern's gender, is reflected in the newsworthiness of the case study events. The news values used in this research are from the schemata of Harcup and O'Neill (2017) based on the original news values in foreign reporting by Galtung and Ruge (1965) will also be coded for as they appear in the sample. The news values are as follows:

1. Exclusivity
2. Bad News
3. Conflict
4. Surprise
5. Audio-visual
6. Shareability
7. Entertainment
8. Drama
9. Follow Up
10. The Power Elite
11. Relevancy
12. Magnitude
13. Celebrity
14. Good News
15. News Organisations Agenda

This schema is used by journalists and public relations practitioners alike, not only to deem what is and isn't a news story but also where the story should be placed in the hierarchy of news (Gordon, 2011). An in-depth discussion on the ideological function of news values has been explored in the literature review Furthermore, news values is also used in academia to critique what makes news, and the legitimisation of the attention given to political personality and performance over reportage of policy (Rudd, 2016). News values are not static, they serve an ideological function of underpinning what and also who is seen to be newsworthy, and valued in public discourse (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001, 2017; O'Neill & Harcup, 2009). Studies have shown that the normative assumptions of professionalism in journalism practice are on 'male terms' (Reidl et al., 2022, p.4). This was succinctly expressed in the journal article by Lobo et al. (2017) when one of their female interview subjects said, 'In journalism, we are all men.'

It should be noted that there is a rigidity in the coding of these news values, especially when considering the phenomenon of political celebrity (Craig, 2016). Ardern is a political celebrity, both domestically and internationally in countries such as Australia, Canada, the UK and the USA. There is a number of 'soft news' or 'celebrity news' style stories in the sample, however in New Zealand, as she is the Prime Minister and news stories about her are classed by the news value 'the power elite' as one of the most powerful individuals in the country. Politics both in the debating chamber and when performed in the media offers events filled with dramatic tension between rivals or humorous 'gaffes' from politicians (Rudd, 2016). In 2015, for example, ACT Leader David Seymour was being interviewed about the appropriateness of the New Zealand sporting emblem, 'the silver fern', when he proclaimed 'the French, for instance, love the coq.' which subsequently spawned into its own news story, featuring on Stuff, TVNZ, Newshub, and RNZ in New Zealand, with Newshub and RNZ, both referring to the incident as a 'coq up' ("David Seymour on this week's coq-ups" , 2015; Wong, 2015). American news site, Buzzfeed (2015), also wrote a news story on the quote. From this example, it is clear that politicians can still be reported on in a celebrity and humorous fashion, despite their serious position.

The coding of news values, helps grasp the understanding of why these political events featuring Ardern are considered newsworthy and how this shapes the reporting on these stories.

**News genre** refers to the how the subject matter of the news story is managed. The news genre codes have been labelled as:

1. Hard News

Hard news is defined by Patterson (2000) as coverage of breaking events involving top leaders, major issues, or significant disruptions to daily life. Hard news is mostly focused on the societal relevance of an issue, and the style of reporting is best described as rational, unemotional, impersonal, thematically framed and in-depth coverage of politics.

2. Soft News

Soft news is defined by Boukes and Boomgaarden (2015) as news stories that emphasises the experiences of individuals, taking a human-interest angle and the topic is not placed into a broader political context. Individual case stories are said to make political news more comprehensive and appealing. Soft news is said to draw in viewers with a 'lower education level' (Schonbach & De Waal, 2011, as cited in Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015). It is commonly dismissed by some as being 'politically irrelevant.' However, in culture studies, there is an argument put forth that 'soft news' was a vehicle for women's interests to be promoted, particularly in the politics of family, the body, sexuality, which were historically constructed as 'private matters' (Lumby, 1997, p. 33). The 'softness' of 'soft news' is perhaps the genre's connection to the evocation of emotion in a way that is deemed to be feminine (North, 2016). Furthermore, North (2016, p.357) notes that Lumby (1994, p.50) describes the reporters discussion of reporting hard news in a gendered and sexualised manner of "getting a good story up", North (2016) also quotes former editor of Sunday Age, in Melbourne Australia, Gay Alcorn in saying

Stories were categorised in two ways. There were what we called the 'hard cock' stories, they were the good stories, we liked them, they were the *penetrating* stories. And then over there were the 'soft cock' stories, we didn't like them, they were a bit girly, and they *weren't going to get into* the paper.

(As cited in North, 2016, p.357, *emphasis added*).

3. Editorial

Editorials can help to place the events of the news story into a wider political context both in a global sense, or in a temporal sense (comparison to other government decisions made during that term). Editorials often speculate on the effects that international meetings will have on New Zealand and abroad.

4. Opinion/Comment

Opinion/comment news stories are authored by media personalities, academics, ex-parliamentary staffers and public relations professionals, which help the general news consumer make sense of political decisions and offers critique on politicians' political performance. While some academics argue that punditry impedes on serious policy reportage, other academics suggest that opinion pieces can help a lay person make sense of policy as well as politician's performances, which can help inform citizens' voting decisions.

**New coverage stance** categories are as follows:

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. Neutral

A news coverage stance is an indication of whether the news story is a positive, negative, or neutral story about Jacinda Ardern's leadership.

It must be noted that a news story about deaths relating to the Christchurch Mosque Attack or COVID-19, may be a 'negative' story but the story can be 'positive' for Jacinda Ardern in praising her leadership. This coding category is taken from the public relations discipline. From the researcher's time as a public relations consultant, she would categorise whether a new story was favourable towards her client. On some occasions, the overall news story or review might be negative overall, but the discussion around the client and their products or services might be favourable. This logic will be applied to the analysis of the thesis.

Coverage stance is therefore judged as mutually exclusive, the news stories are either positive, negative or neutral about Jacinda Ardern. Judgements about whether the coverage stance was positive, negative, or neutral were made by counting the number of sentences that offered praise, critique or lack thereof in the narrative of the news media stories.

**News sources** have been categorised as the following:

1. Named
    - Family
    - Jacinda Ardern
    - Government MP (those from Labour, New Zealand First and Green Parties)
    - Opposition MP (those from National and ACT parties)
    - International Politicians (such as Former US President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison)
    - Public Servant (such as Director General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield)
    - Social Media (such as posts on platforms such as Instagram or executives like Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg)
2. Unnamed

### 3.4.3 Thematic Analysis Coding

The thematic analysis coding will be performed via the software qualitative research software NVivo. NVivo is a tool for collecting data and the ability to produce elaborate cross-references and aggregate insights (Ackerly & True, 2020). The thinking and reading behind the reflexive thematic analysis are still performed by researcher. NVivo helps assign news media stories to cases to make note of the number of coding references, and the percentage of coverage that code has across the case studies.

In NVivo, the coding was organised into cases of the five news event case studies listed above: Motherhood, the Christchurch Mosque attacks, the eruption of Whakaari White Island, COVID-19 in 2020, and Ardern on the world stage. The news stories were also organised into cases by news genre: hard news, soft news, editorial, opinion/comment, and a news genre that came from the data familiarisation and data coding phases (Braun & Clarke, 2022), media meta-reporting. Media meta-reporting is conceptualised a news media story that comments on the reporting from other news media organisations, its name was taken from the work of Brian McNair (2000). There will be a more in-depth discussion on these news genre cases in chapter seven of this thesis, after the thesis has offered its tripartite analysis of gender – political leadership- and the conventions of political journalism in the three case studies of motherhood, crisis leadership and the world stage.

The primary codes deduced from the content analysis and data familiarisation phase are:

1. Gender
2. Other World Leaders
3. Policy and Legal Discussion
4. Political Leadership
5. Political Process (communicative acts in the political field that mobilise politics to happen, see McNair, 2000)

6. Social Media

Due to gender and social media both being broad categories, they are further broken down into secondary thematic codes. The secondary thematic codes for gender are as follows:

- Affect and gendered behaviour (mentions of empathy, caring, showing emotions)
- Appearance and mode of dress (mentions of grooming and sartorial styling)
- Parenting (mentions of Ardern's daughter, or the acts of parenting)
    - This in itself had a tertiary thematic code of childfree women, in particular reference to other female political leaders who do not have children of their own, neither biologically nor through adoption.
- Pregnancy (mentions of Ardern being pregnant and related topics)
- Sexism and misogyny (both sexist and misogyny critique itself, and the critique of sexist and misogynistic speech or behaviour)

The secondary thematic codes for social media are as follows:

- References to social media companies (such as Meta/Facebook and Twitter/X)
- Comments from social media (quotes in news media stories that are hyperlinked or originated from social media websites)
- Criticisms of social media (mentions of lack of governance of social media content and its ubiquity)
- Named social media executive (mention of an executive as a news source, such as Facebook's Sheryl Sandberg
- Social media post (a specific post used as a source for a news media story)

The content analysis sample consists of news stories across 30 media outlets that relate to the five case study events outlined above, totalling a sample size of 125 news articles. The sample contains both traditional print (including online news outlets such as *The Spinoff* and *Newsroom,* which follow the journalistic construction of print news

stories) and broadcast media. The ratio is 14 print outlets and 15 broadcast outlets. The ratio is a crucial split to note as print and broadcast stories were traditionally crafted with their own considerations of the news cycle and having different imperatives in creating an engaging story. For example, broadcast television relies on news events to provide engaging visuals for the bulletin. The results as shown in the following chapters saw audiovisual (traditionally broadcast television) content focus on more on the visual aesthetics of Ardern's political leadership, while prestige print publications focused more on the 'hard' side of politics, noting about policy and its consequences (see McNair, 2000).

However, it must be noted that due to the media organisations' need to also have an online presence, online news stories from broadcast outlets can also have written stories accompanying their audio or video that follow traditional print conventions in their journalistic construction, while news organisations that were traditionally print outlets also host video content online to complement their written text stories, this means that the results saw some thematic overlaps in the way they framed their political reporting. When considering this delineation, the ratio between print and broadcast stories varies from case study to case study. They are as follows:

1. Motherhood: 13 print/online stories and ten broadcast stories
2. Christchurch Mosque attacks: 18 print/online stories and nine broadcast stories
3. Whakaari/White Island eruption: 11 print/online stories and ten broadcast stories
4. 2020 COVID-19 response: 20 print/online stories and six broadcast stories
5. World stage: 22 print/online stories and four broadcast stories.

The sample of the thematic analysis for this thesis replicates the written elements of content analysis news stories along with six supplementary news stories found online without a paywall that were referenced and quoted in the news stories from the content analysis. The total number of news stories in the thematic analysis sample is 121. These news stories were uploaded and coded via the NVivo software programme. The NVivo software was chosen to provide a more layered analysis when comparing the results from the two methodologies. The functionality of NVivo allows the researcher to

see the coverage of the thematic codes and all the case studies' texts presented as a percentage. The coding coverage percentage will validify the results of the discursive assertions made in the analysis with quantitative measurements from the software. It can be observed from the thematic analysis tables that there is not a clear correlation between the number of coding references and the percentage of the case study that they cover. The percentage of coding coverage is calculated as the number of words coded to a particular theme out of all the words in the case study's news stories. However, the qualitative and discursive weight of the themes must also be analysed with an understanding of other events happening around the same time as the news story to grasp any implicit meaning and hidden news organisation and ideological agendas of the text, if any. Thus, providing the thesis with a mixed-method approach of qualitative and quantitative results.

#### 3.4.3.1 *Thematic Analysis of the Full Sample*

| **Themes by Full Sample (121 News Stories)** | **Number of Coding References** | **Number of Items (News Stories Coded)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 438 | 68 |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 95 | 36 |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 51 | 23 |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 164 | 36 |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 7 | 2 |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 46 | 16 |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 75 | 29 |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 249 | 70 |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 191 | 71 |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 162 | 70 |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 325 | 112 |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 124 | 52 |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 38 | 19 |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 13 | 7 |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 27 | 16 |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 12 | 5 |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 34 | 25 |

*Table 3: Thematic Analysis of the Full Sample*

Thematic analysis is used in this thesis to clearly outline how the patterns of themes in the news stories narrate the understanding of the case study events. The software NVivo allows the data to be analysed holistically as a full sample set. This is important to the research as it creates a robust understanding of how the themes relate and work together to construct a representation of Ardern's gendered political leadership in the media. The table shows how the themes work to construct the representation of Ardern as Prime Minister through the number of coding references (how many times the themes appear in the news stories) and how many of the news stories (items) the themes are present.

When presenting the thematic analysis sample globally, it is apparent that gender as an aggregated primary code is the most frequently occurring theme, with 438 coding references across 68 news stories out of a full sample of 121 news stories. Within the secondary codes of gender, parenting was the most frequently occurring theme, with 171 coding references in 36 news stories, followed by the secondary code of sexism and misogyny, with 75 coding references across 29 news media stories. Karen Ross (2017) noted that female political candidates she interviewed found that the news stories focused more on their gendered expression and performance than the campaign and proposed policies. Ross (2017) states that this is due to journalists enacting a 'novelty framing'. This sees journalists focus on a female candidate's personal life, such as marital and maternal statuses, to differentiate them from their male counterparts. In the past, political office has been male-dominated and viewed exclusively as an institutional field for men. As stated earlier, the first female MP in Aotearoa New Zealand, Elizabeth McCoombs was elected in a 1933 by-election after her husband, who held the seat, died (Coleman, 2020). From 1933-2019, there were 149 MPs who identified as women, and the country had had three female prime ministers. While Ardern's gender alone is not a 'novelty', her simultaneously holding the positions of mother and Prime Minister of New Zealand is novel and thus newsworthy. Ardern’s dual role was particularly newsworthy in countries like Australia, which only had one female prime minister who was not a parent. This novel position made Jacinda

Ardern a 'celebrity politician' internationally, as a liberal feminist symbol for women's empowerment, with the idea of advancing the societal place of all women through her achievements as New Zealand's Prime Minister (Jaggar, 1990). This is reflected in a quote from Carol Toller in *The Globe and Mail* (March 22, 2019)

Somehow it feels auspicious to me that she entered our lives just days after Hollywood brought us *Captain Marvel*, Marvel Studio's first female-led superhero film. We've got Jacinda Ardern on the global stage now, standing tall and clinging fiercely to the human values that other politicians have been casually jettisoning. Maybe there's hope for us after all.

The comparison of Ardern to the superheroine Captain Marvel frames Ardern as a powerful ground-breaking figure who will 'save' women from being trapped under the societal confines of their gender.

In the secondary theme of sexism and misogyny, there is also a critique of Ardern dually holding the titles of 'mother' and 'prime minister' as novel or worthy of celebrity status. The research method of thematic analysis allows the researcher to consider both the coding instances quantitatively and the discursive meaning of the words used in the news stories that represent the theme for qualitative analysis. Outlining the meaning and definition of the words used by journalists and broadcasters in their news stories and broadcasts are essential to a rich, full-bodied thematic analysis.

*Newstalk ZB* veteran broadcaster Leighton Smith's on-air comments found in both the content and thematic analyses samples are clear examples of sexism and misogyny in the media. Regarding Jacinda Ardern taking a separate flight to a diplomatic meeting due to breastfeeding, he falsely claimed

As a working mother you have to make a choice. We all know that every working woman who has a child and a job knows that. Breastfeeding is to be encouraged for three months. Well, the three months is up but she has decided she isn't going to stop and wants to keep breastfeeding. So that is interfering with her job as she chose to do it... So, the question is why does she need to go? Is it because she thinks Winston will

be taking the limelight? I suggest that has something to do with it (*Leighton Smith Show,* 4 September 2018).

Smith's comments are not only derogatory but factually incorrect on two accounts. Firstly, Neve was born on 21 June 2018 (*Newshub*, 2018*)*, just over two months before Smith said the above quote. Secondly, the *World Health Organization* (2021) recommends that infants are exclusively fed breast milk for six months. Smith, here is, suggesting with his false statement that Ardern's baby is making her an inadequate Prime Minister as well as an inadequate mother. The term "limelight" refers the being the centre of public attention. Here, Smith is insinuating that Ardern does not want her Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Winston Peters to be the centre of attention. This comment is part of a wider pattern observed of sexist critique while conducting the thematic and content analyses. In the sample, when Smith is discussing distaste for Gayford and their daughter being present in United Nations General Assembly, he proclaims that the attention on Ardern's family in the public sphere is needless and asks, "can we please have a statesman?" Nancy Fraser (1992) notes that from a feminist perspective, the phrase 'the public sphere' conflates to three concepts: the state, the official economy of the paid labour market, and public discourse. All three have historically been occupied and controlled by men. Thus, Smith's critique here of Ardern's performance on the world stage is rooted in the patriarchal understanding of how to perform political leadership. Habermas' construction of the public sphere is a designation of what Fraser (1992, p.110) aptly describes as a 'theatre' in modern society where political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. In this construction, however, men and a masculinised worldview of an austere style of public speech were classed as 'rational, virtuous and manly'. While 'women-friendly' salon-style public sphere debates were stigmatised as not only 'effeminate' but 'artificial' and aristocratic'. Fraser (1992) notes that the public sphere reflects the classical tradition that paints femininity and publicity as oxymorons, pointing out the etymological connection between 'public' and 'pubic' and 'testimony' and 'testicle'. Fraser (1992, p.114) refers to this as a 'graphic trace', stating that the ownership of a penis was required to speak in public in Ancient Greece.

Social media as an aggregated primary code yielded 124 coding references across 52 news media stories across the entire thematic analysis sample. Coding for social media and its secondary code themes of comments from social media, criticism of social media, named social media executive, and social media posts assist in delineating and outlining the importance of social media in the dissemination of political information in the political information cycle (Chadwick, 2019; Pantic & Cvetkovic, 2020). Politicians use social media to bypass the traditional gatekeeping of journalists to reach their constituents. Journalists use social media as a source-gathering tool. In 2020, around 3 billion people actively used social media as a communications tool to keep up to date with friends, family and world news (Pantic & Cvetkovic, 2020). Criticism of social media is also important to consider as a theme, particularly in the case study of the Christchurch Mosque Attacks, where the terrorist live streamed the attack over Facebook. Across the full thematic analysis, criticism of social media as a secondary coding theme occurred 27 times across 16 news stories. Ardern made headlines globally for spearheading the Christchurch Call with French President Macron to prevent the spread of violent and extremist content on the internet. This is an important theme to consider as it plays a crucial role in Jacinda Ardern's political legacy beyond her tenure as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister.

### 3.4.4 Theoretical Framework

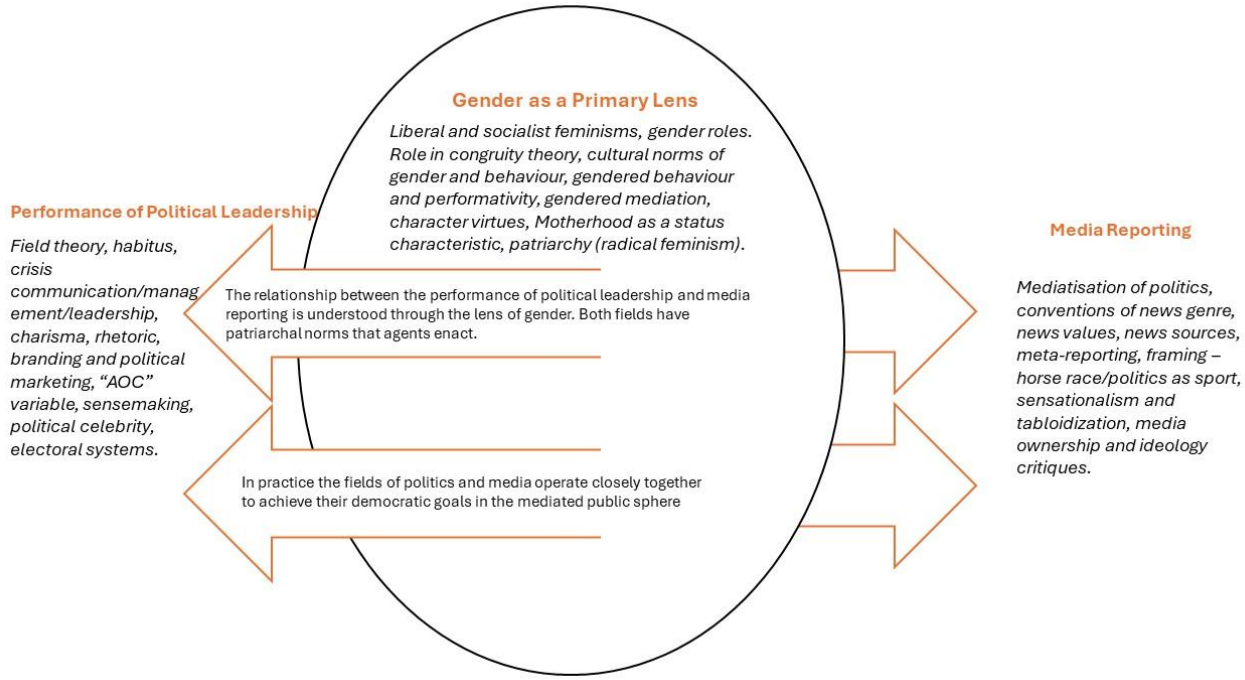


*Figure 2: The Tripartite Structure of Gendered Mediation*

The aforementioned codes work together theoretically by bringing together the theoretical and research concepts of the public relations and the journalism disciplines in an effort to create a holistic picture of how political communications and political reporting are crafted via political performance. These six sets of codes will offer quantitative data for the embedded units of analysis in the embedded multicase analysis. The thematic analysis codes will then further mobilise the interrogation of the patriarchal structures of the political and journalistic fields.

This thesis' theoretical framework can be classified as a tripartite structure with gender at the apex as a lens to which the research can view the theory and practice of the political and journalistic fields, along with recognising their symbiotic nature in practice which gives birth to the mediatisation of politics and the mediated public sphere. A lens in research is a representation or a vehicle to negotiate how the

researcher interpretate and presents the phenomenon they are researching in the context of a social culture (Ojansivu et al., 2022). Etymologically, a lens denotes a double-convex lentil shape, while the modern meaning refers to an object that can transmit, regulate, or reflect light and thus in this process, focus, change, or blur vision. Scholars, therefore, use a lens as a framing and sensemaking tool in research, as social sciences are never absolute; researchers can use a 'research lens' to 'change the focus' as glasses can do to the human eye (Ojansivu et al., 2022).

Thus, gender as the primary lens in this research changes the focus to the interrogation of the patriarchal foundations and sharpen the focus on the subtext of the lived experiences of the life worlds of women and gender-diverse people that is often ignored in the privileging of the masculine perspectives and sensemaking in society-at-large, but more specifically in the political and journalistic cultures of Anglophone-Western society. Furthermore, this thesis follows the assertion of Manne (2017) that misogyny is the policing agent of the patriarchy which is the foundation of which Western society like Aotearoa New Zealand, and her home country of Australia. The unpacking of the presentation of stereotypical gendered behaviours in politics and specifically Ardern's performance is central to answering the research question of this thesis. While gender is the primary lens in the model, gender is also a factor that stands in its own right in the model. In a mediated democracy like Aotearoa New Zealand, the political and journalistic fields construct how gender is performed and experienced by members of the society. Thus, the word choices of 'interplay' and 'tripartite structure' are used to illustrate the permeable system of what Champagne (2005) calls the 'political-journalistic field'.

The theories that the quantitative coding set are grounded in will also inform the qualitative analysis along with the following theories:

1) Gendered mediation

This is an important feminist media studies theory that asserts that the news coverage of political leaders' foregrounds and praises agentic and masculine qualities

while denigrating and diminishing communal qualities usually associated with women and femininity (Trimble, 2017, Ross, 2017, Trimble et al., 2020). These communal qualities that are usually diminished in traditional news media coverage are in turn praised in the news media reportage of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership.

2) Mediated public sphere

The public sphere theory was popularised by Jurgen Habermas (1989), which described how political discussion and critiques of government occur in liberal democracies. The mediated public sphere refers to how the mass media facilitates and/or stifles these political discussions and exchange of ideas occurring. This theory is key to political journalism as it highlights how it acts as a service to civic society, but also how it can be manipulated to allow the masses to political change (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Related is the concept of mediatisation (Strömbäck & Esser, 2014) of politics, which is the process of how politics is dominated by a media logic, the journalists act as an intercessory between the politicians and the public through news media stories, as well as interviews, debates and press conferences as representations of mediated public life (Craig, 2016).

3) Gender as a performance

Judith Butler's (1999) assertion that gender is a performance of repetitive behaviours that are socially constructed to be congruent with the gender roles that typify the binary of the public man/private woman (Fraser, 1995). As previously mentioned in the literature review, Ross (2002) claims that historically women have had to convince the traditional polity that they are competent despite their gender (p. 43, original emphasis), while the news media reportage framed Jacinda Ardern as a competent crisis leader because of her gender. Thus, Bourdieu's (1990) theory of habitus is also integral to the framework of this qualitative analysis. A political leader's

subjectivity is extraordinarily scrutinised by the public vis-á-vis their character and personality, their upbringing and professional background – which is all realised through the interconnection of values in identity markers such as gender, class, ethnicity and aesthetics (Craig, 2016).

4) Politics as a performance

Politics is a communicative act (Rai, 2015). As established in the above discussion on the mediated public sphere, the journalistic interventions of interviews, debates and press conferences are not only representations of mediated public life but also specific instances of embodied communication where we see politics performed (Craig, 2016). Craig (2016, p.5) writes, "The performance of politics is thus in one way judged not to be dependent upon bodily attributes, but equally embodiment is not only necessary but privileged in evaluations of political performance in public life." Politicians' political ideals and rhetoric are expressed through speech acts. Thus, the mastery of voice, gesture, and general bodily deportment are integral to successful political communication (Craig, 2016).

5) Leadership as a performance

Traditional conceptions of leadership tend to be masculine in nature (Knights, 2019). This is characterised by Wilson (2016,p. 164) as "think leader, think male". Aristotle describe the state in Politics as an extension of the home, with the patriarch as the head of the household. Wilson and Newstead (2020) note that leaders are in charge of the sensemaking and meaning making in times of crisis. Leadership can also be conceptualised through the relationship a leader has to their followers (Wilson, 2016). This is seen in the Christchurch mosque attacks case study, where Ardern focused her leadership response on the victims as opposed to the terrorist, which saw the news media narratives become victim-centred and centred on Ardern's leadership itself. Knights (2019) notes that masculine conceptions of leadership often neglect the

embodied and engaged manner that social relations are conducted in everyday life. The qualitative analysis of performance of political leadership in the case studies will consider the bodily deportment and sartorial style of Jacinda Ardern as it manifests in the news media reportage.

### 3.4.5 The Tripartite Structure of Gendered Mediation and the Primacy of Gender

The purpose of this thesis is to reflectively investigate and elaborate on how gender, the performance of political leadership and the structural conventions of political journalism operate in the context of a mediated democracy and the news media representations of Jacinda Ardern's gender. The order of the analysis of this thesis' case studies reflects the thesis' theoretical tripartite structure. The analysis of gender in the news reportage is first to reinforce the primacy of gender and how a patriarchal understanding of gender structures society into a false binary in the dominant position of men, the subjugation of women, and the ignorance towards people who do not conform to the gender binaries of roles and behaviour. Secondly, the case study chapters will elaborate analysis of themes of performing political image and leadership found in the samples of news media stories. This analysis on political image and leadership is refracted through the previous analysis of gender, and it unpacks how Jacinda Ardern's gender manifests through her performance of political image and leadership, as politicians increasingly blur the divide between their personal family life and their public persona (McNair, 2000). The case studies chapters will turn to analysing the political reporting and punditry in the samples of the news media stories, highlighting and problematising how news media normalisation of female prime ministers is still yet to be achieved. This is despite not only Ardern being the third female New Zealand Prime Minister, but also decades of elected female leaders globally and periods of Queen Regents throughout history (Trimble, 2017). The news media are responsible for introducing leaders, describing and evaluating their performances of image and leadership, and circulating the norms of effective leadership (Trimble, 2017). This shows the symbiotic nature of the journalistic and

political fields and their connection at the foundation of the tripartite structure of this thesis.

This thesis asserts that gender is one of the key organising features of all communication interactions and constructs (Griffin, 1992). These aforementioned false gender binaries are infused into society's understanding of how the practice of politics and journalism is constructed and performed. Simone de Beauvoir (1949, p. 283) famously wrote in *The Second Sex,* "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman." This has been quoted by many feminist and gender scholars, including Judith Butler (1986, 1990), who cites this quote in their arguments that gender is a socially constructed performance. De Beauvoir's (1949, p.283) following two sentences are also as equally enlightening and a pithy explanation of a feminist understanding of how the social construction of gender enforces the structures of patriarchal society and fields.

No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilisation as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine. Only the mediation of another can constitute an individual as an *Other* (original emphasis in Borde & Malovany-Chevallier's, 2009 translation).

Thus, gender is the social construction and a process of interpreting the body to give it a cultural form through appropriate acts (Butler, 1986). Through this, normative roles of how men and women are to act out in society emerge firstly through the structures of the nuclear family unit (Jaggar, 1988; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Children are said to observe the patriarchal hierarchy of gender through their mother's subjection to the father's will as the mother cares for matters inside the home (domestic labour), and the father works outside the home in the public producing labour for the marketplace (de Beauvoir, 1949; Jaggar, 1988, Waring 1990). Importantly, Western cultural beliefs about mothers are, in fact, embedded into their cultural beliefs of all women (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). This can be referred to as a 'public man/private woman binary' (Ross, 2002, 2017; Stevens, 2007, Trimble, 2017). This dichotomy can be attributed to the

patriarchal characteristics of liberalism (Griffin, 1992). Women politicians and other female leaders in public life, such as Jacinda Ardern, are role incongruent as they subvert the binary and the gendered hierarchy as they are public women in a position of significant political and economic power. This thesis rejects claims of gender and anatomical essentialism. A person's assigned sex at birth does not dictate the roles that they may perform in society, their behaviour and other personality characteristics (Griffin, 1992), nor must people's behaviour be congruent to the patriarchal dictations of societal roles and gendered presentation. A woman can be a politician, she can be assertive, and she can be empathetic when the communication context arises. What is perceived as successful and appropriate leadership behaviour is also temporal and reliant on the context of the political event. Human behaviour is not static, nor is there a static schema of what makes a successful political leader.

The phrase 'the public sphere' does not only refer to Habermas' ideal of a theatre of society in which political participation is enacted by private persons (men) through the discussion of political ideas in a space that is separate from the state. Feminist scholars use the term 'the public sphere' to refer to the world outside the home, conflating three distinct parts of society:

1. The state
2. The official economy of paid employment
3. The arenas of public discourse (Fraser, 1990, p.57).

Critiques of Habermas' public sphere conceptualisation note his blindness to gender, with some scholars, such as Joan B. Landes, accusing Habermas of this omission being intentional (as cited in Knoppers, 2014). In mediated democracies like Aotearoa New Zealand, the public sphere is not a physical space. No longer are citizens gathering in town halls and salons to discuss current events, instead citizens are presented with discourses via news media products and online social media websites, such as Twitter which is largely made up of citizens in the academic, political, journalistic and other communications fields (Strömbäck, 2014). Even as the public

sphere moves from a physical space to mediated channels such as print, broadcast and online media as a place for citizens to gain political knowledge, the mediated public sphere is still constructed to privilege the views of white males (see Griffin, 1992; Park, 2019). Fraser (1990) notes that efforts to create a more women-friendly public sphere were objected to because they were considered too bourgeois and too feminised.

While many feminist theorists keep the categories of private/public in their critiques, this is not to rehabilitate but to reinterpret them (Wischermann, 2004). The rise of communication technologies and the information services economy could also contribute to the further breaking down of the false private/public sphere dichotomies. The social space of a young girl's bedroom is now mediated through mobile, tablet and computer screens to engage in real-time discourse through platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to discuss both societal issues and the struggles of their own lives beyond the secrets of the *Dolly Magazine* sealed section sneakily read behind a locked door (see Kennedy, 2020). Young women and other people who fall outside of the dominant white cis-gendered heterosexual male category are able to engage in discourses that affect them in multiple conflicting and complementary mediated public spheres, which may be relegated as inconsequential to the middle-class masculinised ideological singular public sphere. These issues can include the gendered mediation of politicians (the focus of this thesis), and discourses around period poverty and reproductive health, which aid in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of the participants' identities (Wischermann, 2004).

For women and people of other minority genders, there is the struggle for the right to see your gendered specificity acknowledged and accepted while also maintaining the right to be a generalised citizen. Thomas Keenan (1993) reflected that the public sphere should not be imagined as a location but as a place to go to reassert one's subjectivity. Fraser (1995) also noted the etymology of the word testimony being related to testes or testicles, to suggest that historically only men were deemed to be suitable to speak in public by virtue of their appendage. When turning to the specificity of Jacinda Ardern and understanding how the patriarchal structures of political journalism understood

and presented her newsworthiness, there is a negotiation that occurs in the news media stories performed by not only the journalist, but other members of the political field and the citizen news consumer. The false dichotomies of rationality/emotionality, competence/kindness, policy/process, masculine/feminine, and, as Bill English termed it in a 2017 electoral debate, "stardust/substance" (see *Stuff,* 2017, September 7). The problematic here is how the journalists understood and represented Ardern's exceptional political performance of leadership. Her ascent to the role of Prime Minister was dramatic and unconventional. Ardern ascended from Labour List MP to the elected member of Mount Albert, to Deputy Labour Leader, to Leader of the Opposition, in the Prime Minister in a year (Timperley, 2018). The leader of The New Zealand First Party, Winston Peters, announced that his party was to enter into a coalition with the New Zealand Labour Party after a month-long of negotiation (Peters, 2018). Ardern (2018, p.28) called the election campaign 'tumultuous', and the delayed and surprising election result added to the news value of drama to the story for international and New Zealand media alike. The personality, youth, and gender of Jacinda Ardern also became the subject of spectacle dubbed 'Jacindamania', in line with the fervour that was caused by the music band, *The Beatles* (Timperley, 2017; Peters, 2017). In the globalised political context, Donald Trump was elected as President of the United States, even after a secret recording leaked of him gloating about sexual exploits with women and using the vulgar phrase 'grab them by the pussy' (Chapman, 2019). This followed a global feminist movement, Me Too, which highlighted the epidemic of sexual assault on women and other genders, particularly in the entertainment industry, which saw executive Harvey Weinstein arrested on multiple charges (Chapman, 2019). Ardern's elevation was seen as a tonic to a culture of male entitlement and 'breaking new ground' for female leaders (Clark, 2019, p.32). Former Prime Minister Helen Clark, also a mentor of Ardern, also noted in a piece for *Foreign Policy,* that Ardern is also newsworthy in her political leadership with her refusal to 'back down from tough issues (p.32).' These comments of praise around Ardern's ascent allude to two phenomena for women in leadership, the glass ceiling, and the glass cliff (Ryan et al., 2007). The glass ceiling refers to the barriers women and other minority groups face when trying to ascend to the upper echelons of leadership,

whether in the business or the political fields. The glass cliff is a concept that refers to the precarious nature of women's leadership, women are often elevated to leadership roles during times of crisis and are critiqued and judged more harshly than men are and are exposed to more blame for poor outcomes (Ryan et al., 2007).

In her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern became a fixture in the news media landscape, as she performed politics in a new and exciting fashion. She was unabashedly female, youthful, compassionate, and kind while still performing her leadership responsibilities well, she delivered empathetic leadership with rationalised justification. She did not shy away from the 'hard' policy topics that are usually prescribed to male politicians (Ross, 2002; Stevens, 2007). Tension arises in what is implicit in some of the reportage, as Ardern breaks the status quo of the role congruity and breaks through the perceived binary. In the news event of the Christchurch Mosque Attack, the public can see she is both compassionate to the victims and agentic in her condemnation of the terrorist and her government's swift action to introduce new policies into law. In Ardern's performance of political leadership, she exhibits behaviour congruent to the role of political leadership while still dressing and acting out a feminised gendered performance. The news media had to negotiate to represent Ardern as Prime Minister for both the competent professional who has full agency in her authority and the moments where she exhibited compassion and kindness, in the form of a hug or shedding a tear. This leads the journalists to ask, as if they are a group of singing Austrian nuns, "How do you solve a problem like Jacinda?" The reportage that has long been structured on a patriarchal structure of false binaries must balance the ordinary politics du jour with the spectacle of a female politician who stood on the glass cliff of party leadership when the polls suggested that the National Government was set to win a fourth term in 2017 (Ardern, 2018) and smashed the glass ceiling to become the first women to take maternity leave as a Prime Minister (see Ryan et al., 2007).

This thesis asserts that gender is one of the key organising features of all communication interactions and constructs (Griffin, 1992). False gender binaries are infused into society's understanding of how the practice of politics and journalism is

constructed and performed. Simone de Beauvoir (1949, p. 283) famously wrote in The Second Sex, “One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.” This has been quoted by many feminist and gender scholars, including Judith Butler (1986, 1990), who cites this quote in their arguments that gender is a socially constructed performance. De Beauvoir’s (1949, p.283) following two sentences are also as equally enlightening and a pithy explanation of a feminist understanding of how the social construction of gender enforces the structures of patriarchal society and fields.

No biological, psychic, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilisation as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine. Only the mediation of another can constitute an individual as an Other (original emphasis in Borde & Malovany-Chevallier’s, 2009 translation).

Thus, gender is the social construction and a process of interpreting the body to give it a cultural form through appropriate acts (Butler, 1986). Through this, normative roles of how men and women are to act out in society emerge firstly through the structures of the nuclear family unit (Jaggar, 1988; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Children are said to observe the patriarchal hierarchy of gender through their mother’s subjection to the father’s will as the mother cares for matters inside the home (domestic labour), and the father works outside the home in the public producing labour for the marketplace (de Beauvoir, 1949; Jaggar, 1988, Waring 1990). Importantly, Western cultural beliefs about mothers are, in fact, embedded into their cultural beliefs of all women (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). This can be referred to as a ‘public man/private woman binary’ (Ross, 2002, 2017; Stevens, 2007, Trimble, 2017). This dichotomy can be attributed to the patriarchal characteristics of liberalism (Griffin, 1992). Women politicians and other female leaders in public life, such as Jacinda Ardern, are role incongruent as they subvert the binary and the gendered hierarchy as they are public women in a position of significant political and economic power.

## 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the epistemology, the context of why a mixed methods approach has been selected, and the research design along with the theoretical base for qualitative analysis.

This thesis' epistemological grounding in feminism speaks not only to the topic of gender being central to this thesis. It also speaks to the research design of questioning normative assumptions and power structures of societal hierarchies (Ackerly & True, 2020). These power structures include the patriarchy and the corporate structure of news media organisations.

The methods used to conduct this research are quantitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and embedded multiple case study analysis. These methods were chosen as they are complementary to one another in the stages of data collection and analysis. Case study analysis helps to create a scope for the content analyses to be analysed through the creation of timeframes and topics of case study narratives. The news media stories collected for content analyses, also act as embedded units of analyses for the embedded multiple case studies (Yin, 2009). Quantitative content analysis allows for this thesis to have a statistical element to its analysis akin to research conducted in the natural sciences (Krippendorff, 2018), while thematic analysis allows for subjectivity to be used as a research tool, as opposed to a hinderance (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The categories to be coded for in the content analyses are thematic, news values, news genre, news coverage stance, and news sources. These sets of categories come from the different schools of thought that influence political communication such as journalism studies, mass communication theory and public relations. The theories from these schools of thought such as the public sphere (Habermas, 1989), news values (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017), and theories of democracy and their models of political accountability (Baker, 2002), all work together create a robust narrative of analysis.

The initial limitation to this the quantitative content analysis coding includes the rigid dichotomies of theories such as news genre and news values being anchored in patriarchal ideals. These theories, however, will be mobilised in the reflexive thematic analysis to show how gendered mediation realised the news media coverage of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership during her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister.

The following three chapters of this thesis will cover the content and thematic analyses of the three case studies. Chapter four will focus on the motherhood case study, in regard to Ardern's pregnancy and parenting of her daughter as a working political mother. Chapter five will focus on the three news events (the Christchurch mosque attacks, the eruption of Whakaari White Island, and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020) that make up the crisis leadership case study. Chapter six will then focus on the world stage case study which focuses on Ardern's diplomatic and trade missions overseas, as well as her interactions with foreign leaders.

# 4. The Motherhood Case Study

As noted in the introduction, the Motherhood case study relates to the news events of Ardern announcing her pregnancy in January 2018 and extends into Ardern and Gayford's comments on parenting Neve during the initial COVID-19 lockdown of March-April 2020. The news media stories' narratives in this case study also involve discussion of Ardern being the first publicly pregnant elected world leader.

This chapter will first outline the quantitative results of themes apparent in the content analysis that lay a foundation for the thematic analysis of how the themes manifest in the thesis' case studies. The broad themes of gender and social media coded for in the content analysis have then been broken down into secondary codes to engage with the specificity of Jacinda Ardern's gendered political leadership and performance during her first term, particularly in consideration of the motherhood and world stage case studies. Motherhood is a highly sexed and gendered phenomenon, particularly when considering the reversal of Ardern and Gayford's expected roles in parenting, with Gayford acting as the primary caregiver. Secondly, the chapter will outline the thematic analysis results of the motherhood case study to then enhance the analysis and discussion of the case study vis-à-vis the tripartite structure of gendered behaviour, the performance of political leadership, and the conventions of political journalism.

## 4.1 The Content Analysis of the Motherhood Case Study

| Themes | Motherhood (24 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|
| **Political Process** | 13 (54.17%) | 110 (88.00%) |
| **Gender** | 24 (100.00%) | 72 (57.60%) |
| **Leadership** | 11 (45.83%) | 70 (56.00%) |
| **Other World Leaders** | 17 (70.83%) | 72 (57.60%) |
| **Policy Discussion** | 11 (45.83%) | 73 (58.40%) |
| **Social Media** | 11 (45.83%) | 48 (38.40%) |

*Table 4: Themes in the Motherhood Case Study*

The motherhood case study had the theme of political communicative acts present in 54.17 per cent of the news stories. This anomaly in the data can be explained by the nature of the Motherhood case study. The focus of the news stories in the Motherhood case study are Jacinda Ardern giving birth to her daughter Neve and balancing the responsibilities of parenthood with being the Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand. After giving birth, Ardern also became the first elected world leader to take six-weeks maternity leave, meaning that there was a period during the temporality of this case study where Ardern was not performing the political communication acts found in the political process herself. Instead, the most prominent theme in the Motherhood case study was gender which occurred in 100 per cent of the news stories. One could suggest that this result is innate. As previously mentioned, motherhood, by nature, is a highly sexed and gendered phenomenon. The act of giving birth to a child is an experience limited to people who are assigned female at birth with healthy fertility. The gendered expectation of women as primary caregivers, mothers, and 'homemakers'

outside of the market economy and labour force (Butler, 1990; Waring, 1999) has long been a societal norm. The news stories in the case study also highlighted Ardern and Gayford's subversion of gendered roles in caregiving, with Gayford acting in the historically feminine position of Neve's primary parent in the private sphere. At the same time, Ardern works in the public sphere in the historically masculine position as a political leader (Ross, 2017).

The theme of social media is vital to this research question as social media continues to grow as a communicative tool for politicians and journalists to disseminate information that shapes society's understanding of politics. Social media as a coding category in this content analysis is a broad theme relating to four different sub-themes:

1. Politicians posting on social media being quoted in news stories,
2. Members of the public posting about politicians on their social media, as well as replying to comments on politician's social media,
3. Critiques of the ubiquity and governance of social media,
4. Social media executives being quoted in news stories and being referred to as important thought leaders in a global society.

These four sub-themes are connected to the primary thematic coding category due to their relation to the use and management of social media platforms, highlighting how ubiquitous social media is in the process of political communications, and communications at large. Many news stories noted foreign political leaders and citizens

alike posting messages of congratulations to Jacinda Ardern on her pregnancy and subsequent birth of her child.

| News Coverage Stance | Motherhood (24 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|
| **Positive** | 19 (79.17%) | 83 (66.40%) |
| **Negative** | 1 (4.17%) | 13 (10.40%) |
| **Neutral** | 4 (16.67%) | 30 (24.00%) |

*Table 5: Content Analysis of the News Coverage Stance in the Motherhood Case Study*

Ardern's novelty comes from being only the second elected leader to give birth while in office, this sets her apart from past New Zealand Women Prime Ministers, Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark. Shipley's children were older when she entered Parliament and became Prime Minister, while Clark and her husband had no children of their own. This was a subject of media scrutiny and comparison during the 1999 New Zealand General Election (Trimble, 2014), Shipley was depicted as a housewife akin to Former United Kingdom Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's use of domestic life as political spin (Campbell, 2015), while Clark was ridiculed for transgressing role congruity by performing politics in a more traditional masculinised sense, in her embodiment, speech acts, and aggressive agentic debate manner (Trimble, 2014). The news coverage stance of Ardern's political performance and leadership can also be attributed to her highlighting the 'juggle' and 'multitasking' of women being mothers and in high-powered jobs (*Jacinda Ardern reveals she's pregnant,* 2018). It is here, that Ardern is praised for her 'ordinariness', highlighting that she is like other first-time mothers who have careers that they value (Ceccobelli & Di Gregorio, 2022).

| News Values | Motherhood (24 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|
| **Exclusive** | 7 (29.17%) | 39 (31.20%) |
| **Bad News** | 0 (0.00%) | 50 (40.00%) |
| **Conflict** | 5 (20.84%) | 34 (27.20%) |
| **Surprise** | 19 (79.17%) | 59 (47.20%) |
| **Audio-Visual** | 16 (66.67%) | 50 (40.00%) |
| **Shareability** | 16 (66.67%) | 37 (29.60%) |
| **Entertainment** | 17 (70.84%) | 31 (24.80%) |
| **Drama** | 0 (0.00%) | 35 (28.00%) |
| **Follow Up** | 18 (75.00%) | 101 (80.80%) |
| **The Power Elite** | 22 (91.67%) | 113 (90.40%) |
| **Relevancy** | 15 (62.50%) | 84 (67.20%) |
| **Magnitude** | 4 (16.67%) | 98 (78.40%) |
| **Celebrity** | 4 (16.67%) | 8 (6.40%) |
| **Good News** | 12 (50.00%) | 17 (13.60%) |
| **News Organisation Agenda** | 4 (16.67%) | 17 (13.60%) |

*Table 6: Content Analysis of Harcup and O'Neill's (2017) News Values*

The most commonly occurring news value in this case study is surprise, appearing in 79.17 per cent of the motherhood sample. This can be attributed to the fact that Ardern was only the second elected leader to be pregnant while holding office, and the first to announce her pregnancy to the media. Due to the proliferation of social media such as Twitter as a tool for disseminating news to media consumers (Chadwick, 2017). Online media also relies on the televisual codes and conventions such as evocative video such as Ardern leaving hospital with her new-born daughter to garner 'clicks' or viewers on news media stories and tempt social media users to share news stories onto their own platforms while inserting their own opinions on the issues to further increase 'clicks' and their advertising revenue. The Motherhood case study exhibited the largest amount of news media stories with 'shareability' and 'audio-visual' both yielding 66.67 per cent of the case study, and 16 news media stories.

Fifty per cent of the news media stories in the Motherhood case study sample have framed Jacinda Ardern's pregnancy and giving birth to Neve as 'good news' on both a personal level, for Ardern's family life, and a wider symbolic level of Ardern's trailblazing for working women's maternity rights (Galy-Badenas & Sommier, 2021). No news stories in the Motherhood case study content analysis sample were coded as 'bad news'.

| News Sources | Motherhood (24 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|
| **Named** | 24(100.00%) | 125(100.00%) |
| **Unnamed/Unspecified** | 3(12.50%) | 18 (14.4%) |
| **Family** | 7(29.17%) | 26 (20.80%) |
| **Ardern** | 21(87.50%) | 117 (93.60%) |
| **Government MP** | 3(12.50%) | 18 (14.40%) |
| **Opposition MP** | 1(4.17%) | 10 (8.00%) |
| **International Politician** | 3(12.50%) | 28(22.40%) |
| **Public Servant** | 3(12.50%) | 33 (26.40%) |
| **Social Media Post** | 12(50.00%) | 29 (23.20%) |

*Table 7: Content Analysis of News Sources in the Motherhood Case Study*

The most commonly occurring named news media source was Jacinda Ardern, who was cited in 93.60 per cent of the entire content analysis sample (117 news media stories). This finding is logical as this thesis focuses on the gendered news media coverage of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership. Ardern is quoted as a news source both as a means to present the facts of the news stories, and as a vehicle to offer critique of her political performance. The motherhood case study had the fewest news stories that relied on Ardern as a news source, this can be attributed to Ardern recovering from giving birth to her daughter, and her family making comment in her place, which occurred in 29.17 per cent of the case study sample (seven news media stories).

## 4.2 Thematic Analysis of the Motherhood Case Study

| ***Themes in Motherhood*** (24 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 221 | 40.58% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 9 | 1.13% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 8 | 0.66% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 126 | 26.00% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 6 | 0.69% |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 29 | 4.68% |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 47 | 11.70% |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 21 | 2.88% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 21 | 3.72% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 13 | 1.99% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 46 | 10.97% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 23 | 2.93% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 6 | 0.92% |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 16 | 2.01% |

*Table 8: Thematic Analysis of the Motherhood Case Study*

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

Gender as an aggregated primary theme was the most dominant in the case study. The secondary and tertiary codes: appearance and mode of dress, parenting (and childfree women), pregnancy, and sexism and misogyny combined span 40.58 per cent across the coding coverage of the case study in 221 instances. Parenting as a secondary code is apparent across 126 coding references, spanning 26 per cent. Meanwhile, sexism and misogyny covered 11.70 per cent of the case study. There is a logic to these secondary themes' dominance in this case study due to the gendered nature of parenting and the critique of Ardern's political performance while holding dual roles of being the Prime Minister and a first-time mother being grounded in sexist and misogynistic tropes. This is noted in a feature article about Ardern in *The New Yorker:*

> The couple has committed to raising their daughter on the world stage to help blaze a path for other families. At times, this has made them objects of fascination, such as earlier that week, when Gayford brought Neve to the floor of the UN General Assembly. But it has also generated a backlash, such as when Ardern decided to attend the Pacific Island Forum—a staple appearance for the New Zealand Prime Minister, which, for Ardern, necessitated a taxpayer-funded flight back to New Zealand to nurse Neve, who was too young to receive vaccines. (One headline: "Extra costs for taxpayers so PM can spend more time with baby.") (Hollander, 2018).

The reporting of politics is a historically and culturally situated practice that is moulded by and moulds the social and political contexts in which it exists (Sanders, 2009). The patriarchal structure and history of the political and journalistic fields have meant that the expected behaviour of a prime minister is masculine and agentic (Eagly & Karau, 2002). When Ardern's feminised political performance is not congruent with the societal expectations of a prime minister or a woman, the journalistic reporting and political commentary can exhibit misogynist language and opinions as they reconcile Ardern's embodiment of politics with her gender.

The secondary code of pregnancy covered 4.68 per cent of case study. These coding instances specifically referred to Ardern's pregnant body in the public sphere, a private and international transformation that is played out for public consumption (Galy-Badenas & Sommier, 2021). In the thematic analysis sample, *The Globe and Mail* (2018) refer to Ardern being "LWP – leading while pregnant" as the reason she has 'caught the world's attention'. *RNZ* (2018) published a written article on their website about Ardern suffering from morning sickness, a common pregnancy symptom when negotiating a coalition with New Zealand First leader Winston Peters. It could be suggested that the theme of Ardern's pregnancy reinforces the feminist ideals of women being able to 'have-it-all', a family and a successful high-powered career. Galy-Badenas and Sommier (2021) refer to this phenomenon as being a 'Supermum'.

Political process covered 10.97 per cent of the case study sample text across 46 coding instances. The presence of this theme helps to show the media consumer how Ardern was symbolically performing working motherhood by giving a speech at the United Nations general assembly with baby Neve in the audience to 'create a path for other women' (Marsters, 2018). In contrast, policy and legal discussion as a theme covered only 3.72 per cent of the case study sample across 21 coding instances. *The Globe and Mail* (2018) used the phenomenon of Ardern 'leading while pregnant' to call for better maternity leave and childcare policies in the Canadian parliament, which like Aotearoa New Zealand, is a historically patriarchal and masculine institution (Elgie, 2017).

Social media as an aggregated primary code covered 2.93 per cent of the case study news stories across 23 coding references. The most dominant secondary theme of social media was social media post, which covered 2.01 per cent of the case study text. The social media post theme manifested in this case study by Ardern's choice to bypass the journalistic media and post both her pregnancy announcement and birth announcement via social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. This reflects Ardern's contemporary 'normalcy' announcing major life events on social media for the consumption of wider social networks of family, friends, and professional colleagues. Pantic and Cvetkovic (2020) note that social media posts are now a

legitimate part of the content gathering and sourcing process, along with political communication activities such as press conferences, interviews, and official reports. For example, Australian news website *News.com.au* (2018) cites Malcolm Turnbull (then-Australian Prime Minister) offering his congratulations to Jacinda Ardern on her pregnancy "When we spoke on the phone this morning you sounded more excited than when you won the election! Lots of love from me, Lucy, and all of us across the ditch." Social media posts and comments from social media (0.92 per cent across 6 coding references), provide supplementary information in journalistic stories and can also contextualise international news stories to a local audience.

## 4.3. Analysis of Gender in the Motherhood Case Study

This chapter will now analysis the Motherhood case study's findings in relation to the understanding of gender theory and the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's first term as Aotearoa New Zealand Prime Minister. This thesis agrees with Judith Butler's (1990) conception of gender as a social construct that is performed with norms and expected behaviours prescribing what an individual should do. Gender can be viewed as a performance similar to play acting in the theatre or on the screen, and each actor has their part or role that performs functions to realise the script (Micu, 2022). In William Shakespeare's As You Like It, Jacques proclaims, "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players' They have their exits and entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts…" In the theatre of (political) life, individuals play roles as citizens, as politicians, as men to realise the action of a functioning and lawful society. The script for this play was written by a patriarchal hegemonic society. Like Shakespeare, these roles were performed in public exclusively by men. These men offered a representation of women, their struggles, and their reactions to daily life. This could be seen as comparable to a lawmakers' assembly exclusively populated by men. In contemporary times, women are no longer just relegated to being audience members of their own lives. They can be active citizens with all the political rights and privileges of voting and governing. This chapter seeks to antagonise the scripts that Aotearoa New Zealand's society, has for the role of women in the political field through the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's first term as Prime Minister.

Gendered mediation can also be referred to as 'gendered reporting' and is a phenomenon that has previously been researched by scholars such as Linda Trimble (2017) and Karen Ross (2002; 2010; 2017). Gendered reporting is conceptualised as the reporting of non-male public figures, especially female/cis-gendered women, which overemphasises their femininity, and gender expression, and gendered behaviour. Gendered mediation/reporting can also be analysed through the role congruency theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). There have been successive studies of the media's portrayal of women politicians and political candidates that explicitly assert that the gender of politicians is an important factor in the difference between the coverage of cis-gendered male and cis-gendered female politicians (Ross, 2002). The literature review of this thesis has established that both the political and journalistic fields are masculinised and patriarchal structured industries. Ross (2002) also notes from her interviews with the female politicians that even the seats in parliaments around the world were only designed with men in mind and not women. This is due to the historical nature of parliaments being a male-only space. The first female Member of Parliament in Aotearoa New Zealand was elected in a by-election in 1955 (Coleman, 2019).

This thesis asserts that the relationship between the political and mediated fields is understood through the lens of societal understanding and expectations of gender and gendered behaviour. Culturally, pregnancy and motherhood are constructed as an integral part of a woman's identity (Galy-Badenas & Sommier, 2021). While women have, in recent decades, gained political and economic freedoms through the right to vote and work in both the marketplace and the political field, child-rearing is still expected to be a responsibility that is shouldered by the mother. Motherhood is central to many radical feminist arguments, and there is a belief that motherhood is the basis of female culture, with young girls and women being raised to believe that there is an innate maternal instinct within them. The structure of mothering in a patriarchal society extends beyond the nuclear family (Jaggar, 1988).

The motherhood case study sample of this thesis shows highly explicit examples of news media stories focusing on Jacinda Ardern's body, appearance and mode of dress, specifically in the context of her pregnancy. In the thematic analysis, gender as a primary code yielded 40.58 per cent of the coding coverage across 221 coding references. The secondary gender theme of 'appearance and mode of dress' yielded 0.66 per cent of the coding coverage across eight coding references. These related to Ardern's pregnant body and her sartorial choices in maternity wear and whilst breastfeeding. *The New Yorker* (Hollander, 2018) reported in a profile, "She wore a patterned silk dress and a black suit jacket, and had tucked her long, dark hair behind her ears." Pregnancy is an embodied, highly sexed phenomenon that is only experienced by those assigned females at birth and with healthy fertility. Scholars across sociology and midwifery (Bailey, 2001; Bainbridge, 2006; de-Virty Smith et al., 2012) have noted that pregnant women become public property and for consumption with complete strangers making unsolicited comments and may attempt to touch the pregnant woman's 'bump' (Bainbridge, 2006). In the sample of news media stories, Anna Rawhiti-Connell (*Newsroom,* 2018) opined, "There's a part of me that finds it ironic that much of the prodigious public discussion about what's happening in the Prime Minister's body is rooted in the feminist ideal that a woman's body is not public property nor a political instrument." It is also important to note that the 'prodigious public discussion about what's happening in the Prime Minister's body' (Rawhiti-Connell, 2018) first occurred when Ardern first became Leader of the Opposition during the 2017 general election when presenter Mark Richardson likened the voting public to a prospective employer, who has the right to know about a woman's plan for any future pregnancies (Bracewell-Worral*,* 2017). As mentioned in the literature review, Richardson's belief is incorrect and shows how news media normalisation is yet to occur for female political leaders and how even the ideology of motherhood is patriarchal and capitalistic (Jaggar, 1988), that if a woman is pregnant or a mother of young children, she is maximising her productivity for full profit potential.

Richardson's comments can be compared to Leighton Smith's (2018) comments he made on the radio about Ardern breastfeeding her daughter 'for too long' and stating the following,

> The point is she had a choice to make. As a working mother, you have to make choices, we all know that, every working woman who has had a child and a job knows that. Breastfeeding is to be encouraged for three months. Well, the three months is up but she has decided she isn't going to stop and wants to keep breastfeeding. So that is interfering with her job as she chose to do it.

Then-Parents Editor of *The Spinoff,* Emily Writes (2018), critiqued Smith's comments by writing, "Which proves that the king of New Zealand talkback is not just gross but also bad at counting. Ardern and Gayford's baby was born two and a half months ago." This is an extension of the idea of pregnant women as public property to the early months of Motherhood while nursing. Talkback radio personalities are seen in these examples suggesting that Ardern is unsuitable or incongruent to being a successful prime minister because of her gender and status as a mother. These male media personalities are seeking to control Ardern's body as a fertile woman despite her elite status as Leader of the Opposition and then Prime Minister.

This also relates to the binary division of the private woman/ public man (Trimble, 2017), the news media, through presenters like Mark Richardson and Leighton Smith, are attempting to place Ardern out of the public sphere, leading the political field and into the private sphere of the nuclear family, which some falsely define as being 'non-political' (Jaggar, 1988, p. 292). Much of the news media reportage comments on Ardern and Gayford's subversion of gendered parenting roles, with Gayford, a television show host, taking on the role of the primary caregiver (and other unrecognised forms of domestic labour) while Ardern contributes to the nuclear family by earning outside the household as Prime Minister. *The New Yorker* (Hollander, 2018) quotes Gayford in discussing how they came to this arrangement saying, "It was a no-brainer to say, 'Right, I'll take care of her, you take care of the country,'". News media outlets such as

*The Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (2018) quoted Ardern's Twitter post explaining their domestic arrangement:

She posted the announcement on Twitter, saying she will "join the many parents who wear two hats". "I'll be PM and a mum while Clarke will be 'first man of fishing' and stay-at-home dad," she wrote, adding that she expected a lot of questions. (*ABC,* 2018).

The idea of a 'working mum' is not new. There are many expectations about what a 'good' working mother should be (Delany & Sullivan, 2021, p. 1698). Ardern is represented as a working mother who happens to be a prime minister frequently throughout the sample. Sophia Hollander (2018) wrote in a profile for *The New Yorker,* "The press is "very interested in Iran at the moment," Ardern continued, as Neve started to fuss. "I'm going to pump," she said, switching gears." From this extract, it is clear that Ardern was giving this interview for a prestigious US magazine and expressing breast milk via a machine at the same time. This relates to a post-feminist discourse of privileged white women seeking to 'have it all' by having a high-powered and seemingly glamorous career coupled with a mother, this status of 'having it all' can only be achieved by having a vast support network of family, friends, and hired help. Ardern is quoted by Hollander (2018) as saying that her daughter "has a lot of aunties and uncles." Ardern and, by extension, Gayford, are portrayed in the news media as progressive parents with their subversion of gendered parenting roles, with *Sydney Morning Herald* (2020) suggesting that from Gayford's social media comments that he was "suggesting in a very subtle way that perhaps the bulk of the toilet training is actually being done by him!"

The secondary gender theme of parenting in this case study highlights that the private/ family sphere and the public sphere are not two separate impenetrable spaces and that women, as well as men and those across the gender spectrum, do fully participate in all aspects of the economy. The newsworthiness of this gender subversion is due to the elite nature of Ardern's role as Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the news media coverage highlights how Ardern is economically providing for her family by 'taking care of the country' in both roles in the family and public sphere that the patriarchy expects to be filled by men. News media stories, such as *The Sydney*

*Morning Herald's* (2020) story, highlight the novelty in the ordinary act of toilet training, the 'bulk' of the caring labour is being performed by the father while the mother navigates a global health and economic crisis in the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the discourse of the ideal 'beautiful mother' depicts a white, tight, thirty-something woman who plans her pregnancy around her career after achieving a suitable level of success (Delaney & Sullivan, 2021 p.1699), Ardern is not fully congruent to this stereotype. One could argue that this discourse of an ideal working mother was also at play when *The AM Show* presenter, Mark Richardson, demanded to know if Ardern had any future family plans less than a day into Ardern becoming the Labour Party Leader (Bracewell-Worral, 2017). Ardern and Gayford stressed the point in their announcement that the pregnancy was 'a happy surprise' even going into the intimate detail that they had been told they could not be able to conceive naturally (*ABC,* 2018). Interestingly, three of the four Australian news media outlets reported when Ardern and Gayford first learned of the pregnancy, stating that it was during the coalition negotiations with New Zealand First in October 2017. This suggests that the idea of planning a pregnancy during an election would be a form of deception or an act of dishonesty. Thematically, this ties into the line of questioning and the diatribe from Mark Richardson on *The AM Show* in August 2017, that women and those assigned female at birth are obligated to inform prospective employers of the intimate details of their family planning, fertility, and implies that mothers and mothers-to-be are less 'serious' or committed to their roles in the workplace (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). This can also extend to all women and feminine presenting people, as the cultural beliefs inscribed to mothers and motherhood are transposed onto all women (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Thus, it can be suggested that all young women in the workplace (and other sectors of private and public life) are mothers-in-waiting and less committed to their careers than men. Conversely, fathers are seen as more committed to their work due to the need to financially support their children and partner (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

One could suggest that this is a heteronormative discourse, suggesting that politicians in a homosexual relationship (or even heterosexual couples and single women) would not receive that same positive media coverage if they were to announce a pregnancy via in-vitro fertilisation, and further suggest that a woman acting as mother and primary caregiver would not be a suitable world leader. This discourse also reinforces the idea that women's choices over their own bodies should be up for public debate (Delaney & Sullivan, 2021) and could legitimise misogynistic viewpoints that were pervasive in online discourse that was reported on in the news media and most likely discussed around the dinner table with young women present. *The Washington Post* reported a story entitled *"New Zealand's prime minister is pregnant. The Internet reacted predictably",* which The *New Zealand Herald* republished. The news story anonymously quoted misogynistic remarks, including "She should resign ASAP and focus on family. She is ineligible to govern…" and "I just do not think women should be in such power if they are birthing babies. You can't argue with biology" (Gibson, 2018). It is important to restate that these misogynistic comments were not an opinion that was exclusively about Ardern, these opinions are ascribed to all women, and Ardern's pregnancy acts as an effigy to sexist and misogynistic attitudes. This is one reason why the gendered mediation of Ardern's performance of political image and leadership is such a worthy subject to analyse and research, the liberal feminist notion that one woman breaking the glass ceiling lifts up all women in Aotearoa New Zealand and globally, the misogynistic backlash that shoves her into a glass cage (Wilson & Selman Julian, 2023) thus is symbolically forcing all women into this glass cage alongside her. Moreover, this misogynistic discourse about choosing between political leadership and motherhood was referenced in a children's book about Jacinda Ardern '"You can't be a new mother and do a good job as Prime Minister," some people said. "This is why a young woman can't be a good politician." But Jacinda kept working, and going places.' (p.11). This suggests to the reader, child and adult alike, that young women can be good prime ministers and good mothers at the same time, reinforcing the liberal stereotypical ideal of women 'having it all'.

## 4.4. Analysis of Political Image and Leadership in the Motherhood Case Study

The theme of political leadership manifested in this case study through questions around whether Ardern would be able to perform her role as a political leader, alongside Ardern's assertion that her pregnancy and new motherhood status would not impact her ability to perform politics and aid the political process. In the news stories sample, *RNZ* (2018) indirectly quotes Ardern saying the following to people who may be worried about her capacity to be Prime Minister and a mother, "no one detected that she had pretty bad morning sickness during the formation and early weeks of government." The primary theme of the political process, which is a reference to the performance of politics and acts of political communication, yielded 10.97 per cent of the coding coverage across 46 coding references. It was the second most dominant primary thematic code, after gender, when aggregated with the secondary gender thematic codes, yielded 40.58 per cent coding coverage across 221 coding references. This focus on whether Ardern's pregnancy would impact her job performance once again shows the gender double-bind of role incongruity theory in action (Eagly & Karau, 2002). If the political field and the buildings of parliament are designed by men, for men (Elgie, 2017), then a pregnant woman, 'babybauch' and all, is now taking up more space in a field that was not designed for her, no amount of chic pantsuits and chignons can mitigate the visibility of her female sex through pregnancy. Australian media outlet SBS (2018) also reports in the sample that Ardern accepts that her pregnancy is unusual and will be reported on and adds, "But I would certainly love if I could trade a little bit off that coverage for some of our political agenda, that's for sure."

Political leadership as a primary thematic code yielded 1.99 per cent of the coding coverage across 13 coding references. In the thematic analysis sample, Fox News (Suarez Sang, 2018) reports, "Ardern's pregnancy has been followed around the world, with many hoping the 37-year-old will become a role model for combining motherhood with political leadership." Not only was Ardern seen as a leader of politics during her pregnancy, but also a symbolic leader of the progress for women in public life being publicly and visibly pregnant as Prime Minister. In the United Kingdom, The

Telegraph (Graham, 2018) referred to Ardern's pregnancy as "not quite charting new political territory by having a baby while being the leader of a country." This is due to Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, who is the first recorded elected leader to give birth in office. Bhutto, however, hid her pregnancy from the public eye (Galy-Badenas & Sommier, 2021), which is what made Ardern's pregnancy an act of symbolic leadership for not only women in politics but also in private enterprise.

Ardern's political leadership can be assessed through Ceccobelli and Di Gregorio's (2022) triangle of leadership, which posits that a successful political leader has an appropriate level of perceived authenticity, competence, and ordinariness. According to Ceccobelli and Di Gregorio's (2022, pp. 114-116) triangle, voters want a political leader who is 'someone better than me' (Competence), 'someone like me' (Ordinariness) and 'someone I can trust' (Authenticity). If a political leader possesses these three qualities equally, they have achieved what Ceccobelli and Di Gregorio (2022, p. 122) call 'AOC point of equilibrium'. The examples that the authors use as political leaders who sit at the AOC point of equilibrium are Jacinda Ardern and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, who is coincidentally colloquially known as "AOC", which may explain the chosen order of the acronym's letters. Examples of Ardern's performance of political leadership meeting the AOC point of equilibrium include the following extract from CTV's (2018) online news story taken from the wire service *The Associated Press*:

> She said in a statement that she had asked Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters on Thursday to act as prime minister for six weeks after the birth. "I fully intend to be contactable and available throughout the six-week period when needed," she said. "I will make arrangements for appropriate ministers to act in my other portfolios over the six weeks I am away from Parliament." After the six weeks, she will resume all her prime ministerial duties. "Clarke and I are privileged to be in the position where Clarke can stay home to be our primary care-giver. Knowing that so many parents juggle the care of their new babies, we consider ourselves to be very lucky," she said. "Clarke and I have always been

clear we wanted to be parents but had been told we would need help for that to happen. That's made this news a fantastic surprise," she added.

Ardern's authenticity is on display when she acknowledges both her fertility struggles in the past, saying, "We were told we would need help for that to happen" and calling the pregnancy "a fantastic surprise", alongside the privileged position of her family life, with her partner Clarke being able to subvert the gendered parenting roles and become the primary caregiver. Ardern's ordinariness manifests in this extract through the acknowledgment that other parents must also juggle the responsibilities of their careers with parenthood. Ardern's competence can be noted in her explicit outlining of how the country will be managed during her maternity leave by delegating appropriate portfolios and duties to Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters and other appropriate cabinet ministers. Effective leadership is not only seen in the presence of a leader but also in their absence. Leaders in all sectors of society and the economy can show their competence through the planning of cover in their absence, and with Ardern remaining fully contactable, she can still assist in important decisions in regard to matters such as national security.

Ardern's competency is called into question in this case study due to the societal stereotypes of pregnant women having a 'baby brain'. This is an example of how misogyny is used to question the legitimacy of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership. Research has shown that pregnant women are perceived to be less competent and at the mercy of their hormones, which can 'lessen' women's leadership aspirations (Pownall et al., 2022, pp. 694-695). Alarmingly, Pownall and their colleagues' 2022 study also suggests that some people may perceive teenage boys to be more competent than pregnant women. Stereotypes of pregnant women as having a 'baby brain' or being less competent while also being seen as possessing a higher level of warmth support the notions of benevolent misogyny discussed in the previous chapter. The news media stories in the sample implicitly reference Ardern's ability to fulfil her role as Prime Minister competently and be pregnant/nursing at the same time, with no sign of a so-called 'baby brain'. Time Magazine (2018) in the sample noted that Ardern intended to work until she was 'en route' to the hospital to deliver her baby and

that even on maternity leave, she would be receiving cabinet briefings and other important updates so she would remain competent and equipped upon her return to office. Canada's The Globe and Mail (Renzetti, 2018) described Ardern as 'leading while pregnant'. They highlighted that she was 'busy doing all manner of prime ministerial things, including negotiating trade deals with the European Union, expressing her opinion on the Iran nuclear pact…'. This subverts the stereotype of 'baby brain' that the media consumer may expect and highlights that Ardern is fulfilling her duties and offering opinions on foreign affairs issues.

Ardern draws on her private life in her public performance as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister. This is seen in the content analysis sample when Jacinda Ardern gives a filmed interview to TVNZ's political editor, Jessica Mutch (2018) (later known as Jessica Mutch-McKay), discussing her time on maternity leave and her leadership plans and goals upon her return to work. Most of the interview focuses on her family dynamics and support system during the beginning of parenthood. Ardern acknowledges "tension" between meeting Neve's needs as a newborn and her responsibility as Prime Minister, which Ardern refers to as a set of "unique circumstances". Here, Ardern explicitly discusses how she is negotiating the public/private dichotomy of public life, and she emphasises to Mutch that "Neve didn't choose my political life" and the importance of Neve not being in the constant spotlight. Ardern also outlines her AOC attributes of authenticity, ordinariness, and competence in this interview. She offers a modest answer to Mutch's question, "Do you feel like you're paving the way for women around the world to do what you're doing?" By infusing her ordinariness with her authenticity, claiming her experience is "not our normal yet, but one day it will be." She highlights the ordinariness of her new status as a working mother by stating, "I'm not the first woman to give birth" and describing her maternity leave "The typical things like long nights, not leaving the house that much… that's been my experience, and the experience of all my friends." Authenticity can be perceived in her performance during the interview where she does acknowledge that there is an "added level of interest" as she is Prime Minister. While Ardern's maternity leave is indeed ordinary and mundane in terms of the private sphere, the 'added layer' of

interest is Ardern performing motherhood and political leadership simultaneously. Authenticity can also be perceived with Ardern acknowledging that as parents, she and her partner receive support in raising their child from their wider family and friends network. This is also seen in other news media stories, such as *The New Yorker* (Hollander, 2018), which notes that Ardern claims that Neve has "a lot of aunties and uncles". Thus, Ardern is not framing herself to be a superhero like Wonder Woman or Captain Marvel (she leaves that comparison to be made by Canada's Anne Toller from *The Globe and Mail*, 2019), but as a public mother with a strong support system to be able to do her job effectively. The interview topic then pivots to discussions around events that occurred in the public sphere while Ardern was on maternity leave, including the teachers' and nurses' strikes. This final two minutes of the interview is where Ardern can demonstrate her competent leadership by showing to the viewers and voters that she is definitely abreast of ongoing issues, reinforcing to Mutch that the strikes are not just about money but about working conditions in the sectors which need to be addressed and that her government is listening in the negotiations with the unions. She also discusses "business confidence" in her government, saying that perception and reality do not always align and that the economy is growing while the Labour philosophy is that social well-being impacts economic growth.

Ardern further creates ties from her personal sphere into the performance of leadership and politics by introducing new policies and legislation allowing ministers with a young infant to travel with a taxpayer-funded carer or nanny to help in the child's care. This policy also extends to disabled ministers who may require extra support. In the content analysis sample, the theme of policy discussion was found in 45.83 per cent of news stories in the motherhood case study. Meanwhile, in the thematic analysis, policy and legal discussion accounted for 3.72 per cent of the coding coverage across twenty-one coding references in the Motherhood case study. The news media story in *The New Zealand Herald* by Claire Trevett (2018) explicitly states that Ardern and Gayford made 'a judgement call' to fund Gayford's travel expenses themselves as there was no official programme for the spouses of world leaders. This shows Ardern as a transparent (or authentic) and competent leader, with her attempt to

quell fears that she is being frivolous with taxpayer money, particularly after media personalities like Duncan Garner and Leighton Smith criticised her for flying to Nauru separately from the main delegation being Neve was too young to receive the appropriate vaccines, as discussed previously in this chapter.

## 4.5. Analysis of Political Reporting and Punditry in the Motherhood Case Study

The personalisation and privatisation of political reporting have been well scrutinised by several scholars, including Craig (2016), McNair (2000; 2018), and Muir (2005). This process of focusing on the spectacle and the personal lives of politicians can also be tied to the process "celebrisation' or 'celebritisation' (Street, 2004; Craig, 2016). There is the argument that cannot be ignored that pregnancy is a physical manifestation of one's private life in the personal sphere embodied in the public sphere. Harcup and O'Neill's (2017) news value of surprise is found in 79.17 per cent of the content analysis's sample of the motherhood case study (19 news media stories). This high figure is because Ardern was only the second elected leader to give birth while in office and the first to take a period of maternity leave and be successfully re-elected at the next election. There is evidence in the content and thematic analysis sample of gender novelty framing; while Ardern was the third female prime minister of Aotearoa, New Zealand, her youth and her pregnancy are what made her so novel in the framing of the news media both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. This is seen in *Fox News* (Suarez Sang ,2018) online news reporting, "Ardern's pregnancy has been followed around the world, with many hoping the 37-year-old will become a role model for combining motherhood with political leadership." The interview where Mark Richardson repeatedly questioned and pressed for Ardern to divulge her plans for the possibility of being pregnant was referenced in the reporting of her having given birth to her daughter, Neve, including in prestigious US publication, *Time Magazine* (Quackenbush, 2020). The private sphere in the reporting of Ardern's family arrangements is explicitly stated in *Time Magazine* (Quackenbush, 2020) vis-á-vis the subversion of the gendered parenting roles with the following quote: "Not least

because her partner and father of the baby, Clarke Gayford, will assume the role of full-time dad while she leads the country." It can also be argued here that the news value of the political elite is present due to Ardern's position as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister and media consumers being interested or concerned with how her prime ministerial duties will be performed while her daughter is a newborn baby, particularly in countries that have not had an elected female head of government.

This case study also provides a good example of how Trimble's (2017) factors of personalisation in political news reporting apply in political journalism practice. Especially as Ardern being a pregnant woman in the prime ministerial position, the private acts of family life physically manifest in a public and highly scrutinised fashion.

The list of personalisation factors is as follows (Trimble, 2017):

1. Gender identity
2. Racial identity
3. Sexual identity
4. Sexualisation
5. Physical appearance
6. Age
7. Marital Status
8. Offspring
9. Upbringing

The news reportage in the samples overwhelmingly emphasise and scrutinise Jacinda Ardern's gender identity and performance. Especially in the motherhood case study regarding the context of Ardern as a working mother with elite power and political capital where women were historically excluded. Ardern's sexual identity, physical appearance, and marital status are also frequently referenced in the case study's news reportage in the focus on her partner Clarke Gayford, being the father of her child, and the subversion of gendered parenting roles where Gayford was the primary caregiver. In the online writing news media story published by *Newshub* (Bracewell-Worrel, 2018) reported:

> Announcing the birth, Ms Ardern said the couple was "excited to be joining the many parents out there who wear two hats. I'll be Prime Minister and a mum, and Clarke will be 'first man of fishing' and stay-at-home dad. I think it's fair to say that this will be a wee one that a village will raise, but we couldn't be more excited."

This raises the question whether to some media consumers, this parenting arrangement is unusual, this raises the question that if Gayford had been the prime minister and Ardern had been the fishing television show host, no one would expect Gayford to take leave from running Aotearoa New Zealand to look after Neve, so Ardern could go to catch a marlin in the Far North for television. Even with Gayford performing most of the duties of primary caregiving, Ardern was still breastfeeding, to which *Newstalk ZB* radio personality Leighton Smith (2018) opined on-air that she needed to decide which was more important, feeding her child or running the country. The online news story was headlined as "*Leighton Smith: PM's baby is interfering with her job."* This act of political punditry reinforces the idea that politics and political leadership is not a place for mothers, Ridgeway and Carrell (2002) also suggest that when disparaging stereotypes and tropes are invoked about mothers that the critiques can be mobilised towards all women (and gender-non confirming people).

In Ardern's media interviews in this research sample, she frequently states that she and Gayford are not the first to subvert their gendered parenting roles, with Gayford acting as the primary caregiver (Mutch, 2019). The fact that Ardern and Gayford were not married then was also highlighted in the sample of news media coverage. In reporting the pregnancy announcement, *RNZ* (2018) noted in the news story headlined *'Ardern formed govt while dealing with morning sickness',* that "The baby would likely take Mr Gayford's name, the couple said today, though Ms Ardern added she would try to slip her name in somewhere." This notes that the couple does not share a married name, and the use of the honorific Ms, which intends to suggest that a woman's marital status is unimportant, and that the use of Ms is an explicit rejection of social norms around a woman's status in relation to a romantic relationship. In contrast, the male courtesy title "Mr." just means that he is a man (Chapman, 2013). However, there are

critics who characterise the use of 'Ms' as 'man-hating' (Chapman, 2013), and an *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* Radio host wrote an opinion story for the organisation's news website that listeners believed 'Ms' to be reserved for 'divorcees and lesbians' (Valentine, 2017). This suggests that these listeners are besmirching women who chose the honorific 'Ms' as being incongruent to a heteropatriarchal ideal of a woman being married to one man for her adult life. Baxter (2017) also notes in their research that honorifics for male politicians were used less in their research sample than female honorifics Mrs and Miss both of which connote marriage status.

Regarding the sexualisation of women political leaders, Baxter (2017) notes that women political leaders are framed by a small range of archetypes in news media discourses. These include 'the iron maiden' (for example, Margaret Thatcher), 'the seductress' (for example, Sanna Marin), and 'the mother' (for example, Angela Merkel who was nicknamed *Mutti* meaning Mother by the German people). Baxter (2017, p. 173) claims that these archetypes 'reduce' women by inappropriately sexualising them. However, Baxter (2017) also notes that these stereotypical representations are rarely uniformly reductive but instead provide context for a legitimacy gap and ambiguities in meaning that can for a feminist critique of dominant readings. Prior to motherhood and her prime ministership, news media discourses sexualised Ardern as a seductress with headlines such as *"Battle of the Babes"* in *The New Zealand Herald* (2008) when she was standing for the Auckland Central electoral seat against the National Party's Nikki Kaye, another young woman political hopeful, who won the seat and would eventually go on to become deputy leader of the opposition. There are two possible readings for this headline, first that it reduces two competent political hopefuls to become sexualised femme fatale warriors who are battling with beauty rather than policy. Secondly, it is infantilising as 'babe' can also be a term to mean infant or 'a naïve inexperienced person (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.B). An example of Ardern being confined to the role trap of mother in the research analysis samples is when *SBS* (2019) reported on the backlash that Australian journalist Charles Wooley received for "focusing the interview on her (Ardern's) pregnancy and not her ambitious domestic policy to halve child poverty or her concerns with Australia's deportation stance." In the

thematic analysis of the hard news genre, there were 72 coding references to secondary gender code of parenting (4.91 per cent of coding coverage) and nine coding references to the secondary gender code of pregnancy (0.32 per cent of coding coverage). These roles subordinate women's professional and political identities to their 'gender category" as the masculinised field of journalism continues to entrap women leaders within narrow, sexualised stereotypes and behavioural expectations (Baxter, 2017). In the thematic analysis sample of the hard news genre, the secondary gender code of affect and behaviour, which includes deliberation on the performance of gender and behavioural expectations (including the sexualising of actions) yielded 40 coding references (0.78 per cent of the coding coverage). In turn, while the thematic analysis of the soft news genre saw only 13 coding references of the secondary gender code, they yielded 2.40 per cent of the soft news genre coding coverage. The highest percentage of coding coverage for the secondary gender code of affect and gendered behaviour is 3.51 per cent in the news genre of 'opinion and comment'. These results can be explained by the news genre of comment/opinion reporting focuses more word count to the representations of affect and gendered behaviour, than in the hard news genre, which may mention gender and its secondary codes in a less deliberative and more of a passing fashion.

Wooley's interview (and other journalistic coverage) focuses on Ardern's pregnancy and motherhood status, as opposed to her domestic and foreign policy positions, which can be attributed to gender novelty framing. Ardern herself acknowledges that she is only the second known elected leader to give birth in office. *SBS* (2018) quoted Ardern in an interview in response to the media's interest in her private life:

> "In the current environment, I guess sometimes, what we do is trivialised a little bit. So, I accept that is unusual, I accept that would be reported on. But I would certainly love if I could trade a little bit off that coverage for some of our political agenda for sure… I have become somewhat desensitised…actually it didn't stand out to me particularly at all, in fact almost all the questions I have been asked before."

It also bears repeating that the first elected pregnant woman, Benazir Bhutto, hid her pregnancy and did not have any period of maternity leave. While many women have given birth and taken leave from their employment to care for their newborns making the act itself 'ordinary', the 'extraordinary' that leads to the news coverage invoking gendered exceptionalism is the 'surprise' and relative 'new-ness' of a prime minister/ elected head of government taking parental leave. It should be noted that in 2005, then-UK Prime Minister David Cameron took a one-week period of paternity leave, *The Guardian* (2005) published a news media story by asking other notable British fathers if this time was enough, Rod Liddle, a writer and broadcaster told the journalists the following:

> David Cameron? Well, he's an extremely cautious man at the moment. I suspect taking a week was a political decision - the minimum he could take without deterring women voters and the maximum he could take without deterring male voters. He needs to bond with his baby and we need to bond with him later. I think he should take three months off and leave the party in the hands of Boris Johnson. We'd all be happier with that.

Cameron then took a two-week period of statutory leave after his wife gave birth via caesarean in 2010. A decade before that, in 2000 then-UK Prime Minister Tony Blair reduced his schedule to spend more time with his new-born son (Barr, 2020). These news stories, like the announcement of/commentary on Ardern's pregnancy, giving birth and taking maternity leave, where categorised into the 'children', 'parenting' and 'lifestyle' sections, and not in the 'politics' section of the news websites.

Research suggests that television news, especially in Aotearoa, New Zealand, has been softening or tabloidized, leading to a hybridity in news genre production as opposed to a hard binary line in the sand (Jones, 2017). It can be argued that the focus on Ardern's pregnancy, which to viewers may seem like a 'soft news' or 'tabloid-worthy' angle, is noteworthy in line with the news value of novelty. Thus, news mediated normalisation of female political leaders is yet to occur, most countries have not yet elected a female head of government, but the news mediation of Ardern's pregnancy can arguably be seen as a milestone towards the phenomenon (Trimble, 2017).

Ardern's pregnancy is an attention-catching story to attract eyes, ears, and internet clicks to be shared and syndicated to overseas markets as well. Due to Ardern being the first female political leader to be publicly pregnant, the news treatment of her pregnancy was constructed in a fashion similar to celebrities or a member of the royal family giving birth because that is a form of news framing that journalists and publics are familiar with.

In the thematic analysis, political editor Clare Trevett (2018) wrote a news story for The *New Zealand Herald* that was added to the pre-existing sample news stories from the content analysis sample because of how its online presentation illustrates the hybridity of news genre and the false dichotomy of the hard/soft news divide. The webpage for the news story begins with the headline "*Ministers' nannies can travel on the taxpayer under new rules"* and details how, in exceptional circumstances, nannies and carers for ministers and Prime Ministers' children will be funded by the taxpayer. This policy update is newsworthy both in its step towards making politics and the role of cabinet minister more accessible for new parents, but it also would be of interest to those citizens who are concerned about where their taxes are spent. This story would gain the interest of those who donate to the Taxpayers Union and those interested in advancing accommodation for new parents in the workplace. Along with the clarification from Ardern that 'taxpayers would not be expected to pay for both her partner and a carer for her baby' and also noting that the taxpayer was not funding Gayford's upcoming travel to New York as there was no spousal programme (Trevett, 2018). The second half of this news story's webpage then sits under the subtitle "Clarke and Neve's Big Apple Adventure" which interviews a New Zealand mother living in New York, introducing her writing "The freelance copywriter shared her top tips for Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's partner Clarke Gayford and the couple's daughter, 3-month-old Neve, ahead of their week in the Big Apple while the Prime Minister is at the United Nations." The top tips include attending drag queen story time, a puppet show, and a 'pub singalong'. The tone of this second half of the news story switches to a soft/entertainment style news that would usually be placed belong in the travel insert,

as opposed to the political pages with a tenuous connection of giving Gayford ideas to entertain merely months-old Neve in New York while Ardern is performing her diplomatic duties. This turn to a soft news treatment of an inclusive policy for ministers arguably is a devaluation of childcare through the tabloidized reporting. Childcare seen as outside of the economy, even though childcare is essential to ensure that workers can have the time to perform their careers and have well-adjusted workers in the future (Waring, 1999).

To conclude this analysis of political reporting and punditry in the mother case study, news is not only an economic but a cultural product that reflects the dominant cultural assumptions about who and what is important (Baxter, 2017). Harcup and O'Neill (2017) would class this as 'the power elite' – powerful people in the public sphere in politics, education, and business, as well as nations that hold power in diplomacy, and trade (such as the United States). This is why the news media is an essential part of the tripartite structure of this research, as the news media represents, reinterprets, and reinforces the dominant culture's assumptions about gender and also how the political field is understood as a communicative phenomenon that creates and enforces the laws and social order of its citizenry. The dominant cultural assumptions about women and gender-diverse people presented in the news media are governed by the intersection of identity and social variables such as gender, class, ethnicity, wealth, power and nationality to determine what is to be considered 'natural' or 'normal' (Baxter, 2017). While Ardern having a baby as a woman is natural, and in fact a biological phenomenon, (reinforced by the fact the news media stories in the sample state that Ardern called her pregnancy 'unexpected but exciting' (see *News.com.au,* 2019). It is not 'normal' because she is only the second elected woman to be 'PM and a mum' (*News.com.au,* 2019). The reporting of Ardern's pregnancy by journalists in the news media is also a part of the process of normalising, through repeatedly disseminating communications about pregnant political leaders, it becomes seen as "normal" (Trimble, 2017) so that it could become commonplace in the future to see

pregnant political leaders continue in their jobs, albeit after a period of parental leave, that is already common in other professions.

## 4.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the motherhood case study covered a highly sexed phenomena, which further bought the primacy of gender to the forefront of the news media narratives. The content analysis found that gender was the most commonly occurring theme in this case study. Discourse around the false dichotomy of private woman/public man are seen in the news media stories, as Ardern is performing politics as a pregnant person. Ardern is thus embodying the private nature of domestic life in her very public facing role as Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand.

This thesis will now report and analysis the findings related to the crisis leadership case study involving the news events of the Christchurch mosque attacks, the eruption of Whakaari, and the pandemic response to COVID-19 in 2020.

# 5. The Crisis Leadership Case Study

This chapter will focus on the crisis leadership case study, the case study involves three news events: the mosque attacks, the eruption of Whakaari White Island and the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic. These events are examples of different types of crises – a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, and a health pandemic. Proverbs et al. (2021) typify these crises as symbolic crises, where the response to the crisis is as important as the crisis itself, as they can shape political perception and public opinion. The chapter will first present the content and thematic analyses findings relating to this case study. Following the tripartite structure, this chapter will then move to analyse how themes and issues of gender and gendered behaviour manifested in the case study's news media reporting. Thirdly, the chapter will explore the themes and issues surrounding the performance of political image and leadership in the crisis leadership case study, which is refracted through the patriarchal understanding of gender and gendered behaviour. Finally, the chapter will offer some concluding thoughts.

## 5.1. The Content Analysis of the Crisis Leadership Case Study

| Themes | Mosque Attack (27 News Stories) | Whakaari Eruption (21 News Stories) | COVID-19 2020 (27 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Political Process** | 26 (96.30%) | 19 (90.48%) | 25 (96.16%) | 110 (88.00%) |
| **Gender** | 17 (62.97%) | 7 (33.34%) | 7 (26.93%) | 72 (57.60%) |
| **Leadership** | 19 (70.38%) | 12 (57.15%) | 18 (69.24%) | 70 (56.00%) |
| **Other World Leaders** | 13 (48.15%) | 7 (33.34%) | 10 (38.47%) | 72 (57.60%) |
| **Policy Discussion** | 20 (74.08%) | 4 (19.05%) | 18 (69.24%) | 73 (58.40%) |
| **Social Media** | 15 (55.56%) | 4 (19.05%) | 6 (23.08%) | 48 (38.40%) |

*Table 9: Content Analysis of Themes in the Crisis Leadership Case Study by News Events.*

In the case studies of the Christchurch Mosque Attacks, Whakaari Eruption, COVID-19 in 2020 and World Stage, political process as a theme was found in over 90

per cent of the news stories. The theme of political process is referred to by Brian McNair (2000) as 'process journalism'. This is often characterised as dichotomous to reporting on the policy implemented by governments, and there is a belief that the reporting on the political process and communicative acts is to the detriment of policy reporting and journalism's democratic function of holding governments and political leaders accountable (Paletz, 1998). Instead, they focus on the sleaze, scandal and competition in politics (McNair, 2000) that is mobilised through a politician's political speech acts. Policy discussion as a theme occurred across 58.40 per cent of the content analysis sample across the five case studies (73 news stories). It was the second most common theme in the content analysis sample. These results are similar to a four-week study completed by Brian McNair (2000) in his book *Journalism and Democracy: An evaluation of the political public sphere,* where over half of the political news stories related to policy matters. The journalistic evaluation of political communicative acts and a politician's leadership (which accounted for in 56 per cent of the content analysis news stories) can be referred to as 'political style'. In contrast, policy reporting is referred to as 'political substance'.

The news event which social media was most apparent was the Christchurch Mosque attacks (55.56 per cent). This can be attributed to the terrorist live streaming the assault on the social media platform Facebook and Ardern's policy initiatives to ban semi-automatic weapons used in the Mosque attacks, as well as advocating for policing violent and hateful content on social media platforms. The theme of social media is vital to this research question as social media continues to grow as a communicative tool for politicians and journalists to disseminate information that shapes society's understanding of politics.

| News Coverage Stance | Mosque Attack (27 News Stories) | Whakaari Eruption (21 News Stories) | COVID-19 2020 (27 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Positive** | 19 (70.38%) | 9 (42.86%) | 16 (59.26%) | 83 (66.40%) |
| **Negative** | 2 (7.41%) | 1 (4.77%) | 6 (22.23%) | 13 (10.40%) |
| **Neutral** | 6 (22.23%) | 11 (52.39%) | 5 (18.52%) | 30 (24.00%) |

*Table 10: Content Analysis of the News Coverage Stance in the Crisis Leadership by News Events*

The news event with the least amount of news stories with a positive news coverage stance is the Whakaari White Island eruption (9 news stories, 42.86 per cent of the content analysis sample). The contrast here between the Motherhood case studies (which as seen in the previous chapter yielding 50 per cent positive news coverage stance in the content analysis) and the other case study events is that the reporting is not overly focused on the exceptionalism of Jacinda Ardern's gender and feminised political leadership. The reason for this result and the lack of gendered exceptionalism could be attributed to the time period of the case study event. The eruption of Whakaari White Island occurred nine months after the Christchurch Mosque Attacks had occurred. While the news reporting in the Whakaari eruption content analysis sample also makes note of Ardern's feminised leadership style, it is not the main focus of the journalistic storytelling of the case study event. The Christchurch Mosque Attack news reporting did explicate Ardern's feminised leadership style which resulted in a positive news coverage stance (19 news stories 70.38 per cent), which can be analysed through the lens of benevolent misogyny and role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This point will be expanded on further in this chapter. Moreover, the nature of the crisis event and the possibility of a second eruption of the volcano also suggests that the newsrooms were focusing on producing up-to-date facts about the ongoing rescue operation and not taking the time to craft opinion and editorial media content that lends itself to positive or negative coverage. This resulted in the Whakaari White Island eruption case study event yielding the most neutral news coverage stance media stories (11 news media stories, 52.39 per cent).

Overall, neutral news coverage stance made up 24 per cent (30 news media stories) of the full content analysis sample.

Negative news coverage stance was only found in 10.40 per cent of the full content analysis sample (13 news stories). The case study event with the highest proportion of negative news coverage was the COVID-19 Response in 2020, yielding six news stories with a negative news coverage stance (22.23 per cent). These news stories offered a negative critique of the New Zealand Government's lockdowns and COVID-19 elimination strategy, for example *Newstalk ZB's* Mike Hosking during his *Mike's Minute* (2020, 17 April) proclaimed "I reckon she (Ardern) made a few glaring errors... She is wrong. Elimination is a mirage." There were also negative critiques about the communication and information dissemination strategies of the crisis response published in *The Guardian* (Edwards, 2020) opining that by only having the '1 pm' Press Conference for journalists to ask Ministers and senior public servants like the then-Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield, weakens democracy and the state of New Zealand media. While Jason Walls wrote for *The New Zealand Herald* (2020), that New Zealanders have "every right to be 'incredibly angry' at the Government" for disseminating and delaying the correction of incorrect information about the need for COVID-19 testing in West and South Auckland. It is important to note that news coverage stances can also be influenced by the news organisation's agenda (also a news value as per Harcup and O'Neill (2017)). For example, *The New Zealand Herald* and *Newstalk ZB* are known in New Zealand for holding a centre-right political affiliation.

| News Values | Mosque Attack (27 News Stories) | Whakaari Eruption (21 News Stories) | COVID-19 2020 (27 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Exclusive** | 12 (44.45%) | 2 (9.53%) | 10 (38.47%) | 39 (31.20%) |
| **Bad News** | 22 (81.49%) | 19 (90.48%) | 8 (30.77%) | 50 (40.00%) |
| **Conflict** | 14 (51.86%) | 0 (0.00%) | 3 (11.54%) | 34 (27.20%) |
| **Surprise** | 19 (70.38%) | 2 (9.53%) | 9 (34.6%) | 59 (47.20%) |
| **Audio-Visual** | 7 (25.93%) | 12 (57.15%) | 4 (15.39%) | 50 (40.00%) |
| **Shareability** | 7 (25.93%) | 2 (9.53%) | 6 (23.08%) | 37 (29.60%) |
| **Entertainment** | 4 (14.82%) | 1 (4.77%) | 3 (11.54%) | 31 (24.80%) |
| **Drama** | 9 (33.34%) | 20 (95.24%) | 3 (11.54%) | 35 (28.00%) |
| **Follow Up** | 25 (92.60%) | 21 (100.00%) | 24 (92.31%) | 101 (80.80%) |
| **The Power Elite** | 26 (96.30%) | 13 (61.91%) | 26 (96.30%) | 113 (90.40%) |
| **Relevancy** | 15 (55.56%) | 14 (66.67%) | 15 (57.70%) | 84 (67.20%) |
| **Magnitude** | 14 (51.86%) | 19 (90.48%) | 12 (46.16%) | 98 (78.40%) |
| **Celebrity** | 2 (7.41%) | 0 (0.00%) | 0 (0.00%) | 8 (6.40%) |
| **Good News** | 0 (0.00%) | 1 (4.77%) | 2 (7.40%) | 17 (13.60%) |
| **News Org Agenda** | 3 (11.12%) | 0 (0.00%) | 3 (11.54%) | 17 (13.60%) |

*Table 11: Content Analysis of News Values in the Crisis Leadership Case Study by News Event.*

The second-most prominent news value 'follow up' was found in 80.80 per cent of the full content analysis sample (101 news media stories). Notably, in the Whakaari news event 100 per cent of the news stories were coded to the news value category 'follow up'. This reflects the nature of the case study events which were constantly unfolding, requiring media consumers to be updated with the most up to date information. The news value of 'follow up' can be analysed through Chadwick's (2017) political information cycle. The crisis case study events in particular were first reported as 'breaking news' bulletins, then elaborated on in further news stories as the facts arose. Due to the focus of this thesis on the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership, the content analysis sample includes stories from the Fink's (1986)

‘crisis breakout’ and ‘chronic’ stages, or Mitroff’s (1994) ‘damage containment’ and ‘recovery’ stages (as cited in Coombs, 2015, p. 9). One of the criteria for media stories to be selected is that Ardern is either the focus or mentioned in the news story as an ‘elite actor’ in the political information cycle (Chadwick, 2017). News stories that include the ‘follow-up’ news value are reporting on policy and recovery measures to mitigate the crisis impacts, such as Ardern calling on Ministers and public sector leaders to have a ’20 per cent pay cut’ (Sachdeva, 2020), along with leadership actions such as visiting mosques and a refugee centre to offer comfort and support for the Muslim community (Moger & Devlin, 2019).

‘Bad news’ as a news value appeared in 90.48 per cent of the Whakaari White Island eruption case study (19 news media stories) and in 81.49 per cent of the Christchurch mosque attacks case study (22 news media stories). These also capture the human-interest angle, focusing on the emotions and lives of the victims for example, in the content analysis sample Charlotte Graham-McLay (2019) online story on *SBS Australia’s* website states “Perhaps most frustrating is the sense among some survivors, including Atacocugu, that officials simply do not understand the magnitude of the challenges they face: the trauma, the injuries, the inability to financially support themselves.” The mentions of substantial mental and physical injuries sustained from the attack and the loss of financial stability has the emotionally negative framing of ‘bad news’. This extract also notes Harcup and O’Neill’s (2017) news value of ‘magnitude’, which was coded for in 51.48 per cent of the Christchurch mosque attacks content analysis sample (14 news stories), and 78.40 per cent (98 news media stories) of the content analysis sample.

| News Sources | Mosque Attack (27 News Stories) | Whakaari Eruption (21 News Stories) | COVID-19 2020 (27 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Named** | 27(100.00%) | 21(100.00%) | 27(100.00%) | **125(100.00%)** |
| **Unnamed/ Unspecified** | 4(14.82%) | 6(28.58%) | 2(7.41%) | **18 (14.4%)** |
| **Family** | 1(3.71%) | 0(0.00%) | 0(0.00%) | **26 (20.80%)** |
| **Ardern** | 24(88.89%) | 21(100.00%) | 25(92.60%) | **117 (93.60%)** |
| **Government MP** | 3 (11.12%) | 4 (19.05%) | 5(18.52%) | **18 (14.40%)** |
| **Opposition MP** | 4(14.82%) | 1 (4.77%) | 1(3.71%) | **10 (8.00%)** |
| **International Politician** | 3 (11.12%) | 8 (38.10%) | 5(18.52%) | **28(22.40%)** |
| **Public Servant** | 7(25.93%) | 13 (61.91%) | 7 (25.93%) | **33 (26.40%)** |
| **Social Media Post** | 2(7.41%) | 5 (23.81%) | 3 (11.12%) | **29 (23.20%)** |

*Table 12: Content Analysis of News Sources in the Crisis Leadership Case Study by News Event.*

Journalists, as a rule cite their interviewees by name to establish credibility of their information. This is seen in the content analysis sample with 100 per cent of the 125 news media stories, all having their news sources cited by name. However, sometimes senior political aides are referenced by their job title. For example, from the COVID-19 in 2020 crisis case study content analysis sample *New Zealand Herald* journalist, Jason Walls (2020, 31 August) cites a "communications spokesman" in saying "a response on the post will arrive soon" in reference to the Government's *Unite Against COVID-19* social media profiles posting incorrect information about who needed to seek a Coronavirus PCR test. Only 14.4 per cent (18 news media stories) of the full content analysis sample had unnamed or unspecified sources.

International politicians were cited as news sources in 22.40 per cent of the full content analysis sample (28 news media stories). This sizable proportion indicates the globalised nature of the political field. World leaders like Jacinda Ardern do not make unilateral leadership and policy decisions without consultation or critique from their

peers. This is especially noted in the Ardern on the world stage case study where international politicians were quoted discussing policy the affects their countries as well as Aotearoa New Zealand (54.85 per cent, 14 news media stories). In the Whakaari White Island Eruption news event, international politicians are quoted as news sources in 38.10 per cent of the content analysis sample (eight news media stories). This is due to many of the burn victims and deaths from the eruption being tourists from countries like Australia, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister at the time were quoted as news sources in the sample's news media stories.

Journalists citing Government MPs (members of parliament belonging to the New Zealand Labour Party, New Zealand First, and the Green Party) and public servants shows that democracy and governing in Aotearoa New Zealand is not a one-person job, but requires input from other ministers, leading public servants and other subject matter experts. Government MPs were quoted as news sources in 14.40 per cent (18 news media stories) of the entire content analysis. Government MPs as a coding category includes cabinet ministers like Dr David Clark and Chris Hipkins, quoted in their capacities as Health Minister around the COVID-19 crisis and the scandal where Clark broke lockdown rules to go mountain biking and was then replaced by Hipkins (Fedshun, 2020). Public servants were quoted as news sources in 26.40 per cent (33 news media stories) in the entire content analysis sample. The case study event that yielded the highest percentage of news media stories with public servants quoted was the Whakaari White Island eruption. Public servants quoted in the case study event's news media stories included Counties Manukau District Health Board leaders, Worksafe spokespeople, and search and rescue personnel. This reflects the many working parts of government in a democratic Westminster-style parliament, particularly in response to a crisis.

## 5.2. Thematic Analysis of the Crisis Leadership Case Study's News Events

*Table 13: Thematic Analysis of the Christchurch Mosque Attacks News Event*

| ***Themes in Mosque Attacks*** (27 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 102 | 4.89% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 53 | 3.69% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 26 | 1.37% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 11 | 0.71% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 0 | 0 |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 4 | 0.46% |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 8 | 0.97% |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 68 | 1.95% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 57 | 11.88% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 60 | 9.07% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 107 | 19.57% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 33 | 5.13% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 14 | 3.09% |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 4 | 0.40% |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 5 | 0.47% |

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

The most dominant theme in the Mosque Attacks case study is political process covering 19.57 per cent of the case study text over 107 coding references. Examples of political process in the case study news stories include references to Ardern giving media interviews, speeches in parliament, and holding press conferences. Other examples of political process include Ardern using rhetorical devices in her political performance and Ardern meeting with the victims of the Mosque attacks and members of the Muslim community, as well as the striking school students protesting climate change, where she first learned of the Mosque attacks (Manhire, 2019). Political process as a theme that steers the narrative direction of this case study. The rhetorical device of Ardern refusing to say the gunman's name shifted the news media's focus and framing on the interactions between Ardern and the victims rather than the gunman himself.

Ardern has been quoted in the media as typifying her own political performance and political leadership as “politics with a bit of heart” (Toller, 2019). Political leadership as a theme covered 9.07 per cent of the case study text over 60 coding references. The news media globally also frequently referred to Ardern's political leadership during the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosque attacks as unique compared to other world leaders (1.95 per cent coverage across 68 coding references). *The Globe and Mail* (Toller, 2019) referred to Ardern as the country's 'comforter-in-chief'. At the same time, *CNN* (Whiteman, 2019) referred to Ardern's leadership as a 'strong, empathetic response' in her sensemaking leadership activities, such as her condemnation of the act as terrorism, visiting the Mosques where the attacks occurred and offering hugs to the members of the Muslim community. Gigliotti (2016) typifies this leadership style as 'president as comforter'. Ardern's rhetoric promoted an idea of a unified country grieving together and that citizens could feel safe that it was a one-off attack from an outsider who did not share Aotearoa New Zealand's ideals and values of inclusivity and peace. The news media also staked the claim that part of Ardern's

political leadership response to the Mosque attacks was grounded in her gender. Gender as an aggregated primary code covered 4.8 per cent of the case study text over 102 instances. When visiting the Mosques, Ardern wore a traditional hijab worn by many female followers of the Islamic religion as a mark of respect, and the media made multiple references to it. *CTV*'s (2019) news story noted, 'images of her wearing a hijab and embracing the Muslim community created a lasting impression for many.' Appearance and mode of dress as a secondary theme covered 1.37 per cent of the case study over 26 coding references. *The Telegraph* (Graham, 2019) quotes Dalia Mohamed, a family member of one of the victims, saying, 'The prime minister when she came wearing her scarf, that was big for us." Ardern exhibited feminised gendered behaviour in her leadership response of hugging, and other comforting behaviours is praised in this case study.

The policy and legal discussion theme covered 11.88 per cent of the text across 55 coding references. The coding references of this theme refer to the policy and law changes made in response to the Mosque attacks crisis. The news media stories in the case study make a note of the following policy initiatives: extra police protection was assigned around Mosques in the aftermath, the New Zealand Government covered funeral expenses, extra staff were added to the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), and the terror alert was increased to 'high' in case of copycat attacks. Most drastically, the Government swiftly enacted new legislation outlawing the semi-automatic weapons.

*Table 14: Thematic Analysis of the Whakaari White Island Eruption News Event.*

| ***Themes in Whakaari Eruption*** (21 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 11 | 2.00% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 11 | 2.00% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 0 | 0 |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 0 | 0 |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 3 | 0.44% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 12 | 2.57% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 11 | 2.98% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 35 | 6.87% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 9 | 1.96% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 4 | 0.89% |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 5 | 1.06% |

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

Compared to the other case studies, the case study of the Whakaari White Island eruption has yielded less coding coverage results in the thematic analysis. This could be attributed to the fact all the news stories were categorised in the hard news genre, which sees more of a 'straight' reportage of the events without much analysis or interpretation. Gender as a primary theme only yielded 2 per cent coding coverage of the news event. These references pertained to reporting on Ardern's gendered behaviours in caring (hugging) and expressing empathy. There was no other secondary gender themes present.

The most apparent theme in the news event was the political process, which covered 6.87 per cent of the case study across 35 coding references. The political process theme included Ardern chairing cabinet meetings, and giving press conferences, leading a moment of silence for those who lost their lives or were injured in the eruption and giving interviews to the media. One reason these coding results are significantly less than other case studies is due to the nature of this case study's event reporting. Unlike the other two crises events (the mosque attacks and the 2020 COVID-19 response), journalists did not frame the news media narrative through Jacinda Ardern's leadership. The news stories about the Whakaari eruption focused on the volcano's ongoing dangers and mission to recover the survivors and remove the deceased from the island.

Political leadership covered 2.98 per cent of the case study text across 11 coding references. Australian online news website *News.com.au* (Bedo, 2019) published a news story about Australians sharing their reaction to Jacinda Ardern's response to the eruption in contrast with Scott Morrison's response to the ongoing bushfires in the country. The news story quotes one person's tweet calling Ardern "the best leader in the world right now." (Bedo, 2019). Social media as an aggregated primary code covers 1.96 per cent of the case study text across nine references. The secondary code comments from social media, like the one just mentioned, covered 0.89 per cent of the case study (across four coding references). These coding references were social media posts made by Jacinda Ardern to update her followers on

the rescue operation developments and covered 1.06 per cent of the case study (across five coding references).

Policy and legal discussion as a theme were apparent when discussing the policy of monitoring the volcano's seismic activity. Other examples include the New Zealand Government's investigation into whether health and safety protocols were breached and supporting the injured through New Zealand's ACC scheme – which means that negligence lawsuits cannot be brought in New Zealand. The theme covered 2.57 per cent of the case study across 12 coding references.

*Table 15: Thematic Analysis of the COVID-19 in 2020 News Event*

| ***Themes in COVID-19*** (26 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 8 | 0.30% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 5 | 0.10% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 1 | 0.08% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 2 | 0.12% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 0 | 0 |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 0 | 0 |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 28 | 1.16% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 54 | 17.11% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 43 | 14.78% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 44 | 12.77% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 8 | 1.11% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 5 | 0.62% |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 1 | 0.18% |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 2 | 0.31% |

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

The most dominant theme in the COVID-19 in 2020 news event is policy and legal discussion. The theme covered 17.11 per cent of the case study text across 54 coding instances. In this case study, policy and legal discussion as a theme included reporting on the 'alert level system', which was the four-level protection framework that dictated New Zealanders' freedom of movement and in-person socialisation. The alert level system dictated if people could go to school or work if they were allowed to go to religious ceremonies and visit their friends and family. 'Level four' and 'level three' were also referred to as 'lockdowns'. News media stories in the sample also compared New Zealand's lockdown in March 2020 to Australia and the United Kingdom, which had fewer restrictions on their movement. However, their governments did not clearly communicate the new policies as the New Zealand Government did during the 2020 lockdowns. Other important policy and legal initiatives discussed included the Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ), installing wider footpaths to aid in social distancing and creating educational television channels during school hours to help with home education.

Political process as a theme covered 12.77 per cent of the news event over 44 coding references. This coding references to this theme noted Ardern was giving speeches, taking press conferences and posting updates on social media (as an aggregated theme, social media covered 1.11 per cent of the case study over 8 references). News media stories also critiqued that Ardern consolidated her power and authority through the daily 1 pm press conference to update the New Zealand public on the number of people infected with the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and important policy and legal updates that were impacting citizen's lives. This was the only time of day that Ardern made herself available to the media. The coding to the theme also includes Ardern demoting Dr David Clark in cabinet rankings after he was found to have broken lockdown restrictions to ride his mountain bike, take a beach walk with his family and move house.

Gender as an aggregated theme covered only 0.30 per cent of the case study over eight coding references. The lack of gendered reporting could be attributed to the complex nature of the policies and regulations needed to navigate Aotearoa New Zealand, through this still ongoing case study event. Although gender as a theme in the

thematic analysis coding is not as frequent as it was in other case studies, there was still evidence of news stories critiquing Ardern's leadership through a gendered lens. These critiques included comments on her clothing during lockdown and references to her 'empathy' as a feminine behaviour. Outside the sample, the iconic fashion magazine *British Vogue* (Devaney, 2020; Devaney, 2020b) claimed that Ardern's masterclass in crisis leadership was due to her female gender.

## 5.3. Analysis of Gender in the Crisis Leadership Case Study

Ardern gained prominence on the world stage as a feminine and competent female political leader in the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque attacks in March 2019. In the media reporting of Jacinda Ardern's leadership performance, most news stories in the content analysis contained the theme of gender and employed gendered framing (62.97 per cent). These gendered frames extended the 'super-mum' ideal discussed earlier in this chapter (Delaney & Sullivan, 2021). In the content analysis and thematic analysis, samples of the Christchurch mosque attacks news stories, CNN (Whiteman, 2019) referred to Ardern as a' global celebrity' and spent 91 words describing Ardern as the first world leader to give birth in office in nearly 30 years, and as a 'progressive working mother' who brings her daughter along to the United Nations assembly. Moreover, *The Globe and Mail* (2019) compare Ardern's response to the Marvel Superheroine, Captain Marvel, who has the first female lead superhero to have her own film in the blockbuster Marvel Cinematic Universe. The Conservative-leaning British newspaper, The *Telegraph* (Graham, 2019) also went as far as to publish the following explicitly:

> The fact the 38-year-old went on to become only the second world leader in history to give birth while in office only strengthened the misgivings of some that she was a lightweight. Any such belief that Ms Ardern might not be up to the job has been banished in the aftermath of Friday's massacre in Christchurch.

This can also be seen as an attempt to dismantle the false dichotomy of kindness versus competency and alludes to findings that people tend to assume that new

mothers are less competent in their work than men and childfree women (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). *Time Magazine* (Campbell, 2019) referred to Ardern's behaviour in the aftermath of the mosque attacks in the gendered terms' empathetic but defiant'. Ardern was adept at selecting the appropriate gendered response for the needed moment, showing that gendered behaviours in political performance can be as an individual negotiating a spectrum. Ardern showed compassion and solidarity to the victims and the wider Muslim community while also exuding authority in her position as Prime Minister to introduce new gun legislation and a strong message that terrorism in the name of white supremacy and gun crime will not become a rolling headline as it is in other countries.

Ardern's display of empathy was categorised in the thematic analysis sample as the secondary gender code 'affect and gendered behaviour'. In the entire sample, there were 95 coding references made to affect and gendered behaviour across 36 news media stories. Ardern was praised in numerous news media stories that were cited in the sample news stories. She physically embraced and consoled members of the Muslim community. It was not only her caring actions that made these photographs that accompanied the news stories memorable – in an act of solidarity, Ardern, also wore a hijab. A hijab is a headscarf worn by some (but not all) Muslim women as an expression of their faith (Salahshour & Serafis, 2022). The *New Zealand Herald* (2019) notes that Ardern's decision to wear a hijab was 'intuitive', which is a value closely aligned with women, particularly drawing on the phrase "a woman's intuition" (Jaggar, 1988). Leadership scholars such as Michelle K. Ryan and her colleagues (2007) have also noted that women tend to be selected as leaders during times of crisis and precarity due to the feminine-aligned virtue of intuition and its positive effects on people management over the management of the bottom line. Ardern citing her intuition as the motivation for her wearing of the hijab, typifies the tripartite structure of gender-political image and performance-media in action. One can link the idea of feminine intuition to habitus. Ardern's leadership response to the Christchurch mosque attacks, including the donning of the hijab, was an embodied and genuine human

response but it was also generated from her own understanding about her political leadership, that prioritises compassion as a 'comforter in chief' (Gigliotti, 2016). The gendered scripts of how women behave, and dress has clearly impacted Ardern's actions and choice of words in her political performance, which in turn is represented by the news media to the citizenry, who critique and judge Ardern's performance of political image and leadership through their understanding of how a politician and women should act and present themselves for that key temporal moment.

In the thematic analysis of the Christchurch Mosque attacks, the secondary gender code of 'appearance and mode of dress' yielded 1.37 per cent of the coding coverage across 26 coding references. These references praising Ardern's wearing of the hijab contrast common discourses in Western media that the hijab is a symbol of oppression and anti-feminism (Salahshour & Serafis, 2022). Ardern, as a political elite in the powerful position of Prime Minister and as a self-described feminist, subverts these prominent discourses by wearing the hijab as a mark of respect and solidarity coupled with her repeating the unifying rhetorical phrase 'they are us.' Salahshour and Serafis (2021) note that the concerns and fears of women who wear the hijab in Western societies are grounded in repugnance towards foreign practices and an enduring animosity between Islamic and Christian-dominated Western practices.

The study completed by Salahshour and Serafis (2021) found that The *New Zealand Herald* published fewer positive news media stories about Ardern wearing the hijab than Stuff-owned newspapers. The media discourses present in The *New Zealand Herald*'s news stories suggest that Ardern was "normalising women oppression among Muslim women and beyond." However, *The New Zealand Herald* owner, NZME is also the owner of *Newstalk ZB,* which was the radio station whose talkback hosts in the content and thematic analysis sample have dismissed and belittled Jacinda Ardern's political performance as Prime Minister through her gender and her status as a mother. This shows that not only is New Zealand media, such as The *New Zealand Herald* and Newstalk ZB, are not only subscribing to a patriarchal and sexist hegemony but also a White Eurocentric hegemony, suggesting that their conception of how a woman should behave and dress is somehow morally better than other cultures. The newsworthiness

of Ardern wearing the hijab can be seen as another example of benevolent misogyny understood through the intersection of Judeo-Christian supremacy. Wearing a hijab as a female ex-Mormon prime minister means that not only is her behaviour role incongruent with the news media's understanding of what a politician should be (Eagly & Karau, 2002) but also how a Western woman and Western political leader should dress. When Toby Manhire (2019) asked Ardern about her choice to wear a hijab in a profile for *The Spinoff*, Ardern said:

"The elements of that surprised me," says Ardern today. "When I had the all-clear to go down on Saturday, I asked a friend if they had something for me to borrow. If I'd been [at home] in Auckland, it would have been different, but I didn't have scarves with me. So, I asked if she had something I could borrow, because for me it was just a mark of respect. It was naturally what you would do. So, no, I didn't really think about that, either." Later, it was suggested to her that it was an important symbol of solidarity with Muslim women in New Zealand who felt unsafe. "I hadn't thought about it in those terms. It felt incredibly sad but completely obvious as well, that there would be those who would be worried. You know, the Muslim community was so obviously targeted, and they wear their faith so openly."

It is clear from this quote that Ardern's choice to wear a hijab was one out of cultural respect. Wearing a hijab inside a mosque is a traditional custom, and for those women who choose to veil in everyday life, an explicit statement of faith. Ardern's aim was to symbolically show empathy and respect through her clothing choice. This was also stated in the sample's international media news stories, like the *BBC* (2019).

Ardern's empathetic and gendered behaviour is also framed as newsworthy in the COVID-19 2020 case study. *TVNZ* (*1 News Now,* 2020) reported on the praise Ardern received in international media like The Atlantic's Uri Friedman, writing that Ardern may be the most effective leader on the planet due to her leadership style of 'empathy in a crisis.' The news stories in the sample also focus on Ardern and female scientists hosting special' press conference' like sessions for children with scientists during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with declaring the Easter Bunny an essential worker so that the children can still receive their Easter eggs without breaking the illusion of the

fictional character (*CNN,* 2020). This shows Ardern's empathy and care for children and their parents, reinforcing the idea of Ardern being both 'PM and a Mum', as previously mentioned in this chapter. Furthermore, the news media stories in the sample laud Ardern for being 'caring and outwardly normal. She is also clearly competent at a time when so many others are not' (*1 News Now,* 2020). This is an example of the news media stories promoting Ardern's leadership as gendered exceptionalism. The aforementioned praise is implicitly gendered as the 'others' she is deemed to be more competent than her male contemporaries such as Donald Trump and Boris Johnson. Trump and Johnson both exhibited hyper-masculine behaviours such as aggression and agentic leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002), and policies that focus on 'hard' policy areas that are commonly attributed to male politicians (Stevens, 2007) such as the economy, thereby not enforcing strict lockdowns like Ardern did Aotearoa New Zealand who focused her policies on the gendered 'feminine' policy areas of healthcare, elder care, and education. Using *Facebook Live* to communicate these policy updates as a reminder to New Zealanders isolated at home, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Green, 2020) reports that Ardern delivered the 'check in' after 'putting baby Neve to bed.' Thus, reminding the media consumer of Ardern's dual status as a prime minister and as a mother of a young child. In this news media story, we also see close attention paid to Ardern's 'appearance and mode of dress', one of the thematic analysis' secondary gender themes (0.08 per cent coding coverage with only one coding reference). "Hunkered down on her Auckland couch in a tracksuit and without make-up, she apologised for her casual garb, saying that putting toddlers to bed can get messy" (Green, 2020). This relates to the idea of Ardern being like 'a normal mum'. She is dressed in comfortable clothing appropriate for parenting a young toddler in the home in a tracksuit without make-up, as opposed to the gendered expectation of dress in the parliamentary debating chamber of a blazer and a full face of make-up (Trimble, 2017). This creates identification between Ardern and her citizenry, as she was also sheltered in place along with the rest of the country who were not essential workers, as they too had swapped the blazers and flat ironed hair of the office for the casual garb of tracksuits and messy buns of the couch.

In contrast to the other two crisis events, the news reportage of Ardern's response to the eruption of Whakaari White Island had a less thematic focus on Ardern's gender. The content analysis results show that only a third of news stories contained the theme of gender, while the thematic analysis showed gender as a primary theme only yielded 2 per cent of the coding coverage in the case study event. The low percentage of coding coverage could be due to the amount of time between the Christchurch mosque attacks and the eruption, only nine months. Ardern's gendered behaviour was not as newsworthy, although photographs of her embracing first responders were included in news media stories such as *Stuff* (Coughlan, 2019). The focus was on the ongoing dangers and the recovery mission, as opposed to accessing the novelty of Ardern's performance. There was some critique of government departments offered in the sample, suggesting that the safety of the workers and tourists was ignored. Other gendered behaviours exhibited by Ardern in this case study involve Ardern showing her emotions, her voice cracking, and her eyes tearing up. This can be seen as an example of feminine leadership (Wilson, 2020). However, these actions are details in the story, not the focus of the news stories' narratives. This case study can be seen as an example of how political news involving female political leaders can be reported when news media normalisation (Trimble, 2017) is achieved. Thus, reporting such events does not require a comment on the female leader's sartorial choices or her body but on her competencies as a legislator and leader.

## 5.4 Analysis of Political Image and Leadership in the Crisis Leadership Case Study

Previous research has shown that in times of crisis, a politician's relationship with their citizenry is significantly affected by the politician's performance of political leadership (Bligh et al., 2004). A crisis can be defined as a low-probability, high-impact event that affects the viability and reputation of an organisation and has an ambiguous nature in its cause, effects, and means of resolution, often through swift decision-making (Pearson & Clair, 1998). It is the sometimes-Herculean task of the political leader to bring order and enact sense-making to their public to guide their followers

through a crisis (Bligh et al., 2004; Gigliotti, 2016; Jong, 2021; Wilson, 2020). Crises are how a leader's character is tested and how their legacies are formed to be remembered by history, whether in praise or infamy. A leader's character is an amalgamation of virtues, personality traits, values and situationally appropriate behaviours (Seijts et al., 2023). The effectiveness of political leadership is also context dependent. What may be effective leadership in the aftermath of a terrorist attack may not be congruent to effective leadership through a globalised economic recession.

This thesis's sample of news media stories frames Jacinda Ardern's leadership during times of crisis as a 'masterclass' of charismatic leadership (*Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* 2020). Max Weber (1946) theorised the idea of charismatic leadership, borrowing from a study of the early Christian church where the Apostle Paul used the word charisma, meaning 'gift of grace', to legitimise his claim to leadership (Breuilly, 2011). Charismatic leadership involves the arousal, articulation, and expression of sentiments that followers could feel privately but cannot express themselves. Rhetoric is commonly associated with charismatic leadership. The rhetorical style of charismatic leadership includes tailoring speeches and framing arguments that are most suited to the current audience and time contexts (Bligh et al., 2004). According to Weber (1919), due to charisma, followers will not obey a political leader due to tradition or statute, but because they believe in them. The leader is recognised as being 'called' to that position of power.

In the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosque attacks, Ardern was praised in the sample's news media stories for her charismatic leadership and decisive policy actions (*The New Zealand Herald,* 2019; Batrawy*,* 2019). Ardern held a night-time press conference on 15 March 2019, hours after the terrorist attack, to update the media and the nation on what officials knew then. Ardern's bodily deportment was appropriately subdued, with a sombre facial expression. She states that it is believed that 40 people had died, with 20 more people receiving treatment for injuries (Smalls*,* 2019). Ardern engages in sensemaking and guides her followers in how to respond emotionally to the tragedy, stating it could "only be described as a terrorist attack", which was "well-planned" by someone with "extremist views" and notably was Australian born. This is

an act of othering the suspect. Rhetorically, Ardern framed the attack as an assault on all New Zealanders and the country's diversity in an attempt to counteract the deliberate othering of Muslim communities:

> Christchurch was the home of these victims. For many, this was not the place of their birth. For many, this was their choice. The place they actively came to and committed themselves to, the place they were raising their families. Where they were part of communities who they loved, and they loved them. It is a place that many came to for its safety. A place where they were free to practice their culture and their religion. For those of you who are watching tonight and questioning how this could happen here: we, New Zealand, we were not a target because we are a safe harbour for those who hate. We were not chosen for this act of violence because we condone racism because we are an enclave for extremism, we were chosen for the very fact we are none of these things. Because we represent diversity, kindness, compassion, a home for those who share our values, refuge for those who need it, and those values, I can assure you, will not and cannot be shaken by this attack. We are a proud nation of more than 200 ethnicities, 160 languages, and amongst that diversity, we share common values and the one we place our currency on right now and tonight is our compassion and the support for the community of those directly affected by this tragedy, and secondly, the strongest possible condemnation of the people who did this. *You may have chosen us, but we utterly reject and condemn you*. (Ardern, 2019, 15 March [added emphasis]).

The last sentence of this press conference extract (which has been italicised) was quoted by multiple media outlets in the content and thematic analyses samples, including *The New Yorker* and *Newshub,* along with other popular media outlets outside the thesis' samples, such as *The Daily Mail* to contrast Ardern's leadership response to other leaders such as George W. Bush and Donald Trump. *Newstalk ZB* (Batrawy, 2019)

published a news story on their website noting that Ardern's decisive leadership action of labelling the event as a terrorist attack contrasted many ideologically motivated mass shootings in North America by white non-Muslim gunmen that should have been labelled as terrorism. Ardern shows compassion by addressing the shared values and acknowledging the suffering of the grieving communities throughout the country and attempts to unite the country through unifying rhetoric, stating, "they are us". "They" in this context refers to the victims of the terror attack and the Muslim community at large, and "us" means all those who live in New Zealand, not just the hegemonic Pākehā, and Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. When Ardern says "us", she refers to all those who identify as 200 different ethnicities calling New Zealand home. She is eliciting the rhetorical technique of identification, calling upon the collective identity as a nation and appealing to emotion to channel their grief into expressing the character virtues of compassion and care (Burke, 2006). Directing followers' emotions is an integral part of sensemaking in crisis leadership (Gigliotti, 2016). In the content and thematic analysis samples *The Telegraph* (Graham, 2019) refers to Ardern's face as "the picture of grief" in the attacks' aftermath. The ancient Roman orator Cicero said that a political leader's rhetoric transforms and organises civil society through reason and eloquence (as cited in Richards, 2007). In the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque attacks, Ardern enacted the role of comforter in her leadership, and photojournalists captured Ardern embracing mourners with her eyes closed. This act of comforting and care became symbolic globally with the image being projected onto the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, and a mural painting of the embrace proposed in Melbourne, Australia (Noonan, 2019). Ardern also received a standing ovation at the memorial held ten days after the attacks in Christchurch before she made her speech (Manhire, 2019), showing she had successfully connected with her followers as a 'comforter' leader (Gigliotti, 2016).

In the thematic analysis sample, Toby Manhire writes the following for *The Spinoff* (2019), "In the past, her invocations of kindness might have been dismissed as slogans. Not today. "We each hold the power, in our words and in our actions, in our daily acts of

kindness," she says. "We are not immune to the viruses of hate, of fear, of other. We never have been. But we can be the nation that discovers the cure."

Ardern's leadership performance in this crisis was seen as authentic, competent, and imbued with humanity. Her gendered exceptionalism is framed in news stories from *The Spinoff* (Manhire, 2019), *The New Yorker* (Gessen, 2019), and *Time Magazine* (Campbell, 2019) through her own noting that her leadership performance was intuitive and expressing the need for more humanity in politics, which led to her avoidance of 'the bellicose, war-footing political rhetoric that so often stalks terrorist attacks' (Manhire, 2019). Ardern is also lauded throughout the content and thematic analysis samples for leading the New Zealand Government to ban semi-automatic weapons that were used in the terrorist attacks with an expedited timeline of only ten days (Campbell, 2019*;* Manhire, 2019). The *CBC* (2019) from Canada reported that while there was some opposition from firearms owners, the response to the proposed legislation was overwhelmingly positive, with Ardern addressing those with reservations on the legislation saying:

> You either believe that here in New Zealand, these weapons have a place, or you do not. If you believe, like us, that they do not, you should be able to believe we can move swiftly. An argument about process is an argument to do nothing. – *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation,* 2019.

There were also critiques of Ardern and the Labour Government's delivery of the 'lofty' promises they were previously praised for in the news media sample (Williams*,* 2019; Graham-McClay*,* 2019). New Zealand online news website *Newsroom* published an analysis news story by South Island correspondent David Williams (2019, noting that Ardern's comments on ACC support for terror attack victims were inconsistent. Williams noted that in Ardern's speech during the debate to ban assault weapons, she acknowledged, 'They (the victims) will carry a raft of disabilities, and that's before you consider the psychological impact.' However, five days later, the New Zealand Cabinet vetoed a plan to support a one-off exception to usual legislative rules that ACC only

covers those who are physically injured and employed and extend it to the mentally traumatised victims of the mosque attacks. Ardern's comments and actions here see her roleplaying of 'leader as a caretaker' to 'leader as an institutionalised voice' (Gigliotti, 2016). Ardern is representing the Labour Government as the institutional voice as Prime Minister when she claimed on the morning television programme *Breakfast* (as cited in *Newsroom,* Williams, 2019) that extending ACC to those mentally injured by the March 15 attack would have been a "significant change" that could potentially alter the levies paid. She also raised the prospect that such a "big change" would require consultation. "It would take time," she said. "We wanted to provide cover. We wanted to do it quickly. ACC would not have been a quick option."

Ardern claimed that victim support through the Ministry of Social Development would be 'a bit more agile' and have the opportunity to operate with 'a bit more discretion.' Here, there is a clear leadership tension between Ardern's compassionate and 'human' leadership response that she has been lauded for internationally, with the institutional need to follow the correct procedures set forth by legislation.

Australian media outlet *SBS,* also published an article syndicated from *The New York Times* written by Charlotte Graham-McLay (2019) that reported on how the New Zealand Government had failed on their 'lofty promises' to the victims of the terrorist attack. The news story begins by detailing that survivor Temel Atacocugu is 'fed up' with New Zealand Immigration stalling the visa applications for his mother and nephew to immigrate from Turkey to help him as he 'adjusts to his new life.' This issue is not exclusive to one victim, as Graham-McLay writes, 'Like Atacocugu, 43, many say New Zealand's immigration system is struggling to respond to victims' wishes to bring their relatives to the country to provide physical and emotional support.' This is in contrast to Ardern's comments made five days after the terrorist attack, which noted the emotional/mental and spiritual effects this traumatic event would have on their wellbeing (*SBS,* 2019). This suggests that the actions of the government and the glacial pace of the public service are incongruent with Ardern's public declarations, as noted in scholarship from the likes of Gigliotti (2016) and Pearson and Clare (1998),

successful leadership is not just rhetorical sensemaking but also implementing action to relieve the suffering of followers.

There were also further critiques in the sample that this tragic event was able to occur because New Zealand's spy agencies were focussing on the surveillance of people who may have ties to extremist Islamic ideology instead of white supremacist extremism exhibited by the assailant. The Christchurch Mosque Attacks did lead to a review of New Zealand's spy agencies, which are charged with monitoring and surveillance to protect New Zealanders from transnational terrorism, as well as violent extremist attacks on New Zealand soil and cyberattacks against New Zealand infrastructure and its citizens (Rogers & Mawdsley, 2022). There is a clear sense of insecurity felt by minority groups such as Muslims, which they felt were not acknowledged by intelligent and security professionals as their directives to focus on 'the war on terror' ignored the vitriolic white supremacist rhetoric espoused by the Christchurch mosque shooter that was posted on online forums, showing that there was a blind spot towards those who are more congruent to the hegemonic white-favouring system. The Royal Commission's recommendations called for greater public involvement, enlisting advisory groups representative of marginalised communities, local government and the private sector to aid in covering the blind spots of intelligence agency leaders (Rogers & Mawdsley, 2022).

Due to the ongoing and unfolding nature of the recovery mission and clean-up for bodies after the eruption at Whakaari White Island, Ardern played the leadership archetype of 'leader as an institutional voice' (Gigliotti, 2016). Ardern is mainly quoted in the news media samples as a conduit for rescue updates, such as *The New Zealand Herald* (2019) writing, "Ardern made the comments during her official statement to Parliament this afternoon… Speaking to media before going into the House the afternoon, Ardern said she had spoken to one of the helicopter pilots who was on the island in the immediate aftermath." There were flashes of 'leader as caregiver' (Gigliotti, 2016) when photos of Ardern were published in media stories of Ardern embracing first responders to the eruption, much like the now famous photo of Ardern

embracing a Muslim woman at a mosque and in expressing the nation's collective sympathy as she called for a minute's silence a week after the eruption. Ardern is quoted in *The Telegraph's* (2019) news story:

> "New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has called for a minute's silence on Monday at 2.11pm local time, a week on from the eruption. She said: "Wherever you are in New Zealand or around the world, this is a moment we can stand alongside those who have lost loved ones in this extraordinary tragedy. "Together we can express our sorrow for those who have died and been hurt and our support for their grieving families and friends."

The news media stories about the Whakaari rescue mission in the samples did not exceptionalise Ardern's feminine leadership traits to the extent seen in political reporting of the aftermath of Christchurch mosque attacks or during the initial lockdown periods of COVID-19. However, Ardern did still exhibit feminine characteristics in the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). These feminine characteristics exhibited in her political leadership performance included being sympathetic, sensitive to the needs of others, and compassionate (Bem, 1974). These feminine characteristics can be inferred from the *Newshub* article in the news media story sample where Ardern's ministerial address on behalf of the Government, saying, "Our hearts go out to the families of those who are injured, missing or deceased," the Prime Minister said, addressing Parliament Tuesday afternoon." Later in the news story, Ardern is also quoted saying

> "I want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of health professionals who are working across the country to prioritise support to those injured," Ardern said. "In some cases, this has meant people have been moved around the country to ensure they have the best expert care... That means they are in Middlemore, Waikato, Christchurch, Auckland, the Hutt and Tauranga."

This shows that Ardern as a leader, is sensitive to the needs of the victims and their families, as well as those working in healthcare, to ensure that the care of the victims was the best they could receive. Bem (1974) also notes that, in general, masculinity is

associated with ‘getting the job done’ and while femininity is often associated with an affective concern for the welfare of others. One could claim that Ardern’s leadership style during the aftermath of the Whakaari eruption was, in fact, an androgynous leadership style, showing sympathy and concern for the welfare of the victims, first responders and health care professionals who worked tirelessly to tend to the survivors needs (Smalls, 2019). Ardern also again acknowledged the healthcare workers’ efforts on 6 April 2020, when the National Burns Unit discharged the last patient from the eruption (*The New Zealand Herald,* 2020). While also ‘getting the job done’ (Bem, 1974, p.156) by ordering an inquiry into how the tragedy at Whakaari White Island was allowed to occur (*The AM Show,* 2019). In the thematic analysis sample, *Newsroom’s* (Williams, 2019) news story also infers Ardern’s leadership type as an ‘institutional voice’ (Gigliotti, 2016) and exhibited the ‘masculine’ characteristic of ‘getting the job done’ (Bem, 1974), by noting Ardern’s requesting that work be done to identify any broader issues or gaps that are not covered in the two investigations into the safety concerns and procedures surrounding the Whakaari White Island eruption. Thus, what is also seen in this case study is Ardern relying on expert advice and input to create better policies to avoid a recurrence of tourists visiting a volcano that has a raised GeoNet warning. This is in line with Ardern and her government relying on expert health advice during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

In the content and thematic analysis samples, the news story by Australian online media outlet, *News.com.au* (Bedo, 2019) aggregated tweets from Australians praising Jacinda Ardern’s performance of political leadership and comparing her to her Australian counterpart, then Prime Minister Scott Morrison. Twitter user Michael Taylor’s “@AusIndiMedia” post is hyperlinked into the news story saying, “I think we need Jacinda Ardern to come over here and look after the country in times of emergency. Scott, take a holiday. #NotMyPrimeMinister.” Another user, May’s “@mezjac” is hyperlinked into the news story saying “Within about 1 hour of a natural disaster in NZ, Jacinda Ardern is addressing the country on the situation, resources & plans. I can't compare her to Australia's PM, she is measured, appears in control. #auspol”. Leadership as a theme occurred in 57.15 per cent of the content analysis

sample (12 news media stories from a total of 21 news media stories). While in the thematic analysis sample the theme of political leadership yielded a coding coverage of 2.98 per cent across 11 coding references. Interestingly, in the content analysis the case study of Ardern's response to the Whakaari eruption yielded 11 neutral news stories, which equates to 52.39 per cent of the case study's sample. This case study event is the only one out of the five in this research that did not skew to have a majority positive sentiment of Ardern's political leadership and performance in the news coverage stance. This can be attributed to the focus of the stories being about the on-going developments of the rescue operation, as opposed to Ardern's feminine-gendered response that was so highly exceptionalised by the news media in the content and thematic samples of the Christchurch mosque attacks. This may be due to the fact that Aotearoa New Zealand has experienced a number of natural disasters in recent decades, whereas the Christchurch mosque attacks were the largest mass shooting in New Zealand's history and the first to be so publicly rooted in white supremacy, as outlined by the terrorist's online manifesto. Moreover, the event of Whakaari White Island's eruption occurred only nine months after the Christchurch mosque attacks.

As the BSRI (1974) and this thesis has frequently mentioned leadership is normatively viewed as a masculine quality, and female politicians are other public leaders are role incongruent in their chosen profession because of their gender and the expected feminine characteristics and behaviours. How an individual acts as a social subject does not fit into neat binary categories that the normative view of a patriarchal Western society suggests, women can be leaders, men can be carers, and people can identify outside of the gender binary while simultaneously possessing the character virtues of leadership and caring. While Bem (1974) is most known for her Sex-Role Inventory, she also published much scholarship on androgyny in psychology. Jacinda Ardern's leadership response through the initial COVID-19 lockdown was decisive (a masculine trait). She asserted her authority as the leader of Aotearoa New Zealand (again, masculine). Yet, simultaneously she was sympathetic, aware of the needs of her followers, and fostered an attitude of kindness within the uncertainty of the 'unprecedented times'. These are seen as feminine traits, Johnson and Williams (2020,

p.945) note in their article entitled *Gender and Political Leadership in a Time of COVID* the following:

> While male leaders have built on the role of male head of household and warrior defender in honing their gender performance, women leaders have been able to draw on traditional conceptions of women's roles. After all, it is traditionally mothers, not fathers, who look after sick members of the family. It is traditionally mothers who take charge of household hygiene and ensure that children and recalcitrant males wash their hands. It is also women who are traditionally caring and empathetic in times of trauma.

From the media coverage of Jacinda Ardern's pandemic leadership, the gendered mediation and an overemphasis on her perceived feminine character traits contributed to the result of high citizen compliance to stay in their homes during the lockdowns. This is how the success of Ardern's pandemic leadership was evaluated and measured as seen in the news media stories sample Wilson states for *The Conversation* (2020), which was republished by the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (2020), "success or failure hinges on getting most people to choose to follow your leadership — even though it demands sudden, unsettling, unprecedented changes to their daily lives. This is the harsh reality that political leaders around the world have faced in responding to COVID-19." Moreover, media outlets in the content and thematic analysis samples, such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* (2020), where Ardern's leadership success is linked to her expressed gendered behaviours:

> On the lockdown's first evening, after putting baby Neve to bed, Ardern posted a video "checking in" with her people. Hunkered down on her Auckland couch in a tracksuit and without make-up, she apologised for her casual garb, saying that putting toddlers to bed can get messy. She was encouraging and, in a classic example of Communications 101, delivered bad news with a carrot.

The news media typify Ardern's leadership as being both 'compassionate' (feminine) and 'competent' (masculine), as seen by the above quote from the news media detailing how Ardern's appearance as a political leader was, in fact, congruent to

that of a young mother and most likely matching the sartorial style of her constituents of track pants and no makeup to deal with the 'messy' task of a toddler's night-time routine. However, the quote also highlights Ardern as competent in her leadership, citing it as 'a classic example of Communications 101'. This contradicts the gendered assumption that women are less competent and less suited for leadership roles (Bem, 1974; Ross, 2002, 2017; Stevens, 2007). It also contradicts the historical hurdle that the political field constructs for hopeful female political leaders by using the feminine status of homemaker and nurturer to withhold promotions (Schlehofer et al., 2011; Johnson & Williams, 2020). This is alluded to in the news media sample across multiple case studies in comments about Ardern breaking the glass ceiling in juggling being the prime minister and a mother. One news story from *The New Yorker* (Hollander, 2018) claims, "One way in which Ardern is inarguably modelling a new type of gendered leadership is in her dual roles as a mother and a world leader." Academic scholarship from the leadership and political science and communications fields note that the discourses of COVID-19 leadership apparent in both the media and research literature suggests that female world leaders, such as Ardern, are hailed as a voice of reason, while macho strongmen like Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro found their countries dealing with high death rates due to their non-collaborative leadership styles and focus on saving the economy as opposed to the lives of the people who keep the engine of the economy running (Wilson & Neuman, 2020; Simpson et al., 2021).

*CNN* (2020) quotes Professor Michael Baker, a University of Otago public health academic and advisor to the Government's COVID-19 response, that the successful response to the pandemic was "the combination between good science and good leadership." While strongman leaders like Donald Trump actively contradicted the US Government's top health officials and experts, Jacinda Ardern used a collaborative approach, delivering her daily press briefing with the Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield, and other distinguished academics such as Professor Baker, and Dr Shaun Hendry. Collaboration is often perceived to be a feminine virtue. Ardern does not stand at the lectern as one woman demanding her citizens all be on house arrest; the language and rhetoric Ardern uses in her press briefings, political speeches, and media

interviews employ a compassionate persuasion, asking citizens to give up their freedom of movement for the collective good of Aotearoa New Zealand, and reinforced with rhetorical phrases such as “the team of five million”, and “be kind, stay home, save lives.” The phrase “the team of five million” creates a sense of the ‘imbued we’, all five million of New Zealand’s population are working together to stop the COVID-19 virus from spreading throughout the community. However, there were critiques of this rhetoric for the unintended consequences, including the othering of the one million citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand, living overseas, unable to return without securing a precarious place in a Managed Isolation and Quarantine facility (MIQ). While these MIQ facilities were in fact, four- and five-star hotels, which helped to tide the hotel industry while the borders were shut to tourists, there was a randomised lottery system that made returning home unattainable for many and led to years without people being able to see their loved ones in person. Keys (2020, p.145) states that the returnees became ‘symptomatic figures’ and became representative of antagonisms vis-à-vis the ideas of citizenship, national identity, public health and New Zealand’s border security during this time. An opposition party, ACT (Association of Consumers and Taxpayers), launched a petition entitled “The Team of Six Million” to end the ‘oppressive’ MIQ system restricting citizens’ rights to return home. There can be no such thing as perfect leadership, especially in times of unfolding crises. Van Wert et al. (2022, p. 641) adeptly summed up Ardern’s pandemic leadership by saying, “A leader who is a paragon of what the age needs, but also a leader out-of-step with the times the world lives in.”

## 5.5. Analysis of Political Reporting and Punditry in the Crisis Leadership Case Study

Women’s representation in news media has long been seen as synonymous with entertainment (Riedl et al., 2022). This is one of the reasons why women politicians get turned into ‘eye candy’ and sexualised. As previously mentioned, instead of being represented as individuals with their own agency, women become ‘Blair’s babes, Cameron’s cuties’ (Trimble, 2014). The habit of framing women as entertainment becomes increasingly problematic in times of crisis. In the case study of Jacinda Ardern’s leadership response to the Christchurch Mosque attacks, even the positive

media stories about Ardern's political leadership are an exercise in gendered exceptionalism and female spectacle. News media organisations in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and internationally draw focus to Ardern's wearing of the hijab. Her acts of comfort and caring become the focus of media interviews and are projected onto buildings as a message of hope. Instead of journalists and pundits focusing on the ugly subjects of Islamophobia and growing white supremacy extremism, the events of the Mosque attacks and the aftermath are framed through the gendered exceptionalism of Jacinda Ardern, a white woman, becoming a token of tolerance rather than reckoning with the tension that the media itself is a key part in constructing for these anti-Islamic and hateful narratives (Rahman, 2020).

In terms of political punditry and commentary about Ardern's leadership response to the Christchurch Mosque attacks, there was an argument as to whether Ardern donning a hijab to pay her respects to the mourning Muslim communities, particularly when visiting their places of worship was disrespectful to women in Iran who were campaigning to be allowed not to wear the veil, as mentioned in previous chapters. The sartorial semiotics of Ardern political leadership response are worthy of comment, former political journalist, John Armstrong, wrote in an opinion for *Noted* (2019):

> The ramifications of the killings are so many and so vast and cut so deep that they dwarf everything else – and, moreover, will continue to do so for quite some time. It is worth noting – and then repeating – that the slaughter at the city's two mosques is arguably the biggest crisis that has confronted a New Zealand prime minister in peacetime. There is little to be gained, however, by heaping more accolades on Jacinda Ardern for her consummate handling of the aftermath of the murder spree. It is instead worth stressing that the Prime Minister's Christchurch Call amounts to a stunning diplomatic triumph for the leader of a country with a population of barely five million people. Ardern accordingly deserves far more credit for harnessing the opportunity to stem cyber-linked terrorism than her countrymen and women have given her.

It can be suggested that the focus on Ardern wearing a hijab is more of a comfortable and digestible read for news media consumers than news media consumers and producers reckoning with their place in perpetuating Islamophobia and attempts to curb online hate and cyber-terrorism.

There is still evidence of gender novelty framing and gendered exceptionalism in the crisis case studies of Ardern's political leadership response to the terrorist attacks on the Al Noor and Linwood Mosques and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ardern's political leadership response in these two events is contrasted with the leadership responses from other *male* world leaders. These leaders include former US Presidents George W Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, along with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. These leaders' responses to gun violence were found to be lacking in not only a genuine sense of inclusivity and empathetic engagement but also swift policy actions, in banning semi-automatic weapons (see Rahman, 2022). Ardern's gender is still mentioned and centred in the framing of her skilful political leadership, making notes of her shedding tears, offering cuddles, and wearing a hijab as a sign of solidarity. Ardern's choice to wear a hijab in solidarity with those Muslim women who so openly wear their faith was reported by *The New Zealand Herald* (2019) as 'intuitive', a virtue that is in line with femininity and draws on the expression of *a woman's intuition* (Cameron, 2024). In line with philosopher Kate Manne's (2017) argument that misogyny is the policing vehicle of the patriarchy, it can be suggested that the softening in news treatment of these crises to focus on Ardern's feminine behaviours is a symptom of the euro-patriarchal societal structure of Aotearoa New Zealand. There is a gendered specificity in the praise that the news sources in the news stories reinforce the Cartesian binary thinking that women have more emotional intelligence than aggressive, agentic men. In the news media sample, *The Project* (*Mediaworks*, 2019) reported, "Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern made headlines across the globe for her response to the horrendous attacks and says now she thinks New Zealanders understand Muslims in a way they never did before." Ross (2017) has claimed that women have to prove themselves to be capable political leaders despite their gender, the news media reportage in the content and thematic samples infers that Ardern's crisis leadership in response to the Christchurch mosque attacks because of her gender. The

accompanying images of Ardern embracing mourning women in a hijab became so prominent in the media framing that Ardern's political opponents, such as ACT leader David Seymour, claimed her compassion and empathy in her leadership performance resulted in her inability to deliver on the policy change. It should be noted that Seymour was the only politician not to support the Ardern Government's policy to ban semi-automatic weapons used in the Christchurch mosque attacks.

It is important to note that the news stories analysed in this research are follow-up news stories after the initial breaking news bulletin. This decision was made because there would be more opportunity for discursive thematic analysis of the media representation of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership performance throughout the timeframe of the case study events. This is one of the reasons why the news value of follow-up (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017) is one of the most frequently occurring news values found in 80.80 per cent of the content analysis of the whole thesis sample. Regarding the news genres of comment/opinion, editorials, and analysis, the news value of follow-up is also relevant as the news story details opinions and analysis of events that have already received breaking news treatment. Chadwick (2017) noted that the political news cycle has morphed from what was seen as the 24-hour news cycle of cable television, to merely seconds. Previously, timing was key in news production, as well as the selection of which events became news. Chadwick's (2017) conception of the political information cycle includes hybridising social media and legacy media in news collection and dissemination. Political reporting, particularly on political scandals is mediated through Twitter (now X). News frames are produced in real-time as politicians, journalists and citizens interact with each other to disseminate and reinterpret political events that become news. In the whole content analysis sample, 23.20 per cent of news media stories used social media posts as news sources. These social media posts quoted include ones from non-elite actors, such as passionate political activists and partisans.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an important political communication case study to use when discussing and analysing the political information cycle and the importance of accurate information being disseminated from official social media accounts. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed to the everyday citizen who is not familiar with the political-

journalistic fields how it works, or in colloquial terms, 'how the sausage was made'. (see, *'Political muckraker' Tova O'Brien: 'Take a step back before you have a go',* 2020, 1 May). During the COVID-19 lockdowns, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern held daily press conferences in the Beehive Theatrette and was joined by Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield and other relevant ministers and public officials. These press conferences became essential daily viewing and a cultural media 'moment' in a way that television has not been since the end of the COVID-19 Alert Level system. The televised press conferences gained its own IMDB.com profile page and inspired various artworks; one model out of household rubbish is now in a collection at Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum in Wellington, New Zealand. The 1 pm Daily press conference became appointment viewing in the era of on-demand streaming and saw the New Zealand citizenry gain an interest in the political-journalistic sphere akin to Sean Spicer's daily press briefings with the White House press corps that became news stories and public spectacle, then New Zealanders' need for up-to-minute information about an unfolding pandemic crisis (see Julian, 2018). Pundits and political journalists, then took this newfound public interest in 'political-journalistic sausage making' to opine about the New Zealand Government's communication and information dissemination processes concerning the ideals of democracy. This is evident in the crises case studies of the Christchurch Mosque Attacks and the eruption of Whakaari when Ardern's press conferences were used as a news source and not a media product in their own right.

The March and April lockdown of 2020 was a topic that saw many different news stories in the opinion/comment news genre from media personalities, journalists, talkback radio listeners and politicians of past and present. In the content analysis sample, 26.93 per cent of news stories were coded as the 'opinion/comment news genre' coding category (7 out of 27 news media stories). *Newstalk ZB* breakfast show host, Mike Hosking has a segment during is weekday broadcast programme called *Mike's Minute* where he tells his radio audience his opinions on what he believes is the most critical issue of the day. According to radio surveys, *Newstalk ZB's Mike Hosking Breakfast* has been one of the most popular commercial radio station breakfast shows over the past 15 years (*NZME.co.nz,* 2023). On Friday 17 April 2020, when the lockdown was lifted from a strict level four to level three,

which Hosking summarised as "...you can get takeaways, you can build a building, and you can attend a funeral. Australia has been doing this for weeks now." The crux of Hosking's argument in the *Mike's Minute* segment is that the level four restrictions of the lockdown were an overreaction and would have dire economic consequences as many businesses were unable to operate under level four conditions. Hosking frequently states his vehement disagreement with Ardern's strategy:

> If you watched the Prime Minister's address yesterday, I reckon she made a few glaring errors. She suggested we are in the unique position to eliminate the virus. She is wrong. Elimination is a mirage. Unless you have a vaccine, you don't eliminate a virus. And what, given we don't have a vaccine, does elimination look like? Ask anyone and you will not get a straight answer. She defended the potential charge of overreaction: "We don't want to confuse reaction with overreaction." I say she said that because that's exactly what she did do - she overreacted. The 1000 hospital beds empty are proof of that, the ICU units that have barely been bothered are proof of that. The economic carnage is proof of that.

Harcup and O'Neill's (2017) news value of news organisational agenda is important to consider in the choice of topic for that particular day's Mike's Minute. On the website of *Newstalk ZB's* parent company, NZME (NZME.co.nz, 2024), the description of a target listener for the radio station is listed as follows.

Targeting listeners 40 - 59 years old, Newstalk ZB brings you the best news and talk back all day. Confident, informed and in control, the Newstalk ZB audience is the backbone of the New Zealand economy. Because of their role in business, they make big calls on a daily basis and keep our economy humming.

Thus, criticising the prime minister for the lockdown strategy's economic impact and the effect on listener's bank accounts is congruent with the news organisation's agenda. According to Hosking, Ardern and her cabinet's strategy to prioritise the health system and ensure it is not overwhelmed with COVID-19-infected patients was an

overreaction because the hospital wards and intensive care unit beds were not being used. Common wisdom and the message disseminated by the health authorities is that the strategy is effective because by having citizens stay in their homes, the virus could not spread and infect the people who would have been in those hospital beds. Furthermore, if those infected with COVID-19 needed ICU treatment and perhaps died, then productivity and therefore the economy would be affected.

The ramification on business was not the only societal issue caused by the 2020 lockdowns to receive the punditry treatment. *The Guardian,* a news media outlet that originated in England as a newspaper, now has a New Zealand webpage in its world news section online. *The Guardian* (2020) published an opinion news story by Dr Bryce Edwards, a political analyst in residence at Victoria University of Wellington, entitled "*New Zealand's COVID-19 strategy looks successful, but we must safeguard democracy".* Edwards quotes senior journalists in their dismay that the 1 pm daily press briefing was the only avenue the media had to ask questions and hold the government to account. The New Zealand Press Gallery were thus representing their news organisations' journalists in attempting to ask questions for their other stories. According to *Newshub* investigative journalist Michael Morrah and *Stuff* senior journalist Andrea Vance, the newsgathering process was hindered for many journalists, as the importance of timeliness in news reporting was overruled by the need to eliminate the COVID-19 crisis, as Edwards (2020) opined:

> That means the combination of civil society, media and the parliamentary system that normally keeps a check on government and authorities is now seriously weakened. This may be necessary given the dire threat posed by COVID-19, but it's also dangerous for democracy and decision-making while the crisis is unresolved. There were already serious democratic deficits in New Zealand – most notably, a concentration of political power, access for vested interests and a lack of public participation in politics. These have been accelerated.

Furthermore, Edwards (2020) notes that the state of the media itself was in trouble due to the COVID-19 crisis with layoffs and closures (namely Bauer Media, who had the monopoly on magazine publication in the country), alongside the growing trend of journalists changing their careers to join lobbying and public relations firms. This trend is also attributed to journalists' reliance on news subsidies such as press releases, white papers, and other assets produced by communications professionals on behalf of corporations and governments (Bunce, 2019). Thus, impacting the news media in the performance of its democratic function of holding power to account as a watchdog was already in jeopardy despite the newly enforced narrow timeframe of question time after Ardern, Bloomfield, and other relevant ministers finished their updates in the daily 1 pm Press Conferences.

The news genre of media meta-reporting was apparent in the COVID-19 initial lockdown case study, with media outlets in Aotearoa New Zealand, referring to praise of Ardern's crisis leadership from international media outlets. Notably the journalistic praise that is quoted is often grounded in gendered exceptionalism. For example, *TVNZ* (2020) reported that *The Atlantic's* Uri Friedman praised Ardern's leadership style as "being focused on empathy", "soothing", both terms that are related to feminine character virtues of care and motherhood (Bem, 1975; Ridgeway & Carrell, 2002). This can further extend the argument in line with de Beauvoir (1949) that understanding of gendered behaviour first exist in the family unit, and then extend onto the world outside the home. The coding category of gender yielded 15 coding references across 13.35 per cent of coding coverage in the media meta reporting news genre. The secondary gender codes that are present in the news genre are affect and gendered behaviour (9 coding references across 4.82 per cent of coding coverage), appearance and mode of dress (3 coding references across 2.23 per cent coding coverage). The sample of media meta-reporting as a news genre included the news media story from *RNZ* (2020) about the media rescue package that Government created as the COVID-19 crisis saw a downturn in revenue due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions restraining trade in the magazine industry and the industry of advertisers. The news media story also quoted

media commentator Gavin Ellis that the media industry was in "existential crisis" and that "it was not that commercial media is too big to fail – it was just too important." This quote infers the democratic importance of commercial media in offering a plurality of voices in holding the power elite to account, having a range of media organisations means that journalists are able to investigate institutions in society, like the government of the day, without worrying about losing funding. Media meta-reporting is also another way media organisations can hold each other accountable in a public manner, as the fourth estate (McNair, 2000).

The Government's Unite Against COVID-19 social media profiles were another key communication method used to disseminate official government information about the virus and the Government's plans to eliminate it in New Zealand's population. In the news media stories, these social media posts are often used as a news source and as accompanying pictures. In the news media story sample, Jason Walls, *Newstalk ZB* Chief Political Reporter, wrote an opinion/comment story for sister media outlet, *The New Zealand Herald* (Walls, 2020) about the ramifications of publishing incorrect information on these social media platforms. The Government's official COVID-19 social media channels had incorrectly posted that all residents in South and West Auckland needed to have a PCR test at a testing station, even if they were asymptomatic. Walls writes in the opinion story "That means that people with legitimate Covid symptoms faced a much, much longer wait as likely thousands of people scrambled to get a test." Walls also writes that Ardern's reaction to the incorrect information was that she was 'incredibly angry' and in his opinion, while that is valid and she 'gets off the hook when it comes to the blame for how the stuff up occurred,' she is to blame for there being no formal correction notice issued to notify newsrooms of the change. Having the incorrect information still publicly visible despite reporters seeking comment on the post and Health Minister Chris Hipkins not taking the opportunity during a radio interview to clarify and correct the information. Furthermore, Walls (2020) criticises Ardern for not addressing the incorrect information herself in her opening speech of the 1pm press conference on the Sunday, instead waiting to be

asked about the incorrect information. Walls finishes his commentary by saying that New Zealanders have the right to be as equally angry of the government as a whole for not fixing the issue faster.

Walls' opinion piece gives an insight into the political information ecosystem, and the previously mentioned symbiotic nature of the political and journalist fields to function in as a communicative encounter. This piece of commentary was one of the six news media stories out of 27 news media stories in the COVID-19 in 2020 content analysis case study sample as having a negative stance in the news coverage of Ardern's political leadership performance. Despite Ardern being able to communicate to a proportion of the public directly by disseminating information on social media without journalists as an intercessory, the news media still play an important role in disseminating information to those who do not engage with social media platforms due to a number of reasons such as age, not having internet access or phone data, and disability. The criticism that Ardern or one of her press secretaries should have followed up with the communications officials that her directive to fix the issue had been completed. For context, this opinion news story was published on Monday 31 August 2020, one day after Auckland moved to alert level 2 at 11:59pm (*Covid19.govt.nz,* 2022), this meant that legally when the incorrect information was posted Auckland residents were only allowed outside their properties if they were essential workers, in an emergency, or receiving medical treatment, such as a COVID-19 PCR test. This means that not only did it delay those people in the queue with genuine COVID-19 symptoms, but the queues also would have held up traffic in the streets of the surrounding areas to the testing centres, meaning it would have been difficult for emergency services to move through the traffic when needed which could as Walls (2020) suggests, result in dire consequences. This scenario reinforces that the communication/competency false binary is, in fact, a false binary and that the importance of communication in politics is undervalued by those who are not familiar with the political-journalistic field.

Another example of punditry highlighting the importance of clear and transparent communication in the political information cycle was written by senior journalist, Andrea Vance from *Stuff* (2020). While the time constraints of the press briefing and the

narrow representation of a few key figure heads and only the parliamentary press gallery in attendance contributed to, in Vance's (2020) opinion piece for *Stuff*, the ability to have control over "how the message is being imparted and manipulated to influence our behaviour." Vance highlights in her opinion news story that political leadership, Ardern's communication skills are a credit to the low COVID-19 statistics in the country at the time. Also, that "her [Ardern's] brand centres on positivity, kindness and empathy" opposed to focusing on "doom and gloom" which Vance opines are not effective tools for mass persuasion. It should be noted that Vance was one of the journalists that Dr Bryce Edwards cited in his opinion news story for *The Guardian* (2020) mentioned in the previous also highlights that Ardern's excellent communication skills gave her strong control and reassuring presence in the daily press conferences as 'low-level propaganda', and that they do not substitute for truth and accountability, as important questions from journalists go unanswered as there seems to be a 'gulf' between what is being shared at the press conferences and the experiences of frontline health care workers over personal protective equipment, contact tracing, and levels of testing. However, this 'gulf' is not highlighted in international media in the content and thematic analysis samples. Instead, the news stories were framed around Ardern's compassionate communication style grounded in gendered exceptionalism, and granting the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy essential worker status so the children of Aotearoa New Zealand can continue receiving their Easter chocolate treats and gold coins for their teeth.

The news media reportage of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership response to the Whakaari White Island was not framed through a lens of gendered exceptionalism in the manner that was seen in the other crisis case studies in this research. The outlier status of the political reporting of this attributed to multiple factors in relation in relation to Harcup and O'Neill's (2017) news values taxonomy. In terms of the news value of 'surprise', the stratovolcano erupted on 9 December 2020, nine-months after the 15 March 2020 Christchurch Mosque attacks, where Ardern's political leadership was framed through gender novelty, and gender exceptionalism. New Zealand media

outlets in the news media samples, focused on the unfolding events of the rescue operation, using Ardern as a news source for official information. It is also important to note, while the eruption of the stratovolcano did come without sufficient warning and safety measures in place, which resulted in WorkSafe charging 13 parties with breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (Robson, 2021, June 3). Five of the parties were eventually found guilty and liable to pay fines, while three of the parties also had to pay reparations (WorkSafe NZ v Whakaari Management Limited [2024] NZDC 4119 [1 March 2024). Aotearoa New Zealand had had multiple natural disaster crises in the past decade with the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, along with numerous aftershocks. Moreover, Aotearoa New Zealand most populated city, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland is built over the geologically young Auckland Volcanic Field with many of the oldest suburbs named after their volcano (Hayward & Jamieson, 2019). Ruapehu regularly emits smoke and so the chance of volcanic eruption is not something that New Zealanders would think impossible. Schools teach their students about volcano and other natural disaster (such as earthquakes) evacuation procedures.

Another news value in Harcup and O'Neill's (2017) taxonomy is 'News organisation's agenda', as natural disasters have occurred multiple times in recent history, newsrooms and journalists have set frames that they can draw back and rely on to inform the public of the on-going dangers of the active volcano. The victims of the Whakaari White Island eruption had multiple ethnicities and nationalities; there was no hate nor societal reasonings other than gross negligence for the victims to have been on Whakaari when it erupted. Regarding the 'audio-visual' news value, there were captivating images and videos of the eruption and the surrounding debris; these images were privileged over images of Ardern embracing first responders to the eruption in a similar fashion to what was seen in her leadership response to the Christchurch Mosque Attacks. Australian news media outlet, *news.com.au* (Bedo, 2019) published a news story the day following the eruption about Australians praising Jacinda Ardern's political leadership response to the Whakaari White Island eruption in contrast to Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison's political leadership response to bush fires

on the Australian East Coast. Ardern was praised for being 'compassionate' compared to Australia's "cold hearted government." The news angle of comparing Ardern to Australian prime ministers was commonly used in Australian media. In the world stage case study, there are more instances of Ardern being exceptionalised as 'the best leader in the world right now.' (*News.com.au,* 2019) in comparison to Australian prime ministers and other strongmen political leaders, which will be analysed further in the next chapter.

In summary, this section has examined the media reportage from three distinct crisis events, the Christchurch Mosque Attacks, the eruption of Whakaari White Island, and the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. While the media reporting in all three crisis events mentioned Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister, in the Whakaari case study, the reporting of Ardern as Prime Minister was functional in the way it involved her issues official comments and updates on the eruption, the rescue mission, and the victims in hospital. In the content analysis of the Whakaari Eruption case study Ardern was quoted as a news source in 100 per cent of the sample's 21 news media stories. It is from the reporting of this case study that one can see the possibility of news media normalisation of women political leaders occurring. Both in times of crisis and other political moments, it is possible for journalists to focus on the magnitude of the consequences of an event than the gendered behaviour of those performing their jobs. The findings of this news events' reporting and the case study at large, can be used to further develop an alternative reporting approach, that aligns with the social reality of women and non-binary people holding positions of power in the public sphere and no longer being relegated to the sphere of domesticity in the family home.

## 5.6. Conclusion

Grounded in the results of the content and thematic analyses of the case studies, this chapter has examined the focus on the gendered exceptionalism being

apparent in the Christchurch Mosque attacks, and the COVID-19 in 2020 case studies, specifically through the secondary gender codes of "appearance and mode of dress", "affect and gendered behaviour" and "parenting". Specifically in the reportage of news media stories drawing on Ardern's motherhood status in their situating of Ardern to the media consumer's mind as a shorthand as if to say, "remember her, she was the pregnant one we told you about." Particularly in the instances of when the news media stories were praising Ardern's leadership performance, like when *The Globe and Mail* (2019) wrote "…if there is one positive outcome amid all this hideousness, its Ardern's ascension to the global stage. We met her before – she gained international attention for taking a six-week maternity leave not long after she was sworn in as Prime Minister in 2017."

While these crisis events may be seen as unique, singular and unprecedent in their contexts, there are still lessons that can be applied to crisis leadership and the journalistic reporting of crises. Terrorist and violent attacks, natural disasters, and new pandemics occur throughout the world frequently, and regularly feature in the news reporting of television, print, online and media outlets. Ardern's crisis leadership was reported by media outlets like *The New Yorker, The Atlantic, and The Globe and Mail,* as groundbreaking and even otherworldly. Ardern's compassionate, wellbeing-centric leadership was imbued in her non-crisis political policy platform too, which aided her gaining a reputation of being a genuine and authentic leader (Ceccobelli and Di Gregorio, 2022). There is a need for the sensemaking of Jacinda Ardern's leadership to be gender conscious as one's expression of gender is integral to their expression of self and their relationships to others. However, it is imperative that gender not be the sole focus of female politician's performance. The almost Cartesian duality of competency contrasted to warmth and care (Brown et al., 2018), and the false dichotomy of style and substance imbues a benevolent misogynistic view that because Ardern's gender makes her 'the most effective leader in the world' in times of crisis, that therefore her political style is inappropriate for moments where politics operates in an 'everyday' fashion. This is best summed up in a Facebook post that ACT Party Leader David Seymour (2023) made when Ardern announced her resignation:

Jacinda Ardern is a well-meaning person, but her idealism collided hard with reality. We wish her and her family well for their future. Ardern's collision with reality has left this country with big problems: the economy, the lawlessness, the Treaty.

Ardern (2023) somewhat addressed these false dichotomies that saw competency and warmth, feminine and leader become at odds with one another in the general sensemaking of female political leadership in her valedictory speech:

> I cannot determine what will define my time in this place. But I do hope I have demonstrated something else entirely. That you can be anxious, sensitive, kind and wear your heart on your sleeve. You can be a mother, or not, an ex-Mormon, or not, a nerd, a crier, a hugger – you can be all of these things, and not only can you be here – you can lead.

It is important in the sensemaking of political leadership, that the humanity of the politician remains, while Ardern was an inspirational leader and adept at leading Aotearoa New Zealand through crises, it is important to resist the superheroine and saintly metaphors. Politicians of any gender are not otherworldly beings but human beings who wish to do their part in making this world a better place. This thesis will now move to analysing the Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage case study.

# 6. The Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage Case Study

In the age of globalisation, embarking diplomatic and trade missions, and meeting with other world leaders are regular occurrences in a prime minister's duties (unless there are travel restrictions due to a worldwide pandemic). This chapter will focus on the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern on the world stage. Firstly, this chapter will report the findings of the content analysis of the case study's news media story sample. Then, the chapter will report on the findings of the thematic analysis performed on the world stage case study. Following the tripartite structure, this chapter will then move to analyse how themes and issues of gender and gendered behaviour manifested in the case study's news media reporting. Thirdly, the chapter will explore the themes and issues surrounding the performance of political image and leadership in the crisis leadership case study, which is refracted through the patriarchal understanding of gender and gendered behaviour. Finally, the chapter will offer some concluding thoughts.

## 6.1 The Content Analysis of Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage

| **Themes** | **World Stage (26 News Stories)** | **Total (125 News Stories)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Political Process** | 26 (100.00%) | 110 (88.00%) |
| **Gender** | 17 (65.38%) | 72 (57.60%) |
| **Leadership** | 10 (38.46%) | 70 (56.00%) |
| **Other World Leaders** | 25 (96.15%) | 72 (57.60%) |
| **Policy Discussion** | 21 (80.77%) | 73 (58.40%) |
| **Social media** | 12 (46.15%) | 48 (38.40%) |

*Table 16:Themes in the content analysis of Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage*

The most common theme found in the content analysis sample of the world stage case study is political process (100 per cent, 26 news stories). This theme refers to the process of communicative acts performed by a politician as an agent of the political field. These acts include but are not limited to sending press releases and statements,

holding press conferences, being interviewed by the media and making public speeches in an attempt to come out as the winner in the political competition of dominating the media narrative.

"Other world leaders" refers to Ardern's contemporaries such as Donald Trump, Scott Morrison and Angela Merkel, who met with Ardern on her diplomatic and trade missions abroad and held joint press conferences with her. Due to the nature of this case study, it is no surprise that "other world leaders" were found in 96.15 per cent (25 news media stories).

The theme of political process is referred to by Brian McNair (2000) as 'process journalism'. This is often characterised as dichotomous to reporting on the policy implemented by governments, and there is a belief that the reporting on the political process and communicative acts is to the detriment of policy reporting and journalism's democratic function of holding governments and political leaders accountable (Paletz, 1998). Instead, they focus on the sleaze, scandal and competition in politics (McNair, 2000) that is mobilised through a politician's political speech acts. Policy discussion as a theme occurred across 80.77 per cent of the content analysis sample in the world stage case studies (21 news stories). It was the second most common theme in the content analysis sample of the five news events, found in 58.40 per cent of all news media stories. These results are similar to a four-week study completed by Brian McNair (2000) in his book *Journalism and Democracy: An evaluation of the political public sphere*, where over half of the political news stories related to policy matters.

| ***News Coverage*** | **World Stage (26 News Stories)** | **Total (125 News Stories)** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Positive*** | 20 (76.92%) | 83 (66.40%) |
| ***Negative*** | 3 (2.40%) | 13 (10.40%) |
| ***Neutral*** | 4 (3.2%) | 30 (24.00%) |

*Table 17: Content analysis of the news coverage stance of the Jacinda Ardern on the world stage case study.*

The positive news coverage stance has an overwhelming majority of 76.92 per cent of the case study's content analysis sample (20 news stories). Trimble (2017) and Ross (2017) note that internationally, female politicians and political candidates are framed as 'trailblazers' or a 'novelty' as the political field and parliamentary chambers are seen as a masculine dominated space, created by men, for men (Elgie, 2017).

Ardern's novelty comes from being only the second elected leader to give birth while in office, this sets her apart from past New Zealand Women Prime Ministers, Jenny Shipley and Helen Clark. Shipley's children were older when she entered Parliament and became Prime Minister, while Clark and her husband had no children of their own. This was a subject of media scrutiny and comparison during the 1999 New Zealand General Election (Trimble, 2014), Shipley was depicted as a housewife akin to Former United Kingdom Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's use of domestic life as political spin (Campbell, 2015), while Clark was ridiculed for transgressing role congruity by performing politics in a more traditional masculinised sense, in her embodiment, speech acts, and aggressive agentic debate manner (Trimble, 2014). The news coverage stance of Ardern's political performance and leadership can also be attributed to her highlighting the 'juggle' and 'multitasking' of women being mothers and in high-powered jobs (*News.com.au,* 2018). It is here, that Ardern is praised for her 'ordinariness', highlighting that she is like other first-time mothers who have careers that they value (Ceccobelli & Di Gregorio, 2022).

| News Values | World Stage (26 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|
| **Exclusive** | 8 (30.77%) | 39 (31.20%) |
| **Bad News** | 1 (3.85%) | 50 (40.00%) |
| **Conflict** | 12 (46.15%) | 34 (27.20%) |
| **Surprise** | 10 (38.46%) | 59 (47.20%) |
| **Audio-Visual** | 11 (42.31%) | 50 (40.00%) |
| **Shareability** | 6 (23.08%) | 37 (29.60%) |
| **Entertainment** | 6 (23.08%) | 31 (24.80%) |
| **Drama** | 3 (11.54%) | 35 (28.00%) |
| **Follow Up** | 13 (10.4%) | 101 (80.80%) |
| **The Power Elite** | 26 (100.00%) | 113 (90.40%) |
| **Relevancy** | 25 (92.59%) | 84 (67.20%) |
| **Magnitude** | 0 (0.00%) | 98 (78.40%) |
| **Celebrity** | 2 (7.69%) | 8 (6.40%) |
| **Good News** | 2 (7.69%) | 17 (13.60%) |
| **News Org. Agenda** | 7 (26.92%) | 17 (13.60%) |

*Table 18:News values in the Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage Case Study*

The most prominent news value found the content analysis of this case study was 'the power elite' which was found in 100 per cent (26 news stories) of the news media stories. This is logical as the case study dealt with Ardern and other elite political actors meeting together in their capacity as world leaders. The news values of relevancy, refers to the cultural proximity of a nation's culture in foreign news (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017), and the impact it could have on the media consumer's daily life and the society they live in.

The news value of 'exclusive' was found in 30.77 per cent of the case study's news media stories (8 news media stories), these news stories included exclusive interviews with Ardern from prestigious international media outlets like *BCC* and *CNN*.

| News Sources | World Stage (26 News Stories) | Total (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|
| **Named** | 26(100.00%) | 125(100.00%) |
| **Unnamed/ Unspecified** | 3(11.54%) | 18 (14.4%) |
| **Family** | 18(69.23%) | 26 (20.80%) |
| **Ardern** | 26(100.00%) | 117 (93.60%) |
| **Government MP** | 3(11.54%) | 18 (14.40%) |
| **Opposition MP** | 3(11.54%) | 10 (8.00%) |
| **International Politician** | 14(53.85%) | 28(22.40%) |
| **Public Servant** | 3(11.54%) | 33 (26.40%) |
| **Social Media Post** | 7(26.92%) | 29 (23.20%) |

*Table 19: Content analysis of News Sources in the Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage sample.*

International politicians were cited as news sources in 22.40 per cent of the full content analysis sample (28 news media stories). This sizable proportion indicates the globalised nature of the political field. World leaders like Jacinda Ardern do not make unilateral leadership and policy decisions without consultation or critique from their peers. This is especially noted in this case study, where international politicians were quoted discussing policy the affects their countries as well as Aotearoa New Zealand (54.85 per cent, 14 news media stories). Social media posts as a news source were found in 26.92 per cent of the news media stories of this case study (7 news stories), these included posts from Ardern and other foreign leaders about their meetings during diplomatic and trade missions.

## 6.2 Thematic Analysis of Jacinda Ardern on World Stage Case Study

*Table 20: Thematic Analysis of Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage*

| ***Themes in World Stage*** (27 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 96 | 10.00% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 15 | 0.73% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 16 | 1.46% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 32 | 6.08% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 1 | 0.08% |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 12 | 1.26% |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 8 | 0.97% |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 129 | 12.00% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 47 | 16.36% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 32 | 4.49% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 92 | 25.24% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 49 | 7.99% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 20 | 3.89% |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 3 | 0.20% |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 12 | 2.72% |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 8 | 0.40% |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 6 | 0.78% |

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

The world stage case study includes news media stories about Ardern meeting with foreign leaders, attending diplomatic summits and appearing in foreign media profile stories. The most dominant theme in the case study was political process which covered 25.24 per cent of the case study text across 92 coding references. The political communicative acts of the political process involved in the coding references to this theme include holding joint press conferences with fellow world leaders and giving speeches at important diplomatic events like the United Nations General Assembly (the UN) and the Pacific Islands Forum. When Ardern visited the UN, the contents of her speech and her focus on the March 15 Christchurch Mosque Attacks were the subject of the headline and lead for news stories such as *Newshub's* (Smalls, 2019) 'The world has changed': March 15 dominates Jacinda Ardern's United Nations address.

Policy and legal discussion is another central theme when analysing the narratives disseminated in news media stories. Policy and legal discussion covered 16.36 per cent of the case study text over 47 coding references. These references often noted the policy issues that were the focus of Ardern's meetings with foreign leaders to provide the context of whether the meeting could be friendly or contentious or policy issues that Ardern addressed in her speech. This includes Ardern's meetings with then Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison regarding Australia's policy to non-citizen criminals who had served a year-long prison sentence back to their country of birth. *New Zealand Herald* (2019) and *TVNZ 1 News* (2019) note in the thematic analysis sample that Ardern referred to this policy as 'corrosive' to New Zealand's relationship with Australia as many of the deportees had no current connection to New Zealand outside of having been born in the country. Other key policy issues discussed in this case study include New Zealand's policies concerning refugees in contrast to Australia's. Another example of this is Ardern's advocacy for Australia to extend

financial support to New Zealand citizens living in Australia during the COVID-19 lockdowns, who were usually ineligible for Australian government support.

Other world leaders as a theme are key to understanding the World Stage case study. The theme's coding covered 12 per cent of the case study text over 129 coding references. Other world leaders refer to foreign heads of state and governments with whom Ardern engages in diplomatic and other political communication activities. These other world leaders include Former Australian Prime Ministers Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison, Former United States President Donald Trump, Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama and French President Emmanuel Macron. The late Queen Elizabeth II was included in this thematic code despite being the Head of State of Aotearoa New Zealand due to the fact she resided in the United Kingdom and was also the Head of State for other Commonwealth nations like Canada, and Australia. The theme of other world leaders is important to the thesis as the theme shows the comparison of journalistic critique of the political performances between Ardern and these other world leaders, in particular, if these comparisons are gendered. Gender as an aggregated primary theme covered 10 per cent of the case study text across 96 coding references. An example of this includes the following quote from *Time Magazine* (Westcott, 2020):

> However, Ardern has infused New Zealand with a new kind of soft power. When she visited the UK to meet Queen Elizabeth II, who is still New Zealand's head of state, she wore a kahu huruhuru, a feathered cloak bestowed by Maoris (sic) on people of honor. Lots of world leaders try the trick of celebrating a nation’s first peoples by donning the local dress. But Ardern, visibly pregnant at the time, didn’t wear her gift with the awkwardness of Western leaders who show up at local photo shoots in guayaberas or floral headdresses. She rocked it. “Other countries want to be associated with what she represents,” says Hayward. “That’s what’s unusual. She’s not having to ask for the time. The doors are opened because it’s helpful for other leaders to be associated with her.”

This quote shows how the theme of gender manifests through the secondary codes of appearance and mode of dress (1.46 per cent coding coverage across 16

coding references) and pregnancy (6.08 per cent coding coverage across 32 coding references). Along with how gender and other world leaders as themes interrelate in the research, other world leaders now want to be associated with Ardern's feminine soft power to increase their own positive perception.

## 6.3. Analysis of Gender in the Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage Case Study

The gendered exceptionalism of Jacinda Ardern as Aotearoa New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister, is further apparent in the news reportage of the World Stage case study. Ardern, as a political figure, is compared to her older male counterparts, such as Donald Trump, Boris Johnson and Scott Morrison, in a manner that reflects benevolent misogyny. *Newstalk ZB's* Heather Du Plessis-Allan (2018, 23 September) captures the fascination with Ardern's gendered exceptionalism with the following quote "Ardern has captured the zeitgeist of our time. A young, progressive leader. With a baby. Down-to-earth enough to buy her maternity wear from Kmart. Cool enough to DJ in her free time." These seemingly positive critiques are laced with othering – reminding the media-consuming citizen that Ardern is not congruent to the widely accepted mental image of a political leader of a middle-to senior aged white, able-bodied white heterosexual man that is embodied by Trump, Johnson, and Morrison. Du Plessis-Allan's comments here capture the attainable nature of Ardern's habitus, suggesting that one could easily match the Prime Minister's maternity wear from the affordable department store, opposed to the expensive designer brand suits that a male political figure would adorn.

It is worth noting that the *Newstalk ZB* is very popular talkback radio station that leans toward a conservative ideology. Many critiques offered by the station's broadcasters follow and reinforce the patriarchal norms that are entrenched in the political and journalistic fields and public life at large. While in this extract, Du Plessis-Allan is praising Ardern for the unique and interesting components of her political

habitus, earlier in the commentary news media story, Du Plessis-Allan (2018, 23 September) noted that the previous month had been 'rough on the Prime Minister' and that 'a lot had gone wrong', noting that Ardern had cancelled her regular Tuesday morning media engagements and 'got herself confused over the meaning of the letters G D P." GDP stands for gross domestic product (Waring, 1999). This criticism of Ardern forgetting a basic economic acronym propagates the false binary belief that charismatic political performance and 'progressive political ideology' directly oppose being financially literate with a strong grasp of economic policy. This false dichotomy can also be seen in public protest, during the 2017 election, farmers 'rallied against Labour and the Greens in Jacinda Ardern's hometown Morrinsville' (Manhire, 2017, 19 September). One farmer held a sign that read 'she's a pretty communist', thus charging Ardern with the crimes of being visually attractive and subscribing to an ideology whose followers are often maligned for not understanding the economic imperatives that capitalism prescribes. This protest sign is also in line with Bill English's critique that Ardern was "all stardust" Pretty, and "no substance", a communist who does not know what GDP stands for (see Levine, 2018).

This false dichotomy of charisma and compassion versus competence also reflects the nature of 'hard policy' portfolios, such as economics and finance being assigned to male politicians over female politicians, who are more likely to be assigned 'soft policy' portfolios like children and women's issues (Ross, 2002; Stevens, 2007). Moreover, Waring (1999) notes that housewives and their domestic work are excluded in the gross domestic product figures, along with the 'progressive' work in conservation and other environmental issues.

This criticism of Ardern not having a handle on economic and other policies is one that is given to many progressive female politicians, such as Chlöe Swarbrick of the Aotearoa New Zealand Green Party, who, despite such criticisms, holds multiple qualifications, including a Bachelor of Laws. Furthermore, Du Plessis-Allan (2018, 23 September) ends her opinion piece by reminding the reader of 'problematic narratives' about Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership, inferring that the Deputy Prime Minister, Winston Peters, was the 'calling the shots', inferring that Ardern is not a

true leader and reliant on Peters who is more congruent to the role of a political leader than Ardern. Du Plessis-Allan also states that one of the problematic narratives is that the Prime Minister 'doesn't understand business basics', as a call back to the claims that Ardern got confused over the acronym GDP and calling Ardern's character into question, claiming that she is 'economical with the truth'. What is striking here, is the word choice that Du Plessis-Allan (2018) has employed, claiming that Ardern has been accused of being 'economical with the truth' (added emphasis). This phrase is an idiom that means 'avoiding stating the true facts about a situation, or lying about it" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). It is generally accepted that politicians often 'spin' stories to present themselves in the best light (McNair, 2000; Ross, 2017), Du Plessis-Allan (2018) is referring to this by using the economical, which has the root word 'economic' which she was criticising Ardern of not understanding earlier in the opinion piece.

The secondary gender theme of sexism and misogyny yielded 3.21 per cent of the coding coverage of the world stage case study thematic analysis sample across 20 coding references. These comments included The AM Show host, Duncan Garner (Mediaworks, 2019) quoting then-Opposition leader Simon Bridges, criticising Ardern for being a "Part-Time Prime Minister" for taking a diplomatic visit to one of New Zealand's dependant territories, Tokelau, during a sitting week of parliament. Garner then notes, 'Finance Minister, Grant Robertson jumped to her defence saying the comments were disrespectful and possibly sexist.' Garner further states that Robertson was 'very upset' about Bridges' comments and also asks the viewer a rhetorical question of 'Why would it be sexist?' before introducing Bridges as an interview guest referring to him as a 'full-time Opposition leader.' To answer Garner's question, this is why the remarks were sexist: The phrase 'part-time prime minister' is reminiscent of the title given to mothers who do not work outside the home, 'full-time mother'. Bridges further criticises Ardern, saying she is neglecting New Zealanders by travelling overseas. Bridges described on The AM Show as "Spending several days on a boat to 1,500 people." Suggesting that by engaging in foreign affairs and in diplomatic and trade missions, which is an important part of a Prime Minister's job description, Jacinda Ardern is failing the 'New Zealanders at home'. This is reminiscent of the sexist

belief that mothers with full-time employment somehow love their children less because they are not in the home taking care of them during those hours. As previously stated, Ridgeway and Correll's (2004) research found that mothers are perceived as less committed to their workplace and competent at their work.

Similarly, Newstalk ZB Breakfast show host Mike Hosking also referred to Ardern's 2020 diplomatic trip to Fiji as 'swanning through the Pacific' as he introduced Political Editor Barry Soper to give his on-air report from Fiji about the Ardern and Prime Minister Bainimarama meeting. The tone of voice Hosking delivered this quip in made it sound as if Ardern was on a small holiday before 'banging her head against the Scott Morrison wall about deportees.' Fiji is a popular holiday destination for New Zealanders. In 2022, after the international borders reopened after being closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 154,000 arrivals into Fiji were from Aotearoa New Zealand (Anthony, 2023). Barry Soper (2020) in his report for *Newstalk ZB* also noted in his report that Ardern was to participate in a traditional Kava ceremony that would make her mouth go numb and impede her ability to make speeches and share family pictures with the Fijian Prime Minister, almost likening the diplomatic trip to a school reunion, and inferring that serious work would not be done.

Other notable secondary gender themes in the world stage case study include parenting, which yielded 6.08 per cent coding coverage (32 coding references) and pregnancy, which yielded 1.26 per cent coding coverage (12 coding references). The secondary gender code of appearance and mode of dress (1.46 per cent coding coverage across 16 coding references) can also be thematically linked to the pregnancy as the news media outlets discussed Ardern's maternity wear. Notably, Ardern was pregnant on her foreign affairs trip through Europe, which saw her meeting with other world leaders, such as then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Queen Elizabeth II. *CNN* (Westcott, 2018) published a news story online with the headline, "Jacinda Ardern wears traditional Maori (sic) cloak to dinner with Queen Elizabeth." CNN's news story explains the origins and significance of the korowai or kahu huruhuru cloak and then briefly mentions in the last paragraph the prestigious honour that Ardern was one of only four leaders to receive a private audience with the Queen. Meanwhile, Time

Magazine (Luscombe, 2020), later recount Ardern wearing the kahu huruhuru while ‘visibly pregnant’ and ‘without awkwardness’ that other Western leaders possess when they wear indigenous dress for photo opportunities. This suggests that, like when Ardern wore the hijab while visiting mosques in the aftermath of the Christchurch terrorist attack, she was wearing the cloak as a symbolic representation of bridging a relationship between the Māori people and Head of State, Queen Elizabeth II. In the sample of news media stories, The Spinoff (Hill, 2018) report on the German Press’ fascination with Ardern’s ‘babybauch’ (German for ‘baby bump’) and her need to wear ‘hideous compression stockings’ on her 36,000-mile aeroplane journey whilst being seven months pregnant to meet with then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Guest writer for The Spinoff, Julie Hill (2018), notes that Ardern and Merkel discussed key issues regarding their two countries, such as trade and working holiday visas, geopolitical issues in Russia and Syria, and missile strikes. No one can accuse the Prime Minister of ‘swanning about’ on a tropical German holiday with those serious items of discussion on the agenda. Furthermore, it could be suggested that these media and political personalities do not value diplomatic efforts with the Pacific as much as in Europe.

A key event in the world stage case study that captured the media’s attention both in Aotearoa New Zealand, and internationally was Ardern’s partner, Clarke Gayford, bringing their infant daughter Neve onto the UN General Assembly floor. In the thematic analysis sample, The Telegraph (Pearlman, 2018) and Newsroom (Sachdeva, 2018) reported the significance of Neve being the first infant in the UN General Assembly. The news stories also use the themes of parenting to contrast Ardern’s nurturing and empathetic nature to contrast with Donald Trump’s “instincts towards protectionism” and penchant to “swear vengeance against his enemies.” Along with suggesting that Ardern most likely would not attempt to match the level of ‘machismo’ exhibited by Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron (Sachdeva, 2018), this again shows the contrasts drawn from other world leaders who happen to be male to highlight Ardern’s gendered exceptionalism. It is, however, unavoidable for journalists to touch on these gendered themes when they are so overt as to have Neve as the first infant on the

general assembly floor. News is about reporting on events that are 'new', current, and occurring for the first time (Fuller, 1996; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). Otherwise, it would be referred to as 'olds' or 'sames'. These gendered and exceptionalised news stories are a part of the news media normalisation process (Trimble, 2017). New events, such as a baby sitting in a UN general assembly while her mother gives a speech, must be covered and problematised to be normalised. *The Telegraph* (Pearlman, 2018, 25 September) quoted United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric that the organisation was "delighted" to have Neve in the General Assembly Hall and stated that only five per cent of the world leaders at the time were women, "so we need to make them feel as welcome here as possible."

Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage is a highly newsworthy event, as she meets other powerful world leaders who are more congruent to how one would envision a political leader. Ardern stands out amongst a crowd of leaders due to her age, her gender, and the physicality of being pregnant or holding an infant on her lap. This is succinctly noted in *Time Magazine's* (Luscombe, 2020) profile, "Her gender and youth (she's 39) were always going to make her stand out in a field dominated mainly by old grey men." Ardern, however, continued to capture the interest of journalists globally, not just because of her biographical data, but because of her performance of political leadership and image, which has been noted by journalists and academics alike, and seen a growing body of literature across a number of academic fields, including political science, communications, as well as management and leadership studies, that focused on Jacinda Ardern's leadership response as well as her image management and contrasted her performance to other leaders. Ardern's speeches at foreign affairs forums and profiles in international media, including the prestigious women's fashion magazine Vogue have given her a new level of international political celebrity that has not been achieved by previous Prime Ministers in Aotearoa New Zealand. While her gender did factor into the newsworthiness of the content and thematic analyses of news stories, her performance of political leadership, infused with feminine virtue, is what kept the international media interested and the profiles captured by Time and New Yorker magazines, along with commentary in New Zealand,

all capture the symbolic significance of Ardern's exceptionalised gendered political leadership. Sam Neill, a well-known New Zealand actor from movies such as Jurassic Park tells *Time Magazine* (Luscombe, 2020) in an interview, "Wherever I go… people say, 'You think we could have Jacinda this week? Could we just borrow her for a while?'" Meanwhile, the commentary at home is still infused sexist belittlement, suggesting that her shining political celebrity on the world stage interferes with her ability to effectively govern the minutia of daily political life, and run the ever-important economy to increase the country's GDP (Du Plessis-Allan, 2018). This chapter will now analyse the performance of political image and leadership in the Jacinda Ardern on the world stage case study.

## 6.4. Analysis of Political Image and Leadership in the Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage Case Study

Ardern on the World Stage as a case study has many notable examples of the media's gendered exceptionalism of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership and image. Time Magazine (2020) introduces Ardern in a profile piece, saying:

> "She became a Hail Mary candidate for Prime Minister, a millennial woman thrown into an election at the last minute to resurrect the fortunes of her slumping party in a Pacific Island nation of 4.8 million people… She officially became her country's leader around the same time she learned she was pregnant with her first child."

In the second paragraph Time Magazine (2020) highlights Ardern's differences from her peers around the world, "Her gender and youth (she's 39) were always going to make her stand out in a field dominated mainly by old gray men." These quotes explicitly reference her gender, age, and pregnancy at the beginning of her premiership, which makes Ardern different from the stereotypical world leader. Notably, this gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's political performance as prime minister almost denies her agency. Instead of her years of experience and educational background in

communications, her crisis leadership is attributed to her gender. The New Yorker (2019) explicitly claims that Ardern's success is "linked to the fact she is a woman."

Regarding political leadership comparisons, Ardern is frequently contrasted with then-US President Donald J. Trump, and their interactions on the World Stage are also reported in the content and thematic analysis samples of news media stories. The Guardian (Aigne Roy, 2017) published a news story with the headline Jacinda Ardern retorts to Donald Trump: 'No one marched when I was elected' New Zealand prime minister describes light-hearted retort to US president after he ribbed her for 'causing a lot of upset in her country'. The 'march' Ardern was referring to in the headline was 'The Women's March' in January 2017 in protest of Donald Trump's inauguration as US President after a campaign filled with unveiled misogyny and a leaked recording of Trump claiming he "grab them (women) by the pussy" which Trump defended as "locker room talk", "locker room talk" is a colloquialism that refers to how men communicate when there are no women around, and is simply 'banter' (Simeone & Jeglic, 2017). Ardern attended the Auckland version of the Women's March when she was only a Labour List MP. Trump's comment that Ardern 'caused a lot of upset' refers to the election result, where although Ardern's Labour Party did not get the highest percentage of votes, the party were successful in creating a coalition agreement with the New Zealand First and the Green political parties to form a government (Peters, 2018). Several comparisons are drawn between President Donald J. Trump's and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's political leadership found in the content and thematic analysis, including the content of their important speeches. When reporting on Jacinda Ardern's address to the United Nations in 2019, *Newshub* (Smalls, 2019) reported the following in an online news story:

> Fallout from the March 15 Christchurch terror attack has dominated Jacinda Ardern's United Nations General Assembly speech. Her speech was in contrast to US President Donald Trump, who used his speech to promote nationalism, telling delegates the "free world must embrace its national foundations".

This characterises the thematic contrasts made between Ardern and Trump's leadership by media and scholars alike. Trump led his nation with an individualistic

‘America first’ policy when he argued to defund the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic (Stuff, 2020). Conversely, Ardern’s world-stage leadership called for a collective, globalised approach arguing that countries no longer ‘ever truly operate in isolation. (Smalls, 2019), in 2020, Ardern countered Trump’s argument to defund WHO citing the need for information sharing and the need to rely on WHO for expert advice (Cooke, 2020). This contrast between Trump and Ardern, once again infers the societal binary thinking of ‘masculine/feminine’ qualities in leadership. Ardern’s leadership privileges collective care, while Trump’s pandemic leadership, punitive and individualistic approach, villainising China and the World Health Organisation for containing the highly transmissible virus in their national borders (see Stuff, 2020; Simpson et al., 2022; Van Wart et al., 2022; Voina & Stoica, 2023). Other world leaders, such as President Donald J. Trump, as a theme in the content analysis of this case study appeared in 96.15 per cent of news media stories.

The news media discourses that emerge from the content and thematic analysis sample is the delegitimisation of Ardern’s political leadership SBS (2018) in Australia reports that in an interview with 60 Minutes, Ardern was described by journalist Charles Wooley as ‘young and attractive’, and also asking the Prime Minister when her baby was conceived. This question is as inappropriate at the family dinner table as it is in a current affairs television interview. Despite the increasing trend of personalisation in politics as the delineation of party politics is blurred (Wahl-Jorgenson, 2004; Richards, 2004; Bennett, 2012; Craig, 2016), this does not invite the media to ask for explicit details of how the family was made. Furthermore, the delegitimisation of Ardern’s political leadership also came from her contemporaries like President Trump. Continuing from Trump’s ‘light-hearted’ comment that Ardern ‘caused a lot of upset in her country’ (The Guardian, 2017), Ardern was forced to clarify rumours that Donald Trump thought she was the wife of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on TVNZ Breakfast (2017) by host Jack Tame. Both of these delegitimisation attempts are rooted in the private sphere and family life being ‘the natural place’ for women to exist (Fraser, 1995). Suggesting that it would make more sense for Ardern, a woman in her late

thirties, to attend a meeting of international leaders as a political spouse rather than a politician.

Criticisms of Ardern's ability to commit to her role as Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand, are linked to her family life, as seen in the thematic analysis sample of the world stage case study's coding coverage of secondary gender themes of parenting and pregnancy. The secondary gender theme of parenting covered 6.08 per cent of the case study's coding across 32 references, while the secondary gender theme of pregnancy covered 1.26 per cent of the case study's coding across 12 references. The AM Show (2018, 4 September) ran a poll asking their audience the question, "Do you support Jacinda Ardern spending extra taxpayer money to attend the Pacific Islands Forum separately?" Framing the question with the expository narrative that 'Jacinda Ardern's baby Neve will cost the taxpayer about $100,000 this week.' Ardern had to travel separately from the rest of the New Zealand delegation to the Pacific Islands Forum due to Neve being too young to receive her travelling vaccinations. In the Motherhood case study, the discourse of Ardern being a role model for young women as she breaks the ceiling as a 'leading while pregnant' being a pregnant prime minister (The Spinoff, 2018; The Globe and Mail, 2019), the demands of a role that has traditionally been reserved for older men constrains a young mother without accommodations that have monetary consequences. This reflects Baxter's (2010) notion that discourses that may seem to endorse female leadership may also constrain or undermine female leadership. The news media's comparisons of Ardern and her older male world leader peers with exceptionalises and undermines Ardern's performance of political leadership through the reliance on the aforementioned false binaries of masculine and feminine personality and leadership qualities, which can suggest that compassion and charisma mean a leader is unable to achieve tangible policy outcomes. It can also suggest that a political leader promoting their country overseas with high profile media engagements which Heather du Plessis-Allan in *The New Zealand Herald* (2018) as 'The New York Times, CNN's Christiane Amanpour, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, The Today Show' in fact acts like wallpaper over the

structural cracks of the success of their political performance at home. Du Plessis-Allan (2018) writes in her commentary column:

> It's a packed schedule ahead of her. But, busy as it will be, baby and all, it's probably a welcome relief to get out of New Zealand. The last month has been rough on the Prime Minister. A lot has gone wrong. Meka Whaitiri, Clare Curran, business confidence, criticism of the PM's solo plane trip to Nauru, Winston Peters repeatedly pulling the rug from under Labour.

This extract suggests that Ardern is escaping political pressure domestically, with two of her female Labour Party cabinet ministers causing controversy with their conduct and the public discontent with the solo flight mentioned earlier in this paragraph, using the international media appearances to distract the New Zealand public. Mentioning the personnel issues with Ardern's cabinet ministers suggests that Ardern is not an adept organisational leader and calls into question Ardern's leadership skills as a country leader. Taking the smaller scale of organisational leadership requiring the same skills as political country leadership, as Baxter (2010) and other leadership scholars like Wilson (2020) claim, leadership is not a solo performance but a joint construction. The construction is made by the leader, their senior team that reports to them (such as a government cabinet) and the followers (citizens). The sensemaking of political leadership is mediated through the coverage of the politician's political performance in news media stories, including opinion and commentary from political 'experts' and 'insiders'. What is a common thematic thread through the commentary on Ardern's leadership is her subversiveness in not adopting a 'blokeishness' to her performance of politics and political leadership, which is seen in the political field by the leadership performances of historical world stage leaders, Margaret Thatcher and Hillary Rodham Clinton, and other communicative fields, such as journalism and advertising (Topić, 2022). Ardern's feminine leadership performance on the world stage can be likened to a type of 'femvertising' which centres on neoliberal projections of women as free individuals with agency to control their own destiny and fight for themselves, thus ignoring the structural barriers that women face (Topić, 2022). They are also breaking down the structural barriers with long hair and a baby feeding on

their breast, as depicted in through the world stage case study in the content and thematic analysis samples. While Ardern is typified as a role model for young women in a neo-liberal feminist fashion (see Jaggar, 1989), Ardern is seen as 'having it all' at the top of the political field and as a mother of a newborn. While there is no doubt, these successes are a result of Ardern's hard work, and drive, there are also structural privileges that have ironically aided Ardern in the smashing of the glass ceiling. Ardern can balance her commitments as a world leader and a mother and be celebrated for it in the news media and on the world stage because she is in a committed heterosexual relationship. Ardern's fiancé, Clarke Gayford, is also heavily featured in the thematic and content analysis samples for his role in parenting Neve, while Ardern performs her duties as a political leader, and shines on the world stage, particularly when he holds Neve on his lap in the UN General Assembly as Ardern gives her address (Newsroom, 2019). This suggests that if Ardern were a single mother or perhaps in a homosexual relationship, she would not have been celebrated for her liberal feminism feat of 'having it all.' Ardern's family achievements are still congruent with Western society's cis-heteronormative paradigm. Ardern is also contrasted with other female political world leaders who are childfree, such as Former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, Former UK Prime Minister Teresa May, and Former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, whom a political rival referred to as 'deliberately barren' (The Telegraph, 2018).

Ardern's world-stage acclaim does not, however, immediately elevate the status of all women as liberal feminist thought may espouse (Jaggar, 1989). In Australia, ABC (2020) published an online news story questioning whether Ardern would be a 'one-term prime minister'. The news story begins by noting that Ardern has received acclaim for being 'charismatic' and 'a leader for a modern age', and then questions Ardern's organisational leadership skills noting that Ardern has not reprimanded Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters for his party's, New Zealand First's, political donation scandal. The news story also notes:

> Polling shows a National-led coalition garnering more support than a second term for the Labour Government The progressive young mother, who is due to

> make a short visit to Australia on Friday, has been lauded for steering her nation compassionately through terrorism attacks and natural disasters.

The media discourse espoused by the *ABC* (Clarke, 2020) news story is again one with a binary attitude, implying that Ardern is 'stardust' and charismatic with her compassionate leadership through unprecedented, extraordinary times, meaning she is not adequate as a leader when it is business as usual, navigating the business and the day-to-day of government. Through binary thinking, this news media story is suggesting that Jacinda Ardern's exceptional feminised and compassionate leadership skills leave her lacking in the masculinised leadership traits of being, agentic and assertive and thus unable to reprimand her Government's junior coalition partner, whom ABC (Clarke, 2020) characterise as 'long-time political provocateur, leader of the nationalist minor party New Zealand First and, crucially, holder of the balance of power in NZ's Parliament." These comments again reinforce the idea that the legitimacy of Ardern's position of Prime Minister whilst being "new" and an "inexperienced leader" is questionable and hinges on Peters "catapulting" her to power (Clarke, 2020). This is in line with Heather du Plessis-Allan's opinion column in the thematic analysis sample mentioning the 'problematic narratives' that "Winston is calling the shots", framing Ardern as "Winnie's Wunderkind" akin to "Cameron's Cuties", "Blair's Babes", and "Nick's Nymphets" (see Trimble, 2017). The analysis of the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership suggests that the news media in Aotearoa New Zealand, and thus by extension the world media still legitimate the prime minister's position of power through a 'first past the post' mindset. Suggesting that politics is a two-horse race between a galloping stallion of the National Party and a trotting mare of the Labour Party, while Winston Peters, acts as the Minister of Racing who is corrupt and disqualified the stallion of the National Party. This chapter will now analyse the conventions of political journalism seen in the Jacinda Ardern on the world stage case study.

## 6.5. Analysis of Political Reporting and Punditry in the Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage Case Study

The previous two chapters have addressed political punditry in relation to Jacinda Ardern's motherhood, and during the crises of the Covid-19 pandemic, volcanic eruption and terror attack in Christchurch. Both sections have been largely focused on punditry at the local level. This chapter will now consider punditry and news reporting on Jacinda Ardern performing politics on the world stage. The events on the world stage of the global political field are complex and multifaceted. Politics on the world stage involves leaders coming together from different cultural contexts and from across the political spectrum, hoping to achieve outcomes that will be best for the citizenry of their respective countries. Events and stories are selected to be news for their newsworthiness (see Harcup & O'Neill, 2017) and then condensed into tight formats for broadcast bulletins, social media posts, print pages and the media consumer's ever-shortening attention span. This means that the news stories are framed to emphasise (or perhaps deemphasise) the important/most interesting issues, outcomes, or moments. The world stage case study news stories focus on granular issues in a rich tapestry of globalised politics and package them into content that will interest and can be easily understood by media consumers. This convention of political journalism was something Angela Merkel joked about in a joint press conference with Jacinda Ardern (*Mediaworks,* 2018, April 18, Television Broadcast) when a journalist asked Merkel if she found Ardern likeable, she replied "Mein Gott! Couldn't you tell that was a wonderful meeting? Time flew by! It was highly interesting, and it was fun! … you should be very proud of your prime minister; I can see this will be the headline in the New Zealand press." The television news segment eased into the diplomatic soundbites about Russia's role and influence in Syria's Bashar Al-Assad using chemical weapons on Syrian citizens, by first showing a snippet of the joint press conference when Ardern and Merkel gave an update on the wellbeing of a kiwi bird that Merkel had met on a previous trip to Aotearoa New Zealand. This is an example of the softening of hard news

on television (Jones, 2017) and that, as noted in the literature review, the dichotomy of hard/soft news is not a truth in journalism practice (Patterson, 2000), as news audiences shrink as the attention economy grows.

The news media stories in this case study also make reference to news media stories from other media outlets, particularly New Zealand media outlets reporting on what international journalists are writing about Ardern in their news media stories when she is visiting their country or meeting with their leader. This is what inspired the choice to have 'media meta reporting' as a news genre code in the thematic analysis in relation to McNair's (2000) discussion on 'meta-media'. A particular example in the thematic analysis sample is a news media story from The *Spinoff* by Guest Writer Julie Hill (2018, April 18), which was categorised as a 'press review'. The news story summarises Ardern's foreign trip through the description of Ardern's media engagements and news stories written about Ardern:

> The much cooler *Der Spiegel* opted for a more ironic headline (yes, Germans know how to be ironic, don't be racist): "Krass! Die Frau macht ihren Job! Schwanger!" (Whoa! The woman does her job! Pregnant!). It quoted Ardern saying she'd like to be remembered for being more than a pregnant leader, then, ironically, went on to discuss her pregnancy, detailing the length of her parental leave, and adding that her partner, who works with fish, is to stay at home with the child. (Hill*,* 2018).

When *Der Spiegel,* wrote "Krass! Die Frau macht ihren Job! Schwanger!" (Whoa! The woman does her job! Pregnant!) as the headline, this ironic framing gives the reader the sense that Ardern's working as prime minister while pregnant is profoundly ordinary. Pregnant people continue to perform their jobs while pregnant, often until the baby is born, depending on the maternity leave legislation and entitlements of the country/company. At the same time, it is exceptional as the pregnant person is the prime minister of Aotearoa, New Zealand, in a role that was traditionally held by cis-gendered Pākehā men (who do not get pregnant). The political process provides the news media with pseudo-events such as press conferences, ceremonial signings, and news interviews with leaders (McNair,2018), which commonly occur when political

leaders travel overseas for diplomatic and trade missions. There can be arguments made that political reportage on the process of politics is an empty spectacle and that the process of mediatisation has turned politics into a shallow, imaged-based rather than ideas-based phenomenon (Rai, 2015). However, there is also the valid argument that image is an expression of ideas, as politics is a communicative phenomenon, framing political information that is attention-grabbing and digestible content that can be grasped and understood by news media consumers who do not have a specialist understanding of, for example, international relations, geopolitical tensions in trade and security into by creating linguistic and visual "short-cuts". *The Spinoff* (2018) news story also recounts Ardern's appearance on *The Today Show* in the United States, where the presenter made a comparison for the US audience to understand after Ardern "vehemently rejected" that she is the "Donald Trump of New Zealand", that Ardern was more like Bernie Sanders (a progressive American Presidential hopeful for the Democratic Nomination in 2016, and 2020 and Vermont Senator), while Deputy Prime Minister, Winston Peter was compared to Ted Cruz (a conservative American Presidential hopeful for the Republican nomination in 2016, and a Texas Senator). This indicates to the American audience simply that Ardern is a champion of progressive politics, while Peters is a right-wing conservative, and that they have disagreements on policy positions by positioning them as being metaphorical "New Zealand versions" of the politicians that they are used to seeing in their mediated political field.

These comparisons between Donald Trump and Jacinda Ardern are another form of gendered exceptionalism that has been discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis. An example of this, in the world stage case study, is the news media story from the British media outlet, *The Independent* (Samputhkumar, 2018), which reported:

> Mr Trump had stressed the importance of national pride and critiqued globalism in his own address.
>
> Although Ms Ardern did not address him directly, her speech was interpreted as a firm rebuttal of Mr Trump's views...

> Ms Ardern said the UN could use its power to bring together the international community, before moving on to her own personal pledge to help further gender equality in New Zealand and across the world.
>
> "Me Too must become We Too," she said. "We are all in this together." Spontaneous applause greeted the end of the speech.

This news media story contrasts Ardern's and Trump's speeches into a binary of compassion versus aggression and the collective good versus individualistic pride. The news media story ends by noting that "The US president bragged about his accomplishments in office but was forced to pause after his claims were greeted with laughter from visiting dignitaries." Coincidentally, the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) conceptualised by Bem (1974) claims that the virtues of compassion, understanding, and sensitivity to the needs of others (virtues that the news framing of Ardern's UN speech in positive critique) are feminine. Meanwhile, the virtues of aggression, individualism, and independence are masculine virtues that framed a negative critique of Donald Trump's political performance in delivering his speech.

The comparison of framing of Ardern and Trump's UN General Assembly speeches also requires a discussion on the notion and the limitations of journalistic objectivity. The ethic of objectivity was developed with the mass media in the late nineteenth – and the beginning of the twentieth centuries (McNair, 2018). This is seen by journalism academics like McNair (2009) as "fundamentally unattainable" (as cited in McNair, 2018, p. 31) due to the process of news gathering, news selection, news framing, news sources, and other conventions of journalism. News media stories do not 'fall into journalists' laps.' Journalists have to decide what is worthy to be covered and what is more important and interesting to their media consumers/audiences/readers for what story goes on the front page of the newspaper or at the start of the news programme through conventions such as Harcup and O'Neill's (2017) revisited news values. The narrative drama of a possible interpersonal conflict between Ardern, as New Zealand's prime minister, and Donald Trump, as US

president, is more likely to be attention-grabbing than just noting that Donald Trump's speech at the UN critiqued globalism. Instead of just stating the topics of Ardern's speech, also noting that Neve Gayford was in the general assembly hall is congruent to the news value of 'surprise'. Neve was the first infant to appear publicly in the UN General Assembly hall. *The Telegraph* (Ainge Roy, 2018) reported this news media story as a positive step for working mothers to gain equality on the world stage of politics by quoting a spokesperson for the UN:

> Stephane Dujarric said the organisation was delighted to see Neve in the General Assembly hall. "Prime Minister Ardern is showing that no one is better qualified to represent her country than a working mother," he said. "Just five per cent of the world's leaders are women, so we need to make them as welcome here as possible."

Neve visiting the UN General Assembly can be seen as a pseudo-event. The reason politicians and political aides use pseudo-events is to create another layer of newsworthiness and the visual needs of broadcast television and online video news producers to have relevant and captivating images to tell the news story, which also includes important policy key messages and outlines. United States magazine, *Time* (Luscombe, 2020) described Neve's attendance at the UN General Assembly in a 2020 profile on Ardern as "...Neve, who both stoked the media interest in her speech and served as a nifty visual aid for her contention that as far as the climate was concerned, time was running out." This is a subtle acknowledgment of the political field's being dominant by a 'media logic' in the political process, which is referred to as 'mediatisation' (Strömback & Esser, 2014). The framing and the quote from UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric as Neve visiting the UN General Assembly is a progressive step forward in The *Telegraph* (Pearlman, 2018), which was not a universally held opinion and adopted news frame. This is seen in the content analysis of the Motherhood case study news story from *Newstalk ZB* (Basset, 2019). Leighton Smith interviews former Labour Cabinet minister Michael Bassett, which was then posted online with the headline "Baby Neve and Clarke overshadowing PM". Both Smith and Bassett claim that the celebrification of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership in

facts delegitimises her from being a ‘statesman’ on the world stage, and in Bassett’s view “does her no honour”, and the reporting is showing a lack of substance.’

This particular *Newstalk ZB* (Basset, 2019) news story was selected to be analysed in terms of the gender politics of Ardern as a Prime Minister and a mother due to Smith and Bassett’s reaction and language choices, such as “the baby is, literally, being paraded around as an accoutrement’ and ‘it (Neve, underlined for emphasis) has been taken to New York, yes, because there is breastfeeding going on.’ Bassett’s comments on the celebrification and mediatisation of the political field do have some academic merit to be mentioned in this world stage section. The gender novelty of Jacinda Ardern and baby Neve is of more important news value to international media than domestic New Zealand media. Firstly, because Ardern’s baby for New Zealanders is more ‘old’ than news, Ardern’s governing has more of an impact on their lives than the symbolic triumphs proclaimed in the international media. Secondly, the Speaker of the House disallowed the New Zealand media to photograph and publish images of Neve as an infant. This also shows that the evaluative frameworks of what is newsworthy does indeed vary depending on who is the target news audience.

The world stage case study’s news media reporting has soon shown how intercultural contexts, and interpersonal relationships can impact how news frames are prioritised. On the international political stage, alongside the gendered novelty for the international media in Neve attending the UN General Assembly and the gendered apathy towards ‘it’ and *Newstalk ZB’s* opinions to return to the political status quo. As mentioned previously in this thesis, as the political field was said to be built by men for men (Eglie, 2017), Ardern is framed as an outsider, an anomaly, and an upset to the political status quo. Ardern has also made headlines with her quick wit. *The Guardian* (Ainge Roy, 2017) published a news story with the headline:

Jacinda Ardern retorts to Donald Trump: 'No one marched when I was elected', New Zealand prime minister describes light-hearted retort to US president after he ribbed her for ‘causing a lot of upset in her country.’

Despite receiving glowing features in *The New Yorker* (Gessen, 2019) and *Time Magazine* (Luscombe, 2020), *Australian Broadcasting Corporation's* foreign affairs reporter, Melissa Clarke (2020), published a news story headlined "Jacinda Ardern's leadership under question in New Zealand despite being lauded abroad". This news story highlights the gaping chasm of the international celebration of symbolic politics and leadership with the domestic reporting of 'politics du jour'.

Polling shows a National-led coalition garnering more support than a second term for the Labour Government. The progressive young mother, who is due to make a short visit to Australia on Friday, has been lauded for steering her nation compassionately through terrorism (sic) attacks and natural disasters (Clarke, 2020).

Melissa Clarke's report details the coalition structure of the government and that Winston Peters', and the New Zealand First Party's support of Ardern is integral to the survival of the government till the next election, or else risk a snap election. The news story also invokes the news framing that Ardern was inexperienced as a political leader, which Michael Bassett also suggested in his aforementioned interview with *Newstalk ZB's* (Basset, 2019) Leighton Smith. The closing paragraph is perhaps intended as a stark reminder to those in the political field that the praise of the international stage does not always translate to votes from citizens at home, saying, "How she wields her leadership at home could determine whether she'll still have a role on the international stage after September 19." It should be noted, that COVID-19 forced the election to be delayed to Saturday, 17 October 2020, when the Labour Party were re-elected with a historic landslide victory, which many credited Ardern's COVID-19 leadership as a reason for success.

## 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter utilised the tripartite structure of gendered mediation to analyse the Jacinda Ardern on the world stage case study. This news media reportage in this case study highlighted and contrasted Ardern's political performance and appearance to other world leaders such as her contemporaries Donald Trump and Scott Morrison, often invoking her gender in her gendered and leadership performances when praising

her performance. The news media reportage in the case study of Jacinda Ardern on the world stage thus further highlights her role in-congruity (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This thesis will now move onto a considered look of how news genre impacts the themes in the narratives of the news media stories across the five news events.

# 7. News Genre in the Content and Thematic Analyses Results

The chapter will outline the key findings regarding how news genre impacts the gendered reporting on Jacinda Ardern as New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister in her first term. A content analysis was performed with the mutually exclusive coding categories of hard news, soft news, comment/opinion, and editorial news genres. In the subsequent thematic analysis, the thematic primary, secondary, and tertiary codes used to analyse the case study events were replicated on the sample news stories classified by news genres. The news genres that were used as coding categories for the content analysis were used again, along with the qualitative genre of media self-reporting. Media self-reporting refers to news media stories that report on what other news media outlets report about a political leader's performance. For example, *The Spinoff* (Hill, 2018) published a news story about the German press reporting of Jacinda Ardern visiting then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel. This type of reporting allows news media organisations to critique politicians from another news media organisation's perspective and demonstrate the leader's soft power. From a political economy perspective, there is an emphasis on the 'clickbait' narratives that are produced from Ardern's gendered political leadership. Harcup and O'Neill's (2017) news value of 'shareability' is also a factor that will be explored in the third chapter of this section. This section will now evaluate the themes found in the five case study events from Jacinda Ardern's first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister.

## 7.1 News Genre in the Content Analysis

*Table 21: News Genre in the Content Analysis*

| **News Genre** | **Motherhood** (24 News Stories) | **Mosque Attacks** (27 News Stories) | **Whakaari Eruption** (21 News Stories) | **COVID19 2020** (27 News Stories) | **World Stage** (26 News Stories) | **Total** (125 News Stories) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Hard News** | 4 (16.67%) | 15 (55.56%) | 19 (90.48%) | 16 (61.54%) | 17 (65.38%) | **71 (56.80%)** |
| **Soft News** | 11 (45.84%) | 2 (7.41%) | 2 (9.53%) | 2 (7.70%) | 5 (4.00%) | **22 (17.60%)** |
| **Comment/Opinion** | 2 (8.33%) | 4 (14.82%) | 0 (0.00%) | 7 (26.93%) | 0 (0.00%) | **13 (10.40%)** |
| **Editorial** | 7 (29.17%) | 6 (22.23%) | 0 (0.00%) | 1 (3.85%) | 5 (4.00%) | **19 (15.20%)** |

‘Hard news’ is typified by scholars as news stories on important issues relating to the public interest, that serves as a platform for dialogue between societal representatives, to inform citizens of the policy debates of the day, and to persuade the news consumer to adopt and conform to the democratic norms (Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015). ‘Soft news’, however, is typified by some scholars and politicians as the ‘dumbing-down’ of political journalism (Ross, 2002, p.70). These two news genres are often viewed as dichotomous, with ‘hard news’ being ‘politically relevant’ and ‘soft news’ being ‘politically irrelevant media’ (Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015, p. 703). However, this can be seen as a ‘masculinised’ logic, while it may not seem relevant to men, it could be of great significance to women and other gender minorities. In the content analysis sample, the coding of news genre was treated as mutually exclusive. The news genre that yielded the highest percentage of news media stories was ‘hard news’ (56.80 per cent, 71 news media stories). ‘Soft news’ as a news genre yielded 17.60 per cent of the content analysis sample (22 news media stories). If this thesis exclusively focused on the 'hard news' news stories, it would reinforce the artificial hierarchy of political information media created by some scholars (Boukes &

Boomgaarden, 2015). Brian McNair (2000) states that ‘soft news’ that reports on the events in the political field, as opposed to policy, (often referred to as process journalism), can democratise the understanding of the political sphere. Schonbach and De Waal (2011, as cited in Boukes & Boomgaarden, p. 703) also note that those consuming soft news media are generally lower educated and less interested in politics than those who regularly consume hard news media content.

It is also important to note that in the dichotomy of 'hard news' and 'soft news', it is believed that men are equated with 'hard news', and women are equated with 'soft news' (North, 2016). This is reflective of the news media’s privileging of dominant socioeconomic paradigm of a capitalist patriarchy (Ross, 2002). News that is reflective of 'a woman's place' or women’s lives are often relegated to ‘soft news’ treatment that is covered by female journalists (Lobo et al., 2017; North, 2016), this included even ‘politically relevant’ news stories about childcare and healthcare policies. The false binary is comparable to the delineation of hard/soft portfolios in parliament; historically, women have been given portfolios concerning childcare, healthcare and education (Stevens, 2007). The delineation is seen in the content analysis sample of the ‘motherhood’ case study, as 'soft news' comprised 45.84 per cent of news media stories. These ‘soft news’ news stories focused on the feminised aspects of pregnancy and childbirth that Jacinda Ardern was experiencing as a woman through the construction of a ‘human interest’ story, and not as a female political leader and the democratic and symbolic consequences of being the first elected world leader to take maternity leave after giving birth (Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015; Lobo et al., 2017; Galy-Badenas & Sommier, 2021). *News.com.au,* housing the news stories in their website's parenting and lifestyle section, opposed to world politics is a clear example of this.

The other two news genres that were coding categories in the content analysis were ‘comment/opinion’ (10.40 per cent, 13 news media stories) and ‘editorial’ (15.20 per cent, 19 news media stories. These two news genres are another side of the

mediated political public sphere. They can be guided the economic needs to deliver exclusive and unique content for news consumers to pay for their newspapers and digital subscriptions. The authority of the author of editorials and comment/opinion news stories does not lie in a perceived 'objectivity', but in the author's insider knowledge and subject expertise of the political field (Thomas, 2019). In the New Zealand media 'comment/opinion' are commonly authored by political journalists like Jason Walls (*The New Zealand Herald,* 2020), Broadcasters on talkback radio like Leighton Smith (*Newstalk ZB,* 2018) and Mike Hosking (*Newstalk ZB,* 2020), academics like Dr Suze Wilson and political public relations professionals like Matthew Hooton and Ben Thomas. Opinion and commentary are important to consider in studies of gendered mediation due to the genre's discursive properties and ability to pass judgment and critique the power elite. Editorial news stories are opinion-driven content published to advocate for causes on behalf of the owners and editors of the news media organisation (Firmstone, 2019).

In the Whakaari White Island eruption case study, there were no opinion/comment or editorial news stories in the content analysis sample. The majority of the news stories were classified as 'hard news' stories (90.48 per cent, 19 news media stories), with on-going breaking developments about the rescue mission and death toll. Only two news media stories (9.53 per cent of the case study sample) were coded as 'soft news', these stories were human-interest focused about the recovering burn victims being discharged from hospital (*TVNZ 1 News,* 2020) and a news story about Australian's online reaction to Jacinda Ardern's compassionate leadership style in meeting with the first responders on social media 'How good is Jacinda Ardern: people applaud NZ PM' (*News.com.au,* 2019). One could relate this to the results found in the previous two chapters regarding the lack of gendered coverage of Ardern's political performance compared to the other four case study events and the smaller percentage of positive news coverage stance in the Whakaari eruption case study. This case study appears to adhere to the perceived journalistic objectivity norms

(Firmstone, 2019; Fuller, 1996), which will be explicated further in a later part of this thesis that will analyse the political reporting and punditry in the case studies.

This chapter will now move on to discussing the results of the thematic analysis of the hard news genre.

## 7.2 Thematic Analysis of the Hard News Genre

| ***Themes in Hard News Genre*** (75 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 178 | 8.73% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 40 | 0.78% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 26 | 0.51% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 72 | 4.91% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 6 | 0.22% |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 9 | 0.32% |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 31 | 2.21% |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 134 | 3.22% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 133 | 12.29% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 81 | 5.96% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 166 | 14.44% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 71 | 4.65% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 27 | 2.05% |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 1 | 0.03% |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 20 | 1.65% |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 11 | 0.19% |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 12 | 0.73% |

*Table 22: Thematic Analysis of the Hard News Genre*

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

The 'hard news' genre in the thematic analysis sample includes 75 written news media stories. The political process is the most dominant theme in the 'hard news' genre. Its coding covered 14.44 per cent of the hard news across 166 coding references. These coding references include noting Ardern's engagements with other media, holding press conferences, and divulging her decision to demote Dr David Clark in the Cabinet rankings and strip him of his associate finance minister role (Manhire, 2020; *CNN,* 2020; Fedshun, 2020). The political process theme explains the political field's events, highlighting the scandal and crisis management performed by political parties and other political actors (McNair, 2000). In the 'hard news' genre, the political process as a theme democratises political reporting to ensure that media-consuming citizens understand political events and their consequences. Park (2019) notes that there is more than one type of political knowledge. There is general knowledge about specific political systems and how events shape these systems, which Park (2019) refers to as political process knowledge. Another type of political knowledge is domain-specific knowledge, which relates to current policy issues debated by politicians in the House and the mediated public sphere. Park (2019) refers to this as political issues knowledge.

While some scholars and media consumers may believe that a false binary that focuses on political process reporting is detrimental to the reporting of policy and legal discussions in reporting that adversely affects political issues knowledge, from the process of conducting the thematic analysis, it became apparent that the themes of political process and policy and legal discussions work together to provide media consumers with a multifaceted understanding of the Aotearoa New Zealand political field. This will be discussed further later in the thesis. Policy and legal discussion as a primary theme covered 12.29 per cent of the 'hard news' genre across 133 coding references. Examples of policy and legal discussion in the 'hard news' genre include quotes from Ministers about media funding packages to save the industry during the initial COVID-19 lockdown (McCullough, 2020) and lifting the terror threat level in Aotearoa New Zealand from 'low' to 'high' (Smalls, 2019). The political process

reporting helps to provide context for policy announcements in a fashion that can be understood by those who may not have the education level to understand complex policy documents (McNair, 2000). This is particularly important in the context of the 'hard news' news genre, where news stories report key facts on important political events.

The primary thematic code of gender covered 8.73 per cent of the hard news genre's written text. The most prominent secondary thematic codes of gender were parenting (4.91 per cent coding coverage across 72 coding references), sexism and misogyny (2.21 per cent coding coverage across 31 coding references) and affect and gendered behaviour (0.48 per cent coding coverage across 40 coding references). Examples of the secondary thematic code of affect and gendered behaviour include reporting Ardern's speeches and behaviour during her leadership response to the Christchurch mosque attacks.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has comforted Muslim community members during a visit to a refugee centre in Christchurch following Friday's mosque attacks. A tearful Ardern said she brought messages of love, support and grief on behalf of all New Zealanders to the crowd gathered at Canterbury Refugee Resettlement and Resources Centre. "New Zealand is united in grief," she said. – (*The New Zealand Herald,* 2019).

The above quote illustrates the reference to Ardern's gendered behaviour; however, it does not overtly praise the exceptionalism of her behaviour. In the 'hard news' genre references to Ardern's gendered behaviour are mainly in the context of reporting the events of the news story.

The secondary gender thematic code of 'sexism and misogyny' in the 'hard news' genre connotes references to sexist or misogynist comments that others have made towards Ardern in the context of maternity leave (Mediawork, 2017) and when an opposition MP called her a 'stupid little girl' during a parliamentary debate (Malik, 2019). The secondary theme also connotes patriarchal structures that can inhibit a women's success in the public sphere, such as Aotearoa New Zealand's gender pay gap and that Aotearoa New Zealand had *only* two previous female prime ministers,

despite New Zealand, Finland, and the United Kingdom (if one includes the brief tenure of Elizabeth Truss) having the greatest number of female prime ministers in the world (*CNN,* 2018).

The primary code of 'social media' yielded 71 coding references in the 'hard news' genre (4.65 per cent coding coverage). Social media's most dominant secondary code is 'references to social media companies. This secondary code includes comments on the ubiquity of social media and yielded 2.05 per cent of the coding coverage across 27 coding references concerning the Christchurch Call initiative, which was spearheaded by Jacinda Ardern and French President Emmanuel Macron. 'Criticism of social media' was the second-most dominant secondary social media code with 1.65 per cent coding coverage across 20 coding references. In the 'hard news' genre, these criticisms include quotes such as:

> "We're evaluating how we can best support this effort and who among top Facebook executives will attend," the spokesman said in a statement sent by e-mail. Facebook Inc, the world's largest social network with 2.7 billion users, has faced criticism since the Christchurch attack that it failed to tackle extremism. One of the main groups representing Muslims in France has said it was suing Facebook and YouTube, a unit of Alphabet's Google, accusing them of inciting violence by allowing the streaming of the Christchurch massacre on their platforms. – *The Globe and Mail,* (Toller, 2020).

As noted in the previous results chapter and illustrated in the above quote, social media can also be a way for journalists to acquire 'news sources' for credible quotes. This can be done via quoting social media executives, which yielded 0.19 per cent coding coverage across 11 coding references. Social media posts are another example of social media being used as a news source. 'Social media posts' as a secondary thematic code yielded 0.73 per cent coding coverage across 12 codes. Including the following quote from *The Telegraph* (Graham, 2018), "Mr Gayford sent an image of his daughter's United Nations security pass, which playfully listed her title as "First Baby". "Because everyone on Twitter's been asking to see Neve's UN ID, staff here whipped one up," he wrote."

This chapter will now discuss the results of the thematic analysis of the soft news genre.

## 7.3 Thematic analysis of the Soft News Genre

| ***Themes in Soft News*** (27 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 82 | 30.55% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 13 | 2.40% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 3 | 0.34% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 39 | 19.00% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 0 | 0 |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 16 | 5.64% |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 11 | 4.09% |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 20 | 5.67% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 5 | 3.61% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 14 | 4.60% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 24 | 12.00% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 22 | 5.80% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 1 | 0.16% |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 7 | 2.36% |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 1 | 0.63% |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 13 | 2.65% |

*Table 23:Thematic Analysis of the Soft News Genre*

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

Scholars Ross (2002; 2010; 2017) and Stevens (2007) argue that news stories are categorised as 'soft news' primarily concern issues involving women. The thematic analysis of the 'soft news' genre shows that women's related issues made up a large portion of news media reportage in the case studies, as 'gender' as a primary code yielded 30.55 per cent coding coverage across 82 coding references in 15 news media stories. The most dominant secondary gender thematic code is 'parenting', yielding 19 per cent of the coding coverage over 39 coding references. Australian online news website *News.com.au* (2018) quoted Ardern noting the balance between parenting and her role as Aotearoa New Zealand Prime Minister, which reflects the liberal feminist ideal of women 'having-it-all' as both mothers and career women:

> "In terms of being a woman in politics, there are plenty of women who have carved the path and incrementally led the way to make it possible for people look upon my time in leadership and think yes, I can do the job and be a mother," she said. "I'm not the first woman to multitask," she said. "I'm not the first woman to work and have a baby. I know these are special circumstances, but I know there are many women who have done this well before I have." She assured New Zealanders the "happy surprise" won't be her only achievement this year. "This will not be the only milestone of this year, or by any means, the only milestone of this government. I want us to be known for what we've achieved for New Zealanders, this will just be another addition to the history of this government."

Quotes such as this one above highlight and emphasises the expectation that women will multitask in their duties of family and work. The recurring theme in the 'soft news' news stories, which suggests that male politicians do not have to 'multitask'

between running a country and being a father to the same extent as female politicians do. ‘Pregnancy’ as a secondary gender thematic code yielded 5.64 per cent coding coverage across 16 coding references. The *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (2018) also framed Ardern’s pregnancy, quoting Ardern herself saying she will “be PM and a mum, " and noting that Ardern only discovered her pregnancy ‘days’ before she became prime minister. This almost reads as an ‘excuse’ for Ardern being pregnant so early in her tenure, it could be assumed that the secondary code, sexism and misogyny’s coding coverage of 4.09 per cent (11 coding references) would have been higher if Ardern’s pregnancy was not referred to as a ‘happy surprise’ (*News.com.au,* 2018) or if her daughter was conceived outside of a heterosexual relationship through invitro-fertilisation. Other coding references to ‘sexism and misogyny’ relate to Donald Trump’s interactions with Ardern, where he noted, “This lady caused a lot of upset in her country.” (*The Guardian,* 2017).

The second-most occurring primary thematic code in the ‘soft news’ genre was ‘political process’, yielding 12 per cent coding coverage across 24 coding references. This result reflects the episodic nature of news media reportage and the preference for the human-interest angle for news stories in the ‘soft news’ genre (Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2015). This is seen in the thematic analysis of soft news stories about social media users' reactions to Ardern’s ‘classy response’ to crises (Bedo, 2019). The ‘soft news’ story notes serious events, such as the eruption of Whakaari White Island and forest fires on Australia's East Coast, but through the framing of citizens' social media comments.

One commented how Ms Ardern was "the best leader in the world right now", while others suggested Mr Morrison should not be visiting NZ and instead focus on his own country "burning" right now. "Hey Morrison. It's important to offer our support to New Zealand. But what about addressing the current crisis in Australia. Our East Coast is on fire and all you can do is offer thoughts and prayers. Address climate change now." – *News.com.au,* (Bedo, 2019)

Social media as a primary theme yielded 5.08 per cent of coding coverage for the 'soft news' genre across 22 coding references. The secondary thematic codes that were noteworthy in the 'soft news' genre include 'social media comments' yielding 2.36 per cent coding coverage across seven coding references. These coding references include quotes like the one above noting what users are saying on social media about Ardern's leadership response. The secondary social media thematic code 'social media post' yielded 2.65 per cent coding coverage across 13 coding references. These coding references relate to social media posts embedded in the soft news stories regarding Ardern's pregnancy announcement and the announcement of Neve's birth. Ardern notably bypassed the traditional news media in announcing the milestone on her own social media profiles like *Instagram*.

This chapter will now move on to interrogating the results of the thematic analysis of the editorial news genre.

## 7.4. Thematic Analysis of the Editorial Genre

| ***Themes in Editorials*** (5 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 54 | 20.20% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 14 | 3.60% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 5 | 0.88% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 21 | 12.91% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 0 | 0 |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 7 | 2.07% |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 7 | 3.09% |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 34 | 4.23% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 16 | 16.37% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 8 | 2.49% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 33 | 22.00% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 7 | 1.39% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 2 | 1.05% |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 1 | 0.03% |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 4 | 0.31% |

*Table 24:Thematic Analysis of the Editorial Genre*

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

In the thematic analysis sample, five news media stories were coded as 'editorial'. The media outlets that these news stories were published on are *Newsroom* (Aotearoa New Zealand), *The Spinoff* (Aotearoa New Zealand) and *The Globe and Mail* (Canada). The coding references were found in the case study events of Motherhood, the Christchurch mosque attacks, and Ardern on the world stage. The primary code of gender yielded 20.20 per cent coding coverage across 54 coding references. The most prominent secondary gender thematic code is 'parenting'. This secondary code yielded 12.91 per cent of the coding coverage across 21 coding references.

It should be noted that 'parenting' as a secondary code is not limited to the Motherhood case study exclusively. In the World Stage case study, a *Newsroom* (Sachdeva, 2018) editorial notes that half of Ardern's interview with leading *CNN* journalist Christiane Amanpour focuses on Ardern as a mother. Ardern's status as a mother and the fact she took six-weeks maternity leave, are alluded to in the editorials to cement her status as a newsworthy and celebrity political leader. This suggests that politicians as mothers have yet to receive news media normalisation (see Trimble, 2017). The editorial from *The Globe and Mail* (Toller, 2019) shows this through the following quote:

> I'm Carol Toller, deputy head of editing at The Globe and Mail, and I've been haunted by what happened in New Zealand last week and how we've responded to it. Nothing can change what happened during those terrifying moments in Christchurch, but if there's one positive outcome amid all that hideousness, it's Ardern's ascension to the global stage. We'd met her before – she'd gained international attention for taking a six-week maternity leave not long after she was sworn in as Prime Minister in 2017.

Fifty-one worshippers lost their lives in the terrorist attack on the Christchurch Mosques, while this was the largest mass shooting in Aotearoa New Zealand's history and resulted in a historic lift in the country's terrorism alert levels – aligning with Harcup and O'Neill's news values of bad news, magnitude, surprise, drama, and conflict, in

Canada, *The Globe and Mail* (2018) chose to highlight in an editorial that a world leader became even famous and revered on the world stage because her leadership response was congruent to a feminised ideal and she happens to be a mother (see Wilson, 2020; 2021). Perhaps this could be attributed to Canada's proximity to the United States of America, where in 2019, there were more mass shootings than there were days (*CBS.com,* 2019). In Canada, after a mass shooting in Fredericton, a victim's widow called Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "a piece of shit" during a condolence call (*Global News Canada,* 2018), suggesting that Toller's praise of Ardern's political leadership and gender behaviour is due to the lack of empathetic leadership from other well-known world leaders who happen to be men. Political leadership as a primary thematic code yielded 2.49 per cent coding coverage across eight coding references. In comparison, the secondary gender thematic code of 'affect and gendered behaviour' yielded 3.60 per cent coding coverage across 14 coding references.

In an editorial for *The Spinoff* (2019), Toby Manhire writes, "As if becoming a mother and prime minister were not challenging enough, Ardern found herself hailed as a standard bearer for women everywhere." From the thematic analysis sample of editorials specifically (but also the entire sample), Ardern is also painted as a standard bearer for other world leaders such as the aforementioned Justin Trudeau, and others like then-UK Prime Minister Teresa May and then-US President Donald Trump as a political leader. For example, Manhire (2019), in his editorial, cites the following example contrasting Ardern and President Trump's political performance and leadership:

> Following the Christchurch attacks, Ardern was asked at a press conference if she agreed with Trump's downplaying of the rise of white supremacy. "No," she said, bluntly. Trump had by then called to offer his condolences, and asked what he could do to help. Ardern's suggestion was that he could provide "sympathy and love for all Muslim communities". Within hours, Trump was doing the opposite, throwing his weight behind a Fox News broadcaster who had questioned the patriotism of a Muslim congresswoman, Ilhan Omar, because she wore a hijab.

The above quote suggests that in her first term as New Zealand's prime minister, Ardern successfully crafted a political performance that satisfies the often-conflicting requirements of the 'gender-double bind' of female leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002). 'Other world leaders' as a primary thematic code yielded 4.32 per cent coding coverage over 34 coding references. This amount is a considerable number of coding references for five editorials.

The editorial news genre's most prominent primary thematic code was 'political process', yielding 22.00 per cent of the coding coverage across 33 coding references. The purpose of editorials is to advocate for or against a position that is dominating the news cycle or an issue that has occurred in the political process (Firmstone, 2019). For example, in the thematic analysis sample of the Christchurch mosque attacks, *Newsroom*'s (Williams, 2019) editorial notes inconsistencies with the Government's ACC policy for the victims of the shooting who sustained life-long injuries and advocates for a consistent line.

Ardern was questioned on her regular slot on TVNZ's Breakfast show yesterday. But her comments jar with official advice and the recommendations of Lees-Galloway. Ardern, whose compassion for the attack's victims has been lauded around the world, painted a picture of a government that wanted to do the right thing by giving victims the best support they could, as quickly as possible. – *Newsroom,* (Williams, 2019)

The quote above shows yet again how the themes of the political process and 'policy and legal discussion' work together to inform media consumers of the events of the political field and how it affects their lives as citizens. 'Policy and legal discussion' as a primary thematic code yielded 16.37 per cent coding coverage across 16 coding references. Other examples of 'policy and legal discussion' include the New Zealand Government's ban on military-style assault weapons, in which Ardern's leadership was praised as this policy change has been unsuccessful in other countries, such as the United States (Toller, 2019).

This chapter will now move onto unpacking the results of the thematic analysis of the opinion and comment news genre.

## 7.5. Thematic Analysis of the Opinion and Comment Genre

*Table 25: Thematic Analysis of the Opinion and Comment Genre*

| ***Themes in Opinion and Comment*** (18 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 82 | 14.52% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 29 | 3.51% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 11 | 1.91% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 20 | 5.19% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 1 | 0.13% |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 10 | 2.02% |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 21 | 6.83% |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 52 | 7.59% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 24 | 8.79% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 48 | 14.12% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 73 | 24.06% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 15 | 1.59% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 7 | 0.42% |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 4 | 0.37% |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 2 | 0.27% |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 2 | 0.53% |

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

The opinion and commentary news genre has risen from the capitalistic marketplace and the journalistic competition for market share and also the right to provide the citizenry with interpretation of political field (McNair, 2000). Opinion and commentary as a news genre exhibited the highest amount of coding coverage for the secondary gender code 'sexism and misogyny' (6.83 per cent coding coverage across 21 coding references). The 'sexism and misogyny' secondary gender code refers to overt misogyny, such as *Newstalk ZB's* Leighton Smith's (2018) diatribe about Jacinda Ardern breastfeeding, claiming it was 'interfering with the job as she chose to do it.' Along with more subtle critiques from Heather Du Plessis-Allan (2018) that the public believe that "Winston (Peters) is calling the shots" and that Ardern "doesn't understand business basics." This comment from Du Plessis-Allan about Ardern's business acumen reflects the belief that women are not suited to 'hard' portfolios such as business and economic development and instead are often given portfolios to do with childcare and education (Stevens, 2007). While these quotes are examples of media personalities expressing opinions that uphold patriarchal norms, opinion writers can also critique the sexism and misogyny that has been expressed by others in the media. In an opinion column for *The Spinoff* Emily Writes (2018) opines:

> Then over on Newstalk ZB, Leighton Smith opened his mouth and this fell out: "Breastfeeding is to be encouraged for three months. Well the three months is up but she has decided she isn't going to stop, and wants to keep breastfeeding. So that is interfering with her job as she chose to do it."
>
> Which proves that the king of New Zealand talkback is not just gross but also bad at counting. Ardern and Gayford's baby was born two and a half months ago.

In this quote Writes (2018) is not only calling out Smith's sexist comments as 'gross' but also factually incorrect.

These above quotes illustrate how the secondary gender code of 'sexism and misogyny' relates to another secondary gender code 'parenting'. Parenting as a secondary gender code yielded 5.19 per cent coding coverage across 20 coding references. The sexism and misogyny from Leighton Smith relating to Ardern

breastfeeding her daughter, can be explained through role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Breastfeeding is the act of providing an infant with nourishment from the chest, that is exclusively experienced by those assigned female at birth (*World Health Organization,* 2020). The political field, as pointed out by Elgie (2017) was made by (cis-gendered) men, for (cis-gendered) men, and as Ardern was only the second elected leader to give birth in office, it is not an expected behaviour for heads of government to need to breastfeed their child while also running a country. Meanwhile, as a mother who has just given birth, there is a gendered parental expectation that the child would be breastfed by the mother. The American Academy of Paediatrics (2021) states that experts believe it is ideal for infants to be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of their lives. Thus, these opinion news stories are questioning Ardern's commitment to being Prime Minister as while she cares for her daughter during a crucial stage of development. Moreover, these opinion news stories are critical of someone who is putting their parenting role at least equal to their role as prime minister, something that prime ministers have not been seen to do traditionally.

The news genre of opinion and comment often focuses on praising or critiquing events that occur in the political process, specifically for this thesis relating to Jacinda Ardern's political performance. Political process as a primary thematic code yielded 24.06 per cent coding coverage across 73 coding references. These news stories are not always written by journalists, or former press secretaries but can be submissions from academics who are subject-matter experts. Opinion columns such as leading critical leadership studies researcher, Dr Suze Wilson's (2020, 6 April) published on the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* (ABC) website offers praise for Ardern's performance in the political process "The March 23 press conference announcement of New Zealand's lockdown is a clear example of Ardern's skilful approach, comprising a carefully crafted speech, followed by extensive time for media questions." One of Wilson's research areas is female leaders and their leadership performance. The primary thematic code of 'political leadership' yielded 14.12 per cent coding coverage across 48 coding references. There is also critique of Ardern's political leadership present in the news genre of opinion and comment. Political scientist Dr Bryce Edwards

(2020) critiques Ardern for 'essentially running the health portfolio from Wellington while the minister of health, David Clark, has been locked down in his home in the far south of the country…' as a move that concentrated her political power.

The primary thematic code of 'policy and legal discussion' yielded 8.74 per cent of the coding coverage in the opinion and comment news genre across 24 coding references. Many of these coding references in news stories from *The Guardian* (Malik, 2019)*, The New Yorker* (Gessen, 2019)*, and Noted* (Armstrong, 2019) discuss the Ardern Government's ban on military-style weapons. In Alistair Campbell's (former press secretary to former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair) opinion column for *The Independent* (2020), he references the policies and legislation around the nationwide Coronavirus Lockdown in Aotearoa New Zealand. These results from the thematic analysis further suggest that the media's discussion of the political process and policy are not mutually exclusive but can work together to help the news consumer understand the events of the political field in a manner that is simple for them to comprehend, thus creating an informed democracy. The results agree with McNair's (2000) assertion that an understanding of political policy cannot be separated from the presentation of the policy in the context of the political process and contemporary political activity. To suggest that opinion and commentary as a news genre is detrimental to policy discussions is a false dichotomy.

This chapter will now move onto the thematic analysis of the media meta-reporting genre.

## 7.6. Thematic analysis of Media Meta-Reporting Genre

*Table 26:Thematic Analysis of the Media Meta Reporting Genre*

| ***Themes in Media Meta-Reporting*** (5 News Stories) | **Number of Coding References** | **Percentage of Coding Coverage** |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender (Primary code)** | 15 | 13.35% |
| Affect and Gendered Behaviour (Secondary Code) | 9 | 4.82% |
| Appearance and Mode of Dress (Secondary Code) | 3 | 2.23% |
| Parenting (Secondary Code) | 3 | 6.30% |
| Childfree Women (Tertiary code) | 0 | 0 |
| Pregnancy (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Sexism & Misogyny (Secondary code) | 0 | 0 |
| **Other World Leaders (Primary Code)** | 11 | 2.95% |
| **Policy & Legal Discussion (Primary Code)** | 9 | 12.29% |
| **Political Leadership (Primary Code)** | 5 | 8.32% |
| **Political Process (Primary Code)** | 16 | 28.51% |
| **Social Media (Primary Code)** | 8 | 4.46% |
| Reference to Social Media Companies (Secondary Code) | 3 | 1.98% |
| Comments (Secondary Code) | 1 | 0.43% |
| Criticism of (Secondary Code) | 2 | 1.11% |
| Executive Named (Secondary Code) | 0 | 0 |
| Posts (Secondary Code) | 3 | 0.94% |

**Number of Coding References** = How many times the theme was coded in the case study, files can have the same theme occurring in multiple instances.

**Percentage of Coding Coverage** = in reference to the entire text coded to the case study, coding coverage refers to the percentage of how much of the case study is coded to the theme.

Media meta-reporting as a news genre was conceptualised for this thesis' thematic analysis in relation to McNair's (2000) discussion on 'meta-media' and the reference to journalism. Media meta-reporting is when news media stories discuss what has been published/ broadcast by other media outlets in relation to Jacinda Ardern's political leadership and performance in the political field. The thematic analysis sample of this news genre contains five news media stories.

The political process as a primary theme yielded 28.51 per cent coding coverage across 16 coding references. These references include *TVNZ* (*1 News Now,* 2020) website reporting on a news story from the American news publication *The Atlantic* that praised Ardern's leadership as being 'the most effective on the planet' during the initial coronavirus outbreak. There are also news stories that discuss Jacinda Ardern's performance in interviews with other media outlets, such as *News.com.au* (Scanlan, 2019) about Ardern being 'grilled' by *The Sunday Project* host Lisa Wilkinson for calling Scott Morrison's stance on deporting criminals to New Zealand as 'corrosive'. Policy and legal discussion as a primary thematic code yielded 12.29 per cent coding coverage across nine coding references. Other references to policy include the Government's media support package during the initial coronavirus lockdown and *Financial Times* journalist Pilita Clark's praise of 'smart policies' including funding to widen footpaths to help with social distancing and creating a home-school TV channel (*1 News Now,* 2020).

This news media genre can be counted as a part of news organisations' strategies to shape and control the interpretation of the political field for news consumers, it can also feature as a part of a news organisation's economic strategy to differentiate themselves from their competitors (McNair, 2000). This is particularly seen in the reporting of Jacinda Ardern's gendered behaviour. Gender as a primary code yielded 13.35 per cent coding coverage across 15 coding references. Nine of those coding references regarded the secondary thematic code of 'affect and gendered performance', yielding 4.82 per cent coding coverage. These coding references reported on international media outlets praising Jacinda Ardern for her 'empathy in a

crisis', her 'intuitive' political performance, and comments on Ardern's 'poise'. (*1 News Now,* 2020; Hooton, 2020).

The discursive weight of this news genre will lend itself to subsequent analysis chapter of political reporting and punditry. This chapter will now move on to the conclusion.

## 7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how the news genre treats themes differently in the journalistic narrative. Scholars such as Karen Ross (2002, 2010, 2017) and Anne Stevens (2007) have noted the gendered split of women politicians being given soft news treatment and novelty framing as opposed to the serious, considered hard news coverage that male politicians receive. This can be seen in the content analysis news genre results where only four news media stories were coded as hard news in the motherhood case study. In the news genre of 'hard news' the thematic analysis conducted via the software NVivo found that only gender as a primary code only 8.73 per cent of coding coverage, despite there being 178 coding references across 75 news media stories. This shows that although gender as a primary theme is present in hard news, it is not awarded sustained deliberation like with 'soft news'. In the thematic analysis of the news genre ‘soft news’ gender as a primary code yielding 30.55 per cent coding coverage across 82 coding references across 15 news media stories. The most dominant secondary gender code in the soft news genre was ‘parenting’ yielding 19.00 per cent coding coverage across 39 coding references. It should also be noted that there were a few soft news stories that were filed in the ‘parenting’ news section of the news organisation’s website as opposed to the ‘politics’ section – this fact will be drawn upon and examined in the subsequent analysis chapters in reference to politicians receiving celebrity treatment in the soft news media akin to global celebrities, like Paris Hilton, or sporting stars like Former All Black, Daniel Carter.

The results of this thesis reinforce Patterson (2000)’s assertion that there is a false dichotomy in the discussion of hard news and soft news. This is also reflected in the false dichotomy of process journalism versus policy journalism (McNair, 2000). From performing the content and thematic analyses that an explanation of the political process and the presentation of policy are both required in building a coherent narrative to those media consumers in the mediated public sphere that are not experts in politics, policy, nor the policy's subject matter (such as public media funding

models, or maternity leave). The coding of the thematic analysis saw the themes of both policy and legal discussion and political process having an often-intertwined presence in the news media narratives.

The thematic analysis brought in a fifth news genre that was not present in the content analysis. Media meta-reporting as a news genre captures the practice of journalists reporting on the news stories produced by their peers in other news media organisations, especially those overseas. This genre plays into the economic imperative of media organisations interpreting the political field for media consumers, as is noted in discussions surrounding the mediated public sphere. This idea will be explicated in the following analysis sections.

The findings of this chapter were informed by the background context provided in the beginning of this thesis, and the research conducted for the literature review. The thesis will now move onto its conclusion.

# 7. Conclusion

## 7.1. Summary of findings

This thesis sought to answer the research question 'how did the news media report on Jacinda Ardern's gender and political performance during her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister?' Through the content analysis and thematic analysis of the five key news media events, the findings have shown that news media normalisation of female political leaders is yet to occur in Aotearoa New Zealand, despite Ardern being the third female Prime Minister. The author is calling for a gendered consciousness in journalism, to acknowledge the individual values and worldview that gender informs but not to exceptionalise a female politician's gender to where she becomes Captain Marvel and a Saint, with news media reportage that is imbued with benevolent sexism and misogyny. News media normalisation is a term used by Trimble (2017) referring to the news media covering a topic enough that it results in news media consumers considering that to be ordinary. From the content analysis, the news coverage stance of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership was overwhelmingly (approximately two-thirds) positive. Ardern was praised and exceptionalised for performing behaviours that are commonly seen as feminine character virtues, such as her empathy. The news media also paid particular focus to how she dressed and presented herself as a Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand. Thus, female political leaders and feminine gender expression has not received its final treatment of news media normalisation.

This research of this thesis was organised using case study analysis (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009) and conducted using the methods of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2019), and thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). These methods of analysis were chosen due to their utility and popularity with other political communications scholars (Waisike, 2019). The news events that were analysed in this thesis are:

1. Jacinda Ardern's pregnancy and the subsequent birth of her daughter, Neve Te Aroha Ardern Gayford. This was referred to as "Motherhood" throughout the thesis.

2. The Friday 15 March 2019 terrorist attack on two Christchurch mosques murdering 51 worshippers and injuring many others. This was referred to as “The Christchurch Mosque Attacks” in the thesis.

3. The Monday 9 December 2019 eruption of Whakaari White Island which killed 21 people including international cruise ship passengers and injuring many others. This was referred to in the thesis as “Whakaari/ White Island” or “Whakaari”.

4. The initial lockdown and recovery stages of the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 to the New Zealand General Election on Saturday 17 October 2020. This was referred to in the thesis as “COVID-19 in 2020”.

5. Jacinda Ardern on the world stage engaging in diplomacy missions and meeting other world leaders. This was referred to in the thesis as “World Stage”.

These five news events made up the three case studies of Jacinda Ardern’s motherhood journey, Jacinda Ardern’s Crisis Leadership (in response to the mosque attacks, the eruption of Whakaari White Island and the COVID-19 outbreaks in 2020), and Jacinda Ardern on the world stage.

The tripartite analysis performed in this thesis was informed the content and thematic analyses results that are reported in the previous four chapter. In performing the content and thematic analyses, first the content analysis was performed looking at coding for the traditional conventions of political journalism, themes, news coverage stance (how was Jacinda Ardern’s political leadership portrayed: positive, negative neutral), Harcup and O’Neill’s 2017 taxonomy of news values (what made the story newsworthy), and news sources (who is quoted in the news media stories, which shapes the framing of the news story).

In the content analysis overall, the most dominant theme was ‘the political process’ which was found in 88.00 per cent of the sample (110 news media stories).

The themes of ‘gender’ and ‘other world leaders’ were both the second-most dominant theme in the whole content analysis sample yielding 57.60 per cent of the sample (72 news media stories). These results suggest that political journalistic narratives are told and understood through the process of actions and behaviours performed in the political field and is seen through the lens of gender vis-à-vis expected gendered behaviours and gender roles. Furthermore, politics is a global phenomenon not just national, and the cultural and political capital that political leaders hold is indeed supranational, as they must work together to achieve common goals. The results of the full thematic analysis sample in this first results chapter, show that the aggregated primary code of gender was yielded the highest number of coding references (438) across 68 news media stories. The secondary gender codes that were aggregated were ‘affect and gendered behaviour’, ‘appearance and mode of dress’, ‘parenting’ (which had a tertiary code of ‘childfree women’), ‘pregnancy’, and ‘sexism and misogyny.’ The primary code of ‘political process’ had the second-greatest number of coding references (325) across 122 news media stories in the full thematic analysis sample.

The most dominant news coverage stance in the content analysis sample, was ‘positive’ which yielded 66.40 per cent of the total sample. The case study event with the highest percent of ‘positive’ as the news coverage stance was ‘Motherhood’ which yielded 19 out of 24 news media stories with a positive news coverage stance (79.19 per cent). This is because the event is both a happy personal life milestone or Ardern and the symbolic ‘progress’ of Ardern taking a period of maternity leave after giving birth. The case study event with the most negative news coverage stance news stories was “COVID-19 2020”. These news stories were critical of Ardern and her cabinet’s decisions to order lockdowns of Aotearoa New Zealand’s citizens for social and non-essential business reasons. Harcup and O’Neill’s (2017) ‘the power elite’ news values was the most common in the total sample (90.34 per cent, across 125 news stories), due to the nature of Ardern’s position of prime minister awarding her an elite status. The second-most dominant news value was ‘follow-up’ (80.80 per cent across the whole sample), because of the nature of events, the news stories selected were ones that gave more specific details following a breaking news bulletin. It is also important to

note the prevalence of ‘magnitude’ as a news value in the content analysis sample (78.40 per cent, across 98 news stories), this was due to the nature of the case study events once again, but also signals how Jacinda Ardern’s political leadership become such a newsworthy phenomenon, not only was she younger, female, and pregnant/a mother. Moreover, she was adept at leading a nation through crises, showing the news media and voters worldwide that politics can be performed with incongruent ‘feminine’ character virtues and aesthetics while still commanding competent leadership over the constituency.

A thematic analysis was then performed through the assistance of the computer software NVivo, which allowed for the results of the thematic analysis coding be presented both as a full sample, and by the five news events that made up the three case studies. The results of the full sample analysis were displayed in the methodology section, while the data broken down by news events were presented in the three case study chapters of motherhood, crisis leadership, and the world stage. These results suggested that political journalistic narratives are told and understood through the process of actions and behaviours performed in the political field and is seen through the lens of gender vis-à-vis expected gendered behaviours and gender roles. Furthermore, politics is a global phenomenon not just national, and the cultural and political capital that political leaders hold is indeed supranational, as they must work together to achieve common goals. The results of the full thematic analysis sample in this first results chapter, show that the aggregated primary code of gender was yielded the highest number of coding references (438) across 68 news media stories. The secondary gender codes that were aggregated were ‘affect and gendered behaviour’, ‘appearance and mode of dress’, ‘parenting’ (which had a tertiary code of ‘childfree women’), ‘pregnancy’, and ‘sexism and misogyny.’ The primary code of ‘political process’ had the second-greatest number of coding references (325) across 122 news media stories in the full thematic analysis sample.

The full thematic analysis sample was then broken down by news genre to see how the genre of the news being reported may affect the news narratives about Ardern’s political leadership and gender thematically. These news genres included were hard

news, soft news, editorial, comment/opinion, and media meta-analysis. Media meta-reporting was conceptualised as a news genre for this thesis' thematic analysis in relation to McNair's (2000) discussion on 'meta-media' and the reference to journalism, particularly, the news media stories in the sample that reference other media organisations' deliberation and framing of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership. The political process was the most dominant primary code, covering 28.51 per cent of the news genre's coding. Gender as an aggregated primary code was the second-most dominant theme in the media meta-reporting genre covering 13.35 per cent, as the journalistic critiques of Ardern were grounded in a hegemonic understanding of gendered behaviours and how they are appropriate in the context of political leadership and times of crisis. Results show that the primary theme of gender in the thematic analysis had the highest percentage of coding coverage (30.55 per cent across 82 coding references). This could be seen as a reflection of the false dichotomy of soft news being perceived as the news genre for feminine and 'women's issues', as opposed to treating stories involving politics and economics as 'hard' and 'masculine' stories, which may be implicitly enforced in newsrooms and editorial directives (Patterson, 2000; Ross, 2002). News genre, therefore, affects how themes are communicated in journalistic narratives.

The theoretical framework that underpinned this thesis' analysis had a tripartite structure, the lens of gender has primacy in this framework, based on the belief that Western society's understanding of gendered behaviour and gender roles influences and frames both how the journalistic and political fields work together but also how news media consumers make sense not only the political field and journalistic field, but also society at large. Citizen engagement with the political field and politicians, like Jacinda Ardern, are mediated through the outputs of the journalistic field (hard news stories, soft news stories, editorial news stories, comment/opinion news stories, and meta-media news stories), and social media. Both the foundations of the journalistic and the political fields are patriarchal. Reidl et al. (2022) referred to journalism as following the 'male' (patriarchal) norm, and politics is categorised by Eglie (2017) as being made 'by men for men'. Through the analysis and discussion in this thesis it is

clear that journalistic news stories privilege the lived experiences of men and present them as 'the norm' and 'the status quo.' Nancy Fraser (1995) talked of a public man/private woman binary in her critique of Habermas's (1989) public sphere, this research has shown that Western society's penchant for Cartesian duality and reliance of understanding the social world through binaries like hard/soft, masculine/feminine, seriousness/frivolity and what Former Prime Minister Bill English referred to as stardust vs. substance, construct an undervaluing of what society perceives to be feminine and relegates them to 'women's issues'. Through these binaries, the lives, experiences, and social understandings of half the world's population are deemed to be less important or consequential to the lives, experiences, and social understandings of the other half.

There is, in media reporting on politics, a perceived binary that one cannot be competent and substantive in their political leadership if they are confident and skilled in their performance and communication of politics: if one has a warm, human-centred communication style, they would not be equal to the bold, decisive traits necessary for the top job and thus, role incongruent (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This false binary forms the context of the thesis' central argument that the journalism field struggled to report on Jacinda Ardern's exceptionalised political leadership. Like a group of Austrian nuns in The Sound of Music, journalists and political communication scholars alike ask, "how do you solve a problem like Jacinda?" Maria, the protagonist of The Sound of Music is a young woman full of life and song, who does not fit in with the rest of the solemn nuns in her convent so much that the nuns all sing in chorus "How do you solve a problem like Maria?" Ardern famously and frequently asserted her desire to "do politics differently." She wished to perform politics that foregrounded compassion and kindness. This can be seen in her mobilisation of key messages and slogans "they are us" and "be kind", yet Ardern was still adept at playing "the game" of politics, she performed her role as a political leader well, she was in control of her performance and generally had a thorough understanding of the policy and bills that were being debated in the house. Critiques of Ardern and her personal, empathetic style of political leadership often drew on the false binary that her emphasis on human-centred leadership was inappropriate for a Prime Minister and made her ill-equipped for the economic

management performed by governments. In news media reporting of Jacinda Ardern's political performance, gender becomes the primary problematic. Furthermore, in the political field, there is a dichotomy that people who are 'charismatic' and engaging political performers lack a breadth of policy knowledge and divisive decision-making required for political leadership. This led to the volume published on 2017 General Election in a series edited by Stephen Levine (2017) to be named "Stardust and Substance". Ardern as Prime Minister gave an embodied emotional performance that exhibited feminine character virtues that that other women in global politics have tended to shy away from in order to appear more congruent to the role and the expectations of a political leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Opposition members of parliament also regularly critiqued Ardern's performance of political leadership through the societal understanding of this kindness/competence dichotomy. When Jacinda Ardern announced her resignation ACT Party Leader, David Seymour released a statement saying "Jacinda is a well-meaning person, but her idealism collided hard with reality. Unfortunately, this has left the country with big problems: the economy, the lawlessness, the Treaty."

Ardern's performance of political leadership shows that individuals in fact perform their professional roles through behavioural spectrum, rather than binaries and absolutes. Ardern's political performance breaks down the societal understanding of the false binaries that are mobilised in the journalistic field, to make sense of the political field. In an opinion column, for *Newsroom*, Anna Rawhiti-Connell (2018) wrote in regard to Ardern's pregnancy announcement as "the beginning of the end of the patriarchy" as this traditional masculine position of power in a normatively masculine field, now has a publicly pregnant (and feminine) agent. Rawhiti-Connell (2018) describes Ardern's full-spectrum political performance as:

> Ardern is able to be a feminist, a role model for women, a staunch advocate for women's rights, a mother and the Prime Minister and we can appreciate and celebrate the strength and confidence it takes to do all that – the balls of steel and the fist that smashed the glass ceiling. She is also able to be a kind person, and we can find inspiration in that too. What once would have been regarded as

> ‘feminine traits’ and ‘signs of weakness’ are now part of the winning hand she and other women have to play. Ardern’s kindness is a part of her special sauce as a leader.

The patriarchal foundations of journalism and the constructed journalistic tropes and shorthand (for example, idioms, like stick to your knitting) are grounded in the patriarchal understanding of how political news is traditionally represented. Time and economic pressures of converging newsrooms, and other structural problems of journalism such as Aotearoa New Zealand’s shrinking television news landscape means that individual journalists are provided with even less scope to be reflexive in their gendered habitus and how that informs their subjectivities and worldview which shape the news media stories that they produce. The status quo privileges the male norms over the norms of other genders (Reidl et al., 2022). This thesis calls for a gendered consciousness and the need for reflexive journalistic practices to be taught and developed in journalism practice and in curriculums. There is arguably a precedent for this, in November 2020, Stuff, owners of Aotearoa New Zealand’s largest online news brand introduced a new company charter that centred Te Tiriti o Waitangi, after an internal investigation uncovered Māori, New Zealand’s indigenous people group were being denied an equitable voice due to journalism practices (Williams, 2020, November 30). The news story announcing the company’s new charter directly quoted Stuff’s owner and chief executive Sinead Boucher saying:

> “I don’t buy into that at all. If you think the job of the news media, in our company and others, is to hold the powerful to account, well, we are the powerful.
>
> “We really have had an enormous impact in shaping public thought in New Zealand and societal norms, not just reflecting them, and I think it is only fitting that a progressive company can pause and have a look at itself,” Boucher said.

Furthermore, Boucher also acknowledged that racism and unconscious bias was present through the company’s 163-year history of producing print and digital news products, noting that the company had taken an often mono-cultural approach that privileged and prioritised the Pākehā worldview (Williams, 2020, November 30). The

themes of Stuff's internal investigation's findings are in line with the findings of this thesis. This thesis suggests there could be a need for apologies to be made to more marginalised communities and people groups including women and gender diverse people.

While Jacinda Ardern's meteoric rise to Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand was met with "Jacindamania", there was also a backlash to Jacinda Ardern's political performance both the media and public discourses. This is despite, as previously mentioned the overwhelmingly positive tone in the news media coverage of Ardern's political leadership. The backlash to Jacindamania suggested that the "problem like Jacinda", was a political leader who was both incongruent in her expected gendered behaviour as a politician but was still judged by many to be successful in her first term of political leadership as seen in the case study samples. The public backlash, like the news media reportage, can also be understood through the thesis' tripartite theoretical structure. The public backlash was due to Ardern's misalignment with the status quo with her unapologetically 'feminine' style of performing politics and leadership, due to the patriarchal structures that create the operating conditions of both the political and journalistic fields. In the samples of news media reportage, journalists and the public struggle with how to report and deliberate on Jacinda Ardern as a successful yet gender-incongruent political performance.

So, how do we solve a problem like Jacinda? By celebrating the incongruence of her gender to the point where reporting ignores the work and experience that goes into the decision-making of her leadership? Many of the news media stories sampled in the thesis would, instead of acknowledging that Ardern was a skilled communicator, likely through her education as someone who holds a degree in public relations and politics, along with her years working as a policy advisor for many Labour Cabinet Ministers and then-Prime Minister Helen Clark, claim her ability to communicate skilfully and compassionate was due to her feminine character virtues imbued in her gendered performance. There is a need for journalism to stop pigeon-holing political leaders into neat boxes that ignore the complexities and the intersections of their individualities. The political field has been seen as a masculine field, made for men, by men. Both

figuratively as an institution and physically as a building Foley (2017) and Eglie (2017) both even noting that some female politicians have to bring footrests into parliamentary chambers because their legs are not long enough for the seats. One of the specificities of Ardern's performance of political leadership, was her public display of feminine character virtues and behaviours. Unlike previous Female Prime Ministers like Helen Clark, who were instructed to change their voice and speech patterns, and Hillary Clinton adopting the sartorial style of pantsuits, Ardern performed her gender as unapologetically feminine. This is despite previous evidence that it is 'easier' for women to break through the glass ceiling if they can fit into the existing male-dominated parliamentary culture (McKay, 2011). Ardern's ability to enact her agentic but compassionate leadership style while still embodying her feminine deportment shows that these gendered behaviours and performances are to be viewed as spectrums, where the political moment dictates what action and expression is appropriate.

In the Motherhood case study, the news media reportage exhibits what Anna Rawhiti-Connell (2018) refers to as 'prodigious public discussion about what's happening in the Prime Minister's body'. Culturally, pregnancy and motherhood are constructed as integral to a woman's identity (Galy-Badenas & Sommier, 2021). Ardern is framed in the news media stories included in the sample as having made a grand achievement or 'smashing the glass ceiling' for all women. The tone of these news stories seem to imply that Ardern is a woman who just happens to be a good prime minister, stripping away her agency, competence and experience (her habitus) that allows her to perform her job as the leader of Aotearoa New Zealand to such a level of success that her party gets re-elected in 2020 with a landslide victory that gave them the mandate to govern alone. The news media reportage of Ardern's political leadership was also congruent with Kanter's 'mother' role-trap (as cited in Baxter, 2003). The gendered exceptionalism of Jacinda Ardern by the news media was further mobilising through her pregnancy and her seemingly successful juggling of being a public woman (prime minister) and a private woman (mother, partner, daughter, sister). In the crisis case studies, the analysis has shown that Jacinda Ardern was deified with headlines

like “Arise Saint Jacinda: A Leader for our Troubled Times” in *The Financial Times*, which was then reported on by other media outlets such as *RNZ*. *The Globe and Mail*’s Carol Toller also compares Ardern to Captain Marvel, the first female lead movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe which was released around the same time the Christchurch Mosque Attacks occurred. The specificity of Ardern and her mobilising of feminine character virtues in her leadership was perhaps the focus of a majority of media reporting, due to the news value of ‘surprise’, her incongruent actions to focus on the victims of the Christchurch Mosque Attacks over the rhetoric of seeking of retribution from President George W. Bush, which was seen after the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York City’s Twin Towers. The journalistic field seemed to fail to capture the complexities of Ardern’s individuality and rely on benevolent and at sometimes aggressive sexism and misogyny to mediate her performance of political leadership to the media consumer.

In the context of Jacinda Ardern as a symbol for working motherhood, there are potential risks of marginalising working mothers who lack the same support structures. This could inadvertently reinforce societal expectations that women should prioritise motherhood over their careers, perpetuating gender inequalities in the workplace. Ardern was quoted in by *The New Yorker* (Hollander, 2018) in saying that baby Neve had “many aunties and uncles”, meaning friends and family members who were available to help with Neve’s care, alongside her partner taking the mantel of being the primary caregiver. This speaks to a class issue, as some families cannot survive on one low-median income compared to Ardern’s high-paying salary. Ardern, herself, does make some references to this in the news media stories (Mutch, 2018). Ardern refers to herself in her pregnancy announcement as joining the ranks of people who “wear many different hats”, meaning being a working mother. Other news sources quoted in the news media sample and in the narrative in Gillard and Okonjo-Iweala’s (2020) book paint Ardern’s public prime ministerial pregnancy as a catalyst for working mothers to be more expected in the workplace. However, Ardern’s minimal six-week maternity leave sets a precedent that new mothers can or should return to work sooner than the

maternity leave entitlements set in law allow for, further appropriating the liberal feminist ideal of 'having it all' for a capitalistic benefit.

In contrast to the other two crises events, the news media reportage of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership in the aftermath of the Whakaari White Island eruption did not receive the same highly gendered news treatment, as her leadership response to the other two crises events. Ardern was used by journalists as a news source for important updates on the rescue and recovery operations on the island, this follows Gigliotti's (2016) archetype of 'leader as an institutional voice.' There were a few references to gendered behaviour, but Ardern's gendered behaviour was not the subject of the new media stories as was seen in the reporting on the other two crises events. The news media stories in the Whakaari eruption event were coded in the content and thematic analyses as hard news stories. These news stories show that the gendered focus comes from the journalists' interpretations of the political process, and feature more in the interpretation of the process of the political field in news genres such as soft news, comment/opinion, and editorial. Despite this, through online social media discourses of Ardern's empathetic and compassionate leadership response to the first responders and victims of the eruption, Ardern's reputation boosted, News.com.au (Bedo, 2019) quoted some Australian Twitter users praise of Jacinda Ardern's leadership, especially in comparison to then-Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and "our cold-hearted government." This research has found evidence similar to other studies (Wilson & Newstead, 2020; Ceccobelli & Di Gregorio, 2022) in that the news media reportage and global acclaim of Jacinda Ardern's sustained performance of political leadership, particularly through the times of crisis in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Christchurch and Whakaari White Island eruption, resulted in good outcomes for her reputation personally. Ardern's consistent performance of compassionate political leadership contained the right proportions of authenticity, ordinariness, and competence (Ceccobelli & Di Gregorio, 2022) It is said that citizens want their politicians to be "someone I can trust", "someone like me", and "someone smarter than me" (Ceccobelli & Di Gregorio, 2022), and this is seen through Ardern's media interviews, press conferences, Facebook Live videos, where she consistently

performs politics with a warm and competent demeanour. It is further implied by news media reportage by journalists and political pundits that her sustained political performance and reputation in the world news media that the New Zealand Government had the legitimacy and social license to call for a lockdown of economic and social movement for multiple times. Wilson (2020) summed up Ardern's political leadership during the initial COVID-19 lockdown as being balanced between "direction, care, and meaning-making." Furthermore, superlative headlines like "New Zealand's Prime Minister May Be the Most Effective Leader on the Planet" in The Atlantic (2020, April 19) and accolades such as being ranked "world's most eloquent leader" (The New Zealand Herald, 2020) also further legitimised her leadership and the resulting successful outcomes.

## 7.2. Limitations and Further Research

Due to the time frame afforded to a candidature of a Doctor of Philosophy degree, and to manage the scope of data collection, only the first term of Ardern's premiership was selected for this study which commenced in February 2020. Therefore, this thesis has not fully addressed the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's second term, which saw the five-month-long lockdown period for Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland starting in August 2021, the COVID-19 vaccine mandates and the month-long parliamentary protest against them in February 2022. The news media reportage of these events would be ripe with qualitative data on the misogynistic media discourses of Jacinda Ardern's performance of political leadership and the narratives in public discourse that mobilised the parliamentary protest to become an embodied discourse of severe consequences. An example of this is a vox populi segment on *1 News* featured a protestor calling Ardern "some girl, in a skirt, on a power trip." Protestors were also calling for the trial and execution of Ardern and many of her parliamentary colleagues as examples of the real-life consequences of public discourse (Taylor et al., 2022).

This research also only includes news media stories for traditional 'legacy' news media outlets; there is also an opportunity to analyse the gendered mediation of Jacinda Ardern's political leadership in alternative or citizen journalism outlets and how

that feeds into online discourses and social media discussions of Jacinda Ardern's political performance. There has been a rise in people going to non-traditional sources for political information and opinions, and according to the AUT's Centre of Journalism Media and Democracy's 2024 *Trust in News* report (Myllylahti & Treadwell, 2024), social media is also used as a fact-checking tool of what is being reported in by traditional news media outlets.

This research was conducted by the author with the help of a team of supervisors, two men and one woman, who brought the contexts of their gendered habitus to the analysis in this research. This was particularly important due to the similar circumstances of the author's habitus to Jacinda Ardern's. Like Ardern, I am a cis woman who is partnered in a heterosexual relationship, and I also have white skin and brunette hair that men tell me looks better down when I tie it up. I also left the religion I grew up with because I was uncomfortable with how the organising powers treated LGBTQIA+ Takatāpui people. We both went to university to study public relations and politics. The identification felt when conducting the research required the reflective feminist research ethic; it can be seen as a limitation to a researcher from a quantitative research perspective. There could be cause for the research to be replicated by men to see if they come to the same qualitative conclusions as I did.

This thesis dealt with textual analysis, asking *how* the media reported on Jacinda Ardern's performance of her political leadership and her gender, and then offers a theoretically informed analysis of *why* this is so. Therefore, the design of this thesis did not include an ethnographic nor practice-informed approach of interviews, observation, and focus groups. There is, however, opportunities for the findings of this thesis to inform research projects about gendered mediation that would take this approach.

The design of this study could be replicated using international politicians, such as Julia Gillard (Australia) and Sanna Marin (Finland), as well as past and present politicians in Aotearoa New Zealand's central and local government politics, particularly the impact of double-role incongruity on the gendered and racial mediation of wāhine Māori politicians such as Former Ministers Hon Kiri Allan and Hon Marama Davidson, Wellington Mayor, Tory Whanau and Te Pāti Māori Wāhine Co-leader, Debbie

Ngāwere-Packer. Furthermore, one can apply the design of this study to the case studies of political scandals and how the role incongruity of gender and race applies to the news media reportage and the subsequent trajectories of their careers.

## 7.3 Contributions to the Literature

This thesis has contributed a multi-faceted, prolonged study in gendered mediation and gendered exceptionalism over the New Zealand General Election of 2017, and the three-year parliamentary term until October 17, 2020. The research in this thesis investigates the patriarchal foundations of journalism that remain largely invisible, which situates the perspective of hegemonic cis-white-heterosexual men as the objective and unbiased perspective. Privileging the 'men's issues' and just 'issues' for all, while 'women's issues', 'queer issues', 'racial issues' get framed as 'special interest', and 'soft news' in the traditional hierarchy of news media story selection and newsworthiness. The tripartite theoretical structure of this thesis captures how gender is used as a lens to understand the institutional sites and the symbiotic goals of the political and journalistic fields. This theoretical model can be used to interrogate the interplay between gender, the performance of political leadership and conventions in news production when studying how the media reported on female politicians and political hopefuls. Harcup (2023) wrote in a journal article that extended on the Harcup and O'Neill (2017) article (in which this thesis used the news values schema for its analysis) that news needs to be further dissected and defended through investigating what journalism takes for granted.

The beginning of this research journey started out with the question: 'How did the news media report on Jacinda Ardern's gender and political performance during her first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's 40th Prime Minister?' Through the thesis, the tripartite structure of analysis interrogated the content and thematic analysis of news media reportage to find that the patriarchal foundations of journalism and society attempted to overlay a status quo narrative in a time of change, both in the individualism of Jacinda Ardern as a competent and compassionate female prime minister, who found success behaving in ways other women had been discouraged from doing. The temporal political moment of Jacinda Ardern's first term as Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister was

also incongruent with the status quo – the terrorist attack in a country that is not as frequently plagued with gun violence as others, a volcanic eruption, and a global pandemic that saw the world halt trade and freedom of movement. To extend on the aforementioned Sound of Music analogy, "how do you hold a moonbeam in your hand?" Journalists need to report on how the moonbeam is shining her light (performing as Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand) and not punishing her and obsessing over her not being a sunray (the stereotypical politician).

Furthermore, this research can be used as a resource in the quest to make the political-journalistic field more welcoming to role-incongruent individuals in politics. Some of the people groups who are seen as role-incongruent to political leadership include women, but also non-binary people, disabled people, LGBTQIA+/Takatāpui people, Māori and other people of colour. The findings of this research show that the journalistic formula for reporting on politics and other news sections is not one-size-fits-all but needs to be tailored to the specifics of the news events and news subjects. This thesis does not seek to advocate for a 'gender-blindness' in journalism, particularly in case studies that involve pregnancy, where the subject itself is a highly gendered and sexed phenomenon, but instead for journalists to privilege political consequences over fashion and tears. Furthermore, the thesis seeks to find a framework in which minority politicians are listened to and considered, not just looked at, in a way that politicians of dominant social groups are. This thesis calls for a gender consciousness in news media reporting that acknowledges the gendered habitus of both the news producer and the news subject. There is a need to move away from stereotypes that journalistically pigeon-hole women political leaders into neat boxes that ignore the complexity and intersections of one's identity and sense of self, seemingly stripping women politicians of their agency and their right to exist as women in public power when their relationship to men and children subjugates them.

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# Appendix I: News media stories from the content and thematic analyses

**News Stories on Jacinda Ardern and Motherhood:**


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# Appendix II: Content Analysis Coding Results Tables

## II.A. The Motherhood Case Study

Key = 1, appears in news story
= 0, not evident in news story
= -, No news story for event in sample
Thematic coding

| | Political Performance | Gender | Leadership | World Leaders | Policy discussion | Social media |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 3A | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4A | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 5A | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6A | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7A | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 9A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 10A | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 13A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 14A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 15A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16A | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 17A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 18A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 19A | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 20A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 21A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 22A | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 23A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 24A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 25A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 26A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 27A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28A | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 29A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 30A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 13/24 | 24/24 | 11/24 | 17/24 | 11/24 | 11/24 |
| % | 54.16 | 100 | 45.83 | 70.83 | 45.83 | 45.83 |

News Values

| | NV1 | NV2 | NV3 | NV4 | NV5 | NV6 | NV7 | NV8 | NV9 | NV10 | NV11 | NV12 | NV13 | NV14 | NV15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 2A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 9A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 10A | - | - | - | - | - | -- | - | - | - | - | - | -- | - | - | - |
| 11A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 12A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13A | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 16A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 17A | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 19A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 22A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 23A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 24A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 25A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 26A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 28A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 29A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 30A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 7 | 0 | 5 | 20 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 0 | 18 | 22 | 15 | 4 | 4 | 12 | 4 |
| % | 29.17 | 0 | 20.83 | 83.33 | 75 | 70.83 | 70.83 | 0 | 75 | 91.67 | 62.5 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 50 | 16.67 |

News Genre

| | Hard | Soft | Comment/Opinion | Editorial |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3A | - | - | - | - |
| 4A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5A | - | - | - | - |
| 6A | - | - | - | - |
| 7A | - | - | - | - |
| 8A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 10A | - | - | - | - |
| 11A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 12A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 13A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 14A | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15A | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 16A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 18A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 21A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 23A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 24A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 25A | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 26A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 27A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 28A | - | - | - | - |
| 29A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 4 | 11 | 2 | 7 |
| % | 16.67 | 45.83 | 8.33 | 29.17 |

News Coverage Stance

| | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3A | - | - | - |
| 4A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5A | - | - | - |
| 6A | - | - | - |
| 7A | - | - | - |
| 8A | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 9A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 10A | - | - | - |
| 11A | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 12A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 13A | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 14A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 15A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 16A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17A | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 18A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 21A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 22A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 23A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 24A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 25A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 26A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 27A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28A | - | - | - |
| 29A | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 30A | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 19 | 1 | 4 |
| % | 79.17 | 4.17 | 16.67 |

News Sources

| | Named | Unnamed | Family/Partner | Ardern | Govt MP | Opp MP | Int Pol | Pub Serv | SocMed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4A | 1 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 9A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 10A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 14A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 15A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 17A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 19A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 20A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 21A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 23A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 25A | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 26A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 29A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 30A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 24 | 3 | 5 | 20 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| % | 100 | 12.5 | 20.83 | 83.33 | 12.5 | 4.16 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 41.67 |

## II.B. The Christchurch Mosque Attacks Case Study

Key = 1, appears in news story
= 0, not evident in news story
= -, No news story for event in sample

**Thematic coding**

| | Political Performance | Gender | Leadership | World Leaders | Policy discussion | Social media |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1B | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 4B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 5B | -- | - | - | - | - | --- |
| 6B | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7B | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 9B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 10B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 11B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 12B | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 13B | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 14B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 16B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 17B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 18B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19B | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 20B | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 21B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 22B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 23B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 24B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 25B | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 26B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 27B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 28B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 29B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 30B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 26/27 | 17 | 19 | 12 | 20 | 15 |
| % | 96.3 | 63 | 70.4 | 44.44 | 74.1 | 55.55 |

**News Values**

| | NV1 | NV2 | NV3 | NV4 | NV5 | NV6 | NV7 | NV8 | NV9 | NV10 | NV11 | NV12 | NV13 | NV14 | NV15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1B | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11B | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21B | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 22B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 23B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24B | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 25B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26B | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27B | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 29B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30B | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 12 | 22 | 14 | 19 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 25 | 26 | 15 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| % | 44.4 | 81.5 | 51.9 | 70.4 | 25.9 | 25.9 | 11.1 | 33.3 | 92.6 | 96.3 | 55.6 | 51.9 | 7.4 | 0 | 11.1 |

**News Genre**

| | Hard | Soft | Comment/Opinion | Editorial |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5B | - | - | - | - |
| 6B | - | - | - | - |
| 7B | - | - | - | - |
| 8B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 12B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13B | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 14B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 15B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 16B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18B | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20B | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 21B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 24B | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 25B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 26B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 27B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30B | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 15 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| % | 55.55 | 7.4 | 14.81 | 22.22 |

**News Coverage Stance**

| | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1B | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2B | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 4B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5B | - | - | - |
| 6B | - | - | - |
| 7B | - | - | - |
| 8B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 10B | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 11B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 12B | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 13B | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 14B | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 16B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17B | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 18B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 21B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 22B | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 23B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 24B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 25B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 26B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 27B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 29B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 30B | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 19 | 2 | 6 |
| % | 70.37 | 7.4 | 22.22 |

**News Sources**

| | Named | Unnamed | Family/Partner | Ardern | Govt MP | Opp MP | Int Pol | Pub Serv | SocMed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 2B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 3B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 13B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15B | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 16B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20B | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 21B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 23B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 25B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 27B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 28B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30B | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 27 | 4 | 1 | 24 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 |
| % | 100 | 14.81 | 3.7 | 88.89 | 11.1 | 14.81 | 11.1 | 25.92 | 7.4 |

## II.C The Whakaari White Island Eruption Case Study

Key = 1, appears in news story
= 0, not evident in news story
= -, No news story for event in sample

**Thematic coding**

| | Political Performance | Gender | Leadership | World Leaders | Policy discussion | Social media |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1C | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2C | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 3C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4C | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8C | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9C | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11C | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12C | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 13C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 16C | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 17C | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18C | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20C | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 21C | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 22C | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 23C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24C | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 25C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 26C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 29C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30C | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 19 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| % | 90.48 | 38.1 | 57.14 | 33.33 | 19.04 | 19.04 |

**News Values**

| | NV1 | NV2 | NV3 | NV4 | NV5 | NV6 | NV7 | NV8 | NV9 | NV10 | NV11 | NV12 | NV13 | NV14 | NV15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2C | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4C | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 5C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 16C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19C | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 21C | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 2 | 19 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 20 | 21 | 13 | 14 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| % | 9.52 | 90.48 | 0 | 4.76 | 57.14 | 9.52 | 4.76 | 95.23 | 100 | 61.9 | 66.7 | 90.48 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**News Genre**

| | Hard | Soft | Comment/Opinion | Editorial |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3C | - | - | - | - |
| 4C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5C | - | - | - | - |
| 6C | - | - | - | - |
| 7C | - | - | - | - |
| 8C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10C | - | - | - | - |
| 11C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13C | - | - | - | - |
| 14C | - | - | - | - |
| 15C | - | - | - | - |
| 16C | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20C | - | - | - | - |
| 21C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30C | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 19 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| % | 90.48 | 9.52 | 0 | 0 |

**News Coverage Stance**

| | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3C | - | - | - |
| 4C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5C | - | - | - |
| 6C | - | - | - |
| 7C | - | - | - |
| 8C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 10C | - | - | - |
| 11C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 12C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 13C | - | - | - |
| 14C | - | - | - |
| 15C | - | - | - |
| 16C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 18C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 19C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 20C | - | - | - |
| 21C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 22C | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 23C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 24C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 25C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 26C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 27C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 28C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 29C | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 30C | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 9 | 1 | 11 |
| % | 42.86 | 4.76 | 52.38 |

## II.D. The COVID 19 in 2020 Case Study

Key = 1, appears in news story
= 0, not evident in news story
= -, No news story for event in sample

**Thematic coding**

| | Political Performance | Gender | Leadership | World Leaders | Policy discussion | Social media |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 3D | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 5D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 6D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 7D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 8D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 9D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 10D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11D | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 12D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 13D | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 17D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 18D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 20D | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 21D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 22D | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 23D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 24D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 25D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 26D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 27D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 28D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 29D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 25/26 | 7/26 | 16/26 | 9/26 | 17/26 | 6/26 |
| % | 96.15 | 26.92 | 61.54 | 34.61 | 65.39 | 23.1 |

## News Values

| | NV1 | NV2 | NV3 | NV4 | NV5 | NV6 | NV7 | NV8 | NV9 | NV10 | NV11 | NV12 | NV13 | NV14 | NV15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 3D | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 5D | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8D | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 13D | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19D | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20D | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 21D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22D | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 23D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24D | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 25D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 24 | 26 | 15 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| % | 38.4 | 34.61 | 11.53 | 34.61 | 15.38 | 23.08 | 11.53 | 11.53 | 92.3 | 100 | 57.7 | 38.46 | 0 | 7.7 | 11.53 |

**News Genre**

| | Hard | Soft | Comment/Opinion | Editorial |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3D | - | - | - | - |
| 4D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 9D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 10D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 12D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13D | - | - | - | - |
| 14D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 17D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 19D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 20D | - | - | - | - |
| 21D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22D | - | - | - | - |
| 23D | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 24D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 25D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 26D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30D | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 15 | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| % | 57.69 | 7.7 | 26.92 | 3.84 |

**News Coverage Stance**

| | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3D | - | - | - |
| 4D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 6D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 7D | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 8D | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 9D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 10D | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 11D | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 12D | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 13D | - | - | - |
| 14D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 15D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 16D | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 17D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 18D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20D | - | - | - |
| 21D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 22D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 23D | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 24D | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 25D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 26D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 27D | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 28D | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 29D | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 30D | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 16 | 6 | 5 |
| % | 61.54 | 23.08 | 19.23 |

**News Sources**

| | Named | Unnamed | Family/Partner | Ardern | Govt MP | Opp MP | Int Pol | Pub Serv | SocMed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 2D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3D | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 5D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 7D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 9D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13D | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 15D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 16D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 18D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 20D | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 21D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 22D | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 23D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25D | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 29D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30D | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 26 | 2 | 0 | 24 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| % | 100 | 7.69 | 0 | 92.31 | 19.23 | 3.85 | 19.23 | 23.1 | 11.53 |

## II.E. The Jacinda Ardern on the World Stage Case Study.

Key = 1, appears in news story
= 0, not evident in news story
= -, No news story for event in sample

**Thematic coding**

| | Political Performance | Gender | Leadership | World Leaders | Policy discussion | Social media |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1E | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2E | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 3E | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 5E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 6E | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7E | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 9E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 10E | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 11E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 12E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 13E | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 14E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 15E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 16E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 17E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 18E | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 19E | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 20E | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 21E | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 22E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 23E | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 24E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 25E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 26E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 27E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 28E | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 29E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 30E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 27/27 | 17 | 10 | 25 | 21 | 12 |
| % | 100 | 63 | 37.04 | 92.6 | 77.8 | 44.44 |

## News Values

| | NV1 | NV2 | NV3 | NV4 | NV5 | NV6 | NV7 | NV8 | NV9 | NV10 | NV11 | NV12 | NV13 | NV14 | NV15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3E | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6E | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7E | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 12E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 13E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 15E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 16E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 17E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 21E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 22E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 28E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30E | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 8 | 1 | 12 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 13 | 27 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| % | 29.63 | 3.70 | 44.44 | 37.04 | 40.74 | 22.22 | 22.22 | 11.11 | 48.15 | 100 | 92.6 | 0 | 0 | 7.4 | 25.92 |

**News Genre**

| | Hard | Soft | Comment/Opinion | Editorial |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3E | - | - | - | - |
| 4E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6E | - | - | - | - |
| 7E | - | - | - | - |
| 8E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11E | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 12E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 13E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 14E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 15E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 16E | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 21E | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 22E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 24E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27E | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 28E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 29E | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 30E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 17 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| % | 62.96 | 18.52 | 0 | 18.52 |

**News Coverage Stance**

| | Positive | Negative | Neutral |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2E | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 3E | - | - | - |
| 4E | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 5E | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 6E | - | - | - |
| 7E | - | - | - |
| 8E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 10E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 11E | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 12E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 13E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 14E | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 15E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 16E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 17E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 18E | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 19E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 20E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 21E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 22E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 23E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 24E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 25E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 26E | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 27E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 29E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 30E | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 20 | 3 | 4 |
| % | 74.07 | 11.11 | 14.81 |

**News Sources**

| | Named | Unnamed | Family/Partner | Ardern | Govt MP | Opp MP | Int Pol | Pub Serv | SocMed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3E | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 5E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6E | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7E | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 10E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 11E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 13E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 14E | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 15E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 16E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 17E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 18E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 22E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 23E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 24E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 26E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 27E | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 28E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 29E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30E | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 27 | 3 | 2 | 26 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 3 | 7 |
| % | 100 | 11.11 | 7.41 | 96.3 | 11.11 | 11.11 | 51.85 | 11.11 | 25.93 |