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# **Politics of Kindness**

## **Exploring the Political Discourse of Kindness Articulated by Ardern in New Zealand**

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

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by

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## ABSTRACT

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Values underpin much of how politics is done. Jacinda Ardern has been re-elected for a second term as New Zealand's Prime Minister after kick-starting her role as a world leader by articulating the goal of bringing ethical values of kindness and compassion into politics and government. Amidst a background of socio-political upheaval in many parts of the world, her approach has gained widespread attention. Therefore, this study explores the potential of Kindness as a political value by analysing the political discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern (Kindness here is used with a capital K and it includes the ethical values kindness, empathy, compassion, *manaakitanga* and *aroha*).

Drawing on the field of Critical Discourse Studies, the research applies macro context theory to identify global topics in relevance to the political discourse of Kindness. The analysis highlights how Kindness, as a political value, has the radical potential to transform political conduct and address the problems of economism, nationalism, and racism. Topics, disclaimers, and metaphors are used in an axiological analysis to see what global actions were legitimised using Kindness as a political value. Kindness as a political value was used for actions such as: promoting a socio-political vision, framing problems and proposing solutions, legitimising policy, persuading leaders, and managing crisis and conflict. Kindness as a political value is then proposed as a well-rounded solution to change how politics is enacted at three levels: leadership, societal, and policy settings.

The analysis further revealed how the political discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern was used to i) legitimise and promote the wellbeing framework that has informed the Ardern-led government's budgeting process; ii) challenge nationalism, isolationism, and protectionism and choose compassionate domestic policies; iii) promote a vision of safe and resilient societies where governments address racist histories and build societies to navigate differences and diversity; iv) manage a national crisis following the Christchurch terror attack and lead the

nation's response, and v) identify political conduct as the underlying problem addressed using the discourse of Kindness.

The discussion also reveals that the 'Politics of Kindness' can address socio-political upheaval through challenging domination, inspiring hope, and leading with resonance.

*Keywords:* Kindness, compassion, empathy, politics, leadership, discourse, ethical values, Jacinda Ardern, Christchurch, critical discourse studies, manaakitanga, aroha, political leadership, values-based politics, political values.

## II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For the ones who have gone before us -

Sheela chithi, sorry we could not make this world a kinder place for you.

For the ones who follow us -

Zoe, Zac, Zara, Micah, Ruby, Zeke, Lily, Joey and Rose, we will with all our heart, all our mind and all our power, try and leave a better, kinder world for you.

For the ones who are here -

Come, let us engage, let us be inspired and let us collaborate to make the world kinder for ourselves, each other and even the other.

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மனுषினே, நன்மை இன்னதென்று அவர் உனக்கு  
அறிவித்திருக்கிறார்; நியாயஞ்செய்து,  
இரக்கத்தைச் சிரேகித்து,  
உன் தேவனுக்கு முன்பாக மனத்தாழ்மையாய் நடப்பதை  
அல்லாமல் வேறே என்னத்தைக் கர்த்தர் உன்னிடத்தில் கேட்கிறார்.

“He has told you, O mortal,  
what is good and what is required of you:  
to do justice,  
to love kindness  
and to walk humbly with your God.”

### III. PREFACE

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When I set out to explore the potential of ethical values in politics, I was looking to make sense of the socio-political world around me. I was looking for answers and landed on the idea of studying ethical values. It was after that, in 2017, that Ardern became the Prime Minister of New Zealand. The political discourse on kindness, compassion and empathy articulated by Ardern captured my attention. I knew enough to realise that election rhetoric was nothing to build my hopes of seeing a different kind of politics. Over the following months, the resurgence of these values in public discourse gained more attention, and I recognised that this politics of compassion and kindness was worthy of closer investigation.

Throughout the course of this research, I have been moving back and forth between hope and cynicism. Meanwhile, in 2019, after the Christchurch terror attacks, I saw the potential of these values in New Zealand's collective response and how the discourse around these values started gaining traction. It was an indicator that many around the world share this quest with me – to see that governments, leaders and nations can be different. It showed me how these so-called ‘weak values’ could be powerful and effective in politics when modelled in authentic, consistent, and well-rounded ways.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	Critical Discourse Studies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
JA	Jacinda Ardern
MP	Member of Parliament
NZ	New Zealand
PM	Prime Minister
POTUS	President of the United States
RNZ	Radio New Zealand
Stats NZ	Stats New Zealand
TVNZ	Television New Zealand
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
US	United States
WITW	Women in the World

## LIST OF KEY TERMS

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aroha affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>

Kindness, compassion, empathy, aroha and manaakitanga  
(with capital K)

manaakitanga hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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Since 2017, reports of the ethical values of kindness, empathy, and compassion have risen in prominence in connection with government, politics, and leadership in New Zealand (“The Observer view” 2019; “Kindness and kaitiakitanga:” 2018; Theunissen 2019). Amongst growing tensions in many political environments around the world, New Zealand politics has witnessed a resurgence of these ethical values that are mainly deemed unfit for the harsh world of politics (Watkins 2018; “You can be strong, you can be kind” 2018). Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has gained widespread attention both domestically and on the global stage for representing and modelling the kind of politics and leadership that is based on kindness, empathy, and compassion. A New Zealand-based poll in May 2020 indicated that Ardern emerged as “the most popular Prime Minister in a century” (“I want the government... to bring kindness back.” 2020, p.1). This rise in popularity for New Zealand’s youngest Prime Minister highlights the significance of analysing the ethical values of kindness, empathy, and compassion that underpin her politics. Therefore, in an attempt to explore the potential of ethical values-based politics in an increasingly tumultuous socio-political world, this study examines the discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern to explore how Kindness as a core value in the way leaders approach politics, has the radical potential to address socio-political upheaval.

## BACKGROUND

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### Democratic politics and socio-political upheaval

Democratic politics is where ideas and identities fight to gain and or sustain power to organise social power, co-operation, resource allocation, and conflict resolution through democratic consensus (Harris 2017; Turner 2006). In this study, the term politics refers to the political activity of organising ideas, governing social groups, and facilitating resources (Bealey 1999; Harris 2017; Nolan 2002). However, politics is also otherwise known for the abuse of power and the bureaucracy that it

entails; the term ‘politics’ is predominantly related to negative undertones, distrust, and cynicism, and ‘politicians’ are often considered to be dishonest and self-interested. (Bealey 1999; Dalton 2004; Fox 2012; Hay 2007; Manning 2015; Stoker 2006). This erosion in the meaning, function, and consequently, the perception of politics in society highlights what this research identifies as ‘socio-political upheaval.’ The various aspects of this socio-political upheaval and its causes have been discussed by scholars studying democratic politics globally.

At the turn of the millennium, McAuley (2003) predicted, “times of massive upheaval in almost every part of our existence: in economics, in lifestyle, in gender roles, in the nature of the state, and in the definition of society” (p.204). Boggs (2007) linked the growing distrust and disengagement of meaningful public participation to what is described as a “deep aversion to politics” (p.321). This aversion is both disempowering to communities, and a threat to democracy as more and more people retreat to their private lives (Boggs 2007). Kane (2017) outlines a political upheaval that shook the order of a post-war world as perceived through the disarray of established parties, de-democratisation in eastern Europe, resurgence of nationalism, expanding terrorism, and the confusion caused by an influx of migrants and refugees into western societies. It is impossible to attribute the cause of this upheaval to any one of the issues. However, the market failure caused by poor economic management is one of the causes of this breakdown, which furthers the public's dissatisfaction towards the self-proclaimed superiority of experts who directed policy and misled the politicians (Kane 2017). The years 2015 and 2016 are also examples of upheaval in civic, democratic politics witnessing a major socio-political shift with the announcement of an Anthropocene epoch, the surprise election of President Donald Trump in US politics and Brexit in a tumultuous European politics (Freedman 2018; Kane 2017). Kane (2017) argues that this upheaval which is rooted in the failure of economic management and the failure of an ethical response has been in the making for many years leading up to it and that “Trump is merely the American exemplar of a more general trend... of political disaffection and upheaval around the world” (p.18). Kane argues that experts (particularly economists) are to take some responsibility for the rise in alternate facts caused by the “heightened level of resistance” to expert opinions that is felt

among the public (p.19). Freedman (2018) points out that elitism and lack of accountability in media institutions have also contributed to this socio-political upheaval by perpetuating public distrust and dissatisfaction. Additionally, Monbiot (2018) has pointed to the erosion of politics and political structures by highlighting the state of our environment and other systemic and wicked problems that are piling on.

In the New Zealand context, Harris (2017) believes that New Zealand politics has lost its way because of factors such as inequality that furthered the distance between members of society, “mean-spirited, dismissive rhetoric” and the lack of imaginative thinking in politics (p.11). The lack of inspiration, increasing disengagement, and the inability to provide practical solutions to the increasing economic, social, and environmental problems are some of the reasons why several scholars and the public have come to believe that “politics is at an end” (McAuley 2003, p.204; Boggs 2000; Kane 2017; Kontos 2018; Manning 2015; Monbiot 2017).

The year 2020 has turned out to be another significant year for politics as governments globally face unprecedented social, political, and economic upheaval. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, protests over racial injustices and a looming economic crisis, public dissatisfaction, division, and distrust of politics highlights the socio-political upheaval discussed in this study (Friedman 2020). Political leaders must address this socio-political upheaval if they want to survive the impending trifecta of crises and effectively lead society to safety in the process.

All politicians are articulating a vision of what a good society looks like while trying to inspire people to follow them using a wide range of values and tools (Kane 2017). The policy response and the leadership approach that routinely disappoints the average citizens has created what Kane (2017) calls a “gaping ethical hole” which in turn leads to a loss of faith in the system, “backlash against globalisation” and ultimately the kind of leaders that led everyone astray (p.19). This ethical hole has led to the rise of non-traditional outsiders entering the national and global political scene (Kane 2017). For example, US President Donald Trump thrived on public dissatisfaction throughout his campaign, which, according to him,

is due to the failure of political leadership that has been of 'inferior' quality. Kane (2017) agrees that Trump is not wrong about the diagnosis, except the alternatives often include anger, division, fear, and unrest as leaders expose and exploit the dysfunction of party politics (Kane 2017).

The objective of highlighting these issues surrounding politics is not to paint a picture of gloom and doom. It is important to emphasise that this research is not a cynical or an apocalyptic view of politics. On the contrary, this study hopes to channel critical thinking to navigate this growing upheaval of politics at a domestic and global level. If the last hundred years is anything to go by, the world has been resilient through much socio-political disarray - navigating intense crises and embracing drastic changes - changes fuelled by revolutionary ideas (Harris 2017; Kane 2017). The idea to address political failure with an approach based on ethical values is a result of that. This study claims that values-based politics has the potential to address the socio-political upheaval of our time. Values-based politics is an approach to political activity “more centrally motivated by values, and more focused on securing values in outcome” (Harris 2017, p.8).

In New Zealand politics, Ardern, as the 40<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister, claimed the ethical values such as kindness, empathy, compassion, and relentless positivity to be the mark of her leadership, government, and politics (Friedman 2020). Moments before swearing into office in September 2017, Ardern stated, “I want this government to feel different, I want people to feel that it’s open, that it’s listening and that it’s going to bring kindness back” (“I want the government... to bring kindness back.” 2017). Amidst the background of socio-political upheaval, the resurgence of the ethical values of kindness, empathy, and compassion in politics is a notable phenomenon.

## THE RESURGENCE OF ETHICAL VALUES IN ARDERN'S POLITICS

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Following the swift rise of Jacinda Ardern as the leader of the NZ Labour Party, as the third female Prime Minister of New Zealand, and as the world's youngest Prime Minister of that time, Ardern promised to reject the kind of politics that is divisive, dishonest and uses dirty tactics while promising to lead a sort of politics that was compassionate, kind, and empathetic (Bennet 2018). Ardern continued to distinguish her politics from the global trend and chose a politics that reflects concepts like kindness, care, honesty, and hope as a compelling alternative. Domestically, this change of tone ensures a more humane response in the interaction between the government and the people it is meant to serve. For example, when Ardern calls for public workers to show kindness in dealing with welfare beneficiaries and working with communities to help those in need (Murphy 2018, Roy 2018). In addition to her approach of "claiming kindness" and "counting on the currency of compassion," Ardern has also urged other leaders to try compassion, kindness, and love and put these ethical values ahead of "isolationism, rejectionism, and racism" in world politics ("You can be strong, you can be kind" 2018; Roy 2018; Watkins 2018; "Kindness and kaitiakitanga:" 2018). The language and values that Ardern presented at the United Nations General Assembly received widespread attention, particularly for its stark contrast to her counterparts ("You can be strong, you can be kind" 2018; Watkins 2018; The "Kindness and kaitiakitanga:" 2018). Ardern credits the Māori worldview and the values of *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship), *whanaungatanga* (kinship, family connectedness) and *manaakitanga* (kindness, care, hospitality) that underpin New Zealand's approach to social and environmental policies on the international stage ("Kindness and kaitiakitanga:" 2018; Bracewell-Worrall 2018). Ardern also positions this politics of kindness as something New Zealanders want and the values of "fairness, kindness and strength" as the "kiwi way" (Bennet 2018). One report suggests that regardless of party affiliations, New Zealanders want a different kind of politics to the one that is divisive or uses dirty tactics (Bennet 2018). In March 2019, Ardern's claim of kindness, empathy, and compassion as the mark of her leadership also gained global attention in the

immediate aftermath of the Christchurch mosque shootings for what many around the world (including Muslim and immigrant communities) perceived as an exemplar demonstration of compassion, empathy, and love for the victims and the wider Muslim community from a leader of a nation (“Jacinda Ardern is redefining leadership” 2019; Theunissen 2019; Cook 2019). When US President Donald Trump asked how New Zealand could be supported in the time of crisis, Ardern reportedly responded by urging the POTUS “to show sympathy and love for all Muslim communities” (Cook 2019).

This resurgence of values is not without criticism. There are prevalent attitudes that consider values such as kindness, empathy, and compassion in politics as unrealistic or ‘too waffly’ while other arguments claim that there is simply no place for those values in politics (Reilley 2010; SST 2018; The Timaru Herald 2018; Edwards 2018; Van Beynen 2018). As a result, Ardern’s unconventional leadership, along with her feminist approach, was prone to attack and criticism as being too weak, soft, or inexperienced for the world of politics. However, Ardern has maintained that “it takes strength to be an empathetic leader” and to represent values like kindness and compassion is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength against the odds (“Jacinda Ardern: ‘It takes strength to be an empathetic leader.’” 2018 p.1).

Ardern’s proposition for a different kind of politics based on kindness, empathy, and compassion is in stark contrast to other leadership trends in politics. Over the first full term as PM, Ardern’s commitment to a ‘politics of kindness’ has been tested not only by the ongoing wicked problems like poverty, and climate crisis, the machinery of parliamentary politics and everyday politicking but also by unforeseen crises such as a terrorist attack, a volcanic eruption, and now a global pandemic. Throughout all of this, Ardern has emerged as a strong leader and a modern pioneer of the concepts of kindness, compassion, and empathy internationally. This prominence is evident in several of the latest New Zealand polls, which indicated that Ardern is the most preferred Prime Minister at a record high of 63% in May and 54% in June in a Colmar Brunton poll and by 59.5% in May and 60.8% in July in a News-hub Reid poll (“National rebounds in new poll,” 2020;

Moir 2020; “Jacinda Ardern soars in preferred PM ratings” 2020; Sadler 2020). Although various factors contribute to the prominence of Ardern’s leadership, the ethical values that underpin Ardern’s leadership and politics - particularly the ethical values of kindness, empathy, and compassion - are the phenomenon worth investigating. We are yet to fully understand the significance of these values at the centre of politics, particularly at the intersections of political leadership, language, and decision-making.

This study also recognises the rightful and equal standing and contribution of *Te Ao Māori* (Māori worldview) and *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language) in New Zealand politics, socio-cultural values, and particularly in the political discourse of Ardern. For that reason, in addition to the three values (kindness, empathy, and compassion), *manaakitanga* and *aroha* - the Māori values that represent the notions of kindness, compassion, and empathy in *Te Reo Māori* - are also included in this investigation. For the rest of this thesis, Kindness – with a capital K will represent the core values of ‘kindness, compassion, empathy, *manaakitanga* and *aroha*’ because these are the ethical values highlighted in Ardern’s claim of the kind of politics, government and leadership that she represents.

## THESIS STATEMENT AND OUTLINE

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### THESIS STATEMENT

This research aims to investigate how Kindness as a political value in the way leaders approach politics has the radical potential to address the socio-political upheaval identified in this study. Based on van Dijk’s (2015) socio-cognitive approach to Critical Discourse Studies, this research applies intertextuality and macro context theory to identify the global contexts of relevance to the political discourse of Kindness. Sowińska’s (2013) framework for value analysis is utilised to identify how Kindness is used and what actions were legitimised. Topics, disclaimers and metaphors are the main tools used in the axiological analysis of Ardern’s speeches to identify how values of Kindness are used to legitimise political actions.

## THESIS OUTLINE

To investigate the ethical value of Kindness articulated by Ardern, the following chapter will first present a literature review, mapping out key concepts of politics, discourse and values that are significant in understanding and exploring this (re-)emerging phenomena of Kindness in politics and its potential in addressing the outlined socio-political upheaval.

The third chapter will outline the methodological field of Critical Discourse Studies, intertextuality and the socio-cognitive approach that underpin the study. Macro-context theory and the critical study of power, knowledge, and ideology are situated in this chapter. Data selection and data analysis steps are reported in detail in this section. The remainder of the thesis will focus on reporting and discussing the values of Kindness in politics.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will report the findings as outlined in the methods section with each chapter focussing on different findings. Chapter 4 will report the macro or global contexts and that are identified and what macro actions are legitimised using of Kindness. Chapter 5 will be a consolidated case study on the Christchurch terror attacks that focuses on how Kindness is positioned in the discourse around the event and what global problems were identified and addressed during the Christchurch attacks. Chapter 6 reports on how Kindness is placed in politics.

Finally, chapter 7 will summarise all the findings from the previous chapters, discussing the strengths and limitations of the ‘Politics of Kindness’ and offer further research recommendations.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW: ETHICAL VALUES IN POLITICS, LEADERSHIP, AND DISCOURSE

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The theoretical positioning of this study is situated at the intersection of relevant concepts on values, politics, leadership and discourse discussed in this review. This review draws on scholars who address the theme of values-based politics, language, leadership, and society (Harris 2017; McKibbin 2017; Sennett 2019; bell hooks 2000; Monbiot 2017). Politics is already value-laden, and leaders communicate values when they seek to persuade, legitimise and coerce each other and society (Sowniska 2013; Harris 2017). This review studied a range of literature from academic books, reviews, articles, academic blogs, and academic podcasts. The review maps out what was described earlier as the emergence of an era of socio-political upheaval. This is followed by a review of references to the role of values in the domains of politics, leadership, and discourse studies. This chapter concludes by highlighting the key influences on this study.

### SOCIO-POLITICAL UPHEAVAL

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The reference to socio-political upheaval points to the erosion of ethical standards in politics and a related increase in societal aversion to politics. What follows is an account of this upheaval and the failure of modern democratic politics:

### DISSATISFACTION AND DISTRUST

There is increasing dissatisfaction with politics, arising suspicion of politicians, and a growing distrust of political institutions, the process of government, and the people who lead it (Boggs 2007; Kane 2017; Manning 2015). Kane (2017) identifies how the American public was dissatisfied with being left out during the recovery period following the financial crisis of 2007-2008 that favoured financial institutions. Dissatisfaction with bureaucratic processes and government experts are a major contributor to this sentiment (Kane 2017). The cause and level of distrust vary in different socio-political contexts (Wendel 2012). In New Zealand,

the latest stats show that 29% and 33% of all respondents rated their trust in parliament as low and medium, while 44% of Māori respondents rated their trust as low (Stats NZ 2018).

## DISENGAGEMENT AND DISILLUSIONMENT

Public disengagement is connected to the disillusionment with the political system. Disengagement is evident in the decline of voter numbers as the younger generation are showing less interest in formal politics (Boggs 2007; Manning 2015). Disengagement poses a threat to the sustainability and the future of political systems if people are increasingly disillusioned to have meaningful engagement with politics. In New Zealand, according to statistics, around 35.3% and 27.7% of the respondents rate their interest in politics as low and medium (Stats NZ 2018). Out of the non-voters in the 2014 elections, 54% of the respondents cited feelings of disengagement as the reason for not participating (Stats NZ 2018). However, it is important to note that in the 2017 general elections, 52000 more voters aged under 30 voted than in the 2014 elections, with the highest percentage of increase amongst the age groups 18-24 at 6.5% and ages 25-29 at 5.5% (Electoral commission 2018). Manning (2015) argues that public disengagement cannot be individualised as choice or preference, but the disengagement instead is a result of a failing political system.

## DIRTY POLITICS AND DISHONESTY

Political life in New Zealand through the 2008-2017 period normalised dirty play, attack-strategies and smear campaign tactics (Hager 2014). Hager (2014) claims that this kind of dirty politics is evident in New Zealand with the exposure of personal attacks and underhanded strategies deployed by the then ruling National Party in partnership with political commentators and bloggers. These practices point to a toxic and unethical culture within politics, where dishonesty is expected and even tolerated among political leaders (Boggs 2007; Harris 2017). Due to this perceived lack of integrity, when traces of honesty, integrity and authenticity are found in political leaders, it is considered as exceptional (Kontos 2018). This result shows varied responses such as distrust, apathy or even tolerance for such expected

character displays amongst political leaders. For example, even when a political leader has been proved to have lied in many instances, supporters seem not to mind the lack of integrity if it aligns with their political ideology (Kontos 2018). Politicians often get praised when they display good values, which would be expected standard practice elsewhere (Hage 2019).

## DIVISIVE AND UNCIVIL

The current political culture has also enhanced polarisation, highlighting the existing division between different groups and different sides of the political spectrum. Uncivil politics exploits ideological differences and othering strategies to divide and capitalise on fear for political gain (Kontos 2018; Kane 2017). The resurgence of nationalism and the election of political leaders like Donald Trump in the US, Boris Johnson in the UK and Narendra Modi in India, who demonstrate and exploit nationalistic sentiments have led to a socio-political upheaval in the form of anger, fear, and division (Kane 2017; Freedman 2018). Freedman (2018) criticises the elite media institutions for their part in the rise of populist leaders that employ negative sentiments and alternate facts as tools for personal and political mandates. With dismissive ideological negotiations, there has been an increase in extreme and radical groups on both ends of the spectrum (Kontos 2018). Alongside the widely covered terrorist attacks that have been threatening western societies; the state-sponsored ‘terrorism’ in the form of illegal attacks on countries like Iraq and Yemen; the increase in alt-right terrorism as seen in the Christchurch terror attacks; the lynching of Muslims and Christians in India; as well as the mass shootings in the US, raise a lot of concern over the ongoing divisive rhetoric (Freedman 2018; Kane 2017; Kontos 2018; Sowińska 2013). Parliamentary party politics continues to survive and thrive on capitalising ideological differences, further amplifying them for political gain as an effective strategy in modern politics (Kontos 2018). Kontos (2018) highlights that the overt bigotry from the right to the case-by-case intolerance on the left, are examples of the political game. The political game also uses insults and mockery as propaganda tools while perceiving civic discord as necessary for political gain (Kontas 2018).

## DISEMPOWERING AND UNDEMOCRATIC

With increasing disengagement, this political upheaval is furthered by disempowerment of citizens across the world (Kontos 2018; Boggs 2007). The process of formal politics can thus be a facade of democracy (Boggs 2007; Kontos 2018). Monbiot (2017) believes that ‘imagination’ is the key moving forward and is also the piece that is missing in how we do politics and governance. However, it is increasingly apparent that politics as-it-is is “unable to stimulate or inspire” (McAuley 2003, p.204). Voter activity is a limited form of participation when in New Zealand the national election and local body elections occur once every three years. Even then, 30.3% of non-voters claim a perceived barrier for not voting. Likewise, members of society may read a newspaper, watch the news (75%), have conversations and discussions on social media and feel like they are participating in politics (Stats NZ 2018). However, only a small number of people have ever contacted a member of Parliament (7.7%) or attended advocacy or neighbourhood interest group meetings (10.7%) (Stats NZ 2018). Recent stats in New Zealand also show that 37.3 % and 34.7% of the public notably believe that they have a low and medium influence on government or decision-making (Stats NZ 2018). Meanwhile, only 29.1% and 8.6% of the respondents rate their understanding of how government works and the decision-making processes as high and very high (Stats NZ 2018). With the lack of imagination in the model and design of the political process to engage and empower the citizens, the public is bound to grow more averse towards any notion of politics being a meaningful part of their lives – but rather a necessary although intolerable activity (Kontas 2018; Monbiot 2017). This sets a dangerous precedent as a "deep aversion to politics will have ominous implications since elites will be freer to pursue their agenda with minimal obstruction from below" (Boggs 2007, p.321). This aversion can also be predominant in groups that experience inequality, injustice and othering (Boggs 2007). Where people are not empowered, democracy has failed to be the political process that it set out to be (Kontas 2018).

Following the outline of a socio-political upheaval, this review situates the study of ethical values in political discourse by reviewing relevant literature on ethical values and their role in politics, leadership, and discourse.

## ETHICAL VALUES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

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Values are principles of crucial importance that underpin how we live life and interact with one another (Harris 2017; UNESCO 2005). Hall (1994), refers to values as the “ideals that give significance to our lives; that is reflected through the priorities we choose; and that we act on consistently and repeatedly” (p.21). Values cannot be perceived as just abstract ideals as they inform our decision-making and turn into actions. The reporting on values undertaken by UNESCO (2002; 2005) identifies eight core values as critical to full human development under the eight dimensions of the human person such as physical, intellectual, emotional, and ethical dimensions (see figure 1). At an individual level, these values are said to be significant for human development and human function, while at a societal level these values are considered vital to how we interact and work together as members of society (UNESCO 2002; UNESCO 2005).

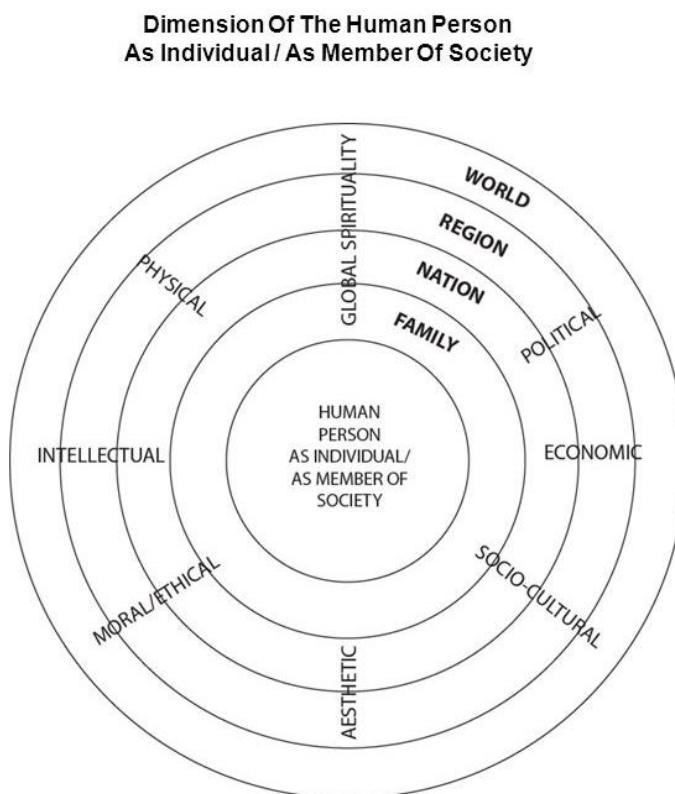


FIGURE 1 DIMENSION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Under the ‘ethical dimension’ of the human person as an individual and as a member of society, the UNESCO (2005) report identifies ‘love and compassion’ as the ‘core values’ of the ethical and moral dimension (see figure 2).

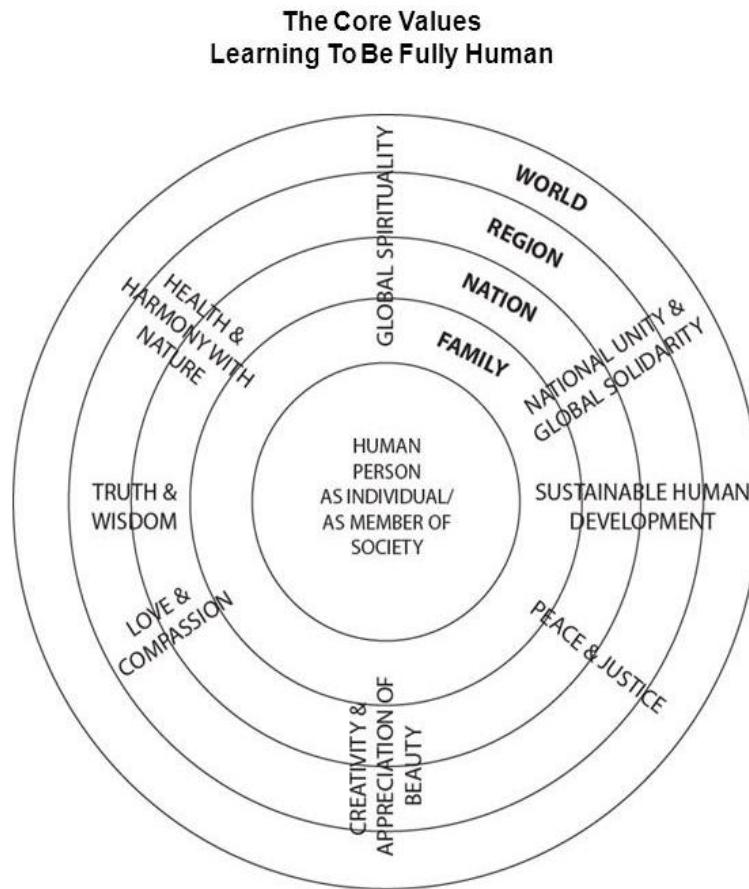


FIGURE 2 THE CORE VALUES LEARNING TO BE FULLY HUMAN

Along with the core values of love and compassion, empathy, kindness, care, and sharing are considered the “basic foundations of ethics and morality” (see figure 3) (UNESCO 2002 p.31). Ethical values are a set of selected values (such as compassion, kindness, care, help, empathy and love) commonly shared across groups of culture, religion, class, race, and gender. They are of significance at a personal level and fundamental to human development and societal interaction. Core values are values “around which other values converge, while related values are those which support the core or major value” (UNESCO 2005 p.15).

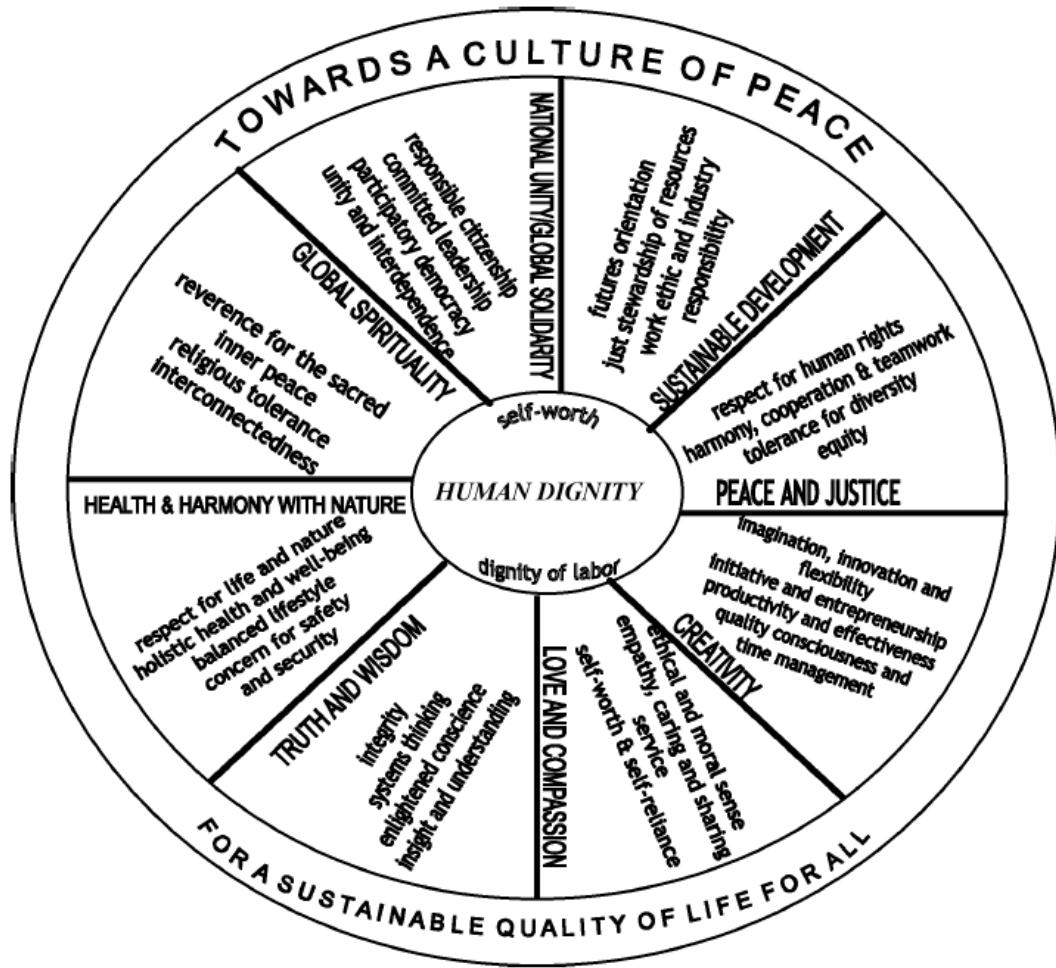


FIGURE 3 PERSONAL AND WORK VALUES FOR ‘LEARNING TO DO’

Based on Ardern’s claims, kindness, compassion, empathy, aroha, and manaakitanga are the five values that comprise the ‘core values’ analysed in this study. Further, it is important also to discuss the limitations of ethical and moral values at a more critical level. In an academic podcast on ethical values in public policy, Sennett (2019) contributes a perspective to distinguish values like compassion and empathy as more ethical values than moral values. In the instance of how we approach welfare, he argues that an approach based on morality can lead to compassion that is unequal (Sennett 2019). Since moral values are subjective and about being good and doing good, often the misconception is that being good can

lead to doing good (Sennett 2019). This is problematic as an emphasis on the individual's morals to guide values like compassion has the danger of creating an unequal exchange that positions one as a benevolent saviour who extends compassion while the other as a benefactor of their charity. This reliance solely on individuals' goodwill to act on values like empathy, is also problematic. It relies on the individual's ability to be consistent in their empathetic feelings and is void of accountability. However, ethical values are rooted in a commitment to one another and developed through interaction and engagement rather than relying on the goodwill of individuals to act on these values. Any use of these values must address the power differentials and aim for an equal and respectful interaction. This positions ethical values as a socially shared commitment that produces morally just outcomes.

McKibbin (2017) and Harris (2017) make a case for 'love' as the overarching core value out of which other related values such as compassion, kindness, empathy, and care stem from. However, in connection with this study, the dimension of ethics comprises compassion, kindness, empathy, *aroha* and *manaakitanga* as the ethical values found in Ardern's speeches. To define and debate each value in detail is beyond the scope of this study. Hence, this section highlights somewhat of a definition for these values with the help of UNESCO's 2002 and 2005 reports titled 'learning to be' and 'learning to do'. Compassion is described as "that pure selflessness flowing from the depth of being directed toward uplifting the condition of the other" (UNESCO 2002 p.31). Compassion then can be understood as a deep sense and emotion that is internally felt, while empathy "involves the ability to participate in the thoughts and feelings of others, involving both the ability to place oneself in the other person's situation and to communicate genuine understanding and deep concern" (UNESCO 2005 p.21). Kindness is the action that displays the deeply felt and experienced values in expression towards others, particularly towards "the least, the last and the lost" (UNESCO 2002 p.31).

In order to consider the role of ethical values in human development, in working together with others, and mainly to establish a shared ethical commitment, it is crucial for these ethical values to be discussed and promoted in politics,

leadership and discourse. This review will discuss key theories in the fields of politics, leadership and discourse to highlight the role of values and explore the significance of ethical values.

## POLITICS AND THE ROLE OF VALUES

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Much of what politics is about points to the activity of managing resources, conflicts, people and ideas. In the most basic terms, Lasswell (1950) described politics as an activity that facilitates who gets what and determines when and how it is achieved. Bealey's (1999) idea of politics focuses on conflict resolution, where the main conflict is over material resources. The definition for New Zealand politics proposed by Harris (2017) indicates it as "the process in New Zealand by which ideas, identities, and individuals gain or lose power" (p.6). Often, the way governance, conflict resolution, and resource facilitation occur are either through means of consensus or force and values aid in that (Nolan 2002).

Additionally, values are also an indicator of what is on the minds of political actors and the ideologies that underpin politics and society (Sowińska 2013). van Dijk (2000), points out that 'it is the specific, group-related and interest-defined, interpretation of values that forms the building blocks of ideological beliefs' (p.14). This section identifies how certain values and ideological beliefs have helped produce some of the dominant narratives in political science and public policy. If as Sowińska (2013) states "values dictate what is permitted or prohibited and the goals to be aspired to by individuals and societies alike" then it provides a strong argument for the relevance for the revolution of ethical values in politics (p.794). This section maps out some problematic concepts in politics highlighted across literature and a call for change towards ethical values in politics.

### Self-interest

This review identifies that the dominant narratives that have shaped much of politics are underpinned by values based on self-interest and promoted by individuals who are selfish, cynical and opportunistic (Stone 2012). Values of

selfishness and self-interest do not fully represent the true values that humans cherish and aspire to in their private lives (Stone 2012). In social science, the notion of ‘self-interest’ that has long dominated the discourse of politics and public policy is primarily associated with rational choice theory (Downs, 1957; Homans, 1961; Elster, 1986). Rational-choice theory assumes that human beings act to maximise individual utility (Downs 1957). That means, the central value to effectively carry out the political activity of social organising, resource allocation, conflict-resolution, cooperation and cohabiting is by means of appealing to self-interest, and for individuals and ideas to gain and sustain power is also out of and through selfish means. This market-driven mechanism is limited in representing the values and the wholesome well-being of human and natural systems (Stone 2012, Monbiot 2017).

Scholars have made strides in dismantling the concept and the possibility of rationality alone being the effective form of political activity (Stone n.d.). Scholars likewise also question the possibility of self-interest when so much of human interests are tied to the groups and social structures they are members of (Manning 2015; Stone 2012). Stone (n.d.) in her blog writes that the notion of pure objectivity that underpins rational theory is also challenged by many philosophies and that emotional distance is neither possible nor productive. The relevance of bureaucratic politics, where only a select few rational actors make objective policy decisions and enforce cooperation of the wider public through self-interest mechanisms or rewards and punishment is waning (Monbiot 2017; Stone 2012; Harris 2017).

Emotions and values cannot be grouped or distanced in policy science, as it is naive and dangerous to exclude them from political reasoning (Stone n.d.). Selfishness is not inclusive and is not capable of fixing existing issues. Instead of self-interest that is still dominant in institutional and societal structures, Burrows (2014) proposes an ethic that is “dangerous unselfishness... an eternal...and sometimes costly altruism” (p.331).

## State v. Market struggle

In the research towards reimagining politics, Monbiot (2017) makes an important distinction by highlighting the flaw in the two main narratives of economy and state: One argues that the state must have more power over the economy and the second argues that the market must be free from any interference. As a response, Monbiot (2017) claims that state and market “both, by rooting out attachment have helped breed alienation, rage and anomie that breeds extremism” (p.94). He proposes that without a different economic model, the imagination and vision of community and a new politics remain just that. In understanding this struggle, it is important to note that any proposition of a new model should not be about either ‘market over state’ or ‘state over market’, or even the combination of both. That type of thinking has continued to perpetuate the partisan divide into irreconcilable differences. Any notable attempt at resolving that has led to a middle-line strategy that is sometimes overlaid with a compromise of values and fails to be effective. As an alternative, Monbiot (2017) suggests a community of people sustained by engagement, cooperation, and moral codes. Even in this proposal, we find values and principles highlighted as a key to informing our politics and thereby providing a fresh and convincing perspective of community, belonging, engagement and participation rooted in “altruism, empathy and deep connection” (Monbiot 2017 p. 185).

## Towards a people-oriented politics

Even in early modern politics and the Renaissance period, values such as compassion were a key political emotion discussed and highly contested (Steenbergh 2016). According to Burrows (2014), this “revolution of values” means, “moving from a ‘thing-oriented’ society to a ‘person-oriented’ society” (p.329). This is built on the notion that people and the environment have value, worth, and absolute dignity. Therefore, it is our responsibility out of mutual concern to reimagine addressing social issues and not see it as a threat to the economy (Sennett 2019; Burrows 2014). The pursuit of unity, collective action, and creative leadership that exhibit imagination, hope and principles all stem from a revolution of values (Burrows 2014, p.329). This review identified literature promoting a utopian

community design, which engages society and politics on the principles of an altruistic, unselfish, people-oriented, loving community and enhances belonging (Monbiot 2017; Burrows 2014). Basically, practising ethical values in politics is to “work for each other” (Burrows 2014 p.18).

The next section outlines leadership theories and how those various theories influenced the role of traits, emotions and values.

## LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

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The subject of leadership has been theorised for thousands of years amongst eastern civilisations and centuries in western and modern civilisations. The history of leadership has witnessed many evolving theories of what makes a leader and different leadership styles. (Spiller et al., 2015). The eastern civilisations emphasise nobility, wisdom, storytelling and enabling others as traits of a leader and in the west, the ‘gentlemen leader’ is benevolent, wise, righteous, influential and brave (Steenbergh 2016; Spiller et al., 2015). Political leaders have always been expected to show ‘benevolence’ – nobility, care, compassion and generosity (Steenbergh 2016). Considering another dominant civilisation that still influences modern times, we see that ancient Rome identifies vision, duty and values as the three foundations of leadership (Gottweis, 2006).

### The exclusion of emotion and values

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, concepts like the *great man theory* promoted that leaders were born with natural qualities, abilities and traits, thereby elevating certain individuals to a higher heroic platform (Spiller et al. 2015). This theory does not account for factors such as the social and environmental context that contribute to shaping one’s qualities and abilities. This theory has been disputed by several scholars and other emerging theories since. With ongoing discussions of whether leaders are born or made, the remnants of this popular belief can still be found across domains in society today. In political leadership, we can observe how such beliefs contributed to the few selective ‘heroes’ who have long been members from

dominant groups that exploited such beliefs to attain and sustain power. In the 1930s, trait leadership, and behaviourism (task-oriented and people oriented) contributed an entirely new flow of literature focusing on the outward, traits, habits, and behaviours of leaders (Spiller et al. 2015). The growth and prominence of the field of psychology in the 1960s brought on *cognitivism* (the science of how we think) and *contingency* theories that saw leadership based on environment and context (Spiller et al. 2015). From 1975 to 1990, *transactional theory* rooted in power and hierarchical structures saw leaders as rational actors using forms of rewards and punishment to gain participation and cooperation. The values of self-interest became a central mechanism and a leadership tool to gain consensus and cooperation. During the free-market driven 1980s, the transactional style became widespread and influential across different business, governmental, and organizational domains and is still present today (Spiller et al. 2015). The inequitable leadership style limits human connection to trade principles and excludes human values, emotion or expression (Harris 2017).

The need for a better kind of leadership in more recent times, particularly among business and organisational leaders, led to the rise of theories such as *relational leadership*, *distributed leadership*, and the more popular theories such as *servant leadership* which challenges the hierarchical power notions of leadership, and *transformational leadership* which is qualities and abilities-focused and is about modelling and influencing the same out of the ‘followers’ (Spiller et al. 2015). *Authentic leadership* that focuses on the qualities of integrity and honesty as a leader was developed in connection with the above. In contrast to the carrot-and-stick transactional style, these theories centred around being equitable, interactive, inspirational, and empathetic. Further, the emergence of Emotional Intelligence established emotion as a primary task of leadership that can be directed by either positive or negative registers that produce resonant and dissonant leadership respectively. Gloeman et al. (2002), in their work on emotional intelligence in leadership, state that:

*“the art of resonant leadership interweaves our intellect and our emotions. Of course, leaders need the prerequisite business acumen and thinking skills to*

*be decisive. But if they try to lead solely from intellect, they'll miss a crucial piece of the equation" (p.29).*

The study of political leadership is increasingly important in the field of politics due to what some scholars call the "personalisation of politics" (Hayes 2009; Laustsen and Bor 2017). In this personalisation of politics, the "programmatic function (of political parties) is being steadily absorbed by the major party leaders", leading to a personalisation of agenda over party mandate, "greater autonomy" for those individual leaders and a "greater electoral volatility" as a result (McCallister 2007, p.584). McCallister (2007) also identifies that a leader's non-political traits and qualities play a more significant part in parliamentary and presidential systems. Laustsen and Bor (2017) in their research test the significance of different political leadership traits and evaluate it and how it affects voter choice as a result. According to them, not enough attention has been given to which specific traits carry the most influence or relevance among voters (Laustsen and Bor 2017). In perceiving leadership outside of politics, traits of *warmth* are preferred over the traits of *competence* (Laustsen and Bor 2017). Laustsen and Bor (2017) identify earlier studies that find competence as more significant than warmth in political leadership and that traits of competence are "most influential" in assessing leaders of the nation (McGraw 2011).

Laustsen and Bor (2017) in their study challenge the results such as Funk's (1996, 1997) that between a competent leader with no warmth and a warm leader with no competence, voters choose the former. The limitations of Funk's (1996, 1997) studies are that it was an election study with a small sample of students excluding any overtime variations according to Laustsen and Bor (2017). The four-dimensional framework characterises the traits of political leaders into competence, leadership, integrity and warmth (Laustsen and Bor 2017). The first three extensively studied traits represent the intellect and capabilities, style of leadership and personality, honesty and morality of a leader, respectively (McGraw 2011; Laustsen and Bor 2017). The traits of warmth representing empathy, compassion, and care for the people has not received the same amount of attention or support, particularly in the field of political science and political leadership, even though

these traits have been proven to be more significant and relevant than the other dominant traits (McGraw 2011; Laustsen and Bor 2017; Fiske et al 2007). Laustsen and Bor (2017) found that across the two-dimension and four-dimensional frameworks, as well as the several mapped out variations, ‘warmth’ was always perceived more important than competence, leadership and integrity. Globally, the recent surge to power of populist leaders who do not exhibit warmth indicates that the perceived incompetence of individuals does not deter support. Going forward, it is also essential to consider that in political science and political leadership theory “warmth, it seems, is a much more important trait in political leaders than so far appreciated...” (Laustsen and Bor 2017, p.106).

The leadership theories highlight how over the years, values and emotions were considered and ignored as an integral part of what was considered an ideal of leadership. However, as Spiller et al. (2015) highlighted, during a period of Western and European prominence, leadership theories came to exclude emotions and explicit values from the leadership domain concurrent with other socio-political events of that time. As Gloeman et al. (2002) point out, the responsibility of values and emotions is “the original and the most important act of leadership. Leaders have always played a primordial emotional role”. This is a strong argument for this study. It helps understand the emotional intelligence behind the approach of values of kindness, compassion, and empathy, driven by a resonant leadership perspective of hope and positivity. The (re)emergence of emotions and values as ideal and invaluable traits legitimises a leader who is able and willing to choose those values explicitly as part of their leadership. Over time, leadership theories through research and embracing change are evolving and favouring the return of emotions and values as a crucial leadership dimension. This does not discount the significance of rationality or other skills and traits that are important in leadership. This review argues that progress in the areas of intellect, behaviour and business acumen should not have come at the expense of the aspects of emotion and values. In fact, “gifted leadership occurs where heart and head, feeling and thought, meet” (Gloeman et al. 2002 p.26).

## DISCOURSE AND VALUES

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In discourse studies, it is well established that language shapes society and society shapes language, but the source of knowledge and power between language and society is inconclusive (Wodak and Meyer 2008; van dijk 2001). Regardless of the source, “society and culture are dialectically related to discourse: society and culture are shaped by discourse, and at the same time constitute discourse. Every single instance of language use reproduces or transforms society and culture, including power relations.” (Titscher et. al, 2000:146). The focus on values in discourse is based on the findings that language, power, and knowledge are intertwined; therefore, a study of discourse must account for knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, and values (van Dijk 2001; Fairclough 2001). In van Dijk’s (1998) Social Cognitive Approach, values are defined as ‘shared mental objects of social cognition’, located in the social memory, and these values control text and talk (p.74). Just as discourse is socially constructed, values are also socially constructed. (Sowińska 2013, p.794). The notion of common ground in the role of values could not be more significant amidst the competing and differing ideologies. van Dijk (1998) states that all ideologies ‘are based on a selection and combination of values drawn from a cultural common ground’ (p.286). As Sowińska (2013) points out about values, “together with culturally shared knowledge, they are part of the cultural common ground” (p.794). The concept of common ground in discourse is important for analysing values as a solution for problematic and divisive politics.

An analysis of norms and values assist in identifying which individual or group is exercising and gaining power in any given discourse. Power is usually not a visible aspect of discourse, and the (re)production of power is rarely attributed to an individual. Discourses require critical analysis to uncover power and how values aid in that. The evaluation of power as use or abuse is variable and determined by ideological positioning and values that influence it. Political leaders are unique in the sense of their power to influence society, their peers, and policy decisions by using values.

Likewise, discourse also both draws from and contributes to knowledge. The role of values can be seen in the discursive (re)presentation, emphasis, and polarisation of group identities, typically ‘us’ and ‘them’, often resulting in positive self-presentation of us and negative presentation of the other (van Dijk 2006). Likewise, the good things and good values about ‘us’ are emphasised and negative things about ‘us’ is usually underplayed, at the same time the negative things about them are emphasised and the good things about them are de-emphasised or left out (van Dijk 2006). Polarisation is another way of using values to both express and influence knowledge about one group in contrast to another - this is our values and that is theirs to help legitimise attitudes and actions that are proposed as a result (van Dijk 2006). Values can essentially be used to construct and shape the difference between ‘us’ and ‘the other’. Hence, knowledge in discourse must also be critically assessed since knowledge is not only expressed or influenced, but discourse can also be used for manipulation. van Dijk (2006) points that discourse in and of itself is not manipulative, but the context in which it takes place is key in evaluating if the discourse is manipulative.

van Dijk (1995) states that attitudes and opinions are not formed or changed in an “arbitrary way” but are connected to the formation and application of values (p.17). Values are not only involved in identifying the more visible opinions and attitudes but also in the underlying ideologies that are crucial in studying political discourse. Ideologies in a fundamental way can be defined “as a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values” (Wodak and Meyer 2008 p.8). Ideological groups can be formed from social and cultural values but vary on an identity-based selection of values. Since values represent ideologies in discourse, the fact that certain values exist or prevail in each domain points to those values “as potentially tied to particular discourses” and consequently tied to specific groups (Fairclough, 2003, p.132). Values that are universal or common, like freedom, are in turn ‘translated’ based on ideological standing such as freedom of the market or freedom from the state, which then needs to be differentiated upon analysis (van Dijk 1998, 2001). Values help construct ideologies but also help represent them in discourse. This relationship between values and ideologies is explained in the quote by van Dijk (1995):

“In such a combined cognitive and social approach to ideology, we assume that ideologies are constructed by a biased selection of basic social values... Thus, ideological control of discourse takes place through the control of mental models, and the same is true for the acquisition, change and reproduction of ideologies themselves. They involve general opinions and values that are represented in the models of the speakers and indirectly inferred from the opinions expressed or signalled in discourse (p.32-33).

### Domination, dissidence, and difference:

One of the biggest challenges of discourse studies is understanding power as power use or abuse. Ideological cognition and representation determine not only the production of discourse but also the perception of discourse. Power is always exercised in political discourse whether it is power use or power abuse is determined by the ideological positioning of the receiver such as advocating for a free market can be perceived as power use in capitalism but power abuse in socialism and likewise, proposing state intervention can be perceived as power use by socialists and power abuse by capitalists (van Dijk 1998). We also see how values can be used by different ideological groups in oppositional ways. However, the notion that discourse and power are intertwined is especially important when exploring values that act as powerful tools in persuasion and legitimisation of power. Hart (2015), Wodak (2015), and van Dijk (2015) highlight that discourse can be situated in the following three categories described as discourse order: dominance, difference and dissidence.

#### Dominance:

The dominant order is a denote of ideas and groups as mainstream or even as the norm. The thing about dominance is that it must be reproduced, and discourse is used to achieve that (van Dijk 1992). It is notable in discourse studies that often dominant ideologies “appear as ‘neutral,’ holding on to assumptions that stay largely unchallenged”. (Wodak and Meyer p.8). This study emphasises that values and norms can be employed in discourse to maintain and sustain dominance in ways

discussed earlier in the section. Dominance discourse works to influence society to justify and maintain the status quo. Sometimes, when left unchecked or unchallenged, dominance without any resistance or opposition can lead to hegemony (Wodak and Meyer 2008). At most times, discourse exists within a dynamic of competition between ideas and values. Wodak's (2001) observation states that 'texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance' (p.11). In addition to ideological domination, because discourse and dominance are socially influential, dominant discourse can lead to social and cultural domination between groups creating dominant and dominated identities (van Dijk 1995). As highlighted earlier, values and norms are used to reproduce dominance at social and cultural levels (van Dijk 2002, 1995). Dominance is seen as abusive use of power as it violates the rights of groups that are being dominated as a result (Fairclough 2001; van Dijk 2001).

### Difference:

The discursive order of difference is usually situated as diversity or as an alternative (Fairclough 2001). When there are struggle and contest between ideas, this order represents discourses that propose something different from the dominant discourse. Different ideas are often informed and represented by alternative values to the dominant ones at the ideological level. The ideologies of difference are expressed by groups and ideas that are on the fringes when it comes to dominant ideologies (Fairclough 2001). Socially this difference involves those who are left out of the discussion. Since domination excludes ideas and groups to sustain its dominance, access for these ideas and groups to be represented is a crucial element (Fairclough 2001). This study points out that the exclusion of ideas and groups is also related to the exclusion of important values and the selective inclusion of other values that help reproduce domination. However, as Wodak and Meyer (2008) point out, "language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power in hierarchical social structures" (p.10). Hence, just as discourse is used to reproduce domination, discourse can also be used to propose the alternative. The ideological and social differences can thereby contribute to the contest of domination and prevent hegemonic discourse, power and ideologies.

## Dissidence or resistance:

This order of discourse is described by terms such as resistance, dissidence, oppositional, marginal (Fairclough 2001; van Dijk 1998). Much of the contest in public discourse happens due to the discourse of dissidence or resistance and its interaction with dominance. van Dijk (1993) explains that a study of dissidence discourse helps uncover power and dominance relations in society (p.250). Discursive dissidence that proposes opposing ideologies and social resistance prevent hegemonic discourse, ideology, and society. At a discourse and ideological level, Wodak and Meyer (2008) propose that “language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and the long term” (p.10). Socially, the resistance order involves dominated groups who oppose and resist ideological and social domination and power abuse.

The discourse of dominance, difference and dissidence remains open and continues to be interactional between the different social and ideological orders. This ongoing contest usually involves problem-framing- highlighting, defining and proposing resolutions and actions (Fairclough 2001). Dominant and dissident groups go about problem-framing in contrasting ways, where one maintains the status quo, while the latter attributes it to the exploitation and abuse of dominant discourse (Fairclough 2001). Resolution and action propositions also can be observed under the different orders to either keep things as they are or propose a change. Dominant discourse can attribute it to threats against the status quo while dissidence attributes it to gaps or failure in the dominant order (Fairclough 2001).

The crucial role of values in discourses is a motivation that underpins this research. van Dijk (1998) finds that values can be both explicit and implicit in discourses. A critique of discourse must make explicit the values hidden, implied or made apparent in the discursive actions. As outlined in the methods chapter, this study is built on the understanding that values situated in the mental models help produce and exercise power, influence and express knowledge, construct and represent ideologies and the formation of opinions and attitudes. Axiological analysis or the analysis of values remain underrepresented in discourse studies. And

a ‘positive’ critical analysis of values even more so. This section on discourse emphasises the significance of studying values in discourse. As van Dijk (2010) highlights, "norms and values ultimately explain why or why not we do specific things and what overall goals we seek through political processes" (p.40). In the research on ethical values in political discourse, this review on discourse and values provide significant literary grounding for analysis. The concepts of common ground positions ethical values in the common ground of space shared in the socio-cognitive dimensions. The use of values in the presentation, emphasis, and polarisation of the us-and-them is another discursive action that will be useful for this study. Finally, the premise of the research places the core values of kindness, compassion and empathy in the discourse of difference and dissidence. In analysing the different discourse, it is also crucial to examine who has access to structure or restructure the existing discourses.

The previous sections identified how these core ethical values have been discussed in the margins of discourse and in bottom-up led change. This highlights the significance of access for these ethical values that are received through the leadership of Ardern as the Prime Minister of New Zealand and will help in the analysis of values to find out what ideas that are otherwise excluded are given access for expression and influence using these core ethical values. More on the significance of discourse and values and the interrelated nature is already addressed in the methods chapter where Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is outlined as a methodological approach for studying values.

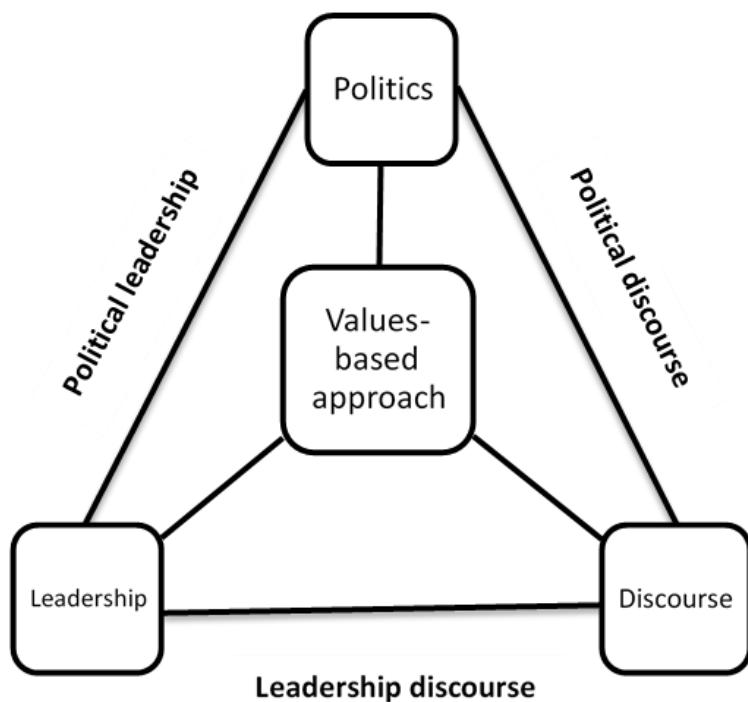


FIGURE 4 SITUATING POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF KINDNESS ARTICULATED BY ARDERN

The values-based political approach is situated at the integration of scholarship on ethical values, political activity, leadership, and discourse (see figure 4).

## KEY INFLUENCES ON THE STUDY OF VALUES

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This section of the review highlights some key literature that outlines the argument for ethical values in domains of politics, leadership, and language. In the New Zealand context, *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori worldview) is a significant contributor for values to be at the centre of discussion around governance, society, and the environment. Faith and spirituality have had a significant influence on ethical values to be at the forefront of change in socio-political culture. Finally, the contribution of feminism and notably black feminism in this (re)emergence of ethical values in the socio-political sphere is notable.

## Māori perspectives

Spiller et al. (2015) provide a significant perspective on leadership and governance based on Māori perspectives, values and worldview:

*“Indigenous Leadership is about being care-takers of the well-being of people and environment. It is virtuous, has a strong sense of duty, seeks balance and harmony, and exhibits a commitment to community and not individualism. There is a kinship with all of creation and this leadership contains a spiritual core. Often leaders inherit and carry on the ancient ideals of leadership... Indigenous leadership tends to be holistic and look at all elements, not allowing the rational and logical to exclude other ways of knowing.”* (p.16)

This review identifies the need for a holistic approach to a new era of politics that integrates emotional intelligence, spirituality and community (/indigenous) values. Spiller et al. (2015) emphasise the importance for leaders to adapt and practise leadership principles and values that include those key components. The leadership ideals suggested here challenge the dominant western styles of leadership that often exclude main values of service to humanity and community. Māori perspectives support the arguments towards a politics centred around the ethical values in leadership and governance. Further, in New Zealand, the Māori influence has been a force of resistance and difference to the dominant Pākehā ideas of governance.

## Spirituality

McKibbin (2018) and Selig (2016) highlight the intertwined nature of spirituality and the concepts of ethical values in addressing the significance of critical thinking and intellectual engagement in politics, ideas, and solutions. Stone (2012) argued that it is misguided and even dangerous to reject emotions and values in politics. McKibbin (2018) argues that to disengage with religion, faith, and spirituality from our politics and public policy could be counterproductive in addressing exclusive or insular values. In what McKibbin (2018) calls the ‘politics of love’, he argues that as a society, we can implore the faith and spirituality of our

communities to choose the ethics of compassion, kindness, empathy, care, and love over other values such as greed, envy, intolerance, and prejudices that are destructive. Burrows's (2014) work on Gandhi and King also highlighted the principles and values of *ahimsa* (nonviolence), truth, and love. Humanity constantly suffers with "hatred, greed and exorbitant self-interest at the expense of other human groups, the environment and so on" and as a result society is prone to a continuous cycle where violence begets violence, evil begets evil, hatred begets hatred, and greed begets greed (Burrows 2014 p.251). According to Burrows (2014) the assertion of 'love ethic' raised the standard of the civil rights movement, where King implored the oppressed blacks to show kindness even toward the racist white which was in turn termed as "the highest Good" in society (P.262). Ethical values have been at the centre of social change against forces that exhibited domination, control, and greed. However, somehow, politics, governance, and leadership of our times have largely ignored this in mainstream socio-political processes and culture.

## Feminism and black feminism

The influence of feminism and black feminism also holds a significant place in this revolution of ethical values in politics. Brown according to King (1995) highlights how in politics the domination of "an explicitly masculine identity" has resulted in rich masculinist ideas of "power, order, freedom and justice" (p.68). Likewise, in leadership and governance, leadership ideals are also by and large dominated by masculine ideals (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995). As a result, traits that were stereotyped as feminine traits were considered a weakness and excluded from powerful leadership positions. In politics, this stereotype of masculinised identity and domination has made it harder for leaders to represent or advocate non-dominant traits and values (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995). Duerst-Lahti and Johnson (1990), found that women in leadership not only avoided stereotypes of feminine styles and traits, in fact, women 'out-maled' or 'out-masculinised' the men (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995, p.27).

Another feminist scholar Kelley (2002) highlights the values of freedom and love as "revolutionary ideas available to us" and that, "as intellectuals, we have

failed miserably to grapple with their political and analytical importance” (p.11–12). It highlights that the potential of such values in both power use and power abuse in politics remain understudied. Nash (2013) finds that the traditions of black feminism go beyond identity politics and intersectionality. Ethical values in the form of love-politics have been one of the foundations of the ‘second wave’ black feminist movement, supported by many black feminist writers and leaders (Nash 2013). Although love is not directly a core value investigated in this study, it is important to note that it is part of the ethical dimension, as highlighted previously and is closely connected with compassion and kindness. Nash (2013) claims that some traditions of the movement have been suppressed while others have been highlighted; hence, love-politics remained ignored or insufficiently addressed when identity and intersectionality came to the forefront of politics. While the latter addresses and focuses on the present visibility and recognition, the former is future-minded. It is important to note that the promotion of these ethics does not discount identity politics or intersectionality but instead aims to highlight the black feminist tradition that has significant potential but is less visible. To display values like love can be rebellious and radical in a world that is also full of hatred (Nash 2013).

Another significant contributor in black feminism is bell hooks (2000), who states that “to choose feminist politics then, is a choice to love” (p.104). bell hooks (2000) argues that even though this spirit of love was important to feminist activism, because ‘love’ was often misused to exercise power, control, and violence in the process of liberation, women felt they needed to “break the bonds of love” (p.102). This highlights the potential of these values misused for abuse, manipulation, and exploitation. In practice, the mainstream feminist movement fell short of being inclusive of the ethics of love by distancing the stereotypical ‘feminine’ traits when it came to politics and leadership. bell hooks (2000) claims, “no one talked about the reality that women would risk hardening our hearts and end up being just as emotionally closed as the patriarchal men or butch females we were rejecting in the name of feminist rebellion” (p.102). A lack of focus in theorising values and the role of love in early feminism and its complexity, risked an otherwise “wise and loving” feminist politics to appear hateful, which has the power to transform us from within but can never take root where there is domination or coercion (bell hooks p.103).

## SUMMARY, LITERATURE GAP, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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The review discussed the role values play in politics, leadership, and discourse and highlighted the significance of ethical values while expounding the contribution of the fields of leadership and discourse to the study of politics. The contribution of leadership theories helps this research focus on the political leader, Ardern; and the contribution of the study of discourse helps this research focus on the significance of the discourse on kindness used by Ardern. The review identified the literature gap in the study of ethical values in politics. First, not enough has been studied to highlight the relevance and significance of ethical values in politics with the ongoing push and pull between rationality and emotion in political science. Second, the theories acknowledging the significance of ethical and human values such as empathy, compassion, and kindness in organisational leadership and even more so in political leadership are relatively new and need further developing. Third, the access that ethical values have received in a discourse of resistance and difference at the highest political leadership level in New Zealand is worth studying. Finally, an analysis of values as a primary focus is yet to take off in political studies (Sowińska 2013).

Hence, in order to analyse the values of *kindness* articulated by Ardern as a potential political value that can help address socio-political upheaval, this investigation uses a critical discourse studies approach. The next chapter reviews critical discourse analysis and elaborates on the research method and design.

### 3. GLOBAL CONTEXTS AND AXIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS IN CRITICAL DISCOURSE STUDIES

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The values of kindness in politics articulated by Ardern is analysed using a qualitative, interpretivist approach, particularly the Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). The first part of the chapter maps out the various dimensions and elements of CDS, macro-context theory, and specific tools that assist in the analysis of values (axiological analysis) - such as metaphors, disclaimers, and proximisation (van Dijk 2015; Sowińska 2013). The second part of the chapter outlines the research method, data collection, analytical framework, and the chapter outline.

In 1883, German philosopher Dilthey distinguished two types of science; one based on “abstract explanation” (Erklärung) and the other on “empathetic understanding” (Verstehen) (Neuman 2000 p.70). Similarly, German sociologist Max Weber argued for meaningful social action (Neuman 2000). The potential of ethical values in politics as a focus in this study requires a qualitative research methodology to understand the underlying meaning and action. Interpretive social sciences emphasise “a detailed reading or examination of text... to discover meaning embedded within text” (Neuman 2000 p.70). The researcher’s subjective experiences are acknowledged and carefully incorporated within the study. The meaning which is otherwise rarely obvious is observed, identified, understood and connected to conceptualise and theorise the meanings involved. The interpretive approach is “the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretation of how people create and maintain their social worlds.” (Neuman 2000 p.71). This approach also varies from a positivist belief that sees social reality as fixed – it changes or varies through interaction and construction of the same. Interpretivism also believes that multiple realities are possible due to multiple interpretations and experiences (Neuman 2000). This social science research undertakes an interpretivist, qualitative study using critical discourse studies to examine the political discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern. CDS as an approach, macro-context as a theory and the axiological analysis of political

discourse using topics, metaphors and disclaimers are outlined in this chapter (Sowińska 2013; van Dijk 1997; van Dijk 2007).

## CRITICAL DISCOURSE STUDIES AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Discourse analysis was developed by Michel Foucault in the 1970s to explore and identify the relationship between discourse, knowledge, and the exercise of power. Discourse analysis has since been used in social sciences and political science to study text and discourse. In the early 1990s, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emerged in an effort by scholars such as Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and Norman Fairclough to address the limitations of discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer 2008; van Dijk 2015). In its various functions, CDA has been approached through philosophical, linguistic, socio-psychological, cognitive, and pragmatic approaches. CDA is a problem-oriented study interested in “de-mystifying ideologies and power” (Wodak and Meyer 2008 p.3). In more recent times, the term Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is the preferred term for the dynamic, broad, and multi-disciplinary field of CDA (van Dijk 2015). From this point, the term CDS will be used to discuss the approach of this study. Despite the different versions, diverse backgrounds, and dynamic approaches, CDS deals with the interaction of language and society. Discourse in this research is viewed as social practice and a material representation of ideology (Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak and Meyer, 2008). This study approaches discourse not as a reflection of reality but as a constructor of reality through ongoing process of meaning-construction, negotiating, and consensus-seeking (Fairhurst and Grant 2010).

As a socio-political problem-oriented study, CDS helps study social phenomena (Fairclough 2001; van Dijk 2001; Wodak and Meyer 2008). This study aims to address the problem of socio-political upheaval in the forms of public dissatisfaction, dirty politics, and division. The resurgence of ethical values of Kindness in New Zealand politics is the phenomenon being investigated. CDS has been used to study political texts such as speeches, parliamentary debates, press releases, and bills (van Dijk 1997). CDS is, therefore, a multi-disciplinary, multidimensional, multi-level study of communication and interaction.

## Discourse, Society and Cognition

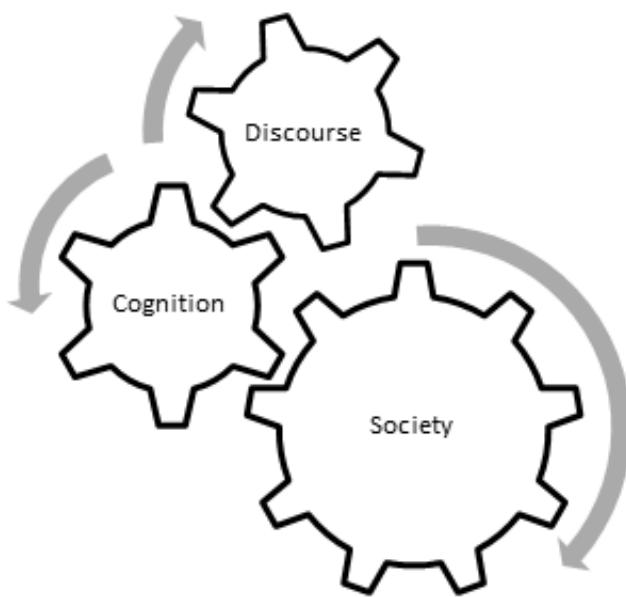


FIGURE 5 DISCOURSE, COGNITION, SOCIETY: THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF DISCOURSE

In studying political discourse, it is important to consider that discourse shapes society while being shaped by society (Wodak 2001; van Dijk 2014). In van Dijk's (2015) socio-cognitive approach, CDS consists of three dimensions - discourse, society and cognition. The discourse dimension comprises written text or talk and is made of discourse structures such as topic choices, disclaimers, and metaphors (van Dijk 2001; 2014). The dimension of society includes the “societal microstructures” of local interactive events such as parliament and press conferences as well as “the more global, societal and political structures” such as group relations, political systems and movements (van Dijk 2001 p.4). In CDS, the socio-cognitive approach is the only approach in CDS that considers a cognitive interface between the interaction of discourse structures and social structures (Sowińska 2013; van Dijk 2001). This study acknowledges that in understanding the (re)production of discourse and the social elements of discourse, the cognitive dimension is crucial and significant. Cognition is critical to understand how discourse is (re)produced and how discourse is received. The cognitive dimension can occur at two different levels: a) Personal (individual mental representation) and b) Social (in group cognition, shared beliefs).

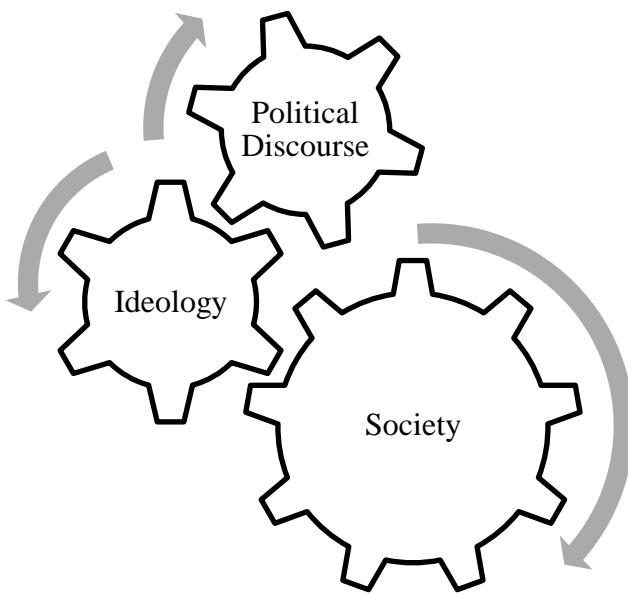


FIGURE 6 DISCOURSE, IDEOLOGY, SOCIETY: THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE

In political discourse, “ideologies are the cognitive counterpart” at a macro level (van Dijk 1997 p.18). Knowledge (socio-cultural knowledge, group-specific), political attitudes, norms, and values form what van Dijk (1997) highlights as political cognition. This interface of political cognition is crucial for studying the discourse of Kindness. In van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach, it is in this cognitive-interface where values are situated alongside ideologies and other political cognitions (van Dijk 1997; 2002; 2015). The following section outlines the various forms of political cognition such as ideology and group-specific knowledge at a societal level and opinions at a personal level.

## POWER

The critical study of political discourse is also interested in power, knowledge, and ideologies. Power in its basic sense is defined as “the chance that an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her own will even against the resistance of others” (Weber 1980, p.28). Discourse as an act involves the production and reproduction of power and social domination and “since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power.” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, p.258). Discourse and power are intertwined, hence analysing

power and how dominant ideas and norms are created through discursive strategies is critical in CDS (van Dijk 1998). CDS, being the study of discourse, focuses on systemic elements of power and analyses power use through examining “more the overall structural features” (Wodak 2008).

One of the challenges for this study is to analyse the discourse of Kindness in relation to power use, abuse, and social domination. However, CDS is also a study of discursive resistance to power (Fairclough 2001; van Dijk 2010). In other words, CDS can be useful to study *dissident discourse*, which is a discursive action to resist dominance. Since discourse is interactional, the ideological underpinnings of the listener determine whether they consider a discourse to be power use or power abuse (van Dijk 2002). Billig (2008), according to Wodak (2008), “raises the question of how CDA researchers understand power and what moral standards allow them to differentiate between power use and abuse”. In discourse, struggle for power is contention between values (van Dijk 1998). While analysing Ardern's political speeches, this contention of values and particularly the promotion of values of Kindness will underpin the overall analysis.

## KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is a set of shared beliefs and is characteristic of group and communal identities (van Dijk 2015). Different types of knowledge act as sources of information and truth that also influence or are influenced by the associated groups, ideologies, values, and norms. Understanding the different types of knowledge is relevant when understanding discourse (re)production strategies. *General knowledge* is the set of facts and beliefs that are shared across communities (van Dijk 2001). Discourse usually contains general knowledge that is not necessarily spelt out, but rather presupposed. This is an important part of the discursive strategy as general knowledge is not usually ideologically based but can be presupposed to support ideological propositions (van Dijk 2001). Cultural knowledge is a set of beliefs that are usually shared and accepted, even between different ideological groups within the same cultural category (van Dijk 2001). It is usually non-ideological without difference of opinion, ideological struggle, or opposition (van Dijk 2001; 2006). Of course, all knowledge can be used for various ideological advantages, but cultural

knowledge itself is presupposed and not ideologically based (van Dijk 2001). Epistemic knowledge or group-specific knowledge is a set of beliefs that are shared within epistemic groups and is ideologically based (van Dijk 2001). Ideologies control such group knowledge - social beliefs acquired and shared by a group (van Dijk 2001). One's group knowledge to an opposing group may be considered opinions or false beliefs and not knowledge (van Dijk 1998; 2001). This group knowledge is also not asserted but presupposed in discourse. Politics is a place where such groups with opposing ideologies meet constantly. In political discourse, this group knowledge is used and interacted with regularly using ideologies, values, and norms (van Dijk 2001). Hence, political discourse is usually highly contentious due to the frequent and dynamic interaction of ideologically opposed groups. In politics, strongly opposed groups must still find ways for civil and productive interaction. This highlights the concept of 'common ground' (van Dijk 2001b, p.15). When group knowledge interacts in a shared space like in general knowledge and cultural knowledge, it becomes the space where foundations of social representation and groups are formed. Common ground is where "beliefs that are generally shared in society, across ideological group boundaries" find their place (van Dijk 2001b, p.15). Common ground is constantly changing through interaction. For example, *human rights* have become a set of shared beliefs and as general knowledge commonly accepted and shared across groups (van Dijk 2001b; 2015). The notions of presupposed knowledge and group knowledge are important in studying political discourse. At the same time, the notion of common ground is significant for analysing values of Kindness that are a set of ethical values that operate in the common ground.

## IDEOLOGY, ATTITUDES, AND OPINIONS

Ideology is a set of ideas and belief systems shared by a group. van Dijk (2006, 2015) argues that ideologies cannot be viewed as either good or bad. There is no default set of belief systems against which ideologies stand opposed. The term ideology was often construed to describe a negative or problematic set of ideas because "dominant ideologies appear as 'neutral', holding on to assumptions that stay largely unchallenged" (Wodak 2008, p.8). Discourse and power with the use of

knowledge can produce, reproduce, reinforce or challenge ideologies. For example, racism and anti-racism are both ideologies and in opposition to each other (van Dijk 2001). Ideology controls the social representation of groups and is both social and cognitive (van Dijk 2001). This study understands the significance of ideologies in examining discourse and exploring values. According to Sowińska (2013), ideologies in CDS are approached as “a totality penetrating the whole fabric of society” (p.793). It also interprets ideologies with the notion that certain dominant ideologies pervade politics and are worthy of critical assessment and that there are no neutral ideologies. This gives analytical significance to dissident and different discourse that challenge the dominant status quo.

The other aspects of ideologies that are important are attitudes and opinions. These are the more visible expressions of ideologies. While knowledge and ideologies are general and abstract, attitudes are the specific belief systems often evident in topics and the approach to specific problems and issues. As van Dijk (2001b) explains,

*“...whereas feminism, sexism, racism, socialism, neoliberalism and ecologism are ideologies (among many others), people may have specific attitudes about issues, such as abortion, immigration, the death penalty, euthanasia or drugs, among many others” (p.16).*

Certain clusters of attitudes are formed and expressed around specific ideologies (van Dijk 2001b). On the other hand, opinions are a more personal and individual set of beliefs embedded in attitudes and stem from ideologies (van Dijk 2001b). Ideologies are shared by a group while opinions belong to individuals and are always forming and reforming.

Values and norms are a big part of ideologies where different ideologies may operate under different sets of values (Sowińska 2013; van Dijk 1998). The same values can often be applied in contrasting ways under opposing ideological standpoints (van Dijk 2001b). For example, as a value, freedom can be construed to promote ‘freedom of the market’, which in turn can be interpreted as positive or negative based on neo-liberal and social ideologies (van Dijk 2002). While analysing

the discourse of Kindness, the implication of the values and how it is used and construed in the context of ideologies will be observed.

## GLOBAL CONTEXTS AND INTERTEXTUALITY

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In CDS, “global contexts are defined by the social, political, cultural, and historical structures in which a communicative event takes place” (van Dijk 2001, p.12). The context in which a discourse is used is crucial to examining a social phenomenon (Wodak 2001; Fairclough 2001; van Dijk 2007; 2015). As established earlier, CDS is a socio-political and problem-oriented approach; therefore it requires an analysis of the text-context relationship to understand the discourse of Kindness in context to the socio-political upheaval being studied (van Dijk, 2001). In discourse production and understanding, contexts act like an interface for meaning-making (Wodak 2001). Context is critical in CDS because “a theory of context provides a theory of relevance” (van Dijk 2001, p.12). While exploring a concept like Kindness in politics, it is imperative to study and understand its relevance to propose or oppose those values as a legitimate political approach.

Context is key in understanding the relevance of the political discourse of Kindness. Macro context or global context is identified through its relevance at a current global, social, political, and cultural setting (van Dijk 2007). The global contexts can be identified in discourse through constructing macro categories that consist of macro settings (such as global politics), macro participants (political leaders) and macro actions (promoting peace). For example: In "I want the government... to bring kindness back" (2017), Ardern claimed to bring kindness back right before swearing-in as the Prime Minister. This can be understood in the global context of politics and governments as the macro setting, political leaders and society as the macro-participants, and promoting ethical values as a macro action in relevance to global politics and leadership. At a global level, these macro contexts are relevant, dynamic, and subjective (van Dijk 2007).

This study realises that, while analysing political discourse, it is important to account for the social and cognitive dimensions of discourse and the role of knowledge, ideology, attitudes, and the use of power. van Dijk's (1997; 2014) socio-cognitive approach could be useful in analysing political discourse using values as political cognition. Language tools such as topics, metaphors, and disclaimers also help in evaluating the values of Kindness and understanding the global contexts through global setting, global participants, and global actions.

Fairclough (2015) highlights that CDS can be a study of discourse focussing on structure as well as on action. According to van Dijk (1997), "actions are also defined in terms of their intentions, purposes, goals and functions" (p.18). This research identifies that a multilateral approach to CDS can offer an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon being studied. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity involve analysing discourse across the different genres of text (see figure 5). For instance, in this case, a study that involves speeches in a domestic parliament setting, media releases, speeches at the UN, and speeches at the party convention all comprise different genres. Smith (2014) highlights that "intertextuality shows how documents are connected, reproducing certain discourses" (p.54).

In intertextual analysis, texts are compared across genres to acquire interpretations and evidence for the discursive action being studied. The data in this study contains Ardern's speeches from different political genres such as legislative (budget), self-presentation (speech from the throne), party-internal (Labour convention) and executive (UN speeches). Wodak (2001) claims that wherever "multiple genres and multiple public spaces are studied" intertextual analysis must be conducted (p.8). It offers clarity and distinction to the many topics and contexts identified, which can then be re-contextualised to identify macro-topics within global contexts.

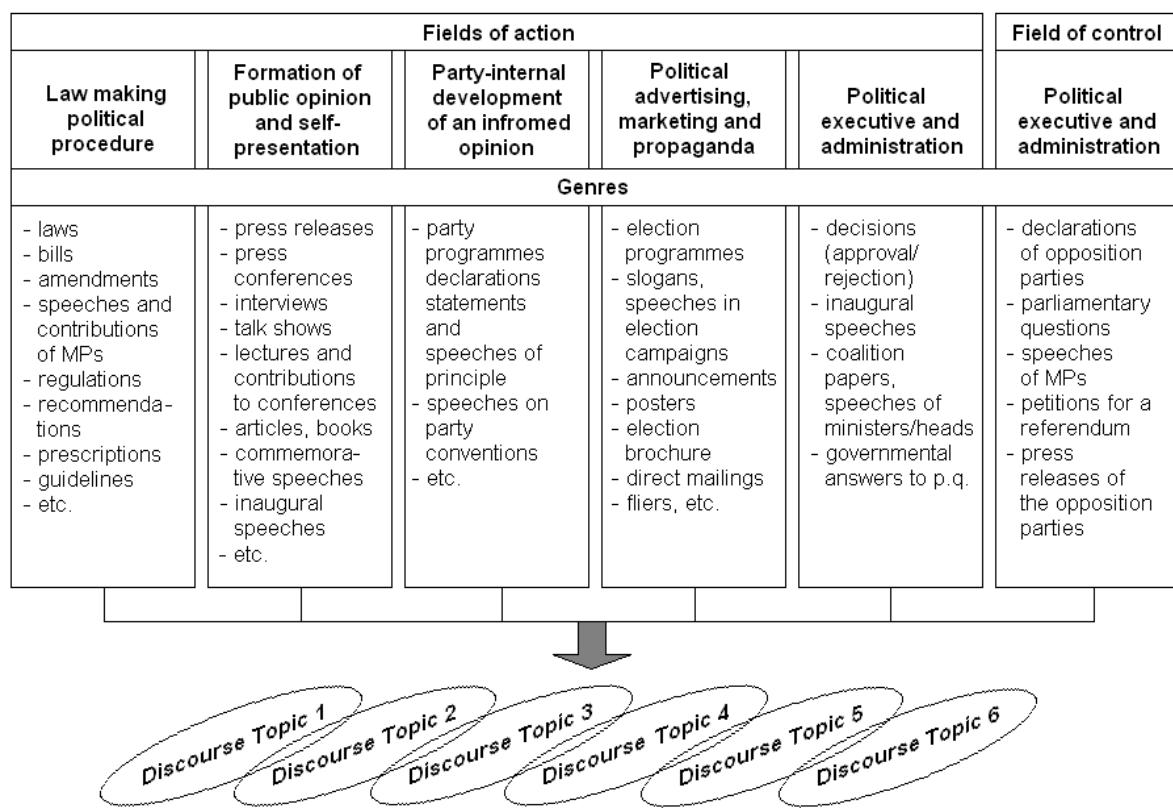


FIGURE 7: SELECTED DIMENSIONS OF DISCOURSE AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

## AXIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

For something as significant as values in political activity, not enough has been studied to define and examine values (Sowińska 2013). As highlighted earlier, values are fundamental to the (re)production of discourse and the interaction of discourse and social structures. Discourse as a social practice is underpinned using values. Sowińska (2013) highlights that axiological research in CDS is the “focus on representations of values in discourse” (p.793). The analysis of the political discourse of Kindness is an axiological analysis. To critically investigate Kindness, Wodak and Meyer (2008) make a significant point, which underpins this study and the selection of CDS as a methodology. The ‘critical’ in critical discourse studies “does not mean negative” - it is to critique in the form of “making visible the interconnectedness of things” (Wodak and Meyer 2008, p.2).

## TOPICS (SEMANTIC MACRO-STRUCTURES)

Topics are defined as *semantic macrostructures* and “represent what a discourse is about globally speaking” (van Dijk 2015. p.6). Since this research is a study of Kindness in politics, a significant part of the study is identifying what global topics Ardern highlights or addresses using Kindness. This study also deals with a large corpus of text that can be effectively and easily analysed using topics. By deriving a ‘gist’ of what the discourse is about, the analysis can locate and understand the production of discourse, actions and propositions. van Dijk (2015) claims that topics in discourse have a “fundamental role in communication and interaction” (p.6). Basically, it informs this study of what Ardern finds most important in the context of Kindness in politics. Topics can be typically derived from discursive elements such as titles, summaries, and conclusions. Topics can be drawn from what the user is assigning, and it also can be derived from understanding the gist of what the user is proposing. Topics highlight the context in which values are employed and are indicative of the proposition, action and meaning-making that the political actor undertakes. It helps in understanding what the discourse surrounding the values is about. Discourse can be understood via macro-topics, and each macro-topic can contain many sub-topics. These topics are neither exclusive nor fixed. They often overlap and interact.

## METAPHORS

Metaphors enable political actors to frame and communicate their point of view in a way that is accessible to the participants. According to Sowińska (2013), Charteris-Black highlights that at a linguistic level, metaphors assign how people or actions are to be viewed. At a pragmatic level, metaphors reflect the speaker’s intentions to persuade. The cognitive characteristic of a metaphor connects the reference between the original use of the word and the contextual use of the same word. Metaphors can be a simple and powerful way for the speaker to communicate their message and get the audience moving in a direction they intend. In politics, metaphors give the power to frame issues without opposition (Sowińska 2013). Fairclough (1989) highlights, “metaphors are ideological and strategic”... strategic in the choice of domains, “and ideological as different metaphors have different ideological implications” (Fairclough, 1989, p.119).

## DISCLAIMERS

An initial reading of the data highlighted a strong presence of disclaimers in Ardern's political speeches. Disclaimers by function, propose a contrast to emphasise the main aspects of the speaker's propositions. Disclaimers are particularly useful when studying a large corpus of text like in this research as it quickly highlights some of the major propositions and actions of the speaker. Disclaimers are also easy to identify with a 'but' clause connecting sentences and useful to study large amounts of data (van Dijk 2000). Another vital purpose of disclaimers is that they express a positive self-presentation while making propositions. According to van Dijk (2014), using disclaimers has "cognitive and contextual implications" as well as social and political implications (p.27). The contextual implication is using disclaimers that are "intended to block negative evaluations" of the speaker. In some cases, as identified in this study, disclaimers are also employed to make propositions that can otherwise be challenging to accept. The use of disclaimers is also meant to be persuasive and increase the social and political influence of the speaker. Disclaimers represent a systematic strategy of establishing contrasts between two propositions. The two ends of the disclaimers can propose a contrast and, when reversed, can communicate an opposing message. Disclaimers also makes explicit the emphasis that the speaker wants to communicate through the semantic move (van Dijk 2000).

It is important to emphasise that this research is not a policy study (analysis or evaluation). It is instead a discursive study that aims to understand the phenomenon of Kindness in politics through the language and leadership in Ardern's political speeches. The significance of researching the policy implications of this phenomenon cannot be overstated. However, that is a scope for future studies. This paper aims to contribute to understanding this phenomenon of values of Kindness in politics through the discursive interaction in Ardern's text and talk.

## METHOD

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The data for this qualitative study is obtained from [beehive.govt.nz](#), the official website of the New Zealand Government that archives Releases (*Pānui Pāho*), Speeches (*Whaikōrero*) and Features (*Tuhinga Kaupapa*) of all New Zealand Ministers including the Prime Minister. The corpus is confined to the portfolio of Jacinda Ardern as the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the first two years of her term (2017-2019). Since this involves a large corpus of text, data selection, and data analysis will be conducted at several levels instead of as a complete micro-level discourse analysis of each of those documents, which is far beyond the scope of this study.

## DATA SELECTION

The first step of data collection is to identify the documents relevant to this study from Beehive.govt.nz. Data is collected using a keyword search undertaken using the built-in search tool provided on the website. A quick and thorough analysis was done to identify the speeches, media releases, and features that included at least one of the chosen values. This process is outlined below in as much detail and accuracy as possible.

- First, a keyword search was done on parliamentary records from the archive of Beehive.govt.nz - the official website of the New Zealand government.
- The archive has records of three content types – Releases (*Pānui Pāho*), Speeches (*Whaikōrero*) and Features (*Tuhinga Kaupapa*) that fit the parameters of this study.
- At the time of the research, the archive had records of 47210 releases, 11709 speeches, and 1258 features from 1995-2019.
- 4059 records (3621 releases, 408 speeches, and 30 features, excluding 362 ministerial diaries) were selected after screening based on the Government Term - Labour Led Government archive during 2017-2019.
- The total number of records selected after screening based on records by the Minister: Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern is 354 (305 releases, 47 speeches, and 2 features).

- Those 354 records were then assessed for eligibility based on keywords searched in the provided search box: ‘kindness,’ ‘compassion,’ ‘empathy,’ ‘*manaakitanga*’ and ‘*aroha*’ were typed in individually and assessed before downloading them as separate files.
- **Kindness (including kind and kinder):** The keyword kindness yielded 37 results (Speeches - 23 | Releases - 13 | and Feature - 1). 21 files were excluded after a quick analysis of the references and for the references of *only* ‘kind of,’ ‘kinds of’ or ‘all kinds’ which does not fit the criteria as values. For example, “*I believe the kind of Government we have just formed is a good example of the kind of cooperation we need to see more of.*” A total of 16 documents were selected and downloaded into NVivo under the given title and genre.
- **Compassion (including compassionate):** The keyword compassion yielded 17 results (Speeches - 7 | Releases - 9 | and Feature - 1). 8 results were identified to overlap with the previous keyword search of *kindness* and excluded from the data to avoid replicating an already chosen file. Following a quick analysis, a total of 9 documents were selected and downloaded into NVivo under the given title and type.
- **Empathy (including empathetic):** The keyword compassion yielded 6 results (Speeches - 4 | Releases - 2 | and Feature - 0). 3 results were identified to overlap with the previous keyword search of *kindness and compassion* and excluded from the data to avoid replicating an already chosen file. Following a quick analysis, a total of 3 documents were selected and downloaded into NVivo under the given title and type.
- **Manaakitanga:** The keyword *manaakitanga* yielded 9 results (Speeches - 6 | Releases - 3 | and Feature - 0). 5 results were identified to overlap with the previous keyword search of *kindness, compassion, empathy* and excluded from the data to avoid replicating any previously chosen file. Following a quick analysis, 3 documents were also excluded for the use of *manaakitanga* in the context of hospitality on trips. For example, “*I know that the couple have greatly enjoyed New Zealanders’ warm hospitality and manaakitanga when they visited previously.*” This did not fit the

criteria of this study. Hence, a total of 1 document was selected and downloaded into NVivo under the given title and type.

- **Aroha:** The keyword *manaakitanga* yielded 7 results (Speeches - 4 | Releases - 3 | and Feature - 0). 4 results were identified to overlap with the previous keyword search of *kindness*, *compassion*, *empathy*, *manaakitanga* and excluded from the data to avoid replicating any previously chosen file. Following a quick analysis, 3 documents were also excluded for using *aroha* as either a person's name, a place name or in a *whakatauki* about loved ones. For example, "*The funding being announced today will support the development of the Te Aroha Tourism Precinct and the Waharoa Industrial Hub.*" This did not fit the criteria of this study. Hence, a total of 0 documents were selected and did not need further searching or downloading. The data selection criteria were complete and fulfilled.
- Finally, a total of 29 records were retrieved and added to NVivo for analysis.

As shown in the table below, 29 records were downloaded to the NVivo software (software for qualitative data analysis: <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>) to extract and analyse the data. The documents were organised chronologically by date (earliest to latest) and assigned a number from 01 to 29, which was added to the given title along with the code JA and stored under Files. For example, the earliest document from the records, 'Speech from the Throne,' from 8 Nov 2017 was named JA01 - *Speech from the Throne*. This was applied to all the documents under Files. Wherever a file is mentioned in the report, it will be distinguished by its code 'F' followed by its number, such as F1. The remainder of the analysis was conducted using NVivo software.

Note: Kindness – with a capital K – represents the core values of 'kindness, compassion, empathy, *manaakitanga* and *aroha*.'

Keyword(s)	Total reference files	Search results			No. of results excluded after analysis	No. of files downloaded	Total no. of files
		Speech	Release	Feature			
kindness, kinder, kind	39	23	13	1	23	16	29 Speeches - 14 Media Release - 13 Feature & Other - 2
compassion, compassionate	17	7	9	1	8	9	
empathy, empathetic	6	4	2	0	3	3	
<i>manaakitanga</i>	8	5	3	0	7	1	
<i>aroha</i>	7	4	3	0	7	0	

TABLE 1 DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW

## DATA ANALYSIS

The axiological analysis of the political discourse of Kindness occurs at three different levels. First is at the micro-level, which involves the features of language, grammar, and lexicon (Sowińska 2013). Disclaimers and metaphors are two such language features used in this study to understand the role of values in political discourse. Since this research is not a linguistic study, the semantic features are not studied in detail, instead it assists in analysing the next levels of analysis. The second is at the meso-level, which focuses on the functions of discourse by studying the propositions and actions of the speaker (Sowińska 2013). This part of the analysis will investigate how values of Kindness are used/construed in the political discourse of Ardern's speeches. The third is at the macro-level, which analyses the overall actions in the discourse of Kindness (Sowińska 2013). In the global context theory, how the values of Kindness are used and the actions that are expressed are then analysed at a macro-level to explore what the relevant macro-settings, macro-participants, and the overall macro-actions are. In this research, more focus is given to the global contexts derived from meso and macro levels of discourse.

First, an initial text search query was run with each of the selected keywords and the stemmed words (kindness, compassion, empathy, *aroha*, and *manaakitanga*) for all 29 files. The resulting references were coded under a case titled, ‘Kindness.’ The keywords references were run through the text search query tool again, this time, to obtain extracts using the option, ‘Spread to Broad context.’ The results were reviewed and added to a case titled ‘extracts,’ which served as the text for analysis. Wherever necessary, the extract was spread wider to include the full context of a paragraph or train of thought under the same paragraph style. The complete extracts, including the file number and title, were stored under the case title extracts. See appendices for a copy of the extracts attached. Where these extracts appear with codes such as 1.5 it denotes that it is the 5th reference from file - 01.

These extracts were then analysed as three investigations and coded under three parent nodes. The first step of qualitative analysis identified the local contexts in which values of Kindness are used to determine the global contexts in which the discourse of Kindness is found (Sowińska 2013). The next step of qualitative analysis examined the macro-categories (settings, participants, and actions) using values of Kindness. Three questions underpin the analytical:

- i. What discursive tools are most relevant? For example, topics, metaphors, and disclaimer
- ii. How are the values of Kindness used/construed in the political discourse of Kindness?
- iii. What are the overall actions? (Sowińska 2013; p.796)

All data involved in this research is secondary data obtained through government websites for public use and therefore requires no special permission. All data is stored, analysed, and coded using NVivo. Following the axiological analysis of the political discourse of Kindness, the findings are reported in the following chapters.

## 4. KINDNESS AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ECONOMISM, FIERCE NATIONALISM, AND RACISM

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As van Dijk states, the “critical aims of CDA can only be realized if discourse structures are related to structures of local and global contexts” (2001, p.12). This chapter delineates the findings of how the local and global context in which the discourse of Kindness is situated highlights specific topics and problems while examining the significance of Kindness in politics. It identifies how the discourse of Kindness was used to challenge economism, nationalism, and racism. It provides a foundation for the analysis in the following chapter, which considers the discourse on Kindness and how it was articulated in relation to the Christchurch terror attacks. The final substantive chapter reflects on the discourse of Kindness and its implications for how politics is conducted.

All text and talk have embedded or emerging topics that give participants the context within which to produce and receive knowledge (Wodak 2001; van Dijk 2001). Ardern’s speeches and media releases are understood using topics such as ‘inequality,’ ‘wellbeing,’ and ‘progress.’ These topics are, in turn, produced or understood in their relevance to global contexts or macro-contexts such as ‘economy.’ Topics were qualitatively analysed using meso and macro-level value analysis to identify what actions were legitimised by using Kindness.

The investigation identified key topics and actions highlighted using Kindness. These key topics identify four global contexts within which the discourse of Kindness occurs. As an intertextual approach, topics or topical macrostructures were identified using the titles and summaries across documents, and the extracts were coded under the four global contexts. As highlighted in the previous chapters, these topics and their respective macro-propositions are not exclusive. They often overlap and interact across various local and global contexts. With such a large corpus of text and data, the topics were derived from multiple levels of further abstraction and categorised until global contexts were identified. For example,

‘homelessness,’ ‘poverty,’ and ‘winter heating’ are situated as part of the broader topic of ‘inequality,’ which helps understand the discourse on ‘economy’ as a macro or global topic.

## CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE DISCOURSE OF KINDNESS

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This overview outlines the topics identified through summaries and categorises them under four global contexts and actions.

1. The race to economic growth that excludes people and the environment makes us all poorer
  - 1.1. Politics not addressing inequality is degrading to all
  - 1.2. This government’s economic approach puts people at the heart of everything
  - 1.3. Wellbeing as a focus adds value to the economy and tackles complex problems
2. Fierce nationalism, isolationism, and protectionism are false promises stemming from old ideologies
  - 2.1. The role of political leaders is crucial in embracing or rejecting insular ideologies
  - 2.2. Choosing global collectivism over domestic self-interest to solve wicked problems
  - 2.3. New Zealand is a leader and is committed to international collaboration
3. Racism threatens the peace and safety of the world through fear, hate, and violence
  - 3.1. The New Zealand government must confront their past legacies of racism towards Māori
  - 3.2. Leaders must navigate differences in diverse and pluralistic democracies to build and shape resilient, inclusive and anti-racist societies
  - 3.3. Christchurch case: Confronting violence and racism in alt-right terrorism.
4. The way politics is conducted contributes to the socio-political upheaval.
  - 4.1. Good governments matter in the world
  - 4.2. A new kind of political leadership is required for positive change
  - 4.3. Political processes can and must be different to tackle their failures

This overview outlines the four contexts where the discourse of Kindness was found across the speeches, media releases, and features analysed in this study. The number of references to the five values of Kindness reveals how Kindness is used in the context of government and politics more than any other context (see figure 8). The context of governments and politics as an overarching context underpins how other global topics are approached (Harris 2017; van Dijk 1997). Kindness in the context of governments and how politics is done will be reported separately in another chapter. A significant amount of discourse on Kindness occurred in the context of the Christchurch terror attacks. The analysis revealed that out of 29 files, 7 files were in response to the Christchurch case. Hence, the findings are categorised as a case study and reported in the next chapter. This chapter reports the findings of the first three global contexts of economism, nationalism and racism, and how Kindness was used to legitimise several actions under each of these global contexts.

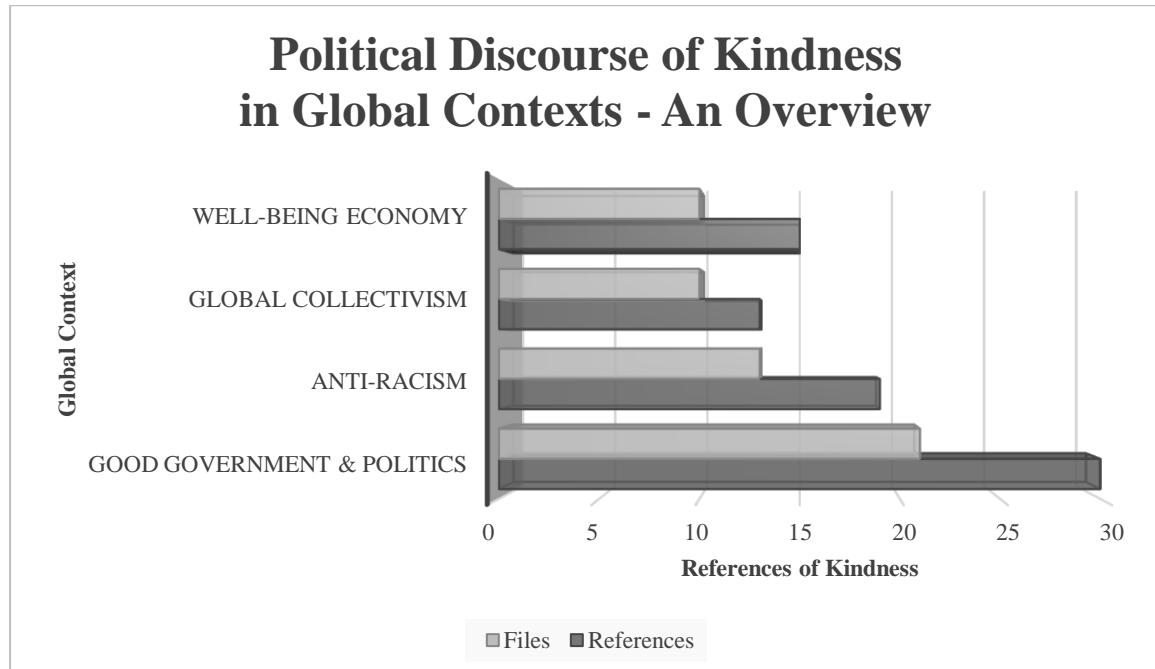


FIGURE 8 POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF KINDNESS IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS – AN OVERVIEW

## 1. LEGITIMISING THE WELLBEING FRAMEWORK AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR ECONOMISM

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There is a prominent connection between the discourse of Kindness and the discourse of the economy. The first topic identified in relevance to the values of Kindness is the proposition to build a better economy that is equal and inclusive using a wellbeing framework. A wellbeing framework includes domains such as health, environment, employment and social connectedness while measuring a nation's growth and not solely base success on economic output (Anderson and Mossialos 2019). The analysis revealed that many of the downloaded documents addressed Kindness in relation to the global context of the economy. Out of the 29 documents, seven titles: "Progressive and inclusive growth - sharing the benefits" (JA06), "Progressive and inclusive growth - sharing the benefits" (JA06), "PM to promote trade and wellbeing at World Economic Forum" (JA13), "Our plan for a modern and prosperous New Zealand" (JA08), "Working together to build a new economy" (JA07), "Opinion - An economics of kindness" (JA14) "Wellbeing Budget tackles New Zealand's long term challenges" (JA23), "Wellbeing, a cure for inequality" (JA27), revealed a discourse of Kindness, which is focused on the economy. Kindness in the economics discourse first frames inequality as the problem caused by the race to success; second, persuades international leaders, and business communities to adopt an inclusive approach; and third, legitimises a well-being agenda as an alternative for GDP. Regarding this, Anderson and Mossialos (2019) state,

*"Gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of a country's entire economic output, is used as a near-universal measure of economic wellbeing. However, GDP does not reflect issues that citizens value, such as inequalities, housing, education, employment, the environment, and income security" (p.1).*

The discourse of Kindness proposes working together towards building a new, modern, and progressive economics of kindness, based on the wellbeing framework that is both prosperous and inclusive while tackling inequality and other long-term challenges that are important to citizens. By proposing this new, modern, and

progressive economy, there is an implication that the existing economic model is old, outdated, and regressive for this time. The framing of problem-solution as an action assists the promotion and legitimisation of shifting to a wellbeing framework for this ‘new economics of kindness.’ Fairclough (2001) highlighted that problem-framing and solution proposing actions are significant discursive actions in the dominant and dissident discourse. The framing that the current economy is exclusive, and not everyone gets to share the benefits of that economic model, is a dissident discourse against dominant ideology (Fairclough 2001). This, in turn, influences the solution-proposition. While a dominant discourse proposes solutions that maintain the status quo, dissident discourse proposes change - in this case, a new economic framework to address exclusion and *cure* inequality. The actions surrounding economic discourse and the discourse of Kindness will be discussed further.

### 1.1 Framing inequality as a problem caused by rapid growth and exclusion

Inequality and the consequences of the old economy are a focus of the discourse of Kindness. The negative impacts of the previous government’s nine-year term are made visible through the social issues of homelessness, hunger, and child poverty affecting individuals and groups. At the beginning of the speech from the throne, Ardern establishes that:

*“In the last nine years, New Zealand has changed a great deal. Ours is a great country still. But it could be even greater. In our society today, no one should have to live in a car or on the street. No one should have to beg for their next meal. No child should be experiencing poverty. That kind of inequality is degrading to us all” (JA01.2).*

The change attributed to here indicates a deterioration caused by inequality. The discourse of Kindness through storytelling and strong assertions contributes to participants’ cultural knowledge regarding groups experiencing homelessness, hunger, and poverty. By highlighting the plight of individual members of society,

like people living in cars and on the streets, people begging for food and children growing up in poverty, Ardern frames these topics as a result of inequality. The discourse of Kindness is then used to legitimise policy focus in the areas of housing, winter heating packages, and an increase in family packages (JA01). Care and compassion are used as a human right along with other human values such as respect, and dignity to suggest that care and compassion are entitlements of everyone. It is suggested that some have been deprived of those entitlements that all members deserve and value. From that constructed and shared understanding, Ardern then asserts that it is “degrading to us all” (JA01) for New Zealand as a collective that any of their members should be deprived of their basic entitlements in today’s society.

Inequalities, in the context of the economy, are linked to rapid development and unchecked growth. In an article published by the Financial Times, Ardern hopes to lead an economic approach that is based on wellbeing. Regarding the status quo, Ardern states that,

*“We must accept that the race to grow our economies makes us all poorer if it comes at the cost of our environment or leaves our people behind” (JA14.2).*

The metaphor of race suggests that economic growth as a competition to succeed has resulted in winners and losers. There are consequences to the environment and to specific groups in society when the economy grows at a rapid pace and progress functions as a competition. Inequality (and the effects of it amongst members of society) is acknowledged as one such consequence. A year later, in a similar international context, Ardern states that “inequality has progressed almost as rapidly as development... But thankfully, some values endure” (JA27.1). Compassion as a national value is called a “source of national pride” to promote New Zealand’s vision (JA27). This vision involves a wellbeing approach that addresses inequality and requires these goals and ideals to be translated into substantial progress. Kindness here is used to persuade political action.

## 1.2 This government puts the wellbeing of people at the heart of everything it does

Kindness discourse challenges the ideologies of a free market and state intervention in this topic. The wellbeing framework is promoted as an alternative to the dominant capitalism and its underlying neo-liberal ideology. Ardern attributes the focus on the issues of inequality and exclusion to society itself. In the speech from the throne, Ardern promoted a vision where “*people will always be at the heart of this government*” (JA01.5). The positive self-presentation is another strategic action to legitimise their policy focus. In the same context, Ardern uses the Maori whakataukī (proverb) “He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata (Because, after all, what is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people)” (JA01) to promote a people-oriented politics. The discourse on Kindness challenges the presupposed notion that political activity is dominated by market-related activity and attitudes that topics such as human welfare and mental health are outside of the political purview. A wellbeing agenda is a result of that. In the opinion piece on “An economics of kindness,” Ardern states:

*“From a purely economic perspective, there are clear benefits to supporting positive mental wellbeing, including as enhanced productivity. From a kindness perspective, the modern age places huge stresses on young people, which affects their ability to live full, meaningful lives. Confronting this will make us a better country.” (JA14)*

After creating what is claimed as the “world’s first wellbeing budget” (JA14), Ardern promoted a wellbeing agenda at a global stage. Along with an economic perspective, Ardern uses the view of Kindness as a motivation for this wellbeing approach. Kindness assists as a persuasion tool to urge other political and business leaders to consider a change. In referring to the World Economic Forum, Ardern hoped that “*this wellbeing approach could provide a model which others in turn might look to*” (JA13). Ardern also frames the need for a wellbeing approach within the public dissatisfaction that challenges world leaders. Highlighting the relevance for a wellbeing agenda, Ardern claims,

*“Our wellbeing approach is generating significant international interest, particularly at a time when the international rules based order is under strain, and leaders are grappling with constituencies dissatisfied with the status quo” (JA13).*

By promoting a wellbeing agenda as an answer to solving public dissatisfaction, Ardern both legitimises New Zealand’s priorities and persuades other leaders to follow suit. This section identified that Kindness was used to challenge the status quo to promote solutions - the well-being framework. A focus on well-being is a deviation from the dominant political activity and the expanding of the role of government. Kindness then aids in persuading other leaders that a wellbeing agenda is an effective response for governments that are dealing with public dissatisfaction.

### 1.3 Economic success and Kindness can coexist:

In order to achieve and garner support, prevailing attitudes, and opinions around the economy must be addressed. Any opposition to the dominant economic model is only going to weaken development and growth. Propositions for change must also deal with the real concerns of uncertainty amongst existing practitioners and stakeholders in the process. One way to establish that is by demonstrating the leadership of Ardern and her government as competent, reliable, and responsible in this domain. In addressing a Westpac business convention, Ardern uses empathy as a value to acknowledge concerns around economic certainty and persuade the business community “working together to build a new economy” (JA07). At the opening of parliament in 2019, Ardern claims that “the Government has demonstrated a new kind of leadership, proving that it is possible to be responsible stewards of the economy while advancing concepts like compassion and kindness” (JA15). The self-presentation of a “new kind of leadership” and “new thinking” (JA27) in the discourse of Kindness helps in promoting a vision for society where both kindness and economic success can coexist.

Making this economic shift is always going to be hard. When it comes to such topics, the political and economic systems are deeply entrenched in the existing dominant ideologies. Kindness is used along with other concepts such as pragmatism and courage to legitimise its potential. In negotiating for change, Ardern uses Kindness to directly and explicitly address the attitude and widespread opinions surrounding any changes to the dominant economic approach. The release, entitled ‘An economics of kindness’, concludes by saying that:

*“This isn’t woolly but a well-rounded economic approach... As leaders, we should not be afraid to reject the status quo, especially when an entire generation is doing just that... We in New Zealand hope to, once again punch above our weight by forging a new economic system based on this powerful concept — one that is successful, but one that is also kind.” (JA14)*

The following year, at the international stage, Ardern persuaded leaders to also challenge the dominant systems by saying, “It calls on us to strive for equality, no matter how difficult and entrenched systems are.” (JA26)

The discourse of Kindness promoting a ‘kind new economy’ is a discourse of dissidence against economism. It is also evident that values of Kindness are at the centre of legitimisation and negotiation and persuasion in this context. Kindness to succeed does not require the economy to fail, nor does it cause it to fail. Wellbeing is not about excluding the current groups but including the ones that are excluded. Wellbeing is not about replacing the current system but expanding it further to include more. Wellbeing is not about opposing the market, but favouring people, including other dimensions of human development that go beyond economic achievement. Kindness is about including everyone to share the benefits of economic growth, especially those that are marginalised and disenfranchised. Kindness is also about including all areas of human development as a measurable goal, not just the economic dimension. The next section will detail how the discourse of Kindness challenges the discourse of nationalism using Kindness as a political value.

## 2. PERSUADING LEADERS TO REJECT FIERCE NATIONALISM, ISOLATIONISM, AND PROTECTIONISM

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In this global context, the overall argument of the discourse of Kindness is that fierce nationalism, isolationism, and protectionism are false promises that exploit public dissatisfaction and therefore, must be rejected. The overall action in the discourse of Kindness in this context is persuading leaders to reject these *isms*. The Kindness discourse legitimises the persuasion by framing the underlying problem as public dissatisfaction, and the solution as compassionate domestic policies. Second, Kindness is used to promote a vision of global collectivism and replace self-interest. Third, Ardern legitimises New Zealand's commitment to global collectivism by positioning New Zealand as a world leader in promoting values that motivate and sustain international collaboration. This analysis finds that Kindness underpins each of these actions and is used for the overall action of persuasion in the context of fierce nationalism.

### 2.1 Proposing compassionate domestic policies to tackle public dissatisfaction

In 2018, Ardern released a statement to an international audience on an 'economics of Kindness'. In this release Ardern claims,

*"At a time when the international rules-based order is under strain, when leaders around the world are grappling with understandably dissatisfied constituencies...I wholeheartedly believe that more compassionate domestic policies are a compelling alternative to the false promise of protectionism and isolation. Now we have a chance to prove it." (JA14)*

The grouping of these words isolationism and protectionism not only emphasises the meaning but appears to cover the different versions stemming from the same ideologies. One interesting observation is that within the given data, Ardern rarely uses the term 'nationalism' explicitly except on one occasion at the UN General Assembly in 2019 (JA28). Even then, Ardern uses the phrase *fierce*

*nationalism or self-interest* as a discursive strategy. Ardern's strategy implies that her argument is not against nationalism itself but only against the fierce kind of nationalism that is only self-interested. The popularity and effectiveness of insular ideologies and blame-shift strategies means political leaders like Ardern run the risk of being evaluated as not prioritising their constituents' best interests. This caution indicates an appeal to the 'commonality' without alienating large parts of society or being alienated for her differing ideologies. Kindness points to the socio-political upheaval in the form of public dissatisfaction and distrust as the underlying problem here. Ideologies of isolationism and protectionism exploit self-interest and blame-shifting to deal with the upheaval, while Kindness proposes compassionate domestic policies. Compassionate domestic policies are promoted as the solution that takes responsibility and repairs the breakdown of public trust and public satisfaction.

Ardern, as a prime minister, is navigating the dual roles of being a world leader but also having to prove that her loyalty is first and foremost to New Zealand. Other leaders also have to do the same with their respective constituents, which is acknowledged in Ardern's statements regarding the competing domestic and international priorities. In a speech entitled "*why does good government matter*" (JA25), Ardern speaks to an audience of Australian and New Zealand School of Government, saying,

*"As leaders globally, we are facing a rising tide of public suspicion towards government, a sense that we've let the material differences between us stretch beyond fairness, and as a result there are signs of life in old ideologies."*

(JA25)

The (re)emergence of nationalism is closely connected to the domestic political climate. Just as it was with the economy, the undercurrent of public dissatisfaction and distrust towards governments is highlighted here again as a problem which is then addressed by the shared values of Kindness. Ardern acknowledges the political problem that leaders face in their constituencies by identifying public dissatisfaction and distrust. Ardern frames the topics of nationalism, isolationism and protectionism as problematic and representative of

what she claims are “*signs of life in old ideologies*” (JA). This personification metaphor defines these ideologies of isolationism and protectionism as something of the past that should have been dead. Instead, ideologies like nationalism, isolationism, and protectionism are being revived and used by political leaders to ease and appease the public’s distrust with a false, fierce, and self-interested political promise.

## 2.2 Promoting international collaboration

Despite the momentum that nationalist and isolationist ideologies are gaining, the discourse of Kindness is promoting international collaboration and collectivism amongst political leaders. Kindness is used as the force that challenges those dominating ideologies exploiting self-interest. In the context of promoting the wellbeing framework, Ardern states:

*“And I hope that we can share what we are doing, and learn from others.”*  
(JA27)

*“But ultimately more collaboration is needed as well as more examples of the international community prioritising our collective and global wellbeing over domestic self-interest.”* (JA27)

The discourse on economy reported earlier, and now the discourse of nationalism are not mutually exclusive. They overlap and interact around topics like wellbeing, public dissatisfaction, inclusion, and self-interest that dominate both contexts. The wellbeing framework as a compassionate domestic policy can address some of the underlying problems like public dissatisfaction fuelling isolationism. Likewise, global collectivism is crucial for promoting the well-being agenda and the transition to an inclusive politics. In both ways, Kindness is opposed to insular self-interest. At the UN General Assembly in 2019, Ardern made a statement urging,

*“If instead of fierce nationalism or self-interest, we seek to form our tribes based on concepts that can and should be universal.”* (JA28)

This statement again promotes a shift from insular-self-interest to concepts that are universal - like Kindness. The promotion of collectivism is a promotion of Kindness, and the promotion of Kindness is a promotion of global collectivism. At an international summit in Berlin, addressing an audience of leaders, Ardern said,

*“In these times of change and challenge, countries that share values and which are prepared to show responsible leadership must stand together.”*  
(JA06)

According to this statement, global solidarity is achieved through values-based politics and responsible leadership. Ethical values like Kindness cannot be an insular value; this may be why the discourse of those values are most used in addressing entrenched problems like inequality or racism. At the Christchurch Call summit, Ardern said,

*“To the country leaders present, we must think beyond our national borders and work globally and collectively.”* (JA22)

Leaders are urged to reject insular ideologies that could hinder tackling global problems like terrorism. Following the Christchurch terror attacks, Ardern used the values of Kindness to persuade a collective action on curbing the broadcasting of terrorism on the internet (JA22).

## 2.3 Legitimising New Zealand's commitment to global collectivism

Kindness is also used to persuade others by legitimising the New Zealand government's commitment against isolationism and protectionism. The Kindness discourse includes a level of positive self-presentation of New Zealand in Ardern's speeches. New Zealand's geographical location, size, and cultural values are highlighted in connection with the rest of the world. In Ardern's maiden speech at the UN in 2018, the PM highlights,

*“For all of that, our isolation has not made us insular.*

*In fact, our engagement with the world has helped shape who we are...*

*In the meantime, I can assure all of you, New Zealand remains committed to continue to do our part to building and sustaining international peace and security...*

*To being pragmatic, empathetic, strong and kind.*

*The next generation after all, deserves no less.” (JA10)*

The discourse of Kindness places New Zealand as a contributor to international goals of peace and security. The quote suggests that a commitment to the international goals of peace is symbiotic with the commitment to values of empathy and kindness. The discourse of Kindness underlies New Zealand's stance in the context of global collectivism and the persuasion of other leaders to reject fierce nationalism, isolationism, and protectionism.

In summary, the momentum of nationalism, isolationism, and protectionism is perpetuated by leaders exploiting the problems of public dissatisfaction caused by exclusion. Responsible leadership rejects isolationism and protectionism and chooses compassionate domestic policies to address domestic socio-political upheaval. Kindness rejects values of insular self-interest that drive the decisions on competing priorities. In its place, the principles and notions of Kindness are promoted as the chosen values for New Zealand in this context. New Zealand's commitment to global collectivism is intertwined with New Zealand's pursuit of Kindness in its domestic politics. Similarly, the following section identifies how the discourse of Kindness contributes to anti-racism discourse using the values of Kindness as a socio-political value.

### **3. FIGHTING RACISM AND PROMOTING AN ETHNICALLY SAFE, RESILIENT, AND KINDER SOCIETY**

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Ardern's speeches contain a significant focus on systemic racism, political racism, and social racism. Much of the discourse on anti-racism is around the Christchurch terror attacks. Hence, the Christchurch attacks will be studied as a case study to have a deeper understanding of how Kindness was used to lead through the

crisis and conflict surrounding the event. However, Ardern's focus on anti-racism was not limited to Christchurch. Ardern began her role by addressing the systemic racism towards New Zealand Māori. The discourse of Kindness promotes a socio-political vision of an anti-racist politics resulting in a society that is ethnically safe, resilient, and kinder.

### 3.1 Māori and the New Zealand Government

In examining the discourse on racism and political racism, Kindness is used to highlight the ongoing conflict between New Zealand Māori and the New Zealand Government. In the process of problem-framing, there are propositions that the government must both look at the historical elements with the Māori as well as their future standing in New Zealand. Regarding the past, in the setting of international leaders, Ardern displays a negative self-presentation when it comes to New Zealand's history related to the Māori. At the 2019 National Statement to the UN, Ardern states:

*"Make no mistake though, we do not claim to be a perfect nation.*

*While we are home to more than 200 ethnicities, that does not mean we are free from racism and discrimination. We have wounds from our own history that, 250 years on from the first encounters between Māori and Europeans, we continue to address." (JA28)*

In 2019, following the widely received praise for New Zealand's response to the Christchurch terror attacks, Ardern made a disclaimer, arguing that New Zealand is not a perfect nation when it comes to racism. The discourse addresses the attitude that New Zealand has moved on from its racist past because of the strides achieved in diversity. The implication here is that neither diversity nor an exemplar crisis response can act as a cover-up for the systemic racism that underpins New Zealand's past and present. Amidst highlighting the diversity of many ethnicities in New Zealand, the discourse of Kindness distinguishes Māori while addressing political racism.

The future of a kinder society depends on addressing its racist past. In Ardern's maiden speech from the throne, the values of Kindness play a crucial role in promoting a vision for society. During which, Ardern states,

*"This government wants to foster a kinder, more caring society. This will involve, government leading the way and facing up to its responsibilities and the legacies from the past..."*

*"It is time to start considering what the treaty relationship might look like after historical grievances are settled. To consider how we, as a nation, can move forward in ways that honour the original treaty promise.*

*A promise of a nation in which Māori values – diverse as they are – stand in their rightful place alongside those of European New Zealanders and other more recent arrivals.*

*A nation in which manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga and whanaungatanga inform our decision-making." (JA01)*

In this discourse, Kindness assists in mapping out how the vision for a “kinder, more caring society” can be achieved, first, by addressing the past and present legacies of political racism, including the ongoing legacy of colonisation. Kindness then legitimises Ardern’s stance that New Zealand’s anti-racism efforts must include addressing its racist past with Māori.

Addressing historical grievances is only the start. However, addressing the racist past includes what was done in the process of establishing a European government - the exclusion of Māori to let their values and worldview be at the forefront of leadership and governance. In New Zealand, European values still dominate the domains of politics, business and government. Ardern promotes the values of *manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga and whanaungatanga* as governing values. Kindness is not only used in legitimising certain propositions, but the discourse of Kindness reproduces, resulting in the promotion of more diverse ethical values in politics.

### 3.2 Dealing with the ‘Other’, navigating differences, and equipping the next generation

Values-based key actions are recommended in this vision for a safe, resilient and tolerant society. Kindness assists in legitimising the propositions in favour of values-based actions. In the UN statement, Ardern highlights,

*“Scientist Robert Sapolsky recently reminded us that humans organise. Whether it’s class, race, country or coin flipping – there has always been a tendency to form us vs other.*

*But he also asks the question, what if we change what ‘us’ means?*

*If instead of fierce nationalism or self-interest, we seek to form our tribes based on concepts that can and should be universal.*

*What if we no longer see ourselves based on what we look like, what religion we practice, or where we live. But by what we value.*

*Humanity.*

*Kindness.*

*An innate sense of our connection to each other.” (JA28)*

By quoting scientist Sapolsky’s work, Ardern proposes alternate parameters to redefine what constitutes the ‘us’ and the ‘other’. In other words, if humans cannot override the tendency to operate as ‘us’ and ‘them’, communities must engage in rejecting values of self-interest and choose connection with each other. Kindness is at the centre of this proposition. The goal to build resilient societies must include navigating differences. Ardern promotes Kindness as something that can help achieve a space for such differences to be negotiated and discussed.

*“Creating a safe space for the expression of different ideas; for political debate and dialogue whether it be on the streets or online remains an essential part of democratic and pluralistic societies. It is critical in resolving tensions in a peaceful manner.” (JA26)*

Leaders are urged to be proactive in creating a safe space for peaceful results. In essence, this proposition widens the scope of political activity in not only responding to racism and terror but actively promoting the positive and healthy engagement of ideological differences. This is consistent with Ardern's hope for the younger generation. Referring to the 192 young New Zealanders who were awarded the PM Scholarship for Asia and Latin America, Ardern claims,

*"Equipping students for the 21st century is a priority... to further develop intercultural competencies, language and empathy, for example" (JA02)*

In highlighting those students and their upcoming opportunities, Ardern classifies empathy alongside language as a competency that can be learnt. Promoting Kindness as a social and cross-cultural skill to address the differences is a consistent feature in Ardern's speeches. Even when speaking at the Waitangi Day Pōwhiri, Ardern, referring to her child and the next generation, said,

*"But I also hope that they know what we value... I hope they know the importance of manaakitanga, lessons that I've been taught and observed by Māoridom overtime..." (JA05)*

Ardern emphasises the values of *manaakitanga* and the ethics of care as values to pass down as part of this vision for the collective future.

In summary, the discourse on Kindness highlights and addresses problems in three global contexts: i) Proposing an economics of kindness through a wellbeing framework that expands the notion of the economy from self-interest to tackling issues of inequality and reforming a government that puts people at the heart of all economic activity. ii) Promoting international collaboration to address wicked problems using values of Kindness to legitimise collectivism while exposing fierce nationalism, isolationism, and protectionism as false promises from political leaders to handle public dissatisfaction; iii) Building an anti-racist discourse and society to address violence, terror, fear, and hatred while challenging governments to address their past racist legacies and to create a future legacy using the values of Kindness.

In addition, this chapter identifies certain patterns that connect the discursive strategies in the three global contexts to the above discussions. New Zealand is positioned as a leader in addressing economism, nationalism, and racism. Māori values are positioned as a contributor in challenging the discourses around economism, nationalism, and racism. Public dissatisfaction and suspicion of governments are highlighted either as a result or as the cause of each of the global topics of economism, nationalism, and racism. Political leaders, governments, and political activity are instrumental in addressing the global challenges that face politics. In the context of reforming politics, Kindness as a political value was analysed in detail and reported later.

The next chapter reports the findings of how the discourse of Kindness was used in the Christchurch case study, providing a more detailed analysis of the context and actions that were legitimised using Kindness.

## 5. CHRISTCHURCH CASE STUDY: COMPASSION AS A CURE FOR VIOLENCE, HATRED, AND FEAR WITHIN THE SOCIO- POLITICAL ANTI-RACISM DISCOURSE

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By consolidating the framework and approach of the previous chapter, this study investigated the political discourse of Kindness in the case of the Christchurch mosque attacks. CDS, context theory and value analysis were employed as a method to identify how the discourse of Kindness was central in addressing the topics of racism, anti-racism, far-right terrorism, and beliefs about ethnic groups, Muslims, immigrants, and refugees. The analysis shows how the values of Kindness were constructed as a cure for hate and fear in the socio-political anti-racist discourse articulated by Ardern. The analysis also demonstrates how Kindness aids in understanding the role of politics and political leadership in the ‘(re)construction or challenge’ of racism (Van Dijk 2000).

Ardern’s speeches strategically position several metaphors within the discursive actions to construct and propose the values of Kindness in responding to the Christchurch terror attacks. The discourse of Kindness around the Christchurch mosque attacks identifies four main topics relevant to the anti-racism discourse: far-right terrorism, white supremacy, anti-immigrant ideologies, and anti-Muslim ideologies. While analysing how values were used in Ardern’s speeches, this chapter identifies that the value of compassion dominated the discourse around Christchurch. Hence the rest of the chapter will use the term compassion to address how compassion, along with other values like *aroha* and *manaakitanga*, were at the centre of the anti-racism discourse. Metaphors assisted in the analysis to identify what actions were legitimised using the values of compassion.

## FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

One of the most significant findings of this case study is the problem-framing and definition of the Christchurch mosque shootings as a “terror attack” and “terrorist attack”. This is seen in the following three titles: *National condolence book opened for victims of Church mosques terror attack* (JA17), *PM House Statement on Christchurch mosques terror attack* (JA18) and *National Remembrance Service following Christchurch terrorist attack* (JA19).

This is an example of discourse exercising power to reshape knowledge and challenge dominant ideologies. The presupposed framing of terrorism is ideologically biased and is a strategy for political actors to justify power abuse usually against the ‘other’, typically an outsider or a foreign national. Socially, the dominant terrorism framing also gets misused as anti-Muslim rhetoric. The Christchurch case in New Zealand witnessed a reversal of a Muslim minority group victimised by a member of the white ethnocentric majority. Even though Ardern does not explicitly mention those terms, the discourse has underlying implications of terrorism based on far-right ideologies, white-supremacist ideologies, and white-ethnocentric-racism. The claim of kindness towards the Muslim community meant that the attacks needed to be called out as terrorism.

The values of kindness, compassion, and aroha were a central force to provide the alternate discourse and access for a discourse on white-ethnocentric terrorism. This challenges the dominant racist discourse that usually deemphasises white-ethnocentric violence as extremism and even a mental health issue. This terrorism framing also saw a discursive action of rejecting these ideologies and distancing New Zealand from those individuals and groups. The Christchurch case study is a case study of a terrorism event.

## ANTI-MUSLIM AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT IDEOLOGIES

The other side of the coin in this case study also highlights the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes that are connected to the first topic. Addressing New Zealand, Ardern stated,

*“On a quiet Friday afternoon a man stormed into a place of peaceful worship and took away the lives of 50 people... It was the day that the simple act of prayer – of practising their Muslim faith and religion – led to the loss of their loved ones’ lives” (JA18).*

Here the Muslim community and, interrelatedly, immigrants are highlighted as an ideologically and socially dominated group in Western society. Ardern’s anti-racist discourse is explicit in acknowledging and highlighting the Muslim faith and religion in the discourse on Kindness and anti-racism. Kindness is also used to urge leaders to stand against political racism, particularly anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant ideologies on the international stage. During the Christchurch Call summit, Ardern stated:

*“Our societies must be compassionate and inclusive no matter what religion, race or gender, and we cannot call for others to model this behaviour unless we model it ourselves, in our actions and in our language” (JA22).*

Kindness, in an anti-racist discourse, is used to normalise the differences and emphasise their good things. Kindness is also used to persuade leaders to model the behaviour in anti-racism.

The rest of the chapter shows how compassion as a value was used in the anti-racist discourse to promote a New Zealand identity, legitimise the socio-political response, encourage anti-racist actions, and challenge the *us-them* narrative. The next section highlights how compassion was used in four different ways to legitimise certain overall actions in the context of anti-racism.

### i) Using compassion to promote a national ethos

One of the first and most prominent ways compassion is constructed in this anti-racist discourse is in the frame of New Zealand's national identity. Some of the metaphors employed in this strategy include *a safe harbour*, *an enclave*, *home*, and *refuge* to describe what New Zealand is and what New Zealand is not. Addressing the nation from the Beehive, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Ardern said,

*"For those of you who are watching at home tonight, and questioning how this could have happened 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 that we are none of those things.*

*Because we represent diversity, kindness, compassion. A home for those who share our values. Refuge for those who need it. And those values will not and cannot be shaken by this attack." (JA16)*

To make sense of how an incident like this could occur in New Zealand, Ardern exercises power to assign meaning to the crisis through her discourse. Ardern also directly addresses those 'who are watching at home' as the participants of this communicative event. By stating that New Zealand was 'a target', was 'chosen' and that 'a man stormed into a place' Ardern implies an external actor and force behind this event. By claiming that New Zealand is not a 'safe harbour for those who hate' or an 'enclave for extremism', there is an explicit distancing of New Zealand identity from both the people and the ideologies that are connected to the one who carried out the Christchurch attacks. New Zealand's identity, which includes values such as compassion, is directly linked to the reason why New Zealand was targeted. Compassion as an identity value is juxtaposed in contradiction with the values that underpin the groups and ideologies of extremism and hate. New Zealand identity is

also defined in terms of a home and refuge. The commonality of ethical values between groups is attributed to expanding New Zealand's scope to include belonging and safety to other groups. The presupposed knowledge of immigrants and refugees as well as certain attitudes associated with that are addressed here. Power is also assigned to the values themselves as being stronger, more enduring, and more powerful through the assertion that the values '*will not and cannot be shaken.*' Ardern claims that the attacks are not a reflection of the true identity of New Zealanders and in doing so implies that people and ideologies of hate and violence are threatened by the values of New Zealand. Strong assertions, like when Ardern calls Friday the 'darkest of days', attempts to legitimise and reinforce the socio-political attention and response to the event. Compassion as an identity is positioned and constructed as secure, true, and powerful. During the national remembrance service in Christchurch, Ardern addressed the Muslim community, Christchurch community, and the rest of New Zealand. Talking about New Zealand, Arden said:

*"A place that is diverse, that is welcoming, that is kind and compassionate.*

*Those values represent the very best of us.*

*But even the ugliest of viruses can exist in places they are not welcome.*

*Racism exists, but it is not welcome here.*

*An assault on the freedom of any one of us who practices their faith or religion, is not welcome here.*

*Violence, and extremism in all its forms, is not welcome here."*

*Our challenge now is to make the very best of us, a daily reality.*

*Because 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.*

*And so to each of us as we go from here, we have work to do, but do not leave the job of combatting hate to the Government alone.*

*We each hold the power, in our words and in our actions, in our daily acts of kindness. Let that be the legacy of the 15th of March.*

*To be the nation we believe ourselves to be." (JA21)*

Kindness and compassion are at the centre of constructing New Zealand's national ethos and self-presentation. Ardern's anti-racist discourse is interesting in the actions where Ardern also ventures into negative self-presentation as part of constructing a national identity. In other words, Ardern proposes that New Zealand renounce certain parts of their collective identity. The metaphor of a 'virus' provides a mental model to connect with the well-known meaning of a virus in the health context, as well as assist in the persuasion of rejecting racism, violence, and extremism. Just as the spread of a virus can happen despite being deemed unwanted, so is racism and extremism also defined by that discursive strategy. Ardern uses a metaphor like virus to communicate difficult realities and articulates a negative self-presentation of New Zealand. This is reinforced by stating that New Zealand is not immune to the viruses of hate and fear of the other. Ardern legitimises the propositions of addressing the different layers of anti-racism. The different expressions or attitudes that stem from similar ideologies are highlighted in this discourse. There is a distinction between the two uses of the same virus metaphor. First, the discourse talks about the ugliest of viruses that represents racism in the form of violence, extremism and terror. The second type of virus represents racism in another form - fear and hatred of the 'other' which can be more subtle but also more widespread. This part of New Zealand identity is challenged, and there is a proposition for it to be transformed through the daily words and acts of Kindness.

Compassion as an identity, if not translated into a daily reality, does not guarantee immunity against such ideologies and practices. In summary, Ardern, in using compassion as an identity value, promotes i) living out the constructed identity of New Zealand with values such as compassion and kindness - the true values of New Zealand; ii) entirely rejecting the renounced parts of the identity like violence and extremism; and iii) challenging some prevalent parts of the national identity in the form of fear and hate of 'other'. These are some of the findings of Ardern's use of compassion as an identity value to build anti-racism and New Zealand's national ethos.

## ii) Using compassion to challenge the ‘us’ and ‘them’

This section identifies how Ardern’s political anti-racist discourse constructs compassion as an instrumental value in addressing the ‘*us vs them*’ divide. In the construction of compassion as a national identity, it was demonstrated how the discourse proposes to not only reject racism in the form of violence and terror but also to challenge society’s racism in the form of sentiments of fear and hate of the ‘other’. It is apparent, as Ardern ‘responds’ to the terrorism and extremism that was brought upon them, she uses power and discursive strategy to act proactively in addressing the more common forms of racism, its ideologies, and its prevalence. To transform that, Ardern, through her discourse, exercises power to reform, define, and assign value to the ‘us’ and ‘other’ paradigm. Two weeks after the terrorist attack, Ardern at the national remembrance service addressed the Muslim community, Christchurch community, and the rest of New Zealand in a televised service. In talking about the stories of the victims in the attack, Ardern states,

*“They were stories of bravery.*

*They were stories of those who were born here, grew up here, or who had made New Zealand their home.*

*Who had sought refuge, or sought a better life for themselves or their families.*

*These stories, they now form part of our collective memories.*

*They will remain with us forever.*

*They are us”. (JA21)*

New Zealand was represented as a home and refuge, as identified earlier. Here, the same metaphors are reiterated, but with a focus on the people who made it their home and people who sought refuge in New Zealand. Through storytelling, Ardern highlights a group of people who were targeted out of hate. The presupposed talk about immigrants and refugees and the explicit mentioning of the Muslim communities draws on the shared pre-existing knowledge, attitudes, and opinions of those groups in Western societies like New Zealand. This discursive action is multi-faceted. Not only is Ardern building an anti-racist discourse for the wider society,

but she is also using her power to represent the Muslim community in an action that also speaks to them. By stating that their stories were of bravery, Ardern is promoting a positive representation of them to the rest, but she is also attempting to share the power with the Muslim community and represent them with dignity. Second, by normalising and highlighting their life stories, experiences, and families, there is a positive representation of them, and at the same time, it establishes their belonging in New Zealand society. This is again reinforced by a discursive strategy of proximising them as part of ‘our collective memories’ and strong assertions of ‘remain with us forever’. In an attempt of proximisation, Ardern utters a discursively strategic phrase saying, “they are us” (JA21). This action explicitly resists the dominant *us-them* rhetoric and sets out to reverse it. Ardern demonstrates that this resistance and reversal is a critical part of doing anti-racism. In the ‘*us vs them*’ narrative, groups that are typically othered in the ‘them’ category like immigrants, Muslims, and refugees, in this case, are now part of the ‘us’ category. Ardern’s use of compassion provided the legitimisation and persuasion for power to be exercised in this way of dissidence and reversal of the ‘us’ and ‘them’ instead of reinforcing it. This action also means that the New Zealand identity is shared with the previously othered who now discursively belong to the in-group. This is one half of it. The same day as the attack, Ardern addressed the nation in a media conference saying:

*“We are a proud nation of more than 200 ethnicities, 160 languages. And amongst that diversity we share common values. And the one that we place the currency on right now is our compassion and support for the community of those directly affected by this tragedy.*

*And secondly, the strongest possible condemnation of the ideology of the people who did this.*

*You may have chosen us – we utterly reject and condemn you”. (JA16)*

The discourse of Kindness was immediately employed in Ardern’s speeches in the context of highlighting New Zealand’s diversity. In promoting the diversity of New Zealand, Ardern’s House statement three days later also reiterated:

*"I have said many times Mr Speaker, we are a nation of 200 ethnicities, 160 languages. We open our doors to others and say welcome. And the only thing that must change after the events of Friday, is that this same door must close on all of those who espouse hate and fear.*

*Yes the person who committed these acts was not from here. He was not raised here. He did not find his ideology here, but that is not to say that those very same views do not live here." (JA18)*

If the proposition is that the previously othered group is now a part of ‘us’ and a part of the in-group, this restructures that paradigm, and inadvertently another group is assigned as ‘them’ or the ‘other’. Ardern in this political anti-racist discourse strongly asserts that the person and the group that are responsible for the violence and hate are the ones to be ‘othered’. This is an interesting claim as people and groups who share those ideologies in its various forms (be it violence or hate) are usually also members of the dominant cultural groups in Western societies. New Zealand is reiterated to be a vastly diverse and open place. The emphasis on New Zealand identity and its values is evident here again. However, Ardern redirects the discourse to the individual and as an implication to any groups that share that ideology, condemns them, and supposedly rejects them. In this action, it is noteworthy that Ardern openly addresses the ideology that was behind the motives. The racist, extremist, and terrorist ideologies and people associated with them are rejected from being considered an in-group. It is presupposed that, interestingly, some of these people would have previously been a part of the in-group but in Ardern’s political anti-racist theory, they are now strongly condemned and rejected - they are ‘othered’.

Ardern also addresses another part of the ideology - hate and fear, and those who ‘espouse’ it. The door metaphor is an easily understandable and persuasive strategy. In one action, Ardern reinforces the New Zealand identity of being compassionate, diverse, and open - open to those who need it and the ones who share those values. On the other hand, Ardern also proposes to close the same doors only on those who espouse fear and hatred. This shows how Ardern uses simple

metaphors, strategically confronts ideologies, proximises the previously othered and polarises/distances those who represent the two forms of racism - fear and hate, and violence and extremism. We see how compassion is at the centre of this resistance and reversal. Ardern claimed that ‘our compassion’ is the value on which New Zealand can place their currency during this event. As a metaphor, it implies that compassion can be bet on, invested in, and risked as the chosen value to show support towards the Muslim community and those affected. Ardern argues for the value of compassion to be the underlying value that drives all action. By highlighting the potential and the reliability of the value, Ardern legitimises the concept of compassion in her discursive approach in New Zealand socio-political domains. This highlights how compassion has been an instrumental value in proximising those that were othered, rejecting the ideologies and people that *espouse* fear, hate, violence, and extremism and thereby reversing the ‘us’ and ‘them’.

### iii) Using compassion to legitimise support of the Muslim community

In Ardern’s speeches, following the Christchurch terror attacks, one of the recurring actions is highlighting the response of New Zealanders to the event. One of the functions of the strategy using values such as compassion, love and empathy is the positive self-presentation of New Zealand following an extremist event. Also, this strategy uses discursive power to assign meaning to the actions of the public as can be seen in Ardern’s assertion that ‘*these actions represent the true values of New Zealand*’. Finally, these values are used in such a way to denote the intention of Ardern to legitimise these values themselves and, as a result, legitimise the response which is based on these values.

On March 18, the government announced opening a national condolence book for victims of the Christchurch mosque terror attacks. In promoting that, Ardern said:

*“We have already seen a huge outpouring of love and support from across the country for those affected and for the wider Christchurch community. These actions represent the true values of New Zealanders – love and compassion.*

*“The Muslim community in New Zealand have experienced the most horrendous attack on them imaginable. While it is a small action, the condolence book offers an opportunity for New Zealanders to unite and express our opposition to hate and state our commitment to the values of love and compassion.” (JA17)*

The same type of language was reiterated at the national remembrance service when Ardern said:

*“In the week since the unprecedented terror attack there has been an outpouring of grief and love in our country. The service will be a chance to once again show that New Zealanders are compassionate, inclusive and diverse, and that we will protect those values.” (JA19)*

The outpouring of love, grief, and empathy implies the in-dwelling of the same. Ardern’s speeches highlight the actions of New Zealanders across the country. The action involved here can be interpreted as reinforcement and a reminder of New Zealand’s identity and values. In the House Statement, Ardern also states,

*“I know that as a nation, we wish to provide every comfort we can to our Muslim community in this darkest of times. And we are. The mountain of flowers around the country that lie at the doors of mosques, the spontaneous song outside the gates. These are ways of expressing an outpouring of love and empathy. But we wish to do more.” (JA18)*

During a crisis, we see a leadership responsibility to remind the people of the ‘good things’ to maintain and sustain the constructed national ethos and identity. These good things about New Zealand are communicated by highlighting the wider public's response and actions, such as “the mountain of flowers around the country” and “the spontaneous song outside the gates”. These actions are then assigned meanings and asserted as an expression of “love and empathy” and a commitment to “love and compassion”. There are two implications to the use of values in this context: whether New Zealanders’ response came out of their inherent, in-dwelling values, or their actions were compassionate and therefore it must mean that they are

inherently compassionate. Regardless, compassion is promoted as an inherent value. Furthermore, the inherence assists in legitimising the use of values like compassion for social and political activity. And if the use of compassion is legitimate and accepted then the response and actions that follow are also legitimised as a result of that. With this, Ardern aims to garner support and legitimise other propositions that use compassion as motivation.

#### iv) Using compassion to promote safe and tolerant communities

Compassion in this observation is constructed to invoke policy intervention, leadership action and social response. Some key propositions are highlighted using metaphors. As a social response, compassion is used to invoke a commitment from New Zealand society to continue to *walk with* the Muslim community in New Zealand and *surround them* with values that are representative of the New Zealand identity as established in the previous sections. This journey-action includes an appeal to ongoing support that continues beyond this crisis event. Compassion used in this way displays the potential of translating such public attitudes during a crisis into becoming a social norm in general. Values like love and compassion are used to extend the social response to long-term commitments. During the house statement, Ardern addressed the Muslim community, saying:

*“And in this role, I wanted to speak directly to the families. 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. Our hearts are heavy but our spirit is strong...*

*But we wish to do more.*

*We wish for every member of our communities to also feel safe.*

*Safety means being free from the fear of violence.*

*But it also means being free from the fear of those sentiments of racism and hate, that create a place where violence can flourish.*

*And every single one of us has the power to change that.” (JA18)*

This is one of the stronger arguments for the use of values like Kindness in political discourse. These values are not just relegated to being reactionary. Compassion here is instead used to advance proactive actions such as actively creating a safe and racism-free community. This is proposed at various levels. Society has the power to address its fear and hate of others, and at the same time deconstruct a space where violence and expression of violence can *flourish*. Here, compassion is used as ‘power’ that is held and shared by everyone in society. The presupposed knowledge about power being held by powerful players and political actors is being addressed here. This is yet another significant construct of compassion. Since these values typically belong in their private lives, it is also the power that everyone in society has access to - to exercise and utilise in a public domain. Other than the time dimension, compassion is also argued to be translated across the various spaces where action is required - from societal response to leadership action and policy action. At the Tech for Good Summit, Ardern addressed leaders in the business and political domains saying:

*“We are building on foundational work that has already been done in a number of different fora, but we need to go further.*

*We must build resilient societies that reject and resist acts of terrorism and violent extremism.” (JA22)*

The Christchurch Call is an example where the discourse and policy settings interact. Ardern calls on tech companies towards this vision of building safer communities. The terror attacks were “specifically designed to be broadcast on the internet” (JA22). The safe-society goal must acknowledge the social-media era and its role in racism and anti-racism efforts. The discourse of Kindness focuses on political leaders’ responsibility to *build* societies that are anti-racist, that are resilient to differences, that have access to the power of compassion, and are opposed to violence and extremism. Compassion as a value, according to this discourse, must always move to action: to come together, to do more, to think outward and beyond oneself, to respond in a way that is supportive of the ones who

are suffering, and to create a safe place to end violence and racism. Kindness is positioned as a critical tool in breaking the cycle of violence.

It seems to be an appeal to the emotions, but also an appeal to action. At certain stages, this appeal to action at the societal and leadership level still seems abstract. A lot of the legitimisation seems to be occurring at an ideological level, struggling over values, norms, attitudes, and opinions. However, compassion to action must be observed through policy promotion in the discourse of Kindness. From changes in gun laws to addressing the use of the internet for terrorism through tech-for-good, values are employed to justify, negotiate and legitimise the government's focus on those policy areas.

In this Christchurch case study, the analysis of the discourse of Kindness identified that resolving crises and managing conflict as the overall action legitimised using compassion as a core value. The discourse of Kindness in politics effectively managed a crisis event and achieved significant gains in the anti-racist discourse in New Zealand. Chapter seven reports how much of the discourse of Kindness is aimed at transforming the way politics is conducted. Ardern highlights the conduct of politics in significance to how politics responds to the global contexts of economism, nationalism, and racism. Therefore, the discourse of Kindness places the way politics is enacted as the overall global problem that Kindness as a political value addresses.

## 6. KINDNESS AT THE CORE OF POLITICAL CONDUCT

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As a shared cultural value, Kindness becomes a political value when it is “declared typical for political systems” - in this case, democratic politics (van Dijk 1997, p.16). The analysis found that the discourse of Kindness promotes Kindness as a core political value, i.e. the preferred value at the centre of political activity (UNESCO 2005; van Dijk 1997).

This chapter highlights the finding that as a political value, Kindness first and foremost addresses the topic of how politics is enacted. As van Dijk (1997) states, “political discourse is at least partly topically about politics itself” (p.25). This research finds that the political discourse of Kindness is significantly topical about the way political activity is carried out by political institutions (states, governments, councils), political actors (politicians, public office holders) and political processes (governing, opposition, agenda-setting) (van Dijk 1997). This chapter highlights how the discourse of Kindness problematises the conduct of politics with serious socio-political consequences. The way politics is enacted has overarching significance to how politics addresses other global topics. Thereby legitimising the proposition that Kindness as a political value is a solution to transform the way politics is conducted. This is followed by identifying how Kindness was used as a core political value in the political discourse of Kindness studied in this research.

### GOOD GOVERNMENTS MATTER IN THE WORLD

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The way politics is enacted is a significant contributor to socio-political upheaval. Ardern uses the discourse of Kindness to highlight politics and governments' failure, leading to public distrust and public dissatisfaction highlighted in this study (JA13, JA14, JA25). Addressing the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, Ardern claims:

*“As leaders globally, we are facing a rising tide of public suspicion towards government, a sense that we’ve let the material differences between us stretch beyond fairness.”*

Kindness as a core political value empathises with how society is affected by political failure. Ardern, through the discourse of Kindness, indicates that addressing socio-political upheaval is a political responsibility. In that process, across Ardern’s speeches, she is promoting a vision of a good, fair, and future-minded government. Four files contain titles that indicate Ardern’s focus on governments within the discourse of Kindness: “The 100 day plan and beyond - setting the direction of the government” (JA04); “Redefining successful government” (JA09); “Government restores fairness for family carers” (JA24); and “Why does good government matter” (JA25). The discourse of Kindness consistently promoted a vision of good governments to address socio-political upheaval. Change in the way politics is done at an institutional level occurs by “building a public sector that can help build good government” (JA25). Political processes and political leaders have a crucial part in it too. Referring to political processes, the discourse implies that election-based politics is self-serving. At the International Conference on Sustainable Development (JA09) in New York, Ardern declares:

*“If I were to sum up our agenda though, it would be simple. I want to demonstrate that politics doesn’t have to be about three or four year cycles. It doesn’t have to be self-interested or have a singular focus.*

*It can think about long term challenges, and respond to them. It can be designed to think about the impact on others, and show that it’s making a difference. And it can even be kind.*

*As an international community I am constantly heartened by our ability to take a multilateral approach, to sign up to a set of aspirations that are values based.*

*But perhaps it’s time to also challenge ourselves to move beyond aspiration to action.*

*That is what we will be doing in our corner of the world.*

*And I can assure you we will never, never, never give up”. (JA09)*

The discourse of Kindness is used to frame politics that is primarily focussed on elections and getting access to power as “singular focussed” and “self-interested”. Instead, Ardern proposes a values-based approach to politics. However, the change in political processes is dependent on political leaders. Ardern’s personalised stance on the topic, claiming “I want to demonstrate” shows how political activity and leadership are interrelated. The discourse of Kindness helps persuade leaders to first “sign up” to these aspirations and second to “move beyond aspiration to action”. The discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern strengthens New Zealand’s commitment to values-based politics and positions New Zealand as a world leader in this area.

## THE POSITIONING OF KINDNESS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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This chapter identifies that Kindness as a political value is used as a core political value to challenge how politics is done. The analysis showed how values of Kindness were used at a meso-level of utterance and what actions were legitimised with the help of Kindness (Sowińska 2013).

### 1. Kindness amidst other political values

The discourse of Kindness is explicit with values. The initial text search query revealed that the values of Kindness (compassion, kindness, empathy, *aroha* and *manaakitanga*) are often used in relation to other values that are a part of other global topics (such as equality and justice). As van Dijk (1997) highlights, political values are used to organise ideologies. Ardern defines her leadership and politics in terms of preferred values (van Dijk 1997).

First, the five ethical values of Kindness are often used alongside one another and interchangeably. For example, “the Government has demonstrated a new kind of leadership, proving that it is possible to be responsible stewards of the economy, while advancing concepts like compassion and kindness” (JA15). There is no explicit definition or distinction of these selected values within this discourse. McKibbin (2017; 2018) and Harris (2016) have argued that in values-based politics

there must be an overarching value that other values centre around. Ardern interchangeably chooses compassion and kindness as the main value, making it harder to understand which main value Ardern is proposing.

The second pattern shows how the values of Kindness are used with other related values that are more well-known and established political values. This discursive strategy strengthens the meaning of Kindness in politics as well as legitimises its use by drawing a connection to these other established values. Kindness is associated with other universal values such as care (JA1), humanity (JA28, 26), equality (JA1), diversity (JA16), inclusion (JA6), justice and Māori values such as guardianship (*kaitiakitanga*) (JA14) and kinship (*whanaungatanga*) (JA1) that assists in the legitimisation and promotion of Kindness.

This positions Kindness along with these widely valued concepts and aims to gain legitimisation for Kindness as one of those universal values. Kindness is also used along with values of creativity (UNESCO 2005) such as modern (JA15), confident (JA01), ingenuity (JA11), innovation (JA11) and transformative (JA08). This seeks legitimization and manages conflict between ethical values and values that represent creativity and development. The third pattern of groupings suggests that values of Kindness are used along with seemingly contrasting values to address the opposition and further the legitimisation to these values being used in politics. For example, *pragmatic, empathetic, strong and kind. (JA10) and compassion and professionalism. (JA29)*

Empathy and pragmatism (JA27), for example, are used together often. Harris (2017) points out that in New Zealand, pragmatism is the “watchword of successive governments” (p.9). This implies the objective of legitimising and promoting Kindness along with the widely established political value. Contrasting values like pragmatism and practicality are “all too often a code or cover for value-judgments” (Harris 2017, p.9). Certain values are exploited to oppose and exclude ethical values from politics. It is a dismissive strategy to respond to any political actors that use such values in the dissident and different discourse categories. The discursive strategy here focuses on anticipating and de-myth some of these criticisms or

dismissals. Additionally, these criticisms also extend to delegitimize the values as they are often constructed as opposed to strength or an obstacle to success - both values (success and strength) are established as ideals in political and societal activity. Ardern highlights and responds to these underlying attitudes towards the values of Kindness by positioning them as mutually co-habitable with strength and success.

While (re)introducing values like Kindness, the discursive strategy of employing other values that support, negotiate and even values that are supported in return display a dynamic, inter-related, and interactional nature of values in political discourse. Overall, Kindness here is constructed, positioned and promoted as a universal value. As a result, Kindness as a universal value in politics is closely related to other similar universal values in politics; it is transferable and loosely related with other more accepted creative values; it is able to coexist with contrasting values mutually. The discursive strategy also includes an effort to legitimise Kindness in politics, to emphasise its significance, and to de-emphasise its criticism as a discursive strategy.

## 2. Kindness as a core political value

Within the domains of politics and political activity, values of Kindness analysed at a meso-level are found to be used and construed in the following ways: Kindness as an essential attribute or quality in politics, as motivation for proposed change, as a different approach in political processes and as a political aspiration for society. These four constructions will be expanded further in this section.

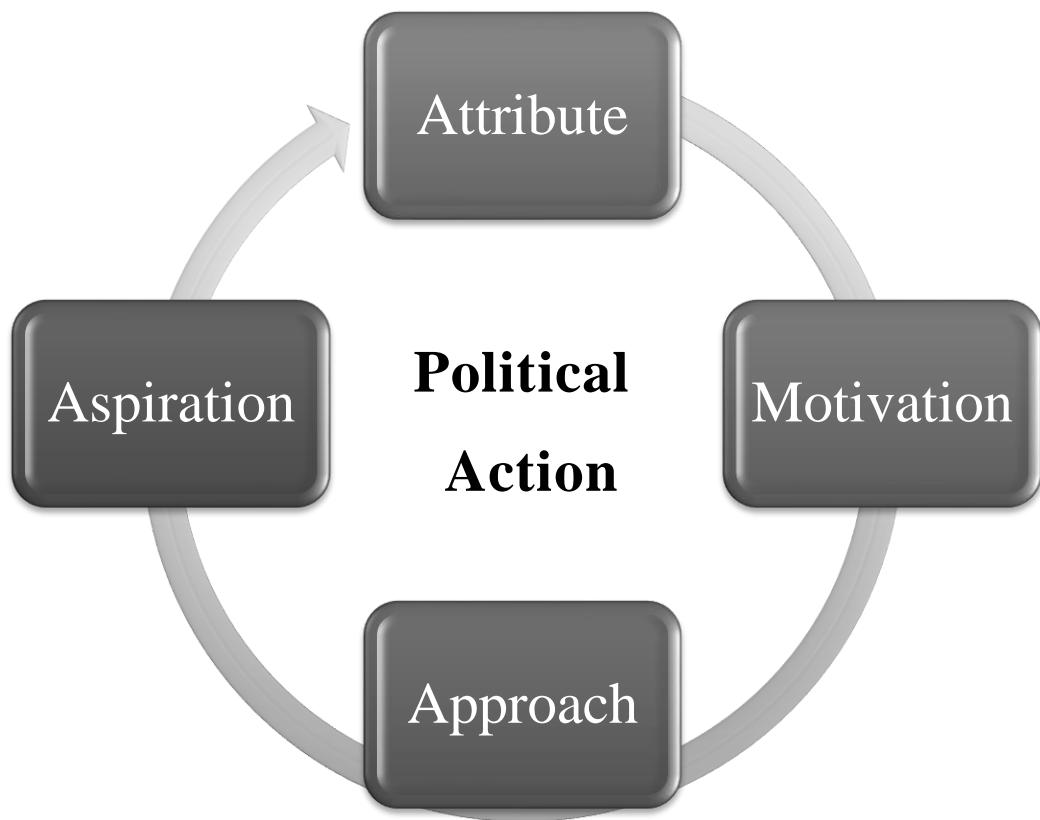


FIGURE 9: EXPRESSIONS OF KINDNESS AS A POLITICAL VALUE

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#### THE ‘WHAT’

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#### KINDNESS AS AN ATTRIBUTE - CHALLENGING DOMINANCE

Kindness is used to describe and promote a different type of government or leader. Politics, governance and leadership are dominated by masculinist ideas of leadership and values (Duerst-Lahti 1995). Ardern in her speech counters that by saying,

*“We decided that there was a place in government for concepts like compassion and kindness” (JA09)*

Other than government as an institutional entity, politicians, and other leaders are also particularised in the attributional positioning of Kindness. Addressing the passing of former Deputy Prime Minister Jim Anderton, Ardern states:

*“New Zealand has lost a man of integrity, compassion and dedication to public service...”*

*“...A man of deeply-held values and ideals, he was practical and compassionate.” (JA03)*

In this discourse, the compassionate and kind attributes of politicians are emphasised and highlighted in the action of promoting these values as rare and memorable ideals in leaders. Kindness is also placed as an attribute in relation to societal groups - national, global, and ideological. At a societal level, when describing New Zealand and global identities, values of Kindness are often positioned as the “true values” (JA17), and as “what makes us, us” (JA18). The discourse of Kindness involves the qualities of Kindness to promote political identity amongst leaders while constructing a social identity. This construction of Kindness has socio-political consequence where attributes or qualities of Kindness can then motivate political and actors towards change.

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#### THE ‘WHY’

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#### KINDNESS AS MOTIVATION FOR CHANGE

At the end of the first 100 days in government, Ardern in her speech at the parliament addressed New Zealand’s leaders and the constituents to highlight the achievements of the government. Ardern highlights the story of a 12-year-old boy named Malachi to highlight the motivations of her government, saying,

*“Today I have been asked to talk to you about the conclusion of our 100 days in office, and where we are going next. But long lists of policy often leave out an important feature. The why. Malachi seems to have picked that up. It is the*

*'why' that drives individual politicians, it's what motivates your policy agenda, it's what dictates the kind of government you are... ”.*

The discourse of Kindness is full of actions that express Kindness as the motivation - ‘the why’ for socio-political change. The construction of Kindness as motivation and the proposition for change occurs at leadership and policy levels. Amidst competing priorities, Kindness as motivation ensures that certain issues do not remain neglected. In this case, Ardern highlighted how Malachi liked the family package and the mental health inquiry because one helps kids that could not afford lunch and the other helps people, he regularly sees in his hospital visits. Kindness as a motivation identifies groups that are typically excluded and legitimises political action. Kindness as motivation is a proposition for change towards inclusion. Hence, Ardern adds,

*“I am going to look forward - to tomorrow and the next few hundred days after that, and further still to the kind of Government we will be as we work to leave a legacy of a stronger, fairer, kinder New Zealand.” (JA03)*

In this discourse of Kindness, motivation is primarily associated with change, not status quo. The references about the future indicate that nostalgia is not driving this discourse, but rather the need for change is. Motivation also “dictates the kind of government you are” which points to Kindness as an approach to implementing these actions.

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## THE ‘HOW’

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### KINDNESS AS AN APPROACH - DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Towards the end of the first year in government Ardern addressed the parliament saying,

*“But all of that is the what. We can't ignore the how.  
Our third key theme is all about the type of leadership this Government is*

*committed to providing.*

*By default, it is going to be different.*

*We have come in with a commitment to deliver transparent, transformative, and compassionate government.” (JA08)*

Ardern uses her speech for positive self-presentation and influences the formation of public opinion (Wodak 2001). This section is about what is claimed as the ‘how’ and implied across Ardern’s speeches. Ardern explicitly uses discursive strategies to propose Kindness as an approach to transform political, social, and policy processes. This was also communicated at the beginning of her term as prime minister. Ardern highlighted,

*“We will have to do things differently. But it is possible, if we include each and every person, in each and every town and region of New Zealand.”*  
*(JA01)*

And later at an international stage in New York, Ardern went on to say,

*“Connectedness, inclusion and the principle of kindness in the way we govern.” (JA06)*

In both instances, inclusion is the value that is being highlighted alongside the proposition to do things differently. This is reflected first as a commitment to the process and approach at the governmental and leadership level. The processes that claim inclusion are urged to use Kindness in the approach all the way through. For example, at the opening of parliament in 2019, Ardern called on agencies

*“to improve the service it provides to beneficiaries and create a more compassionate and caring approach.” (JA15)*

This discourse contributes to the challenge of negative attitudes that persist towards recipients of government assistance. This challenge is carried out by positioning values of compassion alongside human rights and entitlements. Along with Kindness, inclusivity must include respect and dignity in this approach. The

transformative approach is also asserted as being a well-rounded and inclusive approach. In this discourse of Kindness, transforming the approach is both inclusive and respectful. Kindness as an approach is aimed primarily at the way political activity is carried out to reflect Kindness. Kindness as the ‘how’ looks different, well-rounded, and inclusive.

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### THE ‘WHERE’

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#### KINDNESS AS AN ASPIRATION - DEMANDING ACTION

One of the most significant findings of this study is how Kindness is positioned as an aspirational shared goal for politics and society. In Ardern’s UN address, Kindness is promoted to global significance by promoting Kindness as the primary political pursuit of New Zealand.

*“If I could distil it down into one concept that we are pursuing in New Zealand it is simple and it is this. Kindness.” (JA10)*

On multiple occasions, Kindness is constructed as a destination to move towards. Ardern’s claim that all of the political pursuits can be summed up in one concept - Kindness - is a strong assertion that underpins kindness as a socio-political goal for New Zealand. This implicitly promotes Kindness above all other pursuits in Ardern’s politics. In addressing the budget, Ardern frames the communicative event as an “opportunity” to “become... a kinder nation” (JA01). ‘To become’ indicates change, growth, and development in the areas of ethical values and ‘to do’ - which focuses on tangible action necessary to achieve the goal. These two actions are intertwined.

In the discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern, Kindness is applied in politics in four main forms: attribute or quality, as motivation, as an approach and as the aspirational end-goal. All these political expressions of Kindness are linked to political action. In politics, a person with Kind qualities expresses that through political action. Statements such as to “continue to work” with Work and Income

towards a compassionate approach beneficiaries (JA15), “we have work to do” (JA21) or proposing to “move beyond aspiration to action” (JA09), indicate that the discourse of Kindness involves transforming how politics is conducted through political action. Kindness as a political action changes how politics is enacted across multiple levels or settings as discussed below.

## THE THREE LEVELS OF POLITICAL ACTION USING KINDNESS

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While analysing the values at a macro-level of actions, several propositions were legitimised under each type of use for Kindness as a political value. In the process of studying what actions are legitimized and promoted, it was discovered that these construals of Kindness propose a set of actions which can be categorised as occurring across three different settings and participants.

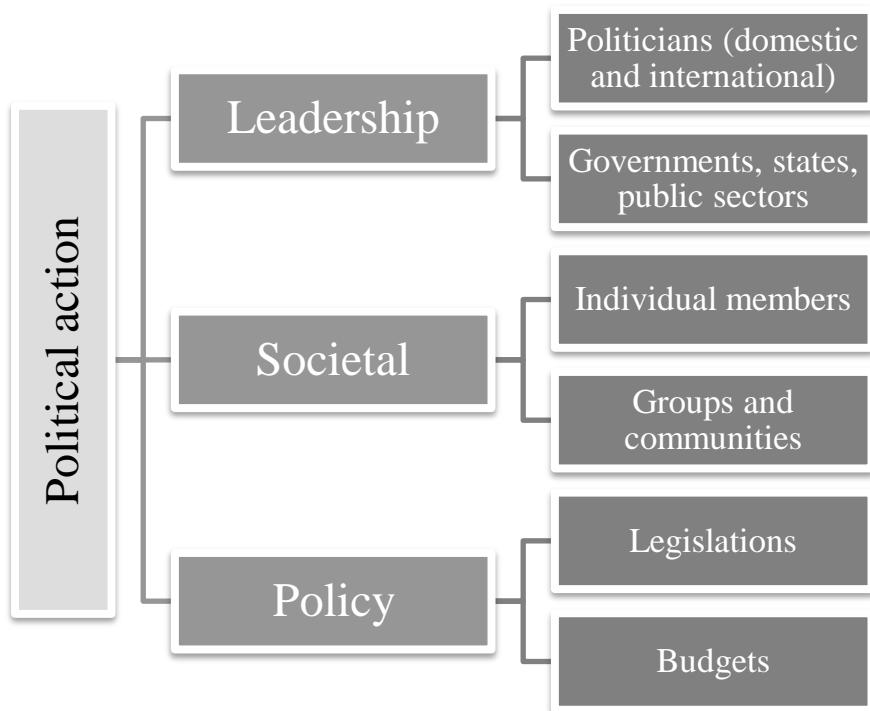


FIGURE 10: POLITICAL ACTION SETTING USING KINDNESS

Kindness calls for changes at three global settings: i) leadership (governments and politicians) ii) Societal (individual members, groups, communities) and iii) Policy setting (legislations, economists, budgets, opposition). These settings were

derived from the local settings the discourse of Kindness occurred in, and the participants or settings addressed using Kindness.

## 1. KINDNESS IN LEADERSHIP

One of the most prominent focuses of Kindness in politics occurs at a leadership level within politics itself. The leadership setting consists of individuals (political leaders) and entities (governments, states). The discourse across genres addresses political leaders and entities such as elected officials (MPs) in NZ parliament, politicians in party conventions, and world leaders at the UN. Much of the discourse of Kindness is aimed at the global setting, beyond the local contexts of each communicative event.

Kindness promoted at the leadership level is proposed to be of utmost significance. Addressing the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, Ardern emphasises,

*But as is so often the case in this sphere – the buck ultimately starts and stops with us, the politicians.*

*As leaders globally, we are facing a rising tide of public suspicion towards government, a sense that we've let the material differences between us stretch beyond fairness, and as a result there are signs of life in old ideologies.*

*But if we begin at home, if we broaden our idea of good government and act with a sense of fairness of guardianship – and even kindness - of what we in New Zealand call manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga – then I absolutely believe we will make headway on these challenges.*

*But we won't succeed unless we apply these same values globally (JA25).*

At a systemic level, Kindness is at the centre of creating what Ardern calls ‘good governments.’ At this level, governments are urged to adopt the principles of Kindness in the dimensions of decision-making, in the way they govern, and in the services provided by the public sector. However, there is also a specific focus on individual politicians themselves to adopt and demonstrate Kindness. By disclaiming that “the buck starts and ends with politicians” (JA25), Ardern places emphasis on

the role of politicians. Ardern reiterates that at the Christchurch Call saying if we have hope for societies to be compassionate and inclusive “we cannot call for others to model this behaviour unless we model it ourselves, in our actions and in our language” (JA22). In this proposition, systemic and social change is reliant on political leaders. At the last UNGA, Ardern referred to leaders as the key holders for hope. Ardern concludes the speech by saying,

*We may feel afraid, but as leaders we have the keys to create a sense of security, and a sense of hope.*

*We just need to choose.*

*Tatou tatou (JA28).*

Kindness as a political value is first and foremost promoted at a leadership level. By stating, “we just need to choose”, the discourse of Kindness at the leadership level is juxtaposed against blame-shift politics. This implies that Kind leaders do not exploit the socio-political upheaval. Leaders are urged to hold themselves responsible for bringing hope and security in a volatile political climate. In this proposition, political leadership is key to the future of politics.

## 2. KINDNESS IN SOCIETY

Expanding from the leadership level, Kindness as a political value seeks to shape and be shaped by society. The discourse of Kindness actively promotes those values in society. This level recognizes society's role in the reformation of how politics is conducted and in resolving problems that politics aims to achieve. In addressing politics, the focus on society is a focus on values itself.

*“What if we no longer see ourselves based on what we look like, what religion we practice, or where we live. But by what we value.*

*Humanity.*

*Kindness.*

*An innate sense of our connection to each other.*

*And a belief that we are guardians, not just of our home and our planet, but of each other.*

*We are borderless, but we can be connected.*

*We are inherently different, but we have more that we share.” (JA28)*

The disclaimers here emphasise values-based social organizing more than racial, religious, or national identities. This transformation of society based on Kindness promotes belonging and connection over differences and division. In previous instances, guardianship or kaitiakitanga was consistently promoted regarding environmentalism. Ardern builds on that, to include being guardians “of each other” (JA28). This Kindness-based vision for the future occurs in the societal setting, and achieving this goal requires a societal commitment to these values.

At the Waitangi pōwhiri, Addressing the nation at the national remembrance service, Ardern urges that “each of us... have work to do” and the necessary change is not limited to the leadership level (JA21).

This shows that an actualisation of a vision “*to be the nation we believe ourselves to be (JA21)*” requires a transformation of values at the societal level. These values in society have the power to maintain or challenge political focus. Ardern emphasises the role of society in the transformation that is being proposed. Ardern highlights how society has a part in changing the way politics is conducted. Talking about different members and groups, Ardern describes them using attributes like kindness and compassion. For example,

In memory of an Airforce Museum Director, Ardern describes that: “*her determined efforts in response to the Canterbury earthquakes were inspirational. She, and the Museum’s Board, demonstrated enormous kindness, innovation and ingenuity in opening up the Museum to Canterbury’s displaced community. (JA11)*

Furthermore, once again in referring to the mental health workers in Palmerston North Hospital Ardern said:

*“When I visit mental health services I’m always impressed with the compassion and professionalism of staff, but too often I hear that their work is made harder because of the rundown state of facilities. We’re getting on with the job of fixing that. (JA29)*

Whether it was regarding a highly regarded museum director Thérèse Angelo, or regarding groups such as mental health workers, Ardern's actions highlight them in connection with the values of Kindness. This is consistent with the proposition where Ardern claims, "we each hold power... in our daily acts of kindness" (JA21). This power of Kindness and compassion can positively impact society as highlighted in the museum director. In the Palmerston Hospital case, highlighting their compassionate quality is followed up by addressing policy failure in allocating resources for the infrastructure. A \$30 million-dollar investment was allocated to the acute mental health facility. This leads to the next setting, where Kindness is actualised - policy.

One of the main suggestions in this discourse is for society to also participate in the change that is being expected at the leadership level. For example, in the context of addressing hate following the Christchurch attacks, Ardern makes a discursive move to mobilise society as responsible actors. Ardern asserts that "each of us ...have work to do". As individuals and as groups, members of society are included in this shift towards Kindness and addressing problems that pervade the socio-political domains. In another such discursive move, Kindness is constructed as a value shared by New Zealand society but not cherished. This disclaimer implies that although certain values are familiar and shared, society has somehow failed to cherish the values of Kindness. It suggests that knowing and sharing these values are insufficient for transformation and that society has to do more with it. The focus on the next generation in this extract also highlights the intention of Ardern to promote Kindness as a long-term normative value cherished by New Zealand society. Kindness in politics is interrelated to everyday Kindness at a societal level.

One of the strongest discursive strategies observed here is the suggestion that Kindness is a power that society holds and that the individuals and groups can exercise this power through their everyday language and action. Ardern's specific focus on shifting culture with Kindness and mobilizing society towards values of Kindness as one of the most significant moves will be highlighted and argued in the discussion section. In this section we identify how at the societal level the promotion of Kindness is legitimised and emphasised because: members of society are

responsible actors just as political actors are; Kindness can be a normative and long-lasting value if society can learn to cherish these values; Kindness is power in the hands of every member of society and can be exercised through their everyday language and action.

### 3. KINDNESS IN POLICY

This section identifies that Kindness in politics remains abstract and incomplete if it does not include policy action and response. This level is about the actionable expression of Kindness through policy and resource allocation. In this discourse, policy is a crucial expression of values of Kindness and legitimisation that Kindness in politics works.

- *But perhaps it's time to also challenge ourselves to move beyond aspiration to action. That is what we will be doing in our corner of the world. (JA09)*

An emphasis on action is supported in the policy setting. Kindness is highlighted as actionable through policy and resource redistribution in the examples of addressing inequality and exclusion. The justification for policy selection and promotion, particularly ones that “reject the status quo” is argued by using values like Kindness. Besides, the arguments against Kindness as unsubstantial are also challenged at this level. On the contrary, Kindness is promoted as a well-rounded approach at the policy level. As an example, the budget proposals are highlighted by Ardern as being both economically responsible and kind. The implication is that policy expression of Kindness acts as evidence to prove the place of Kindness in Ardern’s discourse as a substantive use of values. Promoting the wellbeing framework for economic success, Ardern states,

*I wholeheartedly believe that more compassionate domestic policies are a compelling alternative to the false promise of protectionism and isolation. Now we have a chance to prove it. (JA14)*

The assertion “now we have a chance to prove it” claims that compassionate policy settings will demonstrate how Kindness in politics can address public

dissatisfaction. This positions the wellbeing framework as the expression of compassion through policy action. In the same media release on the economics of Kindness, Ardern discusses policy actions by stating,

*“This isn’t woolly but a well-rounded economic approach — the same kind we will use to confront the challenges posed by climate change, digital transformation, social exclusion, poor health, housing and domestic violence.” (JA14)*

This outlines the avenues for compassionate domestic policies articulated by Ardern. By highlighting relevant problem areas such as climate change, social exclusion, and poor health, Ardern signals policy action as a significant step within the discourse of Kindness. The discourse of Kindness legitimises policy action using a “kindness perspective” and an “economic perspective” (JA14). This strategy can be found again in Ardern’s 2019 budget speech, where the PM states,

*“Today’s Budget shows you can be both economically responsible and kind.” (JA23)*

Kindness expressed through policy settings challenges attitudes around the place and potential of values like Kindness in politics. In this action Kindness explicitly evolves from an ideal to a tangible application - from aspiration to political action. The effort to legitimise Kindness in politics is furthered by the discursive actions observed at the policy level. Overall, the positioning of Kindness through policy expression acts as evidence for the potential of Kindness in politics. Kindness in politics is no more abstract at this level but emphasised as a realistic alternative through policy action.

This chapter examines how the discourse of Kindness is aimed at transforming how politics is enacted and how Kindness is used as a core political value to facilitate it. The four forms and the three levels of expressions of Kindness as a political value are by no means exhaustive, exclusive, or fixed. They are continually emerging in interactional and interrelated ways. The four forms in which Ardern uses the values of Kindness in politics (attribute, motivation, approach, and

aspirations) and the three levels (leadership, societal and policy) in which propositions are made together inform how Kindness is placed in politics in Ardern's political discourse. The final chapter of this thesis discusses the key findings to identify the politics of Kindness modelled by Ardern along with its potential and limitations amidst a socio-political upheaval.

## 7. TOWARDS A POLITICS OF KINDNESS: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

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This research set out to examine how kindness at the core of how politics is enacted can address socio-political upheaval. Sowińska (2013) highlights that values help read the minds of political actors. The analysis involved examining how Kindness was used as a political value in the political discourse of Kindness as articulated by Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand.

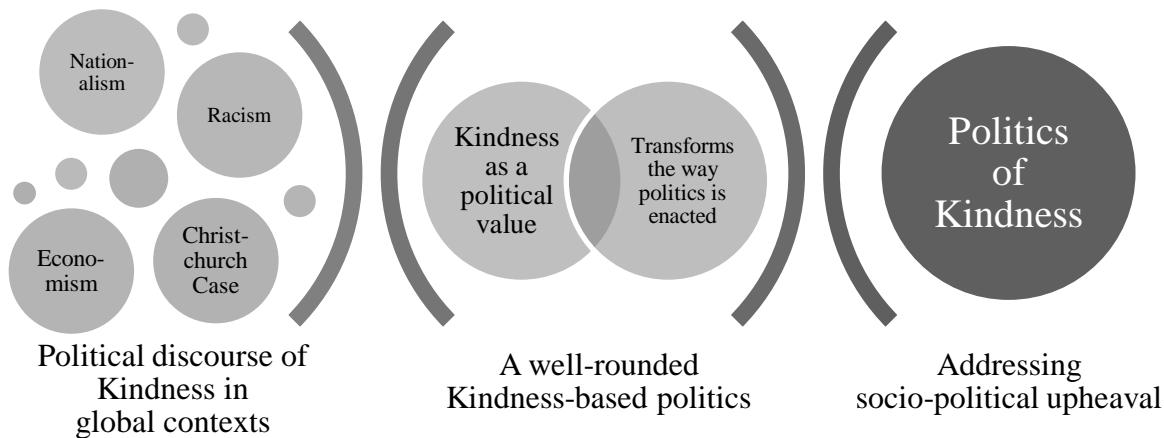


FIGURE 11: THE PURSUIT OF KINDNESS IN POLITICS MODELLED BY JACINDA ARDERN

This thesis first studied the political discourse of Kindness in global contexts of economism, nationalism, and racism to then identify how Kindness as a political value transforms how politics is enacted, leading towards a Politics of Kindness. The final chapter will discuss the potentials of how a Politics of Kindness can address socio-political upheaval that points to a political failure caused by an erosion of ethics in politics and the consequential aversion of society towards politics.

## KINDNESS AS A CORE POLITICAL VALUE: A WELL-ROUNDED APPROACH

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This study identifies the discourse of Kindness as a discourse of values. Several values are at the centre of discursive actions in Ardern's speeches. Kindness in this study represented the five ethical values of kindness, compassion, empathy, *manaakitanga* and *aroha*. The political discourse of Kindness contained explicit promotion of several other values such as peace and justice values (equality, tolerance, unity), creative values (innovation, ingenuity) and sustainable development values (responsibility) that inform Ardern's politics (UNESCO 2002, 2005). The values analysis revealed that Kindness is emphasised as the core value in Ardern's approach to politics. Ardern's speeches used Kindness to promote universal values such as equality, fairness, tolerance, and interconnectedness. Simultaneously, values related to creativity and development, such as ingenuity, pragmatism, strength, and success were repeatedly used to legitimise Kindness as a political value. Ardern's speeches used values like pragmatism and success alongside Kindness to resist a singular focus of political values that prejudices Kindness as weak or as a threat to success (Sennett 2019). Instead, the discourse of Kindness challenges the dominance of self-interest in political action, as many have argued on its limitedness (Stone 2012; Burrows 2014). Harris (2014) identifies selfishness as a barrier to ethical values in New Zealand politics. Self-interest is problematised in this discourse, and Kindness is proposed in its place. Overall, Ardern makes explicit several values that underpin the discourse of Kindness that she is articulating.

In the political discourse of Kindness, Kindness is a core political value that other values are often situated around. The political application of Kindness in the four forms of motivation, aspiration, approach, and attribute points to a well-rounded Kindness-based politics. Talking about a 'radical politics of love' Harris (2016) also proposes similar forms of connections for love in politics (motivation, end-goal, individual quality, and political action) as an effective way of doing values-based politics. The difference identified in this study is that all forms of Kindness are political action. Kindness as an approach is observed in this discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern. The aspiration of leaving a kinder society as a

legacy leads to action. Each of these individually can be about political action; a well-rounded Kindness discourse uses Kindness in all aspects. Political actors motivated for change, act on the approach, which ultimately leads to a kinder society. True values-based politics does not involve superficial use of the values (Harris 2017).

## KINDNESS: TRANSFORMING THE WAY POLITICS IS ENACTED

The axiological analysis of Ardern's speeches revealed a pattern of global actions using Kindness. The political discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern uses Kindness to i) identify problems and propose solutions ii) legitimise policy iii) persuade leaders and society iv) promote a socio-political vision and v) manage crisis and conflicts. These actions were then legitimised using Kindness to address economism, nationalism, racism, and the overarching political conduct.

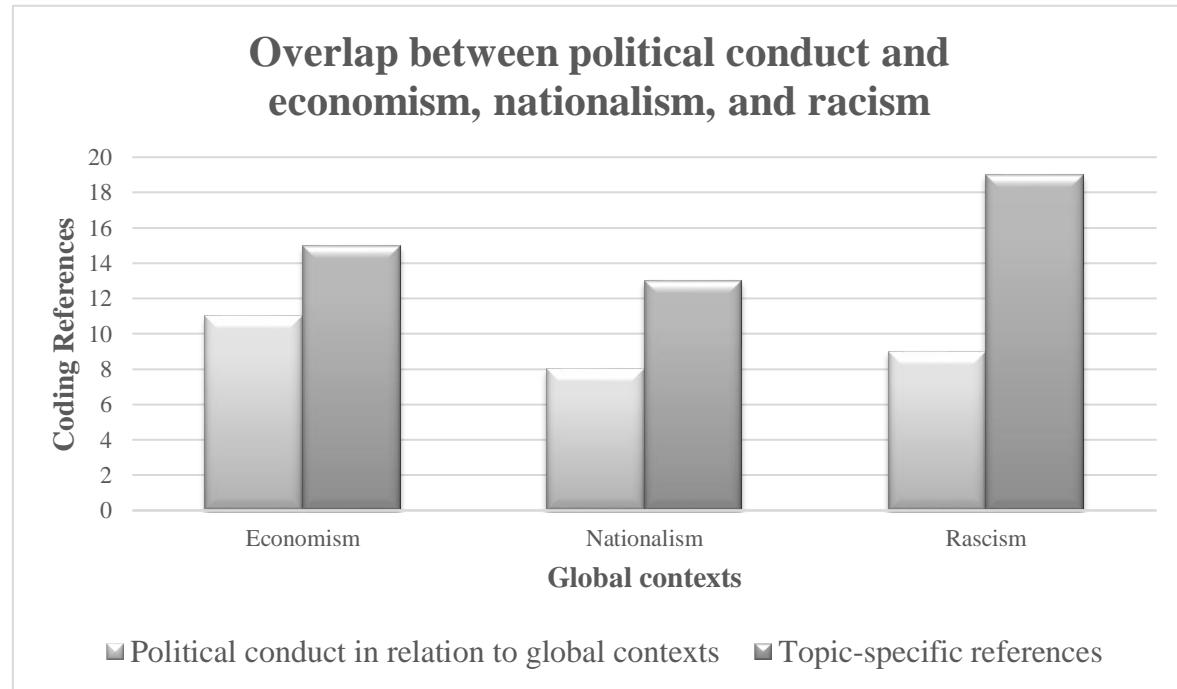


FIGURE 12: THE WAY POLITICS IS ENACTED - THE OVERARCHING PROBLEM IN THE DISCOURSE OF KINDNESS

### i. Kindness to transform the political conduct

The way politics is conducted is the overall problem that the discourse of Kindness is positioned to resolve. Ardern's actions using the discourse of Kindness can be summed up in the approach to reform how politics is enacted. The chart above shows how the discourse of Kindness addresses political conduct in each of the three contexts – economism, nationalism, and racism. There was a significant overlap of coded data under the three contexts that highlight the role of politics and governments within the global contexts of economism, nationalism, and racism. This was an indicator of how the discourse of Kindness primarily addresses the way politics is enacted as an overarching problem area across contexts.

The discourse of Kindness identifies political conduct and political culture as problem-ridden and promotes Kindness as a political value in response to that. As Pullen and Vachhani (2020) note, “Ardern relates to others, she connects and works not only with individuals but transforms the ways in which politics is enacted and leadership is captured anew” (p.8). Ardern’s proposition to bring kindness back into politics underpins the actions relevant to each of the global contexts. This return of Kindness occurs at three settings: leadership, societal and policy.

Ardern uses the values of Kindness to promote a vision for leadership and persuade governments to adopt Kindness as values for governance. Good governments and compassionate leaders are key holders for hope and are challenged to transform the way politics is conducted by modelling, facilitating, and translating Kindness. One of the strongest actions in Ardern’s speeches is the promotion of Kindness at the societal level. Stone proposes that “we need leaders who reach citizens through their hearts” (Stone 2012 p.292). This notion of the heart is more than an appeal to sentiments. It is a clear vision, call for action, and accountability at the societal level, which leads to political action at the policy level. For values-based politics, the policy setting is crucial in its legitimisation (McKibbin 2016; 2018). Leaders who promote ethical values must have clear policy goals to substantiate the idealism (Harris 2014). The discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern emphasises the policy setting in each of the contexts. Overall, the positioning

of Kindness as a core political value should lead to a transformation of how politics is enacted at the three levels of leadership, society, and policy for a well-rounded values-based approach.

## ii. Putting people at the heart of politics and the economy

In the context of the economy, the political discourse used Kindness to legitimise the wellbeing framework as an alternative to GDP. Anderson and Mossialos (2019) emphasise “how a country chooses to measure economic wellbeing affects how priorities are set and how resources are allocated” (para.1). Ardern promotes a government that puts “people at the heart of everything”. The dominant near-universal way of governments that prioritise economic wellbeing ignores other values that citizens have, such as mental and physical health, environmental health, housing and employment (Anderson and Mossialos 2019). Nations measure its success solely on economic output without accounting for its inequalities, social, and environmental ills while measuring its progress. The government’s primary role involves serving the wellbeing of the economy in its priorities and resource allocation rather than the government and the economy serving its people's wellbeing. Based on the works of Wolff & Haubrich (2006), Smith (2014) defines economism as “where policy makers have over-emphasised and over-estimated economic efficiency as the policy objective, and in doing so reduced the importance of other values such as sustainability or equality” (p.38). The discourse of Kindness legitimises the transition to a wellbeing framework to address the inequalities caused by exclusion in economism. New Zealand’s wellbeing agenda was funded by \$26 billion to prioritise mental health, child wellbeing, a sustainable environment and marginalised groups (Anderson and Mossialos 2019). Anderson and Mossialos (2019) identify that, even though this is not a new or original concept, New Zealand’s approach is unique for its “explicit commitment to measure the success of its budget and structure budget allocations according to its national wellbeing indicators” (para.5). The political discourse of Kindness uses Kindness as a perspective to “prove” that Kindness can coexist with economic success, strength, and progress.

### iii. Persuading leaders to adopt collectivism

The political discourse of Kindness was instrumental in persuading leaders to reject insular ideologies of isolationism and protectionism. Ardern's message to the world leaders was a stark contrast to some of her counterparts that exploit nationalistic sentiments ("Kindness and kaitiakitanga." 2018). There is a valid dissatisfaction over political failures in this context (Kane 2017). Countries are dealing with the neglect that communities have experienced through globalisation and the economic crisis (Kane 2017; Kontos 2018). Ethical values like Kindness along with other universal and peaceful values, set a standard where governments correct the harm caused through globalisation, without abandoning the collective approach. The discourse of Kindness proposes compassionate domestic policies, like the wellbeing agenda, as an alternative to insular and selfish ideologies. Nations adopting a blame-shift approach for social ills are deepening the existing divide. Racist ideologies perpetuate these dominant discourses. This paper argues that the topics of economism and nationalism and the problematic attitudes around these topics also have an underlying connection with racism. However, the topic of racism is so polarised that it leads to irreconcilable differences.

### iv. Promoting a socio-political vision of safe communities

Harris (2017), in an argument for values-based politics, claims that New Zealand politics is directionless. This discussion of the potential of Kindness argues that neither nostalgia nor lack of direction achieves any productive results (Kane 2017; Harris 2017). The discourse of Kindness promotes a socio-political vision of a future with an ethnically-safe and resilient society. The vision of an anti-racist society must include a critical view of the history of racism in every society. The distinction and explicit mention of the forms of racism furthers society's accountability in the effects of anti-racist ideologies in a societal setting (van Dijk 1992; 2000). Kindness has been central to addressing one of the most conflict-ridden topics. Political responses of denial, dismissal, or positive spin could lead to disillusionment and further the division between groups (Hage 2019). Kindness cannot operate in domination or in reinforcing a polarising *us* and *them* rhetoric (bell

hooks 2000). Since racism thrives on domination, polarisation, and capitalising the differences, Kindness cannot have biases in the emphasis and de-emphasis of our ‘good’ and their ‘bad’ (van Dijk 1992; 2000). Politics of Kindness includes building a future where navigating differences is a competency that societal members must develop. The focus on building a safe, resilient and diverse society is a task for every society. Referring to Dr King, Burrows (2014) highlights, “ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation” (p.322).

#### v. Managing a national crisis and conflict

The Christchurch terror attacks is an event that propelled Ardern’s anti-racist discourse to global significance. Usually, dominated groups are the majority voice in anti-racism and joined by certain dominant group members (van Dijk 2010). The problem with coddling white ethno-centric racism and far-right violence under narratives and superficial statements results in no confidence for minority groups (Hage 2019). As a Prime Minister, Ardern’s leadership in the crisis management meant she did not wait for what is known as the “contest of explanation” (Boin et al., 2016, pg.110). Ardern’s use of the values of Kindness in her response to this crisis is as Boin et al. (2016) highlight, situated in repentance and symbolic reform that is full acceptance of the blame followed by signs of policy reforms (Jacinda Ardern is redefining leadership, 2019; The Observer view 2019). Ardern’s actions following the events received widespread attention in comparison to other similar events (Manhire, 2019). The reforms included the gun law reform, an inquiry into the intelligence agency, initiative of the Christchurch call and her denial to give the accused any notoriety were highlighted in connection to her leadership. Empathy is important to how leaders manage accountability after a crisis (Boin et al. 2016).

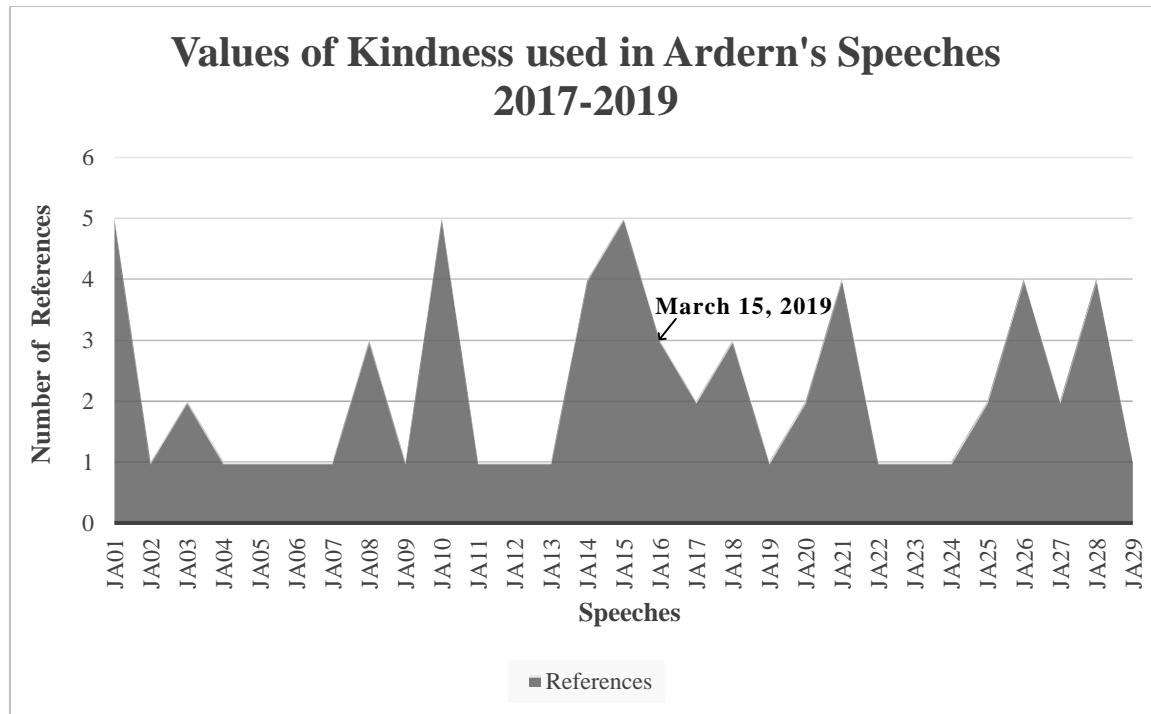


FIGURE 13: REFERENCE TO VALUES OF KINDNESS IN ARDERN'S SPEECHES 2017-2019

Ardern's empathetic leadership was highlighted for its authenticity and clarity (The Observer view 2019). Ardern's authenticity is evidence of her commitment to the values of Kindness. The analysis revealed that the discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern has been consistent throughout the two years of data analysed in this study (see figure 13). Ardern's leadership and expression of leadership are intuitive. Ardern's speeches over two years indicated that Ardern's authenticity is rooted in her consistency.

The discussion summarised how the discourse of Kindness was positioned within the global contexts of economism, nationalism, and racism. Several macro actions were identified in Ardern's speeches using Kindness as a political value. The political conduct or the way politics is enacted is the overarching problem area that emerged from the analysis of Kindness. The macro actions identified that political conduct could be transformed by using political action in three settings: leadership, societal and policy. These macro actions along with macro settings, provide an overview of the political discourse of Kindness articulated by Ardern.

TABLE 2 POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF KINDNESS BY JACINDA ARDERN

<b>Kindness in global setting</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Societal</b>	<b>Policy</b>
<b>Global actions using Kindness</b>			
<b>Promoting a socio-political vision</b>	Good governments matter in the world	Equipping the next generation with competency in ethical values	A safer internet in Tech for Good (Christchurch call)
<b>Persuading leaders</b>	Reject insular and self-interest ideologies	Build resilient societies and create space for navigating differences	Compassionate domestic policies
<b>Framing problems and proposing solutions</b>	Confronting past legacies of systemic racism	Challenge fear and hate of the ‘Other’ through values-based ‘ <i>us</i> ’ and ‘ <i>them</i> ’ as a solution	Wellbeing framework for inequality and exclusion
<b>Legitimising policy</b>	Wellbeing agenda over GDP	Focus on thoughts, words and actions of societal members	Mental health budget Family package
<b>Managing crisis and conflict</b>	Model behaviour in words and actions	Constructing a national ethos	Intelligence inquiry, gun reform

## POLITICS OF KINDNESS – POTENTIAL AND LIMITATIONS

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‘Politics of Kindness’ according to this research, is a politics that has ethical values of kindness, compassion, empathy, manaakitanga, and aroha as the core values of political activity. The politics of Kindness has revealed some potential to address the upheaval between the political and societal domains.

First, Kindness being able to challenge dominance and tackle entrenched problems can address disillusionment and dissatisfaction. The post-war dream of democracy was freedom, equality, and addressing social ills (Harris 2016; Kane 2017). The political failure to address social ills has resulted in public dissatisfaction and disillusionment with politics (Harris 2017; Kane 2017). Stone (2012) argues that democracy does not depend on self-interest but altruism. Throughout this study, the analysis showed how politics of Kindness is a politics of difference and dissidence. It challenges domination and the singular focus of self-interest, to create a shared vision for society.

Second, this shared vision for the future is built on hope rather than despair or anger. Burrows (2014) emphasises that a revolution of values among society and its leaders is one of the main ways politics of despair can be addressed to create and maintain hope instead. A politics underpinned by Kindness and hope can address public disengagement, disempowerment, and the disarray witnessed between society and politics (Burrows 2014; Monbiot 2014; Harris 2016). McAuley (2003) believes that getting people to re-engage with politics is a task for this millennium - the kind of engagement not founded on just ‘negative ethos’ (like anti-something) or reactive participation (social media outbursts, or keyboard warriors). A politics of despair exploits polarising and divisive strategies. On the contrary, a politics of Kindness functions in the common ground to create a positive and proactive way of political engagement (McAuley 2003; van Dijk 2015).

Third, the politics of Kindness requires resonant and responsible leadership. Leaders who are informed by emotional intelligence and resonance “are variously compassionate, driven by hope and ambition, empathetic, conscientious, humble and self-effacing...” (Spiller et al. 2015, p.15). In contrast, dissonant political leaders

that blame-shift exploit the public's dissatisfaction and deepen the divide (Gloeman et al., 2002). Spiller et al. (2015) highlight that "dissonant leaders communicate emotions such as anger, apathy, fear, irritability and may be successful in the short term but cause a trail of negative consequences in the long term" (p.15). These long-term consequences have contributed to a political culture that lacks integrity and responsibility while exploiting societal divide (Harris 2017). In the politics of Kindness, if we want to address the socio-political upheaval and regain the public's trust, then the toxicity of political and often party cultures is an important issue to address. Political culture is about how, over time, ideals become the norm through practise (Wendel 2012). The implications of uncivil, disingenuous political conduct and nastiness becoming common and expected in political culture is damaging to the future of politics (Kane 2017; Kontos 2018; Molloy 2018). Politics of Kindness, on the contrary, maintains a standard of leadership that is healthy and kind.

A politics of Kindness also has its limitations and criticisms, many of which were already discussed in the literature review. However, there are some limitations to consider going forth. With resistance discourse gaining traction in certain areas, if it does not include approaches that are also kind, it could lead to disillusionment. Kindness as a dissident politics can also appear contradictory for dominant groups who could claim unkind treatment of themselves. Politics of Kindness has the risk of being weaponised to attack or silence the groups or social movements that seek systemic changes.

Second, the politics of Kindness is, after all, about including the 'humanness' into political systems and processes through ethical values. Hence, this kind of politics is in many ways reliant and therefore limited by the people who lead it; the willingness, their ability and the spirit behind it. Leaders are also responsible for their contribution to the production and manipulation of knowledge; for representing, promoting, and shaping ideologies, attitudes, and opinions as public officeholders. Most importantly, the main argument that this study observes is that political leaders must be responsible and accountable for the values that they represent, use, and promote.

The final limitation is best articulated by Thiruselvam (2019) who highlights the other side of this politics that can reinforce the notions of unequal exchange with white liberals being the ones who show care to others. Thiruselvam (2019) argues that when Ardern states, “this is not who we are” or “they are us”, those phrases perpetuate an illusion of New Zealand that does not match the reality of many members and groups that are systemically and socially ‘Othered’. Hence as much as it is important to idealise the future of such politics, it is equally important not to cognitively distance ourselves from the reality that we still have a long way to go from where we are currently. The vision for a future that involves ethical values must also carry the potential to navigate difficult subjects, minimise polarisation, and avoid further disillusionment.

## FUTURE RESEARCH PROSPECTS

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This study provides an overview of the Politics of Kindness and the political discourse of Kindness through CDS. The analysis has explored the range of topics, context, issues, and approach of ethical values in politics. The discussion section provides avenues for further analysis for those interested in values-based politics or those interested in political leadership or the political leadership of Jacinda Ardern. Here is a list of research prospects that this study wants to propose:

### 1. Global topics and values:

This study provides the opportunity for future studies to identify the broader themes and topics identified in this study and investigate: a) policy analysis under each global topic b) a comparative study of other leaders’ discourse on these topics. This approach suggests:

- More research into the political culture of New Zealand politics and leadership is needed.
- Students who want to study feminism and values may find this study provides a framework for evaluation. A post-COVID economic discourse comparison might be particularly interesting.

- More relevantly, with the resurgence of discussions around systemic racism with the Black Lives Matter movement, CDS can help study leaders' discourse on the topics along with Ardern's anti-racist discourse.

## 2. Evaluating leaders through social and policy investigation:

As leaders, discursive value negotiation in and of itself is a powerful action and has the power to influence socio-cultural values and knowledge and (re)shape ideologies. As reflected in the findings, this study recognizes that value negotiation without tangible action can be considered 'meaningless'. The next suggestion is for an evaluative study on leadership and politics of Kindness.

- This study analysed Kindness in politics at the leadership level through language and leadership. Other studies can be done to analyse leadership evaluation through other 'text' such as media analysis or public opinion.
- Kindness in politics can be studied at the policy level through policy analysis and policy evaluation. For example, how the Politics of Kindness has impacted the area of mental health in New Zealand.

## 3. Evaluation of values and values-based politics:

Values continue to be a contested and underexplored area of political discourse and political action - values that are used for peace, equality, justice, and inclusion, even more so. If we have to move from critically studying values in its negative use of domination and manipulation to include exploring the potential of values in the positive use of peace, inclusion, justice, equality and non-violence, then more research has to be done identifying what has worked with the help of policy analysis. Kindness in politics can be studied at a societal level, by surveys and interviews to determine the effect and evaluation amongst various groups regarding how it has been received - if and how has it influenced their ideologies, attitudes and opinions?

## CONCLUSION

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A UNESCO report in 2005 points to the “erosion of human values” as “a crisis of our own making,” that is “unless we reverse the trend” (p.13). This research argued that the crisis of erosion of human values, particularly ethical values, is connected to the socio-political upheaval. As Burrows (2014) stated, we need a revolution of ethical values in the political domain to address the serious social consequences caused by the inefficacies and failure of politics. The opposition to such a values-based approach is rooted in dualism and dichotomous thinking, which has failed us so far (Stone n.d.). As Harris (2017) states, values-based politics “in a world dominated by individualism is far from soft. It’s hard. It involves taking on the crushing, paralysing cynicism of our era. I think it requires strength and support and toughness” (p.21).

Ardern’s politics of Kindness has both demonstrated and set a precedent for political leadership in New Zealand. This research is about more than that - it is about the future of politics and that maybe from now on Kindness could be a core value in our political systems, processes, actors, and actions. It is about the hope that it is possible, and if done well, it has excellent potential. We must give ethical values like kindness, compassion, empathy, love, and kinship a chance to revive the quality and longevity of democratic politics into the future and ensure that the dream of an equal and peaceful society does not implode under a more tumultuous reality.

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## DATA REFERENCES

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<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Document Type</b>
<b>JA01</b>	Speech from the Throne  <a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech-throne-2017">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech-throne-2017</a>	8 November 2017	Speech
<b>JA02</b>	Talented New Zealand students awarded Prime Minister's Scholarships  <a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/talented-new-zealand-students-awarded-prime-minister%E2%80%99s-scholarships">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/talented-new-zealand-students-awarded-prime-minister%E2%80%99s-scholarships</a>	8 December 2017	Release
<b>JA03</b>	Government mourns the passing of Jim Anderton  <a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-mourns-passing-jim-anderton">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-mourns-passing-jim-anderton</a>	7 January 2018	Release
<b>JA04</b>	The 100 day plan and beyond - setting the direction of the government  <a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/100-day-plan-and-beyond-setting-direction-government">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/100-day-plan-and-beyond-setting-direction-government</a>	31 January 2018	Speech
<b>JA05</b>	Prime Minister's Waitangi pōwhiri speech  <a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-ministers-waitangi-powhiri-speech">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-ministers-waitangi-powhiri-speech</a>	5 February 2018	Feature
<b>JA06</b>	Progressive and inclusive growth - sharing the benefits  <a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/progressive-and-inclusive-growth-sharing-benefits">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/progressive-and-inclusive-growth-sharing-benefits</a>	18 April 2018	Speech
<b>JA07</b>	Working together to build a new economy	28 August 2018	Speech

	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/working-together-build-new-economy">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/working-together-build-new-economy</a>		
<b>JA08</b>	Our plan for a modern and prosperous New Zealand	16 September 2018	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/our-plan-modern-and-prosperous-new-zealand">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/our-plan-modern-and-prosperous-new-zealand</a>		
<b>JA09</b>	Redefining successful government	28 September 2018	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/redefining-successful-government">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/redefining-successful-government</a>		
<b>JA10</b>	New Zealand National Statement to United Nations General Assembly	28 September 2018	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/new-zealand-national-statement-united-nations-general-assembly">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/new-zealand-national-statement-united-nations-general-assembly</a>		
<b>JA11</b>	Prominent museum director remembered	16 October 2018	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/prominent-museum-director-remembered">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/prominent-museum-director-remembered</a>		
<b>JA12</b>	Prime Minister's speech to 2018 Labour Party Conference	4 November 2018	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-minister's-speech-2018-labour-party-conference">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-minister's-speech-2018-labour-party-conference</a>		
<b>JA13</b>	PM to promote trade and wellbeing at World Economic Forum	17 January 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/pm-promote-trade-and-wellbeing-world-economic-forum">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/pm-promote-trade-and-wellbeing-world-economic-forum</a>		
<b>JA14</b>	Opinion- An economics of kindness	22 January 2019	Feature
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/feature/opinion-economics-kindness">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/feature/opinion-economics-kindness</a>		
<b>JA15</b>	Prime Minister's Statement at the Opening of Parliament	12 February 2019	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-ministers-statement-opening-parliament">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-ministers-statement-opening-parliament</a>		
<b>JA16</b>	Further update from Jacinda Ardern on Christchurch mass shooting	15 March 2019	Release

	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/further-update-jacinda-ardern-christchurch-mass-shooting">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/further-update-jacinda-ardern-christchurch-mass-shooting</a>		
<b>JA17</b>	National condolence book opened for victims of Church mosques terror attack	18 March 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/national-condolence-book-opened-victims-christchurch-mosques-terror-attack">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/national-condolence-book-opened-victims-christchurch-mosques-terror-attack</a>		
<b>JA18</b>	PM House Statement on Christchurch mosques terror attack	19 March 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/pm-house-statement-christchurch-mosques-terror-attack">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/pm-house-statement-christchurch-mosques-terror-attack</a>		
<b>JA19</b>	National Remembrance Service following Christchurch terrorist attack	24 March 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/national-remembrance-service-following-christchurch-terrorist-attack">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/national-remembrance-service-following-christchurch-terrorist-attack</a>		
<b>JA20</b>	Duke of Cambridge to visit Christchurch	28 March 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/duke-cambridge-visit-christchurch">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/duke-cambridge-visit-christchurch</a>		
<b>JA21</b>	Prime Minister's speech at the National Remembrance Service	29 March 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/prime-minister's-speech-national-remembrance-service">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/prime-minister's-speech-national-remembrance-service</a>		
<b>JA22</b>	Jacinda Ardern's Christchurch Call opening statement	16 May 2019	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/jacinda-ardern's-christchurch-call-opening-statement">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/jacinda-ardern's-christchurch-call-opening-statement</a>		
<b>JA23</b>	Wellbeing Budget tackles New Zealand's long-term challenges	30 May 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/wellbeing-budget-tackles-new-zealand's-long-term-challenges">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/wellbeing-budget-tackles-new-zealand's-long-term-challenges</a>		
<b>JA24</b>	Government restores fairness for family carers	7 July 2019	Release

	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-restores-fairness-family-carers">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-restores-fairness-family-carers</a>		
<b>JA25</b>	Why does good government matter?	18 July 2019	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/why-does-good-government-matter">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/why-does-good-government-matter</a>		
<b>JA26</b>	Speech to 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi	25 September 2019	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech-150th-anniversary-birth-mahatma-gandhi">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech-150th-anniversary-birth-mahatma-gandhi</a>		
<b>JA27</b>	Wellbeing a cure for inequality	25 September 2019	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/wellbeing-cure-inequality">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/wellbeing-cure-inequality</a>		
<b>JA28</b>	New Zealand National Statement to United Nations General Assembly 2019	25 September 2019	Speech
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/new-zealand-national-statement-united-nations-general-assembly-2019">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/new-zealand-national-statement-united-nations-general-assembly-2019</a>		
<b>JA29</b>	Better mental health facilities for Palmerston North	14 November 2019	Release
	<a href="https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/better-mental-health-facilities-palmerston-north">https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/better-mental-health-facilities-palmerston-north</a>		