

to restore some kind of innate heterosexual harmony between men and women. And, as the recent political campaign of Pete Buttigieg demonstrates, some queer people (and perhaps especially gay men) still find tremendous value in replicating heterosexual norms about monogamy and domestic bliss that Ward's queer feminist analysis would find quite unimaginative!

In conclusion, Ward's book presents a compelling biopsy of straight culture that is simultaneously humorous, pitying, and scathing. Her book would be a strong addition to any gender studies course and will likely have a wonderful influence on feminist, queer, and masculinities research. In particular, *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality* provides a powerful example of how to adopt a methodologically queer approach to social science research and will hopefully be a model for further important critical research.


David Eichert is a PhD candidate in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics: d.g.eichert@lse.ac.uk

REFERENCE

Ward, Jane. 2015. *Not Gay: Sex between Straight White Men*. New York: New York University Press.

A Populist Exception? The 2017 New Zealand General Election. Edited by Jack Vowles and Jennifer Curtin. Canberra: ANU Press, 2020. 286 pp. AUD \$60.00 (paperback), also available as open access e-book. <http://doi.org/10.22459/PE.2020>.

doi:10.1017/S1743923X21000039, e4

Carol Johnson 

University of Adelaide, Australia

Jacinda Ardern has been one of the more interesting women political leaders in office in recent years, lauded for her success in managing New Zealand's exposure to COVID-19 and for her attempts to pursue a kinder politics focusing on increasing national well-being. She also

proved to be a unifying and empathetic leader following the Christchurch massacre of 51 Muslim worshippers by a right-wing extremist in 2019. This edited collection analyzes the 2017 election that first brought Ardern to power, making her New Zealand's third woman prime minister. As the contributors to this book make clear, this was an election that had a broader international significance, especially for readers interested in gender, populism, social democracy, and the implications of different voting systems.

Some background is useful for explaining why New Zealand elections are particularly interesting internationally. To begin with, New Zealand uses a mixed member proportional (MMP) voting system that gives electors two votes: a party vote that helps determine how many seats a party has in parliament and an electorate vote that determines who will be the member of parliament for a particular electorate. Therefore, there are two types of seats in the New Zealand parliament: those filled by the electorate vote and those filled by the party vote. The seats won by the party vote are allocated through party lists that rank candidates in order. Unlike in first-past-the-post systems, the parties' representation in parliament is generally proportional to the percentage of the vote they received. Another less usual feature is that there have been designated seats for New Zealand's Indigenous people since 1867 (seven at the 2017 election), with persons of Māori descent being able to decide whether to be on the general or the Māori roll.

It is a complicated electoral system for those (including the current reviewer) who are unfamiliar with MMP systems (for example, Germany's). One of the great benefits of this edited collection is that it provides detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the election outcomes that will be of great interest to those who study comparative voting systems. New Zealand has an electoral system that rarely results in a government being elected outright with a clear majority. Normally, a major party comes to an agreement with one or more minor parties to form a government, either through formal coalitions or through agreements that parties will support each other on crucial issues such as votes of confidence or the passing of essential budget supply bills. The 2020 election (which will no doubt be the subject of a later book) proved to be a highly unusual election, with Ardern's Labour government being elected with an absolute majority.

The 2017 election that saw Ardern first come into office, which is the subject of this book, had a more usual electoral outcome in that Labour did not win a majority outright but had to negotiate with other parties.

As various contributors explain, there was considerable uncertainty as to whether the center-left Labour Party or the incumbent center-right National Party (which won more seats and votes than Labour, 44.4% of votes and 56 seats as opposed to 36.95% of votes and 46 seats out of a total of 120 seats) would be able to form government. The outcome was particularly interesting for students of populism. Labour came into office in 2017 when Winston Peters, the leader of the populist New Zealand First Party (7.2% of votes and 9 seats), announced that his party would form a coalition government with Labour. Peters became deputy prime minister. The Green Party (6.3% of votes and 8 seats) promised to support the government on issues of confidence and supply.

Comparative researchers on populism often group the New Zealand First Party with radical right-wing, authoritarian populist parties elsewhere, but the analysis in this book rejects such a simplistic designation. For example, as Jack Vowles points out (Chapter 2), unlike many Western right-wing populist leaders, Peters is not a white supremacist but has Indigenous Māori heritage. Indeed, although this book does not make this point, some of his early speeches opposing increased Asian immigration argued that it was a new form of “colonisation” (Peters 2003). Furthermore, although Peters originally served as a National Party member and minister, he had helped form both National and Labour Party governments before. Significantly, Peters stated that Ardern’s emphasis on kindness and wellbeing was a key reason for helping Labour form government, given that capitalism needed “to regain . . . its human face” (3).

The choice of a populist party to join a Labour coalition government, led by a young, socially progressive woman, is central to the focus of this book, particularly given an international context in which many other social democratic parties are facing major challenges from the populist right. Vowles, Jennifer Curtin, and Fiona Barker remind readers that not all forms of populism are authoritarian or antithetical to pluralism and liberal democratic norms. They also emphasize the need to distinguish between forms of exclusionary and inclusive forms of populism. Subsequent chapters, by a combination of authors, including Vowles, Curtin, Barker, Matthew Gibbons, Janine Hayward, Lara Greaves, and Kate McMillan, provide a sophisticated and nuanced analysis of populism. The chapters successfully integrate key international secondary literature with substantial qualitative and quantitative analysis of the New Zealand case.

Curtin and Greaves's chapter on "Gender, Populism and Jacinda Ardern" may be of particular interest to readers of *Politics & Gender*. Ardern had taken over the Labour leadership just seven weeks before the election, in what some commentators overly simplistically depicted as a "glass cliff" (182) choice of selecting a woman leader when Labour was performing badly at the polls. Ardern's popularity soared, and Labour went from 24% support in opinion polls to 37% on election day (which proved sufficient given the New Zealand election system explained earlier).

Ardern's personal charisma undoubtedly contributed to Labour's success. Curtin and Greaves point out that such charismatic leadership is normally associated with right-wing populist male leaders. They contrast Ardern both with such male leaders and with the few charismatic women leaders of right-wing populist parties, including Marine Le Pen in France and Pia Kjaersgaard in Denmark. Nor was Ardern a left-wing populist leader given her lack of anti-elitist "us versus them" rhetoric and inclusive conception of the "people" (181). Nonetheless, using New Zealand Election Study data, Curtin and Greaves argue that Ardern's electoral message urging hope, empathy, and kindness for all New Zealanders, including her emphasis on ensuring the well-being of those economically left behind, appealed to the inclusive populist vote, effectively neutralizing both a populist politics of fear and an anti-feminist backlash. (However, they note that Ardern did not appeal to authoritarian voters, including right-wing populist ones, who tended to distrust her socially progressive views.) In short, Ardern's win demonstrated a social democratic strategy that could connect emotionally with a wide range of voters, including some previously inclined to support radical right-wing populism. As Curtin and Greaves note, Ardern's strategy succeeded where other leaders who tried to mobilize kindness, such as Hillary Clinton in the United States and Jeremy Corbyn in the United Kingdom, had failed (although different electoral systems also have to be taken into account). Curtin and Greaves's analysis is a model of how qualitative, quantitative, and comparative research can be combined to produce new insights into electoral politics and women's political leadership.

Given the high quality of this edited collection, one hopes that key contributors will also be involved in a subsequent collection analyzing Ardern's major 2020 election win. It would be interesting to see an analysis of the role that Ardern's successful (gendered) management of the COVID-19 crisis (Johnson and Williams 2020) had on her subsequent electoral success. Ardern's skillful use of social media during

the COVID-19 crisis and more generally also deserves attention. In terms of international comparisons, it might be intriguing to compare Jacinda Ardern's leadership with that of another unusually youthful and charismatic female social democratic prime minister, Sanna Marin, who became the fourth woman prime minister of Finland in 2019.

It would also be useful to analyze whether MMP systems can facilitate women leaders (especially given Angela Merkel's long leadership history in Germany), or whether New Zealand's record of women prime ministers indicates something relatively distinctive about New Zealand's political culture. After all, New Zealand has long been one of the gender pathbreakers, being the first country in the world to give women the vote in national elections (in 1893). New Zealand politics deserves greater international attention by gender scholars, among others, and this excellent book is a good introduction.

Carol Johnson is Emerita Professor of Politics and International Relations at the University of Adelaide, Australia: carol.johnson@adelaide.edu.au

REFERENCES

- Johnson, Carol, and Blair Williams. 2020. "Gender and Political Leadership in a Time of COVID." *Politics & Gender* 16 (4): 943–50.
- Peters, Winston 2003. "New Zealand's Identity Crisis — Colony or Nation." Scoop, May 23. <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0305/S00614/new-zealands-identity-crisis-colony-or-nation.htm> (accessed December 28, 2020).

***Artificial Life after Frankenstein.* By Eileen Hunt Botting. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. 306 pp. \$34.95 (cloth).**

doi:10.1017/S1743923X21000295, e5

James Paul Old
Valparaiso University

In Mary Shelley's famous novel *Frankenstein* (1818), Dr. Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of life, but instead of triumph, his discovery leads to disaster. The nameless creature he brings to life comes