Anti-Nuclear New Zealand: 
A report on the decline of anti-nuclear sentiment within the New Zealand public national identity

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Abstract:

2017 will mark the 30th anniversary of the passing of New Zealand’s nuclear free legislation. The events that led to the passing of this legislation aided New Zealanders in defining the country’s unique identity on the world stage. However, with the upcoming US ship visit scheduled for late 2016, there has been little public expression of concern over the reforming of security ties with a former nuclear ally. As New Zealanders’ anti-nuclear attitude has been a point of pride in the past, with the country seen as a world leader for the disarmament cause, it is curious as to why this seems to no longer be the case. This study therefore sets out to show that a decline in anti-nuclear sentiment has occurred, and provides some explanations as to what can be done to raise the nuclear issue within the public consciousness. It does so by conceptualising anti-nuclear sentiment as a strain within New Zealand’s public national identity. As the continuous production and reproduction of relevant ideas within national institutions informs the character of this ever changing identity, two case studies of New Zealand society have been interrogated to measure the strength of nuclear knowledge production within these institutions. The institutions consist of community organisations, the media, politics, and public education. The study shows that there has been a significant decline of knowledge production within these institutions between 1983 and 2016, and that this is due to the elevation of new dialogues surrounding national identity, and the surrender of national perceptions of what it means in New Zealand to be anti-nuclear to bureaucratic, and political spheres. In order to return New Zealand’s anti-nuclear strain to strength with the public national identity, the study recommends that knowledge production within public education institutions needs to increase. This can be accomplished with the help of community organisation programmes in schools, and a Government review of the responsibilities of PACDAC.
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# Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANZUS</td>
<td>Australia New Zealand United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Court of Justice</td>
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<td>NZ</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACDAC</td>
<td>Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPNZ</td>
<td>South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>WCP</td>
<td>World Court Project</td>
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1. Introduction

Research Question

Considering the modernisation and life extension of nuclear weapons by the nine nuclear powers, and the forging of anti-nuclear attitudes within distinct currents of New Zealand’s national identity, why is there less concern for the implications of nuclear weapons possession now, than there was at the passing of the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone?

Context

In 2017, it will have been thirty years since the passing of the legislation that instituted the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone.¹ This legal opposition towards nuclear weapons and their possession marked a split between New Zealand and one of its biggest military assets, the United States of America, due to the US’s neither confirm, nor deny policy on the nuclear capabilities of their warships. This year, the New Zealand Navy will celebrate its 75th anniversary, and for the first time since the suspension of the ANZUS treaty, the US is sending a warship into New Zealand waters to pay their respects to the NZ Navy’s services. This will take place regardless of the US’s continued insistence on their neither confirm, nor deny policy.² This turn of events presents to us a puzzle; if the NZ public felt so strongly about the potential presence of nuclear material on their shores thirty years ago, why is there less concern for this possibility today?

Although the Cold War has been over for more than twenty years, the continued modernisation and life extension of nuclear weapons by the nine nuclear capable states presents a very real threat to not only New Zealanders, but the entirety of the world’s population. When considering New Zealand’s unique history with nuclear weapons protest, we can observe the development of a nuclear taboo.³ Given this taboo, it would be expected that the gradual reforming of military ties with a nuclear power would be met with significant public resistance. While pockets of resistance do exist, the overwhelming sentiment within New Zealand communities is that of acceptance towards


these new developments. In this report, I will make the argument for an observed decline of anti-nuclear expression within New Zealand, and raise several explanations as to why New Zealanders no longer attach such urgency and fervour to the nuclear issue as they once did thirty years ago. This report will draw conclusions on the state of anti-nuclear sentiment within the public strain of New Zealand’s national identity through investigating records of public and political action held in the National Library Archives. The report recommends that the key to keeping the nuclear issue alive in New Zealand is to introduce the topic of disarmament into learning at schools. By doing so, future generations will develop an awareness of the high risk of continued nuclear weapons development in this world, and as a result, an appreciation for the accomplishments of the New Zealand anti-nuclear movement of the 1980’s. This development will facilitate the production and reproduction of knowledge associated with New Zealand’s anti-nuclear past – an important feature of building and sustaining notions of national identity.

Due to the end of the Cold War, and its symbolic representation as the end the nuclear standoff between the USSR and the West, as well as a refocusing of public attention on other world issues such as climate change and increasing global terrorism, the New Zealand public’s interest in the threat posed by nuclear weapons has been replaced by new crises. In conjunction with these issues, the lack of public education on New Zealand’s important role in the global anti-nuclear movement has propagated the public view that New Zealand’s nuclear legacy is no longer significant. In order to reintroduce the nuclear issue into public discourse, and reclaim the anti-nuclear movement as an important event in in the development of New Zealand’s public national identity, nuclear education on disarmament must be introduced in schools.

2. New Zealand’s Anti-Nuclear History

1945 – 1963

New Zealand’s history of anti-nuclear expression can be traced to the days following the United States’ bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In what Kate Dewes and Robert Green posit as the world’s first anti-nuclear lecture, University of Canterbury lecturer Karl Popper stated his belief that the United States’ use of the very first atomic weapon signalled the end of the world as it was known, and the beginning of a new one. Anti-nuclear sentiment in New Zealand, although in its infancy, was intermittently expressed within New Zealand political discourse with demonstrations

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5 Kate Dewes, and Robert Green, Aotearoa/New Zealand at the World Court, (Christchurch, New Zealand: Disarmament and Security Centre, 1999) 6.
such as the Hiroshima day march in 1947, as well as several anti-nuclear petitions such as the Stockholm Peace Appeal in 1950, and a nuclear test ban petition in 1956. However, it was not until the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, an anti-nuclear NGO originally established in Britain in 1958, organized a petition through its Christchurch based New Zealand counterpart aimed at promoting a Southern Hemisphere Nuclear Free Zone. This 80,238-person strong petition was submitted to the New Zealand Parliament in 1963. Although this mobilisation did little to discourage the New Zealand Government from voting in line with its nuclear equipped western allies on UN resolutions regarding the legality of nuclear weapons, a top foreign ministry representative of the time admitted that public opinion would have an effect on government policy on some nuclear issues going into election season.

1970 – 1975

The 1970’s saw the nuclear issue in New Zealand go from a grass roots political movement, to a nation-wide, hot button, election topic. With France’s continued atmospheric testing in the South Pacific at Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls, and rising social awareness over the harmful effects of nuclear fallout on both personal health and the environment, anti-nuclear demonstrations led by public organizations such as churches, trade unions, local boards, and youth groups made the nuclear issue a pressing public concern. In what Elise Locke called “a vigilant democratic society,” ordinary New Zealanders from a variety of backgrounds were able to force each political party to adopt a policy arrangement that they could sell to the constituent for the upcoming national election.

The 1972 election gave Labour, the left leaning opposition political party, the opportunity to seize the political capital offered by a rejection of nuclear weapons possession and their testing, and allowed Labour party leader Norman Kirk to sail to victory with claims that a Labour Government would “create a situation where the whole country [could] unite behind the Government.” Kirk lived up to his promise when he sent the Otago, a New Zealand Navy frigate, to the Moruroa atoll in 1973 to observe the nuclear testing in silent protest of France’s crimes. With a staunch proponent of the anti-nuclear cause leading Parliament, New Zealand then went on to take France to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to be held accountable for its breach of international law. While

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 7
11 Margaret Hayward, Diary of the Kirk Years, (A H & A W Reed, Wellington, 1981), 51-52.
the ICJ would later dismiss the case due to France’s decision to cease its atmospheric testing and move its tests underground, New Zealand was able to demonstrate the utility of the World Court for protecting the rights of smaller nations.\(^\text{12}\)

This period of New Zealand history not only marked the country’s rejection of nuclear weapons testing at the highest form of government, but also signalled New Zealand’s departure from what Green and Dewes call a “traditional dependence on western military ideology,” to a more “South-Pacific oriented identity of independent action.”\(^\text{13}\) Nowhere was this development clearer than under David Lange’s Labour Government of 1984-1990.

**1975 – 1987**

The nuclear issue peaked in the mid-1980’s with the dispute between New Zealand and the United States (US) due to a conflict over New Zealand’s new anti-nuclear laws, and the US’s own pro nuclear policies. Social unrest began in New Zealand after the re-election of the more conservative National party in the mid 1970’s, and the re-establishment of many pro US policies that saw the scrapping of the previous Government’s South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone project (SPNFZ), and the resumption of military ship visits by nuclear allies.\(^\text{14}\) The National Government’s behaviour caused a new surge of anti-nuclear activity by public action groups as seen by the mobilization of a group of water borne peace activists called the Peace Squadron, who would attempt to block ship visits by allied nuclear powers.\(^\text{15}\) In the early 1980’s, the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone Committee began coordinating with local councils to designate many work places, homes, and schools throughout the country as official nuclear free zones. These actions played a crucial role in raising the public’s knowledge regarding the anti-nuclear movement. In 1982, Christchurch announced itself as the first nuclear free city in the world.\(^\text{16}\) Once again, Labour capitalized on the nuclear issue and claimed that, if elected, they would pass legislation that would outlaw nuclear weapons and nuclear power, and reintroduce the SPNFZ. Labour seized Parliament once again in a snap election called by then National Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, and quickly got to work on its election promises.\(^\text{17}\)

In 1986, an opinion poll carried out by the Defence Committee found that 69% now opposed US nuclear powered ship visits, and that 92% of the population opposed the presence of nuclear

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\(^{12}\) Kate Dewes and Robert Green, *NZ at the World Court*. 8.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 9.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 10.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.


\(^{17}\) Kate Dewes and Robert Green, *NZ at the World Court*. 10-11.
weapons in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{18} This substantial shift in public opinion was not only spurred on by the efforts and influences of peace activists and the media, but also by events such as the French bombing of the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland Harbour, and the catastrophic nuclear meltdown in Chernobyl, Ukraine.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1984, shortly after the election of the Lange Government, the new Labour Government was tasked with acting on its decision to ban nuclear powered ships from entering the country’s waters. Due to the US’s neither confirm, nor deny, policy on the nuclear capabilities of its warships, Lange announced that the US ship Buchannan was not welcome in New Zealand waters. Although Lange had hoped for New Zealand to remain party to the ANZUS alliance, the massive support of the anti-nuclear movement in New Zealand made compliance with the US’s wishes difficult. This resulted in the US’s subsequent suspension of the ANZUS treaty, and its relinquishing of its defensive responsibilities to New Zealand in the event that New Zealand is attacked.\textsuperscript{20} This retaliation did not discourage New Zealand. And in 1985, Lange accepted an invitation to debate the country’s anti-nuclear position in his Oxford Union speech, labelling nuclear weapons as “morally indefensible.”\textsuperscript{21}

In 1987, Parliament officially passed the legislation responsible for creating the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone. A law that has remained unchanged to this day.\textsuperscript{22}

1990 - 1996

While New Zealand had resolved the nuclear issue within its own borders, it realised its responsibilities in promoting disarmament abroad. One such milestone in achieving this was working in conjunction with other states at sourcing an advisory opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons use and possession from the ICJ. In 1986, retired New Zealand magistrate Harold Evans began a campaign to achieve an advisory opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons from the ICJ. Evans would name the endeavour, the World Court Project (WCP).\textsuperscript{23}

Growing the support for the WCP was an impressive feat that required large scale networking between WCP affiliates, UN state ambassadors, state department officials, non-governmental

\textsuperscript{19} Kate Dewes and Robert Green, \textit{NZ at the World Court}. 10.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} David Lange, ‘New Zealand Foreign Policy: The nuclear issue and great power - small state relations’, Speech to Yale University, 24 April 1989, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{23} Kate Dewes and Robert Green, \textit{NZ at the World Court}. 11-12.
organization representatives, and a variety of expert lawyers on international law. Through an incredible effort, the WCP was able to get the nuclear issue to the ICJ with the help of the UN organ, the World Health Organisation (WHO). With the WHO’s utility for recommending subjects for debate to the ICJ, as well as a powerful lobbying effort at the UN to have the General Assembly put the question to the ICJ, the question of nuclear weapons legality was finally put to the World Court’s judges. After consideration, the judges decided that “a threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.” In another section however, the judges ruled that they could not conclusively decide whether their use could be justified in times of extreme self-defence, where the very existence of the state is threatened. This ruling represents an incredible milestone in the mission to rid the world of nuclear weapons, and had a positive effect on the way New Zealanders viewed themselves in an international setting. Upon announcement of the ruling, then Prime Minister Jim Bolger called the event “a tremendous victory,” and a “watershed decision which vindicated the anti-nuclear crusade.”

3. National Identity

Before I investigate the state of anti-nuclear sentiment in New Zealand, I will first introduce the theory of national identity I will be working with to build my arguments. Having a clear understanding of how social identities are negotiated, and how a national identity can be conceptualised is critical for the success of this report. When discussing notions of national identity, I will be doing so in reference to public national identity, as opposed to political national identity, and bureaucratic national identity. In order to demonstrate the concept of national identity I will be working with, I will now provide an overview of the works of Tim Edensor, and James H. Liu.

In Tim Edensor’s National Identity, Popular Culture, and Everyday Life, he talks of national identity as being “shaped through shared points of commonality in popular culture and in its grounding in real life.” For Edensor, the on-going construction of national identity is carried out through the recognition of a country’s accomplishments and symbols, as well as within life’s mundane events. Key to both of these approaches is the notion that national identity is neither fixed, nor static. It is

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 12.
26 Kate Dewes and Robert Green, NZ at the World Court. 21.
27 Ibid.
negotiated in respect to what Edensor calls in and out groups.\(^{30}\) Whether it be through a country’s sacrifices in wartime, or the shared social mannerisms used in everyday conversation, the production, and reproduction of national identity is a constant feature of the modern nation state.\(^{31}\) In Liu’s view, the prominence of any given strain within a national identity is contingent on institutions such as “newspapers, maps, museums, and public education,” and the intensity within which they are reproduced.\(^{32}\) As a conceptual tool, one’s own national identity provides a sense of belonging to something greater than themselves. With this sense of identity, the individual is able to draw upon a set of values and beliefs in order to make sense of the personal, political, and philosophical challenges they are faced with.\(^{33}\)

There are a number of ways for a national identity to develop. As one’s own unique identity cannot be realized within a vacuum, Edensor emphasises the use of boundaries as a key determinant of who resides within a given identity, and who is considered “other.”\(^{34}\) These boundaries can range from physical spaces, such as the sovereign territory of a nation, to more ideologically defined barriers, such as systems that support liberal democracies or communism. Edensor also suggests that personal anxieties and insecurities assist in drawing people together under a common belief. Again, we can use the example of liberal democracy and free market capitalism during the United States’ nuclear standoff with the USSR to explain how people can associate so closely with a certain set of values as a coping mechanism for personal insecurity.

4. Analytical Approach

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate a change in anti-nuclear expression within New Zealand’s national identity, and explain why it has declined. As a concept such as national identity is difficult to measure through traditional means, I will now propose a method for studying the strength of anti-nuclear sentiment within a broader national identity.

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\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.


Through the analytical method of process tracing, I will construct a picture of New Zealand attitudes and values, and draw conclusions on the state of one specific set of values through tracing a series of causal pathways that determine the strength of one value set over others. If we think of the strength of anti-nuclear sentiment in New Zealand as a dependent variable, we can then arrange a set of independent variables that tell us whether New Zealanders identify strongly with anti-nuclear values, or if there is a weak correlation. In order to ascertain whether or not there is a change in the dependent variable over time, I will present a snapshot of New Zealand at two different intervals (1983-87, and 2008-16). These independent variables will be based off Edensor and Liu’s concept of institutions as signposts for understanding national identity. For example, the level of political activism for the anti-nuclear cause is one signpost of the level of anti-nuclear sentiment within the national identity. Table 1 provides a list of independent variables that will be used to determine the state of the dependent variable.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Membership in awareness groups</td>
<td>• Strength of anti-nuclear sentiment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Public education</td>
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<td>• Media exposure</td>
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<td>• Influence on political decision making</td>
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5. Case Study One: 1982-1987

Community Organizations

This period saw a wide range of community action and organization around nuclear issues. These expressions of awareness took the form of publicly displayed posters, peace demonstrations, and public service announcements. Such examples include: The North Shore Peace Group’s 1983 campaign to raise awareness over the medical effects of nuclear fallout; the Peace Squadron’s waterborne protests of the USS Truxtun during its visit to Wellington on the 25th of May 1982; and the “wear a white poppy for peace” campaign organized for the Hiroshima march on August 6th of 1983.35 A list of examples showing community engagement with nuclear issues can be found in table 2.36

36 Ibid.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Displays of Public Awareness</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Sail for Peace. Join the Peace Squadron. Oppose the nuclear-armed Texas. [1983]</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Be in the Nuclear Horror Show. Assemble Marion Street. Fri 12 5.30. Wear black. [Black and white poster. 1983]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No more Hiroshimas. Wear a white poppy for peace - August 5th. Hiroshima March 10.45 am, Bunny St, August 6th. [1983].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone Committee (Christchurch). Nuclear-weapon-free zones in New Zealand. As at 14-7-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• North Shore Peace Group Medical effects of a one-megaton nuclear air blast on Auckland 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coalition Against Nuclear Warships. CANWAR factsheet no’s 1-3. [1985]</td>
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Source: Alexander Turnbull Library (National Archives Library, New Zealand)

Media

Approaching media coverage of anti-nuclear related activities between 1982-1987 can be done so from a number of directions. However, in order to get a better sense of the way the anti-nuclear issue pervaded life in New Zealand, I have forgone discussing coverage on news channels in favour of a series of newspaper caricatures from various parts of the country that depict satirical observations of the nuclear issue in current events. Examples of these include James Robert Lynch of the Taranaki Daily News’ 1985 portrayal of a gun tipped with a nuclear warhead as its barrel aimed at Earth captioned “Forty years after Hiroshima.” Other examples include Sir Gordon Minhinnick’s caricature of David Lange standing up to France and the US as Michael Angelo’s David in the NZ Herald in 1985. And Peter Bromhead of the Auckland Star’s portrayal of the deterioration of New Zealand and US

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relations in 1986. An Examples of these caricatures can be seen in image 1. Although it is difficult to draw some conclusive findings on the pervasiveness of the nuclear issue in New Zealand media around this time period, it is reasonable to suggest that political commentary via cartoon strips in local and national newspapers around the country was a regular feature between 1983 – 1987.

Politics

The anti-nuclear issue had an influence on political decisions at both the personal and government level. The activities of anti-nuclear protestors had struck a chord with much of the New Zealand population. All around the country, New Zealanders began declaring nuclear free zones in their homes, workplaces, schools, and cities. For political parties, the importance of the nuclear issue within the constituent influenced their own policies, as seen through Labour’s announcement that they would ban nuclear weapons, renegotiate the ANZUS Treaty, and set up the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone. Upon winning the 1984 national election, Labour denied the US ship Buchannan from entering New Zealand waters, and the US suspended the ANZUS treaty. Within both public and government spheres, the anti-nuclear movement is observed to have had a profound effect on New Zealand political institutions.

Public Education

Public education through schools and public service announcements was insignificant during this period due to the Government’s support for the defence policies of its nuclear armed allies before the fourth Labour Government. Once Labour came to power in 1984, they began work on the legislation that would ban nuclear weapons from New Zealand. This would be the 1987 New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act. Aside from legislating the country’s nuclear ban, the act also set up the Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC). The purpose of this government body was to keep the foreign minister informed of any disarmament affairs, and to publish public reports on the state of the anti-nuclear legislation, and

41 Kate Dewes, “Peace and Disarmament Activism Kate Dewes,” *Public Participation in Foreign Policy*, 2008, 2-3. doi:10.1057/9780230367180.0012.
43 Ibid., 10-11.
the ongoing efforts to promote disarmament abroad. As PACDAC communicates with peace NGOs for the dissemination of anti-nuclear education, this instituted a mechanism for which public knowledge on nuclear issues could keep New Zealanders informed of important developments in the worldwide disarmament cause.

Case 1 Conclusion

From 1982-1987, the New Zealand public national identity exhibited strong currents of anti-nuclear sentiment. Within three of the four independent variables (community organizations, media, and politics), the prominence of anti-nuclear related knowledge production is observed to take place. Knowledge production within the public education institutions, such as schools and Government campaigns, appeared low when compared with the high levels of knowledge production within other institutions. However, the formation of PACDAC in 1987 reflected a desire on the Government’s part to allow for the dissemination of nuclear information throughout New Zealand. When drawing upon Edensor and Liu’s work on national identity production, we can see that anti-nuclear sentiment within the public national identity is high, as knowledge production and reproduction is occurring in each of Edensor and Liu’s identity facilitating institutions.


Community Organizations

Between 2008 – 2016, there has been a sharp decline in community organizations that are dedicated to raising the awareness of nuclear related issues. Community organisations that support environmentalist causes have been on the rise, however. In 2016, there has been a small spike in demonstrations related to anti-warfare, and anti-militarisation (with a loose connection to the anti-nuclear cause). With the upcoming US warship visit in November 2016, and the concurrent Defence Association’s weapons exhibition in Auckland, there are calls for protests to take place alongside these events. In November of 2016, Peace Action Wellington, a small community organisation,

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staged a demonstration at the Ministry of Defence building. The size of these protests is yet to be determined. However, with a lecture from anti-nuclear activist and Nobel-Peace nominee Dr Helen Caldicott scheduled for November, public interest in the New Zealand Government’s current path may increase. Within this time period, only a handful of New Zealand organizations are observed to be actively promoting the disarmament cause. Those of which are the Disarmament and Security Centre operated by Kate Dewes and Robert Green, and the Peace Foundation. Between July and October of 2016, the Peace Foundation was involved in an international project called Chain Reaction. The goal of Chain Reaction was to create a human chain of people that mirrored the chain reaction of a nuclear explosion, with the intent to demonstrate a chain reaction of peace across the world.

Media

Representations of New Zealand’s anti-nuclear stance, and worldwide disarmament efforts, have been limited between 2008 – 2016. Outside of the occasional newspaper article citing New Zealand’s 1987 nuclear free legislation, there has been little reproduction of ideas associated with being nuclear free. However, Prime Minister John Key did reiterate New Zealand’s anti-nuclear positions in a Radio NZ interview when discussing his conversations with US Vice President Joe Biden in 2010. Key stated in regards to New Zealand’s anti-nuclear legislation that it “has been our position since 1986 and well before that.” Media coverage around the Navy’s 75th anniversary drew attention to the upcoming US ship visit with many news outlets reporting on Biden’s visit to New Zealand in July of 2016. Mainstream news outlets have framed the visit as a mending of security ties between the US and New Zealand, and a normalisation of diplomatic relations. This is largely due to the widespread support for the visit across the political spectrum. However, some corners of the left

53 Ibid.
wing media have portrayed the US’s continued insistence of their neither confirm, nor deny, policy as a betrayal of New Zealand’s anti-nuclear legislation.\textsuperscript{54}

**Politics**

New Zealand’s nuclear free policy has seen little to no effect on the political decision making of ordinary New Zealanders between 2008 to 2016 (outside of those actively involved in community organisations aimed at promoting the disarmament cause). However, the influence of the legislation can be observed at the Government level. The Government’s anti-nuclear views can be observed through Gerard van Bohemen, New Zealand’s permanent representative to the UN. Bohemen has been pushing the issue of nuclear disarmament, stating that “for as long as some States retain nuclear weapons – and declare them to be essential for national security – others would seek them as well.”\textsuperscript{55} Some actions by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are also motivated by New Zealand’s anti-nuclear laws. For example, upon taking on the responsibilities associated with the former Minister of Disarmament position (the title was absorbed into the duties of Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2012), Murray McCully sought to denounce North Korea’s nuclear weapon’s ambitions, and reiterated New Zealand’s opposition to nuclear proliferation.\textsuperscript{56}

**Public Education**

In 1987, PACDAC was formed with the intention to provide the public with information on global disarmament developments and education on nuclear issues. In 1996, it played an important role in promoting the World Court Project, and sourcing an advisory opinion from the ICJ. However, between 2008 to 2016, it has failed to promote these issues on the scale it was intended to at its inception. While it encourages the pursuit of research into peace and disarmament causes with its recommendations for academic grants, such as those from the Peace and Disarmament Education Trust, and Disarmament Education United Nations Implementation Fund, it has played a limited role in raising public awareness in regards to today’s nuclear issues.\textsuperscript{57} This decline in activity may be due


\textsuperscript{57} New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "PACDAC (Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control),” New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade,
to limitations in resourcing and staffing allocations by the Government, as suggested by committee members Mary Wareham and Angela Woodward in 2012.\textsuperscript{58} Government impediments to the proper function of PACDAC are observed as far back as the 1990's, with former PACDAC member Stephen Hoadley remarking on the lack of influence the committee actually had on policy decisions regarding New Zealand’s anti-nuclear foreign policy.\textsuperscript{59} The responsibility for public education on nuclear issues has therefore fallen to NGOs such as the Peace Foundation. Throughout 2015 and 2016, the Peace Foundation has begun visiting secondary schools throughout Auckland and engaging students as a part of its REACT programme, a training seminar focused on educating students on global issues relating to peace and disarmament.\textsuperscript{60}

**Case 2 Conclusion**

While public education surrounding issues of disarmament has risen slightly when compared to 1987, the production and reproduction of knowledge associated with New Zealand’s nuclear position has dropped remarkably in all other national institutions, with the exception of a spike in knowledge reproduction in 2016 due to the upcoming US ship visit. Even with this bump in knowledge production, the new narrative being run by New Zealand’s political parties and echoed by the mainstream media is out of step with the spirit of the 1987 legislation. As these case studies have shown, between 1983 and 2016, anti-nuclear sentiment within New Zealand’s national identity has declined. I will now propose some explanations for this decline, before moving on to some final recommendations.

**7. Explanations**

**The National Identity Divide**


\textsuperscript{59} Kate Dewes, "Peace and Disarmament Activism," \textit{Public participation in foreign policy}, 10.

\textsuperscript{60} “About REACT,” \textit{The Peace Foundation}, \url{http://www.peace.net.nz/kiora/school-programmes/responding-to-armed-conflict-2/about-react}
This study has repeatedly referred to national identity in respect to public notions of the nation’s shared values. The purpose of which has been to separate between two other dimensions of national identity; political, and bureaucratic. As identified in the cases studies, the production of nuclear knowledge within political institutions, and the effect of nuclear issues on influencing political decisions, has declined in the public sphere. However, its production and reproduction has not declined within political and bureaucratic spheres, as observed by Murray McCully’s adjustment of the disarmament agenda to align with that of its traditional Western allies. The public surrender of the ability to shape these nuclear conversations has therefore allowed New Zealand’s current relationship with its own nuclear past to become shaped by the interests of political parties and bureaucracies.61 This is observed by the bipartisan embrace of closer ties with the US, and the ministry of foreign affairs’ failure to take the opinions and recommendations of PACDAC seriously. What little reproduction of nuclear related knowledge that has occurred within national institutions over the last 30 years has primarily served to produce a concept of anti-nuclear identity that does not correlate with the independent foreign policy values of the 1987 anti-nuclear legislation. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge production in non-political institutions has helped propel alternate dialogues surrounding the character of New Zealand’s public national identity.

The Changing Political Environment

With the success of the World Court Project in 1996, the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and what former Prime Minister Jim Bolger hailed as the “vindication of [New Zealanders’] anti-nuclear crusade”, the world’s attention shifted to other emerging political issues.62 And just as the issue of nuclear proliferation influenced the construction of national identity in New Zealand, questions surrounding climate change and rising global terrorism began shaping new discussions on national identity. While the 2008 to 2016 case study showed little activity by community groups involved in disarmament campaigns, it revealed that climate change was an issue that many New Zealand community groups were interested in promoting. As a country that promoted itself as being “100% pure” in the past, New Zealand received a rating of “very poor” by the Climate Change Performance index in 2013.63 In addition to climate change’s effect on national dialogue over identity, New Zealand’s defence ties with its traditional Western partners via the Fives

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Eyes programme has marked a shift away from the ‘south Pacific oriented identity’ trajectory of the 80’s, back towards a reliance on traditional military ideology. A discussion on the state of environmentalism, and security policy within New Zealand’s national identity is better left to other projects; the point here is that new dialogues concerning national identity have emerged as a result of a decline in institutional nuclear knowledge reproduction, and its substitution with current political issues.

8. Recommendations

Returning the anti-nuclear strain to strength within New Zealand’s public national identity is not solvable by a single policy change. For New Zealander’s to reclaim this portion of their national identity will require the dissemination of anti-nuclear, anti-war, and anti-militarisation values and ideas in ways that are accessible to the public. However, as national institutions play a central role in the creation of national identities, it is a good a place to start. As the second case study revealed, the production of nuclear knowledge within newspaper and media outlets only occurs during significant events. In the case of 2016, this is the upcoming US ship visit, and the build-up to New Zealand’s 30th anniversary of its nuclear free legislation. We therefore cannot rely on the media to perpetuate nuclear knowledge on its own, as its content is produced with respect to current events. Within political institutions we have identified knowledge production that has seen a shift from independent foreign policy promotion surrounding nuclear issues, to an agenda that reinforces the pursuits of other nuclear equipped nations; an agenda more concerned with preventing nations from acquiring nuclear weapons, than it is at disarming those who already have them. With the upcoming US ship visit, and weapons exhibition slated for later in 2016, we can argue that the interpretation of New Zealand’s anti-nuclear legacy within political institutions has evolved into something that is contrary to the ambitions of the 1987 nuclear free legislation. The institutions that we must target are public education, and community organisations, or rather, we must devise a policy that allows them to mutually reinforce each other.

The work of community organizations and NGOs are instrumental for providing education on topics that national curriculums cannot provide space for. Their promotion of extracurricular events provides students with opportunities that many lower decile schools cannot support. While I recognize these final recommendations may fall slightly on the side of opinion, the claims are supported by the inspiring student projects that NGOs such as the Peace Foundation have helped to

facilitate. In August, 2016 I attended the Peace Foundation’s annual Peace Symposium. Here, students from many schools throughout Auckland attended to listen to peace and disarmament speeches by politicians and activists, and participated in presenting their music, videos, poetry, and art that they had worked on throughout the Peace Foundation’s Schools’ Peace Week event. Each piece of work was centred around this year’s Schools’ Peace Week’s theme – Dialogues for Peace. Students ran with the concept and created projects that reflected what the theme meant to them. The results were powerful, and demonstrated each student’s learning and development. Next year, the Peace Foundation will use New Zealand’s 30th anniversary as a nuclear free nation as the basis for 2017’s Schools’ Peace Week disarmament theme. The resulting production, and sharing, of anti-nuclear, anti-war, and anti-militarisation knowledge that comes from the event will demonstrate a path for New Zealander’s to reclaim their anti-nuclear legacy. Although Schools’ Peace Week reaches up to 150 schools domestically and abroad, the scope is unfortunately still not large enough to propel the nuclear strain back into the New Zealand public’s national identity. In order to increase the scope of these projects, the New Zealand Government needs to review its commitments to PACDAC, and allow it to function in the manner that it is legally required to do so.

9. Conclusion

This report has set out to prove that which many New Zealander’s may already know – that their personal association as a New Zealander with the political efforts of anti-nuclear protestors in the past, is weak. It is, however, not enough to just make this claim. I have therefore set out to conceptualise the nation’s public identity by interrogating the strength of anti-nuclear sentiment in various national institutions; community organisations, media, politics, and public education. Analysis of these institutions has revealed that there are varying interpretations of New Zealand’s anti-nuclear past, and that they are being used to inform a foreign policy that is out of step with the aims of the 1987 nuclear free legislation. The study has revealed that in order to reintroduce anti-nuclear association into the New Zealand public national identity, there must be a Government review of the role of, and its legal responsibilities to, PACDAC. With a better means of achieving its functions, PACDAC must act in ways that facilitate the production and reproduction of knowledge within public education institutions. It is therefore my recommendation that these efforts are aimed in the direction of community organisations. These intuitions provide invaluable access to ideas and opportunities that will allow younger generations to develop a better awareness of New Zealand’s past, and their own relationship with it.
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