

Editorial

This is the second volume and first special edition of the *Newcastle Business School Student Journal*, and it is significant that it is a politics feminist issue. We are living at a time of heightened feminist thought and politics, which are emerging as compelling alternatives to orthodox democratic life and practice. The papers that have been collected here foreground and provide a complex and multi-dimensional window into such feminist/feminised political praxis.

We would like to introduce this journal by acknowledging the Awabakal and Worimi peoples as the traditional custodians of the land and waters of Newcastle, and the Pambalong clan of the Awabakal people as the traditional custodians of the land on which The University of Newcastle is situated. We pay our respects to all elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reading this, and any other Indigenous people engaging with our work.

The Special Issue is divided into two broad schools: Contemporary Feminism and Feminist Political Theory. *Part One: Contemporary Feminism* begins with Joseph Steel's piece analysing the myth of a 'true meritocracy' in Australia's parliament and the way this relates to the shamefully low representation of women in positions of political power. This is followed by a broad discussion of the contemporary #MeToo movement and its relationship with feminist political theory by Lucy Nichols. The issue then moves to Olivia Tostivint's comprehensive analysis of the nature of hegemonic masculinity which acknowledges the emotional, spiritual and even physical damage this phenomenon inflicts to the men and women who are exposed to it. This section then ends with two pieces: Olivia Freund's comparative analysis of the political leadership styles portrayed by Julia Gillard and Peta Credlin and how women adopt masculine behaviours in a patriarchal context, and finally an in-depth discussion of the masculine hegemon as a root cause and perpetuator of male-perpetrated domestic violence by Kyah Denham.

Part Two: Feminist Political Theory begins with Erina Finau's essay which focuses on the axiom of masculinist discourse and argues that this axiom has contributed to the legitimisation and normalisation of violence upon the feminised other, before delving into John Kennedy's piece which examines the way these patriarchal logics and discourses interplay with xenophobia and colonialism to attempt to justify injustice and normalise hierarchical systems of hate and division. We finish this Special Issue with two pieces by Nathan Farrall and Jessica Heaney respectively. Nathan's piece examines the patriarchal nature of Western liberalism as the conceptual underpinning of our contemporary political system which favours men and then masculine, while Jessica's piece explores the imaginings of a post-patriarchal politics through the lens of both liberal and radical feminism and the extent to which these differing strands of feminism can challenge the ontological-political masculine standard of the liberal citizen.

This Special Issue represents the emotional, ideological and intellectual journeys of each of its contributors. Some of the authors were introduced to feminism as both a movement and political theory quite late in 2018, while many others are continuing a longer personal history of development and understanding about the way feminist theory and practice is relevant and important to their lives. All essays had their beginnings in the Politics Discipline's capstone class *Power and the State* which was skilfully coordinated by Dr Bronwyn McDonald to open the space for these kinds of critical and nuanced analyses. It was here that it became clear the writers had something valuable to contribute to ongoing discussions about the (gendered) nature of power, the causes of the systemic disenfranchisement of feminised groups and what we can best do to speak truth to this power and reclaim our agency – and facilitate this reclamation for others without undermining and patronising them in the process.

Most importantly we wanted to recognise the intersectionality that feminism should embody. Feminism, at its core, is as much about relationships of power and their abuse as it is about women's rights specifically. It was critical that we recognised the ways that issues of race, class, queerness and ability all overlap and interact with gender to produce a multi-layered plexus of unequal and hierarchical power relationships. In simpler terms – there are more ways in which people can experience oppression and disenfranchisement than by gender, and it would be wrong to assume that all women experience these systems in the same way, or that men are not also impacted in detrimental ways by the complexities of patriarchy.

The compilation of this Special Feminist Issue follows nearly six months of continuous, dedicated work from all students and staff involved. Painstaking writing, reviewing, rewriting, rereviewing, editing, compiling and – finally – publishing, has resulted in a culmination of nine insightful and inspiring yet, at times, devastating pieces which interrogate the way we treat and view women and femininity and examine the harm patriarchal systems of oppression inflict on women and men of all backgrounds.

We also want to acknowledge Frances Chatwin, one of our original contributors, who had to withdraw from the increasingly demanding project due to personal caring responsibilities and other work opportunities – though she wasn't able to finish the process with us she certainly contributed a body of experience and understanding for which we are grateful, and has been on a journey of her own. We also wanted to thank Dr Bronwyn McDonald and Associate Professor Sara C Motta, who have played extremely important roles in facilitating the entire process. Without their dedication, guidance and support it is difficult to imagine that we would have been able to pull this whole project together.

We hope you find this collection enlightening, inspiring and empowering, and that it contributes to your understanding of our society, relationships and selves, as it has ours.

Contributing Authors