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**How Well Does the Political System Represent the Public Interest?  
A Comparison of Voter Perceptions in Australia and New Zealand**

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**Abstract**

One of the enduring lines of division and potential conflict within any representative democracy is between the represented and the representatives. Just what do our elected representatives represent? One answer is representation of the views and interests of voters which, collectively, amount to ‘the public interest’. In a representative democracy most citizens are not in a position to represent their own views and interests directly most of the time. Hence we have the democratic institution of elections through which members of parliament are chosen to represent the interests of their constituents. One problem with such collective notions of representation is that different individuals have different interests and thus representing the public interest is no uncomplicated matter. However, the representation of the public interest is arguably as much about process as it is about substance. One of the key aims of this paper is to consider, from the voter’s perspective, how well political institutions, parties and elected representatives appear to behave in ways that are consistent with representing the public interest. A second aim is to see whether perspectives on the public interest diverge substantially according to social and political differences within the public.

## **Introduction**

One of the enduring lines of division and potential conflict within any representative democracy is between the represented and the representatives, between the electors and the elected. As the late New Zealand political scientist Keith Jackson (1987: 69) remarked, 'One of the great roles of parliament ... is that of representation'. He goes on to add: 'But representation of what?' One answer is representation of the views and interests of voters which, collectively, amount to 'the public interest'. In a representative democracy most citizens are not in a position to represent their own views and interests directly most of the time. Hence we have the democratic institution of elections through which members of parliament are chosen to represent the interests of their constituents.

Of course, one problem with such collective notions of representation is that different individuals have different interests and thus representing the public interest is no uncomplicated matter. First the public interest has to be identified. On any particular issue the chances of there being a consensus as to what the public interest is are slim. However, the representation of the public interest is arguably as much about process as it is about substance. One of the key aims of this paper is not so much to identify what the public interest might be but to consider, from the perspective of the voters who are represented by members of parliament in a democracy, how well political institutions, parties and elected representatives appear to behave in ways that are consistent with representing the public interest. A second aim is to see whether perspectives on the public interest diverge substantially according to social and political differences within the public.

## **The Public Interest**

Ways of characterising the public interest are many and varied. The notion of the public interest can be seen as rhetorical, procedural and aggregative, as constituting fundamental values or shared interests (McLeay, 2006). The political philosopher, Brian Barry, argued that at its most fundamental level, the public interest refers to interests which people have in common as members of the public (Barry, 1965). Even then, according to some writers, the public interest can be defined from two different perspectives, 'the utilitarian view' and 'the rights-oriented view'. The utilitarian view sees the public interest as amounting to 'the sum of individual preferences' while the rights oriented view 'would constrain utilitarian considerations by insisting on certain individual rights and entitlements' (Sandel, 1988: 109). The emphasis on the 'certain individual rights and entitlements' in the second approach suggests a concern for minorities and perspectives that may not meet with universal popularity, in contrast to the majoritarian connotations in the 'sum of individual preferences' approach.

The 'sum of individual preferences' approach is also consistent with a definition of the public interest as the 'common good' (Goodin, 1996: 332-33). The public interest in this sense is seen in contrast to factional or sectional interests. Goodin argues that this amounts to what he calls a 'least-common-denominator' notion of the public interest, where the public interest is only about the interests everyone happens to have in common. Something is only in the public interest when it is in every private individual's interest. In contrast, Goodin argues for a 'highest common concern' notion of the public interest, whereby the public interest is about interests people necessarily share as members of the public and which require public action to promote them (Goodin, 1996: 339). In other words, this definition focuses

on the interests that we all need to pursue together as public goods rather than what is left over once we take out all our private interests.

In the New Zealand context, Richard Mulgan (1984) has pointed to the crucial role of government in defending and promoting the public interest. Where various private and sectional interests compete to shape policy there is a danger that the broad interests of the general public will not be adequately considered. In these circumstances 'Responsibility for pressing the claims of the public interest when it clashes with sectional interests lies with the government' (Mulgan, 1984: 144). This responsibility means that, despite the public interest being 'dilute and without powerful, independent spokes[people]' the electorate is able to exercise some control over public policy through the ballot box, given that 'politicians' desire for popularity with the electorate gives them an incentive to consider the wider interests of consumers and the public as a whole' (Mulgan, 1984: 144).

These reflections on the importance of the relationship between politicians and voters in consideration of the public interest bring us back to the key focus of this paper, the connection between the representatives and the represented and in particular how the latter perceive the performance of the former in defending the public interest. Mulgan's discussion also makes it clear that the crucial emphasis in this link is on issues of process and mechanisms for promoting the public interest. Thus we would expect the public to be concerned about whether and how political institutions and politicians act in the public interest irrespective of what that public interest might be in any one situation.

As two nations with a long history of similarity in their political systems and voter responses (Bean, 1988; Vowles and McAllister, 1996), Australia and New Zealand provide fertile ground for a comparative analysis of attitudes to questions about the public interest. Notwithstanding the recent structural divergence in the form of New Zealand's adoption of proportional representation (Jackson and McRobie, 1998), in many respects the party systems and electoral patterns within the two countries remain remarkably alike (Vowles and Bean, 2006). It is thus reasonable to approach a comparative analysis of attitudes about the public interest with expectations of relatively similar patterns between the two countries. Where divergent patterns emerge they may point to interesting features of one or other political system that are not shared by the other.

In the analysis that follows the focus is on data collected in New Zealand in 2002 and Australia in 2004, as part of the New Zealand Election Study and Australian Election Study respectively. These studies involve nationwide random sample surveys of the national electorates of the two countries, conducted by mail after the relevant general elections. Notwithstanding some differences, by and large the two projects are procedurally similar, generating similar response rates and both producing final samples broadly representative of the respective electorates. The sample sizes are 5783 in New Zealand and 1769 in Australia. Further details are available in Vowles et al. (2004), for New Zealand, and Bean et al. (2005), for Australia.<sup>1</sup>

### **Voter Perspectives on the Public Interest in Australia and New Zealand**

The present study focuses on a number of key questions asked in both surveys, as part of the larger Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, which may be said to tap the

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<sup>1</sup> The data sets were obtained from the Australian Social Science Data Archive at the Australian National University. The author wishes to acknowledge the staff of the archive, the original collectors of the data and also the funding agencies, while emphasising that the analyses and interpretations in this paper are solely his.

notion of the public interest as it applies to the process of representing voter views and in contrast to the favouring of special interests. In the first instance we concentrate on representation by way of elections, parties and party leaders. Table 1 contains data in response to the following questions: ‘Thinking now about how elections in Australia/New Zealand work in practice, how well do elections ensure that the views of voters are represented by MPs?’; ‘Would you say that any of the parties in Australia/New Zealand represents your views reasonably well? If so, which party represents your views best?’; ‘Regardless of how you feel about the parties, would you say that any of the individual party leaders in the last election represents your views reasonably well? If so, which party leader represents your views best?’<sup>2</sup>

Let us now examine the responses. What we see on the question about how well elections ensure that the views of voters are represented by MPs, is an almost identical pattern of response in the two countries. And it is a response that is rather more positive than negative. While only 7 per cent of Australians and 6 per cent of New Zealanders say that elections ensure that the views of voters are represented very well by MPs, a further 49 per cent and 50 per cent respectively say that voter views are represented quite well. In other words, in both countries a clear majority of 56 per cent say that elections ensure that the views of voters are well represented. On the negative side of the ledger, 36 per cent of Australians and 38 per cent of New Zealanders say that elections do not ensure that voter views are represented very well and a further 7 and 6 per cent respectively say that voter views are not represented well at all. But in general these data support Mulgan’s contention that there is an electoral incentive for politicians to act in the public interest, at least from the point of view of voter perceptions of the functioning of elections.

[Table 1 about here]

The next question in Table 1 is based in the political reality of all contemporary democracies that some parties will represent some people’s interests better than others. For convenience of layout, different parties in the two countries are grouped together, although it is acknowledged that some of the pairings fit better together than others. Not unexpectedly, the two governing parties – Liberal (being the major partner in the coalition with the National Party) in Australia and Labour in New Zealand – receive easily the largest share of respondents saying that these parties represent their views best. From more than one point of view, it would be strange were this not the case. Again as we might anticipate, the major opposition parties, Labor in Australia and National in New Zealand, receive the second largest share of support in response to this question.

What is noticeably different between the two countries, however, is the proportion of respondents opting for the two major parties in total. In Australia, those nominating either of the two major parties amount to two-thirds of all the responses; in New Zealand the combined total opting for Labour or National is less than half. This difference surely reflects the differing electoral systems in the modern era, with proportional representation having loosened the electoral grip of the major parties in New Zealand, while Australian voters remain much more constrained in the electoral choices they have (Vowles and Bean, 2006). Some of the slack in New Zealand is taken up by minor parties (27 per cent of New Zealand respondents say that one or another minor party represents their views best, compared to 17 per cent in Australia,

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<sup>2</sup> There are minor and almost certainly inconsequential variations in the wording between the two surveys, due to formatting of questions and grammatical choices. Where these occur the Australian wording is shown.

with the National Party included) but it is also the case that more New Zealanders (23 per cent compared to 17 per cent) say that no party represents their views well.

The final part of Table 1 shows the responses to a parallel question asking about party leaders, which acknowledges that while democratic politics might be dominated by political parties, the parties are themselves led by and made up of individual politicians. As with the governing parties, the two prime ministers – the Liberal’s John Howard in Australia and Labour’s Helen Clark in New Zealand – gain far and away the most support in answer to this question. Unlike their parties, the two have very similar proportions of their respective electorates saying that they represent their interests best (41 and 39 per cent respectively). The opposition leader in Australia, however, garners more support than his counterpart in New Zealand. In New Zealand the leaders of various minor political parties collectively receive more than twice the amount of support on this question as do their Australian counterparts, again presumably reflecting the electoral system differences. Appreciable numbers of both samples, but more in Australia (21 versus 16 per cent), say that no party leader represents their views well.

In the context of a focus on the public interest, the last two questions in Table 1 exemplify the fact that in some sense the public interest will always be an amalgam of different individual interests, some of which are strongly opposed to one another. To the extent that the public interest may be considered to be the sum of individual preferences, the equation is certainly more complex than might be implied by a notion of the simple addition of terms.

In Table 2 the notion of the public interest is operationalised in terms of political corruption and the extent to which government favours a small number of big interests. The first question is: ‘How widespread do you think corruption such as bribe taking is amongst politicians in Australia/New Zealand?’ The conceptual implication, of course, is that if politicians are involved in corrupt practices they are not pursuing the public interest. A follow-on question in Australia, not asked in New Zealand, has public servants as the referent. The next question, though conceptually equivalent in the two surveys, is worded differently in the two. Australian respondents are asked: ‘Would you say the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?’ In New Zealand the item is: ‘The New Zealand government is largely run by a few big interests’, as part of a Likert agree/disagree battery.

Previous research has some interesting insights on attitudes toward the standards of behaviour of politicians in Australia. McAllister (2000) shows that the Australian public consistently has higher expectations of the behaviour of politicians than do politicians themselves. Among other things, McAllister’s data collected in 1996 show that 73 per cent of the general public think that it is extremely important for federal politicians to ‘always put the public interest ahead of their personal interests’ while among political candidates only 59 per cent hold the same view (McAllister, 2000: 28).

So what of the data in Table 2? Focusing on the first question, we see that while neither country appears to be gripped by a culture of overwhelming concern about political corruption, Australians are considerably more likely to view their politicians as being corrupt than New Zealanders. Some 9 per cent of Australians think corruption is very widespread and another 29 per cent think it is fairly widespread, making a total of 38 per cent who see corruption amongst politicians as prevalent. In some ways it is difficult to know whether this should be viewed as a high or a low figure. In any case, in New Zealand, by contrast, less than a quarter (24

per cent) think that corruption is widespread to some degree. Put in reverse, this means that three-quarters of New Zealanders do not see political corruption as being widespread, including a third who think it hardly happens at all. Only 13 per cent of Australians hold a similarly benign view of their politicians, although another 50 per cent see political corruption as not very widespread.

[Table 2 about here]

If personal knowledge of politicians might lead to a stronger belief in their integrity then it is possible that New Zealand's smaller size and the greater salience of Members of Parliament might be one reason why corruption is viewed as less prevalent in the smaller antipodean nation (Bean, 1992: 153-54). In other words, the oft adduced 'intimacy' of New Zealand political culture, an argument that has many supporters but some sceptics (Harris, 1995), may account, at least in part, for the difference between the two countries on this question.

For Australia we can also consider how much corruption is seen to prevail amongst public servants. The answer seems to be that public servants are viewed as being more likely to be involved in corruption than elected political representatives themselves. Almost half the Australian sample see corruption as either very or quite widespread amongst public servants. The responses shown here are consistent with other data showing relatively negative views in Australia of the professional standards and responsiveness of the public service (Bean and Denmark, 2007).

But is government seen to be run in favour of big interests, or for the benefit of all, that is, in the public interest? As indicated above, the latter term is left implicit in New Zealand and for this reason, combined with the differing response categories as indicated in Table 2, it is less appropriate here than for the other questions we have considered to concentrate on close comparisons between the two sets of data. We can, however, compare the broad patterns evident within each country. We can also note that at either end of the spectrum the proportions are very similar in the two countries. That is, around 9 or 10 per cent strongly agree that the government is run entirely for the big interests, while at the other end only 1 or 2 per cent strongly believe that the government is run entirely for the benefit of all.

In between, Australians appear to cluster more in the middle while New Zealanders' views are more dispersed, but this is probably as much a function of the answer categories offered as anything. The most solid comparative statement that can be made with any comfort is that the balance of opinion is more towards the positive end of the scale in New Zealand than in Australia. In both nations more people judge that government is run by big interests than not, but whereas the ratio is some two to one in Australia it is only one-and-a-half to one in New Zealand. This difference reinforces the findings on political corruption and thus the conclusion that a greater familiarity with politicians may play a role in generating more benign public attitudes towards elected representatives.

### **Social Divisions on Attitudes to the Public Interest**

The variations that have thus far been observed in the responses to questions about the public interest show that the public does not speak with a uniform voice on such matters. It would be highly unusual if it did. Given what we already know about the tendency for different social groups to support different political interests (see, for example, Vowles and Bean, 2006), it is interesting to explore the possibility of social differences on questions about the public interest. Do, for example, people of higher socio-economic standing tend to be more or less critical of political performance in relation to the public interest?

Tables 3, 4 and 5 display the patterns of attitudes on the public interest produced by six core social structural variables, namely gender, age, education, occupation, ethnicity and region of residence. Examining first the question about how well elections ensure that the views of voters are represented by MPs, the most immediate impression to arise from Table 3 is that of more homogeneity than heterogeneity between different social groupings. The second is of substantial similarity between the Australian and New Zealand patterns on a number of the variables.

[Table 3 about here]

By a similar margin in each country, women are more likely than men to feel that voter views are well represented by elections. About 60 per cent of women hold this view compared to only 51 or 52 per cent of men. There are no differences of any note according to age levels and nor, at the bottom of the table, on the basis of region of residence. In both countries those in 'middle class' occupations are more likely than those in 'working class' occupations to be positive about the public interest role of elections by a modest margin, but whereas farmers in New Zealand behave similarly to the middle class, interestingly Australian farmers, a small and rapidly decreasing segment of the community, are far more likely than any other category in the table to judge that elections ensure that the views of voters are represented. Over three-quarters of Australian farmers hold this view.

Further differences emerge with respect to education and ethnicity. In New Zealand university-educated people are more positive about the public interest role of elections while in Australia they are less positive. There are no differences between the views of Maori and non-Maori, but in Australia voters from non-English speaking backgrounds are more likely than the remainder of the electorate to view the role of elections positively.<sup>3</sup>

When the focus turns to political corruption, the data show some degree of differentiation within all six socio-demographic variables in both countries (Table 4). Moreover, patterns by gender, age, education and region of residence (and to some extent on occupation) are similar in both countries, notwithstanding the greater total level of agreement in New Zealand that political corruption is not widespread. In both countries, men, this time, are some 10 per cent more likely than women to say that political corruption is not prevalent; positive views rise steadily by age, so that those aged over the age of 65 are more than 20 per cent more likely than the under 25s to be relaxed about levels of corruption; the well educated hold more benign views than the less well educated (the difference being greater in New Zealand); and urban residents are more inclined to be positive on this question than their rural counterparts.

[Table 4 about here]

With respect to occupation, those in non-manual occupations are more likely than the manual working class to see political corruption as a rare phenomenon. But again the farmers of the two nations diverge in their views. Australian farmers again hold more positive views on this question than almost any other group on the Australian side of the analysis, while New Zealand farmers are close to the manual occupations in their relatively pessimistic stance on corruption. Finally, in relation to ethnic identity, while the direction of difference is the same in the two countries, in that the minority ethnic group has a less benign view of the extent of political corruption, the gap between the views of non-English speaking background and other

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<sup>3</sup> The indigenous Aboriginal population in Australia is not large enough to be identified separately in sample surveys of this nature. Thus immigrant voters from countries whose first language is not English are used as the comparator for the Maori indigenous minority in New Zealand.

respondents in Australia of only 3 per cent pales by comparison with the 26 per cent gap between Maori and non-Maori in New Zealand.

In contrast to the cross-national similarities in the data on perceptions of political corruption and to some extent on whether elections ensure representation of voter views, the variable focusing on whether government is run by a few big interests or for the benefit of all is more inclined to indicate differences (Table 5).<sup>4</sup> On a number of variables differences among groups are slight in Australia but more noticeable in New Zealand. In Australia gender and age produce almost no differences, while inter-group differences are small for education, ethnicity and region. In some of these cases, such differences as there are run counter to the more marked differences apparent within the New Zealand data.<sup>5</sup> Only in the case of occupation are there substantial differences in Australia. For the third time, farmers stand out as holding more positive views than other groups on this question and for the third time those in middle class occupations are more likely than those in working class occupations to hold a positive view. This latter pattern is mirrored in New Zealand, also for the third time, but for the third time New Zealand farmers come between the two major occupational groups.

[Table 5 about here]

In New Zealand, in addition to these occupational differences, older members of the electorate, the university educated, and non-Maori are much more likely to hold the view that the government is not run by a few big interests. To a much lesser extent, men and urban dwellers also hold such views more strongly than women and rural residents. Reinforcing the patterns for occupation, the greater tendency for the university educated than those without a university degree in New Zealand to see the public interest as being served is consistent across all three variables.

### **Partisan Differences in Views on the Public Interest**

The last stage of the analysis addresses the question of the extent to which partisan affiliations within the electorate may underpin views on the public interest. Partisan affiliations are operationalised as the vote for either the governing parties, the major opposition party, or the collective minor parties, with non-voting or informal voting as a fourth category. Political support is presented in this manner rather than using the more conventional depiction of named political parties and even though the governments of the time in Australia and New Zealand are formed by parties of opposite political persuasions, on the grounds that voters whose preferred party is in power, regardless of which party or parties that may be, might be expected to feel that the public interest is being better served than would supporters of parties that are not in government. This would presumably be more true to the extent that voters tended to equate the public interest with their own personal interests.

Table 6 presents the responses to the three core questions about the public interest by party support. The Australian data support the hypothesis advanced above for all three questions. On all three there is a clear line of division between supporters of the Liberal-National parties of government and the other three groups of voters. The extent of the division varies (it is not as strong for the corruption item as for the

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<sup>4</sup> Of course the possibility remains that these differences might be in part due to the items not being precisely comparable in the two countries.

<sup>5</sup> Some of the differences found in the Australian data even run counter to patterns observed in previous Australian studies. For instance, the better educated have in the past been found to have more positive views about whether the government is run for the benefit of all than the less well educated (Bean, 2005: 129).

other two) but it is clearly the dominant line of demarcation (except on the third item, where the small number of informal or non-voters are not far behind government supporters in expressing the view that government is run for the benefit of all). While there is some variation, for the most part opposition supporters, minor party voters and non-voters tend to cluster together.

[Table 6 about here]

In New Zealand, however, the pattern is different. Only on the first question is there a division more or less reminiscent of the pattern in Australia. On the corruption and big interests questions the New Zealand data show an intriguing clustering of supporters of the opposition and governing parties together, with minor party supporters not too far away. Is this, perhaps, evidence of the 'consensus' promised in New Zealand politics by the advent of proportional representation (Vowles et al., 1995)? The one group that clearly stands apart from the consensus is non-voters, who not surprisingly give the most disaffected responses on all three questions.

### **Conclusion**

One thing that has not been possible to address to any great degree with the data in this paper is whether some of the different arguments about the public interest resonate to greater or lesser degrees with public perceptions. For example, the data do not allow for any real test between Goodin's (1996) lowest common denominator and highest common concern alternative conceptions of the public interest. Some of the results do tend to reinforce the argument advanced by Mulgan (1984) about electoral incentives for politicians to act in the public interest. Much of the evidence also appears consistent with the notion of the public interest as the sum of individual preferences. The data on partisan differentials imply that this may possibly be more the case in Australia than in New Zealand in the sense of individuals projecting their own self-interest onto the public interest.

If we accept this claim it points towards a significant explanation for this cross-national variation. The mixed-member proportional representation system, introduced in New Zealand in 1996, may indeed have delivered a degree of political consensus for which such systems are noted. These data on the public interest reveal a degree of cross-partisan consensus in New Zealand that is not only unexpected but also sits in contrast to the divergence between government and opposition supporters observed in Australia. Of course, the qualification to this argument must be that the results presented here amount to only one small set of evidence about one collection of political attitudes (and nor is the evidence unanimously reinforcing of the argument).

Finally, two interesting patterns from the social structural analysis are worth noting. The first is the consistent tendency in both countries for voters of higher occupational status to display more positive views in relation to the public interest. The second is the differences revealed between the two farming communities, with Australian farmers repeatedly showing relatively greater faith in the political promotion of the public interest than their New Zealand counterparts. The reason for this difference could possibly be to do with the fact that farmers constitute a significant sectional interest group of the kind whose interests often compete with the public interest (Mulgan, 1984). In Australia the coalition of parties that are the traditional political allies of farmers are in office, where as in New Zealand the traditional political opponents of farmers are in office. For farmers in Australia there may again be some conflation of the private with the public in that they perceive the

public interest to be advanced because their sectional interests are better served by the incumbent government.

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Table 1: Public Perceptions of How Well its Views are Represented by Elections, Parties and Politicians in Australia and New Zealand (percentages)

	Australia, 2004	New Zealand, 2002
How well elections ensure voter views are represented:		
very well	7	6
quite well	49	50
not very well	36	38
not well at all	7	6
(n)	(1729)	(4686)
Party that represents views best:		
Liberal/National	40	15
Labor/Labour	27	33
National/NZ First	4	9
Greens	7	5
Aust. Dem./United Future	2	5
One Nation/ACT	2	6
Other	2	2
None	17	23
(n)	(1731)	(4175)
Party leader who represents views best:		
John Howard/Helen Clark	41	39
Mark Latham/Bill English	24	14
John Anderson/Winston Peters	4	14
Bob Brown/Jim Anderton	8	3
Andrew Bartlett/ Peter Dunne	1	7
Richard Prebble	-	5
Other	2	2
None	21	16
(n)	(1738)	(4119)

Sources: Australian Election study, 2004 (n=1769); New Zealand Election Study, 2002 (n=5783).

Table 2: Public Perceptions of Political Corruption and Governmental Self-Interest in Australia and New Zealand (percentages)

	Australia, 2004	New Zealand, 2002
How widespread is corruption amongst politicians:		
very widespread	9	5
quite widespread	29	19
not very widespread	50	44
hardly happens at all	13	32
(n)	(1696)	(3651)
How widespread is corruption amongst public servants:		
very widespread	12	-
quite widespread	36	-
not very widespread	43	-
hardly happens at all	9	-
(n)	(1702)	-
Government run by a few big interests:		
entirely for big interests/strongly agree	10	9
mostly for big interests/agree	31	37
half and half/neither	38	24
mostly for benefit of all/disagree	19	29
entirely for all/strongly disagree	2	1
(n)	(1727)	(3772)

Sources: Australian Election study, 2004 (n=1769); New Zealand Election Study, 2002 (n=5783).

Table 3: Perceptions that Voter Views are Well Represented by Elections within Different Socio-Demographic Groups (percentages)

	Australia, 2004	New Zealand, 2002
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	52	51
Female	60	60
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	58	56
25 – 44	57	56
45 – 64	57	56
65 and over	55	55
<b>Education</b>		
No university degree	57	54
University degree	52	62
<b>Occupation</b>		
Manual	51	51
Non-manual	57	58
Farmer	78	57
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
NESB/Maori	62	56
Non-NESB/Non-Maori	55	57
<b>Region of Residence</b>		
Rural	57	56
Urban (large city)	55	56

Sources: Australian Election study, 2004 (n=1769); New Zealand Election Study, 2002 (n=5783).

Table 4: Perceptions that Corruption is not Widespread within Different Socio-Demographic Groups (percentages)

	Australia, 2004	New Zealand, 2002
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	68	82
Female	58	71
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	48	60
25 – 44	54	71
45 – 64	67	80
65 and over	70	81
<b>Education</b>		
No university degree	61	72
University degree	68	88
<b>Occupation</b>		
Manual	55	70
Non-manual	66	79
Farmer	69	72
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
NESB/Maori	60	53
Non-NESB/Non-Maori	63	79
<b>Region of Residence</b>		
Rural	61	74
Urban (large city)	65	79

Sources: Australian Election study, 2004 (n=1769); New Zealand Election Study, 2002 (n=5783).

Table 5: Perceptions that Government is Largely Run for the Benefit of All within Different Socio-Demographic Groups (percentages)

	Australia, 2004	New Zealand, 2002
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	21	32
Female	20	28
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	20	15
25 – 44	20	26
45 – 64	21	33
65 and over	21	34
<b>Education</b>		
No university degree	21	26
University degree	18	44
<b>Occupation</b>		
Manual	15	22
Non-manual	23	34
Farmer	29	27
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
NESB/Maori	17	14
Non-NESB/Non-Maori	21	33
<b>Region of Residence</b>		
Rural	22	29
Urban (large city)	19	32

Sources: Australian Election study, 2004 (n=1769); New Zealand Election Study, 2002 (n=5783).

Table 6: Attitudes to Political Representation and the Public Interest by Party Support (percentages)

	Views Represented		No Corruption		Govt Run for All	
	Aust 2004	NZ 2002	Aust 2004	NZ 2002	Aust 2004	NZ 2002
Government	74	68	70	80	33	34
Opposition	43	44	58	79	8	33
Minor Parties	32	47	54	72	9	25
Non-Voter/Informal	46	36	50	51	26	13

Sources: Australian Election study, 2004 (n=1769); New Zealand Election Study, 2002 (n=5783).