



# **Public Life Values**

**A Report from the  
New Zealand Values Study 2005**

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## Executive summary

This report is the third of three publicly available reports detailing the findings of the New Zealand Values Survey 2005. The first and second reports cover topics relating to New Zealanders' economic and social values respectively. This third report considers New Zealanders' attitudes and values towards participation in public life.

Data for the New Zealand Values Survey was collected using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Interviews were conducted nationally with New Zealanders aged 18 years and over during the four month period from December 2004 to March 2005. Two random samples of approximately 1,200 respondents each were collected. These samples were joined by a data fusion process.

New Zealanders' voting choice and political preference were explored. The four political parties respondents most frequently reported that they would vote for if there were an election tomorrow were Labour, National, the Greens and New Zealand First. When asked about their political views, nearly half the respondents reported their political preference to be 'centre'. Fewer respondents reported themselves to be centre-left or centre-right, and fewer respondents again reported themselves to be left or right. The parties respondents most often reported they would never vote for were Christian Heritage, the Greens, the Maori Party and ACT.

The New Zealand Values Survey contained a series of questions about how people considered the government to be handling New Zealand's affairs. Levels of satisfaction with government were fairly high, with nearly three-quarters of respondents reporting that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with government. Satisfaction was highest amongst Labour supporters. However, almost half the respondents agreed that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves instead of being run for the benefit of all the people. New Zealand's political system was also considered, with respondents asked to rate the political system using a 1 to 10 scale with 1 being very bad and 10 being very good. The overall mean score was 6.1. Over two-thirds of respondents also reported that they were very satisfied or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in this country.

Information was sought on people's attitudes regarding the governing of New Zealand society and the types of political systems that could be employed to govern this country. Three-quarters of respondents considered that our society must be gradually improved by reforms, as opposed to being radically changed by revolutionary action or valiantly defended against all subversive forces. The vast majority of respondents also considered that democracy was a very good or fairly good way of governing this country. Nearly half the respondents considered that having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country was a very good or fairly good way of governing this country.

The vast majority of respondents considered it definitely should be or probably should be central government's role to: provide a job for everyone; keep prices under control; provide a decent standard of living for the old; provide industry with the help it needs to grow; provide decent housing for those who can't afford it; and impose strict laws

to make industry do less damage to the environment. Less than two-thirds of respondents considered it central government's role to reduce income differences between rich and poor.

The level of influence respondents considered they had over government was not high. Three-quarters of respondents agreed that the public has little control over what politicians do in office, while half agreed that the average person can get nowhere by talking to public officials. Similarly, only a minority of respondents agreed that the average person has considerable influence on politics or has a great deal of influence on government decisions. However, half the respondents agreed that government is generally responsive to public opinion.

Questions were asked about respondents' participation in political action. Three-quarters of respondents had signed a petition. One in five had attended lawful demonstrations and less than 20% had joined in boycotts, joined unofficial strikes or occupied buildings or factories. The majority of respondents reported that they would never join an unofficial strike or occupy buildings or factories. Supporters of the Green Party were generally more politically active than supporters of the other main parties. Few respondents reported that they were active or inactive members of a political party (4% and 13% respectively).

The level of interest New Zealanders have in politics was explored. Sixteen percent of respondents reported that they discuss political matter frequently when they got together with their friends. The majority of respondents reported they discuss political matters occasionally, while one in five reported they never discuss political matters. Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported that they followed politics in the news either everyday or several times a week. Five percent reported that they never followed politics in the news. When asked about their level of interest in politics, two-thirds of respondents reported that they were either very interested or somewhat interested in politics.

Respondents were also asked about the level of confidence they have in different organisations, institutions and the media. Two-thirds or greater reported that they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police, community organisations, and the armed forces. Over half respondents reported they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the United Nations, the public service, major companies, the legal system, and the women's movement.

## Introduction and method

The New Zealand Values Survey is part of a wider World Values Study, which is conducted in over 80 countries throughout the world. The World Values Study involves social scientists carrying out research about socio-cultural and political change in their respective countries using questions derived from a core set.

This report is the third of three publicly available reports detailing the findings of the New Zealand Values Survey 2005. The first and second reports cover topics relating to New Zealanders' economic and social values respectively. This third report considers New Zealanders' attitudes and values towards participation in public life.

This report describes the findings from the New Zealand Values Survey that relate to New Zealanders' attitudes and values towards and participation in public life. The specific topics that are covered include: voting preferences of New Zealanders; levels of satisfaction with government; the principles of government that people support; perceived responsibilities of government; participation in political action; and levels of interest in politics.

The New Zealand Values Survey data were collected by a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system from New Zealanders aged 18 years and over. Details of the sampling frame, interviewing process and analysis are provided in Appendix 1. Interviews were conducted over a four-month period from December 2004 to March 2005.

A comparison of the sample characteristics with 2004 population estimates is contained in Appendix 2.

## Analysis

Important aspects of the sample design and weighting procedures were accounted for using the SUDAAN software package (Research Triangle Institute, 2002). Different methods were used to analyse questions based on the different types of response variables recorded.

Statistical testing was done using: 1) logistic regression (for binary responses) (some variables were dichotomised for use in logistic regression); and 2) regression analysis: variables that had a scale response were analysed using regression and their mean scores have been reported. For example if respondents were asked to rate whether they feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives or whether they consider what they do has no real effect on what happens to them on a one to ten scale. This type of response variable was analysed by age using regression and a mean score reported.

Data collected on the range of variables were analysed by age, first choice of political party, and political preferences. Data were analysed in the age groups: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; and 65+. The political parties to which 5% or more of respondents stated that they would give their party vote were used to categorise responses. These political parties were: the Greens, Labour, National, and New Zealand First. Respondents who reported they 'wouldn't vote' or 'don't know' which party they would vote for are also detailed in the report; these responses were given by more than 5% of respondents. Political preference was measured on a one to ten scale. This was categorised as follows: left (1 and 2); centre-left (3 and 4); centre (5 and 6); centre-right (7 and 8); and right (9 and 10).

All differences between demographic groups were tested for statistical significance at the 5% level. Where differences are commented on in the text these were significant at the 5% level. Where there are less than 10 observations in each comparison group(s) differences are not reported. A factor was included in the analysis to adjust for the effective sample size being less than the actual sample size (see data fusion section Appendix 1).

As is usual in the analysis of survey data, these tests only account for random sampling variation and not for any non-sampling errors (such as non-response bias or measurement error) that may be present.

## New Zealanders' voting choice and political preference

The New Zealand Values Survey obtained information about the political party to which people would give their party vote and people's political preference in terms of 'the left' and 'the right'. The political party New Zealanders would never give their party vote was also explored.

### The party vote

Respondents were asked: 'If there were a national election tomorrow which party would you vote for?' The responses to this question are described in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who would vote for each political party if there were a national election tomorrow**

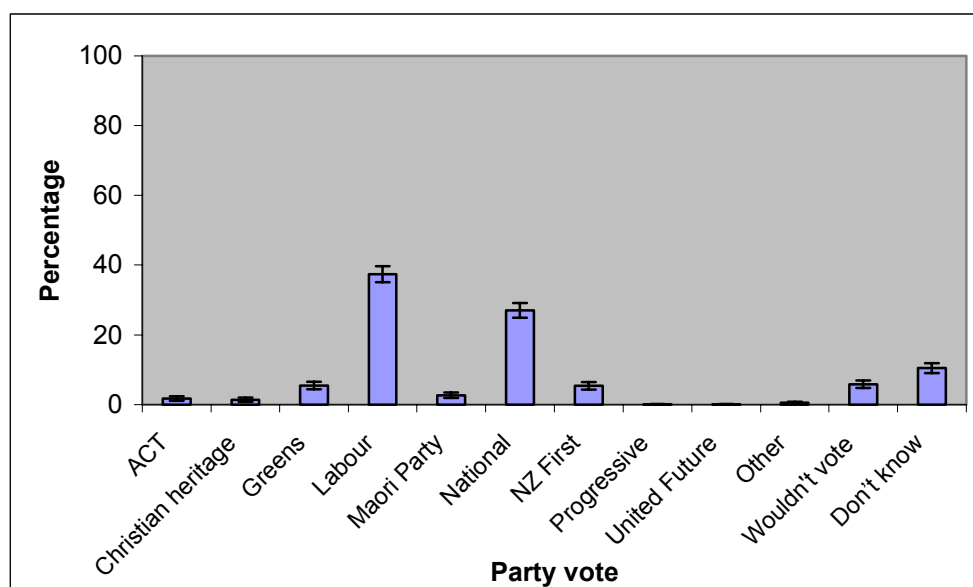


Figure 1 shows that the four most popular parties were: Labour (37%); National (27%); the Greens (5%); and New Zealand First (5%). Six percent of respondents stated that they would not vote and 10% stated that they didn't know whom they would vote for.

Similar levels of support were found for Labour in each age group. However support for the other parties did differ by age group (Table 1).

**Table 1: Percentage of respondents in each age group who would vote for main political parties if there were a national election tomorrow**

Party vote	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Greens	10.2	7.1	6.4	3.3	1.9	1.6
Labour	34.6	34.1	40.8	37.8	39.2	37.1
National	24.5	28.4	24.0	30.3	29.7	28.8
NZ First	4.7	3.6	6.0	4.1	4.7	9.1
Wouldn't vote	6.1	7.7	5.8	5.9	4.1	6.0
Don't know	10.5	9.3	8.0	9.1	12.7	13.7

Younger respondents (aged 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44 years) were significantly more likely to vote for the Greens compared with older respondents (aged 45-54, 55-64 and 65+ years).

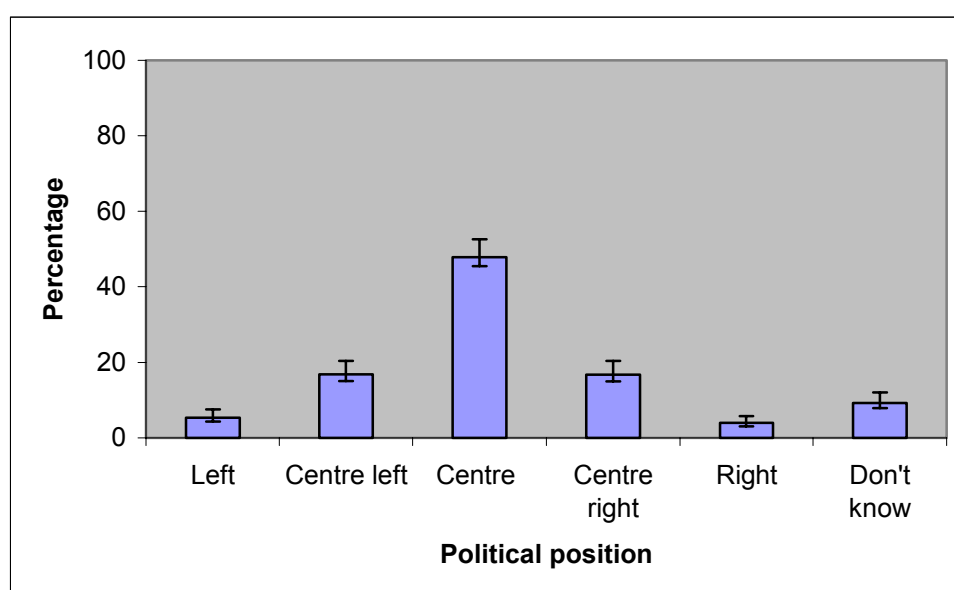
Respondents aged 45-54 years were significantly more likely to report that they would vote for National compared with respondents aged 35-44 years.

Respondents aged 65+ years were significantly more likely to vote for New Zealand First compared with most other younger age ranges (18-24, 25-34, 45-54 and 55-64 years).

### Political preferences

Respondents were asked to describe their political preference in terms of ‘the left’ and ‘the right’ on a 1 to 10 scale. One represented left and 10 represented right. This was categorised as follows: left (1 and 2); centre-left (3 and 4); centre (5 and 6); centre-right (7 and 8); and right (9 and 10). The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Percentage of respondents with left to right political preference**



Nearly half the respondents (48%) considered themselves to be centre. Nearly equal percentages of respondents considered themselves to be centre-left and centre-right (both approximately 17%) and left and right (5% and 4% respectively). Nine percent of respondents stated that they did not know where their political preferences lay.

There were some significant differences between different age groups in their political preferences (Table 2.)

**Table 2: Percentage of respondents in each age group reporting political preference**

Political preference	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Left	5.7	7.4	6.8	3.6	3.4	4.9
Centre-left	15.6	19.6	21.8	18.6	12.5	12.3
Centre	49.8	45.8	45.5	47.9	49.8	48.1
Centre-right	13.1	11.3	14.8	19.5	24.8	18.1
Right	3.3	2.3	2.7	4.5	4.2	7.0
Don't know	12.4	13.6	8.5	5.9	5.4	9.5

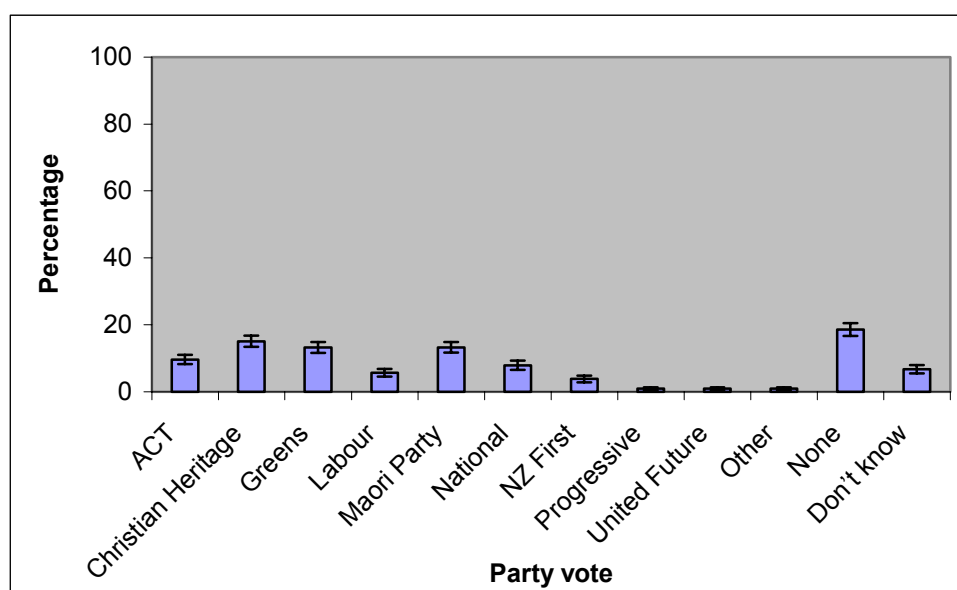
Generally, younger and middle aged respondents (25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 years) had a centre-left political preference compared with older respondents. While older respondents (aged 45-54 years and over) tended to have a centre-right and right orientated political preference compared with younger respondents.

No other significant differences were found between the age of respondents and political preferences.

### Never vote

Respondents were also asked whether there was any political party that they would *never* vote for (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Percentage of respondents reporting the political party they would never vote for**



The parties that respondents most often stated that they would never vote for were: Christian Heritage (15%); the Greens (13%); the Maori Party (13%); and ACT (10%). Nineteen percent of respondents reported that there were no parties that they would never vote for and 7% reported that they did not know whether there were any parties they would never vote for.

Age had some relationship with these results (Table 3).

**Table 3: Percentage of respondents in each age group reporting the political party they would never vote for**

Party vote	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Christian Heritage	16.8	20.4	18.6	15.5	14.8	4.9
Greens	11.6	9.6	10.2	15.1	16.3	17.6
Maori Party	7.0	18.4	13.1	13.8	16.5	16.4
ACT	5.7	4.4	10.0	11.7	11.7	14.1

All younger age ranges (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 years) were significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for Christian Heritage compared with respondents aged 65+ years.

Older respondents (45-54 years and over) tended to be significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for the Greens.

All older age ranges (25-34 years and over) were significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for the Maori party compared with 18-24 years olds.

Older respondents (35-44 years and over) were generally more likely to report that they would never vote for ACT compared with respondents aged 18-24 and 25-34 years.

The political party respondents reported they would vote for had some significant relationship with the party respondents reported they would never vote for. Table 4 shows the relationship between the most popular choices of party respondents would vote for and party respondents would not vote for.

**Table 4: Percentage of respondents voting for each party reporting that they would never vote for Christian Heritage, the Greens, the Maori Party or ACT**

Never vote	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Wouldn't vote	Don't know
Christian Heritage	27.9	17.8	11.2	13.6	12.9	17.5
Greens	0.0	7.9	23.0	14.7	6.5	9.2
Maori Party	5.2	12.2	19.6	13.5	6.1	14.4
ACT	23.3	14.4	2.0	11.7	5.4	8.4
None	20.3	17.8	18.4	12.6	41.9	14.3
Don't know	1.1	5.1	4.1	3.4	12.3	25.0

Supporters of the Greens were significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for Christian Heritage compared with supporters of Labour, National and New Zealand First. Labour supporters were also significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for Christian Heritage compared with supporters of National.

Both National and New Zealand First supporters were significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for the Greens compared with supporters of Labour.

Respondents who reported that they would vote for Labour, National or New Zealand First were all significantly more likely to state that they would never vote for the Maori Party compared with respondents who reported that they would vote for the Greens. Respondents who reported that they would vote for National were also significantly more likely to state that they would never vote for the Maori Party compared with respondents who reported that they would vote for Labour.

Supporters of the Greens, Labour and New Zealand First were all significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for ACT compared with supporters of National. Supporters of the Greens were also significantly more likely to report that they would never vote for ACT compared with supporters of Labour and New Zealand First.

### Voting choice and political preference

The political party that the respondents reported they would vote for was compared with their stated political preference (Table 5).

**Table 5: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party reporting their political preference**

Political preference	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Wouldn't vote	Don't know
Left	9.8	7.8	2.3	4.2	7.1	1.6
Centre-left	29.8	28.4	5.9	8.5	12.0	9.0
Centre	41.5	47.3	43.8	60.3	48.0	58.8
Centre-right	6.6	7.8	33.3	14.4	11.2	9.1
Right	1.5	2.3	8.2	3.5	2.1	1.7
Don't know	10.8	6.4	6.4	9.1	19.6	19.9

Respondents who stated that they would vote for the Greens mainly considered themselves to be either centre-left (30%) or centre (42%). Similarly, most respondents who stated that they would vote for Labour considered themselves to be either centre-left (28%) or centre (47%). National supporters, on the other hand, were more likely to consider themselves centre (44%) or centre-right (33%). The majority of respondents who stated that they would vote for New Zealand First considered themselves to be centre (60%).

## Satisfaction with government

Respondents were asked a range of questions about how they considered the government to be handling New Zealand's affairs and, more broadly, about the system of government that is operating in this country.

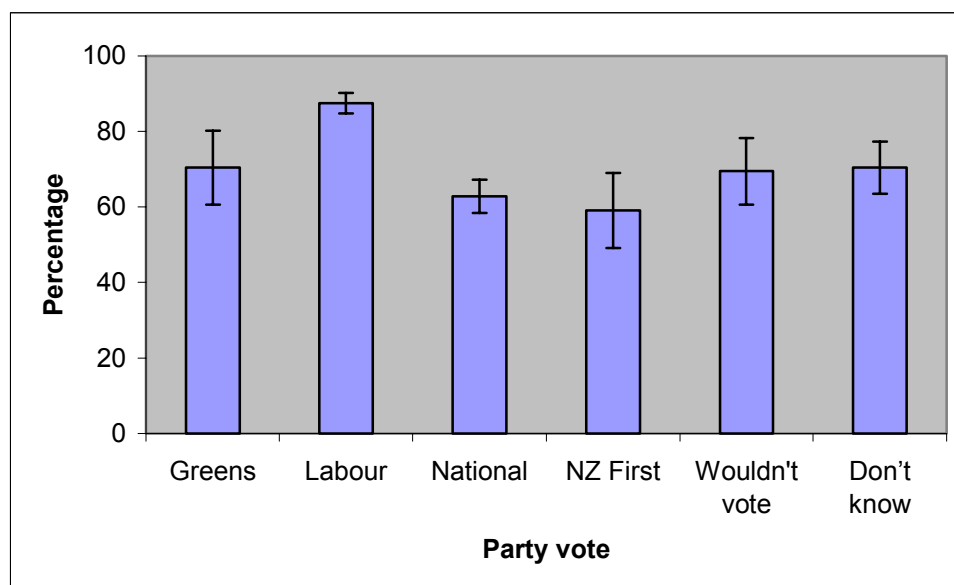
### Satisfaction with government

The question 'How satisfied are you with the way the people now in national office are handling the country's affairs' was asked. The response options for respondents were: very satisfied, fairly satisfied, fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Six percent of respondents reported that they were very satisfied and 66% reported that they were fairly satisfied. Less than one-third of respondents reported that they were dissatisfied with the way people now in national office are handling the country's affairs (23% fairly dissatisfied and 5% very dissatisfied).

The age of the respondents was not significantly associated with their response to this question.

Levels of satisfaction with the way the people now in national office are handling the country's affairs was compared with the political party respondents reported that they would vote for. Results are shown in Figure 4.

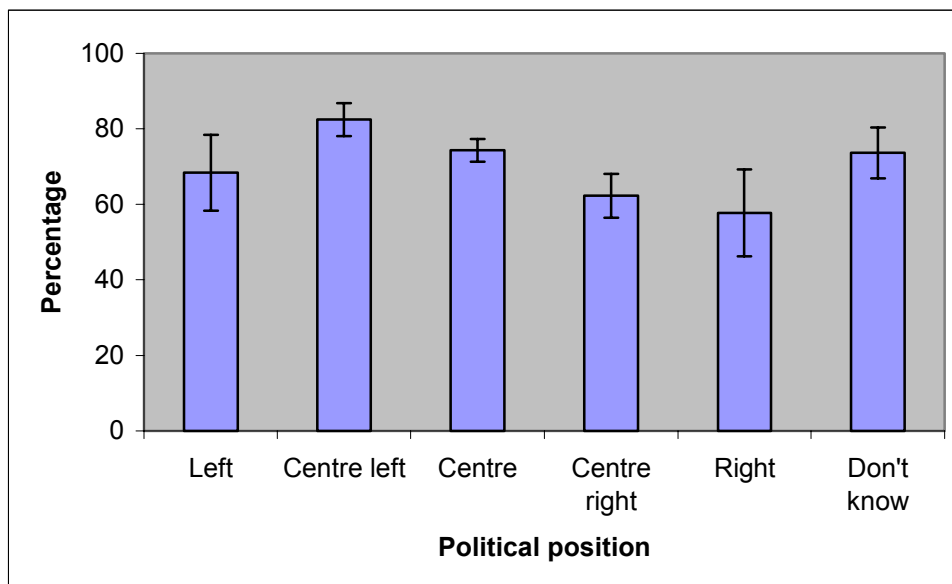
**Figure 4: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way people now in national office are handling the country's affairs**



Labour supporters most frequently reported being very or fairly satisfied with the way people in national office are handling the country's affairs (87%). They were significantly more likely to be very or fairly satisfied than supporters of the Greens (70%), National (63%) and New Zealand First (59%), and those who reported that they wouldn't vote (69%) or didn't know who they would vote for (70%).

Levels of satisfaction with the way people now in national office are handling the country's affairs was also compared with respondents' political preference (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way people now in national office are handling the country's affairs**



Respondents who considered themselves to be centre-left were significantly more likely to be very or fairly satisfied with the way people in national office are handling the country's affairs (82%) compared with all other political preference groups: left (68%), centre (74%), centre-right (62%), right (58%), and those who reported that they did not know their political preference (74%). Respondents who thought of themselves as centre were significantly more likely to be very or fairly satisfied compared with respondents who thought of themselves as centre-right or right. Respondents who did not know their political preference were significantly more likely to be very or fairly satisfied compared with respondents who thought of themselves as centre-right and right.

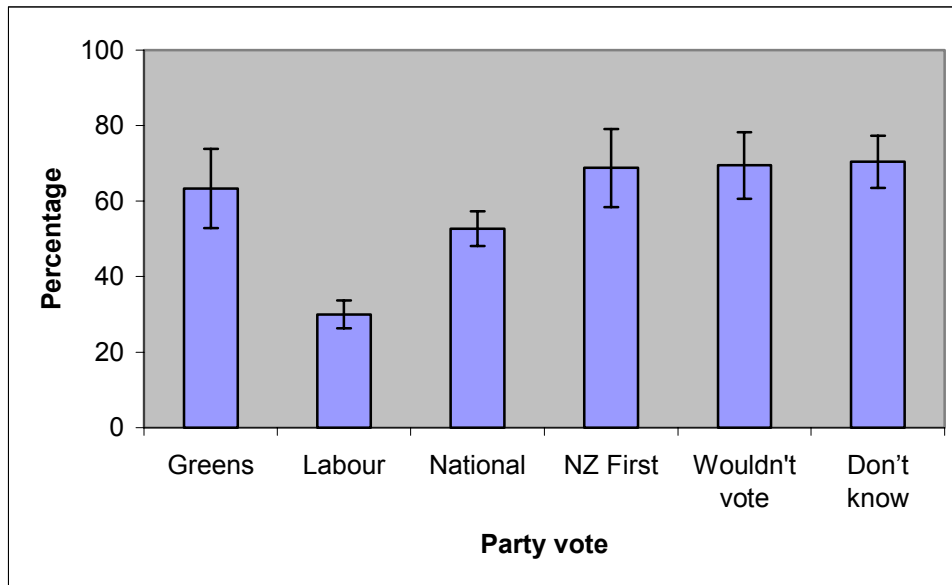
### **Benefits to big interests vs. all people**

The following question about the way that New Zealand is being run was asked: 'Generally speaking, would you say that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?'

Almost half of the respondents (44%) considered that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves. Age was not significantly associated with this result.

The choice of political party that respondents reported that they would vote for was compared with the perception that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves. These results are shown in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who considered that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves**

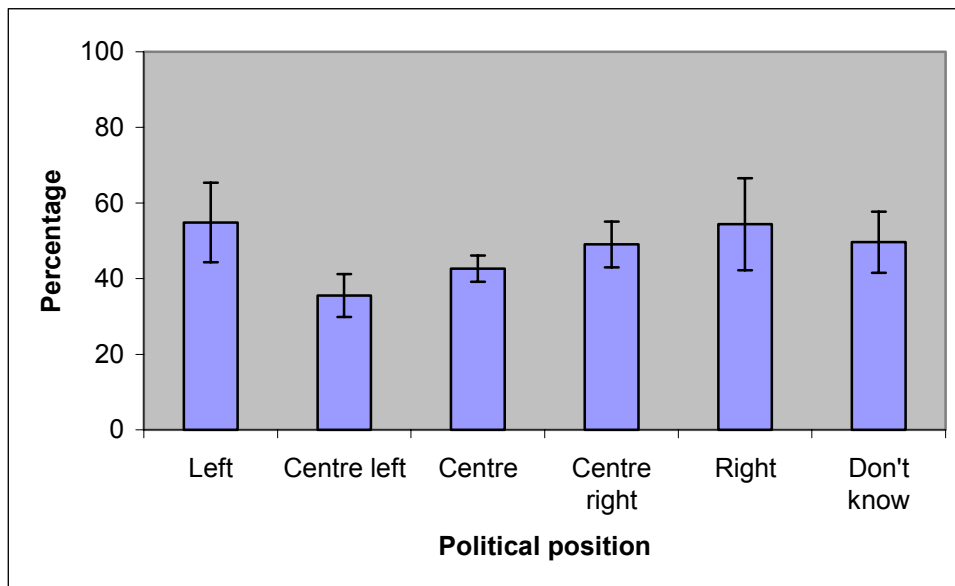


The majority of respondents who reported that they would vote for New Zealand First, the Greens, and National considered that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves (69%, 63%, and 53% respectively). In contrast, just under one-third of respondents (30%) who said they would vote for Labour considered that this was the case.

Respondents who stated that they would vote for New Zealand First, the Greens, or National were all significantly more likely than Labour to report that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves. Respondents who stated that they would vote for New Zealand First were significantly more likely than respondents who stated they would vote for National to say the same.

The question of whether the country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves rather than for the benefit of all the people was also analysed by political preference of the respondents (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who considered that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves**



Just over half the respondents who considered themselves to be either left or right reported that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves as opposed to being run for the benefit of all the people (55% and 54% respectively). Half the respondents who did not know their political preference thought this was the case.

Respondents who stated that their political preference was left, centre, centre-right or right were all significantly more likely to agree that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves compared with respondents who stated their political preference to be centre-left. Respondents who stated their political preference to be either left or centre-right were significantly more likely to agree with this statement compared with those who stated their political preference to be centre.

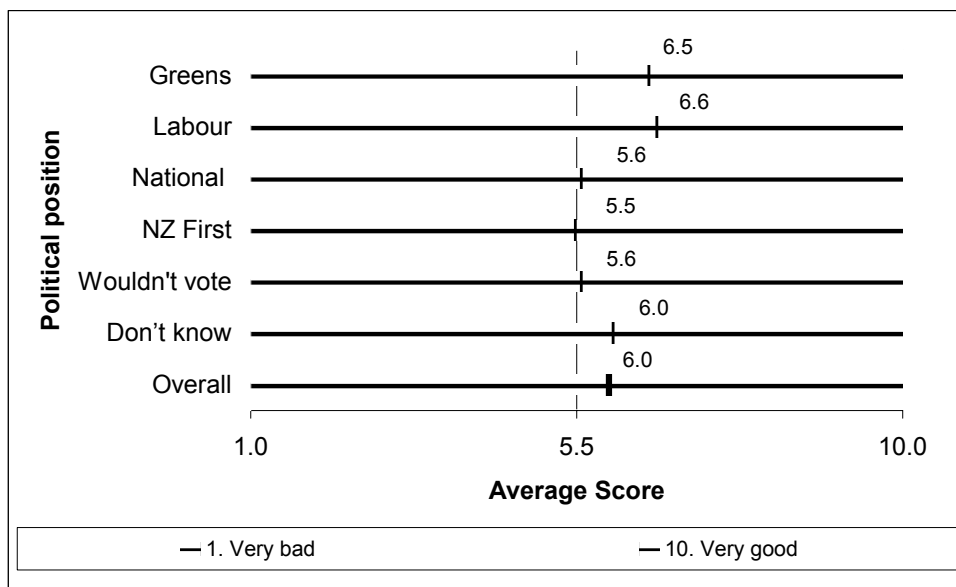
### **Evaluation of current political system**

Respondents were asked about their views on New Zealand’s political system. Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 meant very bad and 10 meant very good, respondents had to choose a point on that scale which reflected their views of where they considered New Zealand’s political system to be today.

The overall mean score on the scale was 6.1. There was no significant relationship between age and respondents' ratings.

The political party that respondents reported that they would vote for, however, was related to their rating of New Zealand's political system (Figure 8).

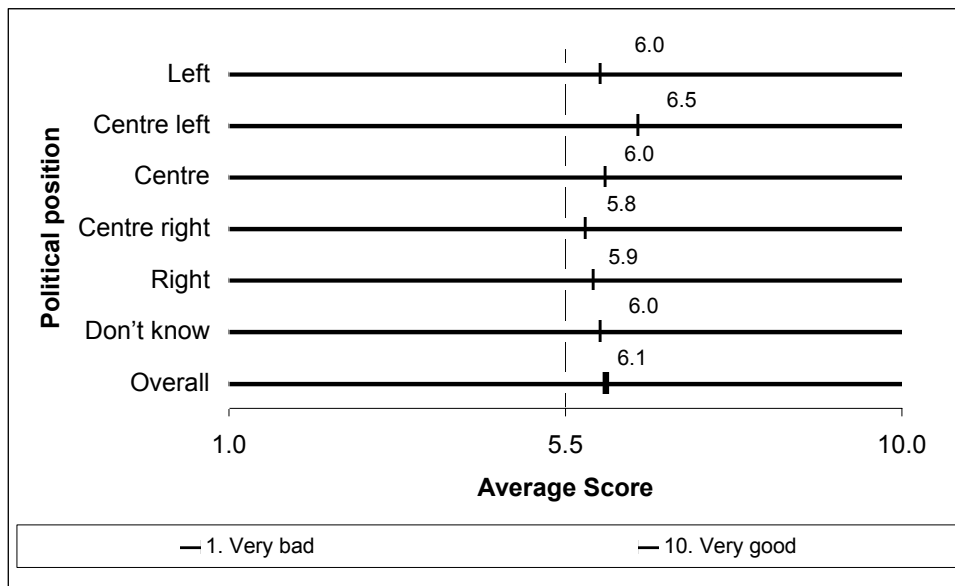
**Figure 8: Mean score of respondents voting for each political party rating New Zealand's political system as it is today**



Respondents who stated that they would vote for either the Greens or Labour both viewed New Zealand's political system significantly more positively compared with respondents who stated that they would vote for either National or New Zealand First.

Respondents' political preference was also significantly associated with their rating of New Zealand's political system as it is today. Refer to Figure 9 below.

**Figure 9: Mean score of respondents of each political preference rating New Zealand’s political system as it is today**



Respondents who considered themselves to be centre-left were significantly more likely to positively rate New Zealand’s political system as it is today compared with respondents who considered themselves left, centre, and centre-right and right. Respondents who considered themselves to be centre were also significantly more likely to positively rate New Zealand’s political system as it is today compared with respondents who considered themselves to be centre-right.

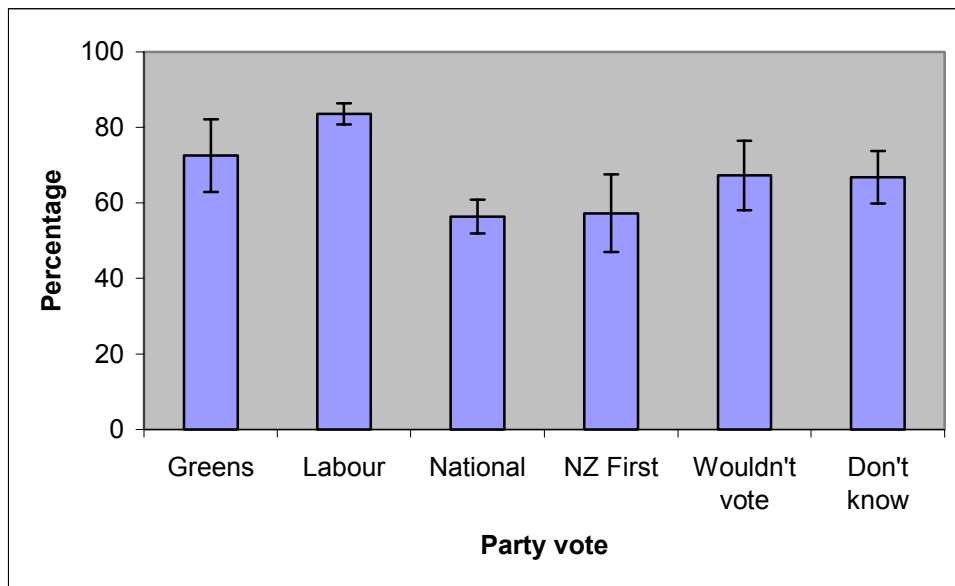
**Satisfaction with current development of democracy**

Respondents were asked whether they were very satisfied, rather satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy is developing in this country.

The majority of respondents (69%) stated that they were either very satisfied or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in New Zealand. Respondents aged 18-24 and 55-64 years were both significantly more likely to consider this was the case compared with respondents aged 65+ years. No other significant differences between age groups were found.

The political party that respondents stated that they would vote for had some association with how they viewed democracy in this country (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who stated they were very satisfied or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country**

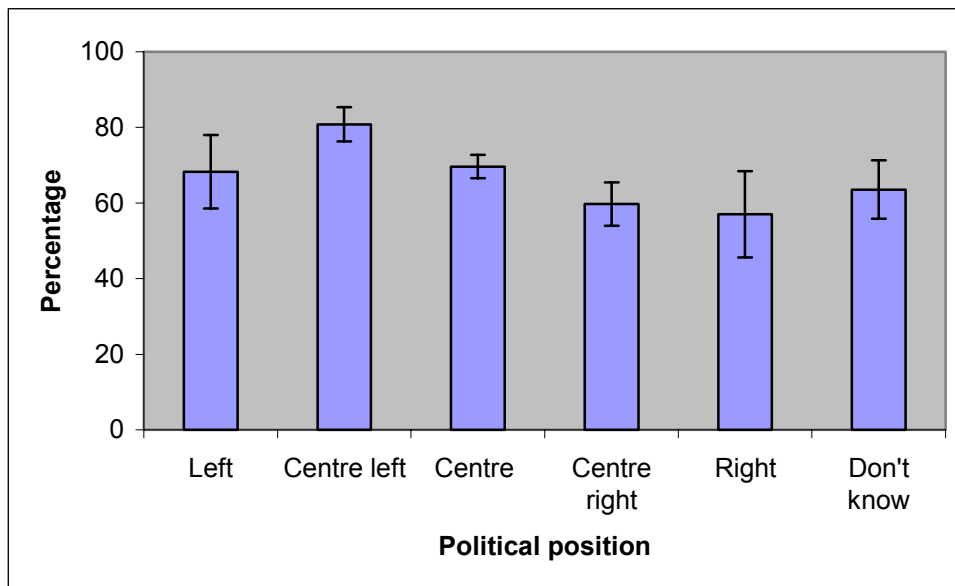


Respondents who stated that they would vote for Labour were significantly more likely to be very or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in New Zealand (84%) compared with respondents who stated that they would vote for the Greens (73%), National (56%) and New Zealand First (57%). Supporters of the Greens, however, were significantly more likely to be very or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in New Zealand compared with supporters of National and New Zealand First.

Equal proportions of respondents who stated that they wouldn't vote or didn't know who they would vote for were very or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in New Zealand (67%).

Respondents' satisfaction with the way democracy is developing was also significantly related to their political preference. See Figure 11 below.

**Figure 11: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who stated they were very satisfied or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in our country**



The majority of respondents of all political preferences (including those who stated they did not know their political preference) were very or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing in New Zealand.

Respondents who considered themselves centre-left were significantly more likely to be very or rather satisfied with the way democracy is developing (81%) compared with those who considered themselves left (68%), centre (70%), centre-right (60%) and right (57%). Respondents who considered themselves centre were also significantly more likely to be very or rather satisfied compared with respondents who considered themselves centre-right or right.

## Principles of government that people want

The New Zealand Values Survey sought respondents' attitudes regarding the governing of New Zealand society and the types of political systems that could be employed to govern this country.

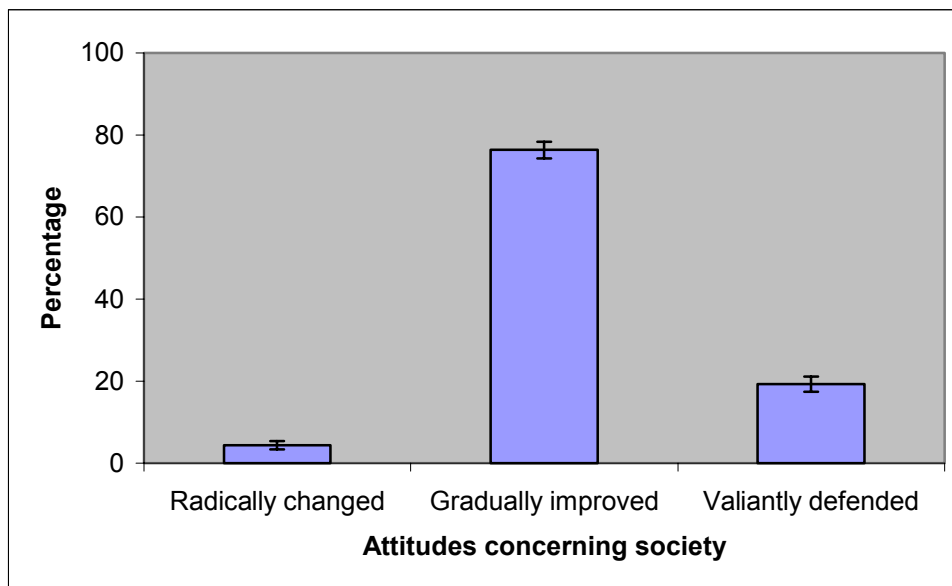
### Support for revolution, reform or status quo

Respondents were asked the following: 'I am going to read out three basic kinds of attitudes concerning the society we live in. Please choose the one which best describes your own opinion'. The attitudes concerning society read out to respondents were:

- The entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action
- Our society must be gradually improved by reforms
- Our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces

The views of respondents are presented in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Percentage of respondents choosing each alternative



Approximately three-quarters of respondents (76%) agreed that our society must be gradually improved by reforms. Four percent considered that the entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action and 19% considered that our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces.

All younger respondents (aged 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 years) were significantly more likely to consider that our society must be gradually improved by reforms compared with respondents aged 65+ years.

Respondents aged 65+ years were significantly more likely to consider that our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces compared with respondents aged 18-24, 35-44 and 44-54 years.

The political party that respondents said they would vote for was related to their choice (Table 6).

**Table 6: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party choosing each alternative**

Statements	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Wouldn't vote	Don't know
Radically changed	13.8	4.0	4.7	3.8	5.0	0.0
Gradually improved	74.5	77.5	75.1	71.5	83.4	76.7
Valiantly defended	11.8	18.5	20.2	24.8	11.5	23.3

Respondents who stated that they would vote for the Greens were significantly more likely to report that the entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action compared with Labour, National and New Zealand First. Respondents who stated that they would vote for New Zealand First were significantly more likely to agree that our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces compared with those who stated that they would vote for the Greens.

Respondents who considered that our society must be gradually improved by reforms were found approximately as often in each political party.

Views on the society we live in were also compared with respondents' political preference (Table 7).

**Table 7: Percentage of respondents of each political preference choosing each alternative**

Statements	Voting choice					
	Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right	Don't know
Radically changed	7.3	3.3	3.4	4.3	14.3	5.8
Gradually improved	76.8	83.8	76.0	74.2	57.5	74.8
Valiantly defended	15.9	12.8	20.6	21.5	28.2	19.4

Respondents who considered themselves to be right were significantly more likely to agree that the entire way our society is organised must be radically changed by revolutionary action than those who considered themselves centre-left, centre or centre-right.

Respondents who considered their political preference to be left, centre-left, centre or centre-right were all significantly more likely to agree that our society must be gradually improved by reforms compared with respondents who considered themselves to be right. Respondents who considered themselves to be centre-left were also significantly more likely to agree with this statement than respondents who considered themselves to be centre or centre-right.

Centre, centre-right and right politically minded respondents were all significantly more likely to agree that our present society must be valiantly defended against all subversive forces compared with respondents who considered themselves to be centre-left.

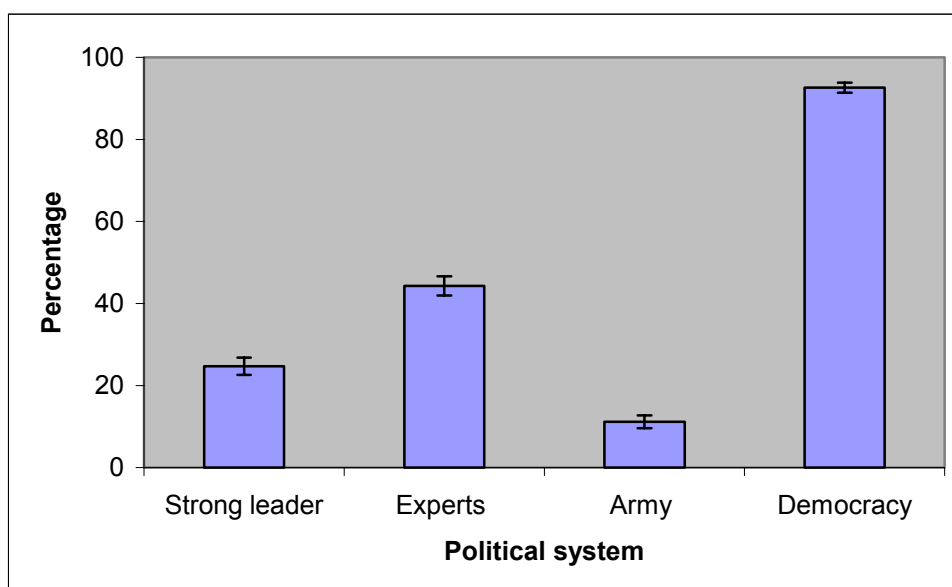
### Evaluation of alternative governance systems

A range of governance systems were described. For each type of governance system respondents were asked to state whether they thought they were a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country. The governance systems were as follows:

- having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Parliament and elections
- having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country
- having the army rule
- having a democratic political system

Figure 13 shows the percentages of respondents who thought the governance systems to be very or fairly good.

**Figure 13: Percentage of respondents who stated governance systems would be a very good or fairly good way of governing this country**



The majority of respondents (93%) reported that having a democratic political system would be a very or fairly good way of governing this country, while nearly half (44%) reported that having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country would be very or fairly good. One-quarter of respondents considered that having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Parliament and elections would be a very or fairly good way of governing this country. Fewer respondents (11%) considered that having the army rule would be very or fairly good.

Age had some relationship with respondents' views of governance systems. Generally, respondents aged 18-24 years were significantly more likely to consider that having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Parliament and elections or having the army rule were very or fairly good things compared with the older age groups. Views about having experts, not government, make decisions or having a democratic political system did not differ between age groups.

Respondents' views on the types of governance systems were compared with the political party they stated they would vote for (Table 8).

**Table 8: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who stated governance systems would be a very good or fairly good way of governing this country\***

Governance systems	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Wouldn't vote	Don't know
Strong leader	11.1	27.1	23.5	29.1	20.3	23.9
Experts	35.5	41.8	47.9	47.6	46.9	44.5
Army	9.2	12.2	11.8	8.7	8.8	7.4
Democracy	92.8	92.9	93.5	87.8	87.4	95.1

Respondents who considered that having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Parliament and elections would be a very or fairly good thing were significantly more likely to vote for Labour, National or New Zealand First compared with the Greens.

Respondents who considered that having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country is a very or fairly good thing were significantly more likely to vote for National compared with respondent who reported that they would vote for the Greens or Labour.

The choice of party did not have any significant relationship with respondents who considered that having the army rule or a democratic political system would be a good thing.

Respondents' views on the types of governance systems were also compared with their political preference (Table 9).

**Table 9: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who stated governance systems would be a very good or fairly good way of governing this country\***

Governance systems	Voting choice					
	Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre right	Right	Don't know
Strong leader	26.4	19.2	25.9	26.0	27.6	25.1
Experts	45.1	35.4	45.0	46.7	49.0	48.1
Army	18.5	6.7	12.0	9.4	16.0	13.4
Democracy	84.1	96.7	92.2	95.0	88.6	91.4

\* Respondents were asked about each governance system in turn. Accordingly, respondents could report that more than one governance system would be a very or fairly good way of governing this country.

Respondents who considered their political preference to be centre were significantly more likely to report that having a strong leader who does not have to bother with Parliament and elections was a very or fairly good thing compared with respondents who considered their political preference to be centre-left.

Respondents whose political preference was centre, centre-right or right were all significantly more likely to agree that having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country is a very or fairly good thing compared with respondents whose political preference was centre-left.

Respondents whose political preference was left, centre or right were all significantly more likely to report that it would be a very or fairly good thing to have the army rule compared with respondents whose political preference was centre-left. Respondents whose political preference was left were also significantly more likely to consider it would be a very or fairly good thing to have the army rule compared with respondents whose political preference was centre-right.

Respondents who considered themselves to be left were significantly less likely to agree that having a democratic political system is a very or fairly good thing compared with respondents who considered themselves centre-left, centre and centre-right. Respondents who considered themselves right were also less likely to agree that having a democratic political system is a very or fairly good thing compared with respondents who considered themselves centre-left. Centre-left respondents were significantly more likely to agree with having a democratic political system compared with respondent who considered themselves centre.

## The responsibilities of government

Respondents' views about the responsibilities of central government and the influence the public has over government were sought.

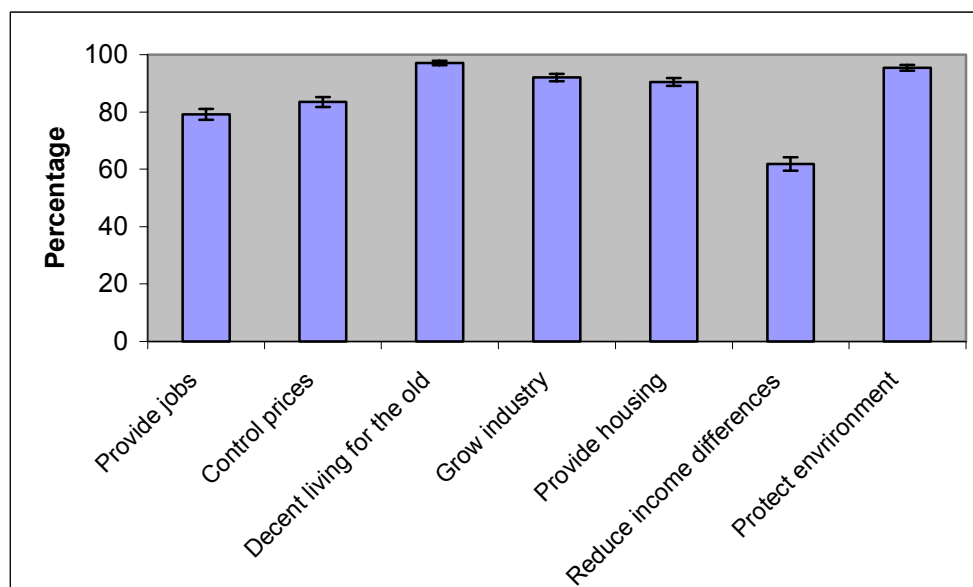
### Responsibilities and responsiveness of central government

The question was asked whether it definitely should be, probably should be, probably should not be, or definitely should not be the responsibility of the central government to:

- provide a job for everyone
- keep prices under control
- provide a decent standard of living for the old
- provide industry with the help it needs to grow
- provide decent housing for those who can't afford it
- reduce income differences between rich and poor
- impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment

Figure 14 shows the percentages of respondents who stated it definitely or probably should be the responsibility of central government for a number of areas.

**Figure 14: Percentage of respondents who stated it definitely or probably should be central government's responsible to help in various roles**



More people considered that providing a decent standard of living for the old (97%) and legislating to prevent industry damaging the environment (95%) definitely or probably should be the responsibility of central government than the other areas asked about. Over 80% of respondents considered that it definitely or probably should be central government's responsible to help keep prices under control, provide industry with the help it needs to grow and provide decent housing for those who can't afford it. Seventy-nine percent of respondents considered that it definitely or probably

should be central government’s responsibility to help provide a job for everyone and 62% considered it definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help reduce income differences between rich and poor.

The age of respondents had some relationship with their views relating to the responsibilities of central government. Respondents aged 18-24 years were significantly more likely than older age groups to consider it definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help in a number of areas, specifically: to help provide a job for everyone who wants one (compared with respondents aged 45-54 years); to help keep prices under control (compared with respondents aged 35-44, 45-54 and 65+ years); and to help reduce income differences between rich and poor (compared with respondents aged 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65+ years).

**Table 10: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who stated it definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help in various roles**

Statement	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Wouldn't vote	Don't know
Provide a job for everyone	76.1	81.2	74.0	85.1	76.1	82.6
Keep prices under control	86.3	87.2	75.2	84.6	84.1	87.7
Provide a decent standard of living for the old	98.4	98.1	95.7	99.1	95.1	97.5
Provide industry with the help it needs to grow	89.4	91.7	92.8	92.6	93.5	93.1
Provide decent housing for those who can't afford it	97.0	93.0	85.1	92.9	87.2	92.0
Reduce income differences between rich & poor	76.5	68.8	49.1	71.2	51.0	65.8
Impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment	94.0	97.8	93.5	95.7	97.6	93.8

Both Labour and New Zealand First supporters were significantly more likely to consider that it definitely or probably should be central government’s role to help provide a job for everyone who wants one, compared to National supporters.

Respondents who stated that they would vote for the Greens, Labour, or New Zealand First were all significantly more likely to report that it definitely or probably should be central government’s role to help: keep prices under control; provide decent housing for those who can’t afford it; and reduce income differences between rich and poor compared with National supporters.

Respondents who stated that they would vote for Labour were significantly more likely to report that it definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help provide a decent standard of living for the old (compared with National supporters) and impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment (compared with Greens and National supporters).

The political party that respondents stated that they would vote for had no relationship with their views about central government’s responsibility to provide industry with the help it needs to grow.

The reported political preference of respondents and perceived responsibilities of central government are detailed in Table 11.

**Table 11: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who stated it definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help in various roles**

Statement	Political preference					
	Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right	Don't know
Provide a job for everyone	83.6	78.2	80.8	73.2	76.5	82.7
Keep prices under control	90.6	87.1	83.4	75.0	82.4	88.6
Provide a decent standard of living for the old	97.2	97.3	97.6	94.9	97.7	97.2
Provide industry with the help it needs to grow	93.5	91.0	92.7	90.5	93.8	92.5
Provide decent housing for those who can't afford it	90.4	94.3	91.1	87.2	89.0	87.7
Reduce income differences between rich & poor	74.7	68.0	61.5	51.3	64.8	63.4
Impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment	96.6	96.6	96.1	92.6	95.3	94.3

Overall, left-oriented respondents considered that central government had more responsibility to help in various roles.

Respondents whose political preference was either left or centre were significantly more likely to consider that it definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help provide a job for everyone who wants one compared with respondents whose political preference was centre-right.

Respondents whose political preference was left, centre-left or centre were significantly more likely to report that it should definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help keep prices under control than those whose political preference was centre-right.

Centre-left respondents were significantly more likely to report it definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility to help provide decent housing for those who can’t afford it compared with centre-right respondents.

When asked about reducing income differences between rich and poor, respondents who considered themselves left were significantly more likely to agree that this definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility compared with respondents who considered themselves either centre or centre-right. Respondents who considered themselves to be either centre-left or centre were significantly more likely to agree that this definitely or probably should be central government’s responsibility compared with respondents who considered themselves centre-right.

Both centre-left and centre respondents were significantly more likely to report it definitely or probably should be central government's responsibility to help impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment compared with centre-right respondents.

No significant differences existed between the political preferences of respondents who considered it definitely or probably should be central government's responsibility to help provide a decent standard of living for the old or to help provide industry with the help it needs to grow.

### **People's influence on government**

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the level of influence the public or average person can have on government. They were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- the public has little control over what politicians do in office
- the average person can get nowhere by talking to public officials
- the average person has considerable influence on politics
- the average person has much to say about running government
- the average person has a great deal of influence on government decisions
- the government is generally responsive to public opinion
- I am usually interested in elections

The level of influence respondents' perceived the public or average person had on government was generally not high. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) agreed that the public has little control over what politicians do in office and approximately half the respondents (49%) agreed that the average person can get nowhere by talking to public officials. Only one in four respondents (24%) agreed that the average person has considerable influence on politics, 19% agreed that the average person has a great deal of influence on government decisions, and approximately half the respondents (49%) agreed that the government is generally responsive to public opinion. Thirty-eight percent of respondents agreed that the average person has much to say about running government and over three-quarters (79%) agreed that they were usually interested in elections.

Perception of responsiveness of government was different by age group (Table 12).

**Table 12: Percentage of respondents in each age group who agreed with statements about the responsiveness of government**

Statement	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
The public has little control over what politicians do in office	73.0	79.2	72.2	74.8	74.6	73.7
The average person gets nowhere talking to public officials	47.4	50.6	51.3	46.9	50.3	51.6
The average person has considerable influence on politics	31.8	22.3	20.0	21.4	22.3	25.5
The average person has much to say about running the government	44.8	46.5	38.7	33.4	30.0	32.6
The average person has a great deal of influence on the government	24.4	21.9	15.9	16.4	13.4	17.5
The government is generally responsive to public opinion	56.0	47.2	46.5	51.0	43.8	44.7
I am usually interested in elections	64.0	77.7	77.6	85.1	86.3	86.8

While there were no significant differences by age among respondents who agreed that the public has little control over what politicians do in office or that the average person can get nowhere by talking to public officials, younger respondents (aged 18-24 years) were generally more optimistic than older age ranges about the influence of the public on government. Younger respondents were significantly more likely to agree that: the average person has considerable influence on politics; the average person has a great deal of influence on government decisions; and the government is generally responsive to public opinion.

When it came to the statement ‘the average person has much to say about running the government’, younger respondents (aged 18-24 and 25-34 years) were significantly more likely to agree compared with older respondents.

Younger respondents (aged 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44 years) were generally less likely to be interested in elections compared with older respondents.

Respondents’ views about government responsiveness differed depending on the political party of choice (Table 13).

**Table 13: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who agreed with statements about the responsiveness of government**

Statement	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Would not vote	Don't know
The public has little control over what politicians do in office	78.1	69.5	79.2	79.6	71.9	73.0
The average person gets nowhere talking to public officials	52.8	40.0	54.1	57.7	56.0	57.0
The average person has considerable influence on politics	19.6	32.8	19.6	15.4	16.0	16.8
The average person has much to say about running the government	41.3	41.4	33.7	44.9	30.3	30.7
The average person has a great deal of influence on the government	9.1	23.4	17.7	13.2	12.4	14.5
The government is generally responsive to public opinion	50.1	62.1	43.0	32.9	40.0	43.5
I am usually interested in elections	73.7	82.7	80.8	73.8	52.3	78.8

Labour supporters were generally the most optimistic about the ability of the public or average person to influence the government. They were significantly more likely than the supporters of the other leading parties to agree that: the average person has considerable influence on politics; the average person has a great deal of influence on government decisions; and the government is generally responsive to public opinion.

National supporters were significantly more likely to agree that the average person has a great deal of influence on government decisions compared with supporters of the Greens. Greens supporters were significantly more likely to agree that the government is generally responsive to public opinion compared with New Zealand First Supporters.

Labour supporters were generally less likely to agree with negative statements about the influence the public or average person had on government. Respondents who stated that they would vote for Labour were significantly less likely to agree that: the public has little control over what politicians do in office (compared with National supporters) and that the average person can get nowhere by talking to public officials (compared with Greens, National and New Zealand First supporters).

Both respondents who stated that they would vote for Labour and those who stated that they would vote for New Zealand First were significantly more likely to agree that the average person has much to say about running government compared with respondents who stated that they would vote for National. Respondents who stated that they would vote for Labour were significantly more likely to agree with the statement 'I am usually interested in elections' compared with respondents who stated that they would vote for New Zealand First.

Agreement with the statements was compared with political preference (Table 14).

**Table 14: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who agreed with statements about the responsiveness by government**

Statement	Political preference					
	Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right	Don't know
The public has little control over what politicians do in office	66.0	67.2	75.7	75.7	81.1	77.7
The average person gets nowhere talking to public officials	54.5	40.9	48.5	51.1	61.4	59.9
The average person has considerable influence on politics	28.0	27.8	23.8	23.1	26.8	20.2
The average person has much to say about running the government	43.2	41.8	38.2	32.4	34.0	37.4
The average person has a great deal of influence on the government	19.0	18.4	18.8	15.8	28.5	15.6
The government is generally responsive to public opinion	51.6	58.4	48.0	45.8	51.6	38.7
I am usually interested in elections	72.5	86.2	76.9	82.5	75.1	72.5

Respondents with right-leaning political preferences were significantly more likely than those with left-leaning political preferences to agree that the public has little influence over government.

Respondents, who considered themselves to be centre, centre-right or right were significantly more likely to agree that the public has little control over what politicians do in office compared with respondents who considered themselves to be centre-left. Respondents who considered themselves to be right were also more likely to agree with this statement compared with respondents who considered themselves to be left.

Left, centre, centre-right and right respondents were all significantly more likely to agree that the average person can get nowhere by talking to public officials compared with centre-left respondents. Respondents who considered themselves to be right were also significantly more likely to agree with this statement compared with respondents who considered themselves to be centre.

Respondents who considered themselves to be right were significantly more likely to agree that the average person has a great deal of influence on government decisions compared with respondents who considered themselves centre-right.

Centre-left respondents were significantly more likely to agree that the government is generally responsive to public opinion compared with centre and centre-right respondents.

Centre-left respondents were significantly more likely to agree that the average person has much to say about running government compared with centre-right respondents. Centre-left respondents were also significantly more likely to agree with the statement 'I am usually interested in election' compared with left, centre and right respondents.

There were no significant differences by political preference of the respondents who agreed that the average person has considerable influence on politics.

## Taking political action

The New Zealand Values Survey explored whether respondents had been involved in political action and whether they were a member of a political party.

### Participation in political action

Respondents were asked about different types of political action. For each one they were asked whether they had actually done it, whether they might do it, or whether they would never, under any circumstances, do it. The forms of political action were as follows:

- signing a petition
- joining in boycotts
- attending lawful demonstrations
- joining unofficial strikes
- occupying buildings or factories

The percentages of respondents who stated that have done, might do, or would never do these types of political action are detailed in Table 15.

**Table 15: Percentage of respondents who reported that they have done, might do or would never do various forms of political action**

Level of participation	Political action				
	Signing a petition	Joining in boycotts	Attending lawful demonstrations	Joining unofficial strikes	Occupying buildings or factories
Have done	77.5	16.9	21.4	8.5	2.6
Might do	16.6	45.0	39.3	33.1	16.7
Would never do	5.9	38.1	39.4	58.4	80.8

Approximately three-quarters of respondents (78%) reported that they had signed a petition, while a further 17% reported that they might do. Fewer respondents reported that they have joined or might join in boycotts (17% and 45% respectively), or attended or might attend lawful demonstrations (21% and 39% respectively). The majority of respondents reported that they would never join in an unofficial strike (58%) or occupy a building or factory (81%).

There were a number of significant differences in the responses given depending on age (Table 16). These are described below for respondents who reported that they had participated in a particular type of political action. (Please note that results are not reported for respondents who said that they might do or would never be involved in a particular type of political action).

**Table 16: Percentage of respondents in each age group who had participated in political action**

Political action	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
<i>Signing a petition</i> Have done	68.0	79.3	81.5	80.9	79.8	78.3
<i>Joining in boycotts</i> Have done	12.7	14.5	22.5	17.8	17.3	15.3
<i>Attending lawful demonstrations</i> Have done	17.0	20.7	23.2	24.5	22.9	19.9
<i>Joining unofficial strikes</i> Have done	6.0	7.4	6.7	10.2	11.1	10.6
<i>Occupying buildings or factories</i> Have done	5.3	2.4	2.7	2.0	0.7	0.7

Younger respondents (18-24 years) were less likely to have participated in political action compared with the older age ranges. Specifically, respondents aged 18-24 years were significantly less likely to have: signed a petition (compared with all other age groups); joined in boycotts (compared with respondents aged 35-44 years); attended lawful demonstrations (compared with respondents aged 35-44 and 45-54 years); joined unofficial strikes (compared with respondents aged 45-54, 55-64 and 65+ years); or occupied buildings or factories (compared with respondents aged 45-54 years).

Respondents aged 35-44 years were also significantly more likely to report that they had joined in boycotts compared with respondents aged 25-34 and 65+ years.

Political action was also considered by political party (Table 17).

**Table 17: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who had participated in political action**

Political action	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Wouldn't vote	Don't know
<i>Signing a petition</i> Have done	81.5	75.1	77.8	75.6	74.3	80.0
<i>Joining in boycotts</i> Have done	36.5	18.8	9.9	17.0	16.8	11.1
<i>Attending lawful demonstrations</i> Have done	44.6	25.1	12.8	10.8	20.8	14.7
<i>Joining unofficial strikes</i> Have done	14.7	9.8	4.7	9.8	8.0	8.2
<i>Occupying buildings or factories</i> Have done	14.0	1.6	0.6	1.8	4.1	2.7

Supporters of the Greens were generally the most politically active compared to the other political parties. Supporters of the Greens were significantly more likely to state that they had: joined in a boycott; attended a lawful demonstration; joined in unofficial strikes (compared to supporters of National); or occupied a building or factory (compared to supporters of Labour).

Respondents who reported that they would vote for Labour and New Zealand First and those who reported that they would not vote were generally more likely to have participated in political action compared with respondents who reported that they would vote for National.

No other significant differences between political action and political party and were found.

The political preference of respondents was also associated with the level of political action the respondents had taken part in. Refer to Table 18.

**Table 18: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who had participated in political action**

Political action	Political preference					
	Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right	Don't know
<i>Signing a petition</i> Have done	69.3	82.0	77.4	79.8	68.6	74.9
<i>Joining in boycotts</i> Have done	20.8	25.7	14.9	14.4	13.5	15.1
<i>Attending lawful demonstrations</i> Have done	19.7	35.5	20.1	16.7	15.0	14.4
<i>Joining unofficial strikes</i> Have done	12.0	12.3	7.8	4.6	12.9	8.7
<i>Occupying buildings or factories</i> Have done	5.9	4.1	1.8	1.3	6.4	2.1

Respondents who stated their political preference to be centre-left were generally the most politically active compared with respondents of other political preferences. They were significantly more likely to have: signed a petition (compared with respondents who stated their political preference to be left or right); joined in a boycott (compared with centre, centre-right and right respondents); attended a lawful demonstration (compared with respondents who stated their political preference to be left, centre, centre-right or right); or joined an unofficial strike (compared with respondents who stated their political preference to be centre or centre-right).

Centre-right respondents were significantly more likely to have signed a petition compared with right respondents. Respondent who stated their political preference was left, centre or right were also significantly more likely to have joined an unofficial strike compared with centre-right respondents.

## **Member of a political party**

Respondents were asked whether they were an active member, an inactive member or not a member of a political party. Four percent of respondents reported that they were an active member, 13% reported that they were an inactive member and 83% reported that they were not a member of a political party.

### Age

Age was not generally associated responses given by respondents to this question. Although respondents aged 65+ years were significantly more likely to report that they were an inactive member of a political party compared with respondents aged 18-24 years.

### Political party

Respondents who stated that they would vote for the Greens were significantly more likely to report that they were an active member of a political party compared with respondents who stated that they would vote for Labour or National.

National supporters were significantly more likely to report that they were an inactive member of a political party compared with Labour supporters. Labour supporters were significantly more likely to report that they were not a member of a political party compared with National supporters.

### Political preference

There was no significant difference in the political preference of respondents who reported that they were an active member of a political party.

Respondents who considered their political preference to be right were significantly more likely to report that they were an inactive member of a political party compared with respondents who considered their political preference to be left, centre-left, centre or centre-right.

Conversely, respondents who considered themselves to be centre-left, centre and centre-right were significantly more likely to report that they were not a member of a political party compared with respondents who considered themselves to be right.

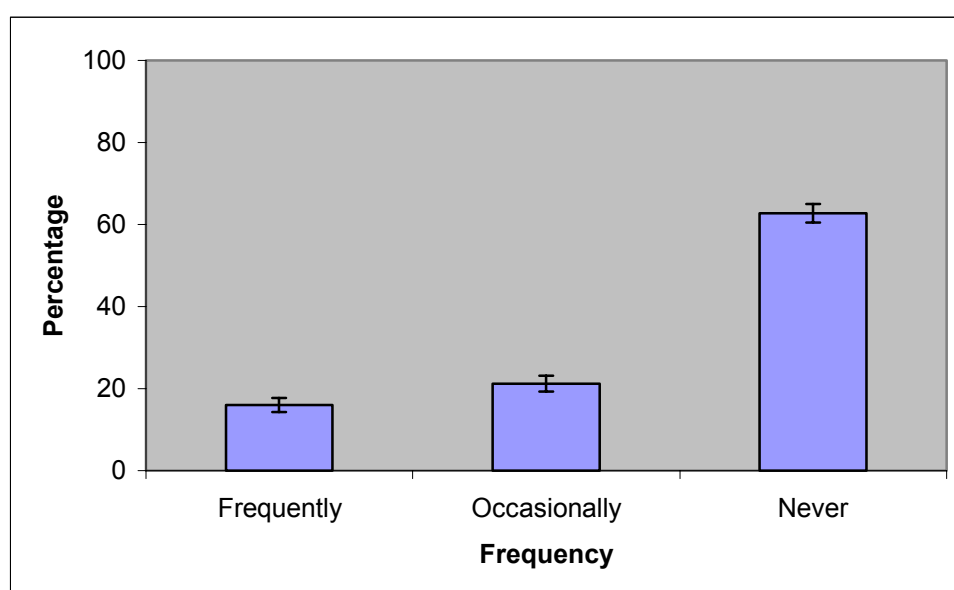
## Interest in politics

The interest respondents had in politics was asked about in the New Zealand Values Survey. Specifically, questions considered participation in discussions about politics, the frequency of following politics in the media, and the level of interest in politics.

### Political discussion

Respondents were asked: ‘When you get together with your friends, would you say you discuss political matters frequently, occasionally or never’ (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Percentage of respondents who discuss political matters frequently, occasionally or never**



Sixteen percent of respondents reported that they discuss political matters frequently when they get together with their friends. Twenty-one percent reported that they discuss political matters occasionally and 63% reported that they discuss political matters never.

Age was not significantly related to likelihood of discussing political matters frequently. However, it was related to reports of discussing political matters occasionally or never (Table 19).

**Table 19: Percentage of respondents in each age group who discuss political matters frequently, occasionally or never**

Frequency	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Frequently	14.0	17.5	14.7	15.1	16.5	20.1
Occasionally	51.3	62.0	65.9	70.9	67.0	61.4
Never	34.7	20.5	19.4	14.0	16.4	18.4

Younger respondents (aged 18-24 years) were significantly less likely to report that they discussed politics occasionally and significantly more likely to report that they never discussed politics compared with older respondents.

When considering the relationship with respondents' voting choice, the frequency with which political matters were discussed differed only in that National supporters were significantly more likely to report that they discussed politics frequently compared with Labour supporters. There were no other significant differences when considering the political party respondents would vote for.

The political preference of respondents, however, was related to their level of political discussion (Table 20).

**Table 20: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who discuss political matters frequently, occasionally or never**

Frequency	Political preference					
	Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right	Don't know
Frequently	25.1	19.7	13.2	18.6	21.8	12.8
Occasionally	45.5	66.1	64.0	67.0	59.9	54.8
Never	29.4	14.3	22.9	14.5	18.3	32.4

Respondents who considered themselves to be centre did not discuss political matters as frequently as those who considered themselves left, centre-left, centre-right or right.

Respondents whose political preference was centre-left, centre or centre-right were significantly more likely to report discussing political matters occasionally compared with respondents whose political preference was left.

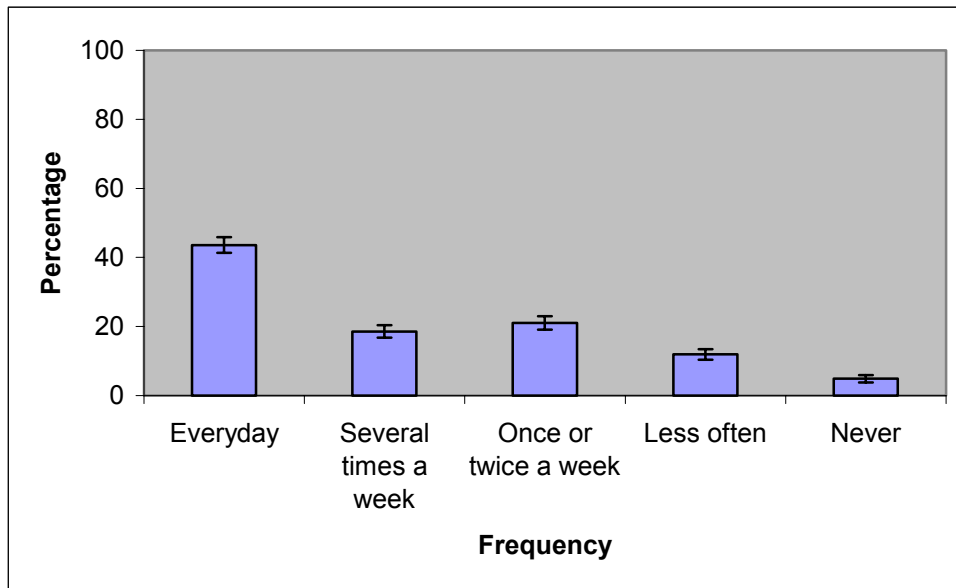
Finally, respondents who considered their political preference either left or centre were significantly more likely to report that they never discussed political matters compared with respondents who considered their political preference centre-left or centre-right.

### **Follow politics**

Respondents were asked about how often they followed politics in the news on television or on the radio or in the daily papers. The response options given were: every day, several times a week, once or twice a week, less often, or never.

Figure 16 below details the proportions of responses.

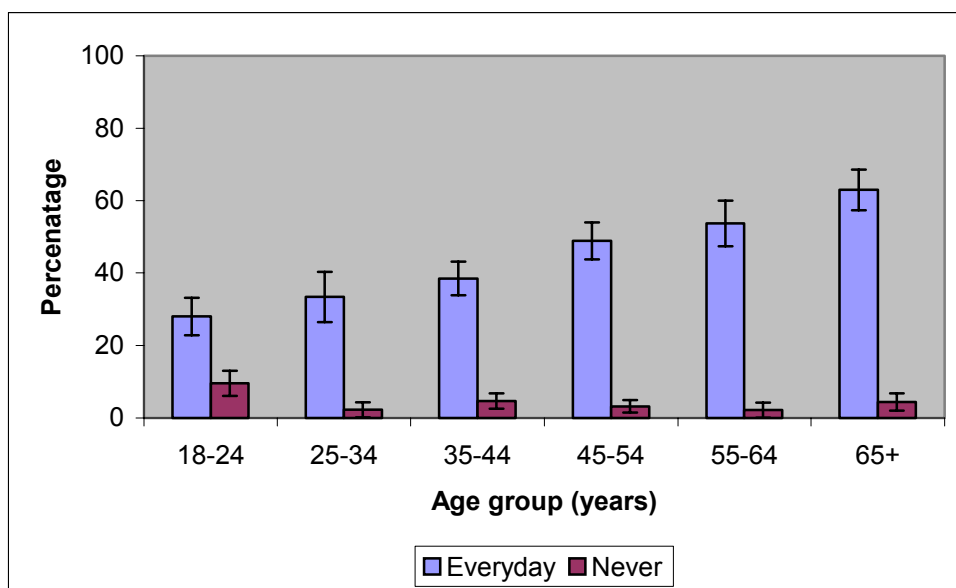
**Figure 16: Percentage of respondents who follow politics in the news**



Nearly two-thirds of respondents (62%) followed politics in the news either everyday or several times a week. Twenty-one percent of respondents followed politics once or twice a week, while 12% of respondents followed it less often than this. Five percent of respondents reported that they never followed politics in the news.

Focusing on respondents that reported they followed politics in the news everyday and those that reported they never followed politics, age did have some relationship with results. Details are shown in Figure 17.

**Figure 17: Percentage of respondents in each age group who reported they followed politics in the news everyday and never**



Older respondents (aged 45-54, 55-64 and 65+ years) were significantly more likely to report that they followed politics in the news everyday compared with younger respondents (aged 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44 years). In contrast, respondents aged 18-24 years were significantly more likely to report that they never followed politics in the news compared with respondents from all older age ranges.

The political party that respondents reported that they would vote for was not significantly related to the extent that they followed politics in the news.

The political preference of respondents was not significantly related to following politics in the news everyday. However, respondents who stated their political preference to be left were significantly more likely to report that they never followed politics in the news compared with respondents who stated their political preference to be centre-left, centre or centre-right.

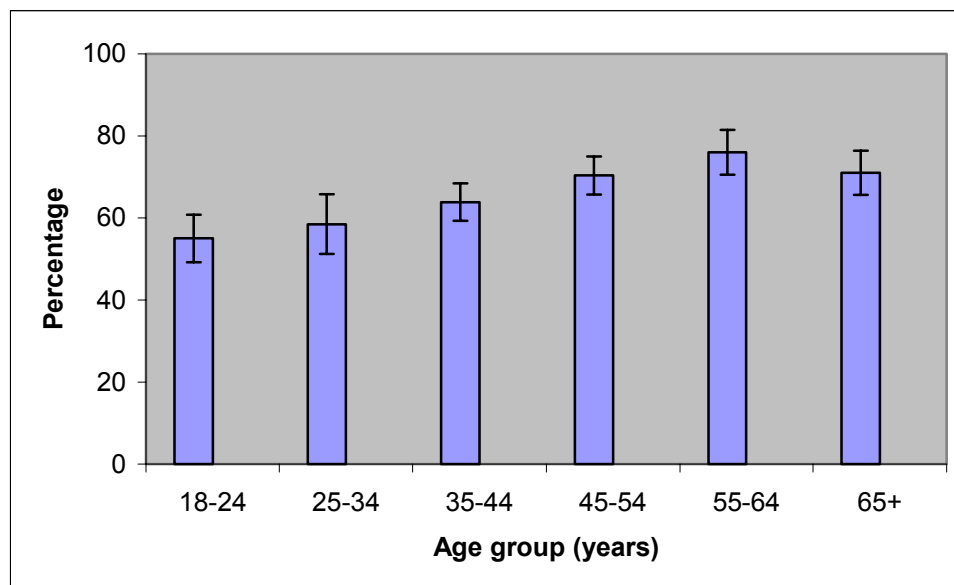
### Level of political interest

Respondents were asked how interested they were in politics. The possible response options were: very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested.

Approximately two-thirds of respondents (65%) reported that they were very or somewhat interested in politics.

Age was related to respondents' level of interest in politics. Percentages of respondents who reported that they were very or somewhat interested in politics by age are shown in Figure 18.

**Figure 18: Percentage of respondents in each age group who were very interested or somewhat interested in politics**



Older respondents were significantly more likely to report that they were very or somewhat interested in politics compared with younger respondents (aged 18-24 and 25-34 years).

The political party respondents stated they would vote for was not related to levels of interest in politics. However, the political preference was related. Respondents who considered themselves to be either centre-left or centre-right were significantly more likely to report that they were very or somewhat interested in politics compared with respondents who considered themselves to be left or centre. Centre-right respondents were also significantly more likely to report that they were very or somewhat interested in politics compared with right respondents.

## Confidence in organisations

Respondents were asked about the level of confidence they have in different organisations, institutions and the media. The response options were: a great deal of confidence; quite a lot of confidence; not very much confidence; or none at all. Percentages below reflect respondents who reported that they had a great deal of confidence or quite a lot of confidence. Confidence in organisations was considered by age, party vote and political preference.

Table 21 shows the percentages of respondents who had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the different organisations, institutions and the media (in order of level of confidence).

**Table 21: Percentage of respondents who had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in a range of organisations**

Organisation	Percentage
Police	73.9
Community organisations	73.4
Armed forces	66.2
United Nations	58.7
Public service	56.4
Major companies	54.4
Legal system	53.6
Women's movement	50.5
Local government	49.6
Government	46.9
Churches	43.3
Green or ecology movement	42.3
Parliament	41.4
Trade unions	37.4
Television	34.9
Press	34.8
Political parties	25.4

The police, community organisations and the armed forces were the organisations respondents most frequently reported they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in (74%, 73% and 64% respectively). The press, television and political parties were least frequently cited by respondents as organisation they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in (35%, 35% and 25% respectively).

There were some significant differences between age groups in the levels of confidence reported (Table 22).

**Table 22: Percentage of respondents in each age group who had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in a range of organisations**

Organisation	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Police	66.7	71.6	73.8	79.1	77.7	76.5
Community organisations	73.4	68.9	75.4	72.9	68.9	77.1
Armed forces	61.9	63.6	68.5	70.8	66.9	65.0
United nations	61.2	58.3	61.0	57.7	59.8	52.7
Public service	64.0	50.8	53.1	56.5	55.4	54.2
Major companies	56.5	54.7	50.5	57.8	59.1	48.8
Legal system	52.8	51.1	52.6	56.2	58.3	49.9
Women's movement	57.2	48.1	45.9	52.1	49.4	46.6
Local government	50.3	43.7	50.3	50.3	51.7	47.5
Government	45.1	47.3	45.5	47.8	51.1	45.5
Churches	44.3	38.1	40.3	45.5	43.2	47.5
Green or ecology movement	45.7	38.6	45.2	43.1	40.8	35.8
Parliament	40.2	40.9	40.4	43.4	47.2	37.7
Trade unions	50.6	29.9	36.9	33.5	34.6	31.5
Television	41.2	34.7	34.7	33.1	36.0	28.1
Press	31.0	35.5	33.2	36.5	39.7	36.8
Political parties	28.2	25.7	21.1	23.0	23.3	30.7

Age was associated with confidence in the following organisations: the police, community organisations, armed forces, the United Nations, the public service, major companies, the women's movement, the green or ecology movement, Parliament, trade unions, television, the press, and political parties.

All older age ranges were more likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police compared with respondents aged 18-24 years. Respondents aged 18-24 years were more likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the public service, the women's movement, trade unions, and television than the older age groups.

The political party that respondents stated they would vote for had some relationship with levels of confidence in all organisations except for the armed forces, where similar levels of confidence were found for each age group (Table 23).

**Table 23: Percentage of respondents voting for each political party who had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in a range of organisations**

Organisation	Voting choice					
	Greens	Labour	National	NZ First	Wouldn't vote	Don't know
Police	56.2	77.4	75.8	63.6	70.9	75.7
Community organisations	78.6	76.5	66.0	79.9	71.1	72.2
Armed forces	63.2	68.5	68.1	61.1	64.2	69.8
United nations	57.9	67.4	57.0	43.5	48.4	55.1
Public service	54.2	62.9	51.2	50.9	49.8	57.1
Major companies	43.2	52.0	63.0	48.6	42.6	57.7
Legal system	46.1	59.7	52.3	39.7	49.6	51.3
Women's movement	72.9	55.5	41.1	45.6	63.7	45.6
Local government	32.6	54.3	49.0	45.1	46.1	52.9
Government	43.2	67.7	34.4	34.4	31.0	39.9
Churches	27.1	44.2	45.1	41.5	34.4	42.2
Green or ecology movement	82.4	49.5	31.7	30.9	46.9	36.8
Parliament	38.5	56.4	31.5	27.3	34.1	41.0
Trade unions	37.5	48.8	24.2	41.5	33.8	34.5
Television	21.0	41.6	35.4	35.7	35.3	29.8
Press	22.5	38.1	36.5	30.8	34.4	34.8
Political parties	29.9	32.3	23.9	16.8	13.5	18.6

Supporters of the Greens were significantly more likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the green or ecology movement compared with supporters of the other major parties, but less likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in local government or the churches. Labour supporters were significantly more likely than the other major parties to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the public service, the government and Parliament. National supporters were significantly more likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in major companies and be significantly less likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in community organisations and trade unions. Similar levels of confidence were found across respondents voting for different political parties for community organisations, the armed forces, the press, and political parties.

The political preference of respondents also had some relationship with their levels of confidence in various organisations (Table 24).

**Table 24: Percentage of respondents of each political preference who had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in a range of organisations**

Organisation	Political preference					
	Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right	Don't know
Police	63.3	75.0	75.3	73.5	69.8	73.1
Community organisations	75.0	77.3	73.5	70.2	68.1	71.9
Armed forces	63.9	62.0	67.7	68.6	61.4	63.5
United nations	55.0	62.3	59.7	55.1	59.2	56.2
Public service	57.9	58.8	58.0	49.6	49.5	59.7
Major companies	48.0	48.8	54.1	59.9	59.4	56.4
Legal system	46.6	61.5	54.2	48.4	54.0	48.5
Women's movement	56.3	58.0	49.1	46.0	44.5	49.6
Local government	46.4	46.2	51.5	49.6	48.3	48.7
Government	51.3	62.2	46.8	34.4	32.9	46.4
Churches	33.0	37.0	44.9	46.4	44.2	45.6
Green or ecology movement	47.1	55.5	41.4	32.3	41.3	37.7
Parliament	31.9	56.3	40.8	34.5	33.5	39.1
Trade unions	48.8	48.3	38.9	23.2	27.6	33.7
Television	33.1	30.4	37.6	34.1	39.7	29.6
Press	35.5	36.0	36.2	32.3	34.2	30.3
Political parties	22.6	28.4	24.3	26.7	23.0	27.8

Respondents who considered themselves to be left and centre-left were significantly more likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the government, the green or ecology movement and trade unions and less likely to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the churches compared with respondents who considered themselves centre, centre-right and right. Centre-left respondents were significantly more likely than respondents of all other political preferences to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the legal system and Parliament. Similar levels of confidence were found across respondents of all political preferences for community organisations, the armed forces, the United Nations, the public service, major companies, local government, television, the press, and political parties.

## Discussion

The results of the New Zealand Values Study highlight a number of interesting areas in relation to New Zealanders' values on public life issues. This is particularly the case when considering the views of people with varying voting choices and political preferences.

### *Evaluation of governance systems*

The questions asking respondents to evaluate a number of governance systems (including having experts, not government, make decisions, having the army rule, or having a democratic political system) revealed similarities in values between the extreme left and extreme right as compared with respondents whose political preference was centre-left, centre or centre-right. While having a democratic political system was most frequently reported as being a very or fairly good way of governing this country by respondents of all political preferences, those on the left and right had less support for this than the three centre categories. Respondents on the left and right also reported more support for having experts, not government make decisions, or having the army rule as compared with the three centre categories.

### *Responsibilities of central government*

Respondents were asked to consider whether it should be the responsibility of central government to intervene in a number of areas (such as providing a job for everyone, keeping prices under control and providing a decent standard of living for the old). Results to these questions show a generally high degree of support from all respondents, irrespective of their voting choice or political preference. It appears to matter little if the respondents reported that they would vote for National or the Greens, or their political preference is left or right. Most people want the government involved in such things.

### *Responsiveness of central government*

Results of respondents' perceptions of the level of influence the public or average person can have on government show that Labour supporters were generally the most optimistic about the ability to do so. This is largely consistent with the fact that a centre-left government was in power at the time the survey was conducted, and that parties towards to the left generally have lower levels of cynicism towards government and politics.

### *Confidence in organisations*

Respondents were asked to comment on their level of confidence in a range of organisations, institutions and the media. In general movements that have traditionally been seen as being on the left (the women's movement, trade unions, and the green or ecology movement) have higher levels of confidence from respondents who consider themselves left. The centre and centre-left give highest confidence levels to governmental groups (the police, United Nations, the public service, the legal system, and government). The centre-right give highest confidence levels to the army

and the churches and the right give highest confidence levels to big companies and television.

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# Appendix 1: Method

## Design

Two samples that included people aged 18 years and over living in private residential dwellings in New Zealand with a connected landline telephone were collected. Each sample had a different version of the questionnaire. All interviews were conducted by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The samples included households with published and unpublished telephone numbers. The sample sizes were  $n=1226$  and  $n=1272$ .

## Sampling

For each sample, telephone numbers were initially selected using random digit dialling, which included connection testing to establish whether phone numbers were working telephone connections before contact was attempted. Using randomly generated phone numbers has the advantage of including both published and unpublished phone numbers therefore gaining greater coverage of the frame than using non-randomly generated, listed, telephone numbers. Selected numbers were also screened against telephone numbers that have been selected for surveys in the last six months, and against the Yellow Pages (to remove business numbers). Some other telephone numbers that did not reach private households were screened out at contact, such as businesses not in the yellow pages.

Phone numbers in each sample were distributed in proportion to the usually resident population aged 18 years and over with a landline phone across 33 area strata which, when combined, cover the whole country.

Each number was called at least ten times at different times and day of the week or until contact was made.

## Respondent selection

The number of eligible people (that is, those aged 18 and over) living in each household was established and listed so that the data collection software could select one respondent at random. Each eligible person within a household was thereby given an equal chance of being selected.

A proportion of households containing only one such person was decimated (i.e. excluded) with a fixed probability of 0.5 to reduce the design effect.

### Data collection

Data collection for the survey was carried out using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system operated by SHORE/Whariki. The CATI system is a network of 20 computer stations and a supervisor's station. The survey questions were programmed and appeared on the computer screen, and respondents' answers, given over the telephone, were coded directly into the computer. Supervisors were at any time able to observe any interview on their own screen and listen into any call without the interviewer or respondent being aware (respondents were told this might happen before the interview began). All people surveyed were asked if they would like to be interviewed by a Maori interviewer.

Where gatekeepers (the person answering the telephone) or respondents declined to take part in the survey, notes were taken on the conversation and, if deemed appropriate, these people were re-contacted by a senior interviewer who attempted to convert the 'refused' into an interview.

Data collection took place from 9 December 2004 to 24 March 2005.

### Response rate

The response rate is the number of completed interviews as a proportion of the number of telephone numbers dialled that would or did produce an eligible participant. There are a number of reasons why a call may not reach an eligible participant/household: the householders were always out or would not answer the phone, the person answering the phone refused before a respondent selection could take place, or the selected participant could not be re-contacted.

The response rate was 51%.

There is evidence of generally declining response rates in New Zealand and internationally (PEW Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004b). These are likely to reflect increased difficulty in getting both household and respondent co-operation. In the case of these current New Zealand surveys there may have been a contribution from increased internet usage using home telephone lines.

In relation to public opinion polling there is evidence of little impact on results from these declines in response rate (PEW Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004c). This has been the case when questions are asked of respondents' views on a range of economic, social and moral issues, including opinions toward government, the poor, business, immigrants, and the root causes of poverty (PEW Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004a).

### Data fusion

Two versions of the questionnaire were used. These had a few selected questions in common, but most of the substantive questions were only on one version. Data from the variables unique to each version were fused onto the other half-sample, creating a synthetic dataset with complete data for all questions.

Data fusion (Kamakura and Wedel, 1997, Gilula et al., 2004) was conducted using an unconstrained nearest neighbour matching algorithm, based on a weighted city-block distance, with penalties applied iteratively to minimise heavy donor usage. Weights for the matching variables were roughly proportional to their predictive power, based on classification trees for most of the unique variables. Specifically, the total size of all nodes split by each common variable was taken as the measure of their predictive power.

Calculating weighted means, proportions and other statistics from the fused dataset is straightforward. However standard software for analysing complex surveys will underestimate the variability of these results. This has been adjusted for here by increasing the estimated variances by a factor of 1.2848, which accounts for the increased effective weight applied to each respondent due to its use as a donor in the fusion process. However this does not account for the variability of donor usage. It is also important to realise that relationships in fused databases can be weaker than the true underlying relationships, due to regression to the mean. The degree of weakening depends on the quality of the fusion, and in particular on whether the matching variables provide a strong enough linkage. Any weakening should vanish if the unique variables are conditionally independent given the matching variables. This conditional independence assumption is implicit in the fusion process.

### Weighting

The weighting incorporated decimation and the selection of one person per household, while correcting for sample skews relative to the population broken down by age and gender. Comparison of age and gender with the Census 2001 can be found in Appendix 2.

### Analysis

Important aspects of the sample design and weighting procedures were accounted for using the SUDAAN software package (Research Triangle Institute, 2002). Different methods were used to analyse questions based on the different types of response variables recorded.

Statistical testing was done using: 1) logistic regression (for binary responses) (some variables were dichotomised for use in logistic regression); and 2) regression analysis: variables that had a scale response were analysed using regression and their mean scores have been reported. For example if respondents were asked to rate whether they feel they have completely free choice and control over their lives or whether they consider what they do has no real effect on what happens to them on a one to ten scale where one meant they had no control at all and ten meant they had a great deal of control. This type of response variable was analysed by age using regression and a mean score reported.

Data collected on the range of variables were cross-classified by age, first choice of political party, and left-right political preferences. Age was broken down into the following groups: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; and 65+. The political parties that 5% or more of respondents stated that they would vote for were used. These were: Greens, Labour, National, and New Zealand First. Respondents who reported

they ‘wouldn’t vote’ or ‘don’t know’ which party they would vote for are also detailed in the report because these responses were given by more than 5% of respondents. Left-right political preference was measured on a 1 – 10 scale. This was categorised as follows: left (1 and 2); centre-left (3 and 4); centre (5 and 6); centre-right (7 and 8); and right (9 and 10).

All differences between demographic groups were tested for statistical significance at the 5% level. Where differences are commented on in the text these were significant at the 5% level. A factor was included in the analysis to adjust for the effective sample size being less than the actual sample size (see data fusion section Appendix 1).

As is usual in the analysis of survey data, these tests only account for random sampling variation and not for any non-sampling errors (such as non-response bias or measurement error) that may be present.

Sums of percentages may not always add to 100% due to rounding.

## Appendix 2: Comparison of sample with population estimates

Tables 25 and 26 show comparisons of the unweighted sample against 2004 population estimates.

**Table 25: Comparison of age and gender of sample against 2004 population estimates**

Age	Population estimates (Dec 2004)		Sample		Difference	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
18-19	2.0%	1.9%	1.5%	1.6%	-0.5%	-0.3%
20-24	4.9%	4.7%	2.6%	4.1%	-2.3%	-0.6%
25-29	4.1%	4.3%	2.9%	4.2%	-1.2%	-0.1%
30-34	4.7%	5.1%	3.6%	6.6%	-1.1%	1.5%
35-39	4.9%	5.2%	4.6%	6.2%	-0.3%	1.0%
40-44	5.2%	5.5%	4.7%	7.5%	-0.5%	2.0%
45-49	4.7%	4.8%	4.3%	5.8%	-0.4%	1.0%
50-54	4.2%	4.2%	5.0%	5.2%	0.8%	1.0%
55-59	3.7%	3.8%	3.0%	4.6%	-0.7%	0.8%
60-64	2.9%	3.0%	2.4%	3.3%	-0.5%	0.3%
65-69	2.3%	2.4%	2.1%	3.0%	-0.2%	0.6%
70-74	1.9%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	0.2%	0.0%
75+	3.0%	4.5%	2.4%	3.7%	-0.6%	-0.8%

**Table 26: Comparison of Maori proportion of sample against 2004 population estimates**

	Population estimates (Dec 2004)	Sample	Difference
<b>Maori</b>	12.0%	13.2%	1.2%