

# Is support for aid related to beliefs about aid effectiveness in New Zealand?

Camilla Burkot

Terence Wood

## Abstract

This paper reports on public opinion about aid in New Zealand. It details overall levels of support for aid increases as well as views about the purpose of aid. It also reports in aggregate on New Zealander's views about aid effectiveness and development progress. The paper examines the correlates of support for increasing aid, as well as correlates of the belief that aid should be given primarily for the purpose of helping other countries. The paper also reports on the correlates of beliefs about aid effectiveness and development progress. Its central findings are as follows. Most New Zealanders are happy with current aid levels. Most also want New Zealand aid given primarily for the purpose of helping poor people in developing countries, rather than advancing New Zealand's interests. Academic education and left-leaning political views are clearly associated with support for more aid. Religiosity is negatively associated with support for aid increases in most models. Believing that aid is effective is also positively associated with support for aid increases. However, its effect is less than that of political ideology. Older people, people with academic education and people with left-leaning political views are more likely to want aid given to help developing countries, as are people who think aid is effective. Men are considerably less likely to want aid given for altruistic ends.

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Camilla Burkot

Terence Wood<sup>1</sup>

Camilla Burkot is a Project Officer at the Burnet Institute  
Terence Wood is a research fellow at the Australian National  
University.

Burkot, C, Wood, T 2017- "Is support for aid related to beliefs about aid  
effectiveness in New Zealand?" *Development Policy Centre Discussion  
Paper #63*, Crawford School of Public Policy, The Australian National  
University, Canberra.

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<sup>1</sup> We are both grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on this paper. We would also like to acknowledge funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (grant: OPP1112019).

# **Is support for aid related to beliefs about aid effectiveness in New Zealand?**

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years the literature studying public beliefs about government aid in donor countries has grown rapidly. However, almost no serious study has been devoted to views about government aid in New Zealand. Sophisticated experimental work on donations to NGOs has been conducted (Clark et al. 2017; Knowles & Sullivan 2017), but other than one paper studying the countries New Zealanders want aid given to (Cunningham et al. 2017, discussed further below), all that is available are simple high-level aggregates, with the most recent of these coming from 2007 (UMR Research 2007). This paper seeks to fill this gap by providing policy-makers, NGOs and researchers with detailed information on overall support for aid increases in New Zealand, as well as similar information on whether New Zealanders want aid given to help poor people in developing countries or to advance New Zealand's own interests – an issue that has been particularly contentious in New Zealand in recent years (see, for example, Spratt 2011; Spratt 2013). The paper also reports on the sociodemographic and political traits associated with differing views about aid and development.

In reporting on the analysis above, this paper provides a rich empirical understanding of New Zealanders' views about aid. It goes beyond this, however, to contribute to the broader international literature on aid by analysing whether people's views about aid are associated with their views on two closely related questions: whether they think aid works or not; and whether they think life has improved in the typical poor country in the last 15 years. These relationships have not been analysed to date in the international literature.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. First, we survey existing international work on public opinion and aid, highlighting both findings and some key gaps in existing knowledge. Then we detail the methods used in our analysis. Then we report on our results, starting first with overall aggregate findings for each of the questions of interest. In the second section of the results we look at the correlates of views about aid efficacy and improvements in poor countries. In the third section of the results we report on

correlates of support for aid increases and the belief that aid should be given primarily to help the poor.

Our key findings are:

- Most New Zealanders appear content with current aid levels.
- A clear majority of New Zealanders want aid given primarily to help people in developing countries rather than to advance New Zealand's interests.
- The majority of New Zealanders think aid is somewhat effective.
- Most New Zealanders are not confident that there has been development progress in the typical poor country in the last 15 years.
- Controlling for other variables, older New Zealanders, urban dwellers and New Zealanders with an academic education are more likely to believe that aid works. Politically, there is no obvious left-right divide in beliefs about aid effectiveness.
- Controlling for other variables, younger New Zealanders and men are more likely to believe that development progress has occurred in the last 15 years, as are religious New Zealanders. There is not a clear political divide in beliefs, but Green supporters and New Zealand First supporters are less likely to believe progress has occurred. With all other variables controlled for, there is a strong positive relationship between the belief that aid works and the belief that development progress has occurred.
- Controlling for other variables, the belief that aid is effective is clearly correlated with support for aid increases. However, interestingly, the substantive magnitude of the relationship is less than that of the relationship between left-leaning political views and support for aid increases. There is no clear relationship between beliefs about development progress and support for aid once other variables are controlled for. Academic education is positively correlated with support for aid increases. Religious belief appears to be negatively associated with support for aid increases.
- With other variables controlled for, men are much less likely to want aid focused on helping other countries than women are. On the other hand, older people are more likely to support aid being given for the sake of helping people in poor countries, as are people on the political left, people with academic educations, and people who believe aid is effective.

In the concluding sections, we discuss the ramifications of these findings.

## **2. Knowledge of public opinion about aid and unanswered questions**

The lion's share of existing work on public opinion about aid has sought to identify the correlates of support for aid and/or support for increased aid budgets. Reflecting this fact, this literature review starts by covering existing work in this area. It then looks at

the much sparser literature focused on views about aid purpose. Finally, it highlights questions which have not been covered in previous work.

## **2.1 Support for aid**

Although the literature is far from unanimous, existing international work studying public support for aid and aid increases has identified a suite of traits that are often associated with support for aid, and which might reasonably be anticipated to be associated with support for aid in New Zealand.

Much international work has found income or wealth (or similar related measures) to be positively associated with support for aid, with the more affluent being more supportive (Chong & Gradstein 2008, p. 8; Diven & Constantelos 2009, p. 128; Paxton & Knack 2012, p. 181). However this finding is not universal: Cheng and Smyth (2016, p. 61) found that in China income is negatively associated with support for economic aid. And in work on Australia, Wood (2015) found the relationship between income and views about aid to be unclear. And in other Australian work, where the unit of analysis was electoral districts rather than individuals, Wood, Humphrey-Cifuentes and Pryke (2016) actually found that wealthier electorates were less supportive of the government giving aid.

A common finding in the literature has been a positive relationship between education and support for aid (Cheng & Smyth 2016; Chong & Gradstein 2008, p. 8; Diven & Constantelos 2009, p. 128; Wood 2015; Wood et al. 2016). The only exception to this finding that we are aware of is that of Henson and Lindstrom (2013, p. 72), who found no association between education and opposition to reducing official development assistance (ODA) in the United Kingdom.

A number of existing studies have also found evidence that support for aid is higher amongst younger people. Wood et al. (2014, p. 20) and Chong and Gradstein (2008, p. 8) found younger people to be more supportive of ODA increases, as did Paxton and Knack (2012, p. 181), albeit more tentatively. Studying views on aid cuts in the United Kingdom, Henson and Lindstrom (2013, p. 72) found younger people were more likely to oppose cuts.

Different studies have found differing relationships between gender and support for aid. Paxton and Knack (2012, p. 181) found women to be more supportive of aid. However, both Chong and Gradstein (2008, p. 8) and Henson and Lindstrom (2013, p. 72) found gender to have no effect on support for aid. In Australia, Wood (2015) found that women were more supportive of aid in general, but that they were no more likely than men to favour an increased aid budget. Notably, we are not aware of any study that found men to be more supportive of aid than women.

In cross-country work, Paxton and Knack (2012, p. 181) found no relationship between the whether people stated they were religious or not and their views about aid. In his Australian study, Wood found a negative relationship between being religious and support for aid (Wood 2015). Henson and Lindstrom (2013, p. 72) found no association between being religious and opposition to cutting ODA in the United Kingdom.

In Australian work, Wood (2015) and Wood, Humphrey-Cifuentes and Pryke (2016) both found that residents of urban areas were more supportive of aid than residents of rural areas, although the findings of Wood's 2015 study suggested this finding might be a product of other views urban dwellers were more likely to hold than their urban location per se.

Most studies on opinions about ODA that have included ideology as an independent variable have found a relationship between left-leaning political views and greater support for ODA (Cheng & Smyth 2016, p. 66; Chong & Gradstein 2008, p. 8; Milner & Tingley 2010, p. 216; Milner & Tingley 2013, p. 393; Paxton & Knack 2012, p.181; Wood 2015; Wood et al. 2016).

## **2.2 The purpose of aid**

There is little research studying the public's views on what they think the purpose of aid giving should be. This is surprising given aid donors' mixed track record in this area. Although some aid is given for the sake of helping people in developing countries, there is evidence that a non-trivial share of the money that donors give to developing countries under the guise of aid is actually designed to serve donor interests rather than help promote development (Heinrich 2013; Hoeffler & Outram 2011; Wood et al. 2017). In New Zealand's case there has been considerable debate about the changing purpose

of New Zealand aid with both individual examples (Spratt 2013; Wood 2012) and more systematic evidence (Wood & Burkot 2016, p. 13) suggesting that New Zealand now devotes a share of its government aid spend to advancing its own geopolitical and economic interests.

The available literature on factors associated with beliefs about aid purpose is limited to three studies. First, Milner and Tingly (2013, p. 395) report on the preliminary results of experimental research conducted in the United States. Their findings show Republicans to be more likely than Democrats to favour aid being given in the United States' interest. Second, using Australian data and a large suite of independent variables, Wood (2015) finds few predictors of support for aid being given for developmental purposes rather than for the sake of advancing Australia's interests. However, of those variables that are in some way associated, of relevance to this study, he finds that left-leaning political views (particularly Green Party support) to be strongly and robustly associated with support for aid being focused on helping other countries, rather than advancing Australia's own interests. A third study, that of Lightfoot, Davies and Johns (2016) comes from the United Kingdom. Of relevance for our New Zealand research, this study finds little evidence of a relationship between left-leaning political views and support for aid being given for altruistic ends, although it does find an association between support for the left-leaning Liberal Democrats and giving aid for this reason. One other notable finding from this study is that support for aid given for altruistic ends is clearly positively associated with general support for aid giving.

### **2.3 Unstudied areas**

Although views on the effectiveness of overseas aid have been canvassed previously in public opinion surveys (see, for example, UMR Research 2007, pp 64-65) we are aware of no serious effort to study the correlates of beliefs in this area. Nor are we aware of any studies which have rigorously tried to ascertain whether the belief that aid works is associated with support for increased volumes of aid. The closest relevant work in this area is that of Cunningham, Knowles and Hansen, (Cunningham et al. 2017) who use a discrete choice experiment run on New Zealand university students to see which factors shape students' preferences with respect to which countries they think aid should be given to. Their findings show students' preferences are strongly influenced by country

need and also, of relevance to our work, by whether or not aid is likely to work in a particular recipient country. Although the study of Cunningham et al. focuses on preferences about where aid should be given, not preferences about whether aid should be increased or not, it suggests perhaps that support for aid increases is highest amongst those who think aid is effective. However, other experimental work has shown that evidence of NGO project efficacy has only very limited effects on people's willingness to donate to aid NGOs (Karlan & Wood 2014). Taken together, these two studies provide ambiguous evidence as to whether we should anticipate views of aid's efficacy to be strongly correlated with views about aid volume.

No serious scholarly study has focused on beliefs about development progress amongst donor country publics. There is good evidence that most aspects of life have improved in most poor countries in recent decades (Kenny 2011; Radelet 2015). Yet it should not be taken as a given that the public is aware of this progress, given that it has been slow and incremental, and often driven out of newspaper headlines by reports of conflicts and natural disasters (Radelet 2015). It is also unclear which members of the public are more likely to believe progress has occurred. The expected relationship between beliefs about development progress in poor countries and support for aid is another area that is unclear. The relationship could be negative if a belief in improvements in poor countries causes people to believe the need for aid is now less acute. On the other hand, the relationship could be positive if beliefs about an improving world are associated with a more optimistic worldview that sees further progress as possible, and which sees aid as having a role in contributing to this.

In addition to learning whether beliefs about aid effectiveness and beliefs about development progress are associated in any way with support for aid, including these beliefs in multiple regressions that have support for aid increases as the dependent variable allows us to see whether the effects of other traits are still present once these two beliefs have been controlled for. If another trait ceases to be associated with support for aid increases once views about aid effectiveness and development progress have been controlled for, it is likely that the trait in question only has an effect on support through increases via its effect on beliefs about aid effectiveness and



development progress.<sup>2</sup> If, for example, we found that left-leaning political views were associated with support for more aid but that this relationship ceased to exist when beliefs about aid effectiveness were included as an independent variable, it would be reasonable to assume that individuals with left-leaning political views are more supportive of aid increases simply because they are more likely to think aid is effective. If, on the other hand, left-leaning political views continued to be associated with support for aid increases even when the aid effectiveness variable was included, this would suggest that political views impact on support through aid via other avenues in addition to beliefs about aid effectiveness. Studying the relationship between beliefs about aid effectiveness and development progress, and views about aid can also help illuminate exactly why different types of people are more or less supportive of aid.

### **3. Methodology**

The data that this study is based on come from questions placed in an omnibus survey conducted by the New Zealand survey firm UMR Research. UMR Research is a large international survey company and has been involved in previous efforts to survey public opinion about New Zealand aid. The survey questions were asked in March 2016. The survey was conducted online but did not involve self-selection. Rather, participants were randomly selected from UMR's survey pool.<sup>3</sup> Survey weights based on socio-demographic traits were provided with the data and were used in our analysis. As a result, the sample is broadly representative of the New Zealand population. The final sample size was 1124.

The questions we asked were worded such that they provided respondents with information that that assisted people in providing informed answers. (For example, we provided information on existing aid effort.) Question wording was chosen to reflect questions that have been asked in similar surveys in Australia, as well as other questions that have been asked internationally. In the first question, information on

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<sup>2</sup> This is assuming the trait in question is also correlated with beliefs about effectiveness and/or beliefs about development progress.

<sup>3</sup> The pool has over 25,000 participants, drawn from around New Zealand.

existing aid volumes was provided so that we could be confident that mistaken beliefs about aid volumes, which might have been correlated to other traits or beliefs, were not driving our findings. The response category order for each question was randomly varied. The survey questions we asked are listed below.

*Question 1: Every year the New Zealand government gives aid money to poorer countries. Currently just under \$1 out of every \$100 of New Zealand government spending is given as aid. Which of the following options best reflects your opinion about aid spending:*

- a) The New Zealand government gives too much aid.*
- b) The New Zealand government gives about the right amount of aid.*
- c) The New Zealand government does not give enough aid.*
- d) I don't know.*

*Question 2: Do you think New Zealand government aid to poor countries should be given primarily for the purpose of helping people in poor countries, or do you think New Zealand aid should be given primarily to help advance New Zealand's commercial and strategic interests?*

- a) Strongly favour helping people in poor countries.*
- b) Favour helping people in poor countries.*
- c) Favour New Zealand's commercial and strategic interests.*
- d) Strongly favour New Zealand's commercial and strategic interests.*
- e) I don't think New Zealand should give any aid.*
- f) I don't know.*

*Question 3: Thinking about the aid that the governments of wealthier countries such as New Zealand give to poorer countries, and what this aid actually achieves, on average do you think that this aid:*

- a) Helps poor people in poorer countries a lot.*
- b) Helps poor people in poorer countries a little bit.*
- c) Makes almost no difference to the lives of poor people in poorer countries.*
- d) Makes the lives of poor people in poorer countries somewhat worse.*
- e) Makes the lives of poor people in poorer countries a lot worse.*
- f) I don't know.*

*Question 4: Think about the following statement. "In the last 15 years the lives of poor people living in the typical poor country have improved significantly." Do you think this statement is:*

- a) Completely unbelievable.*
- b) Somewhat unbelievable.*
- c) Somewhat believable.*
- d) Completely believable.*
- e) I don't know.*

UMR provided us with data from respondents' answers to questions about their sociodemographic traits (as well as additional questions we asked about religious belief). We were also provided with answers to a question about political party preference. Headline findings from the questions about aid and development are provided in the results section. Table 1 below provides summary statistics for the questions.

**Table 1 – Descriptive statistics for independent variables**

<b>Gender</b>	Male	52%
	Female	48%
<b>Academic Education</b>	Yes	43%
	No	57%
<b>Income group</b>	<\$15K	14%
	\$15-30K	21%
	\$30-50K	23%
	\$50-70K	17%
	>\$70K	25%
<b>Age</b>	Mean	47
	Max	80
	Min	19
<b>Religious</b>	No	48%
	Yes	52%
<b>Location</b>	Rural	15%
	Urban	85%
<b>Party</b>	Green (Centre-left)	15%
	Labour (Centre-left)	32%
	National (Centre-right)	41%
	NZ First (Populist/Centre-right)	8%
	Other	3%

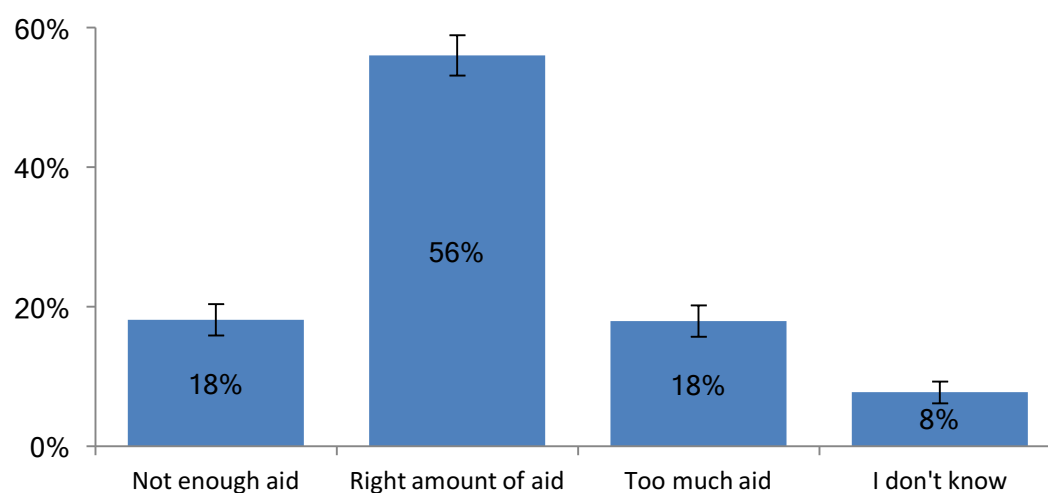
## 4. Results

This section first reports the analysis of summary results to each of the four survey questions asked, and then presents the results of regression analysis. The first section of the regression analysis examines correlates of belief in aid effectiveness and in the development progress of developing countries in the last 15 years, while the second section analyses correlates of support for increasing aid and for giving aid for the primary purpose of helping people in developing countries.

## 4.1 Overall aggregate results

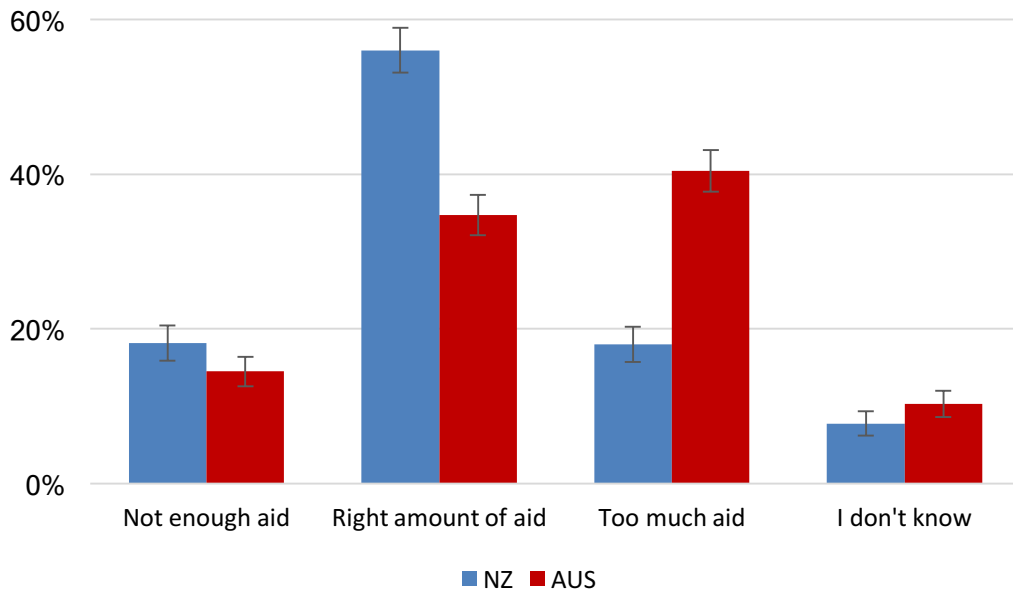
Figure 1 summarises the weighted responses to the question on aid volume, showing the majority of New Zealanders believe that the government currently spends about the right amount of aid. Equal proportions of respondents believe that not enough aid and too much aid is currently being given. These results contrast markedly with findings from Australia. As can be seen in Figure 2, data collected as part of the 2016 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (a nationally-representative survey) reveal that Australians are more than twice as likely to believe that the volume of Australian government aid is too large. Measured as a share of GNI, Australian and New Zealand ODA spending is currently equivalent (based on 2016 OECD DAC data).

**Figure 1: Aid volume, New Zealand**



*Note: Error bars in all figures indicate 95% confidence intervals.*

**Figure 2: Aid volume, New Zealand and Australia**



New Zealanders' overall preference for what their government's aid should be given for is shown in Figure 3. The results show a clear preference for aid being used to help people in poor countries, with only 21 per cent of respondents favouring the use of aid to further New Zealand's commercial and strategic interests.

**Figure 3: Aid purpose**

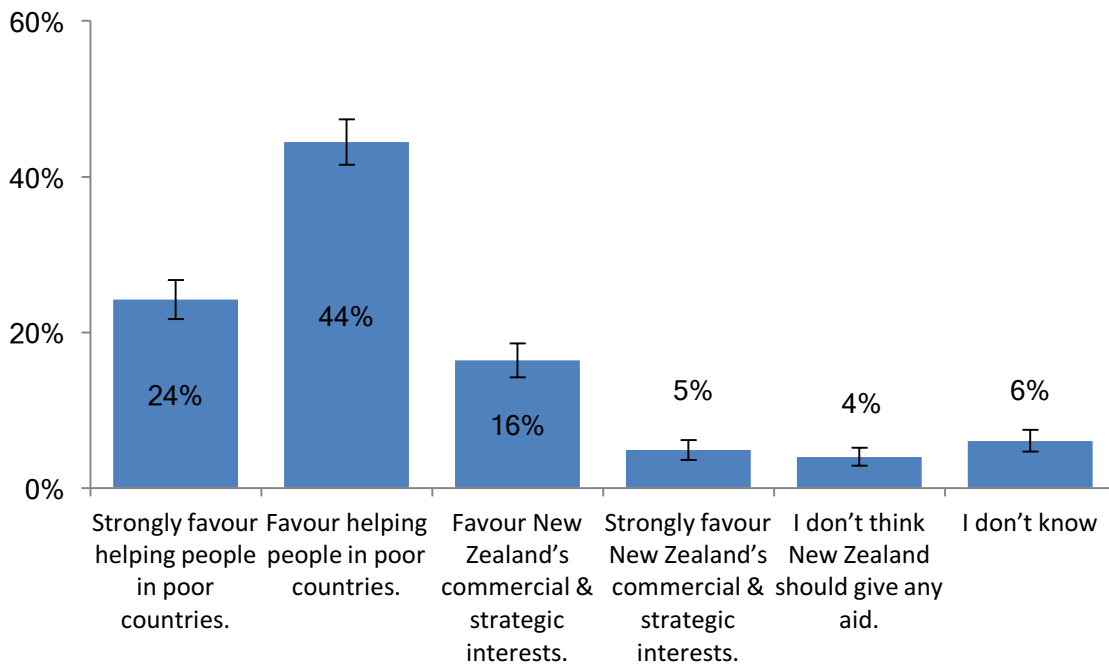
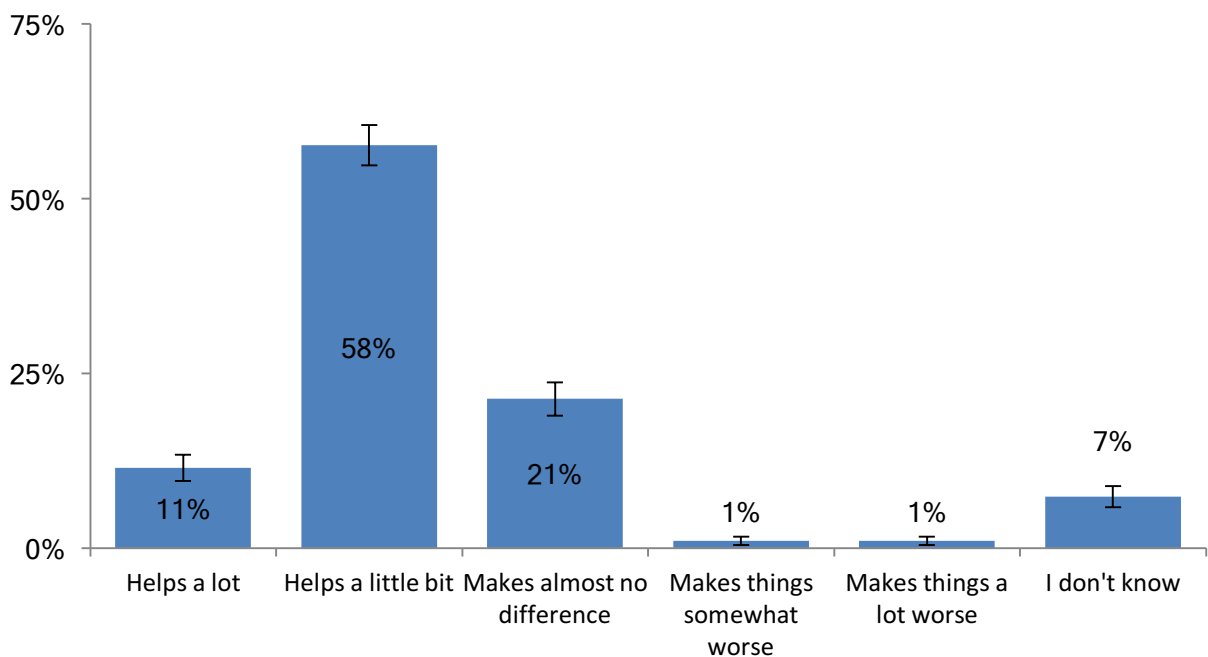


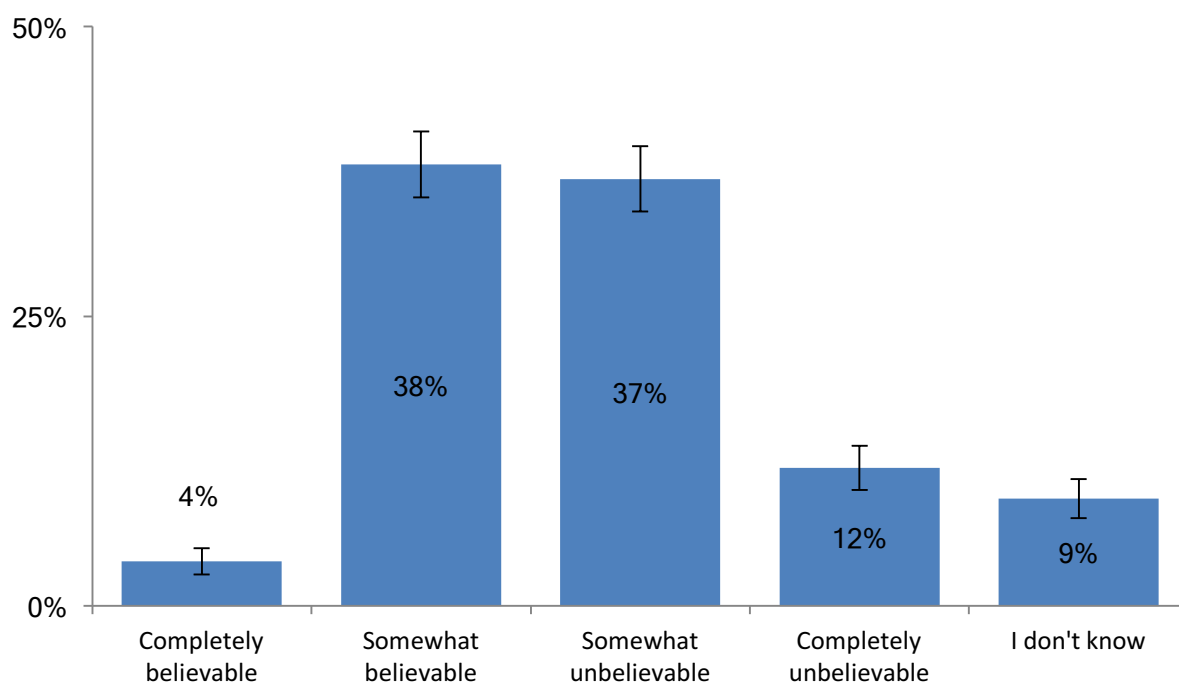
Figure 4 shows the weighted results of New Zealanders' beliefs about how effective aid is. Almost 70 per cent of New Zealanders believe that aid is effective, and just over 20 per cent believe that it makes no difference. Only two per cent of respondents believe that aid has negative effects on recipients.

By contrast to the previous three questions, which show clear majority preferences for a particular response, Figure 5 shows that respondents were more evenly split on the question of whether they thought it plausible that the lives of poor people living in developing countries have improved significantly in the last 15 years. 38 and 37 per cent of respondents found the statement somewhat believable and somewhat unbelievable, respectively. Only four per cent found it to be a completely believable statement.

**Figure 4: Aid effectiveness**



**Figure 5: Belief that lives of poor people in developing world are improving**



## 4.2 Regression results

In the following section we present the results from our regression analysis. In the first subsection we report on regressions where beliefs about aid effectiveness and development progress are the dependent variables. In the second subsection we report on regressions in which views on aid volume and views on the purpose of aid are the dependent variables. As we study beliefs about aid volume and aid purpose we include views about aid effectiveness and development progress amongst our independent variables.

### 4.2.1 Aid effectiveness and development progress

Table 2 shows the results of a series of logistic regression models in which the dependent variable was the effectiveness of New Zealand ODA in improving the lives of people in developing countries. In this table, as in all the following tables of regression results, the coefficients shown represent odds ratios, with p values shown in parentheses below the coefficients. (Readers unfamiliar with odds ratios should note that an odds ratio of greater than one indicates a positive relationship, while a ratio of less than one indicates a negative relationship.) All models excluded people who responded 'don't know' to the question of how effective aid is, rather than treating them

as neutral. Note that in all of the analysis that follows, we converted the categorical responses into binary variables. In the case of the first model this meant that responses of ‘Helps a lot’ or ‘Helps a little’ to the question about whether aid is effective were treated as one category “helps”, which was coded as one in the data. All other responses except ‘don’t know’ were combined to constitute an alternate “doesn’t help” category, coded as zero in the data. As a result, in this first set of regression results, coefficients of greater than one can be read as being associated with an increased likelihood of believing aid is effective, while coefficients of less than one are associated with a decreased likelihood of believing aid is effective.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: Logistic regression results, overall belief in aid effectiveness**

Belief that aid is effective	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Male (compared to female)	0.72* (0.07)	0.83 (0.34)	0.72 (0.10)
Age (continuous)	1.01** (0.02)	1.01** (0.03)	1.02** (0.01)
Urban (compared to rural)	1.62** (0.04)	1.56* (0.07)	1.64* (0.06)
Has academic tertiary education	1.91*** (0.00)	1.69*** (0.01)	1.48* (0.05)
\$15,000-30,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	1.24 (0.50)	1.51 (0.22)	1.31 (0.47)
\$30,001-50,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.80 (0.43)	0.88 (0.67)	0.78 (0.47)
\$50,001-70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.83 (0.53)	0.90 (0.76)	0.84 (0.63)
More than \$70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	1.79* (0.06)	1.71* (0.09)	1.64 (0.15)
Religious (compared to non-religious)	1.36* (0.09)	1.43* (0.07)	1.27 (0.24)
Labour (compared to National)		0.91 (0.68)	1.02 (0.92)
NZ First (compared to National)		0.33*** (0.00)	0.47** (0.03)
Green (compared to National)		1.09 (0.76)	1.22 (0.53)
Other (compared to National)		0.53 (0.20)	0.68 (0.43)
Believe poor lives have improved			2.61*** (0.00)
Constant	0.77 (0.51)	0.86 (0.73)	0.54 (0.21)
n	846	783	743

P values in parentheses \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

<sup>4</sup> In instances where categories had a clear order, as robustness tests we ran ordered logistic regressions. Doing this rarely changed results in a substantive manner. These robustness tests, along with others, can be obtained by emailing the authors.

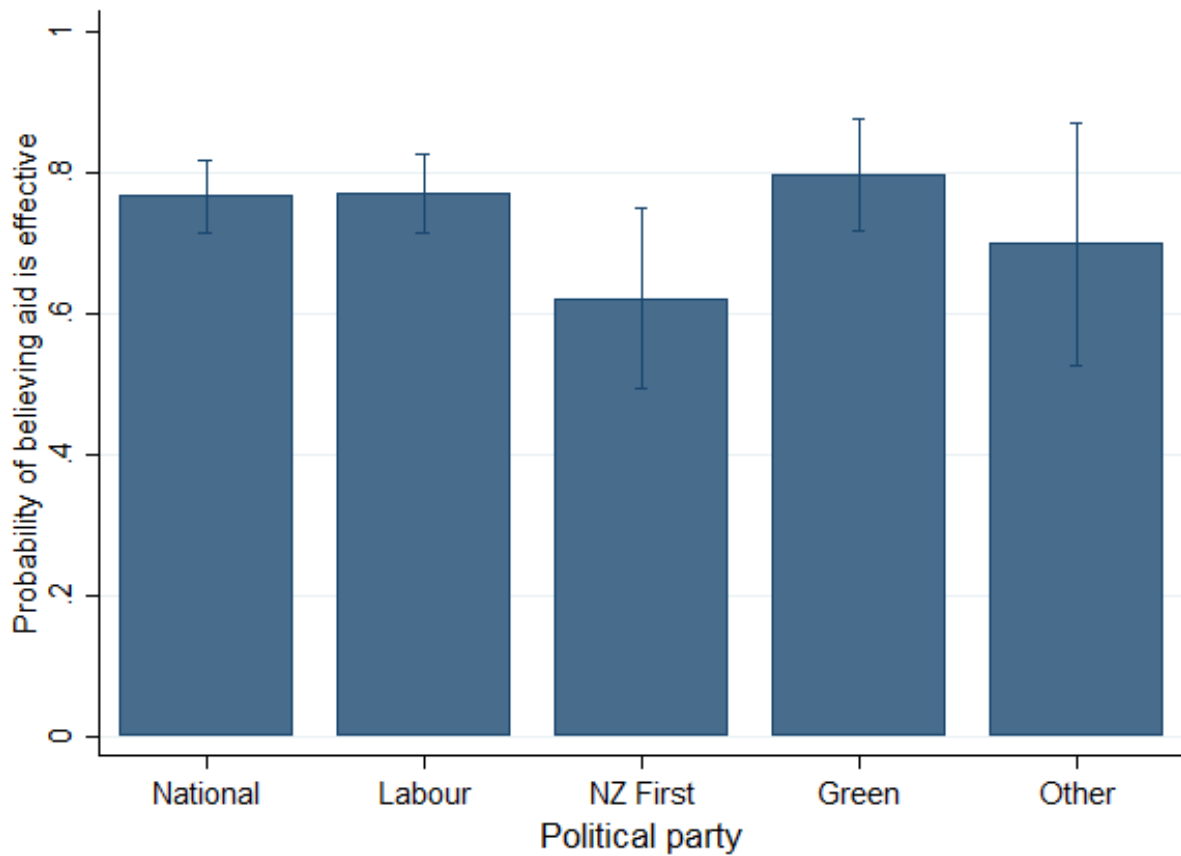


The results show that being older, living in an urban area, and having an academic tertiary education are all consistently associated with belief in the effectiveness of aid. As discussed in previous research (Wood 2015), we think it unlikely that it is urbanism *per se* that makes respondents more likely to believe in the effectiveness of aid; but rather that the kinds of attitudes and political beliefs that would predispose someone to more positive views about aid are more common in urban areas.

Below, we use margins plots based on the most comprehensive regression model used above (Model 3) to provide illustrative estimates of the magnitude of the effects of some of the variables that were statistically significant in each of our models. In all of the margins plots shown in this paper the y-axes are probabilities – specifically the probability of a positive answer to the question – associated with the different categories shown on the x-axis.

Figure 6 below shows the impact that different political party affiliations have on the probability of believing that aid is effective. Interestingly, there does not appear to be any relationship between specific political affiliation and belief in aid effectiveness except for NZ First voters, who are significantly less likely to believe that aid achieves its intended effects. It shows the average probability of a NZ First voter believing that aid is effective would be 62 per cent (after holding constant the effects of other traits associated with voting for NZ First) – the lowest probability of all political party affiliations. There are no statistically significant differences between any other political party affiliations and differences in beliefs about whether aid is effective or not.

**Figure 6: Political party and belief that aid is effective**



There is, however, a clear association between believing that development progress has occurred in the last 15 years and believing that aid is effective. The effect is shown in the Figure 7 below. It shows that, with other traits controlled for, there is an 84 per cent average probability that a New Zealander who believes that the lives of the poor have improved significantly in the last 15 years would also believe that aid is effective. This is noticeably higher than the probability associated with someone who does not believe that development progress has occurred.

**Figure 7: Belief in improvement of poor lives and belief that aid is effective**

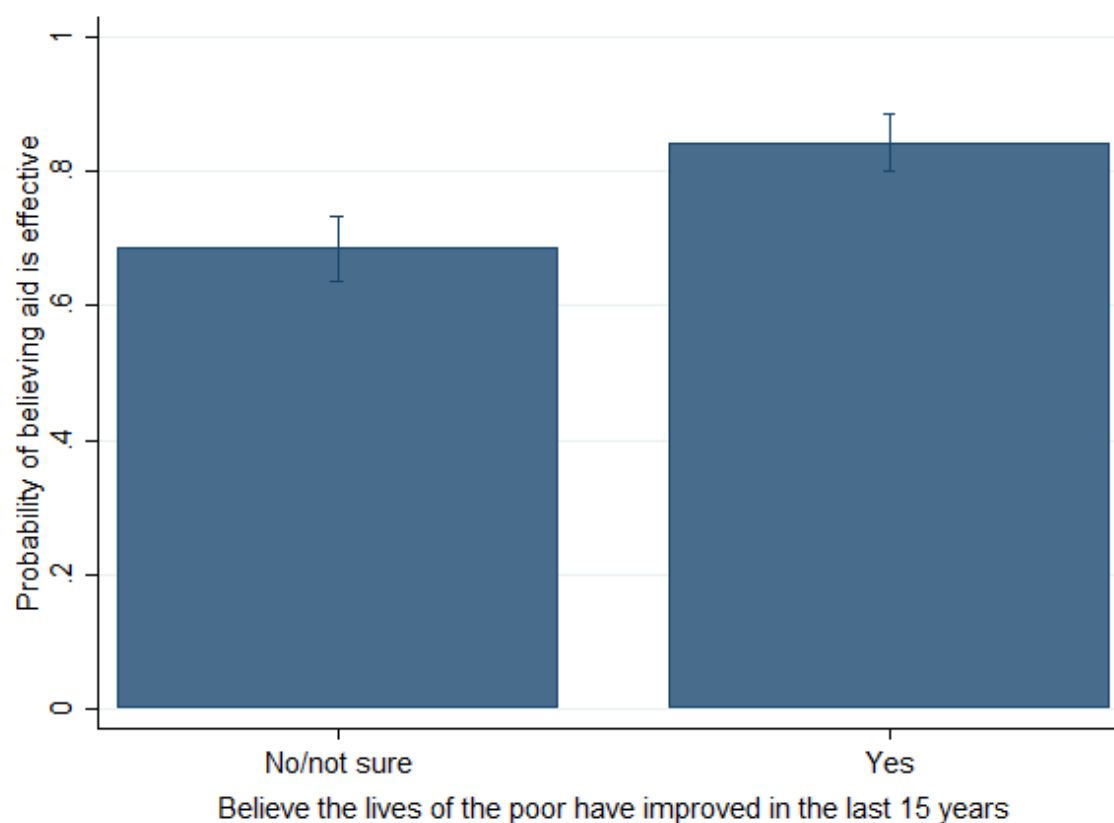


Table 3 shows the results of logistic regressions run where the dependent variable is now drawn from the question about whether the lives of poor people in developing countries have improved significantly over the last 15 years. Responses of 'somewhat believable' and 'completely believable' were coded as one. As in Table 2, the results shown in Table 3 are odds ratios with p values in parentheses.

Across all three models, men and people who self-identify as religious are significantly more likely to believe that the lives of poor have improved, while older people are significantly more likely to take a pessimistic view about the improvement in living standards in developing countries, all other factors being equal.

Similar to beliefs about aid effectiveness, removing the effects of other variables, based on Model 3 we find the average probability that a NZ First voter would believe that the lives of people in developing countries have improved significantly in the last 15 years is notably lower than that associated with National and Labour voters (Figure 8).

Interestingly, although Green voters were no less likely to believe that aid was effective,

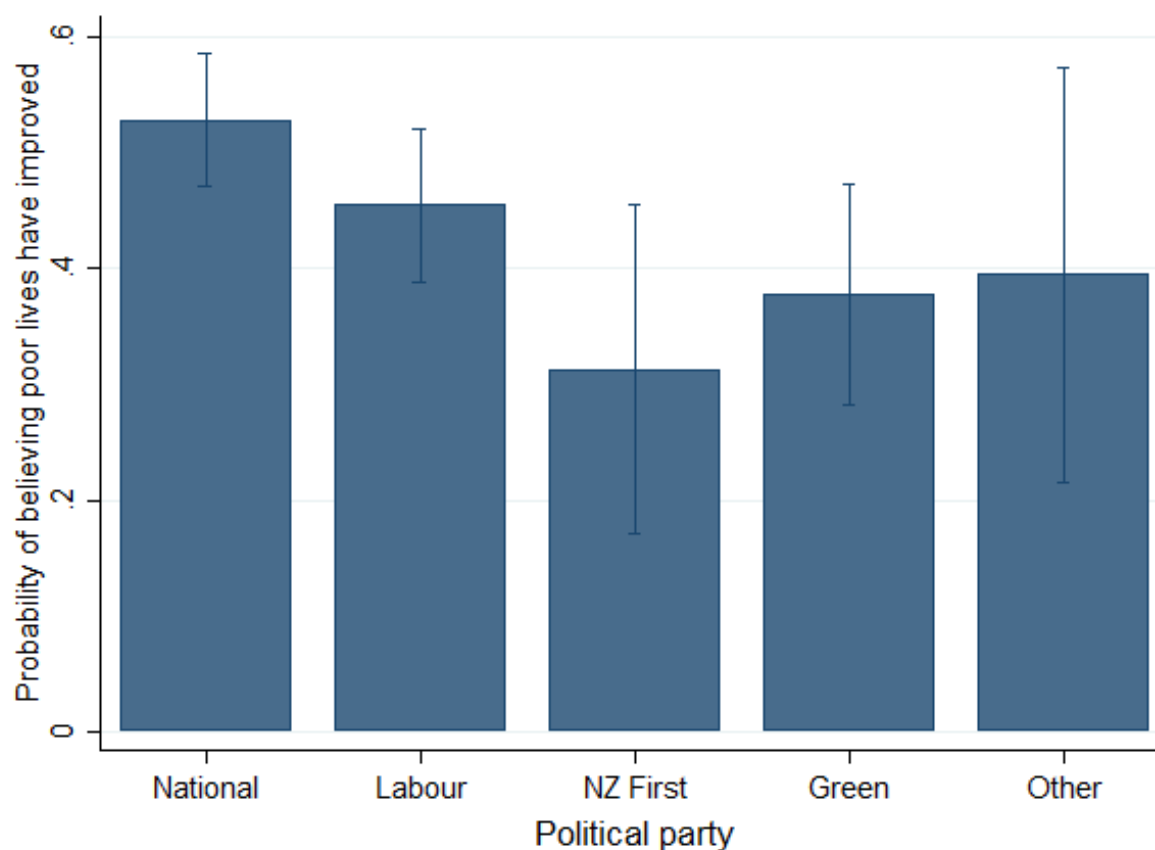
with other variables controlled for they were considerably less likely to believe that development improvements were occurring than National voters were, even if their take was probably more positive than that of NZ First voters.

**Table 3: Logistic regression results, belief that the lives of poor people have improved significantly over the last 15 years**

Believe that poor lives have improved	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Male (compared to female)	1.74*** (0.00)	1.61*** (0.00)	1.68*** (0.00)
Age (continuous)	0.98*** (0.00)	0.98*** (0.01)	0.98*** (0.00)
Urban (compared to rural)	0.87 (0.55)	0.76 (0.24)	0.68 (0.13)
Has academic tertiary education	1.33* (0.07)	1.38* (0.06)	1.26 (0.18)
\$15,000-30,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.75 (0.33)	0.80 (0.48)	0.74 (0.38)
\$30,001-50,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.78 (0.35)	0.88 (0.65)	0.88 (0.69)
\$50,001-70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.72 (0.25)	0.79 (0.43)	0.78 (0.43)
More than \$70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.73 (0.23)	0.71 (0.24)	0.64 (0.14)
Religious (compared to non-religious)	1.61*** (0.00)	1.54*** (0.01)	1.52** (0.02)
Labour (compared to National)		0.73* (0.09)	0.73 (0.11)
NZ First (compared to National)		0.32*** (0.00)	0.38** (0.01)
Green (compared to National)		0.54** (0.01)	0.52** (0.01)
Other (compared to National)		0.63 (0.29)	0.56 (0.18)
Believe aid is effective			2.63*** (0.00)
Constant	1.43 (0.34)	2.06* (0.08)	1.29 (0.59)
n	825	759	743

P values in parentheses, \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

**Figure 8: Political party and belief that lives have improved**



#### **4.2.2 Correlates of support for aid increases and aid purpose**

Next, we look at the factors that might influence support for increasing the volume of aid allocated by the New Zealand government. Table 4 shows regression results for logistic regressions run where the dependent variable was support for increasing aid volume.

The regression results shown in Table 4 offer several intriguing contrasts with existing international literature. While previous research has tended to find higher income or wealth to be positively associated with support for aid, in New Zealand we did not find any significant relationship between income and support for increasing the aid budget. In contrast to previous findings from Australia there does not appear to be any statistically significant relationship between residing in an urban area and support for aid increases in New Zealand. We also find that age has a positive effect on support for aid increases (though this finding is not statistically significant across all models). Again,

this result contrasts with the international literature, which generally shows that support for aid and aid increases is stronger among younger people.

**Table 4: Logistic regression results, support for increasing aid volume**

Support for increasing aid volume	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Male (compared to female)	1.09 (0.67)	1.24 (0.30)	1.18 (0.43)	1.20 (0.40)	1.19 (0.43)
Age (continuous)	1.01 (0.38)	1.01* (0.09)	1.01* (0.07)	1.01 (0.10)	1.01* (0.09)
Urban (compared to rural)	0.82 (0.46)	0.69 (0.22)	0.62 (0.11)	0.71 (0.25)	0.61 (0.11)
Has academic tertiary education	1.86*** (0.00)	1.67** (0.02)	1.53** (0.05)	1.60** (0.03)	1.57** (0.04)
\$15,000-30,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.66 (0.28)	0.64 (0.26)	0.51 (0.10)	0.69 (0.36)	0.55 (0.15)
\$30,001-50,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.94 (0.85)	0.90 (0.77)	0.94 (0.85)	0.95 (0.89)	1.02 (0.96)
\$50,001-70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.77 (0.46)	0.82 (0.60)	0.84 (0.64)	0.88 (0.74)	0.88 (0.73)
More than \$70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.66 (0.19)	0.76 (0.40)	0.71 (0.28)	0.74 (0.37)	0.68 (0.25)
Religious (compared to non-religious)	0.58*** (0.01)	0.73 (0.13)	0.64** (0.04)	0.70 (0.10)	0.65** (0.04)
Labour (compared to National)		4.49*** (0.00)	4.64*** (0.00)	4.38*** (0.00)	4.53*** (0.00)
NZ First (compared to National)		0.50 (0.30)	0.63 (0.49)	0.49 (0.29)	0.58 (0.42)
Green (compared to National)		4.53*** (0.00)	4.83*** (0.00)	4.10*** (0.00)	4.25*** (0.00)
Other (compared to National)		2.49 (0.10)	3.13* (0.07)	2.53 (0.10)	3.03* (0.08)
Believe aid is effective			3.92*** (0.00)		3.83*** (0.00)
Believe poor lives have improved				1.21 (0.35)	0.98 (0.93)
Constant	0.24*** (0.00)	0.08*** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.00)	0.08*** (0.00)	0.03*** (0.00)
n	836	774	756	731	722

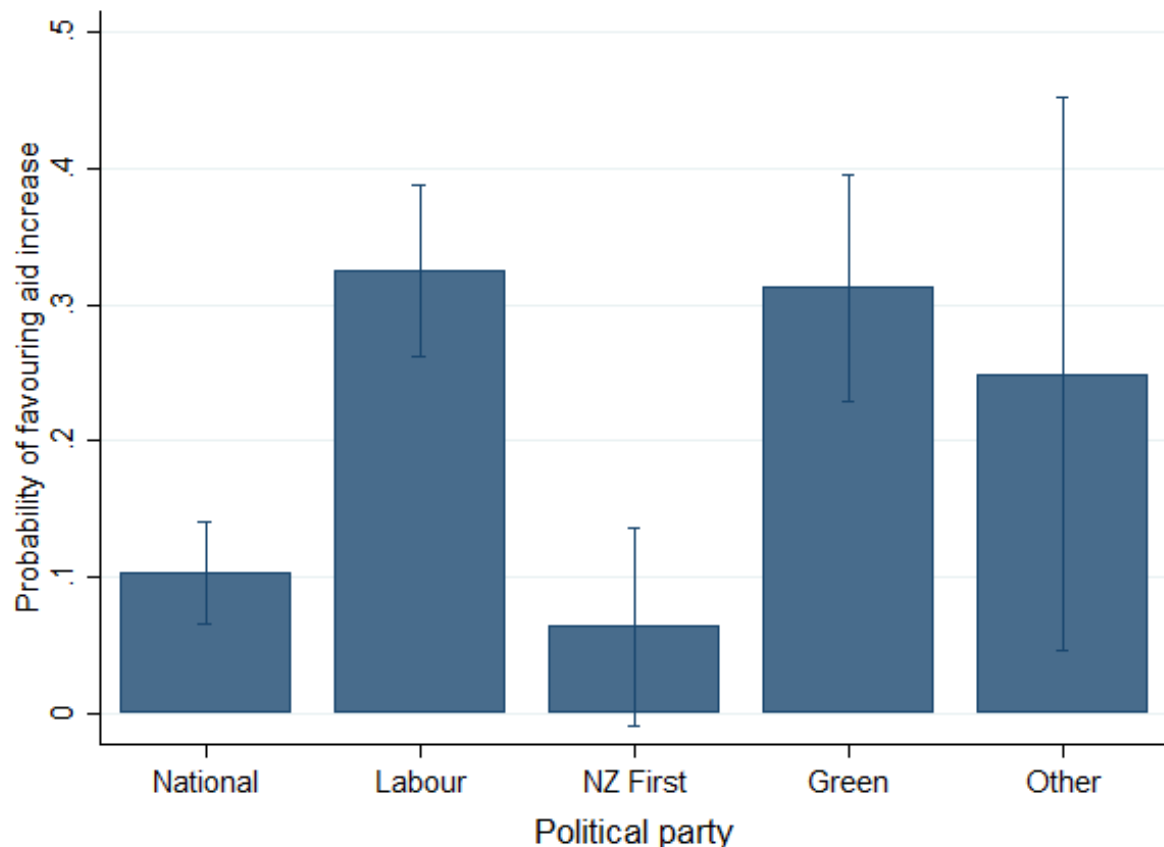
P values in parentheses, \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

When it comes to increasing the size of the aid budget, we find that individuals with a tertiary academic education are significantly more likely to be supportive, while those who state that they are religious are significantly less likely to support a larger aid budget. The first of these findings fits with findings from other countries, while the second is consistent with findings from Australia.

Of the factors included in our model, the strongest influence on support for increasing aid appears to be political affiliation. As compared to National voters, both Labour and Green voters are significantly more likely to support increasing the aid budget. The size of the coefficients associated with these two categories are the highest for any of the variables in the model. Though there is a statistically significant difference between

Labour and Green voters as compared to National Party supporters in terms of their support for increasing aid, in an absolute sense the probabilities that these voters will favour an aid increase remains relatively low once the effects of other variables have been controlled for. The marginal effects of political party affiliation on the probability of favouring an aid increase, based on Model 5, are shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Political affiliation and support for aid increase**

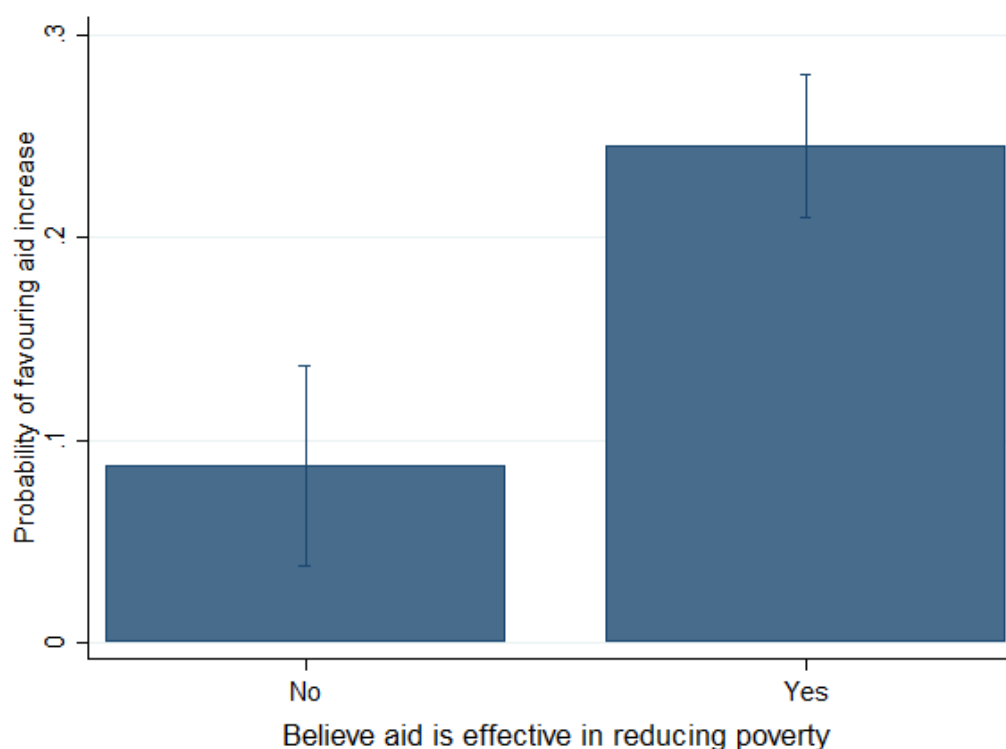


The other factor most strongly associated with support for an increase in the aid budget is the belief in aid effectiveness. Controlling for all other factors, a belief in aid effectiveness is significantly associated with a desire to see the aid budget increased. The marginal effects, shown in Figure 10, show that, once the effects of other variables are accounted for, there is a 25 per cent average probability that a New Zealander who believes in the effectiveness of aid would favour an increase in the aid budget. Interestingly, in both Model 4 and Model 5 there is no evidence of an association between a belief that lives are improving in the typical developing country and support for aid increases. While effectiveness is clearly related with increased support for a

larger aid budget, beliefs about development progress do not appear to be related in any obvious way.

Also worth noting is that tertiary education and party support remain clear predictors of support for increased aid even with beliefs about aid effectiveness and development progress included in Model 4. This strongly suggests that the impact of these traits on support for increased aid is not simply a product of their effects on beliefs on aid effectiveness or development progress.

**Figure 10: Aid effectiveness and aid increase**



Lastly, we present findings related to influences on respondents' views about the purpose of aid: whether it should be used to alleviate poverty, or to advance New Zealand's strategic and commercial interests. Table 5 presents regression results for belief in the purpose of aid as poverty alleviation, where those who were strongly in favour or in favour of directing NZ aid to poverty alleviation were coded as one. Our results show that men are significantly less likely to support aid being given for the purpose of alleviating poverty, with the effect shown in Figure 11 (based on Model 5). The probability that a woman would support aid being given to alleviate poverty exceeds 80 per cent, while among men the probability is closer to 70 per cent (after



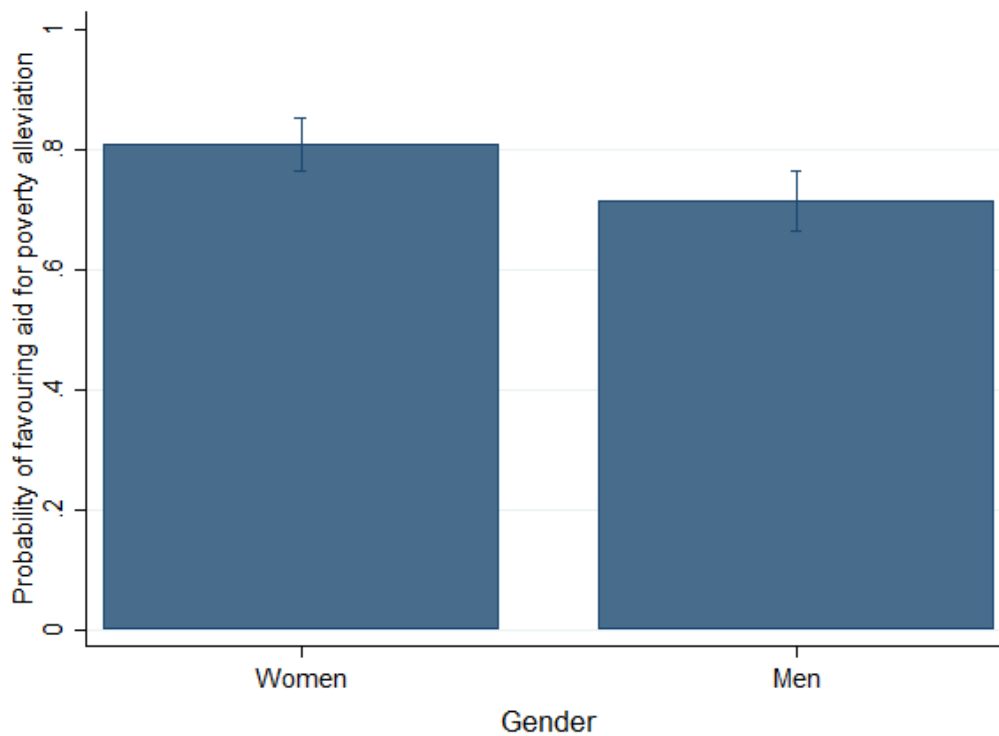
accounting for the effects of any other traits). Older people and people with an academic tertiary education are also significantly more likely to support aid being given to alleviate poverty, all other factors being equal.

**Table 5: Logistic regression results, belief in aid purpose as poverty alleviation**

Belief in aid purpose as poverty alleviation	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Male (compared to female)	0.51*** (0.00)	0.52*** (0.00)	0.56*** (0.01)	0.53*** (0.00)	0.56*** (0.01)
Age (continuous)	1.02*** (0.00)	1.02*** (0.00)	1.02*** (0.00)	1.02*** (0.00)	1.02*** (0.01)
Urban (compared to rural)	1.32 (0.29)	1.21 (0.50)	1.15 (0.64)	1.37 (0.27)	1.30 (0.38)
Has academic tertiary education	1.82*** (0.00)	1.67** (0.01)	1.60** (0.03)	1.63** (0.02)	1.60** (0.03)
\$15,000-30,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.68 (0.28)	0.72 (0.39)	0.65 (0.30)	0.85 (0.67)	0.79 (0.56)
\$30,001-50,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.55* (0.08)	0.54* (0.08)	0.57 (0.14)	0.63 (0.20)	0.70 (0.35)
\$50,001-70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.50** (0.05)	0.56 (0.12)	0.56 (0.14)	0.65 (0.26)	0.67 (0.30)
More than \$70,000 (compared to <\$15,000)	0.58 (0.11)	0.64 (0.21)	0.60 (0.18)	0.71 (0.35)	0.68 (0.30)
Religious (compared to non-religious)	1.17 (0.40)	1.24 (0.29)	1.16 (0.50)	1.20 (0.39)	1.15 (0.52)
Labour (compared to National)		2.35*** (0.00)	2.33*** (0.00)	2.29*** (0.00)	2.23*** (0.00)
NZ First (compared to National)		1.19 (0.67)	1.50 (0.32)	1.22 (0.63)	1.45 (0.37)
Green (compared to National)		3.35*** (0.00)	3.30*** (0.00)	3.19*** (0.00)	3.20*** (0.00)
Other (compared to National)		1.40 (0.46)	1.64 (0.38)	1.28 (0.59)	1.44 (0.52)
Believe aid is effective			2.51*** (0.00)		2.61*** (0.00)
Believe poor lives have improved				1.27 (0.25)	1.08 (0.72)
Constant	1.48 (0.34)	0.89 (0.81)	0.51 (0.18)	0.66 (0.40)	0.39* (0.08)
n	818	757	739	712	703

P values in parentheses, \* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

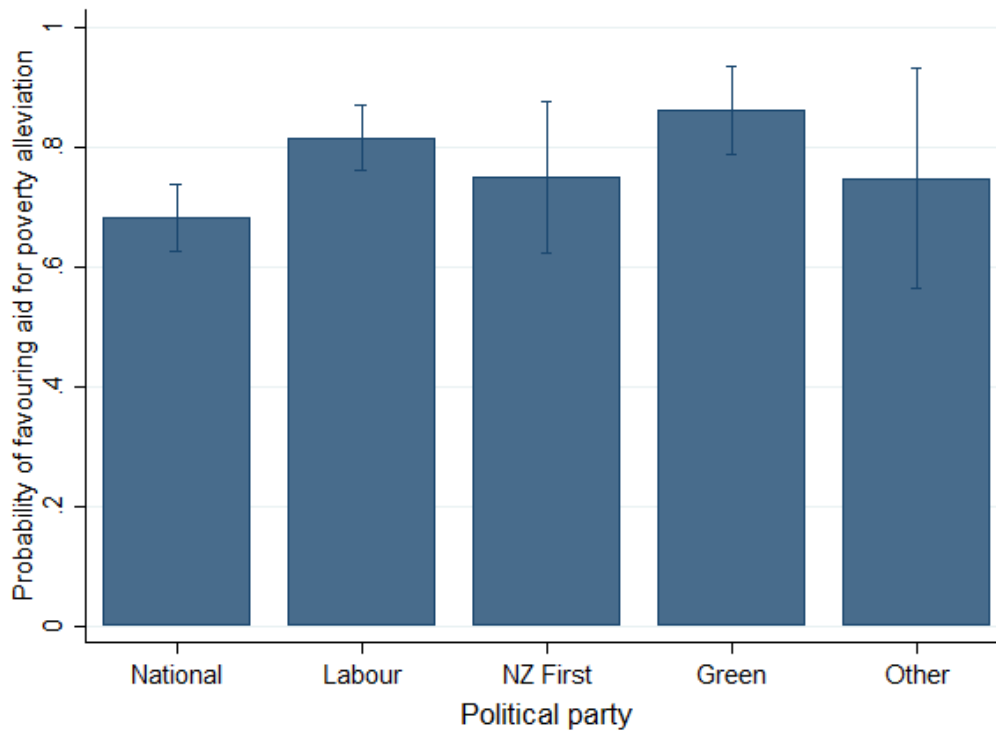
**Figure 11: Gender and aid purpose**



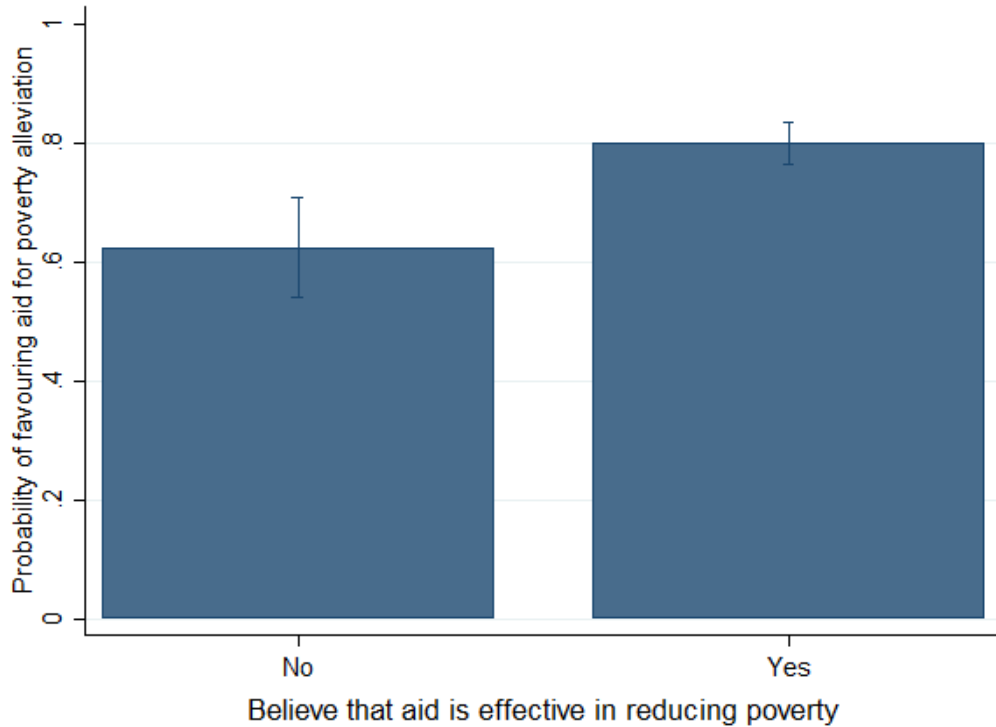
As compared to National voters, Green and Labour voters are more likely to believe that aid should be given with motive of alleviating poverty (when controlling for all other factors). Interestingly, however, as can be seen in Figure 12 the magnitude of this political effect is much less than that seen on support for increased aid budgets. This finding reflects a generalised preference for development focused aid across the political spectrum.

The impact of beliefs about aid effectiveness can be seen in Figure 13, which shows that the average probability that someone who believes that aid is effective would also favour aid being given for poverty alleviation is 80 per cent, once the effects of any other variables that might be associated with either of those beliefs are eliminated. Once again there seems to be no relationship between beliefs about development progress and desired aid purpose.

**Figure 12: Political party affiliation and aid purpose**



**Figure 13: Aid effectiveness and aid purpose**



## 5. Discussion and concluding comments

Overall our findings point to a public that is satisfied with current New Zealand aid volumes. Given, as we have noted, that New Zealand's aid effort relative to the size of its economy is similar to Australia's, this finding stands in clear contrast to the findings that have emerged from recent surveys in Australia. Most New Zealanders think New Zealand gives the right amount of aid; most Australians think Australia gives too much. Possibly the difference stems from the fact that there has been more political debate about aid levels in Australia, while aid flows have largely stayed out of the news in New Zealand. This seems a plausible explanation, although as our regression results showed, there is still a clear political divide in views about aid volume in New Zealand: support for increasing aid is substantially higher on the left.

Support for aid given for the purpose of helping developing countries, rather than helping advance New Zealand's interests, is also more common on the left. Given that the National government's approach to aid in recent years has seen a larger share of New Zealand aid devoted to advancing New Zealand's interests, it could be claimed that the differences in approaches to aid at a political level reflect differences in beliefs amongst the public too. This point should not be extended too far, however. While, in a relative sense, National Party supporters are more likely than voters on the centre-left to want New Zealand's aid focused on advancing New Zealand's interests, in an absolute sense the majority of National voters still want New Zealand aid focused on helping people in developing countries.

The fact that political beliefs are related to views about aid purpose and aid volumes in New Zealand is consistent with almost all of the available international literature. Similarly, the positive relationship between academic education and support for aid increases fits well with international findings, including work from Australia. The negative relationship between religiosity and support for aid increases does not fit quite as well with international work, but is very similar to findings from Australia. Although the New Zealand case does not appear identical to Australia or other countries in the international literature, the correlates of support are broadly similar to those found elsewhere. New Zealand is not an outlier with respect to the findings of existing work.

In the case of the areas where our analysis broke new ground, many intriguing findings emerged. Perhaps most strikingly, political views seem to be entirely unrelated to beliefs about the efficacy of aid (with the exception of NZ First voters). At the same time, however, the belief that aid works was clearly positively associated with support for an increased aid budget and with the belief that New Zealand's aid should be focused on helping people in developing countries. Left-leaning political views and academic education were also clearly correlated with these same beliefs, even when beliefs about aid's efficacy were controlled for. The clear ramification of these findings is that the differences in views about aid volume and purpose associated with education levels and political persuasion are not driven by differing beliefs about whether aid works or not. The effects of education and left-right differences on views about aid appear to be the product of something else – perhaps views about obligations to others, or to other countries.

Unlike the belief that aid works, the belief that the typical poor country has progressed in the last 15 years was not clearly associated with views about aid volume or aid purpose. Prior to this study it seemed a reasonable assumption that better educated New Zealanders would have been more likely to correctly answer this question. And, indeed there was a positive relationship but its substantive effect was modest, and it ceased to be statistically significant once views of aid effectiveness were controlled for. Interestingly, the two political parties whose supporters were most clearly associated with a more pessimistic take on development progress – the Greens and NZ First – are home to very different political beliefs in most areas. Why these very different political viewpoints are associated with a similar degree of development pessimism is something that could be fruitfully investigated in future work. Similarly, it would be interesting to know why education was only inconsistently related to correct views about development progress. Further research in this area could also study if there are more complex interactions between beliefs about development progress, political views and support for aid increases.

There is also potential for future work to examine whether views about development progress and aid efficacy are easily shifted through the provision of information, and whether this, in turn, has any impact on views about aid volume and purpose.

For now though, this paper has contributed to a growing body of research on public opinion about aid by painting a rich picture of New Zealanders' views about aid, and the roles that other traits and beliefs do, and do not, play in shaping them.

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