

# Electoral Politics: Does Globalisation Matter?

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In terms of conventional economic indicators, New Zealand is more globalised than Australia. Two sets of theoretically derived propositions are tested compared to a null hypothesis of no effects: the first, that globalisation will reduce the reality and/or the perceptions of electoral choice, and the second based on the assumption that it may change but not necessarily reduce the effects of those parameters. With data from Australian and New Zealand Election Studies from 1996 onwards, and using multivariate logit models, we test the effects of economic voting, and the ideological salience of Left–Right issues, notably welfare and tax policy, and the extent to which opposition to aspects of globalisation might mobilise support for political parties. We find little support for the argument that New Zealand electoral politics should reflect globalisation influences more strongly than Australian electoral politics. To the extent that the evidence does appear to confirm any aspects of the two propositions, it is commonly the more moderate effects associated with the second proposition that are supported.

## Introduction

In research and commentary about the politics of democracies in the twentieth century, a challenging question has sometimes surfaced: do elections matter? Its answer, from those who tend to raise it, has usually been ‘no’, or at least, ‘not as much as most people think’. The question has been an uncomfortable one for those who study elections. Yet its answer in the negative has not gained sufficient

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support to prevent the continuation and expansion of electoral studies research programs around the world.

To sceptics, elections matter little because public policies are shaped not by the expression of public opinion in voting choices but instead by more fundamental economic and social forces. The best example is provided by late twentieth-century Marxists who argued that the actions of governments were constrained by the nature of capitalism. Capitalism had to be nurtured in order to provide sufficient revenues for the state to fund social programs and thus maintain legitimacy and democratic consent. Governments of both Left and Right were both required to maintain this balance.

Meanwhile, modernisation theorists came to similar conclusions on the basis of other premises: public policy changes were driven predominantly by economic growth and demography. Party ideologies had little effect on government policies (Wilensky 1975; Pampel and Williamson 1989). Empirical evidence for the sceptics was provided by research that indicated that policy differences between parties alternating in office were increasingly small (Kirchheimer 1966). Convergence was not just in policies but also electoral support. By the 1970s and 1980s, electoral research itself was reporting the erosion of the foundations of the class cleavages that had shaped party systems since the 1920s. No longer did Labour or Social Democratic parties represent the vast majority of the traditional blue-collar working class, nor did conservative or liberal parties have anything like exclusive support from the 'middle class'.

Despite such findings, a rich outpouring of studies in comparative public policy from the 1970s onwards began to challenge the sceptics. Numerous studies—although not all—found that parties, and therefore elections, did matter in terms of public policy outcomes, even after taking account of economics and demography (Castles 1982; Hicks, Swank and Ambuhl 1989; Alvarez, Garrett and Lange 1991; Hicks and Swank 1992; Blais, Blake and Dion 1993, Garrett 1998; Swank 2002; Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge 1994). Furthermore, there were interactions between economics and politics. Economic vulnerability, in the form of trade dependence, created a market for a politics of social security underpinned by strong unions and social democratic parties and governments (Cameron 1978; Rodrik 1998).

The revival of economic liberalism, followed by the collapse of communism, opened up new developments and debates. In a more competitive global economy, the ability of capitalism to bear the weight of expanding social programs proved to be limited, bringing about a so-called 'crisis' that apparently required a new balance between the market and the role of the state that bowed more towards the market. Meanwhile, liberalisation of the international economy was generating a new phase of globalisation. International trade and financial flows were increasing, with national governments abandoning many of the levers with which they had hitherto regulated their economies.

Once more, there are claims that elections, parties in government, and now even national states themselves do not matter, at least not as much as before (Ohmae 1990; Friedman 1999). On the other hand, there is also scepticism that globalisation matters as much as some analysts assume. There are, however, few, if any, studies on the impact of globalisation on election outcomes and this paper thus represents an early attempt to explore this connection. Elections, party policies, and governments have always been influenced by exogenous forces, but it is a strong claim indeed that outcomes are completely determined by them, with no role for agency or choice on

the part of the various actors involved. Research once more provides grounds for caution. For example, Boix (1998, 4) argues that while globalisation has ‘forced the convergence of national macro-economic policies’ it has, on the other hand, ‘magnified the role of (competing) supply-side economic strategies and intensified the importance of parties and partisan agency in the selection of those policies’ (Boix 1998, 4). Parties of the Centre-Left seek to maintain tax revenues to generate human capital and thus develop a more productive economy that can also bear the cost of redistributive social programs, while parties of the Right seek to reduce taxes in the belief that the market will maximise general wealth with a minimum of state intervention. Much of the traditional content of policy debate between the Centre-Left and Centre-Right remains highly salient and could, indeed, be becoming more so.

### Expectations in the Antipodes

Australia and New Zealand are among the world’s oldest democracies, with continuous cycles of elections taking place regularly over more than a century. Both countries developed strong union movements early in the twentieth century, and by the 1920s and 1930s their party systems were strongly rooted in a class cleavage. As elsewhere, the major parties associated with the class cleavage survive, but class voting is now very weak. However, these declines in class voting began before the effects of the contemporary wave of globalisation became apparent (Vowles and McAllister 1993).

As the introduction to this special issue shows, both Australia and New Zealand have become more dependent on external trade, in Australia’s case from the mid-1970s, and in New Zealand’s case from the early 1980s. New Zealand began the period with a higher level of trade dependence than Australia and, by the end of the century, the gap between the two countries had slightly widened. In broader comparative terms, in terms of trade both countries are, at most, moderately globalised. Meanwhile, in terms of openness to capital flows and foreign direct investment, New Zealand has a relatively high level of globalisation, with Australia, again, at a more moderate level. A key hypothesis therefore emerges:

*If globalisation has effects on electoral politics, they should be felt more in New Zealand.*

But what effects should globalisation have? We can identify two sets of propositions, one set based on the assumption that globalisation will reduce the reality and/or the perceptions of electoral choice, and the other based on the assumption that it may change but not necessarily reduce the effects of those parameters. Both sets can, of course, be compared against a common null hypothesis of no change at all. This framework can also contain the possibility of a further potential conclusion: globalisation may have no or minor effects on the ‘reality’ of choice—in so far as that can be measured—but may still have effects on perceptions.

In terms of proposition set one, that *globalisation will reduce choice*, if governments are less able to manage their economies, and/or voters perceive this to be the case, then *under conditions of greater globalisation* we would expect that *perceptions of economic success or failure* would have *less effect on voting for or against incumbent governments*. Acknowledging that *declining class politics* pre-dates the increase in levels of globalisation, greater globalisation would tend to *accelerate*

that decline and, in addition, *reduce the ideological salience of traditional Left–Right economic and distributional issues in politics*. More generally, if voters perceive that key economic and social policy decisions are out of the hands of government, *interest and engagement in politics will decline*. This in turn might lead those with an interest in politics to vote against incumbent governments. (A decline in political interest might also impact on voter turnout but, because of compulsory voting in Australia, this is not comparable between the two countries). Another hypothesised consequence of globalisation is increasing social inequality: investment and production move where wages are lowest, so in higher-income countries like Australia and middle-to-higher income countries like New Zealand, wage growth tends to be lowest for lower income earners. At the same time pressures on governments to lower taxation also have the effect of reducing social provision for low income earners. Satisfaction with democracy will therefore be higher among upper income groups, and lower among lower income groups. This may be reflected in *dissatisfaction being associated with political ‘out groups’ in the form of populist political parties and their supporters*.

In terms of proposition set two, that *globalisation will change* the parameters of electoral choice, but not necessarily reduce them, we would expect the *persistence of a certain amount of effective economic voting for or against governments*. This may be because governments still have the ability to influence macro-economic outcomes, or at least voters perceive them to have that ability. After all, globalised economies still require skilled management, and unwise attempts to resist economic external constraints may have negative consequences. In terms of *class politics*, we might expect personal economic circumstances to shape electoral choices if *governments retain room for manoeuvre in terms of tax and benefit policies*, or at least if *voters perceive them to*. Indeed, as noted above, greater economic vulnerability due to globalisation may generate voter insecurity and therefore *electoral demands to expand, or at least retain, compensatory social provision*. If traditional Left–Right ideology declines in importance, however, another ideological dimension is likely to open up: *opposition to globalisation*, or at least to some of its implications. This is likely to take two forms: first, on the Left, the development of *Green politics*. This is a politics that thinks globally, but in terms of practical politics it resists many aspects of economic globalisation. Second, on the Right, *populist* parties will form to oppose what their members perceive to be the erosion of national sovereignty, and the increased flows of culturally divergent immigrants across national borders.

Unfortunately, many of these propositions can be tested only partially and indirectly on the basis of the data available. This article relies primarily on Australian and New Zealand Election Study (AES and NZES) data between 1996 and 2005. In each country, this makes up four elections over nearly a decade. For New Zealand, this is a period of a significant increase in trade dependence, particularly up to 2000. Australia’s level of trade dependence grew less spectacularly, and from a lower base (Castles, Curtin and Vowles 2006).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Australia had some of the biggest inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Asia-Pacific region during this period although, relative to the size of the economies, inward

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<sup>1</sup>Interestingly, however, over this period both countries’ trade dependence actually decreased relative to the OECD average, which brings us back to the question posed in the introduction to this special issue concerning the extent to which the globalisation issue applies in the Antipodean context.

FDI is still more important for New Zealand. With both countries growing at among the highest levels in the OECD from the late 1990s, each presented an attractive location for foreign investment. Despite the difficulty of estimating differences in levels of globalisation precisely, the smaller size of New Zealand makes it more vulnerable to global influences.

There is a further complication with respect to New Zealand: the adoption of proportional representation from 1996 could have some implications for government accountability, given the existence of coalition and/or minority governments from then onwards. This is another reason why economic voting effects and ideological politics might be weaker in New Zealand. While the Australian government since 1996 has been a coalition, the component parties engage only in very limited electoral competition, normally when seats become vacant. On the other hand, Australian federalism and bicameralism could also be said to constrain its federal government, if not to the same degree as minority government in New Zealand. Labor governments have tended to rule an increasing number of Australian States in the period from 1996, and only in mid-2005 did the Australian Liberal–National government gain a majority in the Senate. These differences should be kept in mind. If differences are found, globalisation might not be the explanation—or at least not the only explanation.

Another obvious background factor is, of course, government partisanship. A Liberal–National coalition government has ruled Australia throughout the period since 1996, after a lengthy period of Labor ascendancy in the 1980s and early 1990s. In New Zealand, a National government gave way to Labour-led governments from 1999 onwards. Tables 1a and 1b show Australian and New Zealand election results, indicating the nature of the governmental arrangements in each country. In New Zealand, the National–New Zealand First coalition broke up in 1998, and National continued as a minority government until 1999. Labour formed a minority

**Table 1a.** Election results in Australia, 1990–2004

		1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004
Liberal	% Votes	35.0	37.1	<b>39.0</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>40.8</b>
	No. seats	55	49	<b>75</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>75</b>
National	% Votes	8.4	7.2	<b>8.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>
	No. seats	14	16	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>
Labor	% Votes	<b>39.4</b>	<b>44.9</b>	38.8	40.1	37.8	37.6
	No. seats	<b>78</b>	<b>80</b>	49	67	65	60
Democrats	% Votes	11.3	3.8	6.8	5.1	5.4	1.2
	No. seats	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greens	% Votes		1.9	2.9	2.1	5	7.2
	No. seats		0	0	0	0	0
One Nation	% Votes				8.4	4.3	1.2
	No. seats				0	0	0
Family First	% Votes						2.0
	No. seats						0
Other	% Votes	5.9	5.2	4.3	4.7	4.5	4.0
	No. seats	1	2	5	1	3	3
% Government seats		52.7	54.4	63.5	54.1	54.7	58.0

*Note:*

Bold entries indicate government parties after election.

**Table 1b.** Election results in New Zealand, 1990–2005

		1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005
Act	% Votes			6.1	7	7.1	1.5
	No. seats			8	9	9	2
National	% Votes	<b>47.8</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>33.8</b>	30.7	20.9	39.1
	No. seats	<b>67</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>44</b>	39	27	48
Christian Heritage <sup>a</sup>	% Votes	0.5	2	4.3	2.4	1.4	0.1
	No. seats	0	0	0	0	0	0
NZ First	% Votes		8.4	<b>13.4</b>	4.3	10.4	<b>5.7</b>
	No. seats		2	<b>17</b>	5	13	7
United (Future) <sup>b</sup>	% Votes		0.5	0.9	0.5	<b>6.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>
	No. seats		0	1	1	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>
Labour	% Votes	35.1	34.7	28.2	<b>38.7</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>41.1</b>
	No. seats	29	45	37	<b>49</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>50</b>
Progressive <sup>c</sup>	% Votes					<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>
	No. seats					<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Green	% Votes	6.9			<b>5.2</b>	7.0	5.3
	No. seats	0			7	9	6
NewLabour/Alliance <sup>d</sup>	% Votes	5.8	18.2	10.1	<b>7.7</b>	1.3	0.1
	No. seats	1	2	13	<b>10</b>	0	0
Maori	% Votes						2.1
	No. seats						4
% Government seats		67.7	50.5	50.8	46.7	45.0	42.2
% Confidence/supply seats					8.3	6.7	9.0

*Notes:*

Bold entries indicate government parties after election; bold italic entries indicate parties supporting a minority government on confidence and supply.

<sup>a</sup>In 1996 Christian Heritage ran a joint list with the Christian Democratic Party as the Christian Coalition.

<sup>b</sup>In 2002 the United Party and Future New Zealand (formerly the Christian Democrats) formed the United Future Party.

<sup>c</sup>The Progressive Party split from the Alliance in 2002.

<sup>d</sup>New Labour (5.2%) ran in a loose alliance with Mana Motuhake in 1990 (0.6%). In 1993 they were joined by the Green, Democratic and Liberal Parties.

government with the Alliance in 1999, and with the Progressive Coalition in 2002. From 1999 to 2002 the Green Party guaranteed confidence and supply; from 2002 to 2005 the United Future Party did so, although the Greens often supported Labour on legislation. After the 2005 election, Labour entered into a confidence and supply agreement with New Zealand First, and United Future continued in that role.

One development of particular interest is the degree of support for minor parties in recent years. Although support for minor parties and independent candidates collectively has risen and fallen during this period in both countries, in general, support for minor parties has been greater in this period than in the past. Consistent with the proposition about opposition to globalisation, this has taken the form of both increased support for Green parties and the rise of populist parties, such as One Nation and New Zealand First. In the Australian case, of course, this popularity appears to have been fairly short lived (Leach, Stokes and Ward 2000). The Greens, however, have emerged as a significant electoral force in both countries in the last two or three elections. The electoral system for the Australian lower house has meant that the conversion of votes into seats in that country has been confined

to the Senate, while on the other side of the Tasman the new electoral system has facilitated their playing an influential political role in New Zealand.

### **Voter Responses to Incumbent Governments**

Tables 2a and 2b use logistic regression models to compare the combined effects of social structure on the vote for or against the incumbent governments in the two countries, and the separate net effects of each variable controlling for the effects of the others. In each case, social structure explains a very modest amount of overall choice, slightly less in New Zealand. In New Zealand, non-voters are also included in the group not voting for the government. This has some effects, but these do not account for the difference in model explanation.<sup>2</sup> Note that, in interpreting the results in the table, the signs of the coefficients, which indicate the direction of the effects, need to be interpreted relative to the political persuasion of the incumbent government. Thus, for example, in New Zealand the sign for the farming household variable changes from positive in 1996 and 1999 to negative in 2002, indicating that farming households were more inclined than others to support the National Party but less inclined to support the Labour–Alliance government.

Tables 2a and 2b present a picture of reasonably consistent, but fairly weak, effects of social structure on voting behaviour. Taking the two countries together, the most substantial ongoing effect is for trade union membership. Being a member of a farming household also has a significant effect in all equations, although the overall significance of this factor has to be weighed against the fact that farmers make up only a small proportion of each country's population. Occupational class effects are now quite modest in both countries and in addition there is some fluctuation from election to election. But this low level of impact for occupation is very much a continuation of earlier trends towards a decline in class politics in both countries (see, for example, Bean 1988). The public–private sector division is modest but consistently present in both countries except for New Zealand in 1999. The findings for university education are quite diverse. In Australia, from no education effect in 1996, the university educated favour the coalition in 1998 and then turn against the coalition in 2001, to be joined by the lowly educated in 2004. In New Zealand the lowly educated tended not to support National in 1996 and 1999 and the university educated were inclined to support Labour in 2002 but not in 2005. Where low education has significant effects, it is associated with voting against governments of the Right, but this is more the case in New Zealand.

With respect to ethnicity, in New Zealand the Maori indigenous minority registers a large electoral impact in its inclination to vote against the incumbent National government in 1996 and 1999. In Australia, the equivalent indigenous minority, Aborigines, are too small in number to be subject to analysis in sample surveys of this kind and so the equivalent variable used is immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The effects for this group are smaller than for Maori in New Zealand, although the effects in this period are consistently pro-Labour/anti-coalition. Age effects are strong in some instances in both countries, although in opposite directions.

<sup>2</sup>An alternative 2002 model for New Zealand with non-voters excluded has a lower  $R^2$  but significant relationships are found for manual households (5% more likely to support the government) and Maori (7% more likely to support the government). For 1999, the only substantial difference is an increase in the effects of age, the oldest person in the sample being 19% less likely to vote for the government than the youngest. For 1996, there is a similar effect for age.

**Table 2a.** Effects of social structure on voting for incumbent government in Australia, 1996–2004

	1996 Labor	1998 Coalition	2001 Coalition	2004 Coalition
Farming household	-19**	19**	18**	20**
Manual household	6*	-10**	-15**	-9**
<i>Reference: Non-manual</i>				
Public-sector household	8*	-10**	-8*	-10**
Union household	19**	-15**	-11**	-17**
University degree	1	8*	-12**	-14**
Low education	2	1	0	-8*
<i>Reference: Moderate education</i>				
Maori/NESB	10*	-10*	-8*	-2
Age	-9	37**	31**	13*
Female	-5	2	-6*	-4
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.07
% Concordant	65.9	62.7	62.2	59.4
N	1797	1897	2010	1769

Note:

See Table 2b footnotes.

**Table 2b.** Effects of social structure on voting for incumbent government in New Zealand, 1996–2005

	1996 National	1999 National	2002 Labour Alliance	2005 Labour Progressive
Farming household	14**	10**	-10**	-16**
Manual household	-9**	-9**	2	5*
<i>Reference: Non-manual</i>				
Public-sector household	-5**	-2	7**	9**
Union household	-8**	-7**	13**	12**
University degree	0	-3	6**	0
Low education	-7*	-13**	2	5
<i>Reference: Moderate education</i>				
Maori/NESB	-24**	-13**	-1	0
Age	-5	-1	32**	14**
Female	0	2	3*	7**
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.04
% Concordant	70.8	74.9	66.8	66.2
N	4023	5813	5554	2731

Notes:

Figures are percentage probabilities of voting for the incumbent government, after controlling for the other factors in the table, for each social group as compared to those not in the category, or a reference group. Age is scored from a low of 0 to a high of 1.

Dependent variable is vote for incumbent parties = 1, all others in the sample (including non-voters in New Zealand) = 0.

Missing values are substituted by the variable mean.

\*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01.

Source: AES 1996–2004; NZES 1996–2005.

In Australia, older people are more inclined to support the conservative parties while in New Zealand Labour is the beneficiary of older voters' preferences, although to a lesser extent in 2005 than 2002. Gender effects are small or non-significant except for New Zealand in 2005 and Australia in 2001.

When the results in Table 2a and 2b are viewed in broad terms, apart from when the incumbent shifts from one party to another where we would also expect differences, there is little evidence of change within each country—except for 2002 in New Zealand, where class voting declines significantly and the government appears to shift to the Centre appreciably both in terms of its voting base and its choice of a support party in the Centre rather than on the Left. In 2005, however, class effects somewhat increase in terms of occupation and sector of the economy. But in general, the sizes of the percentage probability effects are higher in Australia: for example, net of other factors, a person from a farming household was 19% more likely than a person from a non-manual household to vote for the coalition in 1998; in 1999 the equivalent figure in New Zealand was 10%. And in 1996, the percentage effect of being from a union household was 19 in Australia and only 8 in New Zealand. One can cautiously conclude that in terms of social structure foundations, class politics remains slightly stronger in Australia than New Zealand, consistent with a 'set one' globalisation hypothesis, but also with other explanations as well.

Tables 3a and 3b similarly assess the effects of economic and some political attitudes of voting for or against the incumbent governments. The overall explanatory power of the models is weaker in New Zealand but, again, for each election except for 2005 in New Zealand there is some substantial effect for economic evaluations, with different combinations of the economic variables having broadly similar effects on voting choice in both countries. However, leaders appear to have stronger effects in Australia than New Zealand and Left–Right ideology slightly stronger effects in New Zealand, in most instances. This latter finding is not consistent with

**Table 3a.** Effects of economic and political attitudes on voting for incumbent government in Australia, 1996–2004

	1996 Labor	1998 Coalition	2001 Coalition	2004 Coalition
<b>Economic<sup>a</sup></b>				
Household 1 year ago	–1	12*	9	5
Country 1 year ago	13**	8	21**	–3
Country in 1 year from now	–41**	13*	–4	22**
State of economy good	–	13*	12*	11*
<b>Political<sup>b</sup></b>				
Interest in politics	–11**	2	–2	7
Satisfied with democracy	–2	0	0	–3
Favours social spending	–1	–7	–11**	–8**
Favours immigration	3	5	–3	–3
Like PM	72**	75**	79**	93**
Ideology (Right)	–12*	32**	22**	18**
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.48	0.42	0.49	0.58
% Concordant	85.9	81.6	85.4	89.3
N	1797	1897	2010	1769

*Note:*

See Table 3b footnotes.

**Table 3b.** Effects of economic and political attitudes on voting for incumbent government in New Zealand, 1996–2005

	1996 National	1999 National	2002 Labour Alliance	2005 Labour Progressive
Economic <sup>a</sup>				
Household 1 year ago	10**	8*	-4	1
Country 1 year ago	13**	12*	9*	8
Country in 1 year from now	-4	-22**	14**	5
State of economy good	16**	14**	7*	7
Political <sup>b</sup>				
Interest in politics	3	1	5	6
Satisfied with democracy	-2	1	9*	7*
Favours social spending	-8*	-3	7**	7*
Favours immigration	4	2	1	1
Like PM	59**	47**	53**	56**
Ideology (Right)	33**	30**	-36**	-40**
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.35	0.33	0.31	0.32
% Concordant	81.2	82	78.2	78.6
N	4011	5022	4537	2731

*Notes:*

Figures are percentage probabilities of voting for the incumbent government between the maximum and minimum values of each variable, after controlling for the effects of the other variables in the equation (including social structure).

Dependent variable is vote for incumbent parties = 1, all others in the sample (including non-voters in New Zealand) = 0.

Missing values are substituted by the variable mean.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup> Questions were:

How does the *financial situation of your household now* compare with what it was 12 months ago?

How do you think *the general economic situation in the country now* compares with a year ago?

What do you think the *general economic situation* in this country will be in 12 months' time compared to now?

For these three questions, response categories were: Is it a lot better, a little better, about the same, a little worse, or a lot worse?

What do you think of the state of the economy these days in New Zealand? Would you say that it is very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, or very bad?/For Australia: The general standard of living has: increased a lot, increased a little, stayed the same, fallen a little, fallen a lot.

<sup>b</sup> Questions were:

Generally speaking, how much interest do you usually have in what's going on in politics? Four-point scale.

On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Australia/New Zealand?

For Australia: If the government had a choice between reducing taxes or spending more on social services, which do you think it should do? Strongly favour reducing taxes, mildly favour reducing taxes, depends, mildly favour spending more on social services, strongly favour spending more on social services. For New Zealand: One represents the view that the government should reduce taxes, and five the view that there should be a tax increase so government can spend more money on health and education. Where would you place your view? (After 1999 the scale became 7 points.)

Do you think the number of immigrants allowed into Australia/New Zealand nowadays should be increased a lot, increased a little, remain about as it is, reduced a little, or reduced a lot?

'Like PM' is an 11-point scale, like = 1, dislike = 0; ideology is a similar scale, Right = 1, Left = 0.

Source: AES 1996–2004; NZES 1996–2005.

a 'set one' globalisation hypothesis: Left–Right ideology should be weaker in New Zealand if globalisation has greater effects there. It may, however, be more consistent with a multi-party system where voters are more encouraged to think of 'Centre-Left' and 'Centre-Right' party blocs than a smaller number of parties that completely encapsulate those differences.

Interest in politics has little impact on vote choices for the major parties. Political interest shows an effect for Australia in 1996 such that those with more interest were less likely to vote Labor, but there are no significant effects in New Zealand. Satisfaction with democracy has no association with voting choice in Australia, but has significant positive effects in New Zealand in 2002 and 2005. This could be interpreted as reflecting perceptions among those valuing democracy that New Zealand's election results in 2002 were reflective of public opinion, although the much narrower result of the 2005 election calls this into question. These effects after each term of Labour-led government indicate that democratic satisfaction was enhanced by those governments, again not entirely consistent with a 'set one' globalisation hypothesis.

Attitudes towards the key socio-economic distributional issue of whether governments should reduce taxes or spend more on social services such as health and education register important effects in the 2001 and 2004 elections in Australia. Voters who strongly favoured social spending were around 10% less likely to support the Liberal–National parties in these elections than those who strongly favoured reducing taxes. Three of the four New Zealand elections indicate the same pattern. Contrary to the proposition 'set one' hypothesis, but consistent with the alternative 'set two' hypothesis, voters are moved by these issues in the current climate. Given that these estimates are calculated after controlling for the more general effects of Left–Right ideology, with which they are correlated, this amounts to an important finding in the context of our investigations.

### **Populist and Environmental Party Support**

Opinions on immigration have no effects on voter choices between incumbents and non-incumbents. This is not surprising in that in general anti-immigration sentiment in both countries has been focused primarily on support for smaller parties, One Nation in Australia and New Zealand First. Table 4 confirms the importance of immigration for these parties in both countries. Those who oppose immigration are (with the exception of New Zealand First support in 1999) significantly and in some cases much more likely to vote for these populist parties than those who favour immigration. This finding is what the 'national sovereignty' hypothesis of proposition 'set two' would predict.

In each case, while Right-wing ideology has some positive association with choice for New Zealand First or One Nation, the effects are weak and zero for Australia in 2001 and New Zealand in 2002 and 2005, although strong in New Zealand in 1996 and still significant in 1999. This association is certainly not as strong or at least as persistent as much of the commentary about the nature of these two parties and their supporters would have led us to believe. Interest in politics is associated with voting for New Zealand First in New Zealand until 2002 at least, but not One Nation in Australia. In the New Zealand case, at least, opposition to some aspects of globalisation has apparently had mobilising effects. Dissatisfaction with the conduct of democracy is another significant factor in both countries, although stronger in Australia. The strong economic effects for New Zealand First in 1996 reflect the knowledge of its

**Table 4.** Influences on voting for One Nation/New Zealand First, 1996–2002

	Australia		New Zealand			
	1998	2001	1996	1999	2002	2005
Farming household	2	9**	2	5*	-1	0
Manual household	2	2	3*	1	1	1
<i>Reference: Non-manual</i>						
Public-sector household	1	0	1	1	0	0
Union household	2	-1	-2	-1	0	-2
University degree	2	0	-1	-1	-2*	-3**
Low education	-1	0	-4*	2	2	-1
<i>Reference: Moderate education</i>						
Maori/NESB	-3	-1	18**	5**	4*	1
Age	1	2	18**	9**	15**	3
Female	-5**	1	-1	1	0	-1
<i>Economy<sup>a</sup></i>						
Household 1 year ago	-5	-2	-2	-2	-6**	0
Country 1 year ago	-4	-4	-6	-1	2	2
Country 1 year from now	-4	-5*	14**	-2	0	-4
State of economy good	0	1	-6*	-1	5*	-4
<i>Attitudes<sup>a</sup></i>						
Interest in politics	3	1	6*	3*	7**	3
Satisfied with democracy	-15**	-9*	-1	-1	-6**	2
Favours social spending	-2	0	0	0	2	4
Favours immigration	-22**	-7**	-18**	-2	-14	-6**
Like PM	-2	5	-15**	-6**	-12**	-4*
Ideology (Right)	9*	2	11**	5*	1	-2
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.05	0.11	0.04	0.08	0.03
% Concordant	93.7	97	88.5	96.2	92.2	95.4
N	1897	2010	4010	5022	4537	2731

*Notes:*

Figures are percentage probabilities of voting for One Nation or New Zealand First between the maximum and minimum values of each variable, after controlling for the effects of the other variables in the equation.

Dependent variable is vote for One Nation/New Zealand First = 1, all others in the sample (including non-voters in New Zealand) = 0.

Missing values are substituted by the variable mean.

<sup>a</sup>See notes to tables 3a and b.

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Source: AES 1998–2001; NZES 1996–2002.

voters that New Zealand First had entered a coalition government, and their hopes that there would be an economic dividend. But the key differences between the two countries lie first in the very strong influence of older age on voting choice for New Zealand First until 2002 at least, with no apparent age effects in Australia on voting for One Nation. This most likely reflects policy differences between these two parties, with New Zealand First taking a strong stance on pensions and superannuation. Second, Maori were significantly more likely to support New Zealand First, reflecting the Maori ethnicity of its leader, Winston Peters, and related to often strong Maori opposition to immigration. Other social structural effects are largely absent or weak. Voting for New Zealand First, but not One Nation, is also associated with dislike of the incumbent Prime Minister.

**Table 5a.** Influences on voting for the Green Party in Australia, 1996–2004

	1996	1998	2001	2004
Farming household	-2	1	3	5
Manual household	0	1	-3	2
<i>Reference: Non-manual</i>				
Public-sector household	-1	1	-4*	-3
Union household	-2	-1	1	2
University degree	1	1	6**	8**
Low education	-1	-3**	-1	-5*
<i>Reference: Moderate education</i>				
Maori/NESB	0	-2	0	-5
Age	-2	-5*	-2	-9
Female	1	3*	2	4*
Household 1 year ago	0	1	3	-4
Country 1 year ago	1	-2	-6	2
Country 1 year from now	2	-2	4	-2
State of economy good	-	-1	-2	5
Interest in politics	-4	-3	6*	-4
Satisfied with democracy	-4*	-3	-2	-5
Favours social spending	4*	1	9**	5
Favours immigration	0	1	2	8*
Like PM	-1	0	-7*	-12**
Ideology (Right)	-6*	-3	-11*	-11**
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.04	0.1	0.13
% Concordant	98	97.6	94.3	90.4
N	1797	1897	2010	1769

*Note:*

See Table 5b footnotes.

In popular discourse, Green Party support is widely associated with young, highly educated, politically engaged citizens and Green parties are also often seen as more Left wing than mainstream social democratic parties. These suppositions are only partially supported by the data for Australia and New Zealand (see Tables 5a and 5b). Social structure plays only a minor role in shaping Green votes, but where it does the highly educated do tend to be more inclined to favour the Greens while the lowly educated tend not to. This pattern, however, while evident in some form in Australia in three of the four equations, is largely absent in the New Zealand data until 2005. Instead, in New Zealand the young are shown to be strongly and consistently aligned with the Green Party, while such a relationship is significant only once in Australia.

Perceptions of the economy have virtually no impact on Green support in either country, reinforcing the argument that voters do not associate Green parties with the economic policy space. Turning to the political attitude variables, there is one positive significant effect for interest in politics in the Australia data, but in the other three cases the sign is negative. For New Zealand, interest has impact only in 2002. The signs are also negative for satisfaction with democracy in Australia, but only one instance is significant. What is more interesting is that the proposition 'set two' hypothesis, referring to electoral demands for compensatory social provision in a context of insecurity generated

**Table 5b.** Influences on voting for the Green Party in New Zealand, 1996–2005

	1999	2002	2005
Farming household	-1	1	0
Manual household	-1	1	-2
<i>Reference: Non-manual</i>			
Public-sector household	0	0	0
Union household	0	0	-1
University degree	2	1	4**
Low education	-1	-1*	1
<i>Reference: Moderate education</i>			
Maori/NESB	-3*	-1	-3*
Age	-9**	-16**	-7**
Female	-2*	0	-1
Household 1 year ago	-2	-3	1
Country 1 year ago	3	-2	-3
Country 1 year from now	-1	-2	1
State of economy good	-4*	2	1
Interest in politics	0	7**	4
Satisfied with democracy	1	2	1
Favours social spending	0	4*	8**
Favours immigration	0	1	1
Like PM	-4*	-5**	-2
Ideology (Right)	-11**	-22**	-19**
Cox and Snell R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.06	0
% Concordant	95.6	94.7	95.9
N	5022	4537	2731

*Notes:*

Figures are percentage probabilities of voting for the Green parties between the maximum and minimum values of each variable, after controlling for the effects of the other variables in the equation.

Dependent variable is vote for Greens = 1, all others in the sample (including non-voters in New Zealand) = 0.

Missing values are substituted by the variable mean.

\*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01.

Source: AES 1996–2004; NZES 1996–2002.

by greater economic vulnerability due to globalisation, is supported in two of the four Australian equations, with those who favour social spending over tax reductions being significantly more likely to vote Green. The same applies in New Zealand in 2002 and 2005. The only significant entry in the table for attitudes towards immigration shows a positive association in Australia between favouring immigration and Green support, a result that is not consistent with our propositions. Nor is it consistent with some aspects of Green philosophy, such as low population growth and sustainability, although it could be said to be consistent with other aspects of Green philosophy, such as social justice and equity for minorities.

The Left-wing status of Green voters is confirmed in the results for ideology, although the association is relatively modest in Australia. These results are further reinforced, however, through the results for attitudes to the Prime Minister. In the last two elections in Australia, voting Green is significantly associated with negative attitudes towards the Liberal Prime Minister, while in New Zealand the effect is

negative for both the National Prime Minister and Labour Prime Ministers, except for Labour in 2005, when Labour and the Greens made more efforts not to campaign against each other. By contrast, Labour and the Greens were at odds for much of the 2002 campaign in New Zealand. In general, these results seem to imply that voters do see the Greens as an alternative 'Left' option in both countries, but more particularly and increasingly in New Zealand.

## Conclusion

In terms of the main propositions proposed at the beginning of this article, while the results are mixed, for the most part the evidence provides relatively little support for an argument of profound effects on domestic electoral politics in the Antipodes resulting from globalisation. Notwithstanding the evidence of the weakened impact of social structure in shaping voter choice, in terms of the relationship between the electorate and the political parties, electoral politics has maintained much the same shape in the two countries in the era of globalisation that it has had for many years. The weakening of structural alignments has been occurring for a long time and cannot in any way be attributed to the recent impact of globalisation. Indeed, developments such as the introduction of MMP in New Zealand have certainly had a much more significant impact than external influences resulting from global forces. Further, there appears to be little support for the argument that New Zealand electoral politics should reflect globalisation influences more strongly than Australian electoral politics.

In many cases the evidence appears to refute the globalisation propositions, especially the stronger stance incorporated in proposition set one, and even in cases where the evidence can be said to be consistent with the propositions it is often clear that globalisation cannot necessarily be accorded the status of an exclusive explanation for the results. To the extent that the evidence does appear to confirm the propositions, it is commonly the more moderate effects associated with proposition set two that are supported.

In this context, the propositions concerning the minor parties, the populist New Zealand First and One Nation parties in particular, are more often supported. In other words, there is evidence of opposition to globalisation in the data. In contrast, there is little or nothing in the analysis to indicate that globalisation will reduce choice in the electoral arena. In fact the evidence that attitudes towards compensatory social provision play an important role in contemporary Australasian electoral politics suggests that, at least in the perceptions of voters, political choice is alive and well, a proposition further reinforced by the experience of the most recent election held in New Zealand in late 2005 when the two major parties campaigned strongly on tax and redistributive issues.

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