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MĀORI AND THE 2017 GENERAL ELECTION— PARTY, PARTICIPATION AND POPULISM

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Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand is not easily placed within the contours of current populist theory (as discussed in Chapter 1). Māori politics, and particularly the Māori electorates, are distinctive features of New Zealand that disrupt conventional assumptions regarding populism. The Māori electorates are also a focus of opposition for those who refuse to acknowledge the status of Māori as tangata whenua (indigenous peoples). This chapter investigates how populism among Māori and non-Māori shape attitudes to the Māori electorates.

First, this chapter discusses the politics of the Māori electorates in 2017. The 2017 general election had significant consequences for Māori, because the Māori Party failed to win any seats. It had been represented in parliament since 2004 and had been a support partner of the National Party-led Government since 2008. Meanwhile, more Māori were elected to parliament than ever before and Māori voter turnout increased. This chapter uses New Zealand Election Study (NZES) data to ask two questions regarding the 2017 general election in relation to Māori. First,

was the decline of the Māori Party predictable? Second, did Māori voter turnout provide a reliable indication of Māori political participation overall? We begin this chapter with a discussion of what we mean by ‘Māori’, the historical origins of the Māori electorates and the emergence of the Māori Party in 2004.

In exploring the NZES data, we split the Māori participants into three categories, based on their self-identified ethnicity and their Māori descent indicator (from the electoral roll). These categories allow us to provide a picture of the Māori electorates and to examine the preferences of Māori voters on the general roll. The categories are: Māori on the Māori electoral roll (7 per cent with NZES standard sample weights applied; $n = 243$; unweighted $n = 610$); Māori on the general roll (6.7 per cent; $n = 230$, unweighted $n = 179$) and non-Māori on the general roll (86.3 per cent, $n = 2,973$, unweighted $n = 2,675$).

However, Māori identity is complex—the decision to identify as Māori may change over time as people learn more about their ancestry and as social norms change (Carter, Hayward, Blakely & Shaw, 2009). Participants’ responses to questions of identity in the NZES created some unexpected results. The ‘Māori on the Māori roll’ category includes all those participants who said they have Māori ancestry—as required by the *Electoral Act 1993*—and who enrolled on the Māori electoral roll. The ‘Māori on the general roll’ category includes all those who said they were of Māori descent and Māori ethnicity and who enrolled on the general roll.¹ ‘Non-Māori on the general roll’ includes all participants who did not indicate Māori ethnicity or Māori descent.

The Māori electoral roll requires some introduction. In 1867, the government created four Māori electorates under the *Māori Representation Act*, as a temporary measure to enfranchise Māori males who were not able to vote due to the property requirement (most Māori owned land collectively). Motivations for establishing the Māori electorates are the subject of debate, ranging from humanitarian concerns for Māori rights to representation to a desire to undermine Māori rangatiratanga (sovereignty/authority) and

1 In 2017, 3.1 per cent of participants who chose ‘Māori’ as one of their ethnic group affiliations did not indicate that they have Māori ancestry when enrolling to vote. In other words, they identified as Māori for the survey but have not identified themselves as being of Māori descent for electoral purposes. A very small group of survey participants (1.6 per cent; $n = 39$) said they were of Māori ancestry but did not identify their ethnicity as Māori: they are included in the ‘non-Māori on the general roll’ group. Of these, 26 did not answer the ethnicity question, 12 identified as European and one as Pasifika.

ring-fence and marginalise Māori electoral power (Geddis, 2006; Irons Magallanes, 2005; Miller, 2015; Parliamentary Library, 2003). Until 1967, non-Māori were not allowed to stand for election in the Māori electorates and, until 1975, ‘full-blooded’ and ‘half-caste’ Māori had to enrol in the Māori electorates (Geddis, 2006). The number of general electorates increased as the population in those electorates grew. However, the number of Māori electorates (four) remained fixed until 1996. By 1996, there were more than twice the number of electors in the Māori electorates than in the general electorates (Durie, 1998).

A major change to the Māori electoral roll occurred when New Zealand changed its electoral system in 1993 and, at the same time, the number of Māori electorates became dependent on the number of Māori on the electoral roll, rather than the electorates being fixed at four. Every five years—for a period of four months—the Māori Electoral Option (MEO) allows persons of Māori descent to decide whether they wish to be enrolled on the Māori or the general roll (Geddis, 2006). Following the MEO in 2013, prior to the 2017 election, 55 per cent of voters of Māori descent were on the Māori roll and there were seven Māori electorates (Electoral Commission, 2013).

Over the years, several minor parties have been set up as ‘Māori’ parties, including Mana Motuhake (1979), which merged with Alliance in 1991; Mana Māori Movement (1993); and smaller parties such as Mana Wāhine Te Ira Tāngata (1998), Te Tāwharau (1996), Piri Wiri Tua (1999) and the MANA Movement (2011), formed by Hone Harawira following his departure from the Māori Party. The Māori Party has been the most successful of these. It was created in 2004 after Labour Party member of parliament (MP) Tariana Turia resigned from her seat in parliament and her ministerial portfolios over the controversial *Foreshore and Seabed Act* (Godfery, 2015). Her resignation caused a by-election in the Te Tai Hauāuru seat, which Turia reclaimed under the Māori Party banner. The Māori Party is a kaupapa and tikanga (customs) Māori-based party that its founders claimed would be ‘neither left nor right, but Māori’ (Godfery, 2017a). The party describes its core values as manaakitanga (the importance of the mana of people), rangatiratanga (humility, leadership, diplomacy and knowledge of benefit), whanaungatanga (social organisation of whānau, hapū and iwi and reciprocal obligations), kotahitanga (unity, purpose and direction) and wairuatanga (spirituality) (Māori Party, 2017). Through its success in the Māori electorates, the Māori Party was in parliament from 2004 to 2017, although the party

never crossed the 5 per cent party vote threshold. Its highest party vote share was 2.4 per cent in 2008; from this time until 2017, it offered support to the National-led coalition government.

The Māori Party and the 2017 Election

The 2017 general election initially appeared uneventful, although some speculated that the Māori Party would hold the balance of power (Godfery, 2017b; Mills, 2018; Tarrant, 2017). When campaigning began in earnest in July 2017, the election seemed a foregone conclusion, with National Party leader Bill English up against Labour Party leader Andrew Little. However, the campaign took a surprising turn just two months from election day when Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei (Ngāti Kahungunu) admitted to benefit fraud during the 1990s. Her admission highlighted the challenges of living on benefits and led to a surge in the polls for the Green Party from 11 to 15 per cent by the end of July (22–27 July, One News Colmar Brunton poll; Curia, 2017a; also see Chapter 2, Figure 2.1). At the same time, Labour Party support dropped from 27 per cent to an historic low of 24 per cent (22–27 July, One News Colmar Brunton poll; Curia, 2017a; 20–28 July, Newshub Reid Research; Gower & Barraclough, 2017). In response to the poll results, Labour Party leader Andrew Little stood down and Jacinda Ardern became Labour Party leader, with Kelvin Davis (the Ngāpuhi MP from the Te Tai Tokerau Māori electorate) as deputy leader. As the new leadership team rolled out its election campaign strategy, Labour Party polling increased to 33 per cent over the first week and rose to 44 per cent (9–13 September, One News Colmar Brunton Poll; Curia, 2017b) before settling at 37 per cent on election night (Electoral Commission, 2017). Meanwhile, Turei had resigned as Green Party co-leader in August (Davidson, 2017); Green Party support then continued to drop to a final low point of 4.9 per cent in the polls shortly before the election, putting them at risk of failing to achieve the 5 per cent threshold (6–11 September, Newshub Reid Research; Newshub, 2017).

For voters in the Māori electorates, the battle lines were drawn well before the campaign period started and the Labour leadership changed. In February 2017, the MANA and Māori parties announced an agreement not to stand candidates against each other in key electorates. Consequently, Māori and MANA party candidates were not competing against one another for the electorate vote, to give both parties a better chance at

returning to parliament (Bargh, 2017). Godfery (2018) has argued that this agreement between MANA and the Māori Party was a flawed strategy from the outset, because voters in those electorates had no good reason to back candidates from parties they did not support. However, in contrast to Godfery's assertion, the 2017 NZES results show that support for both parties is moderately positively correlated for those on the Māori roll ($r = .63$). The 2014 results indicate that this is a sensible strategy. In 2014, Hone Harawira from MANA lost Te Tai Tokerau by 743 votes to Kelvin Davis (Labour; see Table 7.1), while the Māori Party candidate, Te Hira Paenga picked up 2,579 votes. Although the combined vote of Māori and MANA outpolled Labour across Māori electorates in 2014 (Vowles, Coffé & Curtin, 2017), a repeat of the close race was far from certain. Harawira had partnered with internet millionaire Kim Dotcom to contest the 2014 election under the 'Internet-MANA party' banner; therefore, his loss in Te Tai Tokerau meant that MANA had no parliamentary representation between 2014 and 2017. As shown in Figure 7.1, MANA's support in the Māori electorates did not rebound in the 2017 election; instead, it suffered a sharp decline.

A further boost for the Māori Party occurred in March 2017, when the Māori King turned his back on an established alliance with Labour and endorsed the Māori Party candidate over his own cousin and Labour MP Nanaia Mahuta. He defended this position, saying that he was disappointed the Labour Party would not consider the Māori Party as a coalition partner if Labour won the upcoming election (Forbes, 2017). In response, the Labour Party warned that Labour's Māori MPs would beat the Māori Party MPs in all the Māori electorates and that this would 'send a message to the King' (Moir, 2017). Labour raised the stakes further still when they stood most of their candidates in the Māori electorates, rather than on the party list; therefore, voters in those electorates had to vote for the Labour candidate if they wanted that candidate elected to parliament (Radio New Zealand, 2017).

Leading up to the election, polling had indicated that the Māori Party would win one or more of the Māori seats (Bracewell-Worrall, 2017). However, very few publicly released polls were conducted in these electorates, due to rising costs and dropping response rates (Tahana, 2018). The election delivered 29 MPs of Māori descent from each of the political parties in parliament, including seven Labour MPs from the Māori electorates; however, no MPs from the Māori Party won a seat and the party only received 1.2 per cent of the party vote (Koti, 2017).

The party had hoped that Te Ururoa Flavell would hold his seat of Waiariki (encompassing the broader Bay of Plenty area) and bring Marama Fox back into parliament with him on the basis of the party vote. However, Flavell lost by 1,719 votes to popular television personality Tamati Coffey (Labour Party). Therefore, the Māori Party was out of parliament. This result was largely unanticipated by both commentators and polls (Godfery, 2017b; Mills, 2018; Tarrant, 2017). Māori Party co-leaders Fox and Flavell could not hide their shock and dismay on election night; Fox accused Māori voters of having ‘gone back like a beaten wife to the abuser’ (Māori Television, 2017).

Could this result have been predicted? When seen in historical context, 2017 marked an additional point of decline for the Māori Party, whose support had faltered since the 2008 election. Table 7.1 shows the winners of the Māori electorates since 2002 (and their closest opponents). Prior to 2002, Labour held all seven electorates with large margins (from 23.6 per cent to 72.2 per cent of the vote). In 2005, former Labour MP Tariana Turia retained her seat for the Māori party with a 29.5 per cent margin over the new Labour candidate. The Māori Party gained 2.1 per cent of the party vote overall (with 27.7 per cent of the party vote in the Māori electorates) and won three further seats in parliament. In 2008, the Māori Party retained the same seats with larger margins of victory over the Labour candidates and slightly increased their party vote share to 2.4 per cent (28.4 per cent in the Māori electorates), which increased their caucus by one MP to five seats in total.

In 2008, the Māori Party entered into a coalition agreement with the National Party. Māori voters have traditionally shown low levels of support for National (Greaves, Robertson et al. 2017; Sullivan, von Randow & Matiu, 2014; Vowles et al., 2017). Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1 show that support for the Māori Party in the Māori electorates dropped sharply—to 15.6 per cent in 2011. Both co-leaders Sharples and Turia retired before the 2014 election, at which point support for the Māori Party declined further—to 14 per cent.

Although the Māori Party’s failure to win any seats in 2017 was surprising for some, the data show that voters had been moving away from the Māori Party since 2011. The Vote Compass Post-Election Sample data show the flow of party votes between the 2014 and 2017 elections (see Chapter 2, Table 2.2 for more details). This reveals to whom Māori Party voters (in 2014) gave their party vote in 2017 and whether the party vote moved from the Māori Party in 2014 to Labour in 2017, as implied by Figure 7.1.

Table 7.1: The proportion of the vote gained by candidates in the Māori electorates by party across election

	Te Tai Tokerau		Tāmaki Makaurau	Hauraki Waikato (was Tainui)		Waiairiki		Te Tai Hauāuru		Ikarooa-Rāwhiti		Te Tai Tonga	
	Samuels (L)	Mangu (IND)	Tamihere (L)	Turei (G)	Mahuta (L)	Jackson (ALL)	Ririnui (L)	Veroe (MMM)	Turia (L)	Mair (MMM)	Horomia (L)	Philip-Barbara (MMM)	Okeroa (L)
2002	50.4	16.2	73.3	12.8	48.9	25.3	61.9	17.5	71.4	78.1	5.8	63.2	11.1
<i>Margin</i>	34.2		60.5		23.6		44.4		61.8	72.2		52.1	
2005	Harawira (M)	Samuels (L)	52.4	Sharples (M)	52.7	Mahuta (L)	54.6	Flavell (M)	63.0	Horomia (L)	53.7	Okeroa (L)	47.2
<i>Margin</i>	19.0		11.1		10.3		15.1		29.5	10.9		13.1	
2008	Harawira (M)	Davis (L)	62.0	Sharples (M)	52.5	Mahuta (L)	68.6	Flavell (M)	70.6	Horomia (L)	51.5	Katene (M)	47.3
<i>Margin</i>	32.5		38.6		5.0		36.8		41.2	8.5		5.5	
2011	Harawira (MMM)	Davis (L)	43.3	Sharples (M)	58.4	Mahuta (L)	43.0	Flavell (M)	48.3	Horomia (L)	60.7	Tirakatene (L)	40.6
<i>Margin</i>	6.2		5.3		22.8		10.6		29.8	23.1		31.8	
				Jones (L)	Greenhill (M)	Greenhill (M)	Sykes (MANA)	Peke-Mason (L)	18.4	Rathania (M)	37.6	Katene (M)	8.8

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	Te Tai Tokerau		Tāmaki Makaurau		Hauraki Waikato (was Tainui)		Waiairi		Te Tai Hauāuru		Ikaroa-Rāwhiti		Te Tai Tonga	
2014	Davis (L)	44.7	Henare (L)	38.3	Mahuta (L)	61.6	Flavell (M)	45.6	Rurawhe (L)	41.3	Whaitiri (L)	46.3	Tirakatene (L)	42.9
	Harawira (MMM)	41.3	McLean (M)	30.8	Susan Cullen (M)	22.7	Waititi (L)	27.3	McKenzie (M)	33.4	Nikora (MANA)	24.1	Button (M)	24.9
Margin		3.4		7.4		38.9		18.2		7.9		22.2		18.1
2017	Davis (L)	54.0	Henare (L)	48.8	Mahuta (L)	71.6	Coffey (L)	53.7	Rurawhe (L)	45.0	Whaitiri (L)	55.1	Tirakatene (L)	45.9
	Harawira (MMM)	33.5	Taurima (M)	29.0	Papa (M)	28.4	Flavell (M)	46.3	Tamati (M)	40.2	Fox (M)	36.2	Turei (G)	25.3
Margin		20.5		19.8		43.1		7.5		4.8		18.9		20.6

Note: L = Labour; M = Maori; N = National; G = Green; IND = Independent candidate; MMM = Mana Māori Movement; ALL = Alliance.
 Source: Electoral Commission (2017).

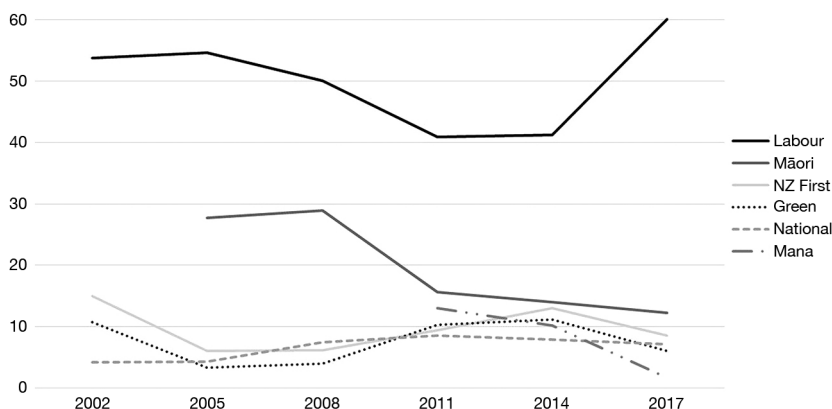


Figure 7.1: The proportion of the party vote in the Māori electorates by party across elections.

Source: Electoral Commission (2017).

Although these response categories are small, the table illustrates that Māori Party voters in 2014 who changed their vote in 2017 were most likely to vote for Labour, or National or not to vote. MANA party voters tended to shift their 2014 Internet-MANA Party vote to Labour in 2017, to the Greens or did not vote.

How can this shift from the Māori Party to Labour be understood? We can examine support for each party through two measures. First, NZES participants were asked to rate how much they liked each party on a scale from 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like), where a score of 5 is ‘neutral’. The results are displayed in Figure 7.2. The Labour Party scored best among Māori voters on both electoral rolls (an average score of 7.4 for Māori on the Māori roll and 6.5 for Māori on the general roll), with regard to how much voters liked the party and how few voters would never vote for the party. In fact, Labour had the highest overall average likeability across all voters with a score of 5.9.

Second, participants were asked to select which parties they would never vote for—a clear indicator of dislike. While National maintained its party vote among Māori voters from 2014 to 2017, Māori voters supported National at lower rates than did non-Māori. Māori on the Māori roll tended to dislike National (with an average rating of 3.3) compared to non-Māori who were more neutral or tended to like National (with an average rating of 6.1). Additionally, half of Māori on the Māori roll said that they would never vote for National, compared with 36 per cent of Māori on the general roll and 18.3 per cent of non-Māori.

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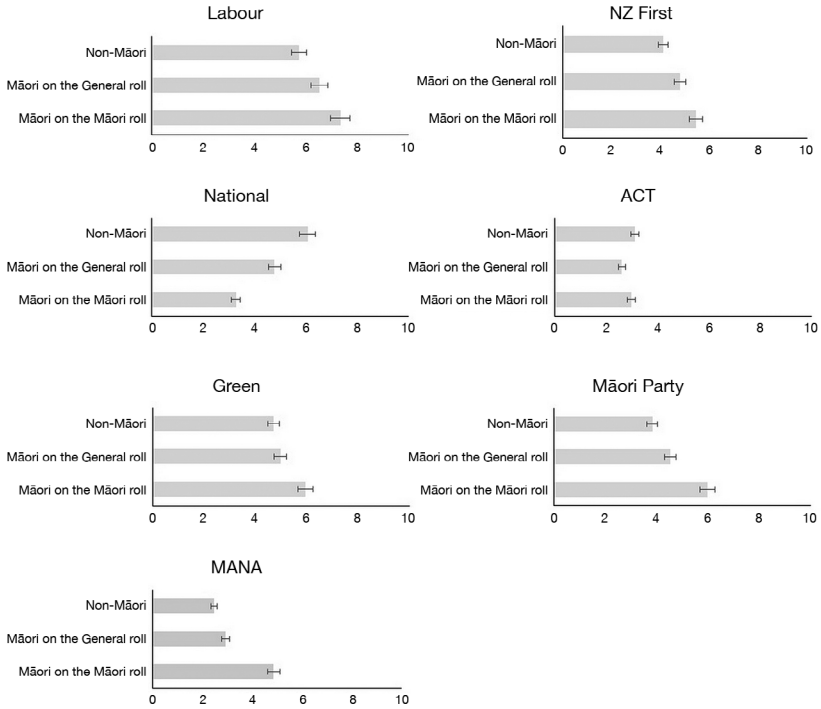


Figure 7.2: Mean likeability ratings by party in 2017 (from 0 [strongly dislike] to 10 [strongly like]) across Non-Māori, Māori on the general roll and Māori on the Māori roll.

Source: New Zealand Election Study (2017).

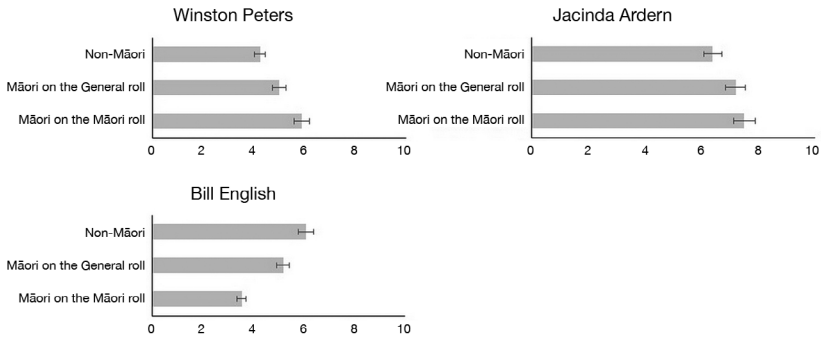


Figure 7.3: Mean likeability ratings for party leaders (0 [strongly dislike] to 10 [strongly like]).

Source: New Zealand Election Study (2017).

The popularity of Labour leader Jacinda Ardern may also explain the shift of Māori voters from the Māori Party towards Labour. Figure 7.3 shows exceptionally high likeability for Ardern, with an average score of 7.5 out of 10 for Māori on the Māori roll and 7.2 for Māori on the general roll (see Chapter 6 for further details of Ardern’s likeability). We do not have data on the likeability of Kelvin Davis; however, it is possible that having a Māori deputy leader has positively affected Ardern’s likeability among Māori.

Certainly, early media representations of Ardern and Davis in the leadership suggested that they would, together, be Labour’s ‘saviours’ (Robins, 2017). However, to put these numbers in perspective, we ran the same analyses for all party leaders across the 2017, 2014 and 2011 NZES datasets, split by Māori descent and roll type. Ardern’s likeability rating was higher than any leader during this period; the next highest rating was an average of 6.4 for non-Māori liking John Key in 2014. Therefore, it seems clear that the Māori Party’s ongoing association with the National Party has cost it its remaining seats in 2017 (Godfery, 2018, p. 395). As Labour’s popularity increased in 2017, Māori moved their support back to Labour.

Māori Voter Turnout and Political Participation

Māori have lower voter turnout than non-Māori—the lowest overall turnout in the Māori electorates (Sullivan et al., 2014; Vowles et al., 2017). In 2017, 79 per cent of all enrolled voters turned out to vote in the election (Electoral Commission, 2017). Overall, for voters of Māori descent (on both rolls), turnout was 71.1 per cent; it was 80.4 per cent for non-Māori. Māori voter turnout increased in 2017 in the younger age groups. In 2014, overall turnout for those of Māori descent was 67.6 per cent (compared with 78.3 per cent for non-Māori). In 2014, turnout for those in the 18–24 age bracket was 55 per cent, which increased to 62 per cent in 2017, whereas turnout for the 25–29 age bracket was 56 per cent in 2014 and 62 per cent in 2017.

Why did Māori voter turnout (and overall turnout) increase in the 2017 election? The closeness of a race has been shown to motivate voter turnout—in a close race, voting seems to be less burdensome, in a trade-

off where one's individual vote may make a difference to the final outcome (Blais, 2000; Geys, 2006; Vowles, 2010). Although this was not reflected in the polls, the Māori electorates were perceived to be close; some commentators even predicted that the Māori Party could hold the balance of power (Godfery, 2017b; Mills, 2018). However, the highest increase in turnout between 2014 and 2017 across the Māori electorates was in Te Tai Tonga (5.6 per cent; see the right column in Table 7.2), followed by Waiariki (4.2 per cent), which, along with Te Tai Hauāuru, was one of two Māori electorates with winning margins under 10 per cent in 2016. The lowest increases were in Tamaki Makaurau (0.8 per cent) and Te Tai Tokerau (2.9 per cent) (Electoral Commission, 2017). Therefore, these increases in turnout could not be explained by the closeness of the race; however, perhaps other differences across electorates—such as age or economic deprivation and between-iwi differences—underlay these shifts. This is consistent with the findings of Vowles (2015), who showed that the closeness of the national-level race, rather than the closeness of the race in an individual Māori electorate, is more important in motivating Māori turnout.

Table 7.2: Turnout by electorate and the change in turnout between 2014 and 2017

Electorate	Turnout 2017 (%)	Change from 2014 (%)
Te Tai Tokerau	70.5	+2.9
Tāmaki Makaurau	64.0	+0.8
Hauraki-Waikato	67.3	+3.2
Waiariki	68.9	+4.2
Te Tai Hauāuru	69.5	+3.9
Ikaroa-Rāwhiti	67.6	+2.3
Te Tai Tonga	71.3	+5.6
Total	68.5	+3.3

Source: Electoral Commission (2017).

Campaigns were conducted before the election to increase Māori voter turnout. In the 2016 budget, the government committed NZ\$5 million over four years to Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Māori Development) to increase Māori electoral participation and awareness across the 2017 and 2020 elections and to advertise the 2018 Māori electoral roll option (Māori Party, 2016; Treasury, 2016). A NZ\$2 million campaign by Te Puni Kōkiri, 'For Future's Sake vote' (#FFSVOTE), was aimed primarily at the

18–29 age group (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2018), reflecting the fact that Māori are a relatively young population (32 per cent of Māori are aged 18–29); crucially, young people are less likely to vote. The slogan, reportedly tested on focus groups, was a play on the commonly used text-talk abbreviation where the ‘F’ represents an expletive. The campaign mostly used social media (Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat) and skits by comedian William Waiirua (Tahana, 2018). A similar campaign was mounted by RockEnrol; although it was not specifically targeted at Māori (given their younger average age than non-Māori), it may have had an effect. RockEnrol began in the 2014 election, through crowdfunding, led by ‘four ambitious and idealistic twenty-somethings’ with links to community campaigning organisations (RockEnrol, 2016). RockEnrol used a three Ps approach—Pledge, Party, Polls—wherein young people were asked to pledge to vote or express an interest in voting, were then given tickets to concerts and were later reminded to vote by volunteers.

Although these campaigns have been credited with increasing the youth vote in 2017, and despite Te Puni Kōkiri’s confident claims that the campaign was a success (Strongman, 2017), Bargh (2017) noted that more robust analysis is required regarding the efficacy of the #FFSVOTE campaign. She noted significant variations in voter turnout both among and within Māori electorates (Bargh, 2017). It is also unclear what #FFSVOTE may have added above and beyond RockEnrol’s three Ps evidence-based approach (O’Connell Rapira, 2016).

Institutional barriers may also have suppressed Māori voter turnout. Controversy arose during the 2017 campaign when Massey University lecturer Veronica Tawhai (2017) reported that Māori had complained to her that polling booth staff lacked knowledge of the Māori roll and the electoral system, which led to some Māori having their voting rights violated. Some Māori on the Māori roll were told they were not registered; others were given incorrect information about enrolling and were handed incorrect voting forms. Tawhai’s claims are supported by evidence suggesting that a lack of knowledge on the part of electoral staff is a structural barrier to Māori voting (Galicki, 2018). The Electoral Commission (2017) received 40 complaints from Māori voters, many echoing Tawhai’s concerns. Following Tawhai’s press statement, the Electoral Commission issued a memo to polling booth staff in an attempt to rectify these concerns (Robinson, 2017).

There are many reasons that Māori might not vote. First, Māori tend to be a younger population and, generally, younger people are less likely to vote than older cohorts (Statistics New Zealand, 2013; Vowles, 2014). Other likely contributing factors relate to socio-economic variables such as home ownership, income, education and employment (Chapple, 2000; Humpage, 2005). Second, many Māori may view the voting system as a colonial Pākehā construct and have no desire to participate. Indeed, under early colonial governments, Māori political participation formed a key goal of assimilation; therefore, voting could be interpreted as an endorsement of this colonial system (Walker, 2004). Indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities generally, tend to have lower levels of trust in government and elected officials and lower political efficacy (Banducci, Donovan & Karp, 2004; Clymer & Falk, 2004; Evans, 2014; Fitzgerald, Stevenson & Tapiata, 2007; Hill & Alport, 2010; Rahn & Rudolph, 2005).

Further, voter turnout is only one indicator of political participation; Māori and non-Māori may participate in politics in different ways (Bargh, 2013; Greaves et al., 2018; McVey & Vowles, 2005). Māori have a long tradition of notable hīkoi (protest marches), such as the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed hīkoi and the 1975 Māori Land March. Recognising this variety, we examined a range of types of Māori political participation in addition to voter turnout (including collective or online action), to provide the full picture of Māori political engagement in the 2017 general election and over the past five years. This examination revealed an interesting pattern of differences, as illustrated in Table 7.3.

The non-Māori sample had higher participation than Māori in only one area; they were more likely to engage in financial activities such as boycotting products or contributing monetary donations to a campaign. However, Māori on the Māori roll were more likely to have participated in social activities such as talking to someone about how they would vote and attending a political meeting or hīkoi/protest. The difference was significant—20.3 per cent of Māori on the Māori roll in the past five years indicated this type of engagement compared to 8.3 per cent of non-Māori. There also existed differences between Māori and non-Māori engagement with media and social media: Māori on the Māori roll watched an election debate at higher rates than non-Māori (70.2 per cent versus 63.7 per cent) and Māori on both rolls reported promoting issues on social media at higher rates than non-Māori. Māori were more likely to have signed a petition and were slightly more likely to have phoned talkback.

Table 7.3: The frequency of engaging in various political activities by descent and roll type

	Māori on Māori roll % (n)	Māori on General roll % (n)	Non-Māori % (n)
This election			
Contributed money	4.2 (9)	3.3 (7)	4.7 (129)
Put up a sign/poster	4.8 (10)	0 (0)	1.5 (40)
Watched an election debate	70.2 (165)	61.8 (141)	63.7 (1,838)
Attended a political meeting	9.5 (20)	1.9 (4)	5.0 (134)
Talked to someone about how they should vote	77.8 (182)	86.0 (191)	71.5 (2,045)
Last five years			
Signed petition	40.8 (98)	40.7 (92)	35.6 (1,007)
Select or Royal Committee submission	4.5 (11)	3.9 (9)	3.8 (113)
Consultation with government	10.1 (24)	9.3 (29)	9.3 (261)
Written to a newspaper	5.5 (13)	5.7 (13)	5.4 (153)
Protest/march/hīkoi	20.3 (48)	13.7 (31)	8.3 (232)
Phoned talkback	4.7 (11)	5.2 (12)	3.4 (94)
Boycotted product	20.2 (48)	26.5 (60)	28.2 (795)
Promoted issue on social media	26.1 (62)	27.4 (62)	22.8 (639)
Contacted politician/official	18.4 (44)	21.1 (48)	18.4 (516)

Note: The first segment of questions asked participants if they had performed the activities during the election campaign; the second segment asked if participants had performed any of the following activities in the past five years. Bold represents the highest value across the three groups.

Source: New Zealand Election Study (2017).

It is important to note that the NZES did not include measures of participation in politics at other levels significant to Māori, such as iwi, hapū or marae politics. These are essential indicators of Māori political participation and engagement, which are worthy of future investigation (Bargh, 2013; Greaves et al., 2018). Further, future research could investigate patterns of Māori political participation over the rich history of the NZES. In summary, Māori voter turnout increased in 2017 due to multiple factors, in the context of a long history of non-electoral political participation by Māori that has been significant in a range of ways, not least in the birth of the Māori Party.

Populism, Authoritarianism, Māori Voters and the Māori ‘Seats’

The New Zealand First party leader, Winston Peters, is Māori and is also commonly referred to as a populist leader (as discussed in Chapter 1). Are these two characteristics somehow related? Exploring populism within minority groups has rarely, if ever, been attempted because minorities are commonly targeted by populists. New Zealand provides an excellent context for such a study, given that Māori are a sizeable and vocal numerical minority and are also tangata whenua (i.e. they have differential status to other ethnic minority groups due to their indigeneity). We might expect Māori to be more populist, given the popularity of Winston Peters and New Zealand First with Māori (Greaves, Robertson, et al., 2017; Vowles et al., 2017). In 1996, New Zealand First became the first political party to break the Labour party’s stronghold on the Māori electorates, winning all five Māori electorates. Further, Māori have good reasons to be anti-elite, given their experiences with colonisation and assimilation. It may be predicted that Māori would score lower on populism, which has been theorised as a reaction to growing diversity, which relates to the desire to return to the ‘good old days’ or some kind of mythical past existence (Taggart, 2000). Originally, goodwill existed between populists and elites, but this has been eroded; for Māori, however, sustained trust has never existed between Māori and (largely Pākehā) elites throughout New Zealand’s colonial history. Further, in Western nations, populism is typically associated with those of European descent (Frank, 2007).

In this discussion, we approach the question of Māori and populism from two perspectives: (1) the extent to which Māori themselves are populist and (2) the extent to which the general population’s attitudes towards the Māori electorates might be associated with populism. First, to explore differences between Māori and non-Māori in terms of populism, we test the populism and authoritarianism scales across Māori on the Māori roll, Māori on the general roll and non-Māori. As discussed in Chapter 2, populism can be measured in various ways. We use the populism and authoritarianism scales, where populism taps into attitudes that elites are ‘out of touch’ and corrupt and authoritarianism is associated with the desire for a strong leader, majoritarianism (with minorities adapting to majority will) and a belief in discipline (e.g. the death penalty and parental discipline).

Second, opposition to the Māori electorates is often interpreted as one way that populism manifests in the New Zealand context (as discussed in Chapter 1). As tangata whenua, Māori have strong claims to the national identity in relation to Pākehā New Zealanders (and more recent immigrants). The populist response, seeking to undermine Māori identity claims, would be to create a superordinate ‘New Zealander’ category that obscures ethnic group differences to hold a true nativist-style identity in relation to recent immigrants to New Zealand. Consequently, the Māori electorates are often targeted by politicians who position their existence as an ‘us versus them’ issue and promote the idea that abolition of the Māori electorates creates true equality among ‘us’ (Māori and Pākehā) as true ‘New Zealanders’ (Brash, 2004).

Māori Voters, Populism and Authoritarianism

In relation to the question of how ‘populist’ Māori themselves are, NZES data reveal that Māori on the Māori roll were more populist than non-Māori; Māori on the general roll typically fall somewhere between the two. The average scores across groups for populism are presented in Figure 7.4, which shows that Māori on the Māori roll had the highest average score (0.66), while Māori on the general roll scored 0.53 and non-Māori scored the lowest with 0.47. Is this driven by a high level of agreement for Māori on certain questions or do Māori on the Māori roll score higher on populism across all questions?

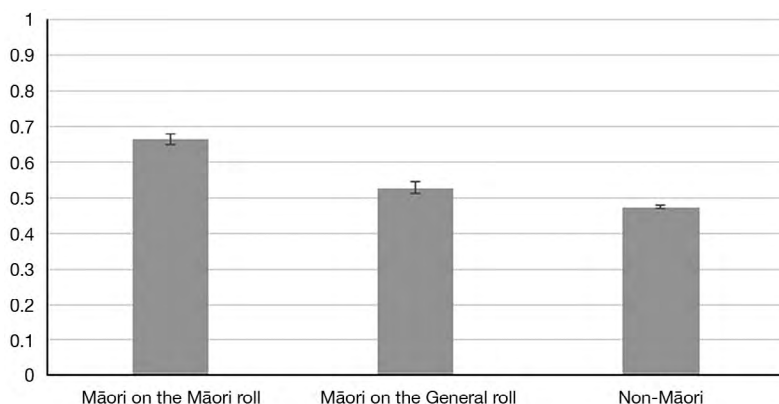


Figure 7.4: Average populism scores for Māori on the Māori roll, Māori on the general roll and non-Māori.

Source: New Zealand Election Study (2017).

We can break this down further by examining the statements presented in the NZES and the percentage of people from each group agreeing with those statements. This reveals that Māori on the Māori roll scored highest of all groups on all statements:

1. *The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions:* 65 per cent of Māori on the Māori roll agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, compared with 57 per cent of Māori on the general roll and 52 per cent of non-Māori.
2. *Most politicians care only about the interests of the rich and powerful:* 62 per cent of Māori on the Māori roll agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 48 per cent of Māori on the general roll and 34 per cent of non-Māori.
3. *How widespread or unusual do you think corruption such as bribe-taking is among politicians and public servants in New Zealand? Would you say it is very widespread, quite widespread, quite unusual, or very unusual?:* 60 percent of Māori on the Māori roll selected 'very' or 'quite widespread', as did 26 percent of Māori on the general roll and 25 percent of non-Māori.
4. *The New Zealand government is largely run by a few big interests:* 65 per cent of Māori on the Māori roll strongly or somewhat agreed, as did 52 per cent of Māori on the general roll and 45 per cent of non-Māori.
5. *Where 1 means government should listen more to experts and 5 means government should listen more to the public, where would you put your view?:* 60 per cent of Māori on the Māori roll selected 4 or 5 (suggesting that the public rather than experts should be listened to), as did 51 per cent of Māori on the general roll and 41 per cent of non-Māori.
6. *What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles:* 60 per cent of Māori on the Māori roll agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 44 per cent of Māori on the general roll and 42 per cent of non-Māori.

Māori, particularly those on the Māori roll, appear more populist than other groups. This makes sense in the New Zealand context: New Zealand First is typically called New Zealand's populist party and is (as noted above) a party that has always had a Māori leader (Winston Peters) and, in 1996, won all five Māori electorates. However, the picture is more complex than this; it may be that populism as measured here is linked to the measure of external political efficacy (a voter's belief that they can influence politics). Therefore, we investigated external efficacy across

Māori on the Māori roll, Māori on the general roll and non-Māori. Māori on the general roll had the highest score on efficacy (an average of 0.82), which is significantly higher than both Māori on the Māori roll (0.80) and non-Māori (0.76). The difference between Māori on the Māori roll and the other groups was not statistically significant; however, the difference was significant between Māori on the general roll and non-Māori.

This suggests that Māori on the general roll score slightly higher on efficacy than others on the general roll, at least in terms of beliefs that voting and those in office can make a difference. By contrast, the populism questions listed earlier probe issues relating to trust in government and elites, in response to concerns that trust has recently been in decline among the majority culture. However, a minority indigenous culture may never have had a high level of trust in government and elites. As noted above, indigenous peoples have lower trust in government within the context of colonisation; thus, lower regard among Māori for political elites could be reasonably expected (Banducci et al., 2004; Clymer & Falk, 2004; Evans, 2014; Fitzgerald et al., 2007; Hill & Alport, 2010; Rahn & Rudolph, 2005). Additionally, one of the largest effects was the difference in reported corruption (60 per cent of Māori on the Māori roll, compared with 25 per cent of non-Māori). It may be the case that Māori believe that corruption is widespread because they actually experience corruption more than Pākehā. For example, analysis of the 2016 International Social Survey Programme question ‘In the last five years, how often have you come across a public official who hinted/asked for a bribe or favour in return for service’ has shown that 8.6 per cent of Pākehā had experienced this kind of corruption, compared to 20.8 per cent of Māori (Milne, Humpage & Greaves, 2016). Therefore, it remains problematic to generalise regarding the explanations for high populism scores across Māori and non-Māori in response to the survey questions. Perhaps Māori have always viewed the elites in this way.

Populism, Authoritarianism and Attitudes towards the Māori Electorates

In 1986, the Royal Commission recommended that New Zealand adopt a form of mixed member proportional (MMP) system that did not have a Māori roll or Māori electorates (Royal Commission on the Electoral System, 1986). As discussed earlier, this recommendation was

not upheld—the electorates and roll were both retained and, indeed, strengthened. The *Electoral Act* was amended so that the numbers on the Māori roll were used to determine the number of Māori electorates in the same ratio as the general electorates. Following the first MMP election, Māori representation in parliament increased and has since been consistently at or above the proportion of Māori in the population.

Since the introduction of MMP, public debates regarding Māori representation have focused on the increasing number of Māori in parliament; calls have arisen to abolish the seats because they are no longer necessary to increase numbers of Māori in parliament (Joseph, 2008). Calls to abolish the Māori seats to reduce Māori representation in parliament overlook the fact that non-Māori can stand for election in those seats; therefore, Māori representation is not guaranteed. Nevertheless, appeals to abolish the seats have resonated with some voters (as discussed below). Most notably, in 2004, National Party leader Don Brash delivered his infamous ‘Orewa speech’ in which he called for the abolition of the Māori seats (Brash, 2004). In 2008, despite longstanding National Party policy to abolish the seats, party leader John Key refused to do so, suggesting there would be ‘hikois from hell’ if he did so (Young, 2014). Since the 2017 election, New Zealand First has called for a referendum on the seats, despite dropping its demand for their abolition when the party formed a coalition government with Labour (New Zealand First, 2018). More recently, the ACT Party has reaffirmed its policy for the abolition of the seats (Radio New Zealand, 2018).

The NZES has asked a question on the abolition of the Māori electorates for several elections; this forms a useful proxy for testing this New Zealand-specific style of populism. To determine whether opposition to the Māori electorates relates to an underlying dislike of ethnicity-based outgroups, we use the anti-out-group questions from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). Most of these questions examine attitudes towards immigrants and what it takes to be a ‘true New Zealander’. In summary, we investigate populism, authoritarianism and in- and out-group attitudes across Māori and non-Māori in relation to how supportive people are of the Māori electorates.

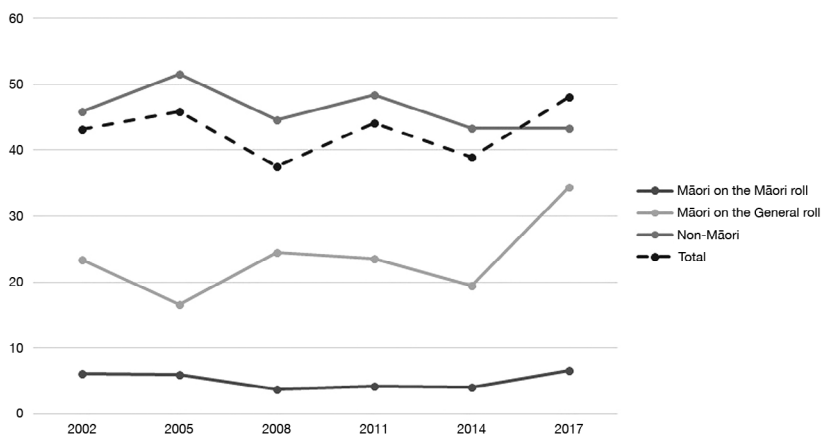


Figure 7.5: The percentage of people opposed to the Māori seats/electorates.

Note: The NZES question wording changed in 2017—a ‘fewer seats’ option was added. This response has been combined with the ‘abolish’ responses in this figure.

Source: New Zealand Election Study (2017).

Figure 7.5 shows the percentage of people opposed to the Māori electorates from 2002 to 2017. These results indicate two general trends. First, support for the Māori electorates increased after 2002, reduced in 2011 and has since been increasing again. Overall, since 2002, there has been more support for keeping or increasing the number of electorates than for abolishing them. There may be various reasons for this; as discussed above, the Māori Party’s support of the National-led government from 2008 onward was unpopular with Māori voters. The Māori Party candidates were elected from the Māori electorates; this association may have driven down support for the Māori electorates themselves among disgruntled Māori voters (although this support returned over time).

Second, unsurprisingly, support for the electorates has always been significantly higher among Māori on the Māori roll than any other group. Māori on the general roll have been less opposed to the electorates than non-Māori. It may seem that opposition to the electorates among Māori on the general roll rose sharply between 2014 and 2017; however, this is likely because the wording of the NZES question changed. The 2017 NZES added the response option of ‘fewer’, whereas previous surveys only allowed for a choice between abolition, keeping the electorates as they are or adding more electorates. For Māori on the general roll, this ‘fewer’ option may better reflect their preferences, because their choice

to enrol to vote on the general roll effectively means there will be fewer electorates. To compare across elections, we have treated both the ‘fewer’ and ‘abolish’ categories as opposition. Non-Māori are generally the most opposed to the Māori electorates; only once, in 2014, did that opposition exceed 50 per cent of those surveyed—the opposition declined again in 2017. Overall, NZES data show that, despite the consistent engagement of political parties in debates regarding the future of the Māori electorates, the public generally support retention of the Māori electorates and such support is increasing over time.

How do attitudes towards the Māori electorates intersect with populist attitudes? Because so few Māori opposed the Māori electorates, to obtain more reliable estimates for these analyses we have split people into two categories: Māori (the Māori on the Māori roll and Māori on the general roll categories together) and Pākehā. Because the theory and literature currently address populism as a majority European phenomenon, Pākehā are the group of most interest here. Small subsamples for other tauīwi—those without iwi, such as Pasifika and Asians—preclude separate analysis here.

The first panel of Figure 7.6² demonstrates a clear pattern—the higher Māori score on populism, the more they tend to support the Māori electorates. This may mean that many Māori, compared to Pākehā, interpret the populism questions differently, reflecting a longstanding distrust in what they perceive to be settler colonial government, underscored by Māori perceptions of corruption (Banducci et al., 2004; Fitzgerald et al., 2007). Conversely, these results also suggest that Māori may see the Māori electorates as an expression of Māori self-determination that cannot be achieved through general electorate representation. Indeed, past research has shown that those who believe their identity as Māori is both positive and important and those who stand up for Māori political rights and believe in the continued importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are more likely to be on the Māori roll (Greaves, Osborne, Houkamau & Sibley, 2017).

2 Figure 7.6 is drawn from a regression model in the Appendix (see Table A7.1). In line with the models laid out in Chapter 3, we examined whether people wish to abolish the Māori electorates against our composite NZES variables representing populism and authoritarianism, and three other sets of attitudes, which reflect the original CSES ‘attitudes to out-groups’. These include cultural conformity, nativism and anti-immigration attitudes. Our model also includes ethnic identity and a control for external efficacy. We interacted ethnicity with populism, authoritarianism, nativism, cultural conformity and anti-immigration attitudes to draw out probability estimates for Māori and Pākehā.

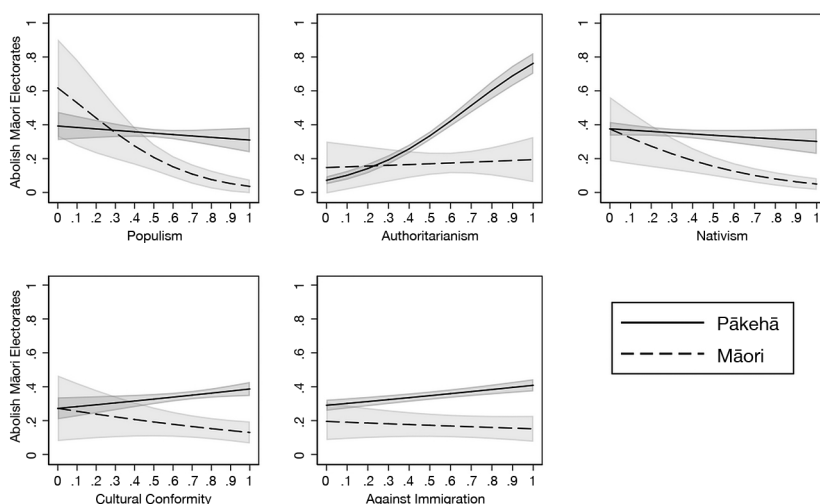


Figure 7.6: Attitudes towards the abolition of the Māori electorates.

Note: ‘Cultural conformity’ combines importance of language and importance of customs to be a true New Zealander; ‘nativist’ includes importance of being born in New Zealand, having grandparents born in New Zealand and Māori ancestry; and ‘anti-immigration’ refers to immigrants’ effects on economy, crime and culture.

Source: New Zealand Election Study (2017).

All else being equal, populism has little or no impact on whether Pākehā support or oppose the Māori electorates; the slope is only marginally negative, within confidence intervals. Our analysis indicates that a high level of populism is associated with Pākehā supporting more Māori electorates and a lower level wishing for the number to stay the same; however, these are not large differences. We can only speculate as to the causes of this effect: perhaps these participants represent left-wing populists who are dissatisfied with the system and how elites have treated Māori? Or perhaps those who distrust elites also think that Māori do not currently hold a fair number of Māori electorates?

The top middle panel of Figure 7.6 shows that, for Māori, being more or being less authoritarian does not relate to support for, or opposition to, the Māori electorates. However, for Pākehā, the difference is dramatic—authoritarianism is the greatest motivation for their opposition to the Māori electorates. These questions index an individual’s desire for a strong leader, majoritarianism and belief in discipline. In this context, these responses make sense; more authoritative leaders such as Winston Peters and Don Brash have been vocally opposed to the Māori electorates/seats (Brash, 2004; One News, 2018). Further, Māori are a numerical ethnic

minority in Aotearoa New Zealand; therefore, people who endorse these views are perhaps more likely to believe that Māori should not have any ‘special rights’, reflecting ‘Māori privilege’ discourse (Barnes et al., 2012).

The top right panel indicates that those who think being born in New Zealand and/or being of Māori descent are important for being a New Zealander are, if anything, less likely to oppose the Māori electorates. The relationship is weak for Pākehā but matters more for Māori. The results for cultural conformity in the bottom left panel are entirely predictable—for Māori, the importance of their language and customs makes them less likely to oppose the existence of the Māori electorates; however, this relationship is relatively weak and falls within confidence intervals. For Pākehā, belief that their culture and customs are important is associated with increased desire to abolish the Māori electorates. For Māori, attitudes to immigration have no bearing on their opinions regarding the Māori electorates; for non-Māori, being opposed to immigration is somewhat associated with being more likely to oppose the Māori electorates.

Conclusions

This chapter has used NZES data to investigate the Māori Party, Māori participation and aspects of populism. The discussion has revealed that the decline of the Māori Party was predictable when the trends over time are considered. However, the popularity of Labour leader Jacinda Ardern likely hastened the party’s departure from parliament. Regarding participation, while Māori voter turnout improved in 2017, it remains low compared to non-Māori. However, turnout is one of the few areas where non-Māori participate more than Māori. We found much higher participation by Māori in a significant range of other political activities.

Finally, Māori score higher on the populism scale than non-Māori. However, this finding should be treated with caution because some of these questions define populism as a low estimation of the majority population’s trust and satisfaction with elites and government. For historical reasons, Māori (as an indigenous minority) have probably never exhibited high levels of trust in government elites. Therefore, it would be problematic to interpret Māori lack of trust as a ‘populist’ trend, in relation to broader international concerns regarding increasing ‘nativism’. However, even if it

is motivated in part by alienation from Pākehā-dominated elites, there is reason to believe that Māori populism is, at least in part, an expression of a desire for collective self-determination.

Most importantly, opposition to the Māori electorates among non-Māori is not based in populism. The main source of opposition to the Māori electorates is authoritarianism among non-Māori who strongly value cultural conformity and oppose immigration. Non-Māori who exhibit high authoritarian tendencies, who desire conformity to their values and who oppose immigration, tend also to oppose the Māori electorates. These electorates symbolise Māori identity and claims to indigenous rights and put into institutional practice the idea of a New Zealand identity that acknowledges pluralism and biculturalism. However, it is necessary to emphasise that this opposition to the Māori electorates is not a majority view; rather, our results indicate that a question of abolition of the Māori electorates would probably lose in a national referendum.

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Appendix

Table A7.1: Abolish Māori electorates (logistic regression)

Abolish Māori electorates (logistic regression)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Efficacy	0.079 (0.287)	0.105 (0.284)	0.101 (0.286)	0.112 (0.286)	0.069 (0.288)	0.099 (0.283)
Authoritarianism	3.397*** (0.322)	3.791*** (0.333)	3.429*** (0.322)	3.365*** (0.323)	3.378*** (0.325)	3.400*** (0.325)
Populist	-0.636* (0.356)	-0.601* (0.363)	-0.410 (0.378)	-0.636* (0.358)	-0.626* (0.355)	-0.643* (0.357)
Nativism	-0.738*** (0.261)	-0.729*** (0.257)	-0.688*** (0.261)	-0.376 (0.273)	-0.675** (0.262)	-0.723*** (0.258)
Cultural conformity (CC)	0.470** (0.230)	0.460** (0.231)	0.475** (0.229)	0.495** (0.229)	0.575** (0.248)	0.451** (0.229)
Anti-immigration	0.467*** (0.113)	0.465*** (0.114)	0.469*** (0.113)	0.456*** (0.113)	0.459*** (0.114)	0.573*** (0.121)

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Abolish Māori electorates (logistic regression)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Māori	-1.094*** (0.280)	0.810 (0.659)	1.038 (0.726)	-0.004 (0.475)	0.003 (0.572)	-0.566 (0.400)
Pasifika	-1.113** (0.503)	3.637*** (1.052)	0.885 (1.415)	-0.851 (0.588)	-0.433 (0.918)	-0.569 (0.598)
Asian	-1.142*** (0.275)	-1.502 (1.331)	-2.050** (0.879)	-0.625* (0.376)	-1.674** (0.813)	-0.775** (0.343)
Other	-1.921** (0.893)	-74.414*** (4.020)	-2.596 (1.842)	-0.270 (0.777)	-5.314** (2.664)	-13.502*** (0.365)
Māori * populist		-3.684*** (1.232)				
Pasifika * populist		-3.622 (2.430)				
Asian * populist		1.663 (1.595)				
Other * populist		1.055 (3.218)				
Māori * authoritarian			-3.456*** (1.020)			
Pasifika * authoritarian			-8.352*** (1.828)			
Asian * authoritarian			0.574 (2.138)			
Other * authoritarian			90.610*** (4.882)			
Māori * nativist				-2.248*** (0.735)		
Pasifika * nativist				-0.726 (1.501)		
Asian * nativist				-2.951* (1.730)		
Other * nativist				0.000 (0.000)		
Māori * CC					-1.563** (0.672)	
Pasifika * CC					-0.959 (1.269)	

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Abolish Māori electorates (logistic regression)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Asian * CC					0.804	
					(1.095)	
Other * CC					4.303	
					(3.016)	
Māori * anti-immigrant						-0.897*
						(0.493)
Pasifika * anti-immigrant						-0.951
						(0.955)
Asian * anti-immigrant						-0.841
						(0.542)
Other * anti-immigrant						12.120***
						(1.197)
Constant	-2.426***	-2.669***	-2.594***	-2.559***	-2.501***	-2.488***
	(0.307)	(0.305)	(0.309)	(0.298)	(0.311)	(0.300)
Pseudo-R-squared	0.100	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110
observations	3,455.000	3,455.000	3,455.000	3,446.000	3,455.000	3,455.000

Source: New Zealand Election Study (2017).

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