



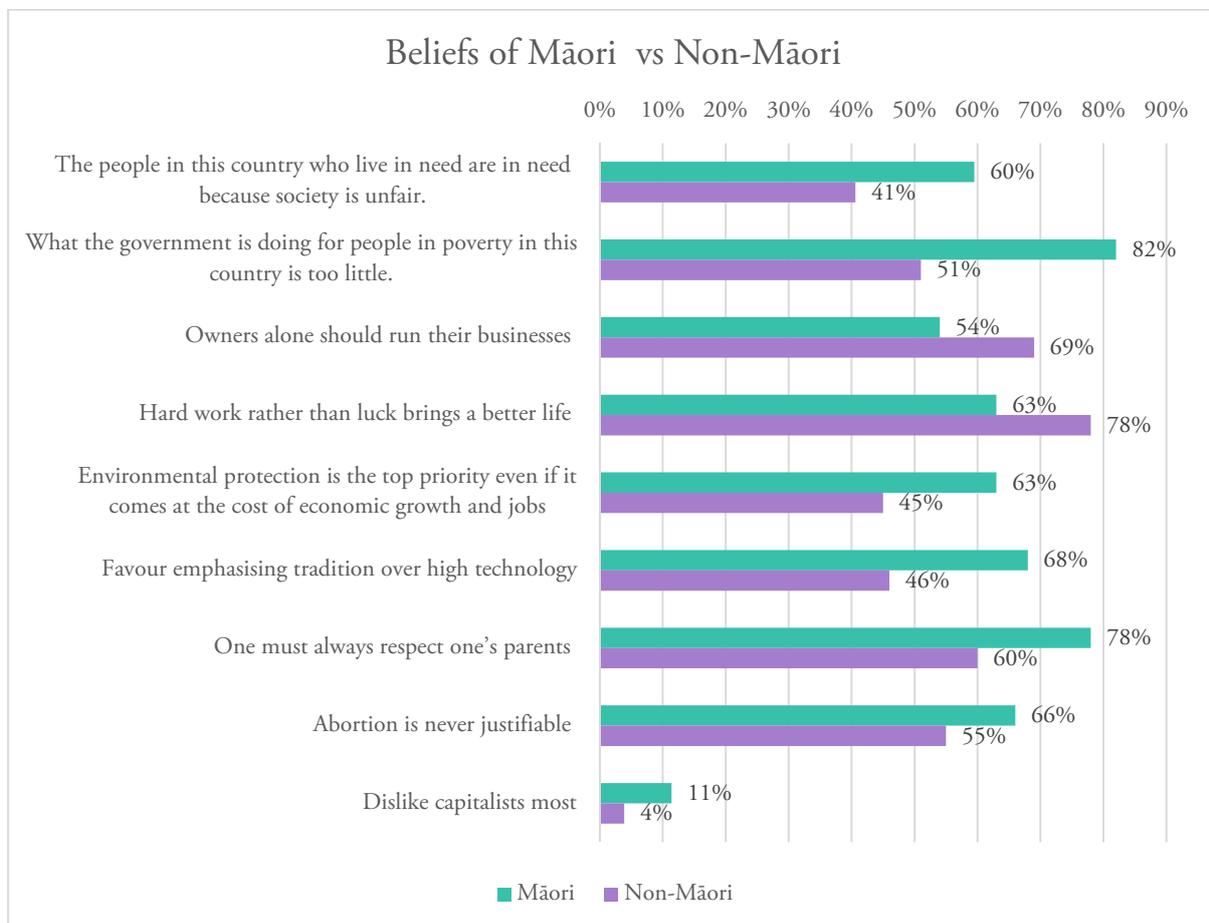
Economic Values and Beliefs of Māori and non-Māori

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A large body of research shows that systems of beliefs and values can contribute to different economic and social outcomes. Cultures that believe luck and connections are more important to personal advancement than hard work, often end up achieving less material prosperity. Ones that emphasise tradition over technology can lead to less innovation and entrepreneurship.

Researchers at Motu Economic and Public Policy Research examined beliefs about the causes of wealth or poverty and the extent to which people are responsible for their own fate in New Zealand. They compared how these differ between Māori and non-Māori.

Māori are 12 percent more likely to believe that the causes of wealth come from connections and luck, instead of individual effort, and are 18 percent more likely to believe that the poor have been unfairly treated, compared to non-Māori. Māori are also 30 percent more likely to believe that the Government is doing ‘too little’ for those in poverty.



These results control for each respondent's income level, employment status and education level.

“It's impossible to say whether these differences in economic beliefs are due to long-standing cultural differences or perceptions of historical injustices or more recent experiences of discrimination amongst Maori,” said Motu Affiliate and University of Auckland Professor, Robert MacCulloch.

When it comes to non-economic beliefs, like authoritarian tendencies and moral values, Māori appear to be more inclined to respect authority figures regardless of their qualities and faults, and tend to be religious conservatives in the sense of being averse to, for example, abortion. Māori are 18 percent more likely than non-Māori to favour the belief that one has a duty to respect and love parents and are 10 percent more likely to be anti-abortion.

Similar differences are also found when comparing beliefs of another minority group - blacks in the USA - relative to the non-black US population.

One important belief of Māori, however, differs markedly from that of blacks in the US.

Māori are 9 percent more likely to believe that the environment should be given priority over economic growth compared to non-Māori. However, the reverse is true for black Americans who are 21 percent less likely to hold this view compared to other Americans. “This suggests that being indigenous has an effect on values around the environment”, said Prof MacCulloch.

Also, unlike black Americans, Māori are more likely to believe that owners of firms should not be given free rein to run them (and other groups, like employees, should be involved). Furthermore, whereas Māori favour more tradition over high technology, and consider capitalists to be more threatening to the social order than other groups, no such effects are present for black Americans.

“Overall, Māori are significantly more in favour of collectivism, non-materialism and kinship ties compared to non-Māori,” said Prof MacCulloch. “These beliefs may help explain why many Māori entities have been built more on a stakeholder, than a shareholder, approach.”

The study [Indigenous Belief in a Just World: New Zealand Māori and other Ethnicities Compared](#) by Arthur Grimes, Robert MacCulloch, and Fraser McKay uses World Values Survey data from 1995 to 2011. It was funded by a Marsden Fund Grant from the Royal Society of New Zealand.

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About Motu

Motu Economic and Public Policy Research is an independent economic research institute which never advocates an expressed ideology or political position. A charitable trust, Motu is founded on the belief that sound public policy depends on sound research accompanied by rigorous public debate.

Motu is the top-ranked economics organisation in New Zealand. It is in the top ten global economic think tanks, according to the Research Papers in Economics ([RePEc](#)) website, which ranks all economists and economic research organisations in the world based on the quantity and quality of their research publications.

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