

Master's thesis

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The Public Opinion of the Millennium Development Goals in Norway

What may affect it?

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1 Introduction

In 2000, all members of the United Nations agreed upon the Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Development Goals were a result of this summit, and is a set of goals that concerns themselves with some of the biggest problems the human race face in the world today. However, what researchers like Mc Donnell et al. (2003) have pointed out: To reach these goals the nations need the political will to make it happen, and political will need the support from the public. Public support depends on the public opinion, and it is important for leaders to know that the public supports their policies (OECD 2004).

This thesis will try to answer the following research question: What is the Norwegian public opinion of the Millennium Development Goals, and what indicators may affect the public opinion of the goals? By performing an OLS regression analysis with survey data from the World Values Survey 2007 Norway, we will check if *media*, *education*, and *party identification/left-right placement* affect how the public prioritize the Millennium Development Goals.

The survey also conducted an experiment when the data was collected, where half of the survey sample was given more information about the goals, while the control sample, the other half of the survey sample, did not receive this information. The experiment wants to find out whether there are differences between these two groups when asked what they think about Norwegian aid spending.

In the analysis we find that the Norwegian public prioritize the Millennium Development Goals high, which support the research done by Mc Donnell et al. (2003). However, the indicators chosen in this thesis do not affect the public opinion much, except for the indicator party identification/left-right placement, which measures the public's position on a political left-right scale. The experiment do find that there are differences between the survey sample who received information about the goals, compared to the survey sample that did not receive any information about the goals. The former group were more positive to foreign aid spending compared to the latter group.

The thesis ends with the conclusion that the reason why the indicators do not affect the public opinion of the goals is that the public in general has little information about the goals, and foreign policy. However, they are highly positive to the goals anyway. The conclusion draws on theory by Ian Smillie, which sums up public opinion on development aid with the following quote: "public support for development assistance is a mile wide and an inch deep" (Smillie 1999: 72).

We will start with the background and history of the goals. Then we will look at what the Norwegian government finds to be important development policy, before taking a brief look at what the government has done to inform the public about the goals. Chapter 3 concerns itself with theory of public opinion and the indicators used in the analysis. Chapter 4 takes us through the methods used in the analysis, and presents all descriptive statistics of the data. In chapter 5, the analysis will be presented and results explained. Chapter 6 will interpret and discuss the findings, and end with concluding remarks, before we end with chapter 7 and sum up what the thesis has done and what the thesis' conclusion is.

2 Background

This chapter will present the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and then take the reader through the development of the MDGs from how they were created to how they ended up the way they are today. Further the chapter will explain in detail why it is important for the world to pursue these goals before it takes a closer look at what the Norwegian government has done to educate the Norwegian public about the MDGs. At the end the chapter sums up the main points.

2.1 The Millennium Development Goals and their history

The Millennium Development Goals were agreed upon by the United Nations' General Assembly during the Millennium Summit in 2000. Through the Millennium Declaration, which all 189 member-nations ratified, the eight Millennium Development goals saw the light of day. The assembled member nations and delegates agreed upon the following goals that the world needs to lend its attention to if we are going to fight poverty and diseases:

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality.
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health.
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

UNDP 2011 The Millennium Development Goals

However, these goals are not new. Nations agreed upon most of them during the many large global conferences in the 1990s. Several international norms and laws, which were adopted during the last decades, have shown that the world are aware of the challenges facing the poverty-ridden parts of the world. Many nations across the world have already taken steps

towards combating the problems, which the Millennium Development Goals represent, either individually or through international contracts (UN General Assembly 2001:7).

In fact, as Hulme (2010) writes, the idea to get rid of, or reduce the global poverty, roots back to the mid-twentieth century. Hulme gives us an overview of several conferences, the ones referred to above from the UN-report, which all were important steps towards the creation of the MDGs. Already in 1990 the first conference was held in New York, entitled the “Children Summit”. The following years several major conferences were held across the globe including a conference on environment and sustainable development in 1992, human rights in 1993, population and development in 1994, social development in 1995 and on women the same year, and two conferences in 1996 on human settlements and food security (HDR 1997: 106). The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, were crucial for the development of the MDGs (Hulme 2010:16). In the Human Development Report (HDR) of 1997 they list several important goals for eradicating poverty, which were agreed upon during the social development conference in Copenhagen. During this conference, the many nations attending it, agreed upon and reaffirmed the many goals decided on during the major conferences from 1990 until 1995. Examples are gender equality and the right to primary education for all children, as well as reduction in child and maternal mortality (HDR 1997: 108).

Hulme (2010) continues in his text to give us a brief history of the MDGs. In 1996, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD’s) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) delivered a report where they presented seven International Development Goals (IDGs), which reflected the interest of the OECD countries (Hulme 2010: 17). These goals were a reflection of the many large conferences during the 1990s. In the DAC report “Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation” we find that the social development goals are created as a response to the 1995 social development conference in Copenhagen (DAC 1996: 9). The only problem with this was that the only countries who really paid any attention to the IDGs were the small countries who already had political programs promoting such policies. Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands took the OECD document about the IDGs seriously, while the other countries gave the document little or none attention. There was almost no response from the developing countries either (Hulme 2010: 17).

What DAC had done by creating the IDGs was to put human development on the agenda. The UN was pleased with this, but wanted to take a lead in such global politics. From 1998 onward, this was just what the UN did. In 1998, the UN started the planning of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, which was to be held in New York in September of 2000. Kofi Annan wanted to make global poverty reduction an important part of the UN agenda in order to ensure that the Millennium Assembly became successful and not another wasted opportunity, like the 50th anniversary summit in 1997. Therefore, Annan appointed a senior advisor to draft a pre-summit report, which would be a basis for the discussions and the negotiations of the Millennium Declaration (Hulme 2010: 18).

The report, called “We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century”, had a somewhat different focus on what was important goals to reach. Poverty eradication was also the focus of this report but compared with DAC’s IDGs there were many differences. Gender equality and women’s empowerment, reproductive health, and goals for the health sector, were all what Hulme (2010) calls losers in “We the Peoples”. These goals got little or no attention in the report. Hulme (2010) explains that the UN report put less focus on human development compared with the IDGs. “We the Peoples” was, according to Hulme (2010), the most progressive results that was expected that the Millennium Summit could agree upon. However, Annan needed to show that the UN was in line with the great organizations of the world and had their support. This is why the four largest development organizations of the world; the UN; the World Bank; IMF; and OECD’s bilateral agencies, got together and produced a document called “A Better World for All: Progress Towards the International Development Goals” (BWFA). In this report, however, the DAC’s IDGs are the goals which are focused on. The BWFA even includes human development goals that “We the Peoples” had omitted (Hulme 2010: 18).

During the summer of 2000, there were “frantic negotiations about what would finally go into the Millennium Declaration” (Hulme 2010: 18). The negotiations ended with agreement and on the eight of September 2000, the Millennium Declaration was approved and signed, by all member states of the UN. Now that the world had agreed upon the Millennium Declaration there was one important thing left for Annan and the UN to do. They had to negotiate with the OECD countries and agree on what set of goals should be the leading for poverty reduction and development. Experts from the DAC, World Bank, IMF, and UNDP finalized the goals. Hulme (2010) states that it is clear that the MDGs were created in the form of the original

IDGs, but the MDGs were also significantly amended, and there was even added a last, eighth goal that had to do with co-operation. We will return to what the goals encompass in a little while. Finally, Kofi Annan could reveal the MDGs, as we know them today, in 2001. The United States did not sign up for these goals at first but did join in on the fight against global poverty during the Monterrey conference where the nations met and set out to find the economic resources needed to reach the goals (Hulme 2010: 18-19).

The overall point of the Millennium Summit and Declaration in 2000 was to find an agreement where all nations, who committed themselves, would work together to find a “comprehensive approach and a coordinated strategy” where they are able to “tackle many problems simultaneously across a broad front” (UN General Assembly 2001:7). The developed nations who have signed the Declaration have reaffirmed their commitments to “higher levels of development assistance, much more generous debt relief, and duty- and quota-free access for exports from the least developed countries” (UN General Assembly 2001:7). Goals like these make it easier to check whether nations fulfill their commitments or not.

However, it is clear that even though there have been a lot of progress there are also many signs pointing in the direction of the world community failing to achieve the many goals they have set themselves. As mentioned in "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (2001): “The widening gap between goals and achievements implies that the international community has failed to deliver on crucial commitments it made during the 1990s” (UN General Assembly 2001:19).

So far, we have looked at how the MDGs became a reality from the beginning to the final result. They started as goals set out by the DAC of the OECD, based on the many conferences of the 1990s, through many negotiations, and ended up into the MDGs with equally much influence from the OECD, and the other large international organizations; The World Bank, and IMF. Now we will turn to the goals themselves and have a closer look at what they stand for and why we need the goals.

2.2 Why we need these goals

When we take a closer look at each of the eight goals, we find that they are quite ambitious. The United Nations' General Assembly has acknowledged that there are many challenges facing the world that must be overcome if we are going to win the battle against all development problems, or just simply reach the goals we have set us through the MDGs. If we are going to handle great challenges, we must use extreme measures. The following section takes a closer look at each goal and connects them to why we need them. We will start from the top with goal 1.

Goal 1 is to fight extreme poverty and hunger. More detailed, the goal says that the world must halve the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than one dollar a day, and halve the population that suffers from hunger, by the year 2015. Finally, the goal states that we must halve the proportion of the world's population which cannot afford or in any other way reach safe drinking water (UN General Assembly 2001:19).

In 2001, when the "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" report was published, the number of people in the world whose income per day was less than one dollar was an astonishing 1.2 billion people. Over 800 million people across the world suffered from hunger and of the 11 million children under five years of age who died every year, 6.3 million died from hunger worldwide (UN General Assembly 2001:19). As much as one billion people did not have access to safe drinking water when this report was written, and as much as 2.4 billion people lacked access to basic sanitation (UN General Assembly 2001:20).

Goal 2 says that by 2015 all boys and girls around the world shall have access to primary schooling, the possibility to fulfill a complete primary level education, and that all boys and girls shall have equal access to the different levels of education (UN General Assembly 2001:20).

By 1998, of a total of 113 million school-age children not enrolled in primary education, as many as 97% lived in developing countries, and as many as 60% of these were girls. The roadmap continues on to mention that experience has shown in many cases that investments in the education of girls translate into better environments for the whole family. Examples

mentioned are better health for the family, less poverty, better nutrition for the family and less fertility among the women due to knowledge about contraceptives (UN General Assembly 2001:20). Working towards goal 2 will lead to some accomplishment of goal 1 by lowering poverty. As we will see the other goals all help work towards goal 1 in one way or another, as well as working towards their own specific goal.

Goal 3 is the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women to combat poverty, hunger and diseases, and truly stimulate sustainable development by empowering women (UN General Assembly 2001:24). This goal is a further development of goal 2 in the way that empowerment of women will lead to a decline in poverty and hunger. Two thirds of the people living on less than a dollar a day are women. By giving women equal right to education as men, and give them control over financial and material resources we will secure decline in poverty, hunger and illness in all families (UN General Assembly 2001:25).

Goal 4 focuses on under-five child mortality. It states that we must reduce the mortality of children under five years of age by two thirds within 2015. Under-five mortality declined, in the years from 1990 to 2000, from 91 to 84 per 1000 live births. Even though this is a step in the right direction, the fact is that, when the report was written, approximately eleven million children under five died annually in developing countries (UN General Assembly 2001:21).

Goal 5 states that maternal mortality must be reduced by three quarters by 2015. In 1995, it was estimated that around 515,000 women died each year of causes related to pregnancy. As much as 99 percent of these women lived in developing countries. To get rid of the high maternal mortality rate, there is a need to get health care available in all countries (UN General Assembly 2001:21). Both goal 4 and goal 5 are connected to diseases, which lead us to goal 6.

Goal 6 says that, by 2015, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria, and other major diseases that afflict humanity, must be halted and begun to be reversed (UN General Assembly 2001:22).

In 2000 almost three million people alone died of AIDS, and about 36 million people lived with HIV/AIDS. Tuberculosis is increasing in many countries because of bad treatment practices. Annually there are eight million people worldwide developing tuberculosis and two

million die from it each year. Malaria, which is another disease the goal focus on, kills around one million people every year. These diseases together with more resistance against vaccines, deterioration in health systems, and more travelling and human migration has lead to an increase in all the above mentioned diseases (UN General Assembly 2001:22). The ultimate goal is to eliminate these diseases all together. Some of the measures that the world can take, to halt those diseases are; Help children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and give them special assistance, and by making pharmaceutical companies produce essential drugs and make the drugs cheap and available to all (UN General Assembly 2001:23).

Goal 7, which is about environmental sustainability, concerns itself with the availability of clean drinkable water, basic sanitation, and with the people who have to live in the major cities' slums. By 2020, the lives of 100 million slum dwellers should improve significantly. The global urban population during the next generation will double from 2.5 billion to 5 billion people. This means that there will become a large demand for living space. With a large demand for living space and few residences available, the price will rise, and more people may be driven into the already crowded and awful slums. When the report was written, recent figures showed that a quarter of the world's population living in cities did not have access to basic sanitation and clean water (UN General Assembly 2001:23).

Goal 8 is the final goal of the MDGs. This goal calls for a major change in trade relations and to the global financial system. It calls on both developed nations and developing nations to come together and work out a global partnership, which will make it easier for developing nations to export goods produced by them. It also calls for the creation of rules and measures for debt payment from developing nations, which will make it easier for these nations to create sustainable societies (UN General Assembly 2001:25-27). Simply said create a global co-operation system, which will make it easier to reach all the MDGs.

As mentioned above the goals are very ambitious, but at the same time, they need to be this ambitious if we are going to get rid of the many problems in the world that causes all this injustice. All the goals are connected to each other in one way or another. Education for all will improve knowledge. Equal rights for women and men will give women more power, which again, will lead to sensible use of resources. This again will lead to less poverty and hunger, since women in general, are better at taking care of their family than men (UN

General Assembly 2001:20). More education will lead to more knowledge about diseases, and women will be able to learn more about how to prevent pregnancy.

In this section, we have looked at the MDGs in more detail and seen why it is important for the world to have these goals. The number of people living on less than one dollar a day was a staggering 1.2 billion people in 2001. Diseases lead to death by the millions each year, and as much as 11 million deaths each year are of children under the age of five. These are serious problems, which demands serious commitment. The following section will look at what the Norwegian government wants to focus on in its quest to reach the MDGs, and how they try to set a stop to the problems these goals face.

2.3 The Norwegian contribution in reaching the Millennium Development Goals

There is no doubt that all nations of the world need to work out ambitious goals, which they themselves need to fulfill, if the world as one is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the deadline in 2015. Norway has indeed set high expectations to herself, and the international society, in recognition of what needs to be done. In a White Paper from 2003-2004, the Norwegian government specifies that to be able to reduce poverty there is a need for political work in international forums to create global reforms (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):6). The developing nations must be open to reforms that will change their political, social and economic situations. However, these nations cannot do all the work themselves. All developed nations of the world must co-operate with developing nations, the private sector and voluntary organizations to be able to adopt reforms. Developed nations must also lead policies, which promote more aid to all developing nations of the world (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):6).

From St.meld. nr. 21 (1999-2000) “Menneskeverd i sentrum”, we find that the Norwegian government is leading a development policy focusing on human rights. The report states that Norway wants to focus on the human rights on a national level, and especially on an international level. The government explains Norway’s focus on these rights as important, because human rights do not only engulf a nation’s own people, but every individual in the world. The human rights are defined as

“fundamental norms which should protect humans against random injustice from the government, and secure respect for human dignity, the individuals integrity, freedom, security and self-realization, regulate the social interaction between individuals, and to secure peace, security and the social and economic justice in the society. These rights are principally inviolable and universal.”

St.meld. nr. 21 (1999-2000) “Menneskeverd i sentrum”

In St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004) we find that human rights were already stated as an important part of development policy in article 55 of the UN charter. Article 55 states that in order to create the conditions needed for peaceful and friendly relations between nations the promotion of human rights and no distinction between race, sex, language or religion, are vital for development (UN charter, article 55). One of the largest problems today concerning human rights is the poverty problem in most of the developing countries of the world. Poverty becomes an even larger problem in areas of conflict. Since many of the challenges concerning human rights are found internationally, promotion of these rights has become a focus in Norwegian development policy (St.meld. nr. 35 2003-2004).

The right to education, humanitarian standards, right to freedom of speech, and the rights of more specific groups such as children and women, are all important focus areas in Norwegian development policies. The areas mentioned are just a few of the many areas that Norway works to promote human rights within (St.meld. nr. 21 (1999-2000):201). Education, women, and children, are the areas interesting to mention with the MDGs in mind.

If we return to the Millennium Development Goals, and draw a parallel between the Norwegian human rights policy focus and the MDGs, we find that goals one through four in particular are of interest. Norway wants to support developing countries in their work for gender equality and the empowering of women. Norway also wants to lead a policy that will care for especially fragile groups of children and youth (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):11).

Economic aid is one of the focus areas in Norway. By aiding undeveloped countries economically, developed nations can support and stimulate the developing countries' own efforts to create a development policy, which reduces poverty. Since poverty, hunger, and equality are the focus of Norway's development policy, the report mentions four areas of priority in which Norway will lay its effort in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The following paragraphs list these areas of priority and some examples that show what the

Norwegian government says is important to promote if a nation is going to develop itself (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004)).

The first area of priority says that it is of vital importance that developing countries develop governing systems, which will secure human rights for the people, secure democracy, and efficient and non-corrupt institutions (St. meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):89). Norway wants to promote institutions of election, parties and agencies of the people, the rule of law, public administration and national audit agencies within the administration, to prevent corruption, and democratic values, which protect the people from the government (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):137).

Next priority is development of business and trade, which will lead to employment within the developing nations, and reduce poverty (St. meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):89). In more detail, it means the creating of better conditions for businesses to thrive in, which again will provide work for the people within the country. This can be achieved by securing better macro-economic conditions and a stable government in peaceful environments (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):151).

The third priority states that it is important for the civil society to grow large and strong so it may protect the interests of the people, and secure that the people is a part of the political processes. Norway wants to work together with special interest organizations that are represented in the developing nations, and work for the promotion of people's rights and ideas, like gender equality, or protection of the children. Such organizations and others like them, promote values that are connected to the MDGs and are therefore especially interesting for the Norwegian government to cooperate with (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004)).

The fourth and last priority points out that Norway wants to work towards peaceful solutions in areas of conflict and war, which will lead to long lasting peace (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):89). There can be no doubt about the fact that war and conflict are very bad for development within a country and to the fight against poverty. Norway wants to use peace building as an instrument to gain peaceful societies, that will last, and not fall back into conflicts again. To be able to meet these expectations, the Norwegian government wants to promote values mentioned in all above points, like social and economic progress, political

reforms and better governmental systems, and better security and development initiatives (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):180-182).

The Norwegian government is greatly agreed on the MDGs. It is an important part of the Norwegian foreign development policy. During the debate following the report "St.meld. nr. 35" the general agreement is that all parties within the Parliament agree that Norway should use the MDGs as guidelines for Norwegian foreign development policy (Sak nr. 1 2005).

This section has looked at what the Norwegian government prioritizes as important development policies. Humanitarian values and human rights are keywords, and much focus is given to children's rights, and to equal rights between men and women. To secure that the public in developing nations can have such rights, the government prioritizes the promotion of values like social and economic progress, political reforms and better governmental systems, and better security and development initiatives in all the developing nations. The next section will elaborate on what the Norwegian government has done to spread knowledge about the MDGs to the public.

2.4 Campaigns to spread knowledge about the Millennium Development Goals

The United Nations has its own campaign to promote information about the Millennium Development Goals on the international level. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is responsible for this campaign. The UNDP works together with many countries in their effort to bring information about the MDGs to the people all over the world. The general-secretary of the United Nations also produces an annual report on the MDGs, which presents progress on the global level (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004):20).

2.5 Millennium Development Goals' Campaign in Norway

In the report "St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004)", the Norwegian government said that they would lead a campaign on the Millennium Development Goals which would explain the importance of reaching the MDGs. They wanted the campaign to reach the youth and younger people of the nation. The focus of this campaign was to increase information about development issues, so that the knowledge about these issues increase within the Norwegian society (St.meld. nr.

35 (2003-2004):20). The Millennium Development Goals campaign was started in 2004 and was ended in 2008 (Prop. 1 S (2009-2010):152).

In the years following from 2003-2004 through 2006-2007, the government reported on the campaign's progress. Already in 2002, a lot of the monetary support was divided among the many institutions that have worked to get information out to the people. In 2003, the ministry of foreign affairs and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) carried out two comprehensive "international weeks" in Stavanger and Tromsø. In both these conferences, the main theme was set by the MDGs. These international weeks have had great success in gathering support for the goals and have seen much participation by local interest groups and voluntary organizations, which show that there is an interest for the MDGs. Such weeks have also proven to be a vital instrument in getting the information about the MDGs to the people, across the country. Since the year 2002 there have been held two to three such arrangements annually, and the main experiences to gather from them is that local societies do engage themselves in the matter through various conferences or cultural activities (St.prp. nr. 1 (2004-2005):153).

In the autumn of 2003 there was held a conference on poverty, and a national conference for youth also on poverty, and both conferences got a lot of attention in local and regional medias. In addition, the contribution of educational material in the school system, study travels for teachers in high school, students of media, and journalists, all contributed to more focus on North/South themes in the school and in the media. Facts oriented information also contributed to the knowledge about Norway's international role (St.prp. nr. 1 (2004-2005):153).

In 2004, the ministry of foreign affairs continued its cooperation with the United Nations Association of Norway by hosting international weeks in the small towns of Gjøvik and Hamar, and one in Bergen. In several of the larger cities there were held follow up arrangements from earlier international weeks. They do increase the awareness of the MDGs in local and regional areas and are reaching wider crowds all the time. This year the production of films, material and exhibitions for use in schools was a major part of the resource allocation (St.prp. nr. 1 (2005-2006):144).

The government continued to host international weeks in 2005 together with United Nations Association of Norway, and extended these weeks to even more towns than before. Drammen and Ålesund were the latest towns to host international weeks. The goals were the same as before; to make people aware of the MDGs. The 2005 opinion polls revealed that the share of people who knew about the Millennium Development Goals in Norway had risen from the small number of 3 percent to the more respectable number of 20 percent (St.prp. nr. 1 (2006-2007):128).

In 2006, international weeks were hosted in Bodø and Kristiansand with a high attendance at both arrangements. The St.prp. nr. 1 (2007-2008) also mentions that the local government is participating a great deal in the arrangements. Further, the Norwegian national newspaper *Dagbladet* had an article in a weekly magazine published by it about health aid, which was read by the population and had great credibility according to evaluations. Work on information concerning MDGs 4 and 5, which is about child and maternal death reduction, was begun. It would be reasonable to expect that the government started to work on this due to their focus on poverty, children and women, which they mentioned in their St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004) on poverty. Material for use in schools was also a big focus this year as well. Finally, articles with references to aid, appeared more often in the media in 2006 compared to the previous year, with a raise of eleven percent (St.prp. nr. 1 (2007-2008):121-122).

Above we have seen what the Norwegian government has done to establish knowledge about the MDGs in the Norwegian public. A campaign conducted together with several local interest groups and organizations have led to the spread of information in many parts of Norway. In particular, this campaign has focused on the young and students.

Through this introduction chapter we have looked at what the MDGs are, and how they evolved. Then we sought to explain in detail what the goals are, and why it is important to have them. Further we looked at what the Norwegian government state is important to focus on in development policies if we are going to reach the goals, and finally, what the Norwegian government has done to inform the public about the MDGs. As we have seen, the government has development aid policies, which largely encompass that which the MDGs focus on. The government has clearly understood the importance to have the public support in their policies, something we understand from the amount of resources spent on the campaign to inform the public. Keeping in mind that the campaign has focused on the youth, and that local and

regional cities of Norway have been the stages for many conferences about the MDGs, we wonder. Are there any effects of the age, or where one live, or education levels, on how the public make up their opinion. Can political orientation have any effect since the government's development aid policies are based on humanitarian values? Based on these questions we will move to chapter 2, which will present why public opinion is important for the government and what theories may explain any effects on the public opinion.

3 Theory

This chapter seeks to give a short introduction to what public opinion is, and present the five definitions of public opinion which Glynn et al. (1999) see as the most relevant definitions. It continues to show how public opinion is important for the process of policymaking and why it is important to study public opinion. The chapter ends with the presentation of theory on several indicators, which may have an effect on the public opinion of the MDGs.

3.1 Definitions of Public Opinion

We will start with Herbert Blumer's definition of the public, which is threefold. First, the public is "a group of people who are confronted by an issue", second, the public is a group "who are divided in the ideas as to how to meet the issue, and third, the public is a group "who engage in discussion over the issue" (Glynn et al. 1999: 16-17). What Blumer says here is that a public is a group of people who have a discourse over a controversy (Glynn et al. 1999: 16).

After defining what a "public" is Glynn et al. (1999) goes on and explain that there are in essence five definitions of public opinion, which overlap each other to an extent. The first definition is simply that public opinion is "the sum of many individual opinions". It is a widely accepted definition of public opinion mainly because it gives us a go ahead to have polls and surveys done, which we can generalize from to the whole population. Aggregation of the individual's opinions gives us a simple way of understanding what the public of a nation feels and thinks about certain policies, reforms or other issues, which the government find necessary to change or create for the benefit of the public. Polling is therefore used by many different instances to find out if and why the public approve or disapprove of some issue (Glynn et al. 1999: 17-18).

A second definition states that the "public opinion is a reflection of majority beliefs" (Glynn et al. 1999: 18). This definition claims that the public opinion comes from the values and beliefs of the majority population. What theorists point out by adding this definition is that

people tend to listen to other people close to them. This can be anyone from their co-workers, to their family members, friends, or even neighbors (Glynn et al. 1999: 18).

The third definition mentioned in *Public Opinion* is that the “public opinion is found in the clash of group interests” (Glynn et al. 1999: 19). By this, the authors of the book mean that public opinion is aggregated from the individuals to interest groups, and then debated over by these interest groups. Such interest groups can be anything from political parties to corporations or activist groups. These interest groups are the ones that lobby policies to the government and mobilize votes during election campaigns. Lobbyism I would argue is more common in the United States, and maybe not so much found in Norway where we have a more corporate system (Østerud 2002). Theorists who use this definition are interested in finding out how individual opinion translates into group interests (Glynn et al. 1999: 19).

The fourth definition states that “public opinion is media and elite opinion” (Glynn et al. 1999: 20). It questions the public’s ability to have an opinion on every social and political matter. Instead, it points out that most people do not have time to make up an opinion on all matters and therefore take the opinions of the elites, meaning politicians, journalists and other such persons, and just repeat them when asked of their own opinion. By adhering to this definition, one would agree that all opinions lie with the politicians and journalists who promote their ideas through the media and thus influence the public by actually giving the public its opinion (Glynn et al. 1999: 20-22).

The fifth and final definition mentioned in *Public Opinion* is that “public opinion is a fiction” (Glynn et al. 1999: 22). By this, it is meant that when the media talks about the public opinion on a given issue, they do not have any evidence, at all, that what they report is actually what the public really means. They mean that surveys made to find public opinion can be manipulated into whatever the scholars constructing the survey wants to map out. To distinguish this definition from the above they further explain that the former definition, even though the elite may construct the opinion, do find their opinions in some kind of empirical reality. The latter definition instead states that there is not any such empirical reality from which to draw any opinions, because public opinion does not exist. It is just, made up, rhetoric. This rhetoric may be intentional, but may just as well be unintentional. In short, the public opinion is just something we think exist due to what the media and other equal instances report (Glynn et al. 1999: 22-24).

Finally Glynn et al. (1999) say that it is difficult to assess which one of the definitions above is the correct one. They explain that all the different definitions above are used all the time, and which one is used depends on what kind of study we are conducting (Glynn et al. 1999: 29-30). This thesis will apply the first definition, since the answer of the research question is based on survey data. In other words, the individual opinions will be aggregated to the public opinion.

3.2 Why it is important to study public opinion

Norway is a democratic state; a democracy. Democracy literally means “government by the people” (Strøm 1999: 49). It is an idea of a type of government, which has existed for a couple of thousands of years, and was discussed by Plato, Aristotle and Socrates in the old Greece (Plato 2000, Aristotle 2000). Democracy is a word with a large variety of definitions. Though it is not wrong to state that Norway is a democracy, just using democracy may not be a good enough definition of our governmental system. The Norwegian government is a parliamentary democracy. The meaning of this, and its importance for the theory will be elaborated on next.

According to Kaare Strøm, parliamentary democracy is a delegation of power from the people to the parliament. He further claims that “all forms of representative democracy entail delegation and accountability” (Strøm 1999: 57). In other words, the parliament is accountable to the people. In Norway, this means that the Storting is accountable to the people. Strøm argues that there is a link from the civil servants, back to the voters. The civil servants are responsible for enacting all policies, which are adopted by the Norwegian parliament. The parliament debate new policies proposed by the ministries of the executive, who again are accountable to the voters (Strøm 1999: 57). These voters are the public.

In a parliamentary democracy, or any kind of democracy for that matter, the people or public is vital for the democratic values to work. Therefore, it is important for the politicians sitting in the parliament that the public agrees with the policy they are leading. Kristen Ringdal explains in his book *Folkemeininga og den tredje verda*, that it is important that political issues voted on and adopted by the government, have support in the public opinion (Ringdal 1981: 6). This is further supported by Glynn et al. (1999) in their book *Public Opinion*, where they state that “leaders need to know what sorts of policies and initiatives voters support”

(1999: 3). They go on to explain that a “democratic state may deteriorate” (Glynn et al. 1999:6) if the government do not respond to the public’s needs. Worst-case scenario there may appear a demagogue who does not use democratic ways to handle political issues or problems. Glynn et al. (1999) go on to claim that one of the most important reasons why we study public opinion is the linkage between public opinion and public policy. It is very important for politicians to listen to the public when they construct new programs or regulations, which will affect the public’s everyday life in one way or another (Glynn et. al. 1999: 6).

Another important reason for studying public opinion is that the public sometimes needs to be mobilized. The most typical examples of mobilization are found during wartimes. However, it could just as well work for any other kind of policy, which the government wants to impose on the public. The government needs to know what the public think, or the nature of public opinion, if the government wants to get support for some initiative it tries to implement (Glynn et. al. 1999: 8-10).

A last reason, which makes it important to study public opinion, is the effect public opinion actually has on a state’s foreign policy. Glynn et al. states that much of the United States foreign policy is produced by the “ideological boundaries determined by American values and priorities” (1999: 12). Many of the debates on foreign policy, they continue, are held within frameworks created by the government from the public opinion. Such frameworks are found by having surveys done to gather information about the public’s opinion on contemporary foreign policy issues (Glynn et al. 1999: 12). History is another way for politicians to work out foreign policy. In such situations, they have a look at former situations to see what was done then, and how the public reacted to that or those given situations. That way they can create policies, which they believe is more in line with what the public will accept (Glynn et al. 1999: 12-14).

From the reasons mentioned above, we can draw the conclusion that public opinion is important for the government and the policies that are in question. Governments, it seems, seek the approval from the public before they implement both public policies as well as foreign policies. In addition, the sheer democratic values of having the public approve of a new policy, is important, as Ringdal mentions (1981: 6). The MDGs have, as mentioned in the introduction, become a very important focus within foreign policy, not just for Norway, but

also for the rest of the world. If the nations are going to keep up the focus and actually be able to keep the promises they have made when signing the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, they will need the support of the public.

This is where we turn our focus towards the MDGs. It is important for leaders, politicians, and other elected representatives to know whether the people they represent have any awareness of the problems facing development in poorer countries as well as what needs to be done to alleviate these problems. It is also important to know how much the public knows about the different development related policies, which exist, and know how much support these policies have in the public. Information officers and policy makers need to know the answers to the issues concerning the public and policy making so that they can create better communication and education programs, which will benefit the public and raise awareness of development aid issues amongst them. Research in this field may help uncover gaps in the already existing information system which job is to raise awareness, and it also enable us to find special groups of people who have interest in the issue and find new ways of reaching these interest groups (OECD 2004). As the researchers behind the paper *Public Opinion Polling and the Millennium Development Goals*, point out: Since there is little research on the subject of foreign aid policies and the MDGs in particular, it is very important to find common questions for most nations so that we will be able to compare the many countries in the end. This is what the researchers set out to do (OECD 2004:238).

Mc Donnell et al. (2003) write that the reason why the world was not able to accomplish their goals on development, which was set at the Rio Conference in 1992, was as simple as political will. Or, more correctly, the lack of political will. They also point out that political will and public opinion is very much connected, and claim that for political will to grow in favor of greater global social equity, there must be an increase in the public's knowledge about development policies (Mc Donnell et al. 2003: 40).

In this section we have looked at why it is important to study the public opinion. Democratic values: that the government is responsible to the people; when there is a need to mobilize the public; and when the government needs to know what the public feel about an issue; are all important reasons to study the public opinion. As Mc Donnell et al. (2003) point out; the political will is dependent on the public opinion.

3.3 How public opinion connects to policymaking

In the last section we gave a short recap of what it is important to look for when we study public opinion. In the next section we will have a look at examples of how policymaking is affected by public opinion.

While Glynn et al. (1999) points out that people do not possess much knowledge about public policy, they also say that since the emergence of media, there has been a rise in the public opinion's importance for politicians. Due to the fact that people now get access to information through different media channels, they are able to produce opinions about the different political issues at hand. In elections it is very important for politicians to get the people's vote and therefore to reveal political information to the public. The public then decides what is in their best interest and the politicians can adopt political programs that are based on what the public wants. One important part to draw from this is of course the mentioning of the media's role. The media has become a heavy participant in getting information out to the public, and is therefore a big reason why there are so many different definitions of public opinion argued over. Many of the examples used in *Public Opinion* (Glynn et al. 1999) uses the media to point out how the public becomes informed about a political issue and change its opinion on the matter. This again leads to the change in the government's policy on the same matter. We will return to this when we look at media as an explanatory indicator, but first we shall look at some examples given in *Public Opinion*, which can explain how public opinion becomes policymaking.

Glynn et al. (1999) have looked at research done by several American researchers who have had a look at whether or not the policy changes within a period of time after the results of a public poll has been revealed. Glynn et al. (1999) refer to Alan Monroe and his study. Monroe defined the majority of a poll to be the public opinion, and looked at whether a policy changed after the poll revealed its information. Let us make this a bit clearer. If the majority, which means 51 percent or more, of the public participating in the poll says that they agree with a certain policy, Monroe would then have a look at the specific policy to see if it changed or stayed the same over the following years. If the public opinion did not want any change and the policy stayed the same, he would point out that there is congruence between the public opinion and the policy. By studying 222 different cases he found that in 64 percent of them there had been a change in policy in the direction of what the public opinion wanted.

Glynn et al. point out that this is significantly different from 50 percent, which would have been expected by pure chance (1999: 306-307). Glynn et al. do also point out, as did Monroe himself, that one cannot rely on these findings alone. However, it is an interesting finding nevertheless (Glynn et al. 1999: 308).

Glynn et al. (1999) also give us an example of a time-series study of a single political issue. A time-series study asks the same question several times over a time period, and let us look at changes in one case over time. In the example used they look at the amount of US troops in Vietnam over a time span, and compares this with public opinion which says that “troop withdrawal is too slow”. The time-series table shows that as the percentage in the public opinion: “troop withdrawal is too slow” rises, the amount of troops in Vietnam steadily descends. When the opinion curve climbs dramatically, the “amount of troops” curve descends faster. This clearly indicates that public opinion does have a saying in how policy changes. There is congruence between the two, which show that one affect the other. Time-series is one of the best methods for finding any relation between public opinion and policy change. With several measures over a span of time, we will more easily see what the trend is (Glynn et al. 1999: 309-310).

Glynn et al. (1999) continue to give several examples of other methodological studies, which show the same results as the ones above.¹ What we can draw from the examples above is that there is clearly a connection between the public opinion and policy change. Many of the policy changes come as a result of the public’s opinion on the issue. This gives us reason to say that it is important to study public opinion so that policy makers can get the idea of what the public wants. We can draw links to democratic theory that, as already mentioned above, states that the people shall govern. It seems that even though the people do not make the policies, they do have an effect on the outcome of policy issues.

It is however important to notice that in all these studies the cases where there are much congruence between public opinion and policy change are salient. There are much discussion about them and many strong opinions about and views on the matter. It is reasonable to say that if there is a lot of information on a topic and more people gain access to this information there will be more opinions on the matter. This can help explain why some issues have a

¹ For further discussion on the matter, I direct you to *Public Opinion* (1999): 299-340

stronger correlation in the examples above, than others. Further, Glynn et al. point out that the public have, in general, less opinion on foreign policy than they do on domestic policy (1999). They explain this by pointing to the fact that foreign policy often is not salient. It also takes a while for foreign policy to have any effect on local areas and local policy and therefore is not so interesting for the public to have knowledge of and an opinion on (Glynn et. al. 1999: 316).

In the report conducted by Mc Donnell et al. in 2003 there is one thing striking them in all the surveys. The public knows that their country gives aid to foreign undeveloped nations, but they do not know how much money is spent or how it is spent (Mc Donnell et al. 2003).

3.4 Explanatory variables of the public opinion of the MDGs

As briefly mentioned in chapter 2, there exist little research on foreign aid policies and the MDGs in particular, so most of the theories used in this thesis will be drawn from general research on public opinion and development co-operation. The following section will deal with *media*, *education* and *party identification/left-right placement*. Theory on how they may affect public opinion will be presented and I will suggest hypotheses on the basis of this theory.

3.4.1 Media

Glynn et al. (1999) write that the public will find events or issues, covered a lot by the media, to be more important and salient, which again will lead them to focus on these issues or events in particular. Glynn et al. use a study by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw as example of how the media affects the public. In the study there was collected several events which had been prioritized after how much media coverage each event had received. When McCombs and Shaw ask the public how they prioritized each event, the events were prioritized in more or less the same way as the media had prioritized them (Glynn et al. 1999: 388-389).

Glynn et al. (1999) go on to say that there have been some myths about which media best covers the information flow to the public. One such myth was that television was the best source for this purpose. However, studies have shown that this is not true. The public is just as well informed by other media like newspapers or magazines, as they are of television.

Another fact is that studies have found that people that are more educated have a tendency to learn more from media coverage than do people with less education (Glynn et al. 1999: 393-395).

Glynn et al. (1999) further states that what earlier studies have found concerning the effect of media on the public opinion is that in general it does not affect the opinion. Glynn et al. writes that people have already got “personal beliefs, attitudes and behavior” which will cause the public to choose to support information which they already agree with. What this means is that the media in general ends up reinforcing the opinions the public already have (Glynn et al. 1999: 399-400). This is actually what Ringdal found when he was studying the Norwegian public’s opinion on foreign aid in the 1970s (Ringdal 1981).

Kristen Ringdal looked at the Norwegian public’s opinion on foreign development policy in the 1970s. He looks at newspapers and magazines to see whether the use of these medias has any effect on the public’s opinion on foreign aid issues. First he uses Lilian Nowak's research to state that people who read the morning edition of newspapers have more knowledge about foreign aid policy questions than people who do not read the morning edition. The same people who read the morning edition also possess more knowledge in general than the others do, and have more interest in the subjects. Ringdal's (1981) findings support Nowak's research. He finds that people with more knowledge or information about foreign aid policy reads more newspapers than people with less knowledge about the matter. This has to do with the fact mentioned above, that people who have knowledge wants to learn more. They get more information from newspapers and therefore read more. Ringdal also finds that interest for foreign aid policy is lower for people who do not read newspapers compared to people who do read newspapers (Ringdal 1981: 234-235).

Media do have an effect on what the public considers to be important political issues, and can therefore affect the public opinion by focusing on certain political issues in their coverage. By having news coverage of the MDGs in the newspapers, or television and radio, this may help people become more aware of these goals and therefore have an effect on the public opinion on the matter. Using Ringdal’s findings which suggests that newspaper reading leads to more interest in foreign aid issues, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: People who use newspapers or television/radio prioritize the MDGs higher than people who do not use newspapers or television/radio.

3.4.2 Education

Weakliem writes in his paper on “The effects of education on political opinion: an international study”, a statement taken from Hyman and Wright (1979). “Education clearly increases political interest and involvement. Educated people are more likely to have an opinion of some kind” (Weakliem 2002: 142). He then goes on to discuss a couple of theories, which argues how education may have an effect on the public opinion. This thesis will use the first definition.

Weakliem looks at the “enlightenment thesis”. This is a thesis proposed by Davis and Robinson, which according to Weakliem, says, “greater knowledge and intellectual sophistication reduce commitment to traditional authority and increase tolerance of diversity” (Weakliem 2002: 142). Weakliem claims that this will have implication for all political views. Others say, “education leads to greater altruism, humanitarianism, and sense of civic responsibility and social consciousness” (Weakliem 2002: 142). If this is true, then we can expect that the public will be more favorable to development aid policies as they become more educated.

What the theory above points out is that the public will change their opinion about political issues when they get educated. If, like the theory above states, the people become more humanitarian and human rights aware, this means it will have an effect on what opinion they hold, for a certain humanitarian political issue. Since the focus of the MDGs lies in humanitarian values, it can be argued that educated people have a more positive opinion about the MDGs. “More positive”, in this context, means that people are more in favor of the MDGs than people with less education are and therefore will prioritize them higher. It would be interesting to explore this further. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: People with higher education prioritize the MDGs higher than people who do not have higher education.

3.4.3 Party identification/left-right placement

Anders Todal Jenssen gives us a short overview of what party identification is at the beginning of his text “All That is solid Melts into Air: Party Identification in Norway” (1999). He explains that Campbell et al. published *The American Voter* in 1960 where they explored how party identification affected how the American people had one party in particular they always returned to in elections. Campbell et al. explained that party identification was “described as a part of the family heritage, passed on from generation to generation and receiving reinforcement throughout the lifetime” (Jenssen 1999: 156). The reinforcement of the party identification comes from the behavior of the voter himself. If he votes for the same party over several elections, and sits with a personal attachment to the same party over time, this means the voter have identified himself or herself with the party. Further, Jenssen writes that when the party identification has established itself, this identification will help make sense of what is happening in the political arena. Or, he continues, said with some simpler words. “The party’s agenda helped the followers identify the important political issues of the day, and emotional strings made voters essentially immune to “deviant” political propaganda (Jenssen 1999: 156).

Jenssen states that this idea of party identification, though it explained much of the behavior of the American voters in the two party system in the US, did not produce the same results when researchers tried to see if this was the case in European countries where there are multiparty systems. The researchers found that it did not hold as well in European countries as it did in the United States. Unlike in the United States, where they claim that party identification is more stable than the vote itself, others found that party identification in European countries were not as stable at all. People were easily changing their party identification depending on several “short-term forces like new issues, presidential performance, candidate evaluations, and assessment of party platforms” (Jenssen 1999: 157).

What Jenssen found when he looked at party identification in Norway was that it had fluctuated in the years from the 1960s to the late 1990s (1999). He found that the stability of the party identification is not high and that it changes much in the time-period mentioned above. Nevertheless, it still exist in Norway.

If we take into account the left and right dimension of political parties' placement we have a tool which can show us how the public orient themselves. Knutsen writes that "party competition tends to take place along the left-right dimension" (Knutsen 1998: 63). In his text, he shows how the different parties have placed themselves on a left right scale in 1982 and 1993 in several European countries. Norway is one of these countries, and we get a clear view of where the Norwegian parties were placed in 1982 and 1993.² Even though the parties move somewhat on the scale between 1982 and 1993, most parties, except Venstre (V) and Senterpartiet (SP), are placed at similar position on the scale in 1982 and 1993. This indicates that parties range from the more radical left side, to the more conservative right side (Knutsen 1998).

In their text "Issues and Party Support in Multiparty Systems" MacDonald et al. (1991) find that parties, on a left-right scale, tend to position themselves on such issues as environment and health care, which have clear connections to the MDGs, in the same positions as the party position itself on the scale. Examples are the socialist party and the conservative party, which places themselves on the left-right scale, where 1 = left and 10 = right, as follows: Socialist, 2.50, and Conservative, 8.21. On environmental the Socialist party positions itself at 2.66 on the left-right scale, while the Conservative positions itself at 6.03. We find the same result when we look at health care. Socialist, 2.34, and Conservative, 7.68 (MacDonald et al. 1991: 1114). Even though we cannot draw any conclusions from these two examples, they do indicate that parties have a left-right orientation on such issues that are connected to the MDGs.

If we step back again and have a look at how party identification affects the voters, or the public to connect it to this text, we remember it said, "the party's agenda helped the followers identify the important political issues of the day". With other words, this means that the parties are information sources for the public who vote for the parties and listen to the political agenda they stand for. This means that the parties affect the public opinion, and the following quote gives us reason to believe that people who place themselves on the left of a left-right scale may have a more liberal view on politics while people who place themselves to the right may have a more conservative view of politics.

² For further reading about this study I refer you to Knutsen (1998): 63-94

"The politics of class is the single most common factor dividing Left from Right in West European political systems, with the former seeking social justice through redistributive social and economic intervention by the state, and the latter committed to defending capitalism and private property against the threats thus posed."

Knapp & Wright 2006: 6

Considering the mentioned theory, it is proposed that people who put themselves more to the left on the left-right scale are more in favor of the MDGs because of the more social justice centered ideology and therefore prioritize them higher than people who place themselves more to the right of the same scale, thus giving us the following hypothesis:

H₃: A left positioning on the left-right scale leads to higher prioritization of the MDGs than a right positioning on the left-right scale.

3.5 Control variables

In the studies done in several DAC countries, including Norway, they found that women had a tendency to be more in favor of foreign aid than men do. They also found that younger people are more in favor of foreign aid compared to older people. The higher educated are also more in favor of foreign aid compared to the lesser educated. And, finally they found that people living in urban areas had a more favorable look on foreign aid than do people who live in rural areas. People who gave the lowest support of foreign aid, was people voting on parties to the far right (OECD 2003: 176).

With this in mind the next section will present theory on how; gender; living in urban or rural areas; and age; may affect public opinion of the MDGs. The section ends with interest groups and suggests how they may affect the goals.

3.5.1 Gender

The female gender, research has shown, is more caring and responsible towards others than is the male gender. Women are more helpful towards others than are men. Women are also more likely to overlook differences that may exist between racial and ethnic groups and to have a

greater sense of responsibility towards people who are less privileged. They are also more supportive of social welfare, education, and health programs, and of economic policies to assist minority groups, the unemployed, and the poor, both within their own societies and abroad (Beutel & Marini 1995: 438).

Beutel and Marini explains in detail, how there are differences between the male and female gender, in their text "Gender and Values" (1995). If we use the theory presented by them together with the fact that women in Norway are more in favor of foreign aid than are men, as found in the study of Mc Donnell et al. from 2003, it will be interesting to have a look at women's opinion of the MDGs compared to men's opinion of the MDGs. The following hypothesis is stated:

H₄: Women will prioritize the MDGs higher than men will.

3.5.2 Urban/Rural

There is a theory in electoral research, which has been used in European context to a large degree when explaining differences in voting behavior, called the cleavage model. In Norway, there are several cleavages, which separate the public and their opinions (Listhaug 1989). One such cleavage is the regional cleavage where people living in the rural areas have a tendency to vote differently to protect their own interests. One example Listhaug uses is Bjørklund's study where he finds that people living in the periphery votes in a different direction to protect their rights of public transfers. This together with many other factors that separate the periphery from the center has provided evidence of regional differences in Norwegian politics (Listhaug 1989: 345-346).

Mc Donnell et al. found that people living in urban, or densely populated, areas were more in favor of development co-operation than people living in rural, or less populated, areas were (2003). By using the same operationalization of urban/rural settlement, as used by the survey the data referred to, I propose the following hypothesis:³

³ I will elaborate on the operationalization in the chapter about Method.

H₅: People who live in urban areas will prioritize the MDGs higher than people who live in rural areas will.

3.5.3 Age

Anne Foner talks about age stratification in her text “Age Stratification and Age Conflict in Political Life” (1974). She writes that youth movements emerge periodically, and that these movements has a tendency to focus on social issues like peace, and rights of people who are part of oppressed or deprived groups (Foner 1974). She continues to explain that

“The age-related differences in behavior and orientations at any given period are linked to two independent processes: (1) aging, as the individual changes psychologically and physiologically over the life course from birth to death, passes through role sequences, and acquires experience in these roles; and (2) cohort flow, as one cohort (generation) succeeds another, each having lived through a different historical period.”

Anne Foner (1974): 188

Using an example from a study where they have asked the people if they agree with a statement, they found that there were differences between the age cohorts on that particular statement.⁴ Over a life course, there was less agreement of the same statement (Foner 1974: 188-189). She also writes that there are differences between young and old people on political matters (Foner 1974: 188).

It has been mentioned, in chapter 2, that the Norwegian government has been running a campaign to raise awareness about the MDGs, through several initiatives from 2004 until 2008. A part of this campaign was to pass information about the MDGs through education for the younger people. This gives us reason to believe that younger people who should possess more information about the MDGs, from schooling, will hold a somewhat different opinion about the MDGs than older people will.

Also keeping in mind what Mc Donnell et al. (2003) found in their study, that young people were more in favor of development co-operation, while old people were less in favor, with the

⁴ For more on the example, look to Foner (1974): 188-189.

theory above stating that there are differences in opinion due to age, the following hypothesis is fashioned:

H₆: Young people will prioritize the MDGs higher than old people will.

3.5.4 Interest groups

The citizens gain information about public issues from each other and from institutions such as school, governmental and political organizations, and mass media (Glynn et al. 1999: 392).

We have already looked at how education and mass media may affect public opinion. The next step then would be to look closer at governmental and political organizations, which ranges from political parties to corporations or activist groups. Interest groups is a gathering term for them. Glynn et al. writes that groups have the ability to "find out about and widely communicate opinions found in the public" (1999: 304). They continue to explain that there has been constructed a theory by political scientists, which show how public opinion is helped to be represented in politics by interest groups, and in this way helps to ensure democracy. This theory, which has received the name "democratic pluralism", in short states that over time and across all issues that may arise, public opinion may be expected to have full representation because of the interest groups (Glynn et al. 1999: 304).

If the interest groups possess the ability to, wildly, communicate opinions found in the public, as the theory above states, we can expect that they are great communicators of information concerning the many topics the different interest groups stand for. This provides a link between the interest groups and the public, which I would argue goes both ways. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether interest groups have any effects on the public's opinion of the MDGs.

The World Values Survey contains an experiment as well, where only half the survey sample is questioned. This half receives more information about the MDGs than the control group, which is the other half of the survey sample. We will see if there are any effects of receiving this information on how the public supports how much aid the government should give developing countries (Bjørshol 2008).

This chapter has given a brief presentation of, what public opinion is, and of the five definitions that Glynn et al. (1999) states are the most common. It ended up defining public opinion in this thesis as the aggregation of the individual opinion into the public opinion due to the use of a survey to answer the research question. The next section lists examples of how public opinion affect policymaking. The last sections present theory about the explanatory variables, which are *media*, *education* and *party identification/left-right placement*, before it ends with some theory about how *gender*, *living in urban and rural areas*, *age*, and finally, *interest groups*, may affect the MDGs. We will now move on to the method chapter where we will define the variables used in the analysis.

4 Methods

This chapter will present the data sources and in short explain the type of regression that will be used in the analysis, before I present the descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables that will be used in the analysis.

4.1 Data sources

The data sources I will be using for this analysis comes from the World Values Survey 2007 for Norway. The World Values Survey institution is a worldwide network of social scientists who study how values, both social and political, change, and what impact they have on the social and political life (WVS 2011). The first ever world values survey that took place was in 1981. By contemporary date, the values surveys have been executed five times. The last survey was executed from 2005-2007 across the world (WVS 2011).

Statistics Norway conducted the survey in 2007. “The World Values Survey is a worldwide investigation of sociocultural and political change based on representative national surveys of people’s values and beliefs” (Bjørshol 2008: 3). The data was collected with face-to-face interviews, and the sample was selected from the population using random sampling in two stages. The sample size (N) of the data set is 1025 respondents, which is 61.6 percent of the gross sample (Bjørshol 2008: 3-7). The data set has been provided by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

4.2 Ordinary Least Squares Regression

I will be using a method called ordinary least squares (OLS) in my regression. This is the most commonly used method in regression due to the “simplicity, generality, broad usefulness, and ideal-data properties” (Hamilton 1992: 34). If we have a set of observations and plot them in a graph, we will be able to draw a line that shows us the effect of X on Y. A linear model like this will help us predict what someone who has a value of X will have as value Y. In a perfect world, this line will fall on all the observations when the line is drawn. However, since we do not live in a perfect world the line drawn will not fall on all the

observations. We end up with a predicted line, which gives us a predicted Y value. This is where OLS comes in to play. Because the predicted Y may be different from the actual Y, we end up with a residual (e_i) which is the difference between actual Y and predicted Y. With other words, residuals gives us the prediction error, which means how far from the predicted Y the actual Y is found. If we sum up the residuals, and square them, we find the sum of squared residuals (RSS) and get a reflection of the overall accuracy of our predictions. The closer the predicted Y fits reality the smaller the RSS will become, which gives us a criterion for the best possible values of the parameters in our regression. OLS is the method used to get the RSS as low as possible, and thereby the predicted Y as close to the actual Y as possible (Hamilton 1992: 30-34).

4.3 The dependent variables

The following section will introduce the dependent variables which will be used in the analysis. The dependent variables measure how high priority the public think the government should give the five different goals. Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the five dependent variables which have been coded into four categories where 1 = Low priority, 2 = Average priority, 3 = High priority, and 4 = Highest priority.

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics dependent variables

Variables	Description	Min	Max	N
Extreme poverty eradication	Ordinal scale with 4 values: 1 = Low priority, 4 = Highest priority.	1	4	493
Child mortality reduction	Ordinal scale with 4 values: 1 = Low priority, 4 = Highest priority.	1	4	493
Primary education for all children	Ordinal scale with 4 values: 1 = Low priority, 4 = Highest priority.	1	4	493
Stop spread of HIV/AIDS	Ordinal scale with 4 values: 1 = Low priority, 4 = Highest priority.	1	4	493
Create better living conditions	Ordinal scale with 4 values: 1 = Low priority, 4 = Highest priority.	1	4	493

Since these variables were part of an experiment in the World Values Survey 2007, only half the sample has been asked these questions, which leaves us with only 493 units. This is not preferable with generalization of the data in mind since we want as many units as possible in such an analysis. Another problem is that the dependent variables only have four categories. We should have a least five categories in a linear regression (Ringdal 2007).

4.4 Explanatory and control variables

Table 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics for all the explanatory and control variables that will be used in the regression.

The education variable has been coded into dummy variables with elementary education as reference group. The original variable was divided into nine categories, where the first three categories: No formal education; Incomplete elementary education; and Complete elementary education, were coded into elementary education. This was the reference category. The four next categories: Incomplete high school education, vocational subjects; Complete high school education, vocational subjects; Incomplete high school education, general studies; and Complete high school education, general studies, were coded into High school education. The last two categories: Some college/university education, no degree; and College/university education, with degree, were coded into College/university education.

The urban/rural variable was coded into a dummy variable where people who live in areas with 20,000 or less inhabitants, are coded as rural and given the value 0. While all who live in areas with 20,000 or more have been coded as urban and given the value 1. I have used the same categories used in a research by Elisabeth Rønning (2000), where the population has been divided into four categories. The reason why I have combined the two lowest categories, and the two highest categories is due to the results in her survey, and because she has not defined the difference between the two lowest categories. Since the results indicate that there is a difference between the two lowest and the two largest categories, I have simply combined them to gain a dummy category (Rønning 2000: 9-13).

The age groups have been coded into four different dummy variables where the youngest age group is the reference category. The original variable age is a ratio level variable. It was coded into: ages 18-24; ages 25-44; ages 45-66; and ages 67-79. The reason for using these groups is due to Foner (1974) who talks about strata in her theory, and because Rønning (2000) has used the same coding in her survey (Foner 1974, Rønning 2000).

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics independent variables

Variable name	Data Source	Description	Min	Max	Mean	Percent	N
Explanatory							
Newspaper reading	WVS 2007	Dummy Read newspaper last week = 1	0	1		1 = 91.9 %	1022
Television/Radio listening	WVS 2007	Dummy Watch television or listened to radio = 1	0	1		1 = 98.2 %	1022
College/University education	WVS 2007	Dummy Education level of college or university = 1	0	1		1 = 46.9 %	1021
High school education	WVS 2007	Dummy Education level of High school = 1	0	1		1 = 40.5 %	1021
Political left-right scale	WVS 2007	Placement on the political left-right scale 1 - 10. Left = 1, Right = 10.	1	10	5.6		997
Control							
Women	WVS 2007	Dummy Gender 1= Woman	0	1		1 = 49.9 %	1025
Urban/rural	WVS 2007	Dummy living in urban area = 1	0	1		1 = 50.5 %	1022
Ages 25-44	WVS 2007	Dummy people with ages from 25-44 = 1	0	1		1 = 38.7 %	1025
Ages 45-66	WVS 2007	Dummy people with ages from 45-66 = 1	0	1		1 = 38.3 %	1025
Ages 67-79	WVS 2007	Dummy people with ages from 67-79 = 1	0	1		1 = 12.4 %	1025
Interest groups:							
Religious organizations	WVS 2007	Dummy members of religious organizations = 1	0	1		1 = 37.9 %	1025
Sports of fitness organizations	WVS 2007	Dummy members of sports or fitness organizations = 1	0	1		1 = 42.1 %	1025
Art, music, or study groups	WVS 2007	Dummy members of art, music, or study groups = 1	0	1		1 = 20.3 %	1025
Unions	WVS 2007	Dummy members of unions = 1	0	1		1 = 49.2 %	1024
Political parties	WVS 2007	Dummy members of political parties = 1	0	1		1 = 17.1 %	1025
Environmental organizations	WVS 2007	Dummy members of environmental organizations = 1	0	1		1 = 7.2 %	1025
Labor unions	WVS 2007	Dummy members of labor unions = 1	0	1		1 = 25.2 %	1022
Relief and charity organisations	WVS 2007	Dummy members of relief and charity organizations = 1	0	1		1 = 31.6 %	1024
Consumer organizations	WVS 2007	Dummy members of consumer organizations = 1	0	1		1 = 19.3 %	1022
Other voluntary organisations	WVS 2007	Dummy members of other voluntary organizations = 1	0	1		1 = 26.5 %	1024
Interaction terms							
Interaction Newspaper + High school	WVS 2007	Dummy newspaper + high school = 1	0	1		1 = 36.7 %	1020
Interaction TV/Radio + High school	WVS 2007	Dummy TV/Radio + high school = 1	0	1		1 = 39.8 %	1020
Interaction Newspaper + College/University	WVS 2007	Dummy Newspaper + College/University = 1	0	1		1 = 44.0 %	1021
Interaction TV/Radio + College/University	WVS 2007	Dummy TV/Radio + College/University = 1	0	1		1 = 46.2 %	1021

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics of experiment

Variable name	Data Source	Description	Min	Max	Percent	N
Experiment:						
Asked questions	WVS 2007	Asked question = 1, not asked question = 0	0	1	1 = 48.1 %	1018
Norwegian development aid	WVS 2007	Too little = 1, Enough = 2, Too much = 3	1	3	1 = 42.4 % 2 = 4.7 % 3 = 51.6 %	1012

Table 4.3 shows us the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the experiment to test whether receiving information about the MDGs has any effect on the survey sample's opinion of how much money is spent on aid by the government.

I will be using the t-test to explore whether or not my hypotheses are true or not in the population. With Student's t, we use a table with given values for the t-distribution, and set the critical value to 0.05. Now we can use the value found from the table to establish whether our findings are true for 95 percent of the population. The t-value we get must be larger than the critical value for t on 0.05 level for us to confirm our hypothesis. If the value is lower our hypothesis is not confirmed (Ringdal 2007).

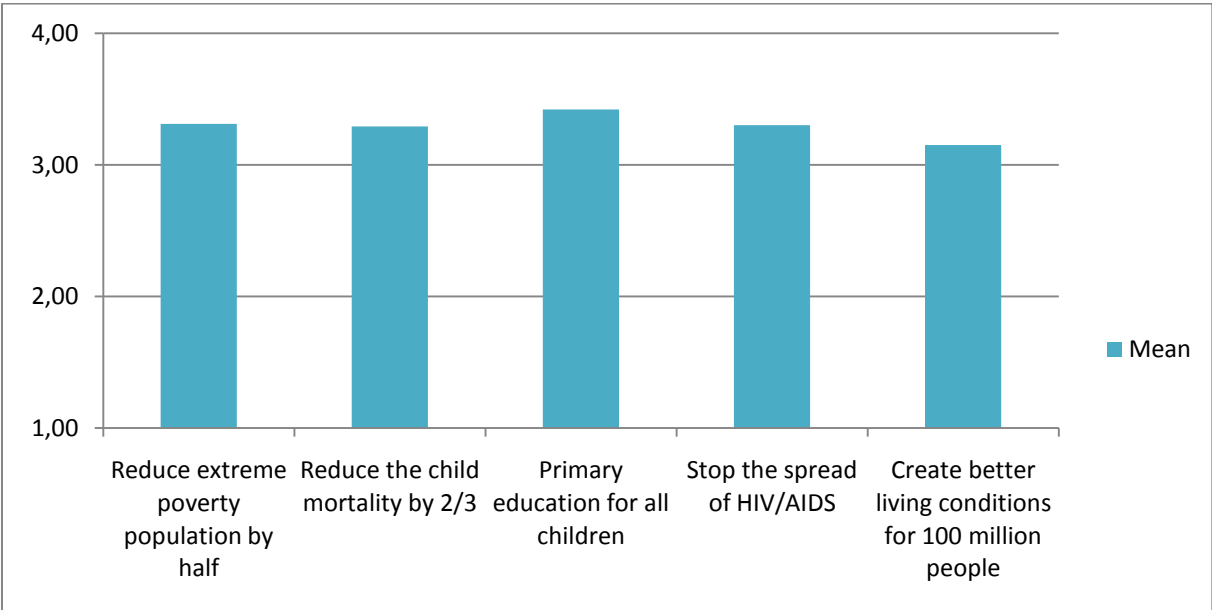
In this chapter we have looked at the descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables that is used in the analysis, and some of the variables have been explained in greater detail. We will now move on to the analysis chapter where I will account for the results of the analysis.

5 Analysis

This chapter will account for the results found in the analysis. First it will show how the public prioritize the MDGs, before it sums up the effects of the explanatory and control indicators on the public opinion of the MDGs. Further it will look at interaction terms and finally account for the experiment conducted in the survey. It ends by summing up what is found, before we move on to the discussion in chapter 6.

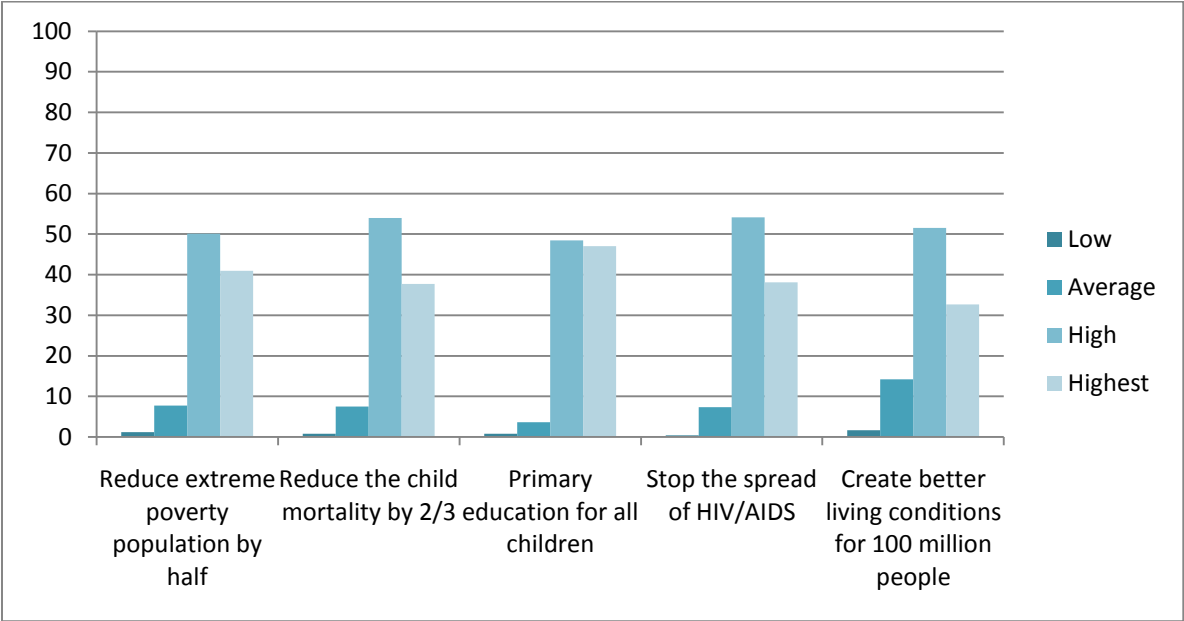
5.1 How the public want to prioritize the MDGs

In the analysis, I have used five dependent variables. These are five MDGs where the survey participants have been asked to rank how high priority they want to give each goal on a four-category variable. What we can read from graph 5.1 is that the Norwegian public in general agrees that there should be a very high priority of all the different goals presented below. All the dependent variables have a mean above three, which means that they have a mean above high priority. The goal with the highest mean is primary education for all children with a mean at 3.42, while the goal to create better living conditions for 100 million people get the lowest mean at 3.15.



Graph 5.1 1=Low priority; 2=Average priority; 3=High priority; 4=Highest priority
Graph shows the mean priority of the survey sample on the MDGs.

If we look more closely at how the survey participants divide themselves on the four categories, as seen in graph 5.2, we find that the overall majority either think that the Norwegian government should give these goals a high priority, or highest priority. Very few say the priority should be average or low. Again, this graph gives a clear indication that most people want to give these goals a high, or the highest priority. It also shows that primary education for all children is the goal that the public prioritize highest.



Graph 5.2 Graph shows the distribution of the survey sample on each MDG in percentage.

5.2 Analysis of the five MDGs

When we take a first look at the analyses of the different goals, we must keep in mind that the dependent variables have been power transformed to give us normal distributed residuals. This justifies the use of t and F tests when we test our hypotheses. Normally distributed residuals is an assumption of OLS-regression. Since we need to take the power of 1 divided by the appropriate power for the specific dependent variable to find a readable result, this will make it a little more difficult to read the results. For example if we want to find the real value of the coefficient of Extreme poverty eradication we need to calculate the value of $72.604^{1/3.5}$.

5.2.1 The explanatory indicators

In chapter 3 there was listed three explanatory indicators of what may affect the public opinion of the MDGs. These were *media*, *education*, and *party identification/left-right placement*.

The first hypothesis was deduced from theory of media. A first glance at the analysis, we find that newspaper reading has the predicted effect on all the MDGs except for "Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS". On all the other goals, the effect of reading the newspaper means that one will prioritize the goals higher. The next media indicator is whether the use of television or radio has any effect on how high the public prioritize the goals. The effect of watching television, or listening to the radio, leads to higher prioritization on all the MDGs except "Child mortality reduction". Since our findings indicate that reading newspapers, or watching/listening to television or radio, may have both a positive and a negative effect on how the public prioritize the MDGs, the hypothesis must be discarded. The effects are not significant at a 0.05 level of significance either.

The next explanatory indicator we looked at was education. From the analysis we find that either having college or university education, or having high school education, affect how the public prioritize the MDGs. However, the effects are randomly different depending on which goal we look at. High school education does not have any significant differences from someone with just elementary education, and affects how the public prioritize the MDGs both positively and negatively. It does not support the hypothesis. College or university education has a positive effect on the public's priority of the goal "Extreme poverty eradication", which is significantly different from people with just elementary education. However, on the goal "Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS", college or university education has the opposite effect. The effects are significantly different from elementary education on this goal as well. The other goals do not have significantly difference between college or university education and elementary education. Given the results we must acknowledge that the hypothesis cannot be supported.

Table 5.1 Regression analysis with all explanatory and control variables

Dependent variables	Extreme poverty eradication ^a	Child mortality reduction ^b	Primary education for all children ^c	Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS ^d	Create better living conditions ^e
Independent variables					
Constant	72.604 (19.645)***	41.484 (9.105)***	52.932 (8.981)***	11.754 (1.770)***	27.714 (9.627)**
Newspaper reading ^f	5.571 (7.921)	2.108 (3.671)	4.502 (3.621)	-0.194 (0.714)	4.641 (3.882)
Television/radio listening ^f	13.087 (16.627)	-1.723 (7.707)	0.105 (7.602)	1.369 (1.498)	9.166 (8.148)
College/University education ^g	20.891 (6.896)**	-5.472 (3.196)	-1.487 (3.153)	-1.497 (0.621)*	5.353 (3.379)
High school education ^g	12.236 (6.859)	-1.772 (3.179)	-2.976 (3.136)	-0.460 (0.621)	5.164 (3.361)
Political left-right scale	-4.559 (1.114)***	-1.262 (0.516)*	-1.824 (0.509)***	-0.126 (0.100)	-0.999 (0.546)
Women ^h	-3.408 (4.019)	3.364 (1.863)	-0.253 (1.837)	0.229 (0.362)	2.382 (1.970)
Urban/rural ⁱ	0.264 (4.082)	-1.020 (1.892)	-3.653 (1.866)	-0.450 (0.368)	-2.183 (1.970)
Ages 25-44 ^j	-6.092 (6.859)	4.759 (3.179)	-1.324 (3.136)	-1.050 (0.618)	-5.317 (3.361)
Ages 45-66 ^j	-13.102 (7.096)	6.620 (3.289)*	0.880 (3.244)	-0.280 (0.639)	-3.332 (3.478)
Ages 67-79 ^j	-6.695 (8.505)	4.398 (3.942)	-0.910 (3.889)	0.791 (0.766)	-3.678 (4.168)
Interest groups: ^k					
Religious organizations	1.910 (4.164)	4.380 (1.930)*	-1.062 (1.904)	-0.092 (0.375)	0.419 (2.040)
Sports or fitness organizations	-1.166 (4.192)	-0.981 (1.943)	1.142 (1.917)	0.713 (0.378)	-2.091 (2.055)
Art, music, or study groups	9.880 (5.140)	3.429 (2.382)	5.160 (2.350)*	0.746 (0.463)	1.619 (2.519)
Unions	2.946 (4.325)	-2.022 (2.005)	-0.737 (1.977)	-0.252 (0.390)	-2.929 (2.120)
Political parties	8.447 (5.542)	3.490 (2.569)	-5.444 (2.534)*	0.222 (0.499)	0.147 (2.716)
Environmental organizations	-12.539 (8.144)	1.424 (3.775)	-2.002 (3.723)	0.231 (0.734)	3.066 (3.991)
Labor unions	-7.892 (4.868)	-0.055 (2.256)	-0.885 (2.226)	-0.391 (0.439)	0.129 (2.386)
Relief and charity organizations	7.895 (4.558)	3.385 (2.113)	4.152 (2.084)*	1.014 (0.439)*	0.668 (2.234)
Consumer organizations	-7.737 (5.304)	-0.245 (2.458)	-1.724 (2.425)	-0.461 (0.478)	1.202 (2.599)
Other voluntary organizations	8.246 (4.742)	-2.861 (2.198)	0.237 (2.168)	0.224 (0.427)	1.991 (2.324)
N	480	480	480	480	480
Adjusted R ²	0.075	0.035	0.038	0.067	0.006

The table shows the regression coefficients and in the parentheses is displayed the standard error values.

*** = significant on 0.000 level, ** = significant on a 0.00 level, * = significant on a 0.05 level

a: power transformed by 3.5 f: used media = 1, not used media = 0

b: power transformed by 3 g: reference category = elementary education

c: power transformed by 3 h: women = 1, men = 0

d: power transformed by 2 i: urban = 1, rural = 0

e: power transformed by 3. j: reference category = ages 18-24

k: member = 1, non-member = 0

The final explanatory indicator that was presented in chapter 3, was party identification/left-right placement. From the theory was deduced a hypothesis depending on the public's placement on a political left-right scale. This is the only indicator which to an extent support the hypothesis. We find that all the MDGs are effected as the theory states. If you place yourself to the left on the scale you will prioritize the goals higher compared to the people who place themselves to the right. For each point you move to the right on the scale, your priority of the goals become more negative, as the hypothesis states. However, since the two

goals: "Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS"; and "Create better living conditions"; do not have significant difference between each point on the scale, the hypothesis cannot be supported, and we must discard it. This variable was tested for curve linearity to see whether there were any significant effects. The F-test showed that none of the models got better when testing for curve linearity, and therefore was excluded in the final model.

In the section above was given a brief overview of what the results of the explanatory indicators was on the MDGs. What they yielded was in general that the effects on how the public prioritize the goals are different in direction, except for the party identification/left-right positioning where the effect is the same on all the goals. In the following section we will have a closer look at the control indicators and sum up what effects *women; living in urban or rural areas; age; and interest groups* have on the prioritization of the MDGs.

5.2.2 The control indicators

The first control indicator we looked at was gender. The theory points out that women tend to be more altruistic and have more humanitarian views than men, which led to hypothesis 4. The results from the analysis yields that this is not true. Depending on which goal we look at the effect of being a women is both negative and positive. None of the effects are significantly different from the effect of men either, and we end up discarding the hypothesis.

Next control indicator is whether you live in an urban or rural area. From theory on cleavage lines was deduced hypothesis 5. Again, we find that the direction of the effect is different from goal to goal. This means that, whether you live in an urban or a rural area, you can just as well prioritize the goals lower as you would higher. Since none of the effects are significant on any of the goals, the hypothesis deduced for this indicator must be discarded as well.

The last hypothesis deduced is on the age indicator. Theory discussed in chapter 3 gives us reason to believe that there might be differences in how people prioritize the MDGs depending on what their age is. From the theory was deduced hypothesis 6. Our findings in the analysis is that this is not true. The variable was recoded into four different age groups, and the effects are different from goal to goal. The first goal; "Extreme poverty eradication"; yields the opposite effect of the hypothesis, while the goal; "Child mortality reduction"; to some extent yields the effect proposed by the hypothesis. The latter is the only goal where we

find significant difference from the reference group. However, it is only the age group of ages 45-66 that is significantly different from the reference group. The other two groups, ages 25-44 and ages 67-79, are not significantly different from the reference group. The group, ages 45-66, is more positive than the reference group, contrary to what the hypothesis states. However, since the overall effect of the age groups are not significantly different from the reference group, this hypothesis cannot be supported by the data.

Finally, I wanted to check whether being a member of any kind of interest group may have any effect on how high the public prioritize the MDGs. The variables were coded whether you are member or not of any of the different organizations above, which all can be seen as an interest group. A first glance of the variables in table 5.1 tells us that being a member of these organizations has little effects on how high the survey participants prioritize the goals. However, membership in some of the interest groups above has an effect on some of the goals. Let us have a look at each goal to see which groups yield an effect.

We start with the "extreme poverty eradication" goal, where we find that there are no significant differences of being a member, and not being a member, in any of the interest groups in the analysis.

The next goal, "Child mortality reduction", yields a significant difference between members and non-members of religious organizations. People who are members of a religious organization prioritize the goals higher than people who are not a member of a religious organization. None of the other variables have significant difference between members and non-members.

The next goal is "Primary education for all children". We find that there is significant difference between members and non-members in three different variables. If you are a member of an art, music, or study group, you will prioritize this goal higher than non-members do. An interesting fact we can read from the next variable is that a member of a political party will prioritize this goal lower than a non-member will do. Lastly, if you are a member of a relief or charity organization, you prioritize this goal higher than people who are not a member of such organizations.

When we look at the fourth goal, which is, "Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS", only one interest group variable sticks out with significant difference between members and non-members. The group of interest is relief and charity organizations, where members of these groups prioritize the goal higher compared to those who are not members.

The last goal, "Create better living conditions", have no variables at all with a significant difference in the effects. When we look at the adjusted R^2 we see that the model just explains 0.6 percent of the public's prioritization of the goal. The dependent variable where the independent variables explain the most variance, at 7.5 percent, is "Extreme poverty eradication". This is followed by "Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS" with explaining power of 6.7 percent of the variance. The independent variables explain variance of the last two goals, "Primary education for all children", and "Child mortality reduction", by 3.8 percent and 3.5 percent respectively.

The control indicators show in general that our hypotheses are wrong. The only significant difference found in these groups was the group, ages 45-66, which shows the opposite of what the hypothesis stated. When we looked for any effects the membership of a interest group may have, we found in general that being a member has no significant difference in the effect from not being a member in most cases, except for a few. The last section, which follows, will look at interaction terms.

5.2.3 Interaction terms

To see whether there are interactions between education and media, four interaction terms were coded and run in their own model. The results showed only significant differences on one of the goals which is revealed in table 5.2 below.

The interaction between newspaper and high school education shows that there is a significant difference in how people with high school education and who reads newspapers prioritize the this goal compared to people who do not read the newspaper and has not got high school education. However, this was the only goal that revealed any significant results.

Table 5.2 Interaction

Dependent variable	Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS ^a
Independent variables	
Constant	9.447 (3.856)*
Newspaper reading ^b	5.025 (2.756)
Television/radio listening ^b	-1.282 (4.705)
College/University education ^c	1.346 (5.555)
High school education ^c	2.506 (4.261)
Political left-right scale	-0.130 (0.100)
Women ^d	0.202 (0.363)
Urban/rural ^e	-0.459 (0.368)
Ages 25-44 ^f	-1.014 (0.621)
Ages 45-66 ^f	-0.222 (0.641)
Ages 67-79 ^f	0.794 (0.767)
Interest groups: ^g	
Religious organizations	-0.066 (0.375)
Sports or fitness organizations	0.653 (0.380)
Art, music, or study groups	0.698 (0.464)
Unions	-0.214 (0.390)
Political parties	0.230 (0.499)
Environmental organizations	0.227 (0.733)
Labor unions	-0.443 (0.439)
Relief and charity organizations	1.031 (0.410)*
Consumer organizations	-0.514 (0.477)
Other voluntary organizations	0.206 (0.427)
Interaction Newspaper + High school	-6.351 (2.916)*
Interaction TV/Radio + High school	2.722 (5.039)
Interaction Newspaper + College/University	-4.566 (3.000)
Interaction TV/Radio + College/University	1.520 (6.074)
N	490
Adjusted R ²	0.071

The table shows the regression coefficients and in the parentheses is displayed the standard error values.

* = significant on a 0.05 level

a: power transformed by 2

e: urban = 1, rural = 0

b: used media = 1, not used media = 0

f: reference category = ages 18-24

c: reference category = elementary education

g: member = 1, non-member = 0

d: women = 1, men = 0

5.3 Experiment

The experiment was conducted to check if there are any effect of giving some of the survey participants a set of questions that the rest of the participants do not get. In the survey they divided the sample in half, and ask one part questions which would give these participants information about the MDGs. The rest of the sample did not receive these question and therefore not the same information. By doing a contingency table analysis of the results; we

will be able to see if there are differences between the expected and observed values. The expected values are of course fifty-fifty. In the contingency table below we see the results.

Table 5.3

Norwegian development aid	Asked questions		Total
	No	Yes	
Too little	39.5 %	46.7 %	43.0 %
Enough	6.6 %	2.9 %	4.8 %
Too much	53.9 %	50.4 %	52.2 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Chi square = 10.902 df=2

As we see in table 5.3, the chi square is 10.902 which with two degrees of freedom means that it is above the critical value of 5.991 which we find with a probability value of 0.05. There is significant difference between people who have been asked these questions and people who have not been asked these questions.

Establishing that there is a difference between the sample that was asked the questions, and the sample that was not asked the question leads to another question. What is the difference? We find in table 5.3 that in the sample asked the questions, more people think that Norway give too little aid and less people think that Norway give too much aid, compared to the sample who was not asked the questions.

In this chapter we have looked at the results from the analysis, and found that all hypotheses stated from the theory have been proven wrong. Even though the results show that most variables effect the prioritization of the goals in both a positive and a negative direction, one variable sticks out. The placement on a political left-right scale shows that people who place themselves to the left on this scale prioritize the goals higher than people who place themselves to the right on this scale. However, a couple of these goals do not show a significant difference between the left and right positions. We also see from table 5.3 that people who are more informed about the MDGs seem to be more in favor of supporting developing countries, compared to people who are not as informed about the MDGs. This is interesting findings and we will now move on to chapter 6 where we will discuss the findings.

6 Discussion

This chapter will interpret the findings in the analysis, presented in chapter 5, and connect them to the research question. The research question sought to find what the public feels about the MDGs, and what may affect the public's opinion of them. Are there indicators that clearly affect the public opinion, and how do they affect it? The chapter starts with the MDGs and briefly connects them to earlier research. It moves on to the explanatory and control variables and briefly discusses their outcome, before it ends with some concluding remarks.

6.1 The Millennium Development Goals

The five MDGs, used as dependent variables, give us an overview of how the public prioritize them. The analysis showed that in general the public prioritize the goals very high. These results show the same as the results presented by Mc Donnell et al. (2003), who found that 88 percent of the Norwegian public was in favor of development assistance. These findings tell us that the Norwegian public is interested in aiding developing countries and help them to get rid of the problems by which the MDGs concern themselves. When we relate these findings with what Ringdal (1981) states, that policy decisions should be backed by public opinion, we understand the importance of the government's knowledge about what may affect the people's opinion of the MDGs. By knowing this the government can inform the public of the MDGs and thus get full support for the politics they want to adopt.

6.2 The explanatory indicators

In this section, the chapter will briefly interpret the results of the explanatory indicators and connect the findings to the research question. The three explanatory variables were *media*, *education*, and *party identification/left-right placement*. The only one of the explanatory variables that to an extent confirmed the theory was party identification/left-right placement. The other two variables had different direction on the effect of the public opinion, and could not confirm the hypotheses. The reason for not confirming the hypothesis deduced from party identification/left-right placement, was that the effect did not prove significantly different on

two of the goals. How do the explanatory variables connect to the research question? We begin with the latter variable.

As already discussed in chapter 5, party identification/left-right placement was the only indicator of all the independent variables that to an extent confirmed the hypothesis stated. The effect was as predicted. A person who places himself or herself to the left on the political left-right scale is more in favor of the MDGs. For each point, he or she moves to the right on the scale, the more negative he or she becomes to the MDGs. This effect shows that there is a connection between the public's political orientation and the public's prioritization of the MDGs. Since the theory discussed in chapter 3 states that parties that are found to the left on this scale tend to be more in favor of social justice (Knapp & Wright 2006) than parties to the right, it was reasonable to believe, having party identification in mind, that the public would be affected by their placement on the political left-right scale.

Now we will have a look at the other two explanatory indicators, and start with media. Even though Ringdal (1981) found that the Norwegian public who read newspapers is more interested in foreign policy matters, this does not seem to affect how they prioritize the MDGs. Neither newspaper reading nor television and radio listening has any significant effect on how the Norwegian public prioritize the MDGs. If we have another look at the theory, we find that Glynn et al. (1999) pointed out that media in general only has an agenda setting effect on what the public have an opinion on. Mc Donnell et al. state that research have shown that the public has high levels of skepticism about media as an independent source of information about the developing world (2003: 26). Glynn et al. also point out that the media probably just reinforce the opinions people already has about an issue (1999: 399-400). This can explain why media has no significant effect in our analysis.

The last explanatory variable was education. Several studies have pointed out that education has an effect on the public's political interest, as Weakliem (2002) states. Statements like, the public become more altruistic and humanitarian as they get more educated, leads us to believe that they would prioritize the MDGs higher as they get more educated. However, what we found in the analysis was that higher education did not mean that people prioritized the goals higher. First, only two of the goals were significantly affected by higher education. In both cases people had to have college or university education for the effect to be significant. Second, education affected the two goals in opposite direction. On "Extreme poverty

eradication”, education had the effect that the hypothesis expected. People with college or university education prioritized this goal much higher than people with only elementary education did. The other goal, stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, showed the opposite effect. If you have college or university education you prioritize this goal lower than people with elementary education level. What we found in the results is that people do not necessarily have a more favorable view of the goals in general, if they have more education.

So far, we have discussed how the results from the analysis affected the MGDs, and have tried to connect the explanatory variables to the results in the analysis. In the next section, we will have a closer look at the control indicators.

6.3 The control indicators

None of the effects of the control indicators confirm the hypotheses. The only significantly different control variable is ages 45-66 on the MDG: "Child mortality reduction". Its effect is opposite of the predicted effect. The reason why we do not find any significant effect of the urban/rural variable may be because of the fact mentioned in the White papers from the government, mentioned in chapter 2; that the campaign to inform the public about the MDGs has raised awareness of the MDGs in all local and regional areas (St.prp. nr. 1 (2005-2006): 144). When we look at the different interest groups we find that membership of any of these in general reveals no significant difference in effect, except for a few. "Primary education for all children" is the MDG where we find most significant differences between members and non-members of interest groups. Members of "Art, music, or study groups" prioritize the goal higher than non-members. Members of "Political parties" prioritize the goal lower than non-members. Finally, members of "Relief and charity organizations" prioritize the goal higher than non-members.

6.4 Concluding remarks

As the theory chapter discussed, public opinion has effects on how foreign policy is adopted, and therefore it is of interest to the government to find out what affects public opinion, since this may help the government to know what to focus on if they want to inform the public about important politics. The government seeks to inform the public about the importance of

the MDGs through its information campaign about the MDGs, and this thesis have therefore sought to find what may affect the public opinion of these MDGs.

First, we need to comment shortly on the sample size. With a sample size of only 480 units, the precision of the analysis estimates are not as good as they would have been with a larger sample size. Therefore, we must also expect that the estimates could show other results with a larger sample size (Ringdal 2007). With this in mind, we now turn to the results.

The results found in the analysis suggest that there are not many indicators, of the ones used in this analysis, that have any effect on how the public opinion prioritize the MDGs. Except for the variable "party identification/left-right placement", none of the other indicators show any effects that can support the hypotheses deduced. What do these findings suggest? These findings can be explained by one factor, discussed in Mc Donnell et al. (2003). There is in general very little awareness or understanding about development co-operation and global issues in the public (Mc Donnell et al. 2003: 22). Also Glynn et al. point out this fact. They state that the public has less opinion on foreign policy since it is less salient than domestic policy is (1999: 316). The research done by Mc Donnell et al. (2003) suggests that people are not aware of what aid their countries give to developing countries. As much as one third of the public in European countries do not know how much their government spend on foreign aid (2003: 23). Smillie (1999) states in *Public Support and the Politics of Aid*, that the public knowledge about international development is very low. The "public support for development assistance is a mile wide and an inch deep" (Smillie 1999: 72). Our analysis supports what Mc Donnell et al. (2003) found, and what Smillie (1999) states, that the public does prioritize the goals high. The reason why we do not find much significant effects in the analysis may be simply because the public does not have much knowledge about the MDGs, and therefore does not have much opinion about them either, despite the governments campaigns to inform the public (St.meld. nr. 35 (2003-2004): 20).

Finally, we found that the survey sample who was given additional information about the MDGs through more specific questions, was more in favor of giving more aid than the survey sample that did not receive additional information. This suggest that raising the public knowledge about the MDGs, may increase support for development aid spending, and policies straightened at reaching the MDGs.

This chapter has discussed the findings in the analysis, connected it to the research question, and concluded that the indicators do not affect the public opinion of the MDGs in general. The reason for this, the thesis conclude, may be that there is not much knowledge about the MDGs in the public, despite government funded campaigns to inform the public. The thesis also concludes that if the public becomes informed about the MDGs, they become more supportive of increasing aid spending.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has sought to find out what the Norwegian public opinion of the Millennium Development Goals is, and what indicators may affect the public opinion of them. Survey data from World Values Survey 2007 for Norway was used in the analysis and theory was based on media, education and political orientation of a left-right scale. Using ordinary least square regression analysis we found that the public prioritize the goals very high, which suggest a high support for helping developing countries. The same results have been found in studies conducted by Mc Donnell et al. (2003). The analysis further checked whether the abovementioned indicators have any effect on the public opinion of the MDGs. What was found, was that the indicators in general did not have any effects on the public opinion. The only exception was the political orientation of the public on a left-right scale which to an extent supported the hypothesis deduced from the theory.

The survey also had an experiment, where information about the goals was revealed to half of the survey sample, while the control group, which was the other half of the survey sample, did not receive this information. The experiment sought to find out if there was any significant difference between these two groups when later asked to state whether the Norwegian aid spending was too little, enough, or too much. The analysis finds that there are significant difference between the sample that received the information and the sample that did not receive the information.

The thesis concludes that there is high support for the Millennium Development Goals in the Norwegian public. However, due to lack of significant effects in indicators which try to explain what may affect the public opinion of the goals, the thesis concludes that there may be little knowledge about the goals. This is supported by earlier research done by Mc Donnell et al. (2003). The thesis finally conclude that if the public become more informed about the Millennium Development Goals, there will be more support for development aid spending, and from this infers more support for the Millennium Development Goals.

Future research in this field should use logistic analysis methods to see if the results in this thesis can be supported. A larger survey sample will also make generalization of the findings

back to the population more reliable. Controlling for the effect of the political elite on the public opinion would be interesting, as well as looking at the effect of other media, like the internet.

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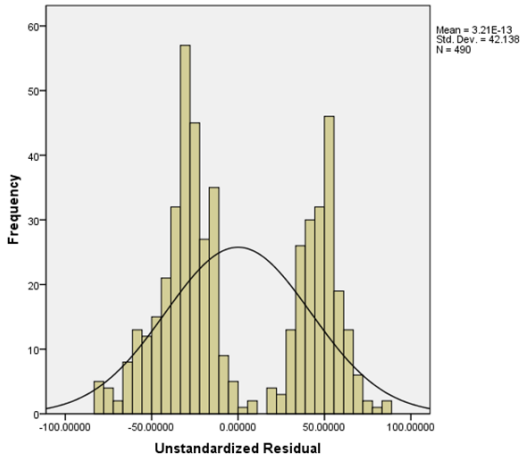
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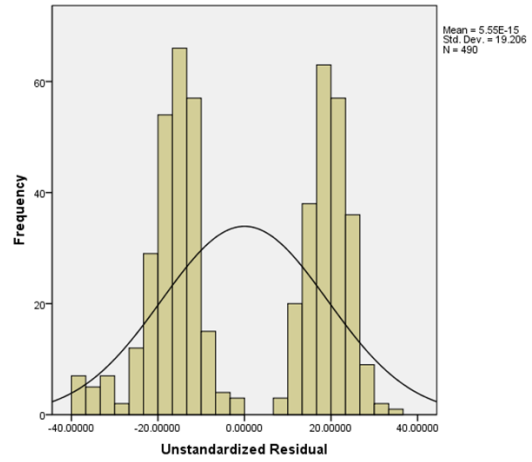
APPENDIX

Assumptions

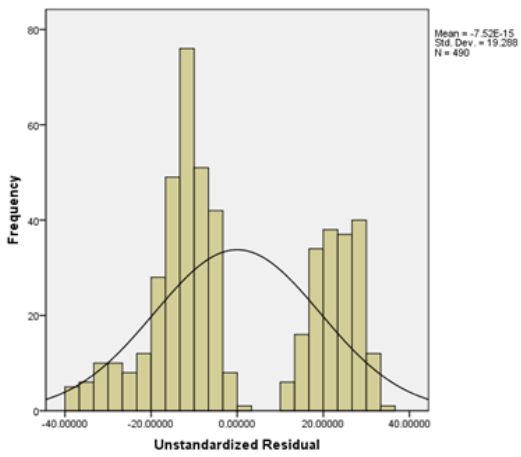
Normal distribution



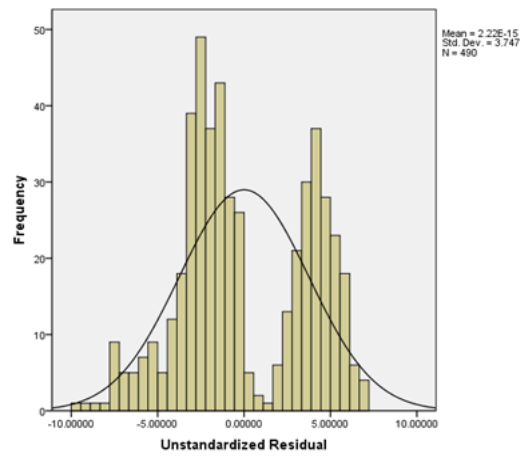
Extreme Poverty Reduction – Power transformed by 3.5



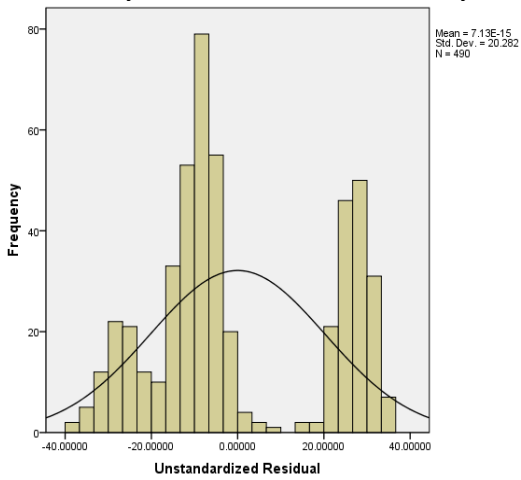
Primary Education for all Children – Power transformed by 3



Child mortality reduction – Power transformed by 3

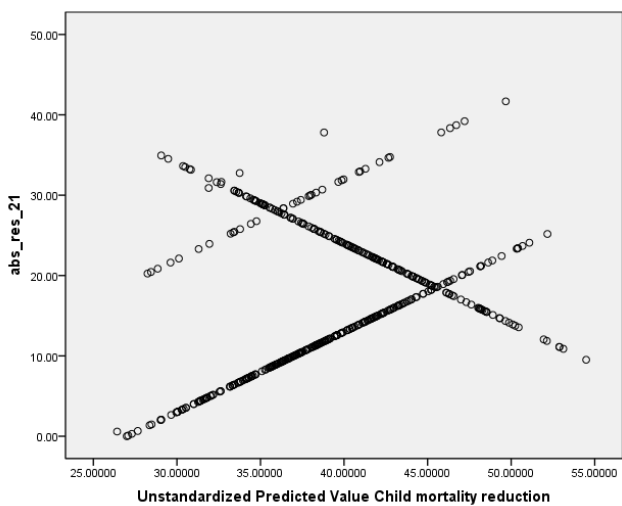
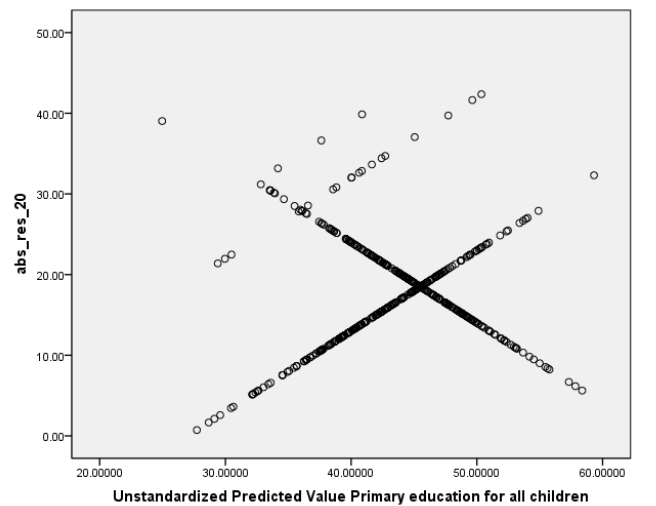
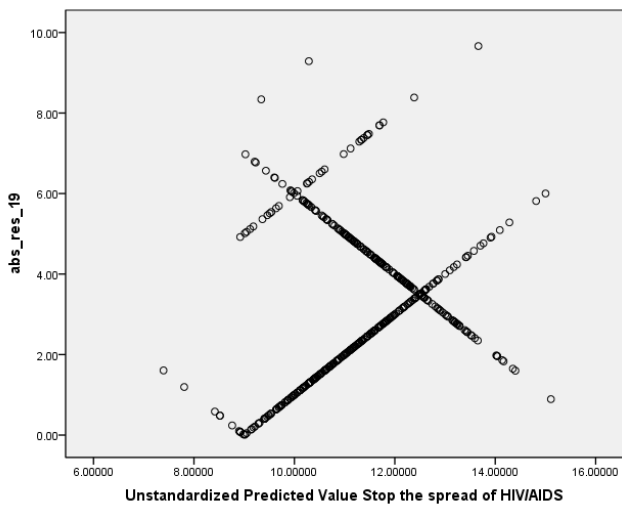
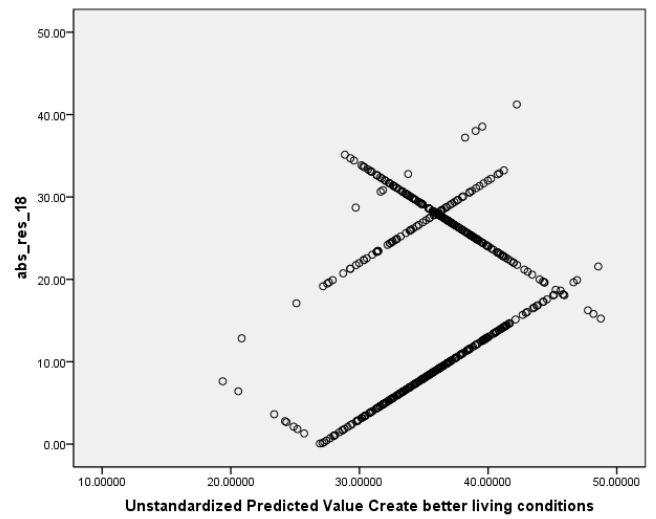
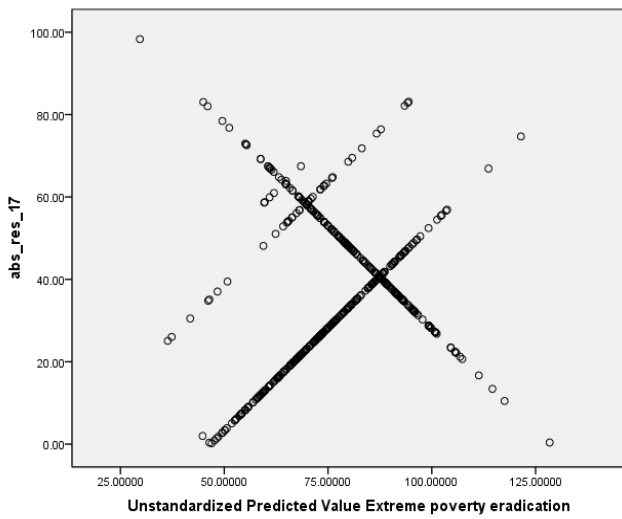


Stop spread of HIV/AIDS – Power transformed by 2



Better living conditions power transformed by 3

Heteroscedasticity



Autocorrelation

Millennium Development Goal	Durbin-Watson
Child mortality reduction	2.021
Primary education for all children	2.013
Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS	1.940
Create better living conditions	2.002
Extreme poverty eradication	1.936

Multicollinearity

Dependent variables	Extreme poverty eradication ^a	Child mortality reduction ^b	Primary education for all children ^c	Stop the spread of HIV/AIDS ^d	Create better living conditions ^e
Independent variables	Tolerance	Tolerance	Tolerance	Tolerance	Tolerance
Constant					
Newspaper reading ^f	0.927	0.927	0.927	0.927	0.927
Television/radio listening ^f	0.937	0.937	0.937	0.937	0.937
College/University education ^g	0.313	0.313	0.313	0.313	0.313
High school education ^g	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.333	0.333
Political left-right scale	0.866	0.866	0.866	0.866	0.866
Women ^h	0.922	0.922	0.922	0.922	0.922
Urban/rural ⁱ	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.896
Ages 25-44 ^j	0.331	0.331	0.331	0.331	0.331
Ages 45-66 ^j	0.317	0.317	0.317	0.317	0.317
Ages 67-79 ^j	0.492	0.492	0.492	0.492	0.492
Interest groups: ^k					
Religious organizations	0.916	0.916	0.916	0.916	0.916
Sports or fitness organizations	0.867	0.867	0.867	0.867	0.867
Art, music, or study groups	0.825	0.825	0.825	0.825	0.825
Unions	0.797	0.797	0.797	0.797	0.797
Political parties	0.848	0.848	0.848	0.848	0.848
Environmental organizations	0.853	0.853	0.853	0.853	0.853
Labor unions	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.820
Relief and charity organizations	0.847	0.847	0.847	0.847	0.847
Consumer organizations	0.861	0.861	0.861	0.861	0.861
Other voluntary organizations	0.835	0.835	0.835	0.835	0.835