



# BRAZIL

## MAJOR FORCES



**CONCERNS ABOUT  
CRIME, THE ECONOMY  
AND HEALTH CARE**



**HIGH LEVELS OF  
DISILLUSIONMENT  
WITH POLITICIANS  
AND LOW TRUST IN  
GOVERNMENT**



**GROWING CONCERNS  
AROUND INEQUALITY**

## WHICH ARE CONTRIBUTING TO:



**A BREAKDOWN IN  
SOCIAL COHESION**



**A TENDENCY  
TO PRIORITISE  
DOMESTIC  
ISSUES OVER  
INTERNATIONAL  
ONES**



## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Despite high levels of support for development, high domestic concerns cause support for this spending to collapse when presented as a trade off against domestic priorities - except when it is framed as spending on joint projects with other countries to solve global challenges.



## PATHWAYS TO BUILDING SUPPORT:

Framing international development as a tool for poverty reduction or disaster relief was more effective than framing as building sustainable economic growth. Emphasising the role of multilateralism and working together with other countries was also effective.

*This chapter is based on polling only*


## SUMMARY

The top issues of concern for Brazilians are crime, the economy and healthcare. Across age and voter groups, people are concerned about growing levels of inequality and they are highly disillusioned with politics and politicians themselves. These forces are contributing to decline in social cohesion, with most Brazilians - particularly young people - feeling less connected to the people around them.

As both a recipient and donor of international development, Brazilians have a unique perspective on multilateralism and development. Brazilians support global cooperation on climate action and poverty reduction, and they care about their country's international reputation. They think a combination of standing up for national interests and contributing to progress on global development and climate goals builds respect on the world stage. These are broadly consistent across demographics, though Bolsonaro voters are notably less convinced that climate action builds international respect.

However, high domestic concerns around the cost of living and inequality mean that Brazilians do not want a focus on solving global problems like climate change or global poverty to get in the way of fixing problems at home. When compared to domestic priorities, support for international development declines. However, when framed through the lens of multilateralism - i.e. joint projects with other countries to solve global problems like poverty and climate change - support for development stays strong compared to domestic priorities.

Humanitarian & disaster relief framing resonates the most with Brazilians across the political spectrum (compared to poverty alleviation or building sustainable economies) though none of the framings shift support in a significant way.

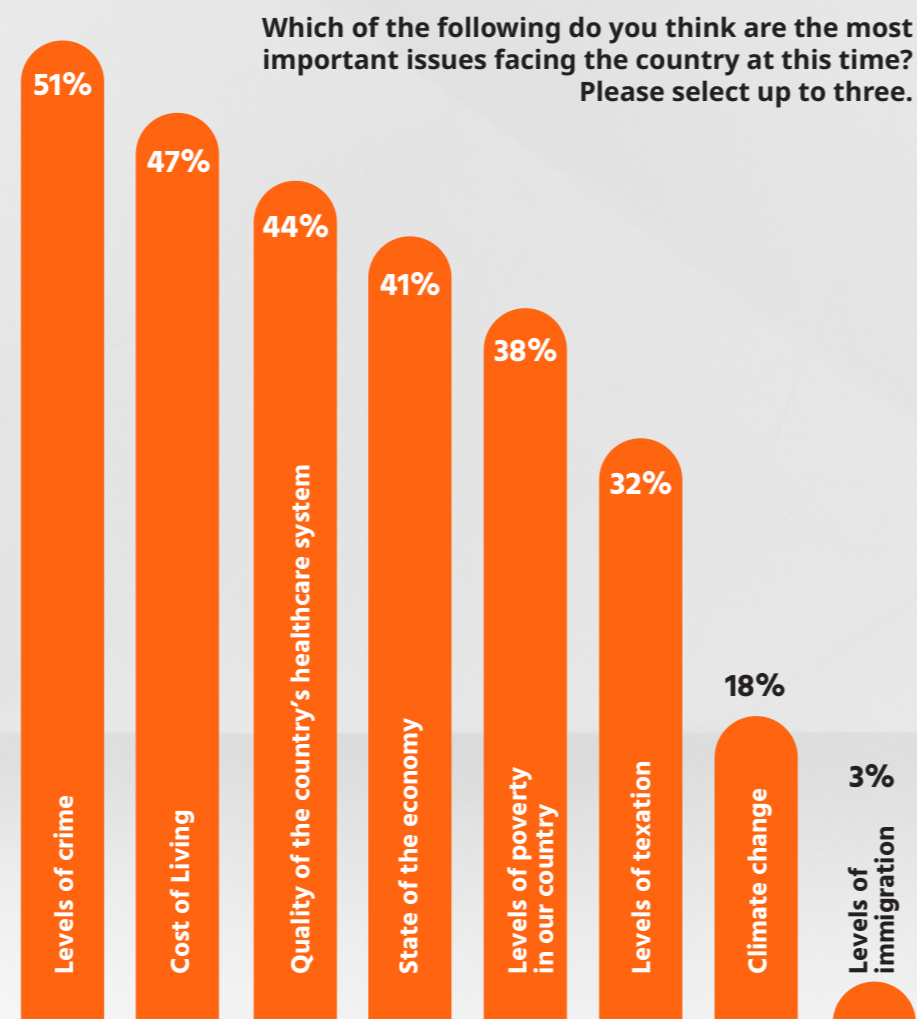


*Brazil does not report ODA spending to the OECD as it is not an official DAC or non-DAC donor country. However, it is playing a growing role as a donor country alongside being a traditional recipient country. Brazil is a member of the International Forum on Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD), where it reported USD 2.6 billion in support of sustainable development in 2023, of which USD 49.1 million was cross-border resources to TOSSD recipients.*

# THE MAJOR FORCES DRIVING THE POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

## Top issues of concern for Brazilians are levels of crime, cost of living and the quality of the healthcare system.

These are relatively consistent across age groups and across those who voted for Lula, Bolsonaro or who did not vote in the most recent election. The state of the economy and levels of poverty are also major concerns - only 19% of the public agree that people in Brazil generally have more than they need to get by.



## Growing inequality is also a major concern in Brazil.

With 70% of the public agreeing that the gap between the rich and poor in their country is growing. This is true across ages and voter groups (67% of Lula voters and 70% of Bolsonaro voters agree the gap between the rich and the poor is growing). Further, 70% of the public disagree that ordinary people get their fair share of the country's wealth - again this is consistent across age and voter groups.

## The public feel disillusioned with politicians and trust in government is split across party lines.

A majority of Brazilians agree that politicians only look out for themselves, that most political discussions are just talk with no action, and that it doesn't matter what the public thinks because politicians will do what they want anyway - this is true across age and voter groups. Trust in the government is clearly split along party lines - with 78% Lula voters saying they trust the national government vs. just 31% of Bolsonaro voters and 42% of people who did not vote in the most recent election. There was no meaningful difference in levels of trust between people who were following the Bolsonaro news<sup>9</sup> vs. those who weren't.

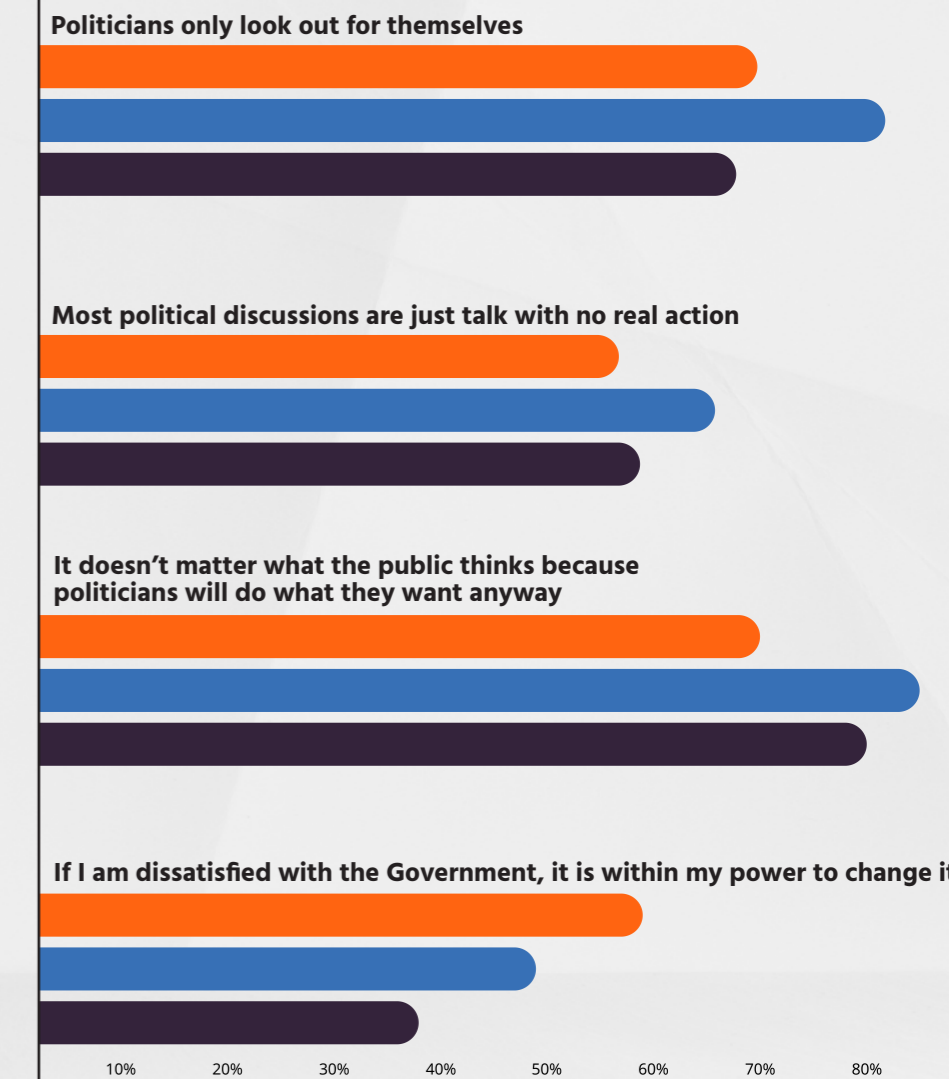
**These forces are driving a breakdown in social cohesion, particularly amongst younger people.** Only a third of the population say they are feeling increasingly more connected to the people around them vs. 54% who say they are feeling increasingly less connected. This is most pronounced for 18-24 year olds - in fact, 61% of this group feel less connected to the people around them, compared to 45% of over-65s.

**However, it is a promising signal that Brazilians feel empowered to make change.** Indeed, the public tend to agree that it is within their power to change the government if they are dissatisfied with it (48% agree vs. 39% disagree), though there are differences across voter groups - with disempowerment highest amongst those who did not vote in the most recent election.

<sup>9</sup> As described in the 'Methodology' section, our fieldwork in Brazil took place in the run-up to the verdict in Bolsonaro's coup trial which garnered significant media attention and attracted large-scale public rallies both in support and opposition.

Please indicate your level of agreement for the following statements. Net support

● Lula (PT) ● Bolsonaro (PL) ● Did not vote



# LOOKING OUTWARD: FEELINGS TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY & MULTILATERALISM

## There is widespread agreement across the public that it is important that other countries have a positive view of Brazil (88% agree).

This is consistently true across age, income and voter groups. The public see a combination of action on global issues - like climate and development - as well as standing up for national interests as the way to build respect on the global stage. Lula voters were more likely to believe climate-related action builds respect compared to Bolsonaro voters.

## Brazilians tend to agree that countries should work together on global problems at the same time as national problems

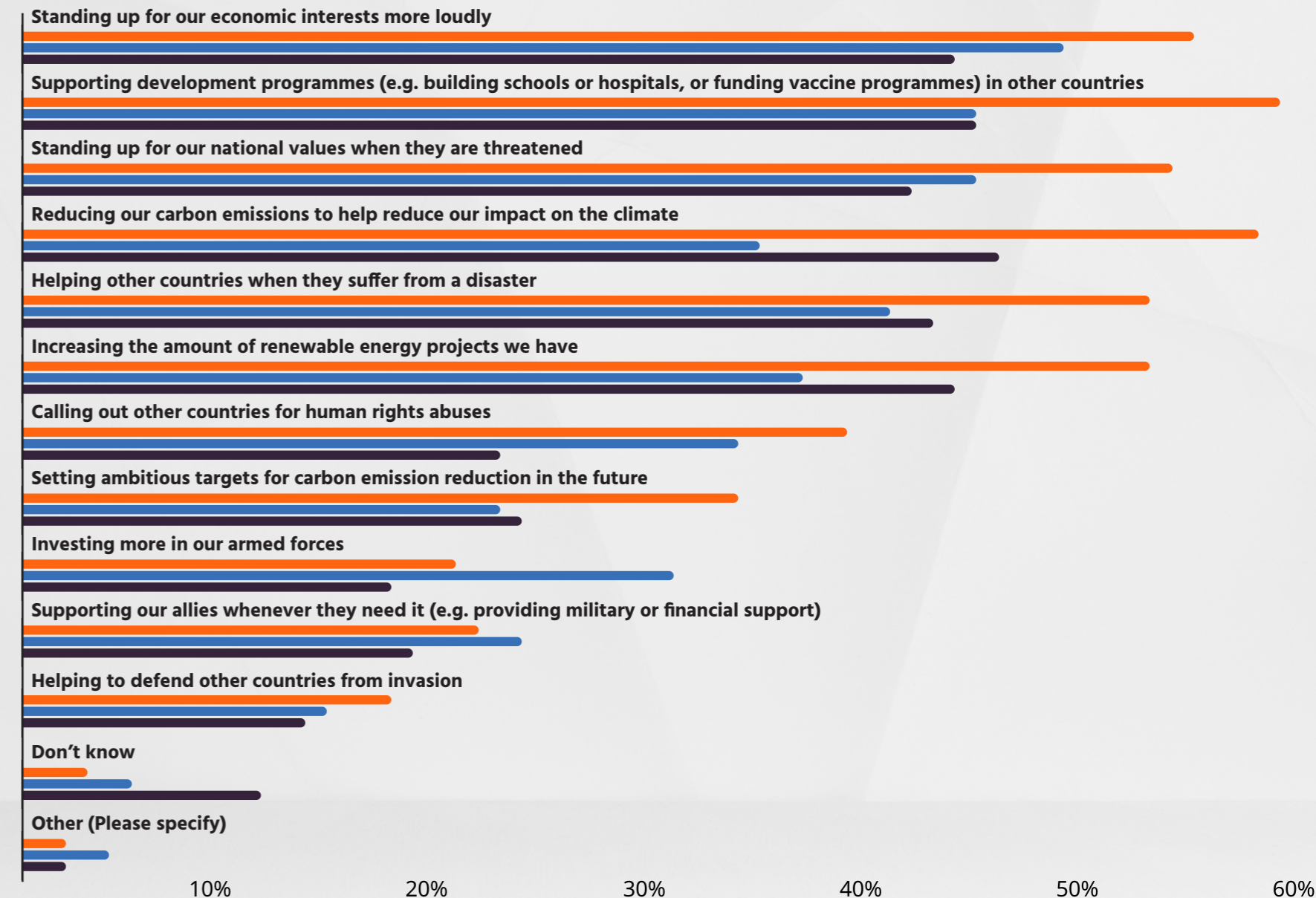
(63% agree vs. 27% who think Brazil should focus on solving national problems before working with others on global problems). Further, a majority of Brazilians (68%) think it is important for their government to reduce poverty in other countries - support is highest amongst Lula voters but there is net support across the political spectrum.

## However, Brazilians don't want a focus on global problems to get in the way of fixing problems at home

54% of the public agree Brazil should take care of its own people before taking care of people from other countries (vs. 39% who think Brazil should do both at the same time). Bolsonaro voters in particular want the government to prioritise Brazilians first (62% agree). Further, the public are split on whether Brazil has a responsibility to help people in other countries when they are in need - young people 18-24 particularly disagree with this statement (36% agree vs. 45% disagree, compared to 45% of over-65s who agree and 35% who disagree).

In your view, which, if any, of the following would increase the respect other countries have for Brazil on the world stage? Select any which apply

● Lula (PT) ● Bolsonaro (PL) ● Did not vote

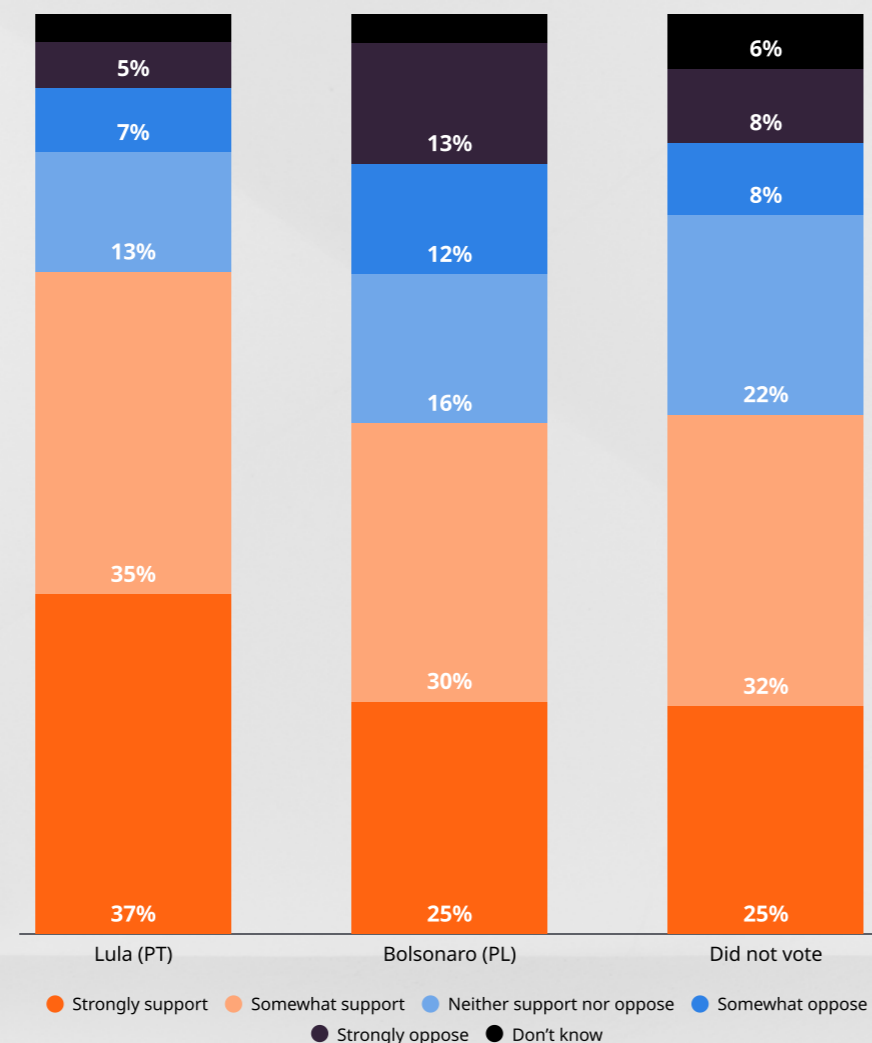


## CURRENT ATTITUDES TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As both an international development donor and recipient, Brazilians have an interesting perspective on the country's development spending - there are high levels of in-principle support (62% support vs. just 18% oppose) across the political spectrum, but high concerns about cost of living and inequality mean the public don't want to see international development getting in the way of helping people at home. Indeed, the main reasons for opposition to development spending were 1. our country should focus on helping people at home first and 2. our country cannot afford to spend money helping other countries.

Brazilians are split on whether or not the country's development spending is effective - 42% think it is effective in its goal of reducing poverty around the world vs. 43% think it is ineffective. Lula voters are more likely to think it is effective compared to Bolsonaro voters and those who did not vote.

To what extent do you support or oppose Brazil spending money to reduce poverty in developing countries, such as by providing food assistance, or helping to construct vital infrastructure like schools or wells?

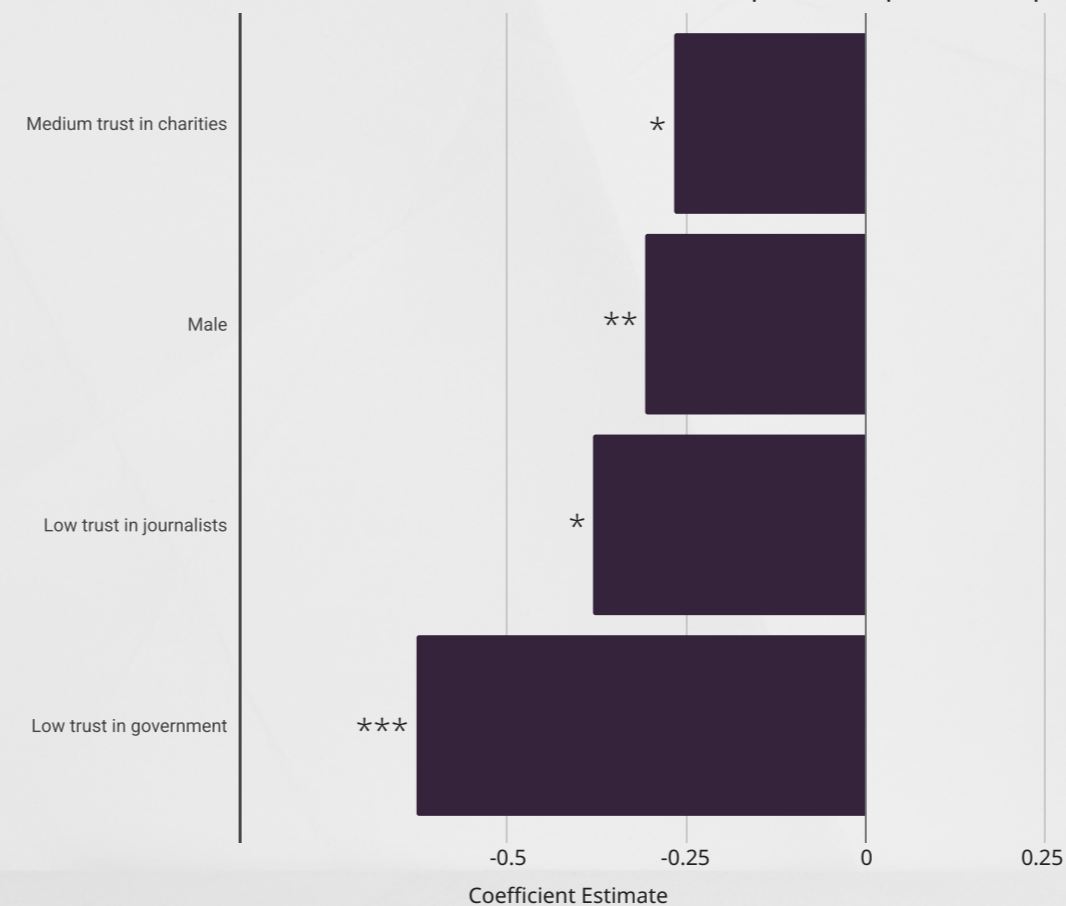


## Opposition to aid was largely driven by those with low trust in institutions.

Low trust in government was the most significant predictor of opposition to international aid in Brazil, with low trust in journalists also significant.

Significant Predictors of Support for International Aid in Brazil<sup>10</sup>

\* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001



<sup>10</sup> Social engagement is defined as those who have taken part in signing a petition, donating or volunteering, sharing political content on social media, or attending a protest. 'Concerned about Immigration: 1' represents respondents who selected immigration as one of the top three issues facing Brazil today.

**The public tend to think the government spends too much on international development.**

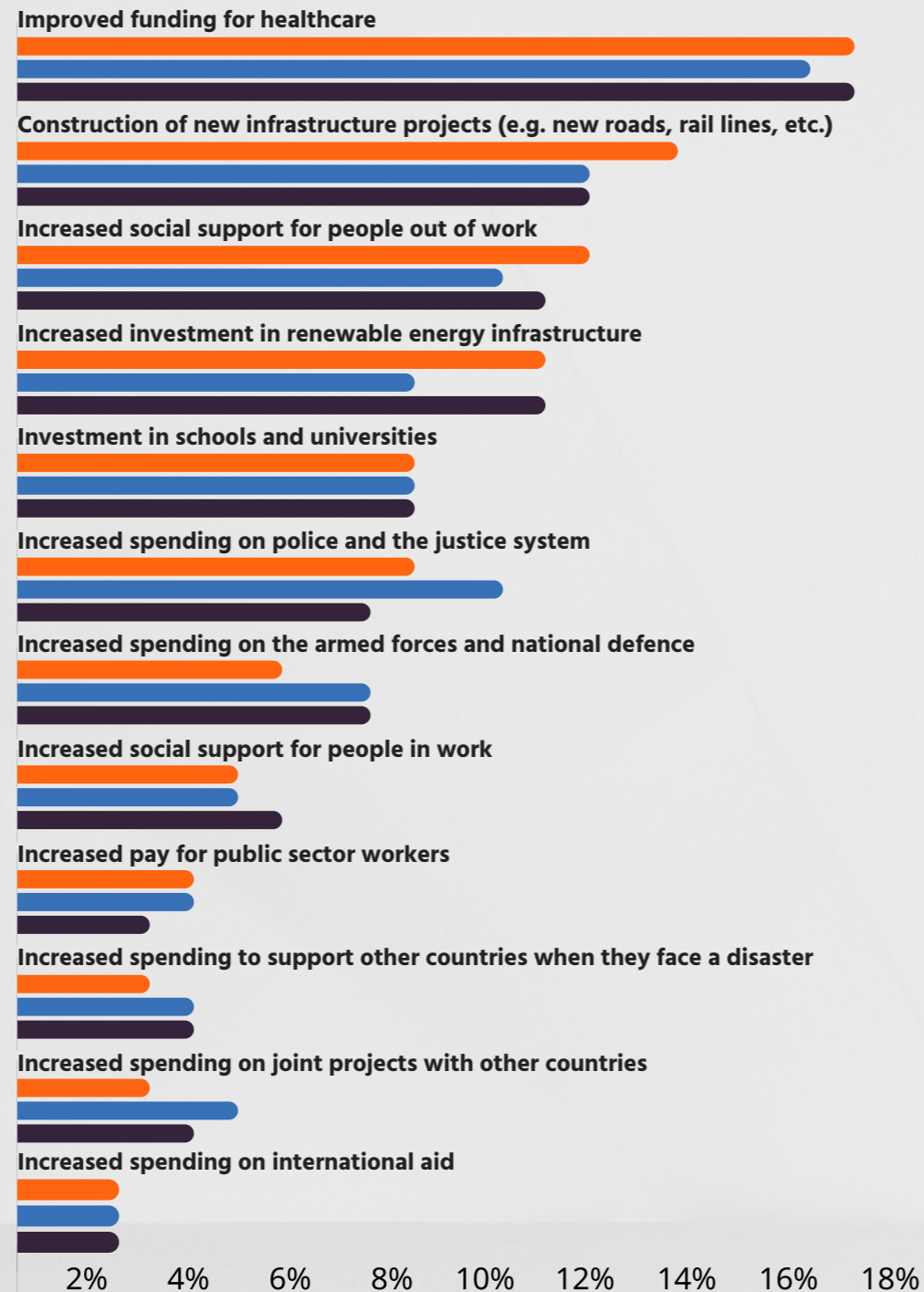
(34% say too much, 19% say the right amount, 24% say too little). Part of this likely comes from the fact that Brazilians overestimate the amount their government spends on development - in fact, 1 in 5 Brazilians think they spend more than 10% of the national budget on reducing poverty in developing countries and nearly half of the public (42%) think Brazil spends the same amount or more than other wealthy countries.

**When forced to trade off between competing policy priorities, support for international development collapses - except when it is framed as joint projects with other countries to solve global challenges.**

When asked how they would like to see the government spend a hypothetical pot of €10 billion, increased spending on international aid was the least likely policy area to be chosen by Brazilians. Support was slightly higher when framed as disaster support for other countries, and significantly higher when framed as increased spending on joint projects with other countries to solve global challenges, such as climate change or poverty reduction.

**Imagine that your country had an additional €10 billion to spend on a policy issue. Look at the policy issues below. Which of these would you MOST LIKE the government to spend this money on, and which would you LEAST LIKE the government to spend this additional money on?**  
 % who would MOST LIKE this policy

● Lula (PT) ● Bolsonaro (PL) ● Did not vote



# PATHWAYS FOR BUILDING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We tested three pathways for building support for international development:

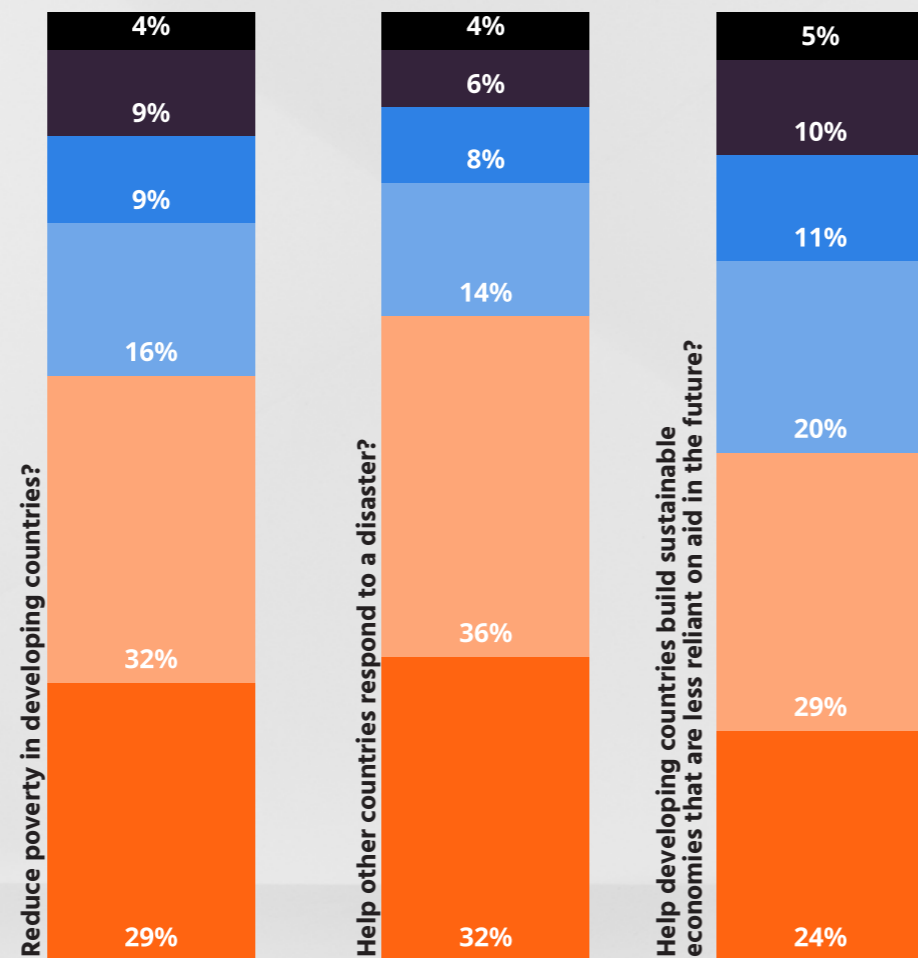
1. Changing the way it's framed
2. Changing how it's spent
3. Raising new tax resources to fund it

We found that none of these options fundamentally altered the way the public views international development in Brazil. The most impactful and convincing framings for Brazilians are disaster relief and humanitarian aid rather than sustainable economic development. The public were also particularly supportive of this spending when framed as part of multilateral efforts to solve global challenges.

## Changing the way it's framed.

Support is highest for development when it is framed as disaster relief (68%), then poverty alleviation (62%) then building sustainable economies (53%).

To what extent do you support or oppose Brazil spending money to...

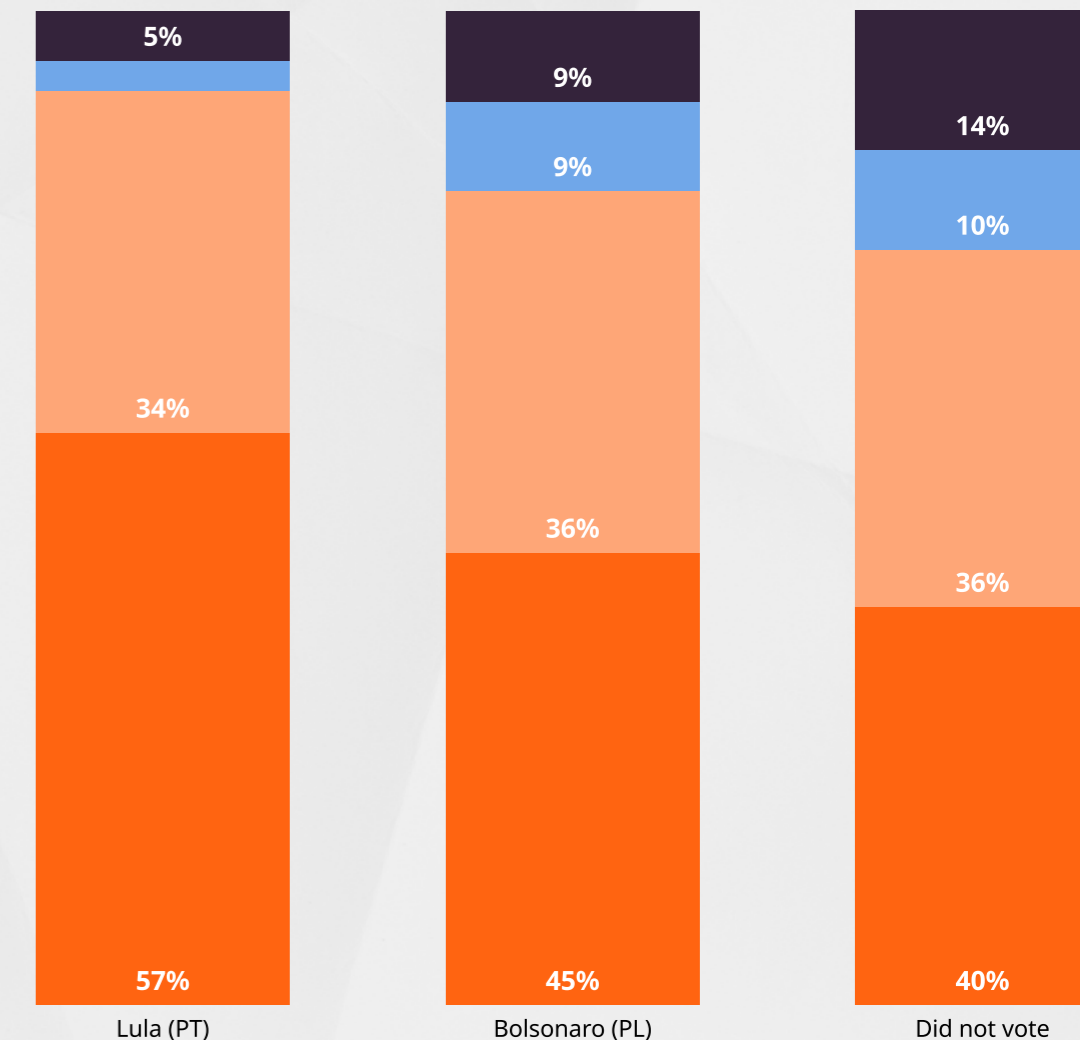


● Strongly support 
 ● Somewhat support 
 ● Neither support nor oppose 
 ● Somewhat oppose 
 ● Strongly oppose 
 ● Don't know

When forced to choose between a humanitarian approach vs. economic growth approach to Brazil's international development spending, the humanitarian approach was more popular across all ages (except 18-24 year-olds, who were evenly split between the two approaches) and voter groups.

We also tested whether the public were convinced by any mutual benefit arguments - i.e. that international development provides tangible benefits to both the donor and recipient country. Brazilians tend to agree that international development can boost the Brazilian economy by providing new markets for their own goods (58% agree), and can reduce migration flows by fixing problems abroad (57% agree). They are less convinced, however, that it can reduce the price of food (45% agree) or energy (39% agree). Younger Brazilians were more likely to believe that it could have economic benefits and reduce food prices compared to older populations and Lula voters were more likely to recognise all of the mutual benefits compared to Bolsonaro voters.

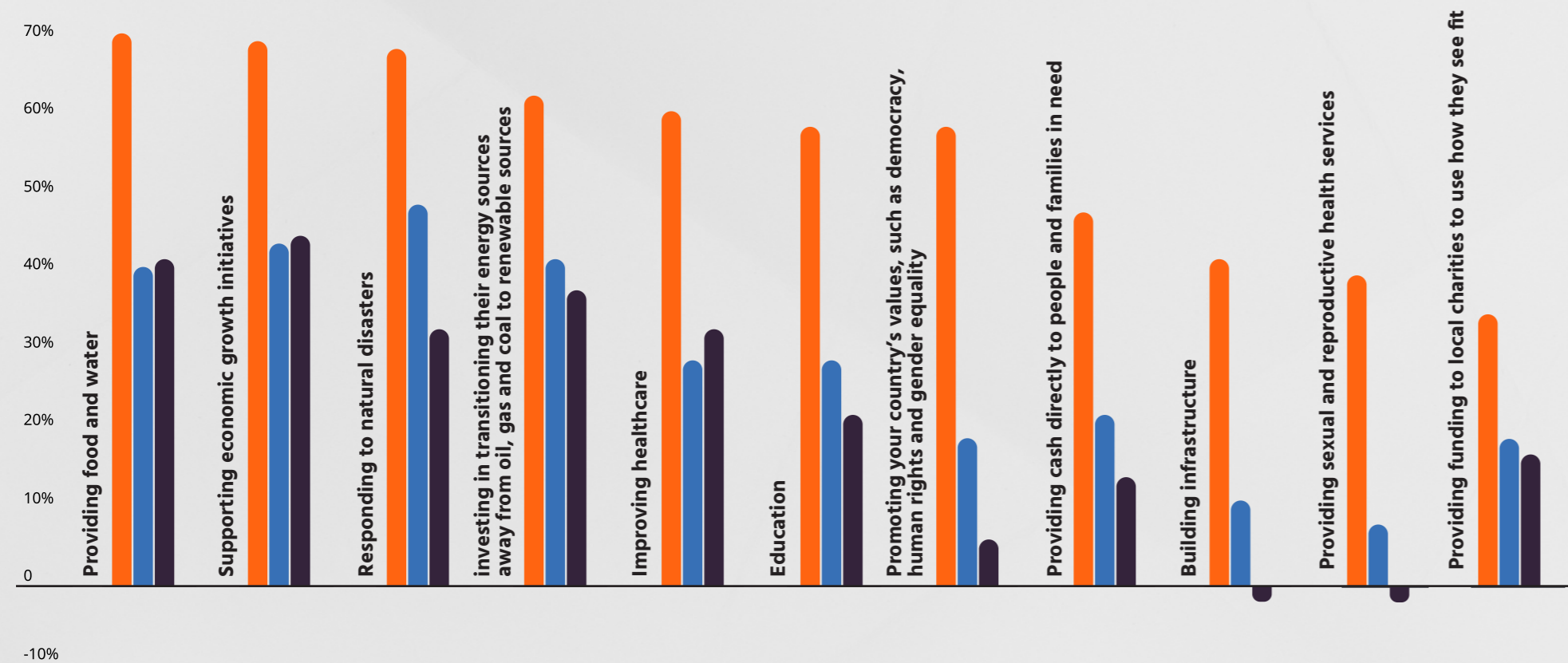
Which of the following comes closest to your view...



● My country's approach to international aid should focus on giving help to people in humanitarian crises and extreme poverty 
 ● My country's approach to international aid should focus on creating sustainable and growing economies that are not reliant on aid in the long term 
 ● My country should not deliver any international aid. 
 ● Don't Know

### Changing the way it's spent.

Most of the spending priorities that we tested were met with widespread support from Lula voters. For all voter groups, the priorities with the highest levels of support were a mixture of humanitarian relief (providing food and water, and responding to natural disasters), economic growth initiatives, and investing in renewable energy.



### Raising new tax resources to fund it.

There was a strong partisan divide in support for new taxes that could be used to support the development budget. There was net support for all options for Lula voters and net opposition for all Bolsonaro voters. For those who did not vote, there was slight support for some taxes aimed at the wealthiest but strong opposition to any new taxes that might impact ordinary people.

