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Political Marketing and Management in the 2017
New Zealand Election

Edited by
Jennifer Lees-Marshment

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Introduction: Political Marketing and Management in New Zealand

Jennifer Lees-Marshment

Abstract This chapter sets the scene of how political marketing is used in New Zealand just like other established democracies but adding context about the 2017 Election. It notes how the election was very unpredictable, with a change in the Labour and Greens leadership just before the campaign started, and that National won the most votes and seats but lost control of government due to the decision by minor party NZ First. Jacinda Ardern, elected Labour leader just 8 weeks before the election, when the party was languishing in the polls, became Prime Minister. This chapter introduces the rest of the book, outlining how the different chapters will seek to explain the result by covering varied aspects of political marketing, drawing on rich and extensive quantitative and qualitative data.

Keywords New Zealand · Political marketing · 2017 Election Branding · Vote Compass

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Political marketing and management is utilised in New Zealand just like any other democracy. New Zealand has a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system and multiparty system, with the main parties being Labour and National, and minor parties including The Greens, NZ First, Māori Party, ACT, and in 2017 Mana and the Opportunities Party. But the same marketing forces apply as in first-past-the-post systems. As former Labour Prime Minister Helen Clark observed:

> To win an election in New Zealand…you must command the centre ground. You have your strong core of supporters but you must get centre ground voters…modern politics in democratic societies has become a bit like a consumer exercise. (Clark 2016)

As previous research has shown (Rudd 2005; Robinson 2007, 2009, 2010; Lees-Marshment 2006, 2009, 2012; Lees-Marshment et al. 2015) market research is used, strategies are created, segments are targeted, key product pledges are offered, and marketing communications are utilised before and during the campaign.

However the 2017 New Zealand election was far from predictable: Labour changed leader just before the election campaign started, the Greens lost a co-leader during the campaign, the Māori party who had been in government with lost all their seats, and the incumbent National party, who had up until the campaign been ahead in the overall party polling for overall party and preferred prime minister, won the most votes and seats but lost control of government due to the decision by minor party NZ First. Jacinda Ardern, elected Labour leader just 8 weeks before the election, when the party was languishing in the polls, became Prime Minister.

Explanations for the eventual result will forever be debatable and contestable. This book focuses on the election from the perspective of political marketing and management, covering public opinion, alignment between party policies and public views, market orientation and party strategy, political branding, campaign advertising, and leadership communication. The research draws on quantitative Vote Compass data, qualitative interviews with practitioners, and analysis of a wide range of primary sources including party policy and communication. While it is not possible in a pivot-style book to cover every aspect of an election, the breadth and quality of data utilised means that the book provides a rich and informed analysis of the marketing and management that went on behind the scenes and its' impact on public views.

Chapter 2 Vote Compass NZ 2017: Marketing insights into public views on policy and leaders by Jennifer Lees-Marshment, Edward Elder, Lisa Chant, Gregory Kerr, Danny Osborne and Cliffton van der Linden, uses a 250,000 respondent Vote Compass data set to help us to understand what the market wanted, essentially, by exploring public views on policy and the leaders.

Chapter 3 Political parties and their customers: the alignment of party policies with supporter and target market views by Jennifer Lees-Marshment et al. explores how prospective party voters and target markets viewed party policies, providing important lessons for practitioners going forward in terms of which groups they succeeded in attracting and those they need to work on in the future.

Chapter 4 Messy Marketing in the 2017 New Zealand Election: the incomplete market orientation of the Labour and National Parties by Jennifer Lees-Marshment explores the extent to which the main parties—National and Labour—followed the market-oriented party model, covering themes such as National's declining responsiveness in government and Labour's struggle to convey potential to deliver.

Chapter 5 Candidate Brand Personality and the 2017 New Zealand General Election by James Barrett assesses the brand personality performance of Andrew Little, Jacinda Ardern, and Bill English from their ascension to the party leadership to polling day. It explores their projected competence, energy, openness, empathy, agreeableness, and charisma, highlighting the importance of having a well-rounded brand personality.

Chapter 6 Minor Party Campaign advertising: A market-oriented assessment by Claire Robinson analyses the marketing effectiveness of advertising by five minor parties the Green Party (Greens), New Zealand First, the Māori Party, ACT and United Future, connecting key marketing concepts in relation to voters and competitors with visual manifestations to uncover the extent to which parties demonstrated market-oriented communication.

Chapter 7 Communicating Market-Oriented Leadership in power and opposition by Edward Elder examines how well Bill English and Jacinda Ardern communicated competence, responsiveness, and authenticity in the campaign, applying the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model.

The final chapter on political marketing and management research and practice synthesises the lessons from the book for research and practice both in New Zealand and globally. It features interviews with

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practitioners from National, Labour, the Greens, ACT and United Future which provide important generic lessons for the conduct of political marketing in practice, as well as specific advice for political parties in New Zealand.

The appendix provides Vote Compass 2017 Core Reports generated by Vox Pop Labs which we hope will be useful to researchers and teachers of New Zealand politics and political marketing.

By utilising political marketing theory and analysis, the book provides powerful insights into both the 2017 New Zealand election and political practice. Ultimately, the core goal of political marketing and management is to create and manage political products that meet market demand. But doing this in practice is much harder than the theory suggests. Politicians struggle to connect and communicate, parties ideology gets in the way, potential coalition partners fight over the same market share, new issues rise on the agenda and catch elites by surprise, attempts to convey delivery competence are thwarted by amusing attack ads that uphold long-held negative frames, and plans are thrown up in the air by a changing party leaders. But in other ways practice confirms theory because parties in government ignore advice on what to do to stop losing touch, market research might be conducted but is ignored, and the value of offering clear, costed, delivery pledges is forgotten. As the book will show, not everything about the 2017 New Zealand election was surprising. The final lessons for practice the book offers which are laid out in the conclusion are as valuable for practitioners as they are interesting for academics.

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Vote Compass NZ 2017: Marketing Insights into Public Views on Policy and Leaders

Jennifer Lees-Marshment, Edward Elder, Lisa Chant, Danny Osborne, Justin Savoie and Clifton van der Linden

Abstract This chapter presents a detailed analysis of descriptive statistics from the 250,000+ Vote Compass data set to help us to understand what the market wanted. Analysing the whole sample but also by demographics and each party's prospective voters, it finds that health was the top issue, closely followed by the economy, then housing, education, social welfare, and the environment. Politicians thus face the challenge of implementing substantial social investment and infrastructure policies while maintaining economic competitiveness. The products offered by Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens were the most closely aligned with public opinion

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in terms of policy, while Labour offered the most likeable leadership. National needs to reflect on being the least responsive to public opinion in their policy offering; Labour needs to defend their market share and leader's popularity; NZ First need to focus on retaining supporters and the Greens work on improving the reputation of their leadership.

Keywords Vote Compass · National · Labour · New Zealand First · Greens

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents analysis of Vote Compass in the 2017 New Zealand General Election, providing in-depth insights into the views of the public on the policies and leaders of the National Party, Labour Party, New Zealand First, and the Green Party based on detailed analysis of descriptive statistics calculated from the survey data of 250,000+ unique respondents. It analyses the data for the whole sample, demographics, and each party's prospective voters, finding strengths and weaknesses in the extent to which the parties' policies and leaders aligned with public opinion. The chapter outlines the methodology and then explores public views on policy and issues, the alignment of party policies with public views and the likeability of the party leaders. It concludes by discussing the marketing effectiveness of the policy and leader product offered at the 2017 Election as well as wider lessons about New Zealanders' policy preferences and political marketing for both academics and practitioners.

METHODOLOGY

Vote Compass is an online engagement tool developed to promote electoral literacy. Initially developed by Vox Pop Labs in Canada and applied in several countries' elections including Australia, Canada, and the

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United States, it was first used in New Zealand in the 2014 election. Vote Compass enables voters to go online, answer 30 questions about policies, and then see how much their preferences match party policies. It therefore considers both party policies and public views, providing a highly valuable insight for political marketing scholars into the linkage between parties and voters. In New Zealand the initiative is run in conjunction with media partner TVNZ, who showcase results of the data during the campaign. University academics work closely with the media partner, advising on issues and questions which formed the propositions used in the survey, analysing the data and suggesting stories for TVNZ. Overall, this produces an accurate but also accessible tool (for further detail on methodology see Lees-Marshment et al. 2015).

In this chapter we focus on the data from 251,364 unique respondents to Vote Compass 2017[1] connected to the four most popular parties as of the 2017 New Zealand General Election: National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens. We chose these parties on the criteria that these parties received over 5% of the party vote in the Election and, therefore, had six or more Members of Parliament and potential influence over who became the government. We examine results from the 30 main Vote Compass policy propositions and the publics' feelings about the likeability of the four parties' leaders, from the overall sample as well as by demographics, including gender and age, as well as by prospective vote measured by respondents' self-declared voting intention.

In the Vote Compass survey respondents positioned themselves on a five-point Likert scale (i.e. strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, strongly agree). In order to mitigate some of the individual subjectivity in respondents' interpretations of, for example, the difference between 'somewhat agreeing' and 'agreeing' (Carifio and Perla 2007), the Likert scale was reduced to a three-point scale (i.e. disagree, neutral, agree) for this chapter. This was warranted by the nature of the dataset, given the parties policies were positioned on

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[1]While Vote Compass New Zealand 2017 (https://votecompass.tvnz.co.nz/) received 469,000 visits, after excluding those who failed to provide demographic information required for sample weighting and removing duplicate respondents, the effective sample size of unique respondents who participated from August 20, 2017 to September 23, 2017 was 251,364.

the five-point scale relative to the positions of political parties with less salience, and relatively more extreme policies, such as the Conservative Party and Mana Movement. Furthermore, as Jacoby and Matell (1971) note, regardless of the number of points used in the collection of data, 'conversion to…trichotomous measures do not result in any significant decrement in reliability or validity'.

The 'averages' around the Vote Compass propositions were calculated by adding up the percentage of the public who agreed with the party's positions on the questions being assessed (i.e. all 30 questions, or the 3 health-related questions, etc.), dividing that by the number of proposition's percentages added up (rounding to the nearest full number). For example, the average percentage of the public who agreed with the National Party's positions on all 30 Vote Compass propositions was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Average} = \frac{\left(\begin{array}{c}\text{Sum of percentages of the public who agreed with}\\ \text{National on the 30 VC propositions } = 984\%\end{array}\right)}{30}$$
$$= 32.8\% \text{ (rounded to the nearest full number} = 33\%)$$

The following sections explore public views on policy and issues, the alignment of party policies with public views and the likeability of the party leaders.

Public Views on Political Issues and Policies

The Most Important Political Issues for New Zealanders

As seen in Table 2.1, the Vote Compass data suggests that the issue considered most important to New Zealanders was health. The issues that were considered important by the second and third largest percentage of respondents were the economy and housing, respectively. Education and social welfare rounded out the top five most important issues, and the environment was (on average) ranked as the sixth most important issue by all respondents.

However, what each party's prospective voters thought was the most important issue in the election did not always match those of voters overall. For example, while more respondents on average thought health was the most important issue, it was only ranked first among New Zealand First's prospective voters and was ranked second

Table 2.1 Top issues by voting intention

Issue	Overall		National		Labour		NZ First		Greens	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Health	**1**	**20.2**	2	20.2	2	23.2	1	20.1	3	13.3
Economy	**2**	**16.9**	1	29.5	7	6.5	4	10.1	7	4.8
Housing	**3**	**16.5**	3	10.5	1	23.9	3	16.1	2	14.5
Education	**4**	**10.0**	4	7.6	3	14.6	5	6.1	5	7.9
Social Welfare	**5**	**6.8**	7	3.5	4	10.2	7	5.0	4	12.3
Environment	**6**	**6.1**	8	2.8	6	6.5	9	2.7	1	28.9

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017 Election
n=251,364

Table 2.2 Policy propositions that got the most support from voters

Proposition	% strongly or somewhat agree
The government should increase funding of public hospitals to reduce waiting lists	93
GP visits for all children under 18 should be free in New Zealand	80
The government should build affordable housing for Kiwis to buy	76
The government should spend more on state schools	75
The courts should be tougher when sentencing young offenders	70
NZ should do somewhat and much more to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions	65
Patients with terminal illnesses should be allowed to end their own lives with medical assistance	68
The government should restrict the tax breaks that can currently be claimed by property investors	67
The government should spend more on rehabilitation services to address drug abuse	65
Corporations should pay more tax	65
DOC should get more funding	62
Prisons should not be privately run	59
Paid parental leave should be increased to 26 weeks	54
Private companies should be required to disclose how much male and female employees are paid for the same work	57
Wealthier people should pay more in taxes	57
The minimum wage should be higher	56

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017
n=251,364

Table 2.3 Policy propositions where opinion is divided and/or a significant number of voters are neutral, showing room for leadership

	Less	The same	More
How many immigrants should New Zealand admit?	49%	35%	5%
How much support should there by for the Māori language?	22%	39%	38%
How much of a role should the Treaty of Waitangi have in New Zealand law?	41%	38%	18%
How much should the government do to make amends for past injustices committed against Māori?	42%	36%	20%
	Disagree	*Neutral*	*Agree*
NZ should increase its refugee quota	47%	23%	30%
The personal use of marijuana by adults should be legalised	42%	17%	42%
The age at which people receive NZ super should be gradually increased	42%	18%	38%

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017

n = 251,364

% indicates those who strongly/somewhat agree/disagree or expressed support for much/somewhat less or more with a proposition

for National and Labour's prospective voters. The biggest differences were around economic and social issues. National's prospective voters were more concerned about the economy than health, while slightly more of Labour's prospective voters were concerned about housing than health. The other key difference, albeit somewhat expected, was almost double the number of the Greens' prospective voters noted the environment was important compared to what they saw as the next most important issue, housing. This is understandable, given the Party's niche support base and environmental-centric brand. What this says overall, though, is that it was very important for parties to focus on social issues such as health and housing, as well as the economy.

Policy Propositions that Respondents Expressed Most Agreement with

As seen in Table 2.2, analysis of overall support for the specific policy propositions used in Vote Compass data also places health at the top of the list, followed by housing and education.

The data also indicates that there is room for leadership on issues such as immigration, Māori rights, marijuana, and the age at which

superannuation should be received. This is because opinion was more divided and/or +30% of respondents held a 'neutral' position on these propositions, as seen in Table 2.3.

THE ALIGNMENT OF PARTY POLICIES WITH PUBLIC VIEWS

As seen in Table 2.4, analysis of data on National and Labour policies and respondent views indicate that Labour's policies were more in line with public opinion than Nationals, with Labour's policies on average having been in sync with more voters—44% compared to 33%.

Table 2.4 Average percentage of respondents who agreed with the parties' policies

Party	Average public support for the parties' positions						
	Overall (%)	HEA (%)	ECO (%)	HOU (%)	EDU (%)	SOC (%)	ENV (%)
National	33	43	25	46	27	39	29
Labour	46	79	41	71	53	42	43
NZ First	45	56	40	46	53	42	43
Greens	50	79	56	71	53	42	43

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017

$n = 251,364$

HEA = Health (Average public support for the parties' positions on health-related propositions: The government should increase funding of public hospitals to reduce waiting lists; GP visits for all children under 18 should be free in New Zealand; How much should the government spend on rehabilitation services to address drug abuse?) ECO = Economy (Average public support for the parties' positions on economy-related propositions: How high should the minimum wage be?; New Zealand should continue to pursue the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA); How much tax should corporations pay?; How much should wealthier people pay in taxes?) HOU = Housing (Average public support for the parties' positions on housing-related propositions: The government should build affordable housing for Kiwis to buy; The government should restrict the tax breaks that can currently be claimed by property investors.) EDU = Education (Average public support for the parties' positions on education-related propositions: The government should continue funding charter schools; How much should the government spend on state schools?; The government should fund three years of post-school education for all New Zealanders.) SOC = Social Welfare (Public support for the parties' positions on the social welfare-related proposition: The age at which people receive New Zealand Superannuation should be gradually increased.) ENV = Environment (Average public support for parties' positions on environment-related propositions: How much should New Zealand do to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? How much funding should the Department of Conservation receive?)

Note The 'Overall' percentages are not only the average of the results for the top six most important issues. These percentages show the average public support for the parties' positions over all 30 Vote Compass propositions, including on issues such as immigration, law and order, moral issues, etc. (Average = Mean percentage)

On average, National's policies were in line with only around a third of voters' views, the lowest of the four parties examined. National did show some degree of alignment with voters' policy views on building affordable housing and increasing hospital funding which, as Table 2.2 earlier showed, received high support. However, their proposals involved less funding than their major party opponent, Labour. Strong links between National's policies and public opinion were also the exception rather than the norm. Even around economic policy, ranked the second most important issue during the campaign and an area where they have traditionally been viewed stronger than Labour, National's platform was not closely aligned with the views of the majority of the public. In particular, National's policy to cut the wealthiest New Zealander's taxes was only popular with about one in twenty New Zealanders and, on the five-point scale, only 4 and 1% of the public agreed and strongly agreed with this position respectively.

There was an even bigger gap between how in line with public opinion Labour's and National's policies were when looking at the specific propositions on issues the public considered most important. Along with offering to invest more in public hospitals to reduce waiting lists and into building affordable housing for New Zealanders to buy, Labour's policies were also more in line with public opinion on the economy and education. Notably, Labour agreed with 68% of voters that the minimum wage should be increased and with 76% of voters that the government should spend more on state schools. However, Labour's policies around some aspects of these important issues were also less in sync with public opinion than those noted above, especially when focusing on economic policies. Only 32% of voters agreed with Labour's position that New Zealand should withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), making their position less popular than National's.

Overall, public support for the two smaller parties' policy packages was stronger than we might expect. Notably, across all 30 Vote Compass propositions, the Greens' policy package attracted the highest average percentage of support from respondents, with an average of 50% of respondents agreeing with the Greens' position on a proposition. New Zealand First's policy package was on average only slightly less in line with public opinion than Labour's, at 45%. Although both parties agreed with National and Labour that the government should build more affordable housing for Kiwis to buy and increase funding of public

hospitals to reduce waiting lists, the Greens and New Zealand First (as well as National) wanted to invest less in building new housing than Labour.

On average, the Greens' policies around the top three most important issues—health, the economy, and housing—were more in line with public opinion than New Zealand First's. This is due to particular policies where there was a high level of cohesion in public opinion. For example, 80% of voters believed the government should provide free GP visits for children under 18, which the Greens agreed and New Zealand First disagreed with. Likewise, 65% of voters believed that there should have been an increase in the amount of tax corporations pay, which the Greens agreed and New Zealand First disagreed with. Moreover, 66% of voters were in favour of restricting the tax breaks claimed by property investors, which the Greens agreed with and New Zealand First were neutral about. The Greens' policies were also more in line with public opinion than New Zealand First's in all of the six most important issue areas. Indeed, with the exception of the public generally supporting National's position on the TPPA, the Greens' policies were more in line with public opinion than the other three parties in all of the six most important issue areas.

Overall, comparisons between the policy positions parties held by the parties and public opinion convey a complex picture. The Greens, who received the least electoral support of the four, advanced policy positions that were most in line with public opinion. National, who won the largest share of the party vote, did the least well. Labour, who ultimately won control of the government, and New Zealand First, who held the balance of power, performed the second and third best respectively.

The Likeability of the Party Leaders

Analysis of overall statistics and broken down by demographics and prospective vote reveals interesting insights about the public's perceptions of the leaders.

Overall Perceptions of Leader Likeability

As can be seen in Table 2.5, when asked to rate how positively they viewed each party leader, respondent's rated Jacinda Ardern the highest with an average rating of 6.1 out of 10, whereas Bill English was rated

Table 2.5   Party leader's average likability

	Bill English (National)	Jacinda Ardern (Labour)	Winston Peters (NZ First)	James Shaw (Greens)
Overall	5.2	6.1	3.8	3.1

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017
$n=251,364$
Note Figure is out of 10, with 1 being least likable and 10 being most likeable. Question asked: How likeable do you find the following leaders?

second highest with an average of 5.2. The Vote Compass data also highlights just how less liked the minor party leaders were relative to their major party counterparts. New Zealand First leader Winston Peters and Green Party leader James Shaw received average likeability ratings of 3.8 and 3.1 respectively.

Demographic Segments

More detailed analysis of likeability ratings by comparative demographics, as seen in Tables 2.6 and 2.7, identifies strengths and weaknesses for all four party leaders. The two major party leaders were perceived very differently by different age ranges and income brackets. The younger they were, and the less income they earned, the higher the average rating respondents gave to Ardern, but the lower the average rating they gave to English, and vice versa, with English attracting more support from respondents who were older and high earners.

The demographics Peters did well with seemed in line with what would be expected. While New Zealand First has promoted policies that might seem to go against attracting support from Māori, such as wanting to have a referendum on the Māori seats, Peters has traditionally had strong support from this demographic. Given New Zealand First's targeting of older voters with policies such as the introduction and expansion the Super Gold Card, it is not surprising that Peters was perceived relatively positively by seniors (people aged 65 and older). Also, while Ardern was rated relatively poorly among with people without degrees, Peters rated relatively well with this demographic. This may be due to Peters' more conservative populist message. However, that same conservative populist message also seemed to

Table 2.6   Segments party leaders scored the highest average likability from

	Bill English (National)	Jacinda Ardern (Labour)	Winston Peters (NZ First)	James Shaw (Greens)
1st highest	Right wing 7.4	Left wing 8.3	Māori 4.5	Left wing 4.8
2nd	Earning +$100 K 6.3	Māori 6.9	Aged 65+ 4.4	Students 4.1
3rd	Aged 65+ 6.1	Students 6.9	Without a high school degree 4.2	With graduate degree 4.1

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017
n = 251,364
Note Figure is out of 10, with 1 being least likable and 10 being most likeable. Question asked: How likeable do you find the following leaders? Only one demographic from each categorisation was ranked

Table 2.7   Segments party leaders scored the lowest average likability from

	Bill English (National)	Jacinda Ardern (Labour)	Winston Peters (NZ First)	James Shaw (Greens)
1st	Left wing 2.4	Earning + $100 K 5.4	Right wing 3.6	Aged 50–64 2.9
2nd	Māori 3.7	Aged 65+ 5.6	Females 3.6	Males 2.9
3rd	Aged 30–39 4.5	Without a high school degree 5.8	Undecided voters 3.6	Earning +$100 K 2.8

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017
n = 251,364
Note Figure is out of 10, with 1 being least likable and 10 being most likeable. Question asked: How likeable do you find the following leaders?
*Only one demographic from each categorisation was ranked

have been too polarising for undecided voters and, more importantly, women (hardly a niche market), who both gave Peters a relatively low rating.

Conversely, one demographic that Shaw rated relatively poorly with was male voters. Shaw also rated poorly with other demographics that have traditionally been more conservative than liberal, such as higher income earners and older voters. On the other hand, Shaw rated relatively well by demographics that the Greens have traditionally appealed

to, such as people who position themselves on the ideological far-left and students, particularly those with advanced degrees. Thus, Shaw's relative likeability ratings among the various demographics largely fit with tradition, but were still at the lower end of the scale.

Likeability by Ideology and Voting Intention

The most notable theme when comparing the Labour and National leaders' perceived likeability in relation to ideology and voting intention was how much more popular Ardern was outside Labour's traditional base, as can be seen in Table 2.8. Ardern was more popular with National's prospective voters than English was with Labour's (4.3–3.0 respectively). Ardern was also rated higher than English among those who positioned themselves in the ideological centre (6.3–4.7). As seen in Tables 2.5 and 2.7, Ardern's average ratings with the three demographics who rated her lowest were still higher than English's overall average likeability rating. Moreover, while Ardern's highest ratings were slightly higher English's, English's lowest ratings were much lower than Ardern's. The data therefore shows that Ardern had a broader appeal than English, including with the much-coveted political middle ground.

As for the minor party leaders, interesting findings include that Peters was more popular among respondents who said they intended on voting for New Zealand First (7.7) than English was among respondents who said they were going to vote for National (7.5). Peters was more popular

Table 2.8 Party leaders' likability with the ideological centre and by voting intention

	Bill English (National)	Jacinda Ardern (Labour)	Winston Peters (NZ First)	James Shaw (Greens)
Ideological centre	4.7	6.3	4.2	2.9
National	**7.5**	4.3	3.1	2.2
Labour	3.0	**8.5**	3.9	3.8
NZ First	4.2	5.4	7.7	2.3
Greens	3.2	7.4	3.1	**6.6**

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017

$n = 251,364$

Note Figure is out of 10, with 1 being least likable and 10 being most likeable. Question asked: How likeable do you find the following leaders? Statistics from the leaders' own party supporters as indicated by voting intention are bolded

with his base than two out of the other three party leaders is understandable, given that Peters has equated himself with the New Zealand First brand since first establishing the party in July 1993. Also notable is that while Shaw's rating with the Greens' prospective voters was his highest from any demographic (6.6), it was lower than Ardern's average rating with the Greens' prospective voters (7.4). This indicates that, although Shaw became the leader of the Green Party over two years before the election, he had yet to establish a firm base among his core supporters.

Conclusion

With detailed analysis of descriptive statistics from the large sample of respondents (251,364), Vote Compass provides us with important marketing insights into public views on policy and leaders.

New Zealanders' Policy Preferences

In terms of the issues voters thought were most important in 2017, analysis of Vote Compass data indicates that health was at the top issue, closely followed by the economy, then housing, education, social welfare, and the environment. Policies which respondents indicated greatest support for were on health, housing, and education such as 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the government should increase the funding of public hospitals to reduce waiting lists; 80% agreed or strongly agreed that GP visits for all children under 18 should be free in New Zealand; 76% agreed or strongly agreed that the government should build affordable housing for Kiwis to buy, and 75% agreed or strongly agreed that the government should spend more on state schools.

These data raise an important warning sign for politicians, with social and public-sector policy issues often requiring long-term commitment rather than quick fixes. Indeed, houses are not built in a day. Furthermore, given how many New Zealanders also viewed the economy as important, these initiatives cannot be completed without balanced the need to invest in social infrastructure while maintaining economic competitiveness. On the positive side, there is room for leadership to move public opinion on issues such as immigration numbers, refugee quotas, Māori issues, marijuana, and superannuation eligibility, where opinion was more divided or neutral.

The Marketing Effectiveness of National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens' Policy and Leadership

The products offered by Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens were the most closely aligned with public opinion in terms of policy, while Labour offered the most likeable leadership. The Greens had the most popular policies, with an average of 50% of the public agreeing with their policies, followed by Labour at 46%, New Zealand First at 45%, and National at only 33%. Even where National showed some degree of alignment with voters' policy views on certain key issues, such as increasing funding for hospitals and building more affordable housing, Labour offered to invest more. In terms of economic policies, the second most important issue in this election and an issue where National has traditionally been stronger than other parties, National's policy positions failed to align with the views of the majority of the public. Using the full five-point scale, only 4% agreed and 1% strongly agreed with National's policy to cut the wealthiest New Zealander's taxes. Public support for the two smaller parties' policy packages was relatively strong, but, on average, the Greens' policies around the top three most important issues—health, the economy, and housing—were more in line with public opinion than New Zealand First. For example, eight out of ten voters were in favour of the Greens policy to provide free GP visits for children under 18 and 65% voters agreed or strongly agreed with the Greens policy to increase the amount of tax corporations pay, both of which New Zealand First disagreed with.

Labour leader Jacinda Arden was rated the most liked party leader, followed by National leader Bill English, then New Zealand First leader Winston Peters, with Green Party leader James Shaw rated the lowest. More detailed analysis of likeability ratings by comparative demographics identifies strengths and weaknesses for all four party leaders. Arden was most positively perceived by younger, lower income voters while English was most positively perceived by older, higher income voters. Arden was also perceived positively by those outside Labour's traditional base, including National's prospective voters and those who positioned themselves in the ideological centre. Peters was most positively perceived by seniors (65 or older) and less well educated. Shaw's particular weakness in this area was with male voters, as well as higher income earners and older voters, whereas he was particularly able to attract voters who were far-left, students and had higher degrees. Nevertheless, the perception among Shaw's own party's base was much lower than the perception of the other leaders among their party's supporters.

Lessons for Academics: Leaders Influence Public Perception, Not Just Policies

These data confirm the basic political marketing theory that parties need to offer policies in line with public opinion, but it also demonstrates they need a likeable leader who can connect to the public. The vast difference between how in sync the Greens' and New Zealand First's policies were with how likable their leaders were perceived highlights the importance of having an overall appealing product and brand, and how important leadership has become to a party's overall product offering. This conclusion is further supported by the growth in support Labour received from the time Ardern took over as leader in early August (see Colmar Brunton 2017). Thus, future research needs to focus more on the leadership aspect of the political product.

Lessons for Practitioners: No Time to Relax

All parties need to understand and respond to the finding that New Zealand voters have become more economically progressive, and that the public expressed strong support for policies aimed at increasing spending in areas such as health, housing, and education, as well as tax increases on the wealthiest people. National needs to reflect the most on this finding, as well as the fact that they were the least responsive overall to public opinion in their policy offering. Overcoming this shortcoming will be especially important if they are to win over future key target markets of undecided and younger voters, as well as the poor perception among these demographics of the party's leadership offering. The analysis indicates that Labour needs to defend and expand their position, and engage in effective marketing communication to retain the leader's likeability through all the challenges they will face in government. Given their National-leaning supporters may be dissatisfied with their support for a Labour-led coalition government, New Zealand First are at risk of not gaining sufficient support to re-enter Parliament after the next election. Therefore, they need to identify a way to satisfy all their supporters with their performance in government. The Greens focus should be on their leadership. While their policies are already strongly aligned with public views, Shaw needs to work to connect more effectively with both his party's supporters and the general public. Vote Compass provides an extensive understanding of public views on policy and politics, and all political parties in New Zealand should take time to reflect on the insights it provides.

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Political Parties and Their Customers: The Alignment of Party Policies with Supporter, Target and Undecided Market Preferences

Jennifer Lees-Marshment, Edward Elder, Lisa Chant, Danny Osborne, Justin Savoie and Clifton van der Linden

Abstract This chapter presents detailed analysis of the +250,000 Vote Compass sample to identify the parties' alignment with supporters, target markets, and undecided voters. National's platform was only in line with the views of 40% of their prospective voters, the lowest of the four parties examined while the Greens' policies were most in line. National's

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overall policy platform was not overwhelmingly in line with any demographic, while Labour, NZ First, and the Greens often overlapped on targets such as lower earners though Labour/Greens were stronger on youth and NZ First seniors. The Greens' policies had the highest alignment with undecided voters, and National the lowest. Labour, the Greens and New Zealand First need to focus on attracting National's prospective voters and undecided voters rather than each other's market share, and National have significant work to reformulate an effective relationship with their prospective and undecided voters as well as identifying potential targets.

Keywords Vote Compass · Supporters · Target markets · Undecided voters · Policy alignment

Introduction

Political marketing involves securing the support from people who are likely to vote for you, while also attracting support from key target markets and undecided voters, to win enough market share to lead or contribute to forming a government. This chapter explores the extent to which the policies of National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens aligned with the views of their prospective voters, demographic target markets, and undecided voters in the 2017 New Zealand General Election. It utilises analysis of descriptive statistics calculated from the +250,000 Vote Compass unique respondents by voting intention and demographic, providing in-depth insight in the alignment between parties' policies and key customers' preferences, before concluding with lessons for academics and practitioners.

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Methodology

As noted in the previous chapter, Vote Compass is an online engagement tool developed to promote electoral literacy (see Lees-Marshment et al. 2015 for further details). This chapter utilises survey data from 251,364 respondents who participated in Vote Compass from 20 August 2017 to 23 September 2017 that is connected to the policy positions of the four most popular parties from the 2017 New Zealand General Election: National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens. The data is broken down by each parties' prospective voters as well as undecided voters, as defined by respondents' self-declared voting intention and by demographic, such as gender and age.

As in the previous chapter, the Likert scale was reduced to a 3-point scale (i.e. disagree, neutral, agree) and the 'averages' around the Vote Compass propositions were calculated by adding up the percentage of the public who agreed with the party's positions on the questions being looked at (i.e. all 30 questions, or the 3 health-related questions, etc.) then dividing that by the number of proposition's percentages added up, and then rounded to the nearest full number.

Analysis of how in line the parties' policies were with certain demographics was conducted by exploring how in line the parties' policies were with each demographic compared to how in line they were with respondents overall (i.e. Party X correlated with only 35% of all respondents on issue Y, but correlated with 45% of students on that issue). While simply ranking each correlation (ranking a party's correlation with 65+ on social welfare, females on housing, etc.) was considered, this would have left the results more divided by issue type than demographic (i.e. Labour correlated with all 18 demographics on the issue of health better than any demographic on any other issue).

The Alignment of Parties' Policies with Their Prospective Voters' Views

The National Party's Responsiveness to Their Prospective Voters

As Table 3.1 indicates, National's platform was only in line with the views of about 40% of their prospective voters, the lowest of the four parties examined. Furthermore, more than half of National's prospective voters agreed with National's position on only 6 of the 30 Vote Compass

Table 3.1 The percentage of parties' prospective voters who supported their parties' policies on average over all 30 Vote Compass propositions

Party	National	Labour	New Zealand First	Greens
Percentage	40	54	47	67

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017
$n = 218{,}037$, i.e. those saying they were going to vote for those 4 parties
Note prospective voters = respondents' self-declared voting intention for a particular party

propositions. These did include policies around issue areas that were important to National's prospective voters, such as health, the economy, housing, and education. This meant that National was in touch with their prospective voters on aspects of issues that mattered to them the most.

However, in other cases where National was more in sync with the views of their prospective voters, the specific part of the issue addressed was not as most important. For example, while one of the propositions where National was more in line with their prospective voters' views was around the economy, it was around trade (supporting the Trans-Pacific Partnership). While trade can be seen as an economic issue, taxation was a much more salient economic issue during the campaign. Here, National's policy of cutting taxes for wealthier people was only supported by 7% of their prospective voters, while more than half (58%) believed that the tax rates for wealthier New Zealanders should have stayed the same. So, in essence, National's prospective voters were more economically progressive in their thinking around taxation than the Party was. This could be seen in other important areas as well, such as health and housing. While National believed that GP visits for all children under 18 should not be free, only 14% of their prospective voters agreed, with 71% thinking GP visits for all children under 18 should be free. Also, while National believed the government should not restrict the tax breaks claimed by property investors, only 23% of their prospective voters agreed, with 55% thinking there should be restrictions.

The Labour Party's Responsiveness to Their Prospective Voters

Labour's positions on the 30 main propositions were in line, on average, with more than half (54%) of their prospective voters' views. The issue areas where Labour's policies were most in line with their prospective

voter's views were also around issue areas that they considered important, such as housing, health, and education. For example, with housing being the issue area considered the most important to Labour's prospective voters, 91% agreed with Labour's policy that the government should build affordable housing for Kiwis to buy, while nearly 80% agreed with Labour that the government should restrict the tax breaks that can be claimed by property investors. Also, with health being the issue area where the second most important issue area to Labour's prospective voters, almost all (97%) agreed with Labour that the government should increase funding of public hospitals to reduce waiting lists, 90% agreed that GP visits for all children under 18 should be free in New Zealand, and 76% agreed that more money should be invested in rehabilitation services to address drug abuse.

Labour's policies on moral issues, taxation, and Māori issues were less in line with the views of many of their prospective voters. A common trend with regard to the divergence between Labour and their prospective voters on these issues was that their prospective voters wanted higher taxes on corporations and wealthier people, more government action on euthanasia and medical cannabis, and for the government to be much tougher on youth criminals, while Labour took a more neutral position on all these subjects. However, the propositions where Labour was most out of line with their prospective voters was around taxation. Labour's prospective voters believed corporations and wealthier people should pay more in tax, while Labour's policy was to keep them at the rate they were. Luckily for Labour, they were generally most out of sync with their prospective voters around issue types that were not seen to be important to a large number of these respondents.

New Zealand First's Responsiveness to Their Prospective Voters

On average, New Zealand First's policy positions on the 30 main Vote Compass propositions were in line with the views of just under half (47%) of New Zealand First's prospective voters' views. The Party's policies were most in line with the views of their prospective voters on issues such as health, law and order, and the economy. For example, with health being considered important to the largest number of New Zealand First's prospective voters, New Zealand First's policy that the government should increase funding of public hospitals to reduce waiting lists was supported by almost all of their prospective voters (94%),

while 61% agreed with the Party's view that more money should be spent on rehabilitation services to address drug abuse. This suggests the Party was positioned relatively well in their ability to be seen as in touch with their prospective voters on the issues that mattered to them.

That said, some of New Zealand First's policies around health and the economy were also where the Party was least in sync with their prospective voters' views. Most notably, only 3% of New Zealand First's prospective voters agreed with the Party's view that corporations should pay less in tax, while 74% believed corporations should pay more. New Zealand First's position on this proposition does seem to go against the Party's populist brand, and is a trend also seen around certain immigration and housing policies, where the Party's position was more liberal and less populist than the Party's brand, and their prospective voters' views, would suggest they should have been. This trend was most obviously seen around Māori issues, however. Here, for example, New Zealand First took the view that the government should do more to make amends for past injustices committed against Māori, while only 14% of their prospective voters agreed, and more than half (58%) thought the government should do less. Luckily for New Zealand First, Māori issues were important to less than 2% of their prospective voters. This raises challenges for the Party: if they continue to offer a broader platform that is less in line with the views of New Zealand First's prospective voters, they may find it harder to maintain their core support if the Party is tainted with any negative perceptions of the government and the role they play in it.

The Greens' Responsiveness to Their Prospective Voters

Because the Green Party attracts support almost exclusively from a niche audience on one side of the political ideological spectrum, it is not surprising that they were the most successful of the four parties at offering policies that were in line with the views of their own prospective voters. The Greens' policies, on average over the 30 Vote Compass propositions, were in line with 67% of their prospective voters. Furthermore, the Greens' positions on these propositions were also in line with the most common view of their prospective voters in 28 of the 30 cases. The Party's policies were especially in line with their prospective voters around issues that these voters considered most important, such as the environment. This is understandable, given this issue area is a

cornerstone of the Green Party brand. For example, 94% of the Party's prospective voters agreed with the Party that New Zealand should do more to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, while 88% agreed with the Party that the Department of Conservation should receive more government funding.

There were only two cases where the Greens did not hold the position most commonly held by their own prospective voters. In both cases, the Party held a more liberal view than their prospective voters. While 31% of Greens' prospective voters agreed with the Party that New Zealand should about the same number of immigrants as now, 37% (only slightly more) wanted fewer admitted. At the same time, while 25% of Greens' prospective voters agreed with the Party that the courts should be less tough when sentencing young offenders, 38% thought they should be tougher. But, in both cases, the most common position among Greens' prospective voters was not a majority and were not on propositions around issues considered important to them.

The Alignment of Parties' Policies to Key Target Markets

Targeting is an important part of political marketing. Minor parties by their very nature tend to appeal to niche audiences, but even major parties need to appeal to certain segments rather than the population as one monolithic entity. Analysing how in line the parties' policies were with certain demographics uncovers a range of insights into the parties targeting effectiveness.

The National Party's Targeting Effectiveness: Higher Earners and Seniors

Analysis of the average alignment of the parties' policies to different demographics suggests that National's overall platform was not overwhelmingly in line with the views of any demographic, as seen in Table 3.2. Relatively speaking, National's platform was more in line with the views of higher earners (people making more than $100 K annually) and seniors (people aged over 65). As noted in the previous chapter, these two segments also gave Bill English his highest average likeability scores. With regard to the six most important issue areas relative to National's correlation with respondents overall, a large section of these

Table 3.2 Support for the National Party's policies by demographics

Demographic	% average agreement with party policies
Age	
18–29	29
30–39	31
40–49	33
50–64	35
65+	36
Gender	
Female	31
Male	34
Place of birth	
New Zealand	33
Immigrant	32
Income	
Less than $60 K	31
Between $60 K and $100 K	35
More than $100 K	38
Descent	
Māori	28
Non-Māori	34
Studying	
Non-student	33
Student	28

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017
n = 251,364
Note % = Average agreement=average % percentage of respondents to agree with party positions over all 30 Vote Compass Questions

demographics liked National's positions on social welfare, with over half of higher earners and seniors agreeing that the age people get superannuation should be increased, compared with just 39% of respondents overall. These findings are likely due to the certainty people earning more than 100 K annually felt, while any increase in the age of superannuation eligibility would not have affected current seniors. Despite this, the degree of strength from these target markets was not that high: National's overall policy platform was still only in sync with between 36 and 38% of the respondents in these demographics. So, while these demographics were more in sync with National's policy package than most, National's policies were still not in sync with a majority of these voters.

Relatively speaking, National's policy package was the least in sync with the views of Māori, younger voters, and students. As noted in Chapter 2, these demographics also gave English likeability scores lower than his overall average. Again, in relation to the six most important issue areas, it was National's position on social welfare that was most unpopular with these demographics compared to respondents overall; with National's position supported by between 28 and 33% of these demographics. This finding is understandable, given they would likely be negatively affected by any increase in the eligibility age for superannuation.

The Labour Party's Targeting Effectiveness: Younger Voters, Students Māori, and Lower Earners

Conversely, the data suggests that Labour's overall policy platform was most in line with the views of the three demographics that National struggled with: Māori, younger voters (people aged 19–29), and students, as well as lower earners (those earning less than $60 K a year), as seen in Table 3.3. Māori, younger voters, and students are demographics Labour has traditionally had strong support from. As noted in Chapter 2, they were also the three demographics that gave Jacinda Ardern her highest likeability scores. With Māori voters, with regard to the top six most important issue areas, it was again social welfare, with Labour's policy to keep the age of superannuation eligibility the same, that was most in line with the views of this demographic compared to respondents overall. Again, this is likely because many people in this demographic would be negatively impacted by an increase in the age of superannuation eligibility. For students and people aged 19–30, surprisingly, health was the area where Labour's policies were most in line with these demographics compared to respondents overall.

There was a divergent trend with regard to the demographics who relatively liked and disliked each of major parties' policy package. Indeed, unsurprisingly, the demographic that was least in sync with Labour's policy package was respondents making more than $100 K a year who also unsurprisingly, particularly disliked Labour's positions on social welfare when examining the six most important issue areas. As noted in Chapter 2, they also gave Jacinda Ardern her lowest average likeability score.

Table 3.3 Support for the Labour Party's policies by demographics

Demographic	% average agreement with party policies
Age	
18–29	49
30–39	48
40–49	46
50–64	45
65+	44
Gender	
Female	49
Male	43
Place of birth	
New Zealand	46
Immigrant	46
Income	
Less than $60 K	48
Between $60 K and $100 K	44
More than $100 K	41
Descent	
Māori	53
Non-Māori	45
Studying	
Non-student	46
Student	50

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017

n = 251,364

Note %=Average agreement=average % percentage of respondents to agree with party positions over all 30 Vote Compass Questions

New Zealand First's Targeting Effectiveness: Lower Earners, Māori, Seniors

The variation in the correlation between public opinion and New Zealand First's overall policy platform from demographic to demographic was more stable than the seen with the other three parties, with between 43 and 46% of almost all demographics being in sync with New Zealand First's policies on average, as seen in Table 3.4. That said, like Labour, New Zealand First's policies on average were relatively more in sync with Māori voters and with lower earners (people earning less than

Table 3.4   Support for New Zealand First's policies by demographics

Demographic	% average agreement with party policies
Age	
18–29	45
30–39	45
40–49	45
50–64	44
65+	44
Gender	
Female	46
Male	43
Place of birth	
New Zealand	45
Immigrant	45
Income	
Less than $60 K	46
Between $60 K and $100 K	43
More than $100 K	40
Descent	
Māori	48
Non-Māori	44
Studying	
Non-student	45
Student	46

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017
$n = 251,364$
Note % = Average agreement = average % percentage of respondents to agree with party positions over all 30 Vote Compass Questions

$60 K a year) compared to respondents overall. And, like Labour, with regard to the six most important issue areas, it was social welfare that was the most polarising position between these demographics and respondents overall, with New Zealand First's policy not to increase the age of superannuation eligibility. This evidence suggests that the demographics who, relatively speaking, were more in line with New Zealand First's policy platform, were also more in line with Labour's policies. This may help explain Peters' decision to form a coalition government with Labour rather than National after the election.

The Green Party's Targeting Effectiveness: Māori, Students, Younger Voters, Lower/Middle Earners

The Greens had the most variation in how popular their platform was across demographics, as seen in Table 3.5. However, their policy positions were still more in line with the views of every demographic compared to the other parties. Like New Zealand First, the demographics whose views the Greens' policies were most and least in line with were similar to Labour's; being most in sync with the views of Māori voters, students and younger voters, and least in sync with the people making more than $100 K annually and seniors. For people making more than $100 K annually, out of the top six most important issue areas, it was

Table 3.5 Support for the Green Party's policies and leader by demographics

Demographic	% average agreement with party policies
Age	
18–29	54
30–39	52
40–49	49
50–64	48
65+	46
Gender	
Female	52
Male	46
Place of birth	
New Zealand	49
Immigrant	51
Income	
Less than $60 K	52
Between $60 K and $100 K	47
More than $100 K	42
Descent	
Māori	58
Non-Māori	48
Studying	
Non-student	49
Student	56

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017

$n = 251,364$

Note % = Average agreement = average % percentage of respondents to agree with party positions over all 30 Vote Compass questions

the Greens economic policies that were less in line with the views of the public, relatively speaking. However, the most interesting findings here are around male respondents. The Greens' overall policy correlation with this demographic on all six of the major policy areas was lower than with respondents overall. As the Greens' policy positions on average were somewhat more in line with the views of lower (less than $60 K) and middle earners (between $60 K and $100 K) than were Labour's and especially National's, there is potential room for growth in support among these markets for the Party.

The Alignment of Parties' Policies with Undecided Voters

The National Party's Responsiveness to Undecided Voters

As Table 3.6 indicates, National's platform was only in line with the views of about 30% of undecided voters, the lowest of the four parties examined. While the economy was one of the top four most important issues to undecided voters, and taxation was a salient issue during the campaign, National's policy to cut taxes for wealthier people was only supported by 4% of undecided voters, while more than half (58%) believed that the tax rates for wealthier New Zealanders should be higher. Undecided voters were more economically progressive in their thinking around taxation than National was. This could be seen in other important areas as well, such as health and housing. While National believed that GP visits for all children under 18 should not be free, only 7% of undecided voters agreed, with 83% thinking GP visits for all children under 18 should be free. Also, while National believed the government should not restrict the tax breaks claimed by property investors, only 10% of undecided voters agreed with them while 65% thought there should be restrictions.

Table 3.6 The percentage of undecided voters who supported the parties' policies on average over all 30 Vote Compass propositions

Party	National	Labour	New Zealand First	Greens
Percentage	30	47	45	51

Source Vote Compass New Zealand 2017

$n = $ 14,109, i.e. those saying they were going to vote for those 4 parties

The Labour Party's Responsiveness to Undecided Voters

Labour's positions on the 30 main propositions were in line, on average, with just under half (47%) of undecided voters' views. The issue areas where Labour's policies were most in line with undecided voters' views were also around issue areas that they considered important, such as health, housing, education, and economic issues. For example 94% agreed with Labour that the government should increase funding of public hospitals to reduce waiting lists, 83% agreed that GP visits for all children under 18 should be free, 80% agreed the government should build affordable housing for Kiwis to buy, 76% agreed with Labour's policy that the government should spend more on state schools, and 70% agreed with Labour's policy that the minimum wage should be increased. However Labour's policies on Māori issues were less in line with the views of many undecided voters, such as only 19% of undecided voters agreeing with Labour's position to do more to make amends for past injustices committed against Māori and 17% believing the Treaty of Waitangi should have a greater role in New Zealand law.

New Zealand First's Responsiveness to Undecided Voters

On average, New Zealand First's policy positions on the 30 main Vote Compass propositions were in line with the views of just under half (45%) of undecided voters' views, just 2% less than Labour. The six propositions where New Zealand First's position correlated best with undecided voters was also the position held by Labour, including on important issue types such as health, housing, education, and the economy. Overall the Party was positioned relatively well in their ability to be seen as in touch with undecided voters, but they were out of line on specific policies. For example, only 2% of undecided voters agreed with the Party's view that corporations should pay less in tax and only 7% agreed with New Zealand First that GP visits for all children under 18 should not be free.

The Greens' Responsiveness to Undecided Voters

The Greens' policies, on average over the 30 Vote Compass propositions, were in line with 51% of undecided voters, the highest of all four parties examined. This is impressive given the Green Party is the most

ideologically extreme and least centralist party of the four examined. The Party's policies were especially in line with undecided voters around issues that these voters considered most important, such as health, housing, education, and the economy. Even around the Party's cornerstone environment issues, there was a high correlation between the Party's position and the undecided voters' opinion. For example, 73% of the undecided voters agreed with the Party that New Zealand should do more to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, while 64% agreed with the Party that the Department of Conservation should receive more government funding. Like Labour, the Greens' similar policies on Māori issues were less in line with views of undecided voters. However, the proposition where the Greens were least in line with undecided voters was around sentencing young offenders. Only 7% of undecided voters agreed with the Greens position that courts should be less tough when sentencing young offenders. That said, these propositions were not around issues considered important to undecided voters.

Conclusion

The value of Vote Compass in the 2017 New Zealand General Election was not only to promote civic engagement—with nearly half a million people using the tool—but to provide detailed insights into the alignment of party policies and their key customers. Detailed analysis of the descriptive statistics from Vote Compass, broken down by voting intention and demographics, reveals important insights into the relationship between the policies offered by National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens and the preferences of their prospective voters, undecided voters, and key target markets.

Effectiveness of Marketing to Prospective Voters by National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens

National's platform was only in line with the views of 40% of National's prospective voters, the lowest of the four parties examined, while more than half of National's prospective voters agreed with National's position on only 6 of the 30 propositions. They were significantly out of sync on propositions such as corporate and higher income earners' tax as well as GP visits, where the data suggests that National's prospective voters were more economically progressive in their thinking than their

Party was. Labour's positions were in line, on average, with more than half (54%) of their supporter's views, with over 90% of their supporters agreeing with their policies on government funding for affordable housing, public hospitals, and GP visits for children. They were less in sync on issues such as taxation, Māori issues, and moral issues, where their supporters held stronger positions than Labour. New Zealand First's policy positions were in line with the views of just under half (47%) of their prospective voters, but they were out of alignment on corporation tax while the Party's position was more liberal than their supporter's views on immigration and housing policies. The Greens policies had the most agreement from their supporters, being in line with 67% of their prospective voters.

Effectiveness of Target Marketing by National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens

Analysis of average alignment of party policies to public opinion suggests that National's overall policy platform was not overwhelmingly in line with the views of any demographic, but leaned towards higher earners and seniors. Conversely, the data suggests that Labour's overall policy platform was most in line with youth and lower earners, as well as Māori and students. New Zealand First were most in line with the views of lower earners, Māori, and senior voters, thus cutting across both Labour and National's potential target markets. The Greens potentially fruitful target demographics were wide ranging, including Māori, students, youth, as well as middle and lower earners.

Effectiveness of Marketing to Undecided Voters by National, Labour, New Zealand First, and the Greens

Undecided voters are crucial in political marketing—alternatively described as floating voters, they represent the section of the market open to switching to a new party. National's platform was only in line with the views of about 30% of undecided voters, the lowest of the four parties examined. They were out of line on policies such as restricting tax breaks claimed by property investors and free GP visits for all children under 18. Labour's positions were in line with just under half (47%) of undecided voters' views. The issue areas where Labour's policies were most in line with undecided voters' views were also around issue areas

that they considered important, such as health, housing, education, and economic issues. However, Labour's policies on moral issues and Māori issues were less in line with the views of many undecided voters. New Zealand First's policy positions were in line with the views of just under half (45%) of undecided voters' views, correlating best with the same six propositions as Labour, on important issue types such as health, housing, education, and the economy. However were significantly out of synch on some issues such as corporation tax and free GP visits for children under 18. The Greens' policies were in line with 51% of undecided voters, the highest of all four parties examined; and in particular on environmental issues as well as the most important issues of health, housing, education, and the economy but less inline on Māori issues and tougher sentencing.

Lessons for Academics: Analyse Prospective Voters Not Just the General Public

This analysis has demonstrated the value of both quantitative analysis and exploration of prospective voters', rather than just the general public's, views of the parties' products. Without analysis of the Vote Compass data, an easy claim to make from the 2017 Election would be that National moved too far to the right to meet the views of their prospective voters, but the data suggests this was not the case. In fact, National was out of alignment with their prospective voters as well as the general public. While access to large-scale data like Vote Compass is rare, this analysis demonstrates that efforts to gain it are worthwhile, as it has enabled insightful research into the perspectives of party supporters.

Lessons for Practitioners: Advice on Future Relationship-Building

National need to recognise that their policies were not closely in line with their prospective voters, who are more economically progressive in their thinking than the Party. Their policies were also least in line with undecided voters. They have a particular weakness with younger voters and thus need to be open to developing new policy positions in response to their needs. If they do not, Labour will likely hold office for several terms.

Labour needs to maintain their policies on health and schools which appeal to undecided voters, and focus on retaining and growing support among younger voters and students, whose expectations of a Labour

Government may be unrealistic. They should explore the opportunity to show leadership on Māori policy, given that the data indicated Māori are a key target group for Labour and as Chapter 2 noted, overall public opinion is unclear in the Māori policy area thus providing room for leadership. However Labour's policies on moral issues and Māori issues were less in line with the views of many undecided voters, thus in appealing to Māori as a key target market they need to be careful not to lose undecided voters. Alternatively they could tactically leave coalition partners to target them instead, which would provide greater differentiation in positioning for themselves and their coalition partners which would be an advantage given they, New First and the Greens, seem to be chasing the same target markets.

Having offered policies that were sometimes more liberal than their prospective voters agreed with, New Zealand First need to reflect on their alignment with these people. While they cater to a market with certain niche views, it has always been a diverse market that has come from both traditionally National and Labour's prospective voters. The markets New Zealand First's product was most in line with were similar to those that were best in line with Labour's and the Greens. They, therefore, need to think about how they are going to position themselves to create clear space and market share especially in relation to the Labour Government. In doing so, they need to test specific policies on undecided voters given specific policies such as being anti-free GP visits for children and wanting to reduce corporation tax were so poorly rated by undecided voters in 2017.

The Greens should explore potential target markets such as men, where they were weak, and middle-income earners, where they have a strength they could further capitalise on. Given that they were more in line with the views of lower earner (less than $60 K) than Labour and especially National, while also being more in line with the views middle earners (between $60 K and $100 K) than Labour, there is potential room for the Greens to capture more of the middle-income market share. They could also go after undecided voters, especially on environmental issues where there is already support for their policies, and also consider moral issues, as this is a key market segment none of the other parties succeeded in appealing to. All of this would help provide distinctiveness from Labour, particularly beneficial given that their target markets in 2017 were somewhat similar to Labour's otherwise.

Summary

Parties should continue to segment the market. The perspectives of different target groups are always going to differ, and parties need to formulate an effective strategy to attract a successful coalition of voters that enable them to occupy distinctive positions from their opponents but also potential coalition partners so they do not compete in the same space. Labour, the Greens, and New Zealand First need to focus more on attracting National's prospective voters and undecided voters rather than from each other's market share, and National have significant work to reformulate an effective relationship with their prospective and undecided voters as well as identifying potential targets.

Reference

Lees-Marshment, J., Y. Dufresne, G. Eady, D. Osborne, C. van der Linden, & J. Vowles. (2015). 'Vote Compass in the 2014 New Zealand election: Hearing the voice of New Zealand voters.' *Political Science, 67*(2): 94–124.

Messy Marketing in the 2017 New Zealand Election: The Incomplete Market Orientation of the Labour and National Parties

Jennifer Lees-Marshment

Abstract This chapter explores the extent to which National and Labour followed the market-oriented party model in 2017. Drawing on multiple qualitative and quantitative primary sources including interviews with senior practitioners, analysis of 170+primary sources and Vote Compass main survey and post-election data, analysis finds that Labour took the edge in overall orientation towards listening and responding to the public whilst National's lack of responsiveness ultimately lost National control of government. Market-orientation is still important. Labour's marketing was imperfect and failed to demonstrate delivery competence, but they tried to respond to voter concerns whilst

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National was dismissive of market research, focused on their strengths rather than voter concerns and relied on their record instead of focusing on future promises. National need to respect, reflect, and reform and Labour needs to deliver in government, while creating space for new product development for 2020 to maintain their market orientation and win again.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the extent to which the main parties—National and Labour—followed the market-oriented party model in the 2017 election. Drawing on multiple qualitative and quantitative primary sources, analysis uncovers opposite strengths and weaknesses in terms of responsiveness to voter demands and delivery. The chapter first outlines the methodology, then explores the marketing effectiveness of both parties, before concluding with lessons for academics and practitioners.

METHODOLOGY

Theoretically, this chapter applies an updated version of the Lees-Marshment (2001) model of market-oriented parties as detailed in Table 4.1. Empirically, it utilises extensive quantitative and qualitative primary data collection including a 250,000+respondent Vote Compass main survey, 24,000+respondent post-election survey, interviews with senior party advisors, 170+primary sources from the Labour and National Party[1] including speeches, policies, press releases, adverts, videos, election billboards, and leader debates as well as media interviews and public market research.

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[1] Acknowledgement is due to Alexa Frost who analysed a significant number of these party sources under my supervision as a summer scholar 2017–2018 and in particular her observations that Labour talked repeatedly of investment and used informal delivery language such as heaps or plenty of plans in their campaign ads.

Table 4.1   The political marketing process for a market-oriented party

Stage 1	Core market-oriented party philosophy	• Aim to satisfy voters needs and wants • Do not attempt to change what people think, but to deliver what they need and want
Stage 2	Market intelligence	• Ongoing process of identifying the needs, wants, behaviors and demands of the voters whose support it seeks
Stage 3	Product design	• Design a new product—including policy, leader, party behavior, organizational structures and membership rights—to suit voters demands identified through market intelligence
Stage 4	Product adjustment	*Adjust the product to* • Ensure policy promises are deliverable in government • Obtain internal support • Differentiate from the competition • Focus on winning support of target markets needed to maintain/win power
Stage 5	Implementation	• Implement the new product design throughout the party organization • Manage potential conflict and hostility towards any changes in policy to suit the market, connecting new policies to party history and ideology where possible
Stage 6	Communication	• Convey the new product design to the electorate in the run up to the election, over as long a period as is feasible • Use appropriate, long-term marketing communications • Ensure communication is consistent and all party behaviour including MPs and members is in line with the new product and messaging
Stage 7	Election campaign	• Party's final chance to convey its' behavior in a positive way • Use range of marketing communication tools to communicate the product

(continued)

Table 4.1   (continued)

Stage 8	Delivery	*Before the election*
		• Create key pledges or priorities to build credibility that can be delivered easily once in power to help build initial support to help mitigate more difficult delivery
		• Refine promises if needed to ensure they are achievable especially in light of any changes in conditions such as the economy
		• Convey management and governing abilities
		In power
		• Focus on the need to deliver in order to achieve voter satisfaction
		• Create delivery units to help success
		• Communicate a sense of progress over time
		• Be honest about problems or failures in delivery; but then propose a solution
		• Communicate real world individualised cases of delivery to voters; localize central government stories and statistics
Stage 9	Maintain a market-orientation	*In power*
		• Maintain unity
		• Continue to collect and be seen to respond to market intelligence about public opinion
		• Identify new target markets
		• Ensure time to plan product design for next election
		• Communicate the future product design

Source Adapted from Lees-Marshment (2001) with additions from Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005), Lees-Marshment (2014, Fig. 8), and Esselment (2012)

Analysis of National and Labour's Market-Oriented Strategy

Market Intelligence and Market-Oriented Attitude

A market orientation puts voters at the heart of decision-making, requiring parties to use market intelligence to identify and respond to voter demands (Lees-Marshment 2001). Interviews confirmed that major parties collect quantitative and qualitative market intelligence, with UMR polling for Labour (Talbot 2018) and Curia Market Research advising National (Farrar 2018), but what is less clear is whether they responded

to it. Neither National nor Labour fully adopted a market orientation, but Labour came closest, while National exhibited arrogance on numerous occasions.

The 2014–2017 period started well for National, with then leader and Prime Minister John Key noting after winning that his government needed to avoid becoming complacent and address the concern from New Zealanders about people who were less well off. Nevertheless National's responsiveness declined, facilitated by strong performance in the polls against a weak opposition for most of the pre-campaign period. Misalignment between National and voters was apparent on issues such the referendum to change the flag which most opposed and a lack of affordable housing to both buy and rent which National refused to acknowledge until closer to the election. Key's own reputation declined and he resigned at the end of 2016, creating an opportunity for repositioning under a fresh new leader. Power was quickly handed to Bill English, who had a reputation for solid and serious competence as Key's Deputy and Minister of Finance but continued the same National lines. Public discontent became apparent in 2017: a poll in May indicated that 64% felt the economy was rigged (IPSOS 2017) and in July another noted nearly 60% were either unsure the government was going in the right direction or thought it was not (Herald-ZB Kantar TNS 2017).

The Party's qualitative market research should have uncovered this discontent. Two key National advisors, David Farrar and Jo de Joux, explained when interviewed that any discontent was not strong enough or was diffused around changing issues. Farrar (2018) noted that:

> normally third term government you are getting "they've been in too long." But because the opposition still wasn't seen as viable…there wasn't actually a huge amount of concern. The usual pressure points of a third term government, where it's like health crisis, education crisis, etcetera, weren't there to that same degree.

> …There were the issues that were the number one issue for a period of time…but [they would not] usually not stay there for too long. Housing did stay there for a reasonable period of time, but actually that then did start to drop down too as the housing market finally started to soften through 2017.

While Farrar conceded 'there was definitely, as with any government, discontent,' the weakness of the opposition prevented it being a strong

steer National needed to change: 'it's fair to say there were a number of people who had been unhappy with the government, but unhappy with the alternative' (Farrar 2018).

Alternatively it could be argued that signs of discontent were dismissed. de Joux (2018) argued that research focused on undecided voters: 'you only talk to people who are genuinely undecided voters… so there's always a degree of discontent amongst research participants' and:

> I don't agree that there was general discontent. At the end of the day, the National Party got the largest amount of the vote. In fact, we got more of the vote than we've ever got, and we certainly got more votes than any other party has ever got under MMP. So, I don't think you can argue there was a huge amount of discontent at all actually.

However, Farrar conceded that 'housing was one the government was too slow to act on' and 'I do think getting onto health earlier would have made a difference' and 'there definitely was some third-termitis there…I don't think you're ever immune from it. It's just a matter of how bad the infection is.' National only followed one aspect of the guidelines for maintaining a market orientation in government: maintaining party unity. Four others were neglected: they did not seem to be responding to market intelligence, there was no obvious quest to pursue new target markets, there was no reflection on developing a new product design, and they lacked a new product.

In contrast, Labour developed a more responsive attitude the closer they got to the election. As market researcher David Talbot explained when interviewed, market research identified 'opportunities on social issues' such as housing which they saw coming as an issue ahead of time, and 'even from traditional National voters, particularly women, there was a real sense that on things like housing and inequality, and child poverty and mental health, a whole range of issues - water quality - that things just weren't as they should be, that kids should be able to swim in rivers, families should be able to afford houses, all those bread and butter types of issues' (Talbot 2018).

Labour responded to this research, with leader Andrew Little explaining 'housing is the number one issue people raise with us, every single place we go' (Little 2017). Chief of Staff Neale Jones explained when interviewed that their policy focus 'reflected areas we knew were genuinely concerns of New Zealanders and they wanted to see action on…

things like rebuilding state houses and increasing the number we built, that was an obvious response to real public concern about homelessness and the housing crisis in general' (Jones 2018). Further evidence of Labour's attention to polling came with Little's acknowledgement in a media interview of his low polling and his subsequent resignation. New leader Jacinda Ardern continued the focus on social issues, once more explaining it as responsiveness to voters:

> Labour's core focus was the right one. Housing, health and education didn't come from nowhere. They came from voters, they came from the public. That's why these ideas will continue to be our focus. (Ardern 2017)

Talbot (2018) observed that he 'saw the market research being used by Labour far better than in many recent times' and 'the connection between the research outputs and the decision makers…was very tight.' Market research under Ardern showed that 'the way she was interacting was definitely resonating on those issues; they were what people were talking about themselves. And to hear a politician talking about them the way she did really worked for them.'

Labour's greater proximity to a market orientation is supported by data from the Vote Compass post-election survey. Respondents were asked whether the main leaders were in touch with ordinary people's concerns and their party policies responded to New Zealanders needs and wants. As Fig. 4.1 indicates, Ardern was seen as much more in touch with ordinary people's concerns.

Additionally, significantly more respondents thought that Labour policies responsive to New Zealander's needs (68%) and wants (71%) compared with National's policies (52% on needs, 56% on wants): see Figs. 4.2 and 4.3.

Product Design and Adjustment

Both party's products had strengths and weaknesses. National's product remained unchanged from 2014, focusing on the economy, given its' strength for National. But this was a strategic mistake. 2017 was not 2014. Vote compass data indicated that the economy was only the 4th top issue for undecided voters; health, housing, and education were the top 3. National did offer new health policies such as an extra

In your opinion, how in touch were the following party leaders with ordinary people's concerns? - Bill English

New Zealand overall; n = 24,628
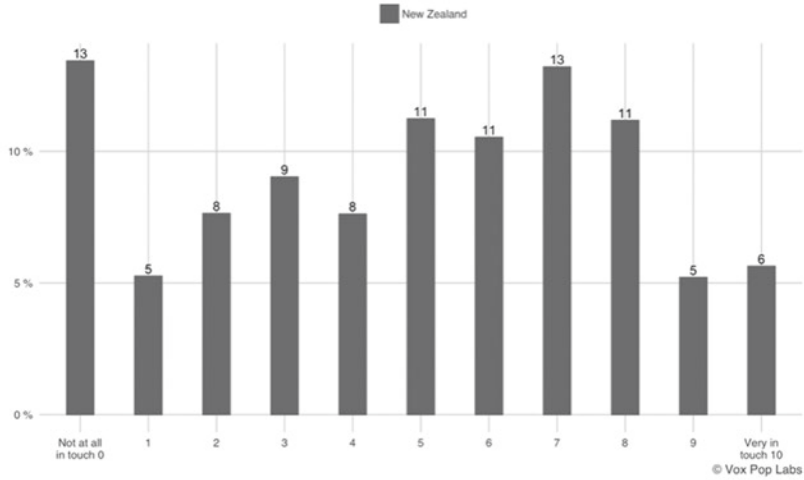
In your opinion, how in touch were the following party leaders with ordinary people's concerns? - Jacinda Ardern
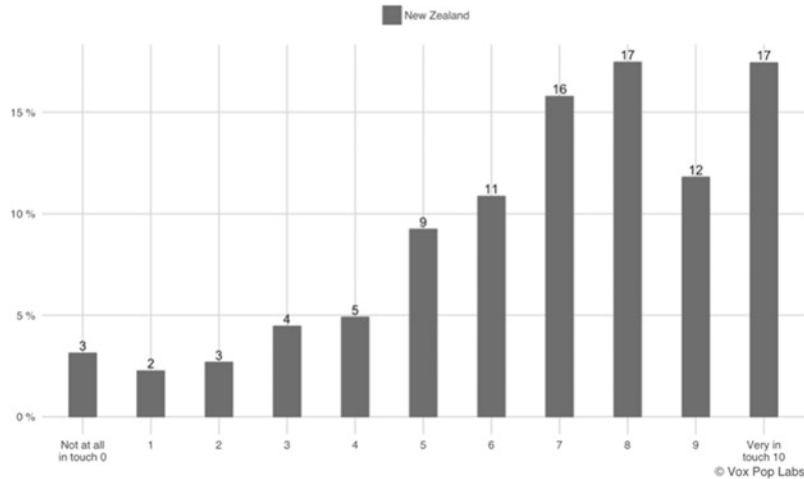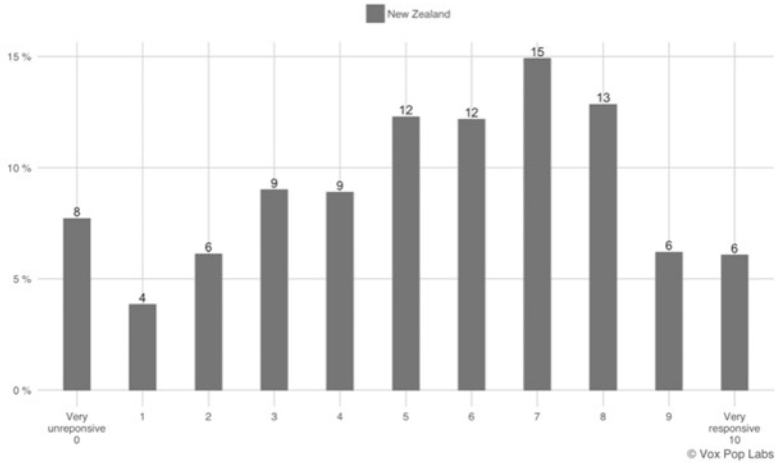
New Zealand overall; n = 24,631

Fig. 4.1 How in touch National and Labour Party leaders were with ordinary people's concerns (*Source* Vote Compass Post-election survey collected between October 10 and December 14, 2017. *Note n* = 24,648)

In your opinion, to what degree do you believe the following parties offered policies that responded to New Zealanders' needs? - National

New Zealand overall; n = 24,466

In your opinion, to what degree do you believe the following parties offered policies that responded to New Zealanders' needs? - Labour

New Zealand overall; n = 24,464

Fig. 4.2 The responsiveness of National and Labour policies to New Zealander's needs (*Source* Vote Compass Post-election survey collected between October 10 and December 14, 2017. *Note n* = 24,648)

In your opinion, to what degree do you believe the following parties offered policies that responded to New Zealanders' wants? - National

New Zealand overall; n = 24,454

In your opinion, to what degree do you believe the following parties offered policies that responded to New Zealanders' wants? - Labour
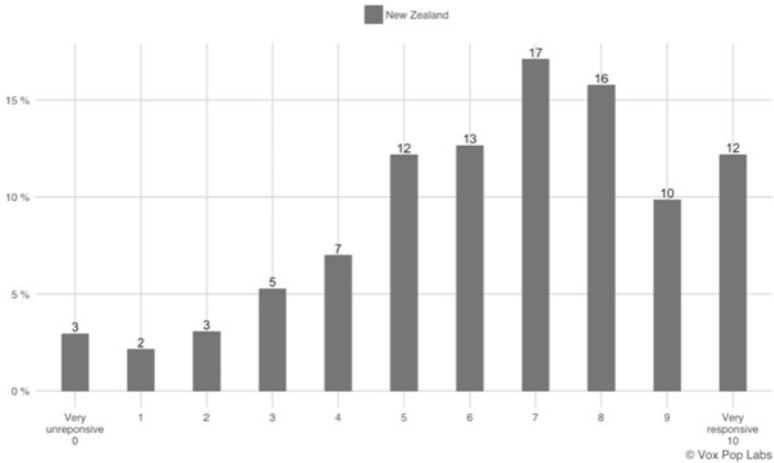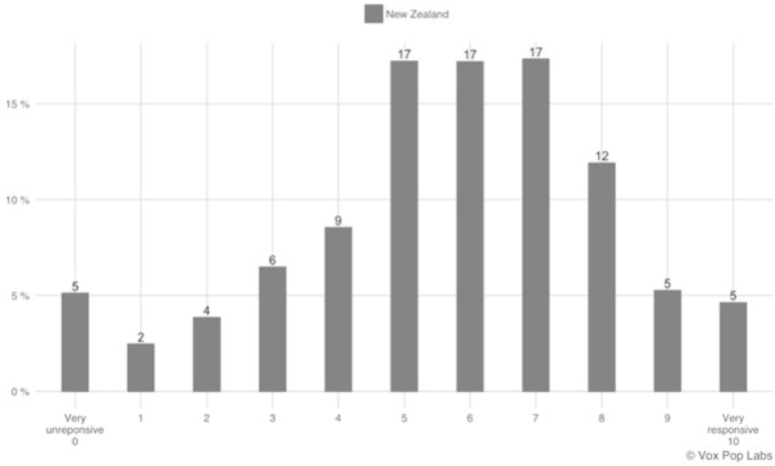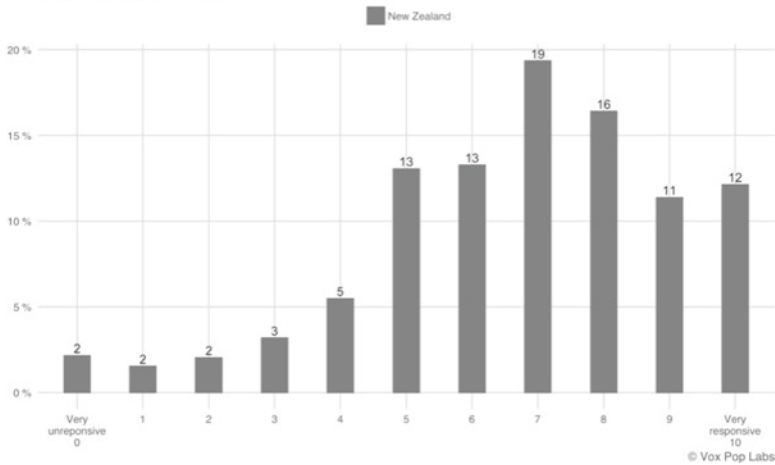
New Zealand overall; n = 24,459

Fig. 4.3 The responsiveness of National and Labour policies to New Zealander's wants (*Source* Vote Compass Post-election survey collected between October 10 and December 14, 2017. *Note n* = 24,648)

$224 million over four years in mental health services, a new hospital to be opened in Dunedin and extension of cheap GP visits to an extra 600,000 people. But announcements on housing and education were just extensions of existing policies, such as increasing the amount available in Government Home Start Grants and new charter schools. They promised to build 34,000 homes in Auckland over 10 years but only some would be social housing or priced at 'affordable' levels. Tactically, National focused on their existing supporters, such as farmers and business owners and targeted regional New Zealand, but focused more on criticising Labour's water and tax policies or maintaining current benefits for businesses than new policy. As leader while English had a strong record for competence having been Finance minister, this made it difficult to convey freshness or concern for social issues.

Labour too faced challenges but overall were more responsive. Under Little they restored unity and succeeded in putting new voter concerns about health care, housing, education, and social welfare on the agenda. For example they made mental health a key issue, promising to fund extra mental health professionals in schools, and focused earlier than National on the need to do more on housing including providing affordable homes and state houses but also improving the quality of rental homes. On education they promised increased student allowances and three years free tertiary education. They also offered a families package and environmental policies. This responded to typical segments such as low-income families and students but also undecided voters. However, Little performed poorly in preferred prime minister polling, ranging around 5–8%. Little strengthened his team in 2017 by appointing Ardern as his deputy and refreshing the party list but gave way to the more media-friendly Ardern for the campaign. Ardern continued the same social welfare focus but added climate change (Jones 2018) which attracted Green supporters but undermined their potential coalition partner. Similarly Labour's placement of Māori candidates high on their list enabled them to argue Māori votes for Labour would result in increased Māori representation, but this took votes from another potential coalition partner, the Māori Party. Labour's biggest weakness was economic management. Labour had their policies economically costed by an independent auditor, but often used grand but vague claims related to investing money such as 'Labour will invest an additional $4billion over four years to deliver a modern education system', 'Labour will also invest in boosting our health system and making education free

and accessible for all children' and on plans for regional New Zealand 'Labour's got a plan to invest in them and make them even better. Better healthcare, better schools, cleaner rivers, and decent jobs.' Several of their policies would hit businesses and individuals, such as a Water Tax, a Regional Fuel Tax, removal of tax breaks for property speculators and multinationals and an increased minimum wage, which further contributed to the impression economic growth might halt under Labour.

Implementation and Unity

National's lack of change made unity easy to achieve, and when English's popularity started declining the party got behind him with the phrase 'Backing Bill' (National Party 2017b). Labour implemented a strategy to stop internal division and 'create message discipline so people aren't saying different things from each other' as division was a key negative blocking people from voting Labour (Jones 2018). Labour's unity did significantly improve, but there was never a sense of them being strongly united behind a clear market-oriented product. For example, when Phil Twyford released foreign house buyer figures to justify new policies, appealing to more centre-right voters, he received internal backlash. When asked to respond to comments by former Labour Prime Minister Helen Clark that parties need to command the centre ground to win elections Little rejected this as 'a pretty hollow view' (Little 2016). Ardern's accession as leader changed the mood somewhat, improving recruitment and fundraising: Jones (2018) recalls how 'we had hundreds of thousands of dollars flowing in pretty much straight away, we had people joining the party in droves.' However, such a late change in leadership also damaged perceived unity: The post-election survey indicated the public perceived National's image of unity to be much stronger than Labour, at 72% as opposed to 53%: see Fig. 4.4.

Communication

Leading up to the campaign, National's communication focused on their natural strength, the economy, and leader English (Farrar 2018; de Joux 2018). However, they failed to convey future benefits from the good economy: As Farrar (2018) reflected, 'it probably could have been more focused on that social benefit.' Regarding English, de Joux explained:

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. National seemed to be a united team capable of governing.
New Zealand overall; n = 24,512
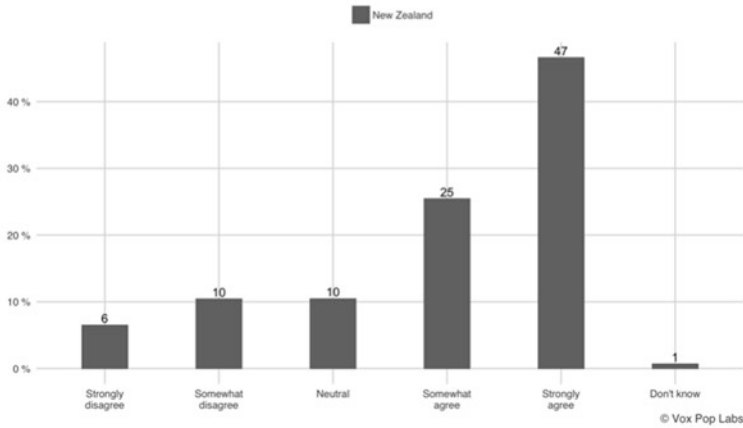
Labour seemed to be a united team capable of governing.
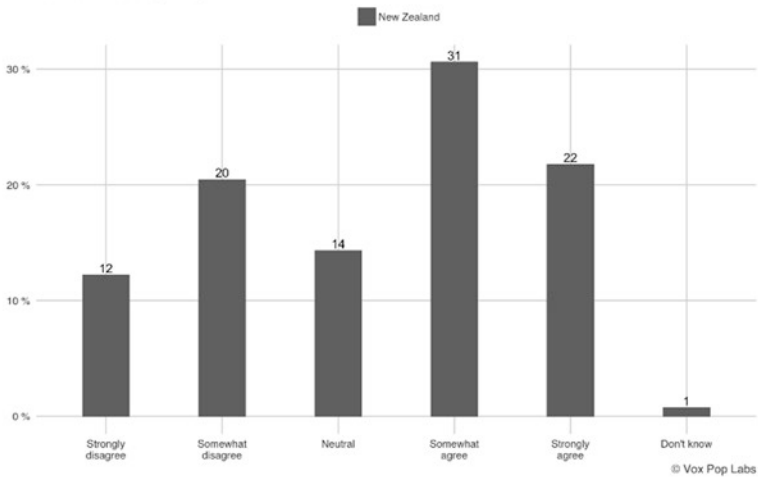New Zealand overall; n = 24,509

Fig. 4.4 National's and Labour's Unity (*Source* Vote Compass Post-election survey collected between October 10 and December 14, 2017. *Note n =* 24,648)

> A lot of work went in at the outset to introduce the public to Bill English… they didn't know much about him because as the finance guy you don't get to have a big personality, it's a very separate role… Our challenge was to get his personality to shine and introduce 'Bill the Leader'. He's a thoughtful person of deep conviction who has a social conscious – a classic "compassionate conservative". (de Joux 2018)

National tried to make Bill more relatable, showing him making spaghetti pizza and doing 'walk-runs,' but such stunts might have worked better had he baked pizza with the Salvation Army to be delivered to people sleeping in cars due to the housing crisis. He talked about changing nappies on Stuff's video series *RadDads*, but was wearing a suit next to casually dressed presenters so the image did not match the message. The 'Let's get together' (National Party 2017a) video featured shots of Bill 'connecting and interacting with New Zealanders' (de Joux 2018) and other ministers, but being tourist-ad in style glossed over growing public concerns about social issues. Farrar (2018) pointed out that regardless of any weaknesses, English attracted relatively low levels of unfavourability: 'English had good favourability, good approvals, public polls showed that too' and de Joux (2018) argued he was relatable but 'it's just that he isn't so much of a showman… but Bill is very thoughtful, he's much more considered. He doesn't necessarily fit into a soundbite.'

Labour's communication focused on top voter concerns and improving Little's image. As Jones (2018) recalled, they rearranged the leaders office resource and 'made sure that our spokespeople in those areas were properly supported, and we made sure that we focused on those issues,' putting issues like education, housing, and health on the agenda. Little took a tour around New Zealand with Ardern received a good response—'people who met him just raved about him…public meetings which had people on their feet all around the country' (Jones 2018) and he received speech coaching and advice on suits. His first ad featured his family and his battle with cancer in his first ad (Labour Party 2017a). As Talbot (2018) noted, the research 'showed that the more they knew about him and the more they saw of him in a non-political frame the warmer they became.' However, on television often his public comments were negative, critiquing the National government, without explaining what a new Labour government might do instead. While research confirmed the issue focused worked, Little 'struggled to connect with the

public' and ultimately 'if your messenger struggles to connect the message to people they won't hear it' (Jones 2018).

Election Campaign

The mixed effectiveness of pre-campaign marketing meant the campaign could have significant impact, and this was certainly the case when Labour changed their leader just before it started. Ardern declared she was going to be relentlessly positive and this worked: 75% of respondents to the post-election survey said Ardern succeeded in conveying a more positive vision, compared with 64% for English. Talbot recalled how 'people started to listen and they started to hear what Labour was saying. So just like through nine years of John Key I would sit there in focus groups and people would replay me things that John Key had said, for the first time in a long-time people now were replaying to me things that the Labour leader had said' (Talbot 2018). Labour devised effective visual backdrops for Ardern's public engagements:

> What she was seen doing was important because of the "sound off" test: what do you see? And what we wanted people to see was Jacinda engaging with young people, engaging on the issues you care about, so being at a big public meeting surrounded by people, being somewhere with a whole lot of young people in white t-shirts behind her, which showed organisation, which showed enthusiasm, which showed youth, which showed energy. (Jones 2018)

Labour also ran TV ads during the leaders' debates where Ardern talked directly to viewers about their plan to deliver more homes, better schools and clean up NZ's rivers (Labour Party 2017b). However, one major hiccup was when they changed positions capital gains tax mid-campaign, further damaging Labour's delivery competence.

National attempted to communicate English's warmer side, releasing an ad called 'Bill's Story' which featured many National MP's discussing his strengths (National Party 2017c). They also called him a 'rock' which emphasised his competence, but hardly conveyed warmth or freshness. His visits focused on farmers meetings, packhorses, industrial sites and rural employment. While both National advisors interviewed loyally argued Bill's performance improved during the campaign, strategically speaking National missed a great chance to focus on their leaders'

biggest strength: a passion for children, evidence for which was buried in the middle of English's campaign launch speech:

> As proud of I am of getting our country's books in order and back into surplus, that's not what gets me out of bed in the morning….What drives me is ensuring every child who grows up in our country has every opportunity to succeed…We don't give up on any of them…Every single child matters – they matter to their family, to their community and to our country. And they certainly matter to me. (English 2017)

But this was not the campaign focus. National did exhibit last minute responsiveness with new policies on housing, offering an extension to paid parental leave and announcing a child poverty target in the Newshub leaders debate, but it was too late. English deepened his out of touch image with arrogant comments in debates and on the evening news such as when asked who he would march in the streets for he said 'myself', 'our product is much better', 'I've done 8 budgets, I know how it works', 'I know this generation, I raised them,' and 'you should listen to this policy, because you should adopt it.'

The problematic campaigning from both sides was evident in dual slogans. Labour shifted from *The Fresh Approach*—tapping on discontent with the government although without specifying what the freshness would deliver—to *Let's Do This* after changing to Ardern. Billboards focused on social issues, but there was nothing on the economy. National began with *Delivering for New Zealanders* with adverts such as *Delivering for Families* focusing on the benefits policies would bring to key groups (National Party 2017e). But they also used *Secure Your Future*. Both parties utilised targeted online ads. As de Joux explained, 'we also did a lot of targeting by region and demographic. Everyone gets the same core message but, for example, we would personalise it with local images or local messages.' Labour's YouTube ads were aimed at key target markets such as students and youth, not just to sell policies but get them out to vote.

National's attack communication was initially the same as 2014, i.e. they were competent but Labour were not, with the 'Keep NZ moving forward' ad (National Party 2017d) depicting blue 'National' runners progressing past a Labour, Greens, NZF grouping tied together and thus getting nowhere. Attacks stepped up a gear when the Minister for Finance Steven Joyce alleged there was an 11 billion dollar holes

in Labour's economic plans and National put out a fearmongering yet humourous ad 'Let's tax this' (National Party 2017f) which highlighted Labour taxes. It was not completely truthful—Labour never said they would raise income tax—but included some taxes they had proposed. As Talbot conceded 'I think it was ethically questionable dirty politics - but I think it was probably politically effective' and de Joux (2018) recalled that it 'really helped the morale in our campaign.' It put the agenda back onto National's strengths.

In defence, Labour pointed to independent experts who supported their costings. However, they needed a more accessible rebuttal, such as simple short ad 'Let's deliver this' with similar images but demonstrating the benefits Labour policies would bring such as more $ in the pocket of low-income families, living in healthier rental homes, able to get to work via good public transport and their children able to play in clean rivers. Labour generally refrained from attacking National apart from Ardern arguing English's sudden child poverty targets were a bit late given they had had 9 years already and that it was 'time to take action on the things we have been drifting on' (Stuff Leaders Debate 2017).

Delivery

While having policies that voters want is important, so is convincing voters the party can deliver them. National exhibited strong competence in economic management, issuing multiple press releases, policy factsheets, and reports highlighting their economic achievements. But their campaign lacked specific easily deliverable pledges, with most policies having long-term target dates such as 7–10 years to build the new Dunedin hospital and 90% of exports covered by free trade agreements by 2030.

Labour were aware that their perceived weaknesses on delivery was a major weakness. Potential voters 'just believed in their heart of hearts, despite any evidence, that Labour would, if they got a chance to run the country, just spend all the money, blow the budget, and drive us into recession. And it was a deeply held belief that facts would not get in the way of' (Jones 2018). Talbot (2018) recalled how despite strong voter concerns about social issues while 'they believed that Labour would be good on those things they worried about how much it might cost to fix them. And so you're back into that frame of, "National's good at running the books, but they don't care about these issues. Labour cares about these issues, and would be good at fixing them, but they might
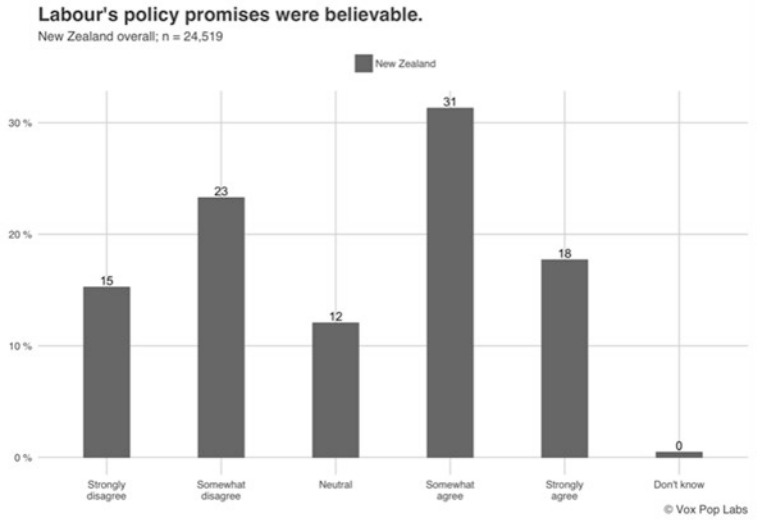
National's policy promises were believable.
New Zealand overall; n = 24,494

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Labour's policy promises were believable.
New Zealand overall; n = 24,519
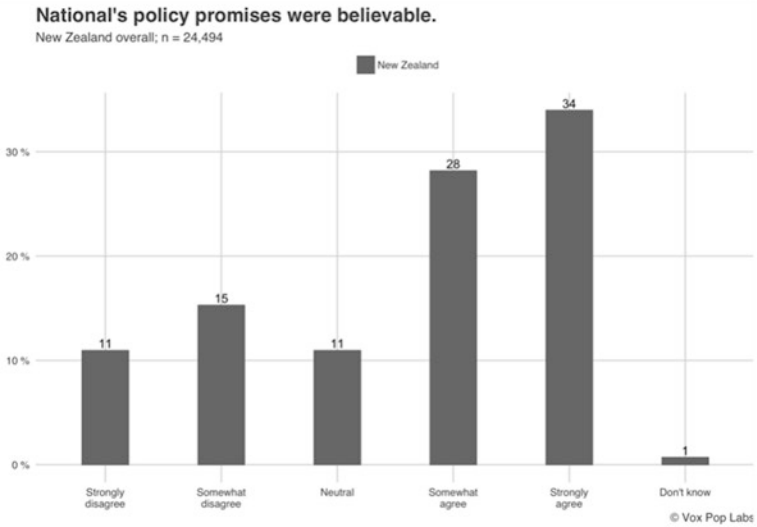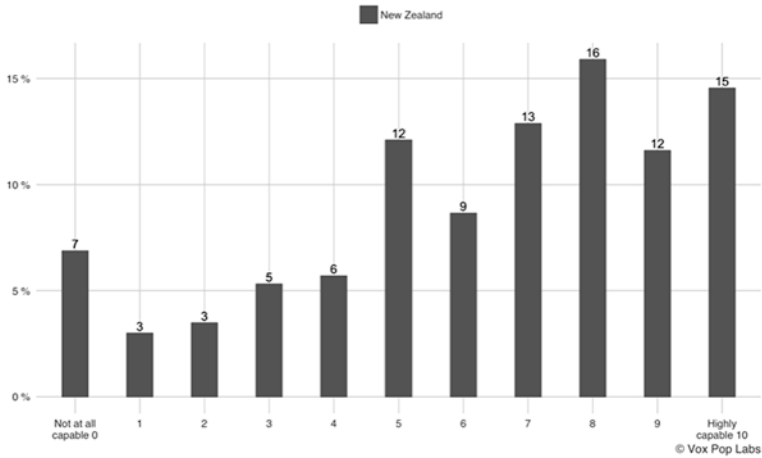

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Fig. 4.5 The believability of National and Labour Party policies (*Source* Vote Compass Post-election survey collected between October 10 and December 14, 2017. *Note n* = 24,648)

In your opinion, how capable were each of the following party leaders of delivering on their promises? - Bill English
New Zealand overall; n = 24,618

In your opinion, how capable were each of the following party leaders of delivering on their promises? - Jacinda Ardern
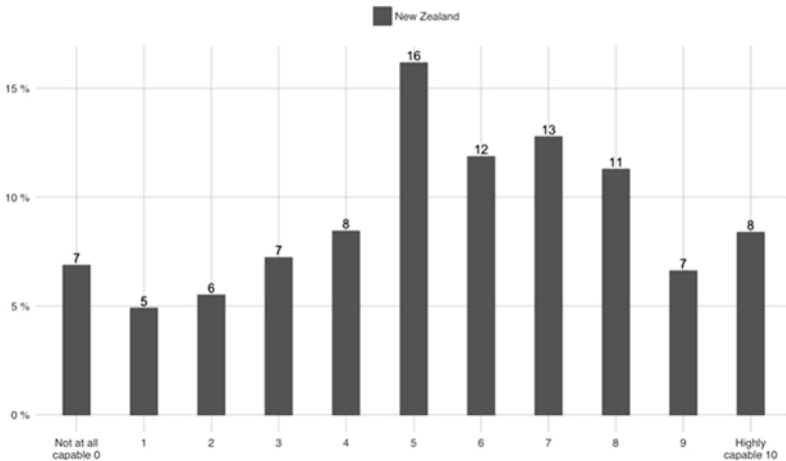New Zealand overall; n = 24,600

Fig. 4.6 National and Labour Party leaders capability to deliver on their promises (*Source* Vote Compass Post-election survey collected between October 10 and December 14, 2017. *Note n* = 24,648)

blow the budget".' A key part of their strategy was therefore to combat this and they released a properly costed alternative budget, set budget responsibility rules to gain credibility with 'influencers and commentators' (Jones 2018), a fiscal plan and a 100-day plan outlining specific policies they would quickly deliver. However, their campaign ads often talked of 'heaps' or 'plenty' of plans such as an ad where Ardern says 'Hi, do you have a young family? Labour has heaps of plans to support families like yours' (Labour Party 2017c) and they proposed several taxes.

Respondents in the post-election survey believed Labour would be less likely and capable to deliver on their promises. Figure 4.5 shows that 49% of respondents thought Labour promises were believable; compared with 62% thinking National's was, and Fig. 4.6 indicates that 51% thought Ardern was capable of delivering her promises compared with 65% thinking English was.

This data suggests that the reason why Labour did not win more seats and votes despite having more responsive policies was delivery. As Jones (2018) noted, 'perceived economic management and delivery competence is almost like a qualification parties need to have to be in the game to win an election.'

Conclusions

The 2017 New Zealand election is a lesson in messy marketing. Labour took the edge in overall orientation towards listening and responding to the public while National's lack of responsiveness ultimately lost National control of government. However, there were also significant weaknesses in Labour's promised delivery which they need to pay attention to if they want to succeed—and remain in—government.

Lessons for Academics

The first lesson is that overall market orientation or responsiveness is still important. Labour's marketing was not perfect by any means, but they were the most market-oriented of the two major parties, and there were repeated signs of National's declining market orientation throughout the 2014–2017 period. National did not respond to market research; they chose to focus on their strengths, not voter concerns; they relied on their record rather than future promises; and when the leader's popularity declined they backed him without reflecting how he might change

in response. They had a much more internal focus, confirming the conclusion from Lilleker and Lees-Marshment's (2005, 225) global study that 'the incentive to maintain a market-oriented party depends on the nature of the competition' which for most of 2014–2017 was weak in comparison with National. However, while market orientation and responsiveness eventually trumped delivery in this election, analysis still shows delivery was crucial. Had Labour got this right they could have won an overall majority because then they would have been able to offer a wanted product that was also seen as deliverable.

The New Zealand election also suggests new lessons for researchers. Firstly, it demonstrates that parties cannot rely on comparative poll advantage leading up to an election, because oppositions can change, as happened when Ardern became Labour leader. Marketing is about organisations' responsiveness to their consumers not just their relative market share. Furthermore, political marketing easy in practice and Labour was by no means a perfect example of a market-oriented party. Leading up to the campaign both major parties had problematic leaders and a poorly chosen focus, with National taking the Lego movie 'everything is awesome' approach while Labour's core argument under Little was 'Vote for us because National are so bad.' Market orientation remains an important concept in political analysis because political parties still struggle to achieve it.

Lessons for Practitioners

Neither major party can relax. The lesson for National is respect, reflect, and reform. They did not lose just because of a decision by Winston Peters, who was himself responding to voters' discontent. They lost their responsiveness to the public and failed to heed the warning signs. The new leader needs to show humility and respect for outcome, and engage in reflection before reforming. They should avoid attacking Labour and use the initial period in opposition to redesign a fresh new national vision and product that will connect with voters' core concerns.

As for Labour, they need to deliver. This means meeting big expectations about action on the infrastructure underpinning daily life—health, education, housing, water, and climate change—all of which take time to address. Labour also need to understand they were lucky to end up in government. New Zealand's 3 year terms are challenging for strategic political marketing. Labour needs to create space and time for new

product development in mid-2019, running listening exercises alongside formal market research, acknowledging any public concerns with unpopular leadership decisions, and refreshing the team and policy. If marketing in opposition seemed hard, marketing in government will only be harder.

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Candidate Brand Personality and the 2017 New Zealand General Election

James Barrett

Abstract This chapter addresses the brand personality performance of Andrew Little, Jacinda Ardern, and Bill English from their ascension to the party leadership to polling day in 2017. Their performance is analysed by assessing candidates according to their projected competence, energy, openness, empathy, agreeableness, and charisma. The research finds that Ardern had the strongest performance according to these criteria, with English the middling candidate and Little with the weakest performance. It thus demonstrates both the value and limitations of competence, the ability of energy to 'reinvigorate' a party, and the importance of openness, empathy, agreeableness, and charisma. It closes with pertinent lessons for practitioners, including the importance and limitations of focusing on a candidate's functional capacity, the importance of charismatic communication, and the ability for facets of candidate behaviour to have impacts across multiple brand personality dimensions. Having a well-rounded brand personality is very important for political candidates.

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The 2017 NZ election highlighted the importance of candidate brand
personality given the victor, Jacinda Ardern, had the strongest projected
personality. Brand personality refers to a psychologically stored set of
personality traits voters associated with a political entity. This chapter will
summarise the performance of Little, Ardern, and English, concluding
with lessons for brand personality and practitioners.

Methodology

In searching for factors influencing brand personality 215 videos, 307 pho-
tographs, and 151 press releases were analysed as primary sources. Also,
218 media reports were examined as secondary data. The transcribed ver-
bal and described visual content from the videos, photographs, and text
from the press releases and reports were placed in a document with factors in
each data 'line' listed as codes, 'grounding' them in data (Glaser and Strauss
1967: 21; Strauss 1987: 28–29). Following Little's analysis, these codes were
grouped into 18 categories. Further codes were extracted through Ardern
and English's analyses. Factors were assessed for influence on a candidate's
performance in the brand personality dimensions in Table 5.1, adapted from
Smith (2009) and Guzmán and Sierra (2009), according to adherence with
the dimensions' traits. They were also assessed for frequency in each case,
with up to four instances considered 'low', between five and nine 'medium',
between ten and nineteen 'high', and twenty or more a 'very high' rate.

Table 5.1 Political brand personality scale

Dimensions	Capability	Openness	Empathy	Agreeableness	Charisma
Traits	**Competence** Hardworking Intelligent Leader Successful Constant Responsible	Sharp Creative Innovative Modern Original	Cheerful Sentimental Friendly Cool	Generous Loyal Sincere Reliable	Glamorous Charming Smooth Trendy
	Energy Dynamic Energetic Enterprising				

Andrew Little's Brand Personality

Little had the weakest performance. While he was average in projecting energy, openness, empathy, and agreeableness, his projected competence and charisma was ineffective.

Competence

Little's competence was weak, partially due to Labour's capacity and coherence. Their incompetence was projected at a high rate, including when overseas students campaigning for Labour complained in the media about living conditions, appearing unsuccessful (Satherley and Brown 2017). This same image was demonstrated through high disunity, illustrated when Poto Williams objected Willie Jackson's party appointment (Hurley 2017).

This was compounded through Little's oppositional discourse, criticising National without solution, or framing them as National's responsibility, appearing less a leader in waiting. For instance, one press release (Little 2016a) highlighted homelessness solutions as National's responsibility:

> It's high time National got real about the housing crisis. It should embark on a massive state-backed building programme for affordable housing, clamp down on offshore speculators forcing house prices out of the reach of Kiwi families and build more state houses rather than selling them off.

Moreover, Little's deputies' discourse was often oppositional, including in one press release where Annette King (2015) criticised the government for surgery waiting lists without solution.

A responsible image was demonstrated through the very high rate Little promised to fix issues, including in one video highlighting 'New Zealand has a housing crisis', claiming 'Labour has a plan to fix it' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017c). However, Little rarely discussed delivery, preventing a successful image. In relation to personal capability, Little appeared more leader-like through his very high espousal of moral discourse, including one video claiming child poverty levels were 'not okay' (Little 2017b). However, this was countered by Little's regular incompetence, including when one article accused him of 'making a hash' (Watkins 2016) on housing and immigration.

Overall Little had trouble projecting competence. Despite the leader-like and successful image projected, this was nullified by Labour's incompetence and disunity, a lack of delivery discussion, incompetence, and Little and King's oppositional discourse.

Energy

Little's projected energy was average. Yet, his oppositional discourse demonstrated energetic attacks on his opponents, while his moral discourse outlined an energetic motivation to lead. This energy was reinforced through regular dissemination of Little's 'Angry Andy' persona, including when one report described him as 'perpetually angry' (Watkins 2016). The very high rate Little's discourse was progress-centred enhanced this, illustrated in one video claiming Labour was 'rising to the challenge of doing things in new ways' (Little 2015). Overall, Little somewhat projected energy through oppositional discourse, the 'Angry Andy' persona, and moral and progress-centred discourse. However, this energy was not consistently demonstrated otherwise.

Openness

Little was also average in projecting openness. Benefits emerged in the sharp image conveyed via awareness, particularly through the high rate of reference to expert opinion. For instance, one video claimed 'the Children's Commissioner says 15 children a year die due to illnesses caused by cold, damp houses' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017a). However, Little did not consistently project openness. He engaged with the environment, women's or minority equality issues, and evidence of progress at a low rate, preventing a modern or innovative image.

Empathy

Little's projected empathy was also average. Assistance emerged via the high rate he referred to salient symbols, appearing sentimental, such as the 'Kiwi Dream', including one press release claiming 'young couples are seeing the Kiwi dream of owning their own place slipping away' (Little 2017b). However, moderation occurred through the very high rate Little's speaking style was awkward, appearing unfriendly, including in a Waitangi Day video, appearing uncomfortable in front of the camera

with long pacing between words (Little 2017a). Moreover, the persona of 'Angry Andy' compounded this.

Nevertheless, this did not prevent a friendly image through the very high rate of fairness-centred discourse, including in one video claiming 'if we want a fairer New Zealand' we 'have to change the government' (New Zealand Labour Party 2016b). However, Little appeared to lack integrity at a high rate, moderating this image, including when accusations of racism arose around Labour's 'Chinese sounding names' home buyer data (New Zealand Herald 2015). Little further appeared friendly through a high rate of concern for children, including in one photo advertisement quoting him as wanting 'to work with all parties to fix child poverty' (Little 2016d). Little was also pictured engaging with charity at a high rate, enhancing this image, including in one photograph showing him collecting in Wellington for the Cancer Society (Little 2016c).

Little indicated empathy through reference to salient national symbols, words of togetherness, and fairness-centred discourse, appearing friendly and sentimental. This was enhanced via concern for children and charity. However, moderation occurred through his awkward speaking style, 'Angry Andy' persona, and lack of integrity.

Agreeableness

Little's projected agreeableness was also moderate. This was assisted by promises to fix issues, appearing more reliable. His demonstrated integrity also assisted, with the very high rate of fairness-centred discourse or criticism of National for honesty making him appear generous and reliable. Such criticism was seen in one interview where Little questioned English's honesty over the Todd Barclay scandal (Little 2017c). This generous image was also conveyed through concern for children and charity. However, several factors hindered this. The low rate he discussed delivery prevented a reliable image, while his awkward speaking style and 'Angry Andy' persona made him appear insincere and unreliable. This was compounded by the high rate he appeared to lack integrity. Overall, Little projected a reliable and generous image through promises to fix issues, fairness-centred discourse and criticising National for honesty. This was also conveyed through concern for children and charity. However, these benefits were moderated by his low discussion of delivery, awkward speaking style, 'Angry Andy' persona, and lack of integrity.

Charisma

Little's projection of charisma was weak. Generally, his behaviour damaged his performance. Furthermore, his 'Angry Andy' persona and awkward speaking style conveyed a less charming and smooth image. Overall, Little had an inadequate performance. While he did convey some energy, openness, agreeableness, and empathy, certain behaviours moderated his performance. Moreover, his performance in the competence and charisma dimensions was weak.

JACINDA ARDERN'S BRAND PERSONALITY

Arden had the strongest performance, suggesting she reversed Labour's chances through force of personality.

Competence

Ardern's only weak point was competence. She did not appear incompetent, but her performance was average. However, it was assisted by the high rate Labour's talent was highlighted, including when Ardern in one speech discussed Labour's 'amazing talent', appearing a successful leader (Ardern 2017c). Nevertheless, this was countered by the very high dissemination of their incompetence, including when one article described Ardern as a 'salvation for a failing Labour Party' (Clifton 2017). This moderation appeared in Ardern's policy discussions. She appeared constant through the very high rate she outlined policy values, including during her campaign launch speech claiming 'a successful economy is one that serves its people' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017a). However, moderation occurred via the unintelligent image presented by the high rate Ardern appeared unclear on policy, including via media criticism for her lack of clarity on capital gains tax (Garner 2017).

Nevertheless, Ardern utilised her smooth speaking style to appear intelligent, including during a confident leaders' debate closing statement, going off script despite audience interruptions (New Zealand Labour Party 2017e). Enhancing this was the very high rate Ardern appeared inspiring, including when one article noted her 'fan mania normally reserved for someone winning an Oscar' (Clifton 2017). Ardern discussed delivery at a very high rate, appearing successful, including in one speech claiming Labour 'will not rest until we turn around all of

the things we've talked about' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017h). Ardern's awareness also afforded benefits, particularly through her very high rate of environmental engagement, shown during her campaign launch speech claiming 'climate change is my generation's nuclear-free moment' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017b).

While Ardern projected competence through her capacity for success and delivery, leader-like behaviour, and awareness, her performance was moderated. While projection of Labour's talent was helpful, this was moderated by their incompetence. Furthermore, while her espousal of policy values helped appear constant, moderation occurred by appearing unclear on policy.

Energy

Ardern's projection of energy was strong. This was partially down to the energetic image conveyed by the very high rate Ardern appeared inspiring. Also beneficial was the very high rate her general energy was conveyed, including through her campaign slogan 'let's do this'. This energetic nature was conveyed by the high rate of action-oriented discourse, including in one video claiming New Zealand could improve its international standing through demonstrating they would 'take action' on climate change (New Zealand Labour Party 2017f). Furthermore, Ardern appeared energetic through a very high rate of progress-centred discourse, including in claiming during one leaders' debate 'I bring generational change and a vision for the future of New Zealand' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017d). Finally, this energetic image was seen in the very high rate her positive attitude was highlighted, exemplified in claiming she would bring 'relentless positivity' (Watkins 2017) to Labour's campaign. Overall, Ardern's projected energy was strong. Through appearing inspiring, conveying energy, and action-oriented discourse she effectively conveyed an energetic image. This was enhanced through her progress-centred discourse, youth, and positive attitude.

Openness

Ardern's demonstrated openness was also strong, partially via awareness, with environmental engagement demonstrating a modern image. Furthermore, she appeared open in showing concern for salient voter issues at a high rate, including in claiming elections should be 'about

the things that matter in people's lives' (Prendergast 2017). This performance was assisted by the innovative image conveyed through progress-centred discourse. This was furthered through her very high rate of engagement with the future, including during one speech claiming 'we have the opportunity this election to turn the page to New Zealand's future' (Ardern 2017e). Her verbal engagement perpetuated a modern image, including through the high rate of concern for women's or minority equality issues, illustrated in criticising Mark Richardson on air over claiming employers should know women's family plans (Bracewell-Worrall 2017). This open image was augmented by the high rate Ardern indicated collaboration with voters, including in one video telling viewers 'it'll be down to you if we change the government tomorrow' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017g). Overall, Ardern effectively projected openness. Through awareness, progress-centred discourse, environmental engagement, and personal openness to experience, she appeared sharp, modern, and open. This was enhanced through her verbal voter engagement.

Empathy

Ardern also found success projecting empathy. A friendly image appeared via the very high rate Ardern made reference to her hometown, childhood, or origins, including in one video showing her 'dropping in' on a Morrinsville business she once worked in (Ardern 2017a). This same image was demonstrated through the very high rate Ardern appeared down-to-earth nature, including when shown helping volunteers erect campaign signage in one video (Ardern 2017b). Furthermore, Ardern's positive attitude assisted this friendly persona. Ardern's voter engagement also appeared friendly through her high rate of concern for women's and minority equality issues and collaboration with voters. This was enhanced through the very high rate Ardern showed concern for children, including in claiming during the second leaders' debate 'my entire reason for being in politics is to rid this country of child poverty' (New Zealand Labour Party 2017c). Overall, Ardern's empathy projection was strong. Through a down-to-earth nature, positive attitude, references to the nation's characteristics, and voter engagement she appeared friendly and sentimental.

Agreeableness

Ardern's projected agreeableness was also effective. The very high rate she outlined policy values indicated a reliable image, while her discussions of delivery enhanced this. Moreover, this also appeared through people-centred discourse. Ardern's down-to-earth nature also projected this reliable image. Moreover, this appeared in high demonstration of integrity through values, including in shutting down attacks on National from Labour over the Todd Barclay scandal (Small 2017). Ardern's voter engagement also conveyed a generous image, including through concern for children and women's and minority equality issues. Overall, Ardern's projection of agreeableness was effective. Through discussing delivery, people-centred discourse, a down-to-earth nature and integrity, and voter engagement, she appeared generous and reliable.

Charisma

Ardern's charisma was also strong, with no aspects of her behaviour damaging her performance. This was down to her smooth and professional speaking style and inspiring nature, appearing smooth and charming. This was enhanced by the trendy image imbued upon Ardern through the high rate she was displayed engaging young people, including during her speech to the University of Auckland (Ardern 2017d). No aspect of Ardern's performance was weak, with strong projection of energy, openness, empathy, agreeableness, and charisma, and an average demonstration of competence.

Bill English's Brand Personality

English was weaker than Ardern. While he had the strongest competence, his performance elsewhere was ineffective.

Competence

English's policy discussions enhanced his performance. For instance, policy nuance was indicated at a very high rate, appearing intelligent, including in one press release justifying raising the superannuation age, because 'New Zealanders are healthier and living longer' (English 2017a). Furthermore, his leader-like behaviour benefitted, including

through the very high rate he engaged with business, appearing more successful, including in one video outlining his visit to Wellington businesses, highlighting growth 'driven by businesses that I have visited today' (English 2017h). English enhanced this image via experience, including through the very high rate he was pictured with world leaders, illustrated by one video covering his visit to Japan, meeting Prime Minister Abe (English 2017d). English's capacity for success and delivery also helped. English was assisted by the very high rate he highlighted delivery, demonstrating reliability, including in one press release claiming National was 'delivering real benefits to the back pocket of hardworking New Zealanders' (English 2017f). English's safety as a candidate was also perpetuated at a very high rate, particularly through National's slogan 'secure your future', featuring in their main campaign advertisement (English 2017i). This successful image was enhanced through high confidence, including in one interview asserting 'we're going to win' the election (Murphy 2017). However, English appeared to lack research at a high rate, appearing unintelligent. For instance, one article critiqued his teacher shortage denials, with one principal asserting 'it's happening in every school around the country' (One News 2017). Overall, English's projected competence was strong. While a lack of research caused damage, his policy discussions and leader-like behaviour conveyed a successful, intelligent, and responsible image. This was enhanced by his capacity for success and delivery and personal capability.

Energy

English's projected energy was average. He benefitted from the very high rate he discussed policy nuance, appearing dynamic. Moreover, his demonstrated confidence projected an energetic image. However, English conveyed general energy and moralised at a low rate, hindering his performance. Yet, his performance benefitted from the very high rate of aspirational discourse, appearing enterprising, including in one video covering a school visit, claiming they were 'growing an economy where' the students 'think they can realise their potential' (English 2017g). However, the low rate he displayed evidence of progress hindered this. English was not strong in projecting energy. While his policy nuance, confidence, and aspirational discourse helped appear energetic and enterprising, this was not conveyed consistently.

Openness

English's projected openness was also moderate. Damage was done by the high rate he appeared to lack research, appearing less sharp. Furthermore, while his aspirational discourse projected an enterprising image, this was hindered by the low rate he displayed evidence of progress. However, the high rate English displayed concern for women's and minority equality issues indicated a modern image, including in one video commemorating women's suffrage (English 2017j). But, this open image was countered via the high rate he appeared out of touch, including when called 'completely out of touch with the realities facing schools today' by the New Zealand Principal's Association head (Lewis 2017). While English displayed openness through his aspirational discourse and concern for equality issues, his performance was moderated. The low rate he appeared to engage in progress, his lack of research, and appearing out of touch hindered his performance.

Empathy

English's demonstrated empathy was also average. His policy discussions had a negative influence as they tended towards saturation with 'boring' facts and figures, negating a cool image. Such discussion is illustrated in the following quote from a press release (English 2017e) on the 2017 budget:

> The Package will lift the incomes of 1.3 million families by an average of $26 a week. It is expected to lift 20,000 families above the threshold for severe housing stress, and reduce the number of children living in families receiving less than half the median income by around 50,000.

On the other hand, English appeared friendly through the very high rate he appeared down-to-earth, including when shown taking public transport during a trip to Europe in one photograph (English 2017a). But this was moderated by the high rate English appeared out of touch. Moreover, English displayed a lack of integrity at a very high rate, compounding this damage, including when caught lying over knowledge of the Todd Barclay scandal (Gower 2017). Despite this, English's voter engagement projected a friendly image, including through concern for women's and minority equality. This also appeared through the very high

rate English was pictured with children, including in one photograph alongside a young girl at Auckland airport (English 2017c). However, this was hindered by the high rate of voter neglect, indicated during the final leaders' debate when Arden accused him of having 'discovered poverty last week' (Newshub 2017). While English indicated empathy through appearing down-to-earth and voter engagement, his performance was moderated. His dense policy discussions and appearing out of touch prevented a friendly and cool image. This was compounded by a lack of integrity and voter neglect.

Agreeableness

English's projected agreeableness was also average. His performance was held back the low rate he promised to fix issues, appearing unreliable. However, he countered this through the very high rate he highlighted delivery. English also appeared generous through a high rate of concern for women's or minority equality issues. However, this was damaged by the high rate English appeared out of touch and the very high rate he appeared to lack integrity, while his high rate of voter neglect made him appear unreliable. Overall, while English appeared reliable and generous through capacity for success and delivery, down-to-earth nature, and voter engagement, moderation occurred. Indeed, this was due to the low rate he promised to fix issues and voter neglect, further compounded by appearing out of touch and lacking integrity.

Charisma

Charisma was the weakest aspect of English's performance. An uncharming image was perpetuated through English's dense policy discussions, while he also had an awkward speaking style at a medium rate, appearing less smooth with unusual, long pacing, and vocal tics, including in one video alongside Bennett after the pair were sworn in (New Zealand National Party 2016). This was compounded by the high rate of voter neglect. English did not have a weak performance, but had issues. While he had a strong performance in the competence dimension, his projection of energy, openness, empathy, and agreeableness was average, and his demonstration of charisma weak.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed the effectiveness of the brand personalities of the two main party leaders in New Zealand in 2017. It demonstrates a range of personality aspects are politically important. Competence was crucial, with former Labour leader Andrew Little's inability to demonstrate competence contributing to his poor performance. Moreover, Bill English won the most seats with competence as his main strength. However, Jacinda Ardern became Prime Minister with competence as her weakest attribute. She improved Labour's electoral prospects with no major policy changes, suggesting high energy can 'reinvigorate' a party when compared with Little's average projected energy. Ardern's victory also highlights the importance of openness, empathy, and agreeableness given her strong performance. This suggests competence alone cannot win over voters when opponents turn in stronger performances in all other personality dimensions. Finally, the importance of charisma emerges given Ardern's strong performance, while the two 'losers' were weak. Moreover, a link between charisma and competence arises. Ardern's professional speaking style and inspiring nature benefitted both dimensions, suggesting a smooth and charming persona assists candidates appear intelligent and successful.

Lessons for Academics

Several lessons regarding candidate brand personality arise for academics. While the importance of indicating competence emerges, it is also evident that strong competence alone is ineffective against an opponent more effective in other dimensions. It also appears energy is particularly important for opposition candidates, particularly those leading parties without recent success. Moreover, the election shows the importance of brand personality generally, helping explain Ardern's surprise victory. Some areas for future research arise from the cases. The link between charisma and competence is a pertinent area, while the importance of energy for incumbents facing new opposition leaders could be examined. More research could also be conducted into what brand personality dimensions are essentially for opposition and incumbent candidates.

Lessons for Practitioners

The cases highlight both the importance and limitations of focusing on a candidate's functional capacity in communication. If facing an opponent with weak performances across multiple dimensions this could be effective. Yet, this appears to be less effective where an opponent is well-rounded. Moreover, the importance of charismatic communication is indicated, with Ardern's comfortable style conveying both competence and charisma. This also indicates some facets of candidate communication influences different dimensions of their image simultaneously. Finally, the importance of candidates possessing a well-rounded persona is indicated, with Ardern effective across the widest range of brand personality dimensions. Going ahead, Ardern should persist in conveying an energetic, personable, and charismatic nature. However, she should also attempt to improve her projection of competence in order to counter the competence of 'economically responsible' National candidates. This could be done through improving the clarity of her policy positions, particularly in regard to tax, and controlling the communication of notable Labour MPs to prevent the party from appearing inadequate.

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Minor Party Campaign Advertising: A Market-Oriented Assessment

Claire Robinson

Abstract This chapter explores the manifestation of market orientation in political advertisements by New Zealand's minor parties' in the 2017 election. It applies an original framework, that assigns key marketing concepts with visual manifestations, to the advertising of the five minor parties seeking to return to parliament in 2017: The Green Party (Greens), New Zealand First, the Maori Party, ACT and United Future. The research demonstrates the importance of focusing on what *parties* do in order to gain a good understanding of what happens in elections. It finds that the parties that fared better, New Zealand First, and the Greens, demonstrated an awareness in their advertising messages that they needed to be voter oriented in order to gain popular support. But all minor parties demonstrated in their messaging a lack of awareness of the need to be more competitor oriented, and this impacted on all their fortunes.

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If there is one thing the 2017 election demonstrated it was that election outcomes and government formation are two different things under MMP. While two minor parties, New Zealand First and the Green Party, helped form the next government, thereby making them *politically* successful, the same could not be said for their *electoral* success. New Zealand First's vote dropped from 8.66% in 2014 to 7.2% in 2017; the Green Party's vote fell from 10.7 to 6.3%, a loss of almost 100,000 votes. United Future and the Māori Party fared even worse, failing to make it back into parliament entirely in 2017, the latest in a string of minor parties that have dropped out of parliament in the past 21 years. The ACT party, while managing to retain one electorate MP in 2017, won only 13,075 votes representing 0.5% of the party vote.

The popular narrative is that major parties 'kill off' minor parties. For example, while waiting for New Zealand First to make its decision about which major party it would go into coalition with after the 2017 election, the political editor of the *Dominion Post* wrote: 'Under MMP minor parties have to weigh up the wins against the collateral damage of any deal. Labour *killed off* the Alliance, while National *consumed* ACT, proved *toxic* for the Māori Party and has had more than one crack *finishing off* NZ First' (Watkins 2017, emphasis supplied). While it makes a good headline, it is an anthropocentric viewpoint that assumes political parties possess a human homicidal ability to deliberately knock each other off. As colourful as this is in the imagination, it is impossible to evidence and it absolves minor parties from any responsibility for their own lack of success or demise.

One of the analytical advantages of political marketing is that its primary focus is on what parties do as opposed to what voters do (which is the primary focus of political science and political communication). Underpinned by a theory connecting party behaviour to success—that parties and candidates with a stronger market orientation will have the greatest electoral success—political marketing enables analysts to investigate the extent to which parties are market orientated in seeking to understand their electoral success or failure. This chapter explores the question: can a political marketing approach help us understand the

minor parties' failure to thrive in the 2017 election? And what can minor parties learn from this research? To explore this it analyses the political advertising of the five minor parties seeking to return to parliament in 2017: the Green Party (Greens), New Zealand First, the Māori Party, ACT and United Future.

Minor Parties

Minor parties (in other countries known as third parties) are those parties that are not one of the two major parties—National and Labour—that have led New Zealand governments since 1935. Minor parties play many roles in New Zealand's electoral system. They help form stable governments; broaden the product options available to voters; are a source of new policy ideas and innovations, some of which have been implemented: for example, the Super Gold Card (NZ First) and Kiwibank (the Alliance); serve as a protest option for voters who are unhappy with the direction the major parties are travelling in and want to express their dissatisfaction through their vote choice; and can influence government formation. It was New Zealand First that decided which major party would lead the 2017 government.

Despite the important role that minor parties play, their popularity has declined over recent elections. In the first three MMP elections (1996, 1999, and 2002) an average of 35.81% of New Zealand voters gave their vote to a minor party. Since 2005 the average has been 22.52%, with only 18.7% voting for a minor party in 2017, the lowest proportion since the introduction of MMP. In 2005 seven minor parties were elected to parliament. In 2017 only three made it in. The demise of minor parties is not necessarily a bad thing: just like any product lifecycle, minor parties represent new ideas that come into currency, and where they are not able to remain relevant to voters they die a natural death. Nonetheless, it is still likely that minor party voters, supporters, party members, employees, donors, and candidates do not enjoy seeing their vote or efforts wasted and their policy innovations come to nothing.

Political Marketing: Advertising

What does it mean for a minor party to succeed in the New Zealand MMP environment, where voters choose parliaments not governments? This chapter proposes that it means staying above the 5% or one

electorate threshold, and maintaining if not growing their proportion of the party vote. With that in mind, can political marketing can help us understand why no minor parties managed to achieve this standard of success in 2017? To what extent is this down to their lack of market-orientation? The chapter explores this through an investigation of minor parties' political advertisements.

The traditional research approach to political advertisements is to look at their effectiveness, the extent to which they influence voter cognition and behaviour. But after decades of research, the best that researchers can conclude is that political advertising has 'limited' persuasive effects, impacting on some voters in some contexts. Try telling political parties and candidates this, however. In the 2016 US presidential election spending on political advertising reached a record high of USD$9.8 billion (NZD$14 billlion). While political advertising expenditure in New Zealand, a country 1.45% the population of the US, does not even reach a millionth of that—in 2017 total advertising expenditure was $8.9 million and political advertising is a consistent feature of election campaigning in this country, and the counterfactual is strong in terms of awareness, reinforcement, and mobilisation. If we didn't come upon billboards on our street corners we might not know that there was going to be an election. If we didn't receive pamphlets in our mailbox we might not learn who was standing in our electorate. If we didn't see videos on our Facebook feeds we might not discover the issues that the election is being fought over, especially if we don't watch the news on television or read a newspaper, which an increasing number of voters don't do.

Political ads are also valuable sources of evidence of the market orientation of political parties. Because they afford parties control over timing, location, content and target audience, they contain the essential messages parties want to convey directly to voters before the messages get mediated by journalists and others. This turns advertisements into a window to the people that are important to parties; the policies that have been devised to meet voter needs; the lengths parties go to maintain longstanding relationships with voters; the leadership and policy offerings parties seek to exchange for votes, funds, support; and the threat parties sense from their competition. Previous research into market orientation manifest in political advertisements found it was

possible to uncover the political marketing factors that differentiated those parties that achieved their electoral goals from those that did not (Robinson 2009, 2010). This chapter updates that research with analysis of the minor parties' 2017 advertising.

Methodology

Because advertising is a primarily visual medium, understanding it through interpretive visual analysis is an appropriate method. To analyse the ads for evidence of market orientation this study uses an original framework (Table 6.1) that assigns key marketing concepts with visual manifestations. The framework supports research into two of the behavioural components of market orientation—voter (customer) orientation and competitor orientation. The framework was applied to the advertising of the five minor parties seeking to return to parliament in 2017: The Green Party (Greens), New Zealand First, the Māori Party, ACT and United Future. The time period studied was from Writ Day (Wednesday 23 August) the start of the 'official' campaign, to the day before the election (22 September).

In 2017 these five minor parties advertised in a range of moving image formats published on a range of social media platforms. Of these, Facebook was the main platform for the dissemination of political advertisements. These took the form of party generated videos with high production values that remained high up on Facebook posts and on party websites for the campaign duration; daily lower image quality direct-to-camera updates by party leaders and candidates on the campaign trail; excerpts from mainstream news clips featuring party leaders; animated text videos; and still photographic or text only images of a size that could be posted on Instagram. To keep the study to a manageable size, it focused on what might be considered the equivalent of the old television commercial (TVC): moving images of a party leader directly addressing individual viewers or party created promotional broadcasts, and published on the party and/or party leader's Facebook pages. To test for areas of consistency, change and innovation, the study compared the minor parties' 2017 advertising to their opening and closing night addresses from the previous 2014 election campaign. An overview of the market orientation in the minor parties' 2017 advertising follows.

Table 6.1 Robinson political marketing advertising framework

Market orientation	Visual criteria
Understanding target audience	A party with a voter orientation is expected to tailor its offerings to the needs of target voters. It is expected that these groups of voters and the environments they inhabit will be visibly identified in advertisements. A party interested in expanding their market share will evidence this in images of other parties' core voters and their environments
Sense and response to voter needs (voter engagement)	A party's understanding of the needs of its target audience will be manifest in images of party leaders listening to those voters. This could be through images of party and/or leader authentically engaging with voters in unscripted moments, using words of togetherness (we/our), and words of and images of listening (nodding, laughing, touching). This could also be manifest in images of target voters themselves asking questions and/or presenting party policies
Voter relations management	A party interested in sustaining a long-term relationship with its voters will acknowledge historic characters, leaders, policies, themes and/or stories in its ads. It will recognise the risks in neglect of their existing core supporters by failing to deliver on their campaign promises to those voters, and so will highlight in its advertisements where it had met those promises. It will demonstrate it can be trusted (not just in words). It will provide a consistent leadership offer of person and/or leadership characteristics. It will provide consistent messages and brand style from one campaign to the next
Offer in exchange	A party that understands its voters will ask for the party vote and will be clear about what it is offering in exchange for the party vote. There will be memorable slogans to help voters recognise and recall the offer. There will be some form of guarantee that the party will keep its election promises
Competitor orientation	A party with a competitor orientation will recognise voters have many options available to them and will demonstrate its self-awareness of its position in the market and tailor its strategies to that position. It will be alert to the need to defend its terrain, and be prepared for attack, by demonstrating new and innovative leadership and/or policy offerings. It will offer more or different benefits than its competition, including a "special sauce" that competitors can't match. It may appropriate those policies from its competition. It may challenge its competition head on through attack messages. In New Zealand's MMP environment, a minor party would be expected to assist voters by explaining why a vote for it would not be wasted. If it is looking to form part if a coalition it could explain its role in that arrangement

ANALYSIS OF THE MINOR PARTIES' ADVERTISING

New Zealand First

New Zealand First demonstrated a strong voter orientation in its political advertisements. It was clear about what it was offering in exchange for the party vote: that by voting New Zealand First voters would be taking out insurance because Labour and National can't be trusted to do it themselves. This has been a consistent feature of New Zealand First campaigning since the 1990s. The party also demonstrated an affinity for its target voter groups by showing images of voters and their environments and images of leader Winston Peters authentically interacting with voters. Much of Peters' time over the campaign was spent traveling around 'the regions' in his bus named 'The Straight Talk Express.' Adapting quickly to social media Peters' Facebook page was full of live videos and still images of him meeting voters and speaking at various stop off points throughout regional New Zealand. The party's hashtags were #campaign for the regions and #home ownership, the latter the reason for its most consistent policies from previous election campaigns—'pressing pause on immigration' and 'coming down hard on foreign ownership'. Reaching into National's territory were three videos featuring Pakeha male farmers, all former National party supporters who felt let down by National. 'Winston is the only man who has consecutively gone into bat for the primary sector' says one farmer. New Zealand First 'policies are all common-sense farming-based policies' says another. The video 'National is no longer the friend of the farmer', attracted 85k views, the highest views of any New Zealand First video. This was quite a major change from the party's 2014 campaign, which had seen a strong focus on the 'baby, the student, the business, the family, the retired' with television broadcasts featuring images of middle-aged and elderly urban women and men, Pakeha and Māori, Asian and young students.

It is in the area of competitive orientation that New Zealand First performed less well. The party appears not to have had any way to counter the impact of Jacinda Ardern's popularity on its vote. New Zealand First had gone into the 2017 campaign with commentators suggesting it would hold the balance of power. This was a similar position to where it was in the 2014 campaign, but over the course of that campaign National's support had grown rather than diminished, and National did not need New Zealand First to form a coalition. In 2017 New Zealand

First seemed to appreciate that to be in a powerful position entering coalition negotiations it needed National to be in a much weaker position, and so it was to the regions and farmers that it focused its messages. In its attempt to woo National voters, however, it took its attention off the urban voter base it had targeted in the previous election. New Zealand First's policies on immigration, housing, and foreign ownership were not sufficiently differentiated from Labour's to keep urban left-leaning voters from moving to Labour. The late August public opinion polls saw New Zealand First's support drop from 9.4–13% in late July to 6.6–8% and Labour's rising sharply. This was just enough for New Zealand First to hold the balance of power and decide which major party formed the next government, but this was more by luck of timing than strategic market positioning. Had the campaign gone on for another week New Zealand First's vote is likely to have fallen further.

The Greens

The Greens had gone into the 2017 election year with one experienced co-leader (Metiria Turei) and one new co-leader (James Shaw). Following Turei's resignation from the co-leadership on 9 August 2017 Shaw was left to head the campaign alone. Much of the Greens' advertising was focused on introducing Shaw. He was shown speaking at public gatherings, fronting campaign videos, smiling, looking relaxed with children, and chatting to supporters. Unlike the Greens' 2014 opening and closing addresses which did not feature any Green MPs besides then co-leaders Turei and Russel Norman, the Greens' 2017 advertising showcased the wider team, with many videos featuring the party's female list candidates. One ad featured a young female voter who had previously supported National but who had decided to vote Green in 2017.

The party's 2017 slogan 'It's time to give New Zealand a great green heart in government' was a refinement of the 2014 slogan 'we love Aotearoa'. It was graphically reinforced by a green heart symbol and supported by advertising images of attractive children, young hipster families, vibrant colours, movement, and beaches. In 2014 the party's social policies led their advertising. In 2017 social policy was barely mentioned, the party instead returning to its environmental niche. Its headline video included commitments to a pollution tax, people's climate fund, 100% clean electricity generation by 2030, a $100 million fund to boost green infrastructure and a zero-carbon act. This video was

viewed 505k times, making it the most watched of the Greens advertisements, and more watched than Labour's highest viewed ad (482k views). Second highest viewed was a clip of Julie Anne Genter speaking in parliament about legalising cannabis (283k views). Third most viewed was a video one week out from the election date explaining that a party vote for the Greens would not split the vote with Labour but would add to the numbers who want to change the government. This video attracted 202k views. The Greens had six videos that attracted over 100k views, the same number as Labour.

By the criteria in the framework, the Green party demonstrated a strong voter orientation in their political advertisements. It demonstrated an affinity for its target voter groups by showing images of voters and their environments and images of its party leader interacting with voters. The strongly female flavour to the Greens advertising was well oriented towards the party's historic and predominantly female voter base. It was clear about what it was offering in exchange for the party vote and offered something over and above previous campaign offerings in order to attract new voters. There was a visual consistency to its advertising messages that rendered the messages easy to recognise and remember. That it did not gain a higher proportion of the party vote is unlikely to be related to its lack of voter orientation.

But, like New Zealand First, it is in the area of competitor orientation that it performed less well. The Greens had long stated that they were going to support a Labour-led government. For this to happen they needed Labour to be in a good electoral position. From a competitive position, however, this meant the Greens could not attack Labour. The only way to grow their vote was to reach into National's voter base. What the Greens do not appear to have anticipated was just how many voters they would lose to Labour upon Jacinda Ardern—a young female leader sharing many of the traits of the Green female team—taking up the Labour leadership. Nor did the Greens appear prepared for Labour's attack on their Green policy base. On assuming the Labour leadership Ardern immediately announced that climate change was this generation's nuclear-free issue, signalling to left-leaning voters that a vote for Labour stood for the same values as the Green Party's. The opinion polls mid-way through the campaign provides evidence of the impact of this. The Greens vote dropped from a high of 13–15% at the end of July to around 5–6.1% at the end of August. With the National vote holding steady, the Greens tried to stem the outflow of voters to Labour with

their vote-splitting advertisement one week out from the election, but this would have been too late to connect with many erstwhile Green voters who would have already made an advance vote for Labour.

ACT

Under David Seymour, ACT's seventh leader in as many elections, the party's 2017 advertising messages took a different direction. Gone were the 'neoliberal' slogans of old about 'one law for all', cutting taxes and public spending. Instead ACT promoted replacing the resource management act with an urban development act to enable councils and developers to build more houses. Seymour was filmed walking around a building site talking to construction workers in support of this message. Even more of a change from the recent past was a focus on education, including advocating spending $1billion to raise teachers' pay. 'Education', says Seymour as he is seen meeting school children and teachers, 'is the greatest gift we can give our children. Great teachers are worth their weight in gold. Let's attract the best and brightest into teaching.' A clip of Seymour playing the guitar and singing along with a class of schoolchildren to the song 'Why Does Love Do This To Me' attracted 47k views on Facebook, the highest views of any ACT video. An extension of Seymour's interest in young people, ACT's 2017 crime policy was more nuanced and focused on getting *youth* crime under control.

Consistent with previous campaigns was the message that the Epsom candidate, now Seymour, was secure in his seat so every party vote would count to bring in more MPs. Other than portrait images of ACT's list candidates, however, there was no messaging that introduced the team members and how they would benefit New Zealand. Undermining Seymour's claim to being secure in his seat, and therefore raising the spectre of a vote for ACT being a wasted vote, National leader Bill English sent an email to supporters a few days out from the election saying 'voting any other way risks a Labour/Greens government. You will not help us by giving your party vote to any other party'. Disappointed that his 'good friend Bill English' would send such an email, Seymour took to Facebook live from the streets of Browns Bay to claim 'this is not true. Every party vote counts. If you want a stable centre right government and keep the left out ... Party Vote ACT'.

ACT manifest a degree of voter orientation in that it was clear about its target audience: teachers and builders/property developers. But this

would not have been a big enough voter base for it to grow its vote. ACT was certainly clear about what it was offering in exchange for the party vote: extra candidates. But its new focus on education and youth, while an innovation on previous ACT policy offerings, was niche and not sufficiently embedded for right-leaning voters to take a punt on a bunch of unknown list candidates in a highly competitive election. ACT's request that voters give it their party vote because it was already guaranteed an electorate seat was more a product-oriented ambition, a sign that they may still be driven by the short-term need to persuade voters of the superiority of their offering in order to gain political power for its own sake rather than a concern for the needs of voters. Like New Zealand First and the Greens, ACT demonstrated little competitor orientation. In its messaging it was unprepared for both a resurgent support for Labour and the spectre of a Labour/Greens/NZ First combination calling most centre-right-leaning voters back to National. It had no offering to counter either.

The Māori Party

Of the two co-leaders of the Māori Party, Te Ururoa Flavell's Facebook page contained the more professionally produced advertisements with the official Māori Party graphics, alongside videos of him on the campaign trail and Māori Party supporters waving party banners on the side of busy roads. Marama Fox's page had videos of her on the campaign trail and some of her speaking direct to camera about her views. Neither leader's messages looked to be part of a coordinated campaign strategy.

While ACT at least had made an attempt at policy renewal, the Māori Party appeared to have taken their eye off the need to remain innovative outside of government, something that would be expected of a market-oriented party. The Māori Party of 2017 resembled nothing like the protest movement started by Tariana Turia in 2004. In 2017 it was seeking re-election on the basis it had access to government ministers. The party's main offering, its 'special sauce' was its ability to access those with power rather than the promotion of specific policies and benefits for Māori. Flavell in his most viewed video (7k views) said he had spent his 12 years in parliament working for Māori, that there was still so much to be done, and he needed support 'to give me a further 3 year term to make sure that we rock solid make Māori Party a part of every

government from here on in.' When asked why people should vote for the Māori Party, Fox in her most watched video 'Carpool politics' (19k views), replied 'When you're a support partner to the government you get to have meetings with all the Ministers, you get a monthly meeting with the Prime Minister. You take your issues straight to the top. If you're in opposition you never get to walk in those doors.'

Like ACT, this positioning appeared to be more product than market-oriented. The party's 2017 slogan #Make it Māori #Make it Happen was a reflection of the party's sense of purpose as a 'Māori voice with influence in parliament'. The fact that the party lost its one remaining electorate seat to Labour, however, suggests that this offering was out of touch with the aspirations of voters, who appeared to no longer agree that the Māori Party was the only way to 'make things happen' for Māori. With a target audience predominantly consisting of existing voters who stood on the side of streets holding support placards, there was no attempt at shifting its focus onto previous supporters who were leaning towards Labour as a way of making things happen instead.

United Future

On 22 August, four-and-a-half weeks out from the election, long-serving United Future party leader Peter Dunne was the third political party leader to resign in as many weeks. Dunne said he had concluded after seeing poll results in his Ohariu electorate that there was a mood for change in favour of the Labour party candidate Greg O'Connor. Dunne considered this was unlikely to alter and after 33 years in Parliament, he did not want to risk losing on election night. As United Future was only in parliament on the basis of Dunne's Ohariu seat, campaigning for the party vote suddenly became as big a challenge for the party as climbing Mt Everest. Rather than concede that the party had come to the end of its life cycle, Dunne's replacement Damian Light campaigned hard for the last few weeks of the campaign. The party's headline advertisement was a colourful illustrated graphic animation featuring an avatar of Light talking through United Future's policies, which were just about unchanged from the policies Peter Dunne had been promoting for the past few elections, the main ones being lowering family tax burdens through income sharing, and a 'Flexi super' voluntary retirement age. Presenting its target audience as cartoon characters, however, displayed little voter orientation; few voters would have identified with those

images. New leader Damian Light was the new product on offer, but he was so new and untested there was insufficient time to introduce him to voters, and nothing for voters to relate to. There was little else that was innovative. If anything the party's repetition of previous policy offerings only demonstrated an *inability* to have influence on government, despite being part of the National-led government for the past nine years. Unmet promises is not a vote-winning offering.

Conclusion and Lessons for Practice

This chapter explored the question: Can a political marketing approach help us understand the minor parties' failure to thrive in the 2017 election? The research demonstrated the importance of focusing on what *parties* do, to gain a good understanding of what happens in elections. Unlike the popular narrative that major parties 'kill off' minor parties, the analysis found that the minor parties were largely responsible for their own failure to thrive in 2017; their own lack of market orientation a factor in their demise. The parties that fared less poorly, New Zealand First and the Greens, demonstrated an awareness in their advertising messages that they needed to be voter oriented in order to gain popular support. But all minor parties demonstrated in their messaging a lack of awareness of the need to be more competitor oriented, and this impacted on all their fortunes in what turned out to be the most competitive election in 9 years.

There are lessons minor parties can take away from the study: the need to be clear about who their target voters are; to have a suite of policies that are differentiated from their competition and genuinely meet the needs of their target voters; to not take previous voters for granted; and the need to be innovative and offer something above and beyond their previous offering. This is especially important for parties that have been part of a previous government. Working in government is simply doing the job they were elected to do, not their unique selling proposition. Voters expect renewal and differentiation *outside* the exercise of responsibility for ministerial portfolios. If introducing new leaders and candidates, parties need to spend time doing this, and should not expect voters to trust them sufficiently that they will accept their word without working for it. Minor parties need to be aware of their competitive position in the market, always be prepared for an attack from a larger party, even one they consider to be a friend, and to have counter attack

messages. They also need to have a clear message throughout the campaign period that explains why a vote for a minor party is not a wasted vote.

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Communicating Market-Oriented Leadership in Power and Opposition

Edward Elder

Abstract The ability to communicate governing qualifications and personal qualities was vital for both National Party Leader and Prime Minister, Bill English, and Labour Party Leader, Jacinda Ardern, in the 2017 New Zealand General Election given they were both new to their roles. Because of this, leadership was more of a focus in this campaign than in the past. Through the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model, this chapter highlights how both leaders effectively promoted the qualities that were already seen as their strengths, but struggled to mitigate or strengthen certain aspects of their image that were seen as weaknesses going into the campaign—for Ardern, strong and competent leadership, and for English, responsiveness to public concern and criticism. The chapter concludes with lessons for Ardern, newly elected National Party Leader, Simon Bridges, and political marketing scholarship more broadly, going forward.

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INTRODUCTION

Party leaders' ability to communicate their governing qualifications and
personal qualities is vital to winning public support, both in government
and at elections. In particular, the ability to communicate authenticity
and a responsiveness to voters, while also communicating the leader-
ship skills needed to deliver in government, is a balancing act that has
been hard for contemporary party leaders to master. This skill was par-
ticularly important in the 2017 New Zealand General Election, given
both National and Labour had elected new leaders less than a year
beforehand and, as a result, leadership was more of a focus in this cam-
paign than in the past. Through the Contemporary Governing Leaders'
Communication Model, this chapter examines how well both National
Party Leader and Prime Minister, Bill English, and Labour Party Leader,
Jacinda Ardern, highlighted their established strengths, and mitigated or
strengthened their perceived weaknesses, through communication dur-
ing the campaign.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE

For over 20 years a cornerstone of research in the field of political mar-
keting has been the examination of political parties and candidates who
achieved electoral success by adopting a market orientation (see Newman
1994). This philosophy urges political parties and candidates to under-
stand and, thus, satisfy the demands of voters through their political
product (see Lees-Marshment 2001). This research has branched out
and evolved over time—from a focus almost exclusively on how political
office was gained, to challenges faced in maintaining a market orientation
in government (Ormrod 2006), to how a market-orientation might be
altered while governing (Lees-Marshment 2009).

One part of this evolution has been around party leaders, who are
becoming an increasingly important aspect of the party product and
brand (Hughes and Dann 2010: 86). While market orientation empha-
sises responsiveness to voters, evidence suggests the public desire
stronger conviction from leaders than early market-oriented theories

anticipated (Gould 2007: 21), especially from governments (Helms 2008). Indeed, if political leaders are seen to buckle to the whims of public opinion too much, they seem to lack the conviction, vision, and strength to be effective (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment 2005: 26). In other words, voters desire political leaders who are responsive yet lead (Johns and Brandenburg 2012).

While balancing the public desire for both responsiveness and leadership is difficult, the right communication strategy can enable political leaders to get that balance right. Research suggests that political leaders do not have to blindly follow public opinion to be perceived as responsive, as long as their communication suggests they are talking *with* the public, rather than *at* them (Scammell 2007). How political leaders can balance communication highlighting their strong and competent leadership qualities as well as their responsiveness and authenticity has been outlined in the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model: see Table 7.1.

Although this model was initially designed to evaluate how leaders already in government use communication to promote their market-oriented qualities in non-campaign communication (see Elder 2016), this chapter will apply the concepts to communication by an aspiring as well as a sitting governing leader. Like sitting governing leaders, opposition leaders need to convey their ability to govern in order to win elections, as perceived competence is so important, not least to delivery. This chapter will therefore examine leadership communication during a campaign, both by the sitting governing leader and the leader of the opposition.

Methodology

To do this, the case study highlights the findings from qualitative analysis of the communication the two major parties' leaders utilised during the 2017 Election. Twelve pieces of communication from several media formats were collected and analysed using the nVivo computer program to find trends in both leaders' communication against the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model. This was done using qualitative discourse and semiotic analysis to identify the visual and verbal messages expressed by both party leaders, and possible interpretations by receivers (see De Landtsheer et al. 2008: 222–225; Rose 2007). Beyond the 12 media texts examined, both leader's and campaign's broader communication was also taken into consideration to get a better idea of

Table 7.1   The contemporary governing leaders' communication model

Quality	Goal	Common ways to communicate
Responsiveness	Communicate the leader is listening to the public	*Verbal* • Start frequent communication early on in the decision making process • Maintain rhetoric encouraging public feedback and debate • Retelling ordinary peoples' stories *Visual* • Visual evidence of the leader with members of the public
	Communicate respectful acknowledgement of public concerns and criticism	*Respectfully explain* • What the public are concerned about • Why they have this concern • Why the leader disagrees *Other verbal* • Communicate potential solutions to public concerns
	Communicate an emotional bond between the leader and the public	*Verbal* • Suggest togetherness, affinity or an understanding of the public • Communicate end goals and aspirations that resonate with the public • Show reflection on hard yet necessary decisions
Leadership	Communicate leadership strength	*Verbal* • Communicate personal conviction • Strong and authoritative tone of voice • Use language cues associated with determination and strength • Not attacking the opposing parties *Visual* • Squared shoulders • Dark formal clothing • Strong facial expressions • Firm hand gestures • In front of group/focal point of imagery

Table 7.1   (continued)

Quality	Goal	Common ways to communicate
	Communicate leadership competence	*Verbal* • Communicate delivery, the reasoning behind and the benefits of the decision • Suggest relationship with members of other political parties, branches of government and stakeholder groups • Discuss other potential decision options *Visual* • Imagery of leader working constructively with other political elites
Authenticity	Communicate honesty	*Verbal* • Be open, honest, and encouraging of media and public questioning • Communicate challenges to delivery • Communicate drawbacks of decisions *Visual* • Maintain reasonable eye contact with the audience • Leaning forward
	Communicate relatability	*Verbal* • Communicate non-political personality • Speak with a cadence that does not sound scripted *Visual* • Open arms and hand gestures • Lighter coloured, less formal clothing • Smile

Source Elder (2016: 11–12)

how and if the trends found in the 12 media texts were more broadly seen.

CASE STUDY: ENGLISH AND ARDERN DURING THE 2017 NEW ZEALAND GENERAL ELECTION

While both English and Ardern were new in their positions as party leaders, their public images were made up of vastly different qualities. Having been in Parliament for 27 years, and having been either Minister of Finance or Prime Minister for the previous eight years, English was

seen as knowledgeable and reliable, yet somewhat unrelatable. Ardern, who entered Parliament at the age of 28, had become Labour Party Leader less than eight weeks before the Election, and was seen as fresh and relatable, yet unproven (see Watkins 2017). Both leaders had to prove that they had the market-oriented qualities expected of a contemporary governing leader. This would mean communicating aspects of their leadership that were already strengths, while mitigating or strengthening their perceived qualities in other areas. This is examined below around the three main qualities of the Contemporary Governing Leaders' Communication Model—responsiveness, leadership, and authenticity.

Responsiveness

Bill English

The broad quality English struggled the most to promote through his communication was being responsive to the public. While English was able to suggest unity and an affinity for demographics National had traditionally had strong support from, such as farmers and rural voters, such communication was often utilised to differentiate National from Labour and their proposals—especially around tax (see Keane and Walbridge 2017). When it came to being responsive to the most salient public concerns and hardships discussed during the Election, such as the unaffordability of housing or stagnant wages, English was often unreflective, defensive, or dismissive. English communicated this both obviously and subtlety in a number of ways, such as not looking directly at Ardern as she voiced to him the concerns she heard from New Zealanders, only quickly acknowledging public concerns before talking about how the National-led Government were delivering or, worse, suggesting that there was not a problem for people to be concerned about. This last trend was particularly detrimental to English presenting himself as responsive, as he would justify his arguments with semantics. For example, when questioned during the first TVNZ 1 Leaders debate about why wages had not increased significantly in the previous nine years, English responded:

> Well, one measure of wages is the way national super goes up, because it's tied directly to the average wage paid in every workplace in New Zealand.

And national super has gone up by twice the rate of inflation. By international comparisons our wages of gone up pretty well. (English, in Leaders Debate 2017)

In essence, English used statistical details to argue that the concerns being raised were not based in fact. This trend could be interpreted as English not being in touch with how the public were feeling and, instead, only had an idea of how New Zealanders were fairing based on what his government departments were reporting to him. This trend emphasised a broader problem English had—talking like he had been confined to the offices of Parliament for a long time. This included continually using very 'wonkish' language and focusing on the details of policies rather than using palatable language to describe the outcomes the public would gain. By doing so, English only further played into the negative image as an out of touch political elite.

Jacinda Ardern

Ardern was more effective than English at communicating responsiveness. Ardern's ability to promote this quality could be seen in small and subtle aspects of her communication—such as being explicit about her intention to focus less on what government statistics (such as GDP) indicated and more on how people feel, as well as utilising online videos that presented Ardern talking about Labour's policies with those who would be most affected by them (see New Zealand Labour Party 2017b). However, as the leader of the opposition, communicating the quality of being responsive to public concerns and hardships was much easier for Ardern than for a governing leader at the end of his government's third term. Indeed, highlighting said public concerns and hardships was an effective way for Ardern to implicitly criticise the Government for the decisions they had made, as well as allow her to communicate her broader end goals that the public could relate to. For example, during her speech at the Labour Party campaign launch, Ardern noted:

[T]he gap between rich and poor is just getting more and more entrenched… [W]e have homelessness… people living in cars who can't afford increasing rents… We have infrastructure in our cities that cannot keep up with daily demand, while our regions look for the job opportunities that will make their young people stay… A government that I lead

will be an active partner in our regions… figuring out ways to support the growth of decent, well paid jobs. (New Zealand Labour Party 2017d)

Ardern subtly attacked the Government through references to the concerns and hardships the public (apparently) voiced, but it did not play an overt role in Ardern's communication more broadly. By staying 'relentlessly positive', Ardern was able to focus predominately on the concerns, hardships, and aspirational goals of the public, while criticising the government in a less aggressive manner. In essence, Ardern presented an image of a leader who was in touch and ready to govern, rather than just an effective opposition leader as her recent predecessors had done.

Leadership

Bill English

The most obvious strategy English utilised to promote his strong and competent leadership qualities was through communication about delivery. Throughout the campaign National presented English as the man behind the post-2008 economic recovery (see NZNats 2017). English himself alluded to this in his communication. Like so many governments seeking re-election, English's communication focused on a message that said that they had delivered, but there was more they could do. This could be seen in English's narration in the National Party's 'Clear choices' television commercial, as seen below:

First, we got New Zealand back in the black. Then we got hundreds of thousands more Kiwis working. Now our economy is growing strongly, and we have a chance to do more for you and solve some of our greatest long-term challenges. But if we stall growth with more taxes and more debt there'll be no money to help those who need it, or when the country needs it. Vote for the team that's delivering. (New Zealand National Party 2017a)

English did not explicitly give himself credit for the delivery. Indeed, English used inclusive pronouns—saying 'we' four times and 'our' twice in the thirty-second commercial. However, given the broader campaign narrative, English's narration, as well as English being presented as the dominant figure of the imagery (i.e. leading a meeting with senior

ministers), the commercial implicitly emphasised English as a strong leader and the chief architect behind the Government's economic record. While the commercial did not include explicit detail about what English had and would deliver, it did act as a reminder about the explicit details that were presented the broader communication strategy. However, as noted in the section prior, English's dogmatic focus on communicating this image of competence through delivery hindered his ability to present himself as responsive and in touch with the concerns and hardships the public felt.

Jacinda Ardern

The ability to present an image of being strong and competent was particularly important for Ardern, given her own image of being young and untested, as well as the circumstances she was elected the Labour Leader under. Ardern was somewhat effective at presenting this image, especially during her first press conference as Leader. Here, Ardern appeared to intentionally emphasise the narrative of a strong and united Labour Party. This included, while standing in front of her front bench, using a strong tone of voice to emphasise how they were 'determined and steadfast', 'organised, and ready', as well as 'looking forward to the challenge of the election campaign' (see RNZ Live News 2017). In essence, by explicitly focusing on presenting a united and competent image when the circumstances of the moment could easily have been interpreted as anything but, Ardern was able to promote herself as a strong and confident leader.

But Ardern was not always as successful at communicating strong and competent leadership, especially later in the campaign. There were times when Ardern had to admit that the finer details of some of Labour's proposals were not finalised due to the fact that she had only taken over the leadership on 1 August (see Television New Zealand, 2017). The most obvious example of Ardern's lack of time as Leader hurting her ability to promote strong and competent leadership was around Labour's reversal on when suggestions from their proposed tax working group could be implemented. Despite Ardern's attempt to communicate strong and competent leadership when explaining the change, the context made that difficult. During one press gaggle, for instance, Ardern noted:

> This is about making sure that we are providing certainty to voters...
> We've balanced [the urgency around tackling the housing crisis] against
> the need for people to be certain when they vote around exactly what we'll

be doing… No [we haven't been spooked by the polls]. There certainly has been an environment of scare mongering. But I also have had feedback that people want that certainty. So, we've balanced the urgency we feel around tackling the housing crisis with also providing certainty for people… But I still stand firm on our plan around tackling the crisis that they are leaving New Zealand in. (Ardern 2017)

Having used the word 'certainty' five times in the response, Ardern was seemingly trying to emphasise how the voting public should feel about Labour's economic viability, despite the change to their initial plan. However, while Ardern tried to communicate confidence, and thus competence, around Labour's economic plan and asserted that they had not changed plans due to political and public pressure, having done so just days after a major poll suggested National and English's attacks on Labour's tax plans were having an effect (see Small 2017), the context suggested Ardern and Labour had buckled under the pressure of opposition and public pressure.

AUTHENTICITY

Bill English

While English's nearly dogmatic concentration on government delivery hurt his ability to seem responsive, he did a surprisingly effective job of presenting himself as relatable. English did this through communication of his non-political personality. Broadly speaking, this was seen in English's communication focusing on his family. This included having his wife and children play a significant role in his social media presence, as well as talking about his family history. This was most seen at its most effective in the social media video 'Bill's story'. For example, when explaining why he remained in Parliament after losing the National Party leadership in 2003, English noted:

Because I'd been telling my kids that when you get knocked down you should get up again, I knew that whatever choice I made they'd read about it in the paper even if I explained it to them. They'd get other people's versions. It was one of the reasons I stayed on in politics then, was simply to act consistently with what I'd been trying to instil in the children. (NZNats 2017)

This communication highlights English's most effective method throughout the campaign for presenting a relatable image—merging the political with the personal. This was also seen through videos where English would converse with his children, often about how National's newly announced policies would affect them and their friends (see Bill English 2017a). In essence, by presenting himself as a family man, English was able to communicate the image of being more than just a political elite. Furthermore, by merging the political with the personal, English was able to present political arguments in a more tangible way— something he struggled with outside of such avenues.

Jacinda Ardern

While there is a greater ability to effectively promote a leader's non-po-litical personality in campaign communication than in non-campaign communication, it was only a small portion of Ardern's strategy to promote her authenticity during the campaign. As a politician who seemed to be naturally personable, Ardern's ability to communicate authenticity did not require the same level of explicit effort as English required. Instead, Ardern seemed to rely on subtle cues such as her tone of voice, hand gestures, and looking directly into the camera to connect directly with the viewer. This was evident in the series of television commercials that presented Ardern against a white backdrop making direct appeals to voters around different issues. For example, in the commercial 'Labour's strong economic plan', Ardern utilised several visual cues that implicitly promoted honesty and relatability, including keeping direct eye contact with the camera (and thus the viewer), wearing lighter coloured clothing, and smiling—even when talking about 'recent polit-ical scare mongering'. Ardern finishes the commercial by saying 'Let's do this' while smiling and (somewhat enthusiastically) bobbing in a disarming fashion (see New Zealand Labour Party 2017a). By letting Ardern's natural personality and ability to come across as authen-tic work for itself, while using other subtle verbal and visual cues to emphasise it, Ardern was able to focus more on promoting her respon-siveness and leadership in her explicit communication. This was a stra-tegically wise decision; especially given her ability to communicate strong and competent leadership was a potential weakness going into the campaign.

OVERALL

Bill English

While English was able to address some of the weaker aspects of his public image through his communication during the campaign, he also hindered progress by concentrating too much on presenting the image of a political leader who had delivered. English was able to make himself seem more relatable by communicating his non-political personality. However, by being somewhat stubborn in his argument that the government, with him as the architect, had seen New Zealand through the post-2008 recession, English also presented himself as unresponsive when the concerns and hardships of the public that were brought to his attention. In essence, English followed a more traditional communication strategy, which highlighted the positives while disregarding or ignoring the negatives (Blumler et al. 1996). It may have been wise for English to present the narrative of competent leadership a little less dogmatically so he could have focused a little more on presenting himself as reflective and compassionate.

Jacinda Ardern

It was clear that, where possible, Ardern did try to address or mitigate some of the weaker aspects of her public image through her communication during the campaign. In particular, Ardern seemed to explicitly try to present herself as a strong and competent leader, while letting her natural personality promote her authenticity for her. This was somewhat successful. However, due to National's broader strategy of questioning Labour's policies and competence, Ardern struggled to maintain this throughout the campaign. Timing was somewhat of an issue for Ardern. While Labour had experienced a surge of momentum thanks to Ardern's ascension, Ardern was hurt by the fact that she did not have a long-established leadership image to fall back on. That said, Ardern took advantage of the fact that she was not in government. While English tried to downplay the concerns and hardships the public voiced, Ardern acknowledged them, and used them to present an aspirational view of the future under her leadership.

Conclusion

Political leaders need to convey their market-oriented qualities during election campaigning, communicating that they have leadership, responsiveness, and authenticity the public desires. In the 2017 Election, both Bill English and Jacinda Ardern effectively promoted the qualities that were already their strengths. Ardern did a better job of trying to mitigate and strengthen her image where she was weakest—around strong and competent leadership—compared to English around his most obvious weakness, responsiveness. However, English was effective at presenting himself as relatable and, thus, more authentic than in the past. All three broad qualities are important for a leader to communicate to promote a market-oriented image.

Lessons for Practitioners

While Ardern did lead the Labour Party back into government, their poll numbers declined in the final weeks of the campaign and, subsequently, got around 7.5% less of the party vote than National. This was due, at least in part, to National's effective questioning of Labour and Ardern's economic competence. Given this, using communication that emphasises her Government's record of economic delivery, and the ability to do so while showing fiscal responsibility, will be key for Ardern to prove that she, and the government she leads, can get things done despite the challenges they face. However, this will need to be done while still emphasising that Ardern is responsive and relatable—rather than defensively using government statistics and 'wonky' rhetoric to defend their record—especially as the concerns of the public become more associated with them than National.

The new National Party Leader, Simon Bridges, can learn from the mistakes of Labour's leaders before Ardern, and what separated her out from them. It is still too early to tell how much of a connection Bridges will be able to make with the New Zealand public on an emotional level. However, the main lesson Bridges can take away from Labour's nine years in opposition is that simply playing the role of opposition to anything and everything the government does could hurt his ability to present himself, and National more broadly, as a viable governing alternative.

While Bridges will need to differentiate his party from the Government, this does not mean focusing almost exclusively on the problems the public face under the Labour-led Government. Bridges will also need to present an aspirational alternative, that focuses on and the ability to deal with the concerns of the New Zealand public; communicating end goals that are palatable, relatable, and achievable.

Lessons for Academics

The findings highlighted also provide political marketing scholarship with important lessons going forward. Most research around market-oriented governing communication has focused on first-term governing leaders. These results suggest that, even when the governing leader is relatively new, leaders of long-serving governments are still prone to defensive language when challenged on public criticisms and concerns—likely due to their governments perceived of the social and economic environment. The results also highlight how political leaders can use elements of their non-political personality to not only present themselves as more relatable, but also explain governing decisions in a more palatable, tangible, and relatable way. This will likely become even more vital going forward, as the dynamics of social media reward more personable communication than traditional media formats. This is also part of a bigger lesson learned: that aspects of a political leader's authenticity are best presented through non-verbal cues. In other words, it is better for a political leader to *show* the public they are authentic and relatable, rather than *tell* the public they are.

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Conclusion: Political Marketing and Management Lessons for Research and Practice

Jennifer Lees-Marshment

Abstract This chapter offs a pragmatism-philosophy-driven analysis of the book findings with additional insights from interviews with practitioners from National, Labour, the Greens, ACT, and United Future, providing lessons for research and practice in New Zealand and globally. For academics, it notes the importance of market-oriented behaviour, the need to align policies with the views of undecided voters and key target markets, differentiate from other parties, develop and communicate the leaders brand in terms of competence as well as relatability and understand the party brand is influenced by the leader not just specific policies. For practitioners it offers advice for specific parties and generic lessons such as the need to plan but be flexible, to create a close relationship between market researchers and party decision-makers, differentiate between parties, understand and manage the party's existing

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brand perception, and that delivery is the qualification parties need to win elections.

Introduction

The New Zealand 2017 election both confirmed theories from previous political marketing research and suggested new perspectives. The overall insight provided from quantitative and qualitative sources of data help to explain why the election result was unclear, as it conveys strengths and weaknesses in the way parties utilised different aspects of marketing and management, leaving voters with no clear front runner. Political marketing and management are applied cross-disciplinary fields of research and much of the work fits into a pragmatism research philosophy which focuses on a potential practical application, seeking to identify 'what works' (Creswell and Poth 2018: 27). This conclusion will therefore synthesise the findings from the previous chapters to generate practical implications from the research. It also integrates a further five interviews with practitioners, taking a qualitative epistemological position 'to get as close as possible to the participants being studied' (Creswell and Poth 2018: 21). The chapter will discuss research findings, ideas for future research, applied advice from the research and practitioner perspectives.

Research Findings on Policy Preferences, Alignment, Leadership, and Communication for the National, Labour, the Greens, and New Zealand First

In terms of New Zealanders' policy preferences, social welfare issues were the top concerns of voters in the 2017 election. Vote Compass data indicates that health was the top issue, closely followed by the economy, then housing, education, social welfare, and the environment and policies which respondents indicated greatest support for were on health, housing, and education: see the Appendix for overall data reports. The extent to which party policies aligned with key groups—public opinion overall, prospective party voters and key target markets—was variable; as was their strategy, branding, and communication.

National

National's policy alignment with public views was the weakest; they failed to strongly align with the general public, their own voters, and key target markets. Even on economic policies—a platform National has traditionally been stronger than other parties—National's policy positions failed to align with the views of the majority of the public. National's platform was only in line with the views of only 40% of prospective National voters, the lowest of the four parties examined. They were significantly out of alignment on issues such as tax and GP visits where the data suggests that National voters were more economically progressive in their thinking than their Party was. National's overall policy platform was not overwhelmingly in line with the views of any demographic, and it was only in line with the views of about 30% of undecided voters. National displayed increasing arrogance and lack of responsiveness to voters, even if they were seen as more united and capable of delivering their promises.

Bill English also contributed to the decline of National's market orientation by denying the housing crisis and making several arrogant comments in the campaign. Bill English received the second lowest, but still relatively high, ranking in terms of likeability, attracting older, higher income voters in particular. His main brand personality strength was competence, but he was weak on aspects such as charisma. English was effective at presenting his leadership, promoting his strong and competent leadership qualities through communication about delivery, but was less effective at showing the listening side of responsiveness to voters given he failed to acknowledge the concerns and hardships of the public on issues such as housing. He did however communicate authenticity in terms of relatability by merging the political with the personal.

Labour

Labour had stronger policy alignment with the general public, and with 54% of their prospective voters' views including on issue areas their supporters thought most important, with over 90% of their supporters agreeing with their policies on government funding for affordable housing, public hospitals and GP visits for children. Their policy platform was most in line with youth and lower earners, as well as Māori and students. Labour's positions were in line with just under half of undecided voters'

views. Labour was the most market-oriented in terms of being responsive to voters but had significant weaknesses when it came to perceived delivery.

Former Labour leader Andrew Little was unable to demonstrate competence and had low charisma. Jacinda Arden exhibited high levels of charisma, energy, openness, empathy, and agreeableness but was weaker on competence. Ardern was the highest ranked leader in terms of likeability. Arden attracted support from younger, lower income voters and also attracted positive perceptions from those outside her traditional base, including National voters and those who positioned themselves in the ideological centre. Ardern was successful at communicating responsiveness with many images of her among the public, and also managed to strengthen her image for leadership through careful placement in front of her team and use of strong tones and words such as ready and determined. She conveyed authenticity through subtle cues such as her tone of voice, hand gestures, and looking directly into the camera to connect directly with the viewer during ads.

New Zealand First

New Zealand First had reasonably close alignment with the general public on policy, and their policy positions were in line with the views of under half (47%) of New Zealand First prospective voters but were out of alignment on some key issues such as corporation tax, immigration, and housing policies. NZ First attracted most support from lower earners, Māori, and senior voters, thus cutting across both Labour and National targets, indicating a potential volatility in their support. Winston Peters attracted the support of seniors (65 or older) and those less well educated. New Zealand First demonstrated an awareness in their advertising messages that they needed to be voter oriented but also failed to demonstrate a competitor orientation with tailored strategies to its' position in relation to other parties.

The Greens

The Greens had the most popular policies especially around the top three most important issues—health, the economy, and housing—and were more in line with public opinion than New Zealand First. The Greens policies

had the most agreement from their supporters, being in line with 67% of their voters. Their target demographics were wide-ranging, including Māori, students, youth, and middle as well as lower earners. The Greens' policies were in line with 51% of undecided voters, the highest of all four parties examined; and in particular on environmental issues as well as the most important issues of health, housing, education, and the economy but less in line on Māori issues and tougher sentencing. The Green Party leader James Shaw received relatively low likeability ratings and his support from his own base was much lower than other leaders received. His particular weakness was male voters, as well as higher income earners and older voters. The Greens demonstrated an awareness in their advertising messages that they needed to be voter oriented in order to gain popular support, tailoring their offerings to the needs to target voters, but as with other minor parties including ACT and United Future, failed to demonstrate a competitor orientation.

Avenues for Future Research

On marketing strategy, the analysis confirms the political marketing theory that major parties need to offer policies in line with public opinion: overall market orientation is still important. Labour were the most market-oriented compared to National's declining responsiveness throughout the 2014–2017 period. However, practice is complex: neither party offered a complete market orientation. Leading up to the campaign both major parties had problematic leaders and focus, with Little and English ineffective communicators and Labour emphasising and National denying problems which both neglected to offer clear solutions to. Despite Labour's focus on social issues they failed to include the economy and were ineffective on delivery.

Focus More on the Leadership Aspect of the Political Product

Analysis also demonstrated that parties need a likeable leader who can connect to the public. The vast difference between how in sync the Greens' and New Zealand First's policies were with how likeable their leaders, as well as how Labour's support grew once Ardern took over, conveys how important leadership has become to a party's overall product offering. In terms of brand personality, Barrett's analysis conveyed

that strong competence alone is ineffective against an opposition candidate more effective in other dimensions such as energy and charisma—a pattern seen in other elections such as the 2015 Canadian election where Trudeau's freshness won over Harper's experience. Similarly when it comes to communicating leadership, Elder's analysis demonstrated that governing leaders prioritise strength and competence but find it harder to alter their established image, whereas opposition leaders can more easily communicate responsiveness and understanding as it helps them convey difference between what the government has delivered and the goals they want to achieve.

Analyse Prospective Voters/Party Supporters as Well as the General Public or Target Groups

An easy claim to make in the 2017 election would be National moved too far away from the centre ground to meet the views of its' more right-wing supporters. However, the Vote Compass data suggests this was not the case: National was out of alignment with their supporters as well as the general public. This shows the value of both quantitative analysis and exploration of prospective voters' views of the product not just the general public.

Marketing Positioning Is Needed in Multi-Party Systems to Avoid Potential Coalition Partners Fighting for the Same Market Share

Analysis of Vote Compass data revealed that Labour, The Greens and NZ First fought over the same ground, attracting similar demographic targets. In a multi-party, proportional representative system, parties need to engage in more effective market positioning so that they go after different voters—those undecided, wavering supporters from other parties—otherwise, for example, the centre-left block will fail to achieve a solid majority. This is further supported by Robinson's analysis of minor party ads which found that the minor parties were largely responsible for their own failure to thrive in 2017 because they failed to offer a competitor orientation with tailored strategies to suit its market position distinct from other parties.

Applied Academic Advice
for Future Marketing Strategies

The research offers a number of insights for practitioners.

Social Welfare Issues Were the Top Concerns
of Voters in the 2017 Election

New Zealand voters have become more economically progressive, and the public expressed strong support for policies aimed at increasing spending in areas such as health, housing, and education, as well as tax increases on the wealthiest people. This presents challenges for politicians, as social and public sector policy issues often require long-term policies rather than quick fixes. Furthermore, given that New Zealanders also viewed the economy as important, action on social welfare needs to be balanced with the need to maintain economic competitiveness.

National Need to Reflect and Reform

In terms of policy responsiveness, National need to realise and reflect on being the least responsive of the four most successful parties to public opinion in their policy offerings, as indicated by both the main survey data and the post-election survey questions on responsiveness to New Zealanders' needs and wants. Most importantly, they need to recognise that their policies were not closely in line with their prospective voters, who are more economically progressive in their thinking than the Party. Thus, National was out of touch with the general public, undecided voters, and their own prospective National voters. They have a particular weakness with younger voters and thus need to be open to developing new policy positions in response to their needs.

National did not lose just because of a decision by Winston Peters. They lost their market orientation, or responsiveness to the public, in power and failed to heed the warning signs. Firstly, Peters himself was responding to voters discontent. As he said in his own words:

> Far too many New Zealanders have come to view today's capitalism not as their friend but as their foe, and they are not all wrong. We believe that capitalism must regain its' human face. That perception has influenced

deeply New Zealand First's negotiations. We had a choice to make, whether it was either with National or Labour, for a modified status quo or for change…That's why in the end we chose a coalition government of NZ First with the New Zealand Labour Party.[1]

Secondly the sense of discontent was apparent as early as September 2016. After Trump won in the United States, Winston Peters posted on Facebook after Trumps victory 'many of your, just as in the UK and USA, have been used and abused by the old political parties…I hear you, I see your troubles and help is on the way.' Winston could see the dissatisfaction, and responded to it, and ended up being kingmaker. I warned a senior National consultant about this, arguing 'you have got to get Key showing more concern for people re housing traffic etc. He needs to show he cares.' But National was losing their market orientation already by then. They did not see that anger.

In some ways this is understandable: they were ahead in the polls on leadership at that time, and the economy was still doing well, and thus they ignored the warning signs from mainstream media reports. Just as the polls made it hard to see their weaknesses leading up to 2017, that they won more seats makes it hard for them to see it post-election. But National now need to accept that they were not good enough. The new leader needs to show humility and respect for outcome, and go into a period of reflection before reforming. They should avoid strongly attacking Labour, as no one will listen anyway, and use this quieter time to reflect and redesign a fresh new National Party vision and product that will connect with voters' core concerns.

The leadership needs to create a brand personality with energy and charisma, and as Elder noted, communicate relatability and responsiveness not just competency (Elder 2016). National also needs to reformulate an effective relationship with their supporters and future target markets especially undecided and younger voters. This requires significant reflection, discussion, further market intelligence, and openness to developing new policy positions by the Party. If they do not do this, Labour will likely hold office for several terms.

[1] https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/full-speech-moment-winston-peters-reveals-why-hes-chosen-labour-and-he-thinks-jacinda-ardern   and   https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/well-if-choose-deputy-prime-minister-made-clear-me-winston-implies-pm-his-take.

Labour: Time to Deliver

Labour needs to deliver, defend, and expand their position, build the competency aspects of Ardern's brand personality, and engage in effective marketing communication to retain the leader's responsiveness and likeability through all the challenges they will face in government.

Every time I teach delivery in my class on political marketing at the University of Auckland I show a funny poster the UK Conservatives used to try to attack New Labour in the 2000 election: it has a picture of a pregnant Tony Blair on it with the words 'Time to Deliver'. It is highly amusing, and gets a laugh every time, but it has a serious message: the ultimate goal of political marketing—indeed politics itself—is to deliver a new product and policy progress in power. For Labour, this means meeting big expectations about action on the infrastructure underpinning daily life—health, education, housing, water and climate change—all of which take time to address. They need to become, as my Canadian colleague Anna Esselment described the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a 'devotee of delivery' if they are going to deliver their promises and meet expectations and should consider setting up a Delivery Unit.

Strategically, Labour needs to understand that they were lucky to end up in government, otherwise they risk developing the typical arrogance of parties in power much earlier than normal. They should follow advice from research into what worked and didn't under Helen Clark—to continue to conduct market intelligence, run listening or consultation exercises to stay or get back in touch, refresh the overall team, use public-friendly, non-political communication and acknowledge public concern with leaders' difficult and unpopular decisions or issues (Lees-Marshment 2008: 533–534). Justin Trudeau is already running a listening tour two years into his time in power. Another principle is to ensure there is the space and time to think about product design/development and develop a new strategy for next election—something that National forgot to do. New Zealand's three year terms are brutal when it comes to developing effective political marketing strategy; and thus Labour needs to start thinking about refreshing their product in mid-2019.

As Barrett advised, Ardern should persist in conveying an energetic, personable, and charismatic brand personality but needs to build more competence to counter 'economically irresponsible' attacks from the National Party, especially because having acknowledged public concerns and used them to present an aspirational view of the future under her

leadership she will need to be seen to act on these in government—again going back to delivery. Expectations need to be managed and policy positions clarified.

Tactically, Labour should identify a distinctive position from their potential coalition partners so they do not compete in the same space. They should focus on retaining support among younger voters and students, whose expectations of a Labour Government and Ardern as Prime Minister may be unrealistic. They could explore the opportunity to show leadership on Māori policy, given that the data indicated Māori are a key target group for Labour and as Chapter 2 noted, public opinion is unclear in the Māori policy area. This would risk alienating undecided voters, but this could be a clever tactical choice, leaving floating voters open for targeting from the Greens or NZ First.

New Zealand First Need to Identify a New Market Position

New Zealand First are—somewhat perversely given their pivotal role in deciding who would lead the 2017–2020 government—at risk. They offered policies that were often more liberal than their supporters agreed with, and their supporters traditionally come from both National and Labour. Their National-leaning supporters are likely to be dissatisfied with them entering into coalition with the Labour Government and they need to identify a way to satisfy all their supporters with their performance in government. Furthermore, the markets New Zealand First's product was most in line with were similar to those that were best in line with Labour's and the Green's. They therefore need to think about how they are going to position themselves to create clear space and market share, and pre-test specific new policies on undecided voters in particular to avoid being significantly out of synch with an important segment of the electorate.

The Greens Need to Work on Their Leadership Team

The Greens focus should be on their leadership. Their policies are already strongly aligned with public views. But Shaw needs to work to connect more effectively with both his party supporters and the general public, working of course with the newly elected co-leader. They also need to focus more on attracting voters beyond Labour's market share. As their campaign manager noted when interviewed, they did a lot of work to increase support for environmental policies but Labour

benefitted from it in terms of votes (Helm 2018). Analysis of Vote Compass data suggests they should explore potential target markets, such as with men where they were weak, and middle-income earners where they have a strength they could further capitalise on. Especially given that they were more in line with the views of lower earner (less than $60 K) than Labour and especially National, and were more in line with the views middle earners (between $60 K and $100 K) than Labour, there is potential room for the Greens to capture more of the middle-income market share. They could also go after undecided voters, especially on environmental issues where there is already support for their policies, and also consider moral issues, as this is a key market segment none of the other parties succeeded in appealing to. This would help provide distinctiveness from Labour.

All Minor Parties Need to Focus on Their Positioning

As Robinson's (2009/2010) theory advises, parties need to identify clear positions and targets within the political market. Their policies need to be differentiated from competitors and offer something fresh to target voters. Strategies they can adopt include defending their market share and against attack (including from their coalition partners), offering new policies with different benefits to other parties, and, in New Zealand's MMP environment, explain why a vote for it would not be wasted. Robinson warned that this is especially important for parties that have been part of a previous government, as voters want something new in addition to work done in ministerial portfolios.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICAL MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT IN THE 2017 ELECTION—AND BEYOND

To provide further insight into practice, nine political practitioners from National, Labour, the Greens, ACT, and United Future were interviewed to get their perspective on the election.[2] Synthesising their views provides common themes which are relevant for all elections and countries.

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[2]While every attempt was made to interview practitioners from a range of parties within available resources and the timeframe, responses to some invitations, including to the Maori Party and NZ First, were not forthcoming.

Planning Doesn't Always Work in Politics—So Plan to Un-plan

Political management argues that creating a strategic plan is one of the essential steps to success. However, this does not always work in practice, especially when there are changes in leaders as there were in this election with the Greens co-leader resigning and Ardern taking up the Labour leadership. This affected all parties including those who changed their own leader. The Greens had made very clear plans—as Helms (2018) noted they had 'a much more developed strategy, approach and analysis.' However, they had chosen an image of their two original co-leaders to go with their slogan *Great Together*, and therefore as Helm (2018) noted they had to create another campaign plan 'at very high pace.' For Labour 'from a pure planning perspective it was very difficult…we had the giant grid up on a wall about what we were doing every day of the election, and suddenly you're kind of instead working a day ahead of the time' (Jones 2018).

Practitioners therefore advised planning for plans to change. National's market researcher noted that 'National MPs for years had been saying Jacinda's the one that worries them. And no one really thought 7 or 8 weeks before the election you'd have a change of leader, but you could have been a bit more prepared for that' (Farrar 2018). The Greens campaign director reflected on how they had been more prepared than normal with greater research, strategizing, and communications design completed earlier than normal, but:

> Politics is a very dynamic business…you can set out with a plan and need to completely change it. So, during the course of our election campaign we almost had three different marketing and communications campaigns, one after the other… the lesson here is to prepare for the unexpected and none of us are infallible. Also leave some capacity for the unthinkable to happen. (Helm 2018)

Labour campaign manager Andrew Kirton also argued that things always happen in campaigns 'that are not according to your plan' and he thus tried to prepare and train staff for 'being nimble in a campaign to pivot when the inevitable curve ball happens' so they were 'able to manage it quite effectively' (Kirton 2018). This paid off when Jacinda Ardern became leader, and the team were able to respond to the need to change the visuals and message. Kirton thus advises that when you're preparing a marketing campaign you need to prepare for the unpredictable. Similarly

the United Future leader Damian Light also reflected that therefore 'you plan your strategy, work it out, but you also need to be able to react really quickly' (Light 2018).

For Market Research to Be Effective There Needs to Be a Close Relationship Between the Researcher and Party Decision-Makers

Labour's market researcher David Talbot argued that one thing that made a big difference working for the Party this time was there being a close collaboration between the market research and party decision-making:

> For me the fundamental thing that was different was the connection between the research outputs and the decision makers. It was very tight.
>
> …. It's about understanding as well how the outputs might be used; what's the direction this organisation wants to go in and how can you best find out from people what they believe, what they think, what they feel about issues in a way that you might be able to connect to the objectives of the client…trying to anticipate a little bit where people will be in a few years, or what the deeper needs are in terms of what they're looking for from politicians and parties. (Talbot 2018)

Focus on Important Segments

Echoing academic literature on targeting, Kirton advised focusing on core floating voters: 'we tried to put a lot of effort into is understanding…who were the group of people that were going to change the outcome of the election and understanding them in designing our messages for them as much as possible.' Similarly Helm discussed trying to activate what academics would call latent publics, but their coalition partner, Labour, benefitted more from this than the Greens:

> We had a whole bunch of latent support sitting there of voters who want to see us in Parliament and really liked us, but weren't necessarily giving us their vote…we of course struggled to do that due to various things that happened…[but] Labour…took up some of the brand and positioning and issues that we'd been bringing up for a long time and were able to attracted a number of voters with them. (Helm 2018)

However, Helm argues that overall the Green Party's leadership on environmental issues has paid off in the long-term. As noted in Chapter 2, Vote compass data showed the environment was considered to be important by the 6th largest percentage of respondents. Helm thus reflects:

> The Green Party has helped to birth New Zealand's first, to my mind, first government that's ever had the environment on almost equal footing with the economy and social issues….I think that's been largely down to our policy leadership and our braveness…So, whilst it wasn't smooth sailing for us, I do think that we have created some really significant change. (Helm 2018)

Differentiate from the Other Parties in Communication Message and Medium

Echoing Robinson's research, Light reflected on the need to differentiate, both in terms of message and medium. He reflects 'I don't think we did enough to differentiate ourselves early enough', which was hard to do being a minor coalition partner to the current government and thus 'you've actually got to say, "This is how we are different from the others", and early as well.' Furthermore they made the mistake of thinking they would gain traction with social media but:

> What we didn't really consider was, of course, everyone would be doing that, and that our message, which we spent this much money on, which would have reached a great number of people, was completely overwhelmed by the message that every other party [who were] spending four times that amount…So that's probably one of our biggest learnings, was not taking into account as much the other parties plans as much…not really thinking about what they were doing. (Light 2018)

In the Campaign, Be Ready to Respond to Opportunities and Seize the Spotlight When It Comes with Simply Produced Communication

Light also noted that they realise in retrospect that they should have focused on easy production short online videos—'setting up the phone and just recording'—which could be produced quickly in reaction to campaign events, thus enabling parties to take advantage of

opportunities when they emerged. He reflected how United Future suddenly got attention from the multiparty leaders debate but there were so many people clicking on their website the site couldn't cope, 'so, people were coming to us, but we didn't use the opportunity to push out as well.' He thus advises that 'if an opportunity comes up you've got to move quick[ly]' (Light 2018).

Compton (2018) observed that generally parties in the 2017 election parties took advantage of the news cycle and responded 'very quickly to it… in previous campaigns there's always, other than the press pack travelling around with either leader there had always been a bit of a delay on any sort of response. But you're getting into the cycle now where you have to respond very very quickly and make use of any opportunities.' de Joux (2018) echoed this, noting that 'on social you can be a bit more clever and, if you have the right people, you can be a lot quicker,' recalling how National 'updated [the Let's Tax This ad] when Labour changed their position yet again. They were changing their policy every week, pretty much every day and then they ruled something else out so we recut the ad and the revised edit was back on air within two days' (see https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9pmXtG2jr8).

It's the Brand, Not Just the Product, Stupid

Both Labour and ACT discussed how they were affected—and hindered—by their overall brand. Labour practitioners talked about how existing brand perceptions affected them, just as it did in the UK before Tony Blair took over and reformulated the party as New Labour. Kirton (2018) noted that like all parties 'we went into the election campaign with our brand…and Labour parties and social credit parties across the world, are common in that they are attacked by conservative and in right wing parties for management of the economy.' Similarly Jones (2018) recalled how he would see National make mistakes on the economy and 'just kind of get away with it because they're the National Party' while 'Labour would painstakingly work away' and National would claim their numbers did not add up and the media would run a story on it 'and people would go, "oh god, Labour's stuffed up again", when we hadn't.' This was down to branding—'it's a really unfair playing field, but that's the nature of it. Like you say, it's brand and brand is very hard to build and brand is very hard to shake.'

Similarly, David Seymour, leader of the ACT Party, reflected on how they learnt a party's success depends on their brand not just their product, and despite pretesting policies their design did not add up in overall brand terms:

> We saw it as a marketing exercise where we would sell the right product. And so, we did market research, we focus grouped…
>
> Our market research told us what people were ACT switchers. ACT people were worried about: crime, youth crime in particular; they were worried about the housing market…they thought that the issue of government waste needed to be addressed, that government was too wasteful; and they seemed to really like the idea of paying good teachers more. So, we had this kind of shop front that we then stocked with policies. So: we wanted to pay good teachers more; we wanted to cut government waste, so we found good examples of that; we wanted to come down hard on youth criminals; and we wanted to present our plan for the housing market. So, it was very product based.
>
> …We didn't look at ourselves and the brand of what we were selling. And so that was our big lesson, is that we stocked the shop with all the right things, but we forgot that people didn't want to come to our shop no matter what was there.
>
> At different times we were the tough on crime party; the smart of crime party; the low tax cut, government waste party; the party of Uber using sophisticated urban liberals; the party of cutting down on benefit fraud and abuse with tougher incentives; the party of educational choice; the party of intergenerational justice and giving millennials a fair go by raising the pension age; and also the party that was supposed to be best on housing. So we had quite a number of different approaches.
>
> …You've got to make sure that the shop front is attractive and that people know what sort of shop they're going to, and that they don't get surprised by what they buy.
>
> …There's an old saying that a good library has something to offend everyone. We managed to be a good library. But that's not what a political party should be…be consistent in your brand, know what you stand for, don't deviate. Because the reality is you get so little opportunity to get across what you're about. (Seymour 2018)

Delivery Is the Qualification Parties Need to Be in the Game to Win Elections

Practitioners supported the research finding that delivery is crucial. Jones (2018) concluded that 'perceived economic management and delivery

competence is almost like a qualification parties need to have to be in the game to win an election.' This, combined with National having negatively defined Labour's brand as about economic mismanagement, created a challenge for Labour. As Talbot (2018) explained:

> National had very successfully run a narrative about their own economic credentials and raised enough doubts about what Labour might do to frighten some people. I would frequently sit in groups and I would ask people what kind of state the Labour Government had left the books in after nine years under Helen Clark, and frequently, quite contrary to the facts, many would say it had been a disaster. And then they might reflect on it for a minute or two and someone might pluck up the courage to say, "oh, hold on, I sort of remember Michael Cullen doing all right and families and the country doing pretty well through that period." But usually it wasn't more than one or two per group. There was definitely a sense that Labour now might be a risk. I think largely as the result of a very disciplined and successful negative campaign over a number of years, directed at reinforcing that brand positioning.

Always Focus on the New Product You Are Offering Voters, Creating a New Campaign for Each Election

Lastly, National practitioners reflected on the need to be fresh. Farrar noted that 'you never get voted in for what you've done, generally, it's more what you will do' (2018) and de Joux (2018) that in hindsight the early framing ad with the runners was outdated: 'it had worked brilliantly in previous campaigns but I think by the time it got to air in this campaign, the moment to "frame" the campaign had moved beyond us.' Thus the wider lesson is to be responsive to changing events and contexts. And thus we go back to management planning: to manage campaigns and market parties and management campaigns most effectively, despite all the strategizing and planning, they need to be adaptable to changing circumstances, to the market, to the competition, to changing circumstances. Being responsive to the market is always more important than professionally produced communication.

Summary

The 2017 New Zealand Election confirms the importance but also varied success of political marketing in practice. For academics, it has highlighted

the importance of market-oriented behaviour, the need to align policies with the views of the public, party supporters and target markets, differentiate from other parties including coalition partners, and communicate this in adverts. It also demonstrates the need to develop and communicate the leaders brand in terms of competence as well as relatability, but also convey the ability to deliver policies in power. Lastly it made clear the need to view the party as a brand, not just a product, understanding that is more than just policies but also influenced by the leader and the overall party.

For practitioners, important lessons emerge for parties in New Zealand and globally: see Tables 8.1 and 8.2. Academics are often criticised for producing lofty theories of little practical use, but the pragmatist philosophy underpinning this research has generated useful insights for practice. Grounded in both academic theory and primary data, as well as interviews with practitioners who played significant roles in the election, these lessons offer valuable suggestions for future strategy and tactics.

Research has been right before. In 2014 we noted that Vote Compass data told us 'many of Labour's policies were generally more popular with voters,' that 'the public expressed strong support for policies aimed at helping those on low incomes' and 'National's leader John Key was perceived as offering a more positive, clearer and deliverable brand relative to Labour's leader.' We thus advised that 'Labour face the challenge of creating a brand of competence to ensure that their policies are seen as deliverable' and 'National need to avoid becoming complacent' (Lees-Marshment et al. 2015: 107). In a TVNZ wrap up story on election night we noted that the 2014–2017 government needs to find a way to address the underlying concern expressed by ordinary New Zealanders that not everybody is doing as well as they could and predicted that if the National government was unable to meet this challenge, they risk being seen as unresponsive to the public over the next three years.

We were right. In 2017 Labour continued to struggle with delivery while National fell more out of line with policy preferences, and New Zealand First chose not to form a coalition with them because of the public sentiment that capitalism was a foe and needed to regain its human face. Looking ahead, the new Labour-led government need to be more cautious and start working on marketing in government with all its complexities if they are to succeed in 2020, just as National need to reflect and reform, while the minor parties need to identify clear market share with new target markets. While all parties utilised elements of

Table 8.1 Political marketing and management lessons for National, Labour, New Zealand First and the Greens

National: Reflect and reform	1. Accept they were out of touch with the general public, undecided voters and their own prospective National voters 2. Engage in significant reflection, discussion, further market intelligence, and openness to developing new policy positions 3. Create a leader brand personality with energy and charisma, and communicate relatability and responsiveness not just competency 4. Reformulate an effective relationship with their supporters and future target markets such as undecided and younger voters

Labour: Time to deliver	• Build delivery competence
	  – Become a devotee of delivery, through initiatives such as expectation management, communicating quick wins and progress, conceding any failures, and creating a delivery unit
	  – balance the desire for both investment in social welfare and economic management
	  – build the competency aspects of Ardern's brand personality
	• Continue communicating the leader's responsiveness and relatability to voters
	• In targeting focus on retaining support amongst youth and students and explore leadership on Māori issues
	• Start planning for 2020 in mid-2019, working to maintain their market-orientation through continued market research and reflection, listening tours and taking the time to create fresh new policies

New Zealand First: Secure supporters and get a new market position	• Accept they are at risk of losing supporters • Identify a way to satisfy all their supporters with their performance in government • Identify a new market position to create clear space and market share from other parties
The Greens: Leadership and new target markets such as men and middle earners	• Work on their leadership team • Shaw needs to work to connect more effectively with both his party supporters and the general public, working of course with the newly elected co-leader • Focus more on attracting voters beyond Labour's market share such as men where they were weak, and middle-income earners where they are stronger than labour

Table 8.2 Political marketing and management lessons for political practitioners

1. Understand that New Zealand voters have become more economically progressive and social welfare issues are their top concerns of voters in the 2017 election but they also want economic management
2. Planning doesn't always work in politics—so plan to un-plan
3. For market research to be effective there needs to be a close relationship between the researcher and party decision-makers
4. Focus on voters who are going to change the outcome of the election
5. Minor parties need to develop differentiated positions and fresh offerings for target voters
6. Always focus on the new product you are offering voters, creating a new campaign for each election
7. Differentiate from the other parties in communication message and medium
8. In the campaign, be ready to respond to opportunities and seize the spotlight when it comes with simply produced communication
9. It's the brand, not just the product, stupid: parties are always affected by existing brand perception
10. Delivery is the qualification parties need to be in the game to win elections

political marketing and management in 2017, no one party used it particularly effectively. At the very least they should consider the advice this research offers for how to do better in 2020.

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Appendix: Vote Compass 2017 Core Reports

Core reports generated by Vox Pop Labs from 251, 364 respondents to Vote Compass 2017 who participated from August 20, 2017 to September 23, 2017, who provided demographic information required for sample weighting and were unique respondents.

See Figs. A.1, A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6, A.7, A.8, A.9, A.10, A.11, A.12, A.13, A.14, A.15, A.16, A.17, A.18, A.19, A.20, A.21, A.22, A.23, A.24, A.25, A.26, A.27, A.28, A.29, A.30, A.31, A.32.

How likeable do you find the following leaders?
New Zealand overall
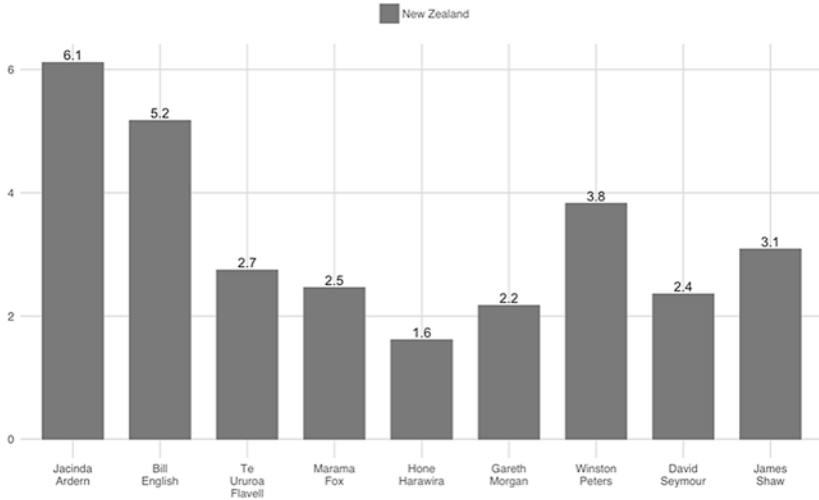
Fig. A.1   The likeability of political leaders

The most important political issues for New Zealanders

New Zealand overall
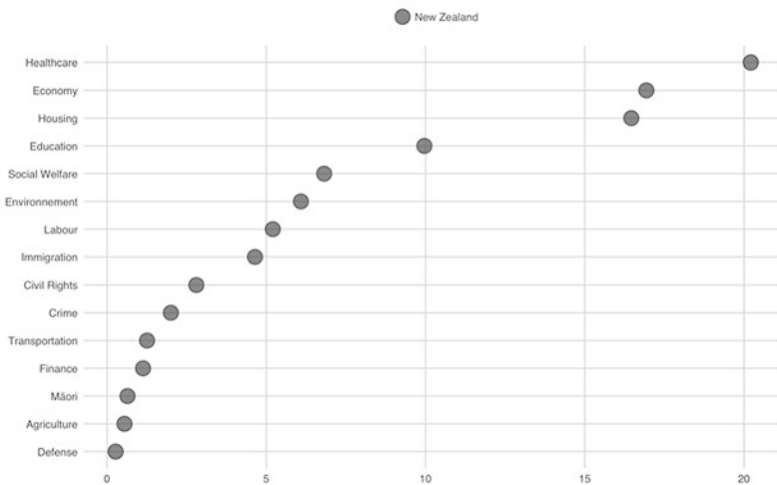
Fig. A.2   The most important political issues for New Zealanders

Paid parental leave should be increased to 26 weeks.
New Zealand overall
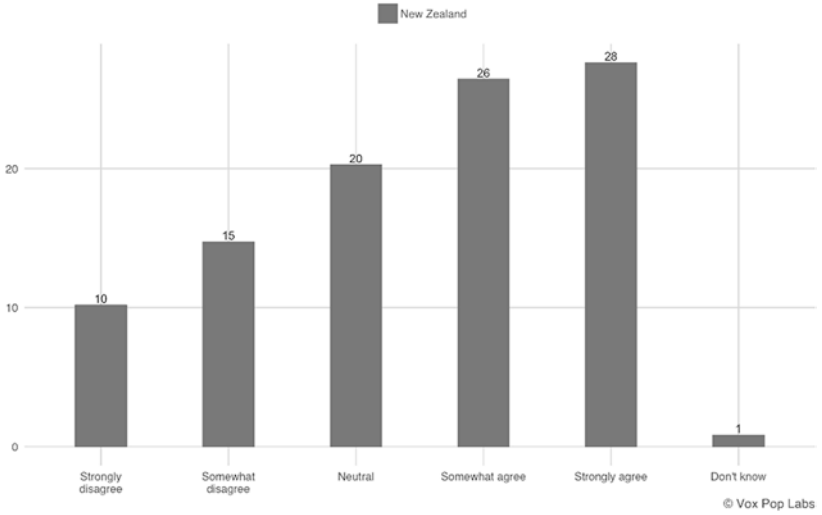
Fig. A.3 Public opinion on paid parental leaving being increased to 26 weeks

The government should continue funding charter schools.
New Zealand overall
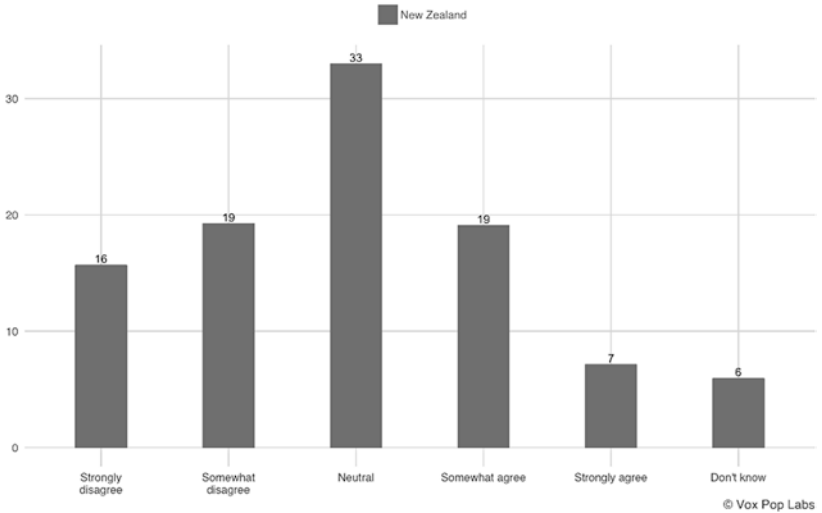
Fig. A.4 Public opinion on government funding for charter schools

How much influence should trade unions have in the workplace?
New Zealand overall
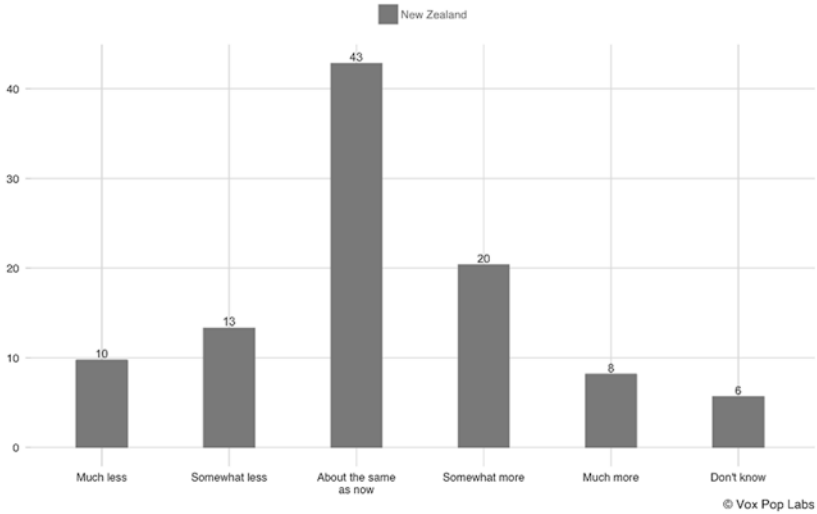
Fig. A.5   Public opinion on trade union influence in the workplace

How high should the minimum wage be?
New Zealand overall
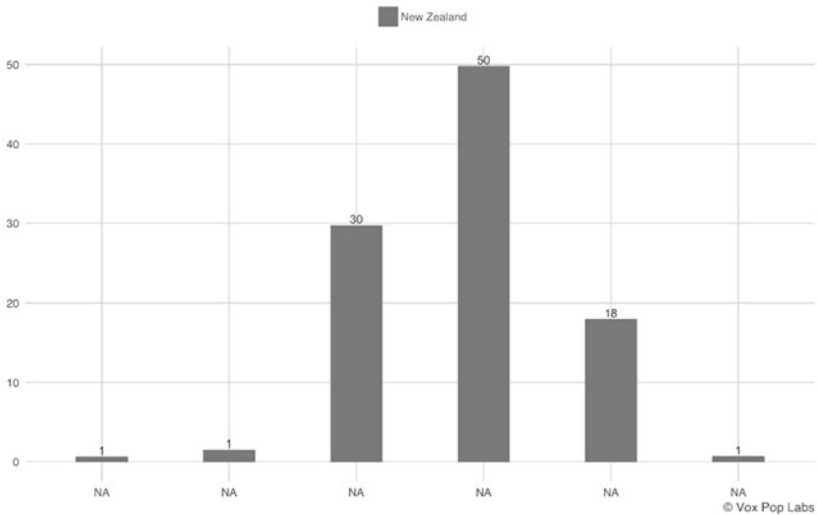
Fig. A.6   Public opinion on the minimum wage
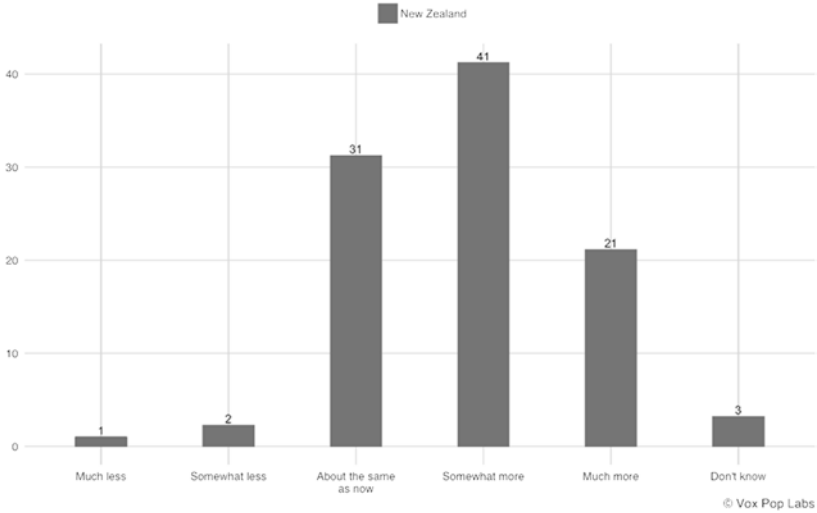
Fig. A.7 Public opinion on funding for the Department of Conservation
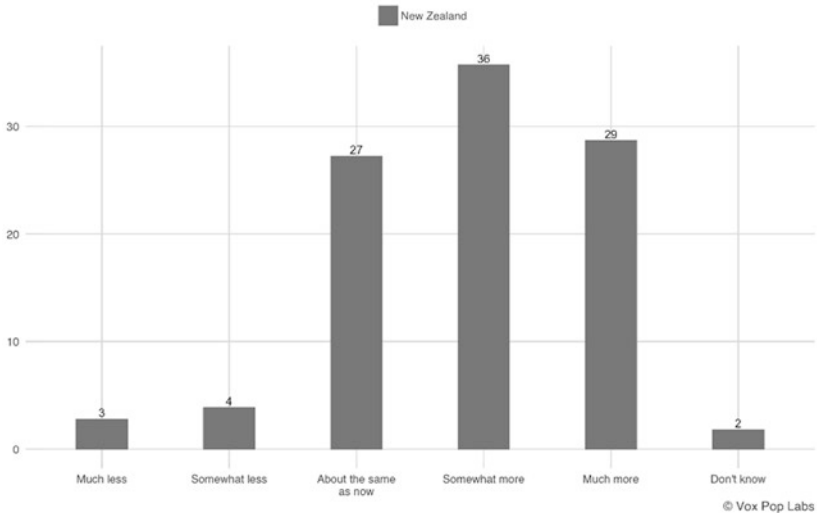
Fig. A.8 Public opinion on action on greenhouse gas emissions

The government should develop closer defence ties with the United States.
New Zealand overall
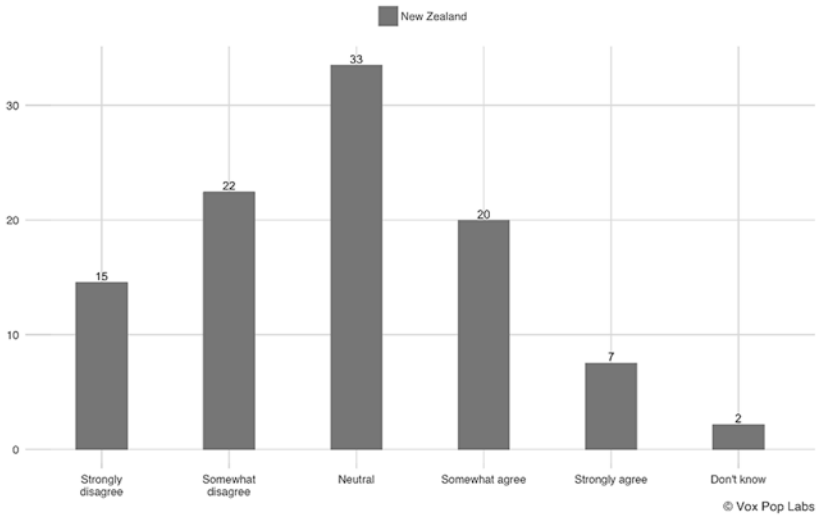
Fig. A.9   Public opinion on defence ties with the United States

New Zealand should continue to pursue the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).
New Zealand overall
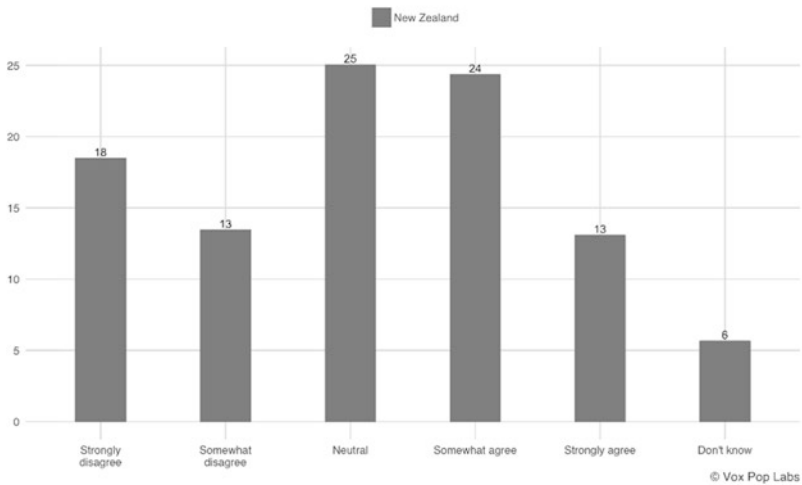
Fig. A.10   Public opinion on the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement

Private companies should be required to disclose how much male and female employees are paid for the same work.
New Zealand overall
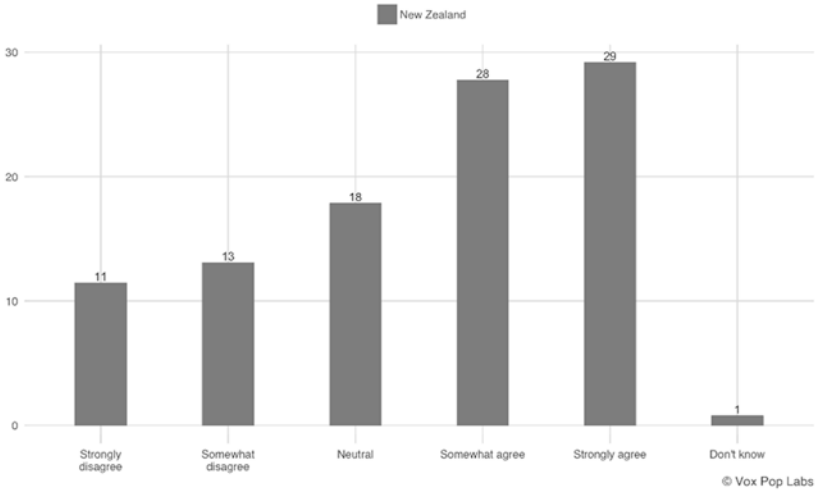
Fig. A.11 Public opinion on disclosing male and female employee pay

There should be as many women Members of Parliament as there are men.
New Zealand overall
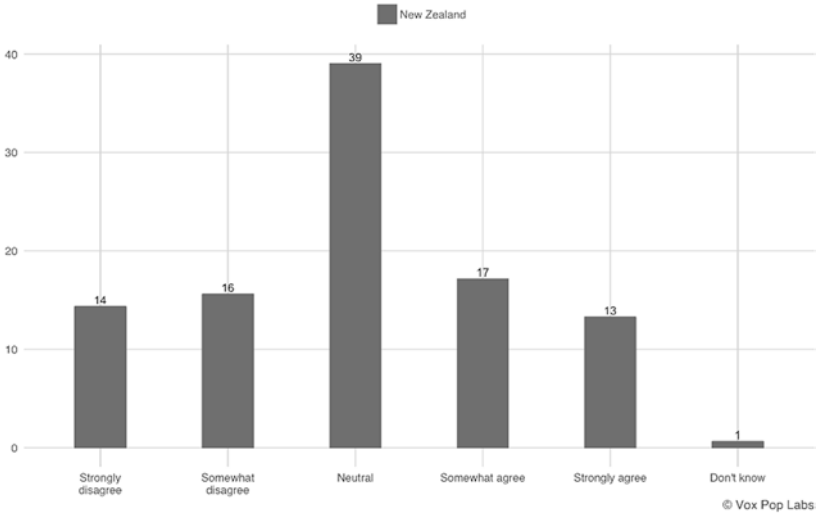
Fig. A.12 Public opinion on equal numbers of women and men MPs

The government should increase funding of public hospitals to reduce waiting lists.
New Zealand overall
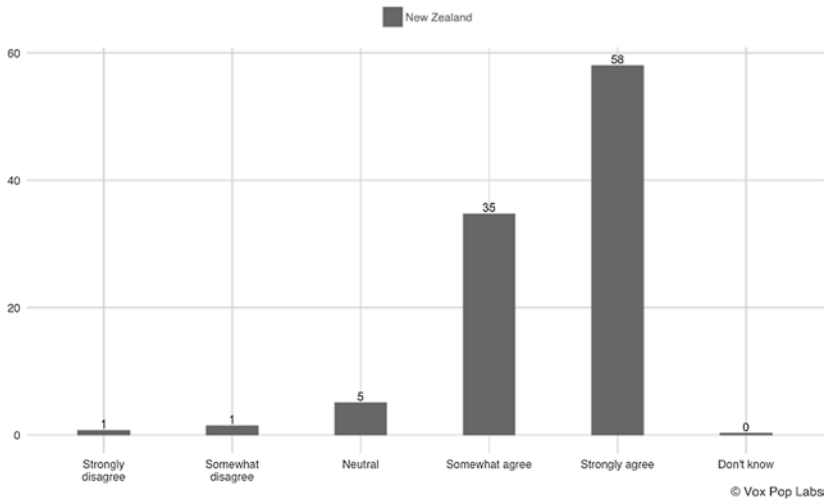
Fig. A.13   Public opinion on increasing hospital funding to reduce waiting lists

GP visits for all children under 18 should be free in New Zealand.
New Zealand overall
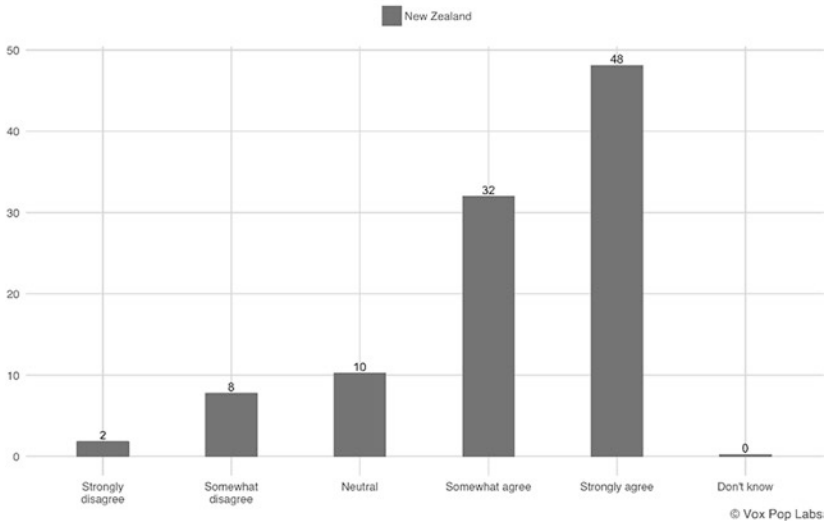
Fig. A.14   Public opinion on making GP visits for children under 18 free

How much should the government spend on rehabilitation services to address drug abuse?
New Zealand overall
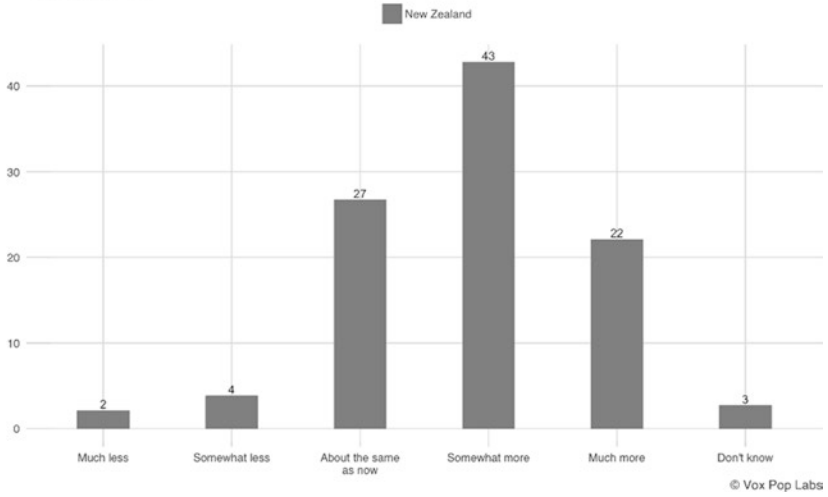
Fig. A.15 Public opinion on spending on drug rehabilitation services

The government should build affordable housing for Kiwis to buy.
New Zealand overall
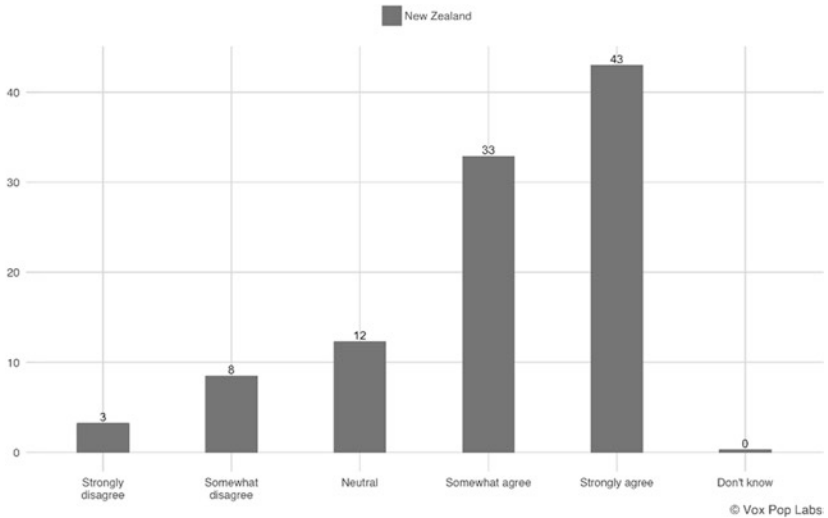
Fig. A.16 Public opinion on building affordable housing

The government should restrict the tax breaks that can currently be claimed by property investors.
New Zealand overall
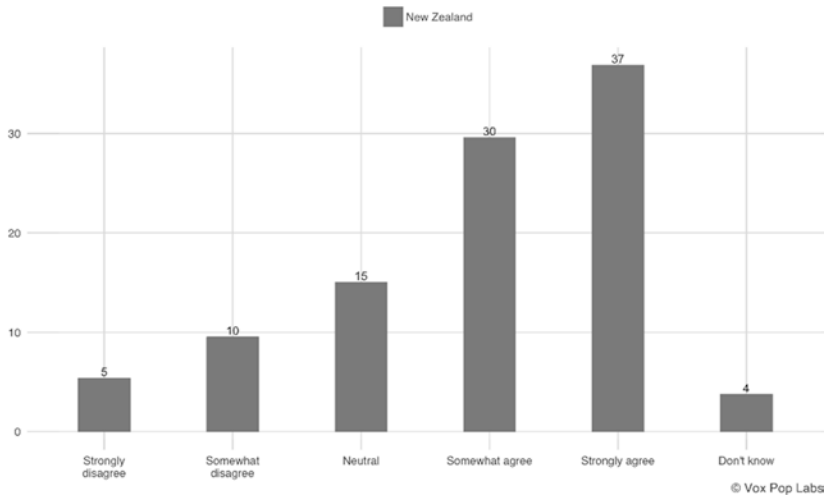
Fig. A.17 Public opinion on restricting tax breaks for property investors

How many immigrants should New Zealand admit?
New Zealand overall
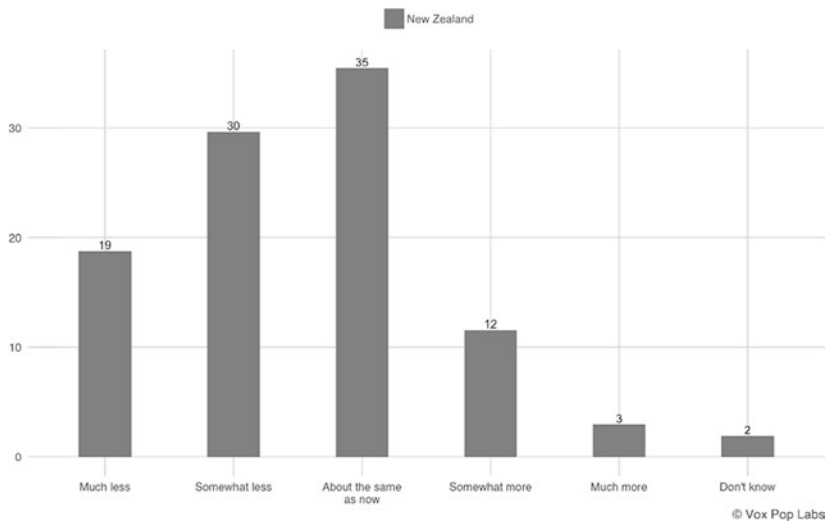
Fig. A.18 Public opinion on amount of immigrants to admit

New Zealand should increase its refugee quota.
New Zealand overall
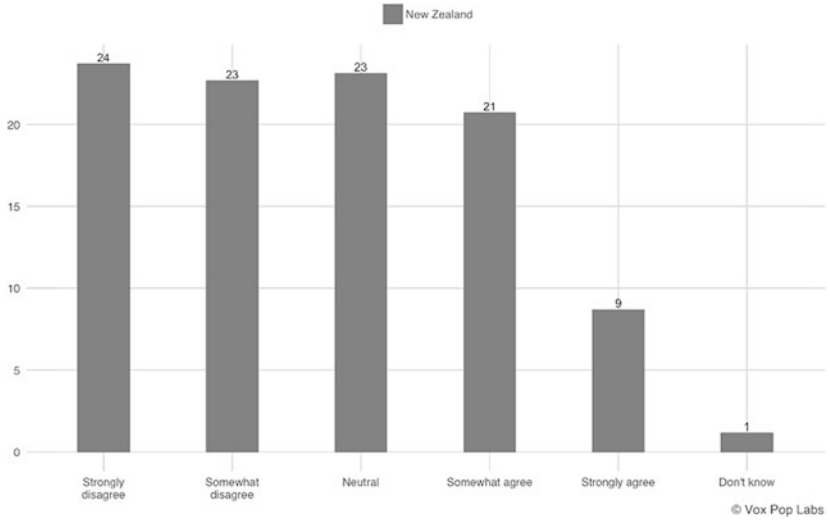
Fig. A.19   Public opinion on increasing the refugee quota

How much should the government spend on state schools?
New Zealand overall
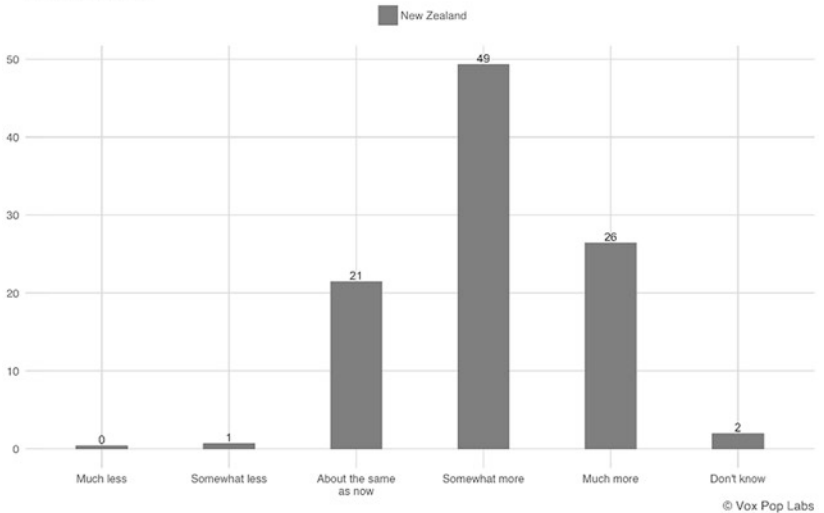
Fig. A.20   Public opinion on spending on state schools

How tough should the courts be when it comes to sentencing young offenders?
New Zealand overall
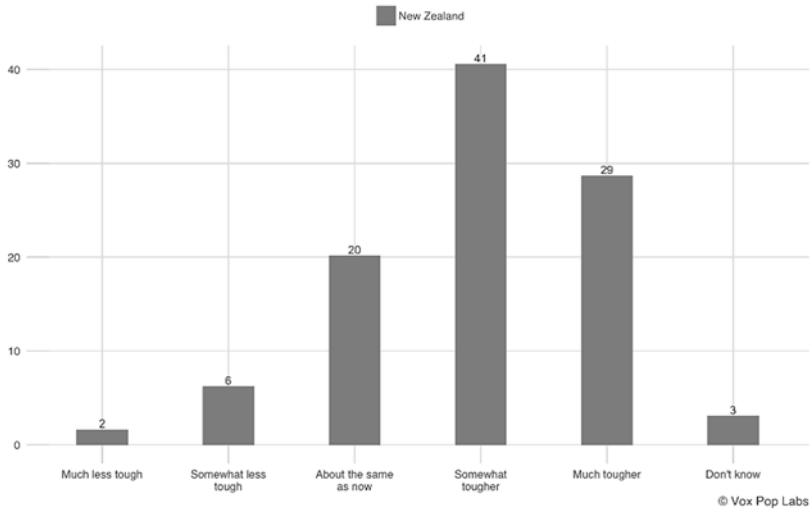
Fig. A.21   Public opinion on sentencing young offenders

There should be no privately run prisons in New Zealand.
New Zealand overall
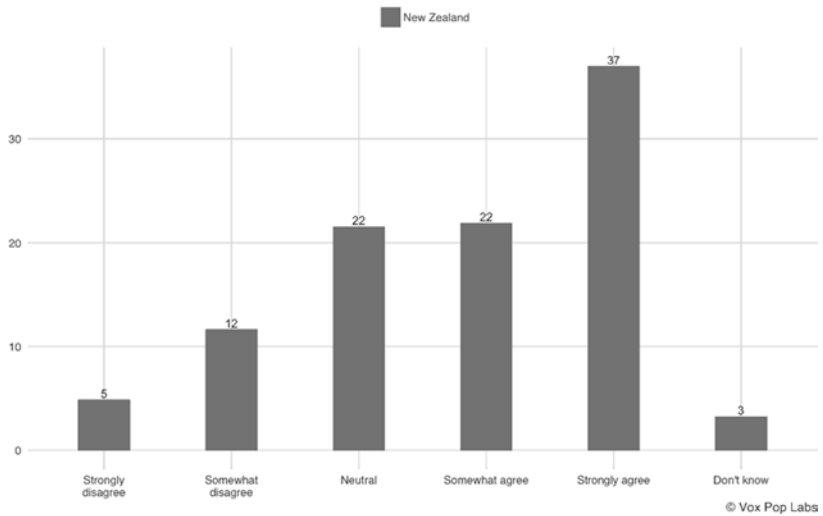
Fig. A.22   Public opinion on privately run prisons
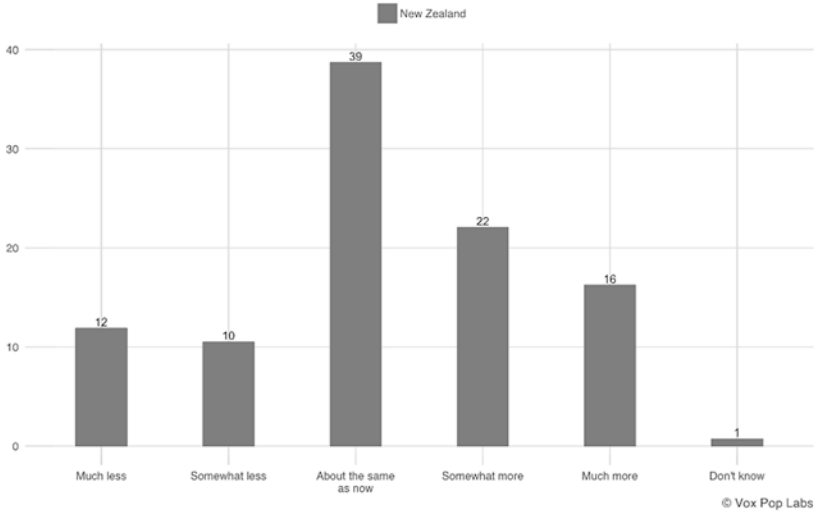
Fig. A.23   Public opinion on support for the Māori language
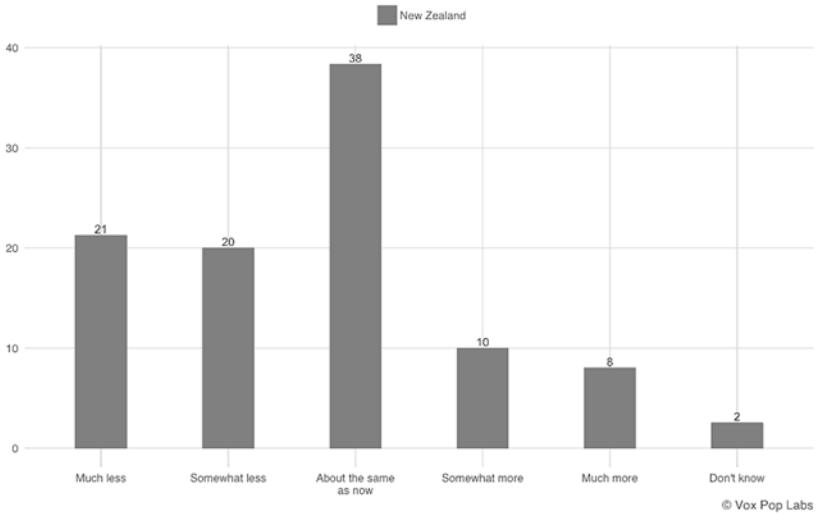
Fig. A.24   Public opinion on the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand law

How much should the government do to make amends for past injustices committed against Māori?
New Zealand overall
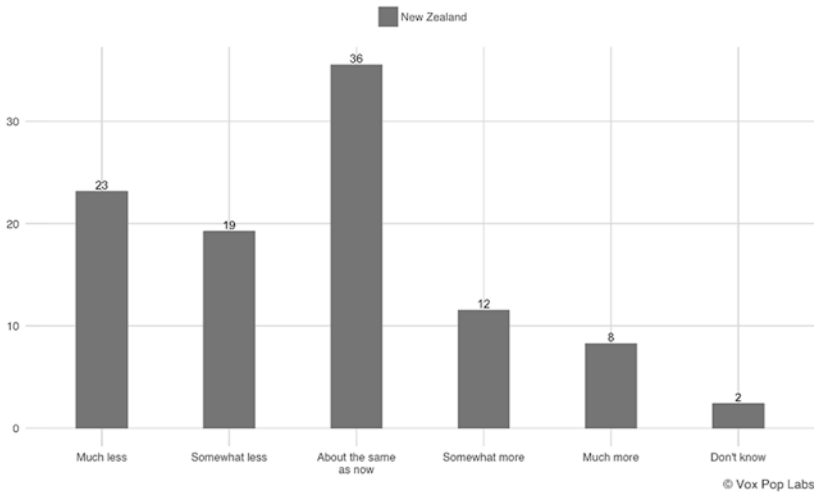
Fig. A.25 Public opinion on making amends for past injustices committed against Māori

Patients with terminal illnesses should be allowed to end their own lives with medical assistance.
New Zealand overall
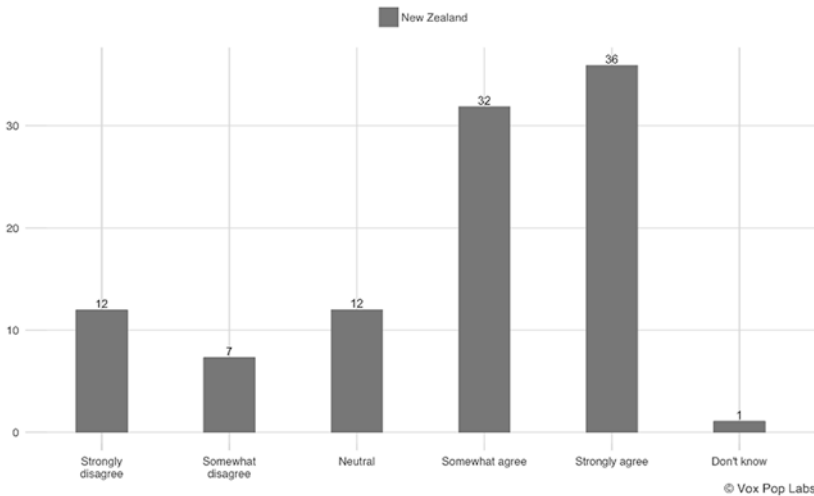
Fig. A.26 Public opinion on euthanasia

The personal use of marijuana by adults should be legalised.
New Zealand overall
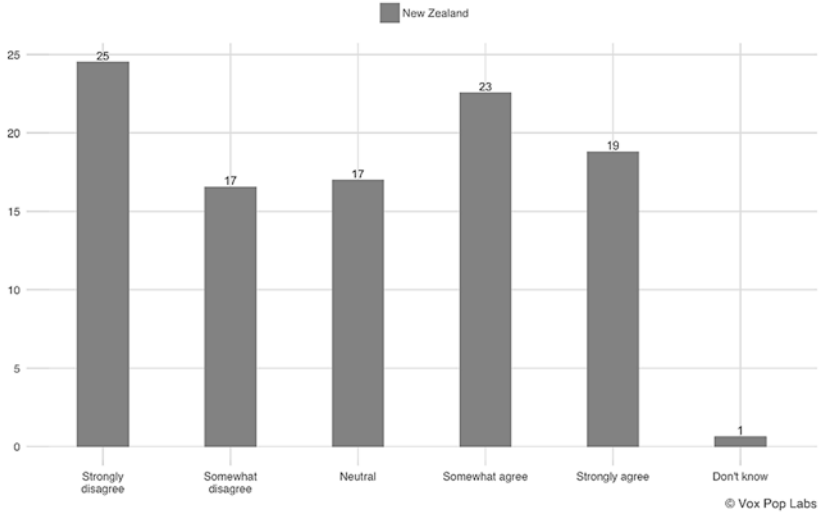
Fig. A.27 Public opinion on legalising the personal use of marijuana

Abortion up to twenty weeks should not require medical approval.
New Zealand overall
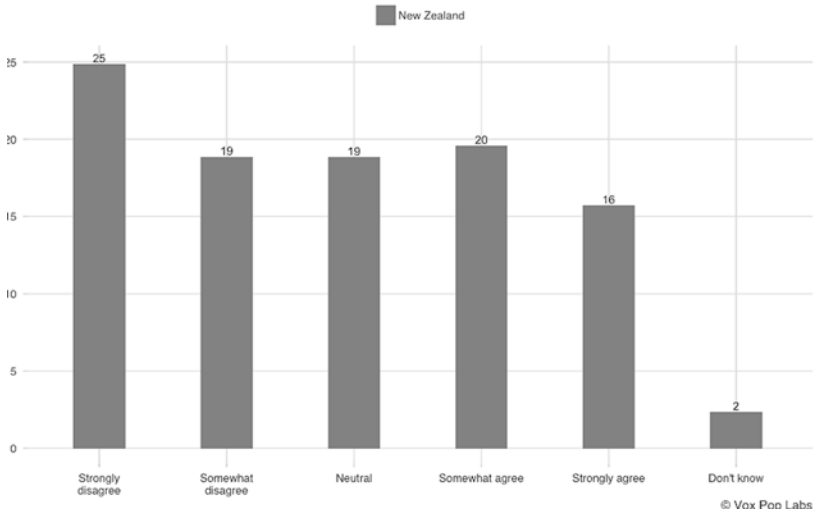
Fig. A.28 Public opinion on abortion

The government should fund three years of post-school education for all New Zealanders.
New Zealand overall
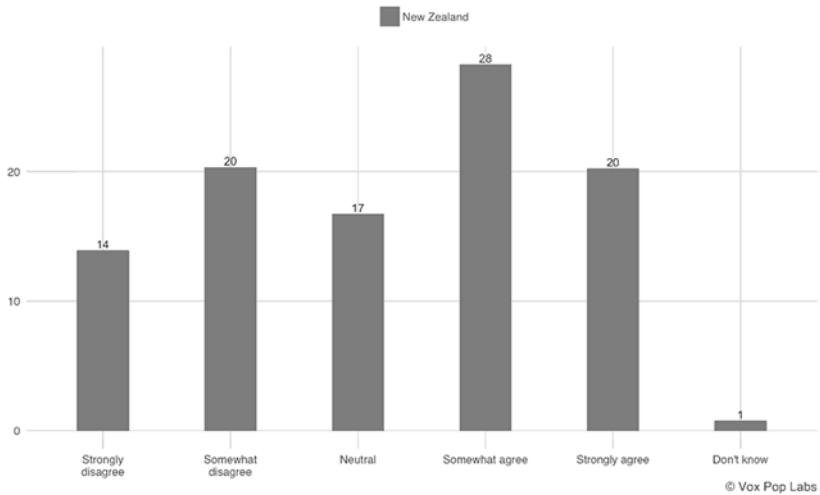
Fig. A.29   Public opinion on funding three years of post-school education

The age at which people receive New Zealand Superannuation should be gradually increased.
New Zealand overall
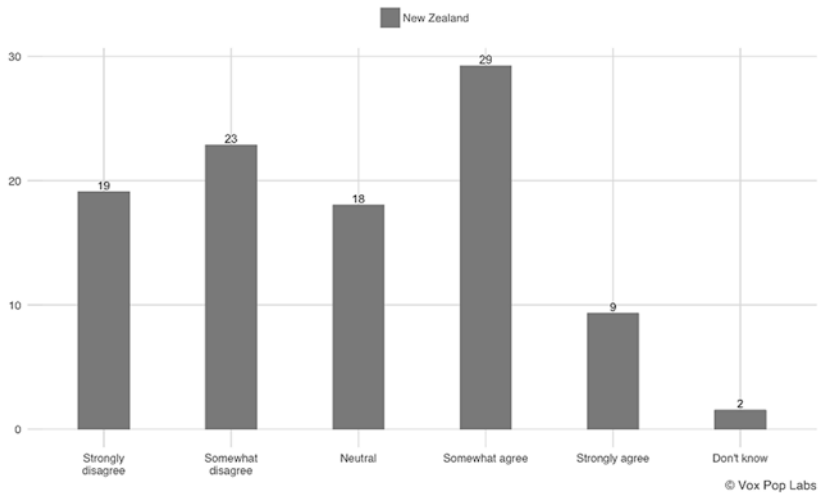
Fig. A.30   Public opinion on increasing the age of eligibility for NZ superannuation

How much tax should corporations pay?
New Zealand overall
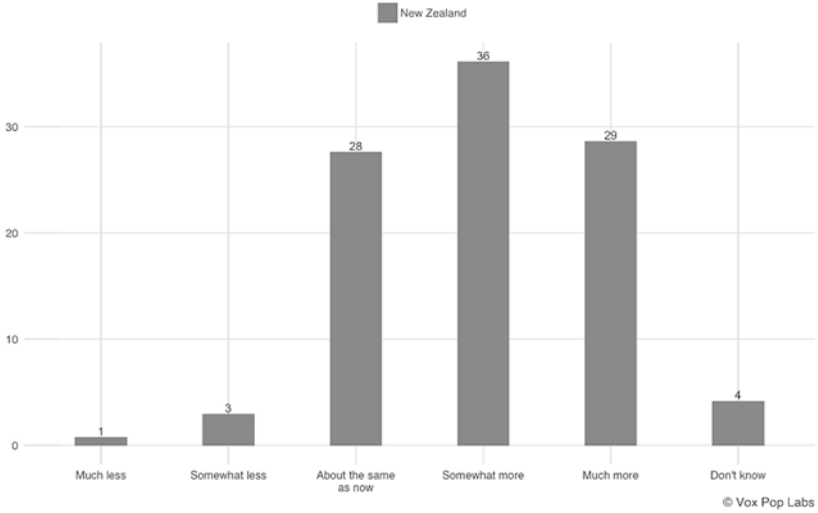
Fig. A.31 Public opinion on corporation tax

How much should wealthier people pay in taxes?
New Zealand overall
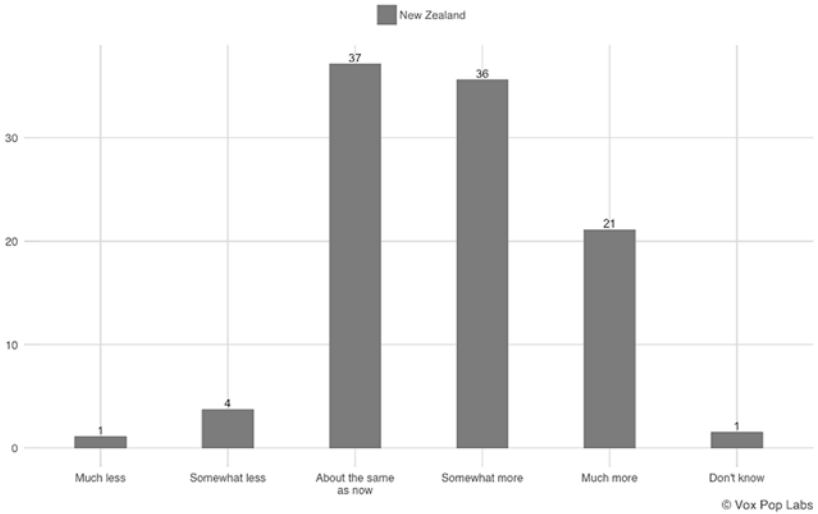
Fig. A.32 Public opinion on tax for the wealthy

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