

3

Between Selfies and Conspiracy Theories: Social media campaigning in 2020

Mona Krewel and Matthew Gibbons

Introduction

Social media has become increasingly important to political parties and voters in recent years. Using content analysis results from Facebook posts by New Zealand political parties and their leaders, this chapter describes how the parties and leaders campaigned on social media. It also uses NZES survey data (Vowles et al. 2022a) to document how most New Zealanders used the internet. And just over one-third used social media to inform themselves during the 2020 election campaign.

This chapter first briefly considers the growing importance of the internet and social media in political campaigning in New Zealand. This reflects the decline of traditional media, the desire by politicians to publish unfiltered messages, and the social distancing rules in effect in 2020. The focus then switches to the New Zealand Social Media Study (NZSMS) analysis of the Facebook communications of all significant political parties and their leaders in the last four weeks of the campaign.¹ The high use of Facebook by

1 The NZSMS analysed all Facebook posts made by the Labour Party, National Party, Green Party, ACT, The Opportunities Party (TOP), New Zealand First, Māori Party, New Conservative Party, Advance NZ/The New Zealand Public Party; and the party leaders Jacinda Ardern, Judith Collins, Marama Davidson, James Shaw, David Seymour, Geoff Simmons, Winston Peters, John Tamihere, Debbie Ngarewa-Packer, Leighton Baker, and Billy Te Kahika between 16 September and 16 October 2020.

parties and leaders to publicise policies and mobilise potential supporters is discussed. The much more positive campaigning of Labour and its leader, Jacinda Ardern, is contrasted with the negative campaigning of the National Party and its leader, Judith Collins. This chapter shows that fake news and half-truths in Facebook posts were relatively rare, and most were made by fringe anti-establishment parties and their leaders.

Data from the 2020 NZES are then used to quantify voters' high use of the internet and the growing use of social media for accessing political information during the campaign. About one-third of voters reported coming across online misinformation or disinformation during the election campaign. Māori and supporters of fringe anti-establishment parties were most likely to state they had come across misinformation and disinformation. More than half of all voters were at least somewhat confident in their ability to identify made-up online content, with those who were most interested in politics, the young, and men most confident about their abilities.

In the final section of this chapter, NZES data are used to assess the effects of social media campaigns on voters' evaluations of the leaders of the two major parties. The results indicate that using Facebook and Instagram to access political news was associated with high ratings for Labour's Jacinda Ardern on a 0-10 'liking' scale. Ardern was extremely popular with voters. In contrast, using Instagram to access political news was associated with disliking National's unpopular leader, Judith Collins.

The internet and social media in campaigning

The internet and social media have made it easier, cheaper, and often more necessary for politicians to bypass traditional media sources such as newspapers, radio, and broadcast news (Enli and Rosenberg 2018, 50). People are also increasingly using social media platforms, which did not exist until the early 2000s, as a source of news. Parties and their leaders are now active on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and use these to communicate unfiltered messages quickly and directly to potential supporters (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017, 211; Hendricks and Schill 2017; Semetko and Tworzecki 2017, 331). As one New Zealand journalist commented, by the time of the 2020 election, the internet had 'allowed politicians to go around us' (Cooke 2021, 142).

In addition, many traditional news sources now have fewer staff to cover political events than in the past. A slow decline of newspapers in many developed countries became much more rapid from the early 2000s as advertising migrated to the internet. This reduced the resources available for news reporting and resulted in newspapers charging higher cover prices, which further reduced readership (Chyi and Tenenboim 2019). In New Zealand, newspaper readership has sharply fallen, print newspapers are now stocked by few retailers, and the number of New Zealand journalists halved between 2001 and 2018 (Loan et al. 2021, iv; Williams 2018). By the time of the 2020 election, New Zealand Media and Entertainment was increasingly putting its content behind paywalls for its flagship *New Zealand Herald* and its regional papers and focussing on stories that appealed to its relatively old and well-off readers. Although the rival *Stuff* newspaper group kept its content free, its news coverage was much more limited than in the past. New providers of news stories, such as *Newsroom* and *The Spinoff*, along with the long-established *National Business Review*, were only available through the internet, and were often paywalled.

Covid-19 regulations also resulted in the suspension of the printing of community newspapers and magazines. Overseas owners and investors had already been despairing about the prospects for the New Zealand newspaper and magazine industry, and the closure of many long-established titles seemed imminent (Greive 2020). Television news was also struggling for advertising and resources. In addition, the 2014 election was the last at which parties were provided with time on television to broadcast the opening and closing of the campaign; at the 2017 and 2020 elections, these broadcasts were only available on the internet. As a result of the decline of traditional media, and changes in campaigning methods, it is important to study social media use by political actors and by voters.

Because of its widespread use and the ease with which information can be posted, Facebook is in most countries regarded as the most valuable social media platform by political parties. In contrast, Instagram use is strongly skewed towards young people and is primarily a visual medium used for sharing highly filtered photos and videos with friends and family, and for following celebrities and social media influencers. Because the young are less likely to vote, and because of the difficulty of posting links, Instagram tends to be a relatively low priority for political parties. Twitter is predominantly used by professionals to share relatively serious written messages (Kreiss et al. 2018, 16, 18; Walker and Matsa 2021). There are also other less

politically important social media platforms, such as LinkedIn and TikTok. LinkedIn is used by some candidates to connect with people. TikTok is very youth-focussed and does not allow political parties to advertise. In New Zealand, as in other countries, politicians usually use social media as a way of broadcasting information, rather than for discussions (Muchison 2016; Ross et al. 2015).

#NZvotes: Social media in the 2020 election campaigns of parties and candidates

This section describes the high level of social media posts by parties and their leaders, and the political issues they covered. It then discusses use of positive and negative messages by the main parties. Whereas Labour and its leader conducted a positive campaign, the results show that National and its leader became more negative over time. The low prevalence of fake news and half-truths in social media posts by most political actors is then quantified.

Because Facebook is the most widely used social media platform, the total number of posts by parties and their leaders made on Facebook during the four weeks before election day is an important indicator of the importance they placed on social media. The nine parties and their leaders in our dataset collectively made 3,037 posts on Facebook during this ‘hot campaign phase’. During the final two weeks of this period, early voting was both permitted and encouraged and, in 2020, most New Zealanders voted before election day. The main parties posted several times each day, with posts increasing as the electioneering ended (Krewel and Vowles 2020d).

Facebook posts were downloaded by the newly created New Zealand Social Media Study (NZSMS) at Victoria University of Wellington using Facebook’s CrowdTangle tool for academic researchers (Meta 2022; Smalley 2022). They were then analysed using the Campaigning for Strasbourg (CamforS) methods that were applied to European elections in 2019 (Fenoll et al. 2021).

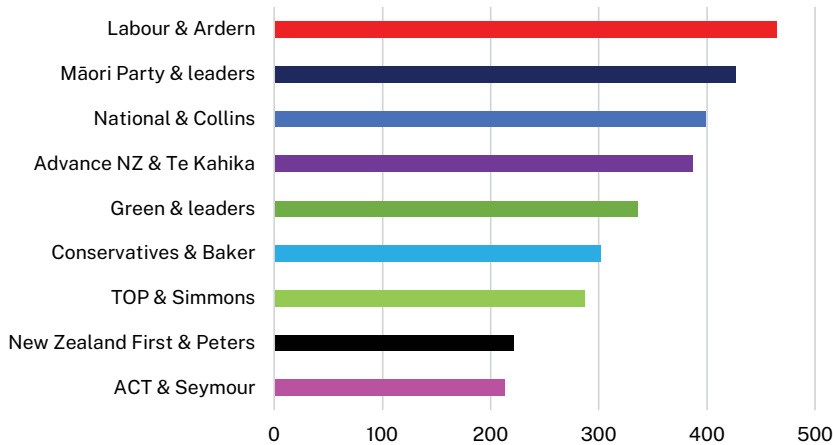


Figure 3.1 Total number of Facebook posts by parties and their leaders

Source: NZSMS (2020).

Figure 3.1 shows that Labour and its leader, Jacinda Ardern, made the most posts in the 30 days before the election, with 465 Facebook posts. This is consistent with expectations: Ardern was known to be highly visible on the internet. Second were the Māori Party and its leaders. Indeed, Māori Party co-leader John Tamihere posted the most of all the leaders, and co-leader Debbie Ngarewa-Packer also frequently posted. Third were National and its leader, Judith Collins, which was expected given National's status as the main opposition party. Fourth was Advance NZ and its co-leader Billy Te Kahika; their other co-leader, Jamie-Lee Ross, did not use Facebook during the campaign. The Green Party and its two co-leaders came next, followed by the New Conservative Party and The Opportunities Party (TOP). The two least active parties on Facebook were New Zealand First and ACT.

The relatively high number of Facebook posts by the Māori Party shows that social media, where it is easy to self-publish information and messages, can be used effectively by a minor party with limited resources. Before the 2020 election, the Māori Party had no parliamentary representation, a small campaign budget, and its prospects of returning to parliament seemed poor. Apart from Māori television, coverage of this party by media outlets was often low. However, the Māori Party had as its leaders two skilled social media practitioners (Krewel and Vowles 2020d), who circumvented traditional media gatekeepers and communicated directly

with potential supporters (Shoemaker 1991; Shoemaker and Vos 2009). Policy announcements, which the party would have once hoped would be published by a newspaper, were made through social media, along with mobilisation messages (Greaves and Morgan 2021, 322).

While social media campaigning is often suspected of being a relatively shallow form of political communication, this is not supported by analysis of the social media communications of the parties and their leaders during the 2020 election campaign. Of the slightly more than 3,000 Facebook posts coded, more than 2,500 contained policy or issue content. Figure 3.2 shows that the proportion of social media posts about an issue gradually declined to about 60 per cent in the five days before the election as the proportion of posts mobilising people to vote increased.² About 4.9 per cent of the posts in our study referred to a political actor’s private life, such as candidates talking about hardships their family had experienced or alluding to their children (McGregor 2018; McGregor et al. 2017; Ross et al. 2023, 7).

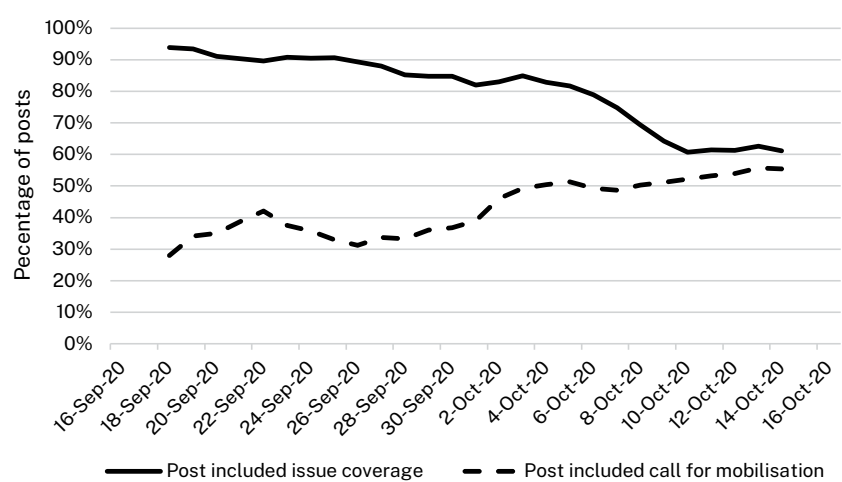


Figure 3.2 Percentage of posts by all actors that included issue coverage or a call for mobilisation (five-day moving average)

Source: NZSMS (2020).

² However, these two categories were not mutually exclusive.

The economy was consistently the dominant issue—included in almost 31 per cent of posts that covered a specific issue. Social issues (18.4 per cent of posts about a specific issue) and the environment (13.5 per cent) were also important. The next most important were domestic issues in general (7.5 per cent), health (6.7 per cent), and transport (6.5 per cent). The relatively low importance of health may seem surprising; however, New Zealand had few Covid-19 cases and it escaped the overloaded hospitals that occurred in some countries. Indeed, the country's death rate during lockdown was slightly lower than usual, probably because infectious diseases such as influenza were unable to spread (Kung et al. 2021).

It is not surprising that most parties focussed their campaigning on the economy, as Figure 1.2 (Chapter 1, this volume) revealed that voters identified the economy as the second most important election topic after Covid-19. However, the Green Party mentioned the environment the most in its posts. The Māori Party campaigned more on social issues to achieve better outcomes for Māori than on the economy and maintained the strongest focus on the Treaty of Waitangi (Krewel and Vowles 2020c, 2020d). In addition, Advance NZ and the New Conservatives focussed more on domestic policies in general than on the economy.

Figure 3.2 shows that by the time early voting began in New Zealand, two weeks before election day, more than half of Facebook posts by parties and their leaders included a mobilisation message. However, despite initially matching and then surpassing other actors in the percentage of mobilisation messages it made, New Zealand First issued relatively few mobilisation messages in the final week of the election campaign (Krewel and Vowles 2020d). This could have been to its electoral cost.

Election campaigns have often been criticised, particularly in the United States, for involving insults, mudslinging, and distortion. Negative campaigning can be effective as negative information is more psychologically 'sticky' in people's memories than positive information (Boydston et al. 2019). However, the effects of negative advertising seem to vary between countries, work best in two-party systems, and are affected by the prior beliefs of voters (Flanaghan 2014, 145–160).

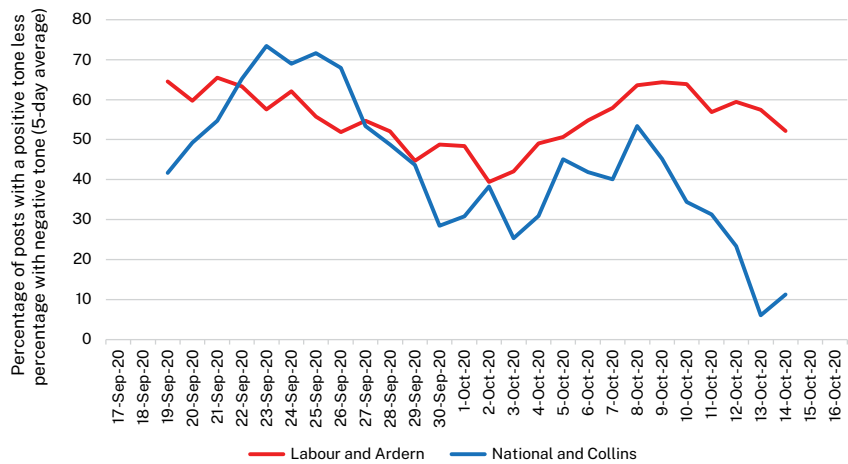


Figure 3.3 Positive minus negative references in Facebook posts by Labour and Jacinda Ardern and by National and Judith Collins (five-day moving average)

Source: NZSMS (2020).

Figure 3.3 shows that the net tone of posts by Labour and Ardern remained strongly positive during the campaign. Ardern’s personal posts remained ‘relentlessly positive’, as she had promised when she became Labour’s leader in 2017 and pledged again in 2020 (Edwards 2017; Sachdeva 2020). Indeed, Ardern did not personally express any negative statements or emotions in her posts. In contrast, National’s and Collins’s posts began positive but became more negative as the campaign progressed, almost falling into negative territory by the last few days. With opinion polls showing it was making no ground, the National Party appears to have become increasingly desperate. For instance, Collins stated that Labour would introduce a disastrous wealth tax³ and argued that it had not met its 2017 campaign commitments. Incumbents usually run more positive campaigns than challengers (Benoit 1999; Druckman et al. 2009; Haynes and Rhine 1998) because they must work harder for the media attention that negativity produces (Hopmann et al. 2012; Schoenbach et al. 2001; Shoemaker 2006). Indeed, Ardern had appeared daily on television during lockdowns and was well known to voters. In contrast, Collins was National’s third leader in 2020.

3 The Green Party leaders believe this worked in their favour as their supporters favoured a wealth tax (Davidson and Shaw 2021, 85).

Of Labour's two partners in government, the Green Party and its leaders also maintained a positive tone in their posts. New Zealand First and its leader adopted a more negative tone towards the end of the campaign, but still made more positive than negative posts. All the minor parties retained a positive tone at the end of the campaign, although there were periods when Advance NZ's posts were negative. Posts by its leader, Billy Te Kahika, and by the New Conservative Party's Leighton Baker were sometimes negative in tone (Krewel and Vowles 2020c).

An important indicator of the quality of a campaign is the spread of misinformation and disinformation. In measuring misinformation and disinformation in New Zealand social media campaigns, the NZSMS distinguished between fake news and half-truths. Fake news was 'content of a post which is completely or for the most part made up and intentionally and verifiably false to mislead voters' (Krewel and Vowles 2020a).⁴ In contrast, half-truths were content that 'is not entirely' or for the most part made up, however, it still contains 'some half-truths or is questionable regarding its factual accuracy' (Krewel and Vowles 2020a). The half-truths variable was introduced because fake news, in its pure form, was rare. Instead, posts more frequently contained information that was not entirely accurate. Examples included assertions by the New Conservative's Baker about poll results and rising crime, and claims by Te Kahika about mandatory vaccinations. While not fake news, these posts were a distortion.

Advance NZ and Te Kahika made the most half-true statements, followed by the New Conservative Party and Baker, the National Party and Collins, New Zealand First and its leader, Winston Peters, and ACT and David Seymour. The number of half-truths by parties in Facebook posts remained relatively constant during the campaign, while for leaders the number fell over time (Krewel and Vowles 2020c, 2020d).

4 The usual disagreements between and accusations made by political actors were not coded as fake news. If a coder assumed that a post included fake news but they were not fully sure, they fact-checked the post, including whether a reliable news site had already identified a statement as false. If they were still unsure, coders were told to not code the story as fake news. This conservative definition of fake news ensured that normal political disagreements between parties and candidates, which are an integral part of the democratic discourse, were not counted as fake news. Furthermore, on a scale from one (very confident) to four (not at all confident), the coders gave a self-assessment of how sure they were they had identified fake news (Krewel and Vowles 2020a). All posts for which coders had not indicated that they were very confident were double-checked by a NZSMS principal investigator. Apart from one post, which was removed from the sample, the principal investigators agreed with the coders' initial assessments.

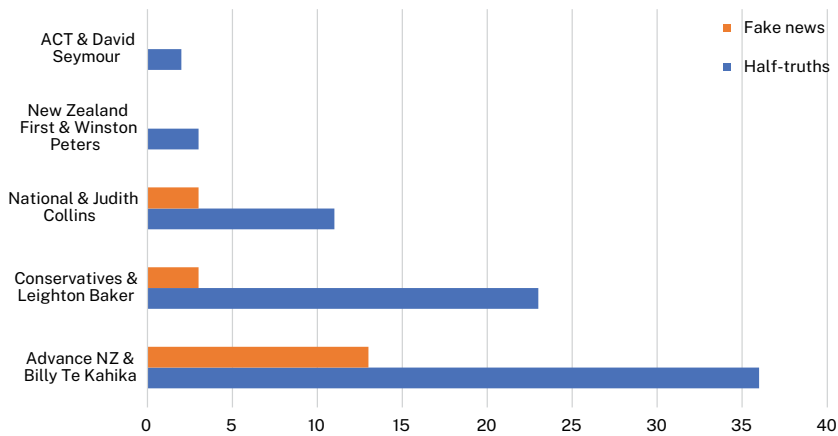


Figure 3.4 Total number of Facebook posts by each party and their leader containing fake news and half-truths

Source: NZSMS (2020).

During the 2020 election campaign, parties and their leaders together posted only 75 half-truths. This reflects the high quality of democratic political discourse in New Zealand (Krewel and Vowles 2020d). However, continuation of the NZSMS in 2022 shows that as polarisation has increased around Covid-19 vaccination mandates, misinformation and disinformation have increased (Krewel 2022).

Figure 3.4 shows that Advance NZ and Te Kahika made the most fake news posts during the 2020 campaign, followed by the New Conservatives and Baker, and then National and Collins (Krewel and Vowles 2020c, 2020d). Most of the fake news posts by Advance NZ and the New Conservatives and their leaders were about Covid-19; however, Advance NZ also attacked the media, including social media providers. Some New Conservatives' fake news and half-truths posts also attacked the media, including the exclusion of the party from the leaders' television debates (Krewel and Vowles 2020c, 2020d). In the posts containing half-truths or fake news neither Advance NZ nor the New Conservatives and their leaders had a very strong or explicit focus on Labour or on Jacinda Ardern, or even on the government in general.

Collins and the National Party both posted a selectively edited clip from the leaders' debate that made it appear that Ardern had described a defence of dairy farming as 'the view of a world that has passed'. Ardern's comment was specifically about the unsustainability of 'dirty dairying'—the practice and defence of which she ascribed to a minority of dairy farmers. Ardern

also applauded farmers meeting sustainability challenges as ‘climate change warriors’. This incident met the NZSMS definition of fake news (Krewel and Vowles 2020b) and was also identified as a distortion by newspaper fact-checkers (Cooke 2020). With only 19 fake news posts among more than 3,000 posts in four weeks, however, for the most part, New Zealand’s parties and their leaders campaigned fairly in 2020 (Krewel and Vowles 2020d).

Only 0.4 per cent of posts featured a meme, where text was added to a picture. ACT and Seymour had the most meme posts, with their memes acting like the billboards used in earlier elections (Robinson 2019, 193). Perhaps the efforts parties put into crafting their posts will increase in the future, especially if they start publishing posts they hope will be noticed by other media and the public. Currently, most Facebook posts are targeted at those sympathetic to a party.

Voters 2.0? Usage and perception of social media campaigning in the 2020 election

This section first considers voters’ high use of the internet and social media, and in particular Facebook, for political information. The ways in which voters were contacted by political parties in 2020, including the continued dominance of direct mail, are then considered. About one-third of voters reported coming across some online misinformation or disinformation, with Māori and supporters of anti-establishment parties the most likely to do so. The results also show that those who are more interested in politics, younger people, and men are the most confident in their ability to identify fake news.

Election study data show that during the 2020 election campaign, 80 per cent of New Zealand voters used the internet to access news or information about the election. However, these results must be interpreted cautiously because 85.8 per cent of New Zealanders reported having internet access at home, newspapers (including paywalled content) and broadcast news are increasingly accessed through the internet, and only 6.7 per cent of New Zealanders reported having no access to the internet. People could have interpreted this question in varying ways.

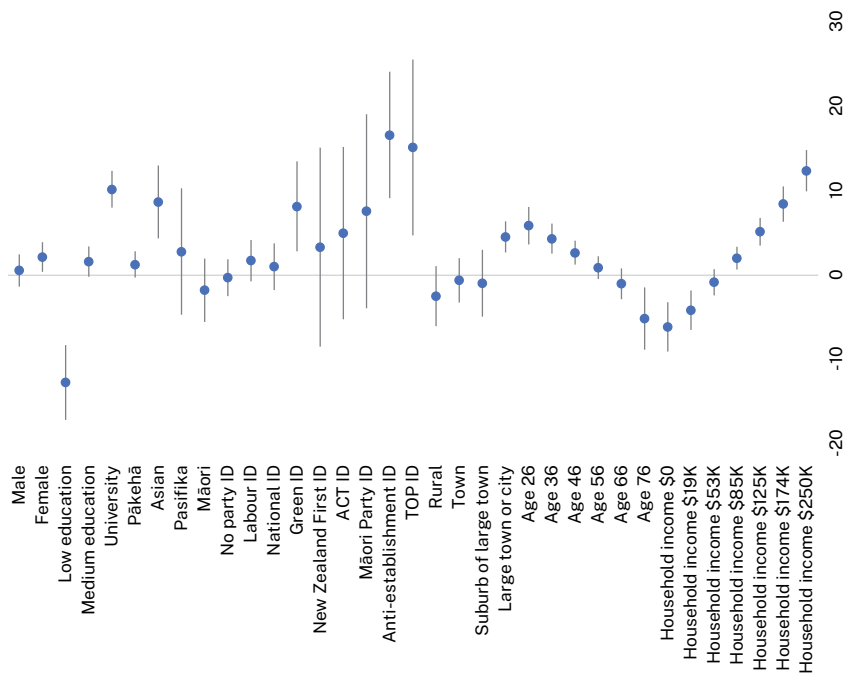


Figure 3.5 Percentage by which internet use for political information differed from mean use

Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

Nevertheless, Figure 3.5 shows—as expected—that the use of the internet for political information was greatest among the youngest age groups, and steadily decreased with age. While the proportions of men and women using the internet for political information were similar, internet use for political information increased with household income and education and was higher for those living in a big city. For ethnicity, Asians were most likely to use the internet for political information, whereas Māori were least likely to do so.

For party identification the differences were usually not significant; however, those who identified with the Green Party were a little more likely to use the internet than those who did not identify with any party. A group of small parties can be classified as ‘anti-establishment’: the New Conservatives, Advance NZ, the NZ Outdoors & Freedom Party, as well as traditionalist religious parties. Those who identified with these parties were also highly likely to use the internet for political information, but the

confidence intervals were wide because of the small number in this group. It is not surprising that the supporters of the anti-establishment parties more strongly used the internet to inform themselves about politics, as they prefer alternative information channels to the ‘mainstream media’ (Holt 2018; Moffitt 2016).

Narrowing the focus to the use of social media, Facebook, as in other countries, was the dominant platform. Indeed, 34.1 per cent of respondents used Facebook for political information, whereas 8.3 per cent used Instagram, and 4.3 per cent used Twitter. This supports the New Zealand Social Media Study’s decision to concentrate on analysing parties’ Facebook messages. Facebook was even used by parties to broadcast their campaign opening speeches and, because of Covid restrictions, National’s campaign launch was a virtual experience for all except a small number of guests (Walls 2020). The total combined use of these three platforms was 36.8 per cent.

Figure 3.6 shows that in a multivariate model the use of Facebook for political information purposes in New Zealand was higher among younger voters. Instagram use was even more heavily concentrated among the youngest voters (Figure 3.7), with the small group of those born after 2000 the heaviest users of Instagram for political information. Because the relationship between Instagram use and age is nonlinear, Figure 3.7 uses age cohorts. In contrast, Twitter use, which is shown in Figure 3.8, was only slightly higher among the youngest age groups, probably because Twitter attracts older people who use it for professional purposes.

Figures 3.6 to 3.8 show that before the 2020 election women made greater use of Facebook and Instagram for political information purposes than men, whereas the percentage of men using Twitter was greater, but statistically not significant. Except for Facebook, where the effects were weak, household income was poorly correlated with the use of social media for political information. Facebook use was similar across education levels. In contrast, those with a university education were more likely to use Instagram and Twitter for political information than those with only a basic education.

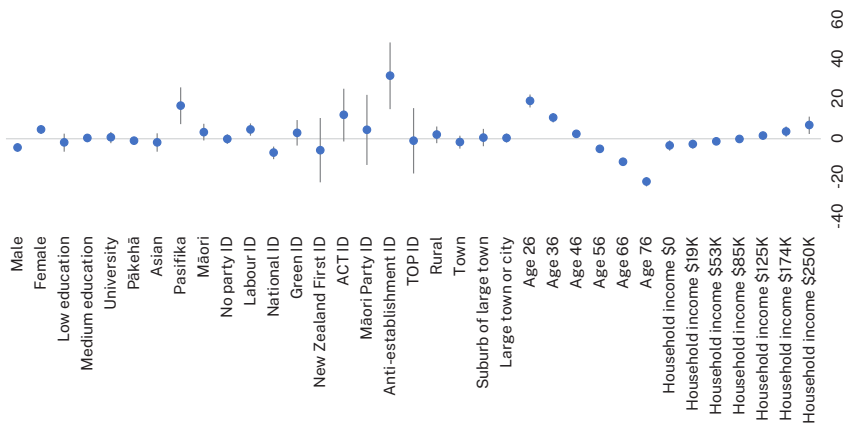


Figure 3.6 Percentage by which Facebook use for political information differed from mean use
Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

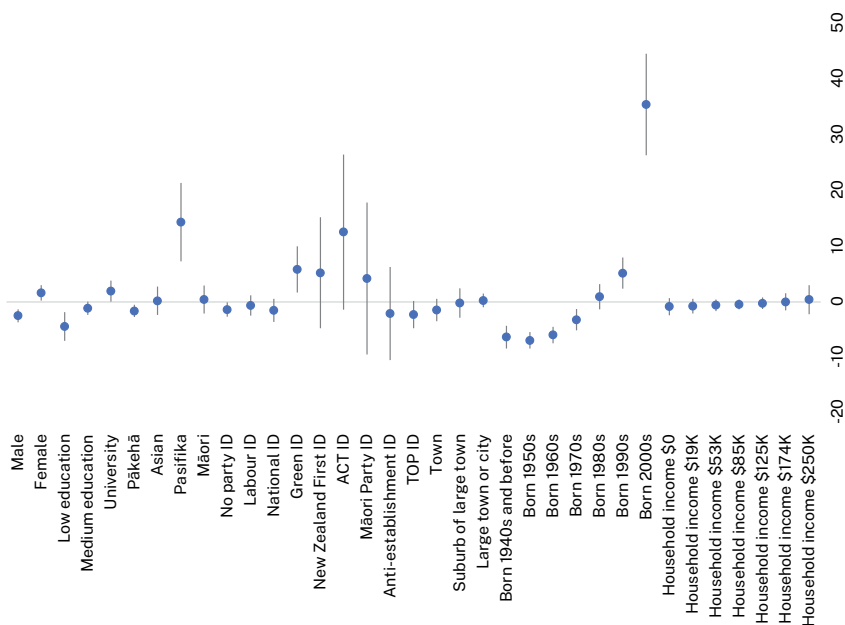


Figure 3.7 Percentage by which Instagram use for political information differed from mean use
Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

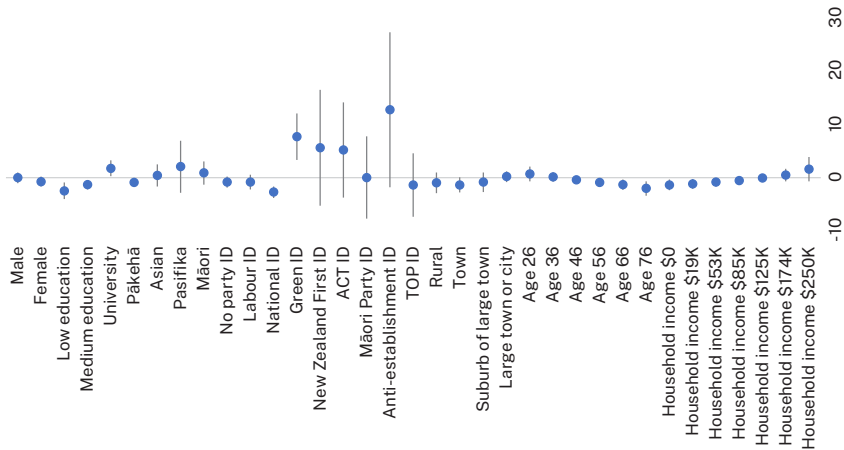


Figure 3.8 Percentage by which Twitter use for political information differed from mean use

Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

Those who identified with anti-establishment parties were more likely to use Facebook for political information than those with no identification, or those who identified with Labour, National, Green, or New Zealand First. For Twitter, the point estimates for the anti-establishment parties and for the Greens, New Zealand First, and ACT New Zealand were all high. However, wide confidence intervals meant that only for the Greens were these point estimates statistically different from those with no identification or those who identified with the established parties. The results indicate Pasifika people were high users of Facebook and Instagram for political information.

As well as actively seeking political information, voters were directly contacted by political parties. Parties targeted messages at core and potential supporters as they outlined policies, introduced candidates, asked people to donate their time and money, and reminded them to vote. Whereas voters are increasingly using social media to learn about political topics, in developed countries, the main ways parties contact voters are usually by direct mail or phone. Between 2011 and 2016, New Zealand parties used direct mail, including leaflets, more than parties in any other country except the United Kingdom and Canada. For face-to-face contact, New Zealand was in the middle of the range, and it ranked slightly higher than average in the use of email and social media. Social media was the method by which the young were most likely to be contacted by parties (Magalhães et al. 2020, 608, 611).

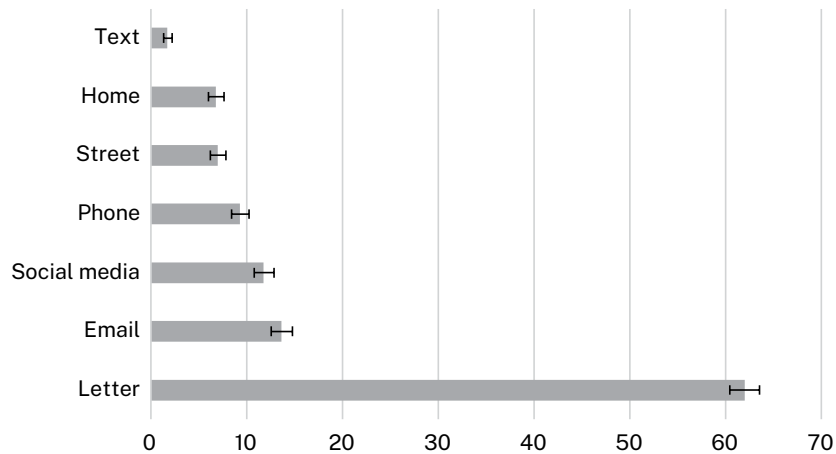


Figure 3.9 Percentage of voters contacted by political parties via different campaign channels

Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

Figure 3.9 (and Figure 4.4 in the next chapter) shows that direct mail still dominated New Zealand canvassing methods in the 2020 election. In 2020, 62 per cent of New Zealand voters received a letter from a political party before the election. In contrast, just 13.6 per cent of New Zealand voters received an email from a party, and only 11.8 per cent were contacted through social media. Even fewer New Zealand voters (9.2 per cent) received a phone call and only 1.7 per cent received a text message from a party. Despite the pandemic, 6.8 per cent of New Zealand voters had a home visit and 7.0 per cent were contacted in the street. Traditional campaign channels are still important, and sometimes dominant, despite the rise of social media campaigning (Semetko and Tworzecki 2017, 332).

Because of the absence of national email or mobile phone contact lists, it is difficult for parties to contact voters by these methods in the way they can using postal addresses for mailing. However, parties have sought to collect people’s email addresses and leaders regularly send emails to those who subscribe to these lists. New Zealand continues to lag behind democracies like the United States, Taiwan, and Iceland in terms of online electoral contacts, but is similar to Australia (Gibson 2020, 46–48).

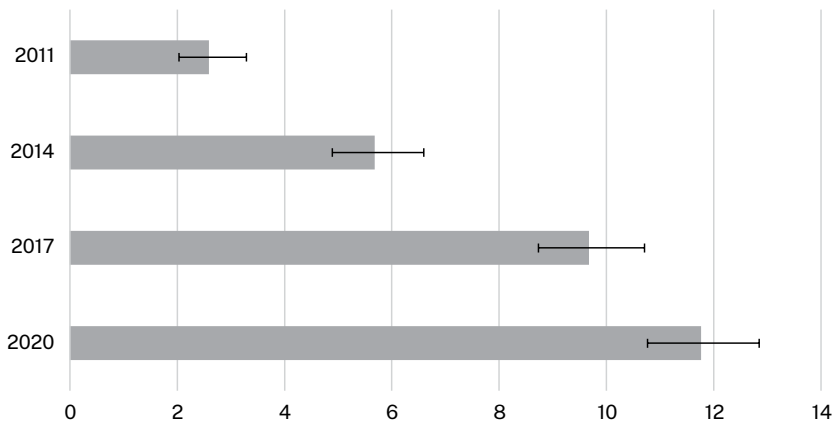


Figure 3.10 Percentage of voters contacted by political parties via social media since 2011

Sources: Vowles et al. (2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d).

Nevertheless, contact by social media has been steadily increasing since the 2011 election, when a question about party contact via social media was included in the NZES for the first time. As Figure 3.10 shows, in 2011, just 2.6 per cent of voters were contacted by a party on social media. Contact with parties on social media over three elections increased a little more than fourfold. However, most use of social media for political purposes is still initiated by users, rather than by political parties and their leaders.

Whereas Ardern had 1.7 million Facebook followers at the time of the 2020 election, just 68,000 people followed Collins. This difference probably occurs because Ardern, who had been prime minister for three years, had a high profile in New Zealand and overseas, whereas Collins only became National's leader in July 2020 after Todd Muller's surprise resignation after 53 days in the job. Ardern received 1,382,238 responses to her Facebook posts over the last four weeks of the campaign, compared with only 255,528 for Judith Collins.⁵ Because of differences in the number of followers, however, on average, Collins's followers were more active in responding to her posts than Ardern's followers.

People who follow and engage with the content of parties and candidates are usually supportive of or sympathetic towards a political actor. This is reflected in the way they invariably leave a positive rather than a negative reaction to content. Responses to Ardern were overwhelmingly 'like'

⁵ These were downloaded from Facebook's CrowdTangle platform for academic researchers.

(71 per cent) and 'love' (24 per cent), with few 'sad' (2 per cent), 'care' (2 per cent), or 'ha ha' (1 per cent) responses, and even fewer 'wow' (0.2 per cent) or 'angry' (0.2 per cent) responses.⁶ For Collins, an even higher proportion of reactions were 'like' (88 per cent), but fewer were 'love' reactions (9 per cent), while the proportions of 'ha ha' (2 per cent), 'angry' (1.5 per cent), 'care' (0.4 per cent), 'sad' (0.2 per cent), and 'wow' (0.2 per cent) were all low. However, posts by Collins towards the end of the campaign stating Labour would introduce a wealth tax that would strip elderly homeowners of their assets resulted in higher angry reactions, which peaked at 4.4 per cent of reactions to Collins on 11 October.

Because there is less gatekeeping than in traditional media, there has been concern that social media is less accurate than traditional media (Semetko and Tworzecki 2017, 332). Almost 33.9 per cent of respondents in the NZES believed they had come across some kind of online political misinformation or disinformation at least sometimes, while 8.7 per cent thought they often encountered misinformation or disinformation during the campaign; 13.9 per cent said they never did and 19.6 per cent did not know.

The level of disinformation in the 2020 social media campaigns of the parties and party leaders was low and, as Figure 3.4 shows, came from two sources: Advance NZ and the New Conservatives. Only those who followed those two parties would have frequently encountered fake news and half-truths. Given this, most voters presumably overstated how often they encountered online misinformation or disinformation during the 2020 campaign. It is likely that many people considered unwanted political information that challenged their own political views as false. Deeply ingrained cognitive biases influence the perceived strength of political arguments (Arceneaux 2012, 273).

Asking people about the level of false online information they encountered could reveal more of a media hostility effect than an accurate assessment of the level of online misinformation and disinformation. This effect highlights the tendency of people with strong attitudes about political candidates or issue-based media coverage to perceive that coverage is biased when it goes against their political position and in favour of their political opponents (Vallone et al. 1985). While this effect has been found

6 The 'sad' responses to Ardern's posts related to the death of US Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and of a New Zealand police officer working in the United Kingdom. The 'ha ha' responses related to humorous images and captions Ardern posted to humanise herself. Collins also made humorous posts and posted about Police Remembrance Day.

in response to traditional media for decades, it is also important for social media and extends to ‘motivated fake news perception’ (Tsang 2022, 824). The percentage of those who reported coming across misinformation or disinformation often or sometimes increased with political interest, further supporting this interpretation, as people with high political interest usually also have stronger political attitudes.

Those who identified with the Māori Party or the anti-establishment parties were most likely to perceive online misinformation or disinformation. For anti-establishment party supporters, this is not surprising, as it is an integral part of their identity to deny widely accepted political and scientific facts (Holt 2018). For Māori Party supporters, the high level of perceived misinformation and disinformation could reflect disapproval of a Western, Pākehā-shaped online political discourse in which they do not feel adequately represented (Iseke-Barnes and Danard 2007; Kamira 2003).

When it comes to people’s self-assessment of their own ability to identify fake news during the campaign, about half of all New Zealanders (54.6 per cent) were at least somewhat confident that they could recognise made-up online content. Only 16.7 per cent were very confident, while almost 16 per cent were not confident, and 4.9 per cent were not at all confident. Figure 3.11 indicates that as interest in politics increased, so did people’s confidence in their ability to spot fake news. Younger people also felt more confident about their ability, perhaps because they have grown up in ‘post-truth’ societies and are used to online misinformation and disinformation. Men felt more confident than women in their ability to perceive misinformation, and the difference was statistically significant. Men tend to feel more confident in their own abilities in a wide range of areas, which reflects gendered socialisation (Beyer and Bowden 1997; Niederle and Vesterlund 2011). Asian people were less confident in their ability to recognise misinformation, although the results varied for different Asian population groups and the confidence interval overlapped with that for Pasifika. Those with a university education were more confident in their ability to spot misinformation than those with low education. Differences were usually not statistically significant for party identification; however, Green Party identifiers were more confident than those with no identification.

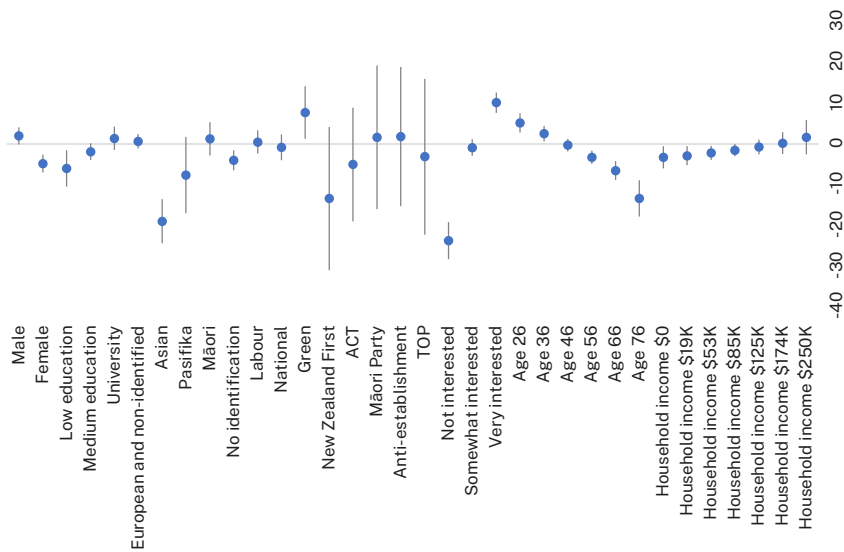


Figure 3.11 Voters’ self-assessment of their ability to identify misinformation and disinformation (deviations from the mean)

Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

Effects of social media campaigning on party leader evaluations

Candidate evaluations can be reinforced, and sometimes even changed, by social media as its content is usually highly personalised. Candidate and leadership evaluations, then, can influence voting decisions (King 2002). Fewer people these days identify with political parties and, even when they express an identification, it is now weaker and less consistent over time than in the past (Dalton 2021).⁷ Candidate and leader evaluations have therefore become more electorally important (Bean 1992) and also more affected by campaign influences including social media use (Hendricks and Schill 2017). This section considers the significantly different effects of social media use on approval by New Zealanders of the leaders of the two main parties.

⁷ A little less than 60 per cent were ‘usually close to’ a political party in 2020, but NZES panel data suggest that about one-third of those were either not close to a party or were close to a different party in 2017. For trends in party identification in New Zealand over time, see Karp (2010) and Vowles (2014). For instability in party identification in New Zealand as far back as the 1980s, see Aimer (1989).

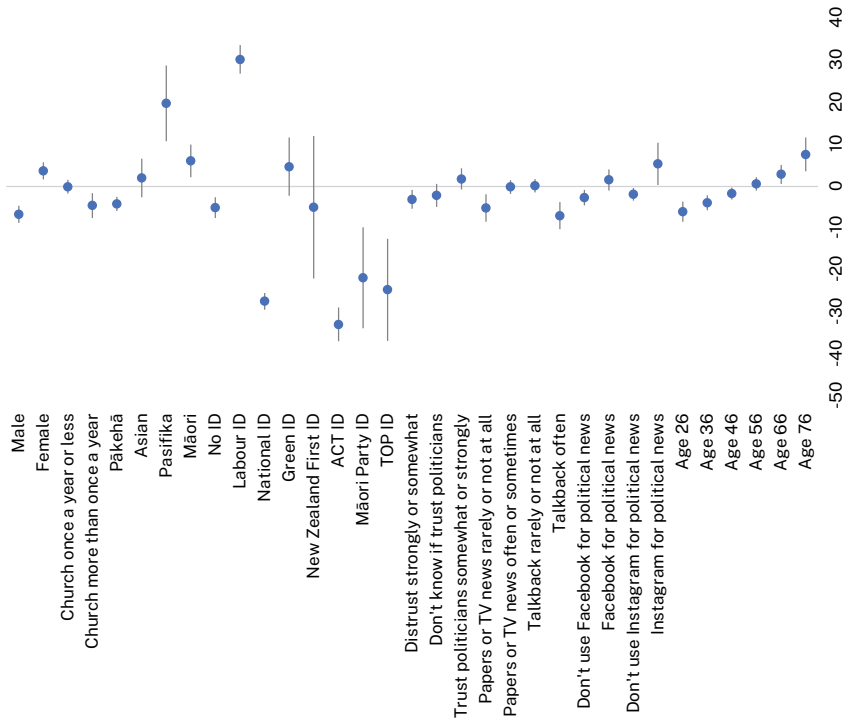


Figure 3.12 Multivariate analysis results for rating Jacinda Ardern as 10 for likeability (deviations from mean)

Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

Labour's Jacinda Ardern was a very popular incumbent leader in the 2020 election, with 34.5 per cent of voters rating her with a 10 on a scale from zero (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like), and only 5.4 per cent rating her as zero. Almost half the voters rated her likeability as an eight or higher. In contrast, National's Judith Collins was not popular, with almost 25 per cent of the electorate rating her with a zero, and only 3.1 per cent rating her with a ten. Almost half of voters scored Collins as zero to three. In the following analyses, those who scored the party leaders as eight, nine, or 10 are considered voters who liked them. Since the distribution for Collins is so skewed towards dislikes, those who disliked her are those who scored her as zero to three.

Using multivariate analysis, Figure 3.12 shows that identifying with Labour and being Pasifika were mostly strongly associated with rating Ardern as a ten. Green Party identifiers, women, and Māori were also more likely to rate Ardern as a 10, as were older voters and those who only went to church

once or less a year. Furthermore, using Facebook to access political news was associated with rating Ardern as a ten. Similarly, Figure 3.12 shows that using Instagram for political news resulted in more people scoring Ardern at 10 for likeability, rather than a lower score. In contrast, Twitter use (not shown) did not seem to be important for liking Ardern. Using newspapers or television for political news was associated with people liking Ardern, whereas using talkback radio had the opposite association.

The Facebook effect was evident when liking Ardern was defined as scoring her eight to 10, rather than just as a ten. The television or newspaper news and talkback effects remained strong; however, the positive Instagram effect disappeared. This suggests that people who used Instagram, which is a platform that has been criticised for promoting and reinforcing beliefs about perfectionism among its youthful followers (Lup et al. 2015), rated Ardern very highly, rather than just highly.

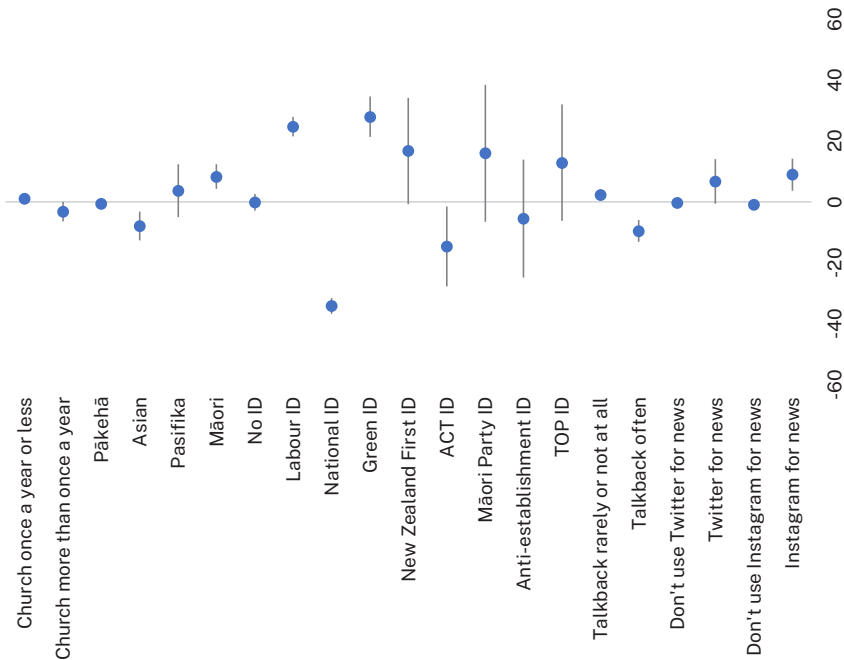


Figure 3.13 Multivariate analysis results for rating Judith Collins as a zero to three (deviations from mean)

Source: 2020 NZES (Vowles et al. 2022a).

For Collins, identifying as a National Party supporter was, not surprisingly, strongly associated with liking her, as was being religious and listening to talkback radio. With the controls shown in Figure 3.13, using Instagram was associated with people being more likely to dislike her. Using Twitter for news also was associated with people disliking Collins, but there was a significance level of only 0.081 for this effect. As Figure 3.13 indicates, the Twitter result might therefore change in a larger sample. Not surprisingly, the party identification controls have a strong effect. Similar results for Instagram occurred when the full range of likeability scores was used for Collins. The Twitter result became much weaker, and the variable for Twitter was dropped. However, there was weak evidence Facebook use was associated with people disliking Collins.

These results suggest that Jacinda Ardern's reputation as a social media 'powerhouse', which is also discussed in Chapter 7 of this volume, was well deserved (Krewel and Vowles 2020b; Wilson 2020). Ardern's Facebook and Instagram performances had a particularly positive effect on people's evaluations of her. She used both these channels frequently and attracted large audiences. In contrast, Judith Collins did not benefit from her social media presence, with those using Instagram for political news tending to dislike her.

Conclusion

This chapter described how parties and their leaders campaigned on Facebook during the 2020 general election campaign, how New Zealanders used the internet to inform themselves about politics, and what effects parties' and leaders' social media campaigns had on voters' evaluations of the likeability of party leaders. NZSMS data showed that the governing Labour Party and its leader, Jacinda Ardern, made the most Facebook posts during the final four weeks of the election campaign. However, some parties with no parliamentary representation also used Facebook heavily as a convenient and low-cost way of communicating with voters and bypassing media gatekeepers. Most Facebook posts contained policy or issue content, although less so as the campaign progressed. Labour and its leader were polling well and maintained a strongly positive focus. The opposition parties and their leaders increasingly attacked Labour. Fake news and half-truths mostly came from the anti-establishment parties and their leaders. In contrast, the quality of political discourse by the established parties was usually high.

Election study survey data showed that more than 80 per cent of New Zealand voters now use the internet to access political information. Use tended to be higher among the young, the educated, and high-income earners and, although the confidence intervals are very large, those who identified with fringe parties are distrustful of the established media. About 34.1 per cent of New Zealanders used Facebook for political information, about 8.3 per cent used Instagram, and 4.3 per cent used Twitter. Instagram use was strongest among the youngest voters. In contrast, age effects were smaller for Facebook and very weak for Twitter. Women made greater use than men of Instagram and Facebook. Pasifika and, with less confidence, Māori made high use of Facebook for political information, as did those who identified with anti-establishment parties. However, traditional campaign channels such as direct mail and person-to-person meetings still dominate political campaigning in New Zealand and were used most by the largest parties.

About one-third of people reported coming across online misinformation or disinformation. Those who identified with an anti-establishment party were most likely to do so, followed by those who identified with the Māori Party. Almost 55 per cent of New Zealanders were confident in their ability to recognise ‘made-up’ online content.

The popularity of Jacinda Ardern was high at the start of the campaign after a tight lockdown that had effectively eliminated Covid-19 from New Zealand. In contrast, Judith Collins, who became leader of the internally divided National Party only shortly before the start of the election campaign, struggled for popularity. Whereas post-election survey data show that almost half of the voters evaluated Ardern as eight or higher on an 11-point scale for likeability, almost half of the voters evaluated Collins as zero to three. Multivariate analysis shows that those who used Facebook and Instagram for news were more likely than non-users to evaluate Ardern as 10 for likeability. Instagram use, in particular, was associated with users giving Ardern a perfect score for likeability, rather than just a very high score. Twitter use, on the other hand, did not seem to be important. In a multivariate model for Collins, using Instagram for political news was associated with people being more likely to dislike her. These results confirm Jacinda Ardern’s reputation as a social media ‘powerhouse’.

Ardern retired from politics in early 2023, partly because of the threats and misogynist personal attacks she and her family increasingly faced (Bradley 2023). It seemed unlikely that Labour and its new leader, Chris Hipkins,

could dominate the social media campaign in 2023 in the same way as Labour did under Ardern in 2020. Admittedly, Hipkins was seen by voters as more relatable than National's new leader, Christopher Luxon (Newshub 2023). Hipkins adeptly used social media to promote Labour's policies and policy delivery, including a much stronger focus on cost-of-living issues; to record his attendance at official events; to be seen promoting the interests of business; and to remind voters that he is an ordinary, strongly nationalist New Zealander with a love of sausage rolls. However, Hipkins made it clear that he would be keeping his children entirely out of politics (Daalder 2023). In his first four months as leader, Hipkins ignored opposition parties in his Facebook posts, although Labour also ran some 'You can't trust National' posts on Facebook. National and Luxon ran a relatively critical social media campaign in the first half of 2023, strongly focussed on a promise to 'Get New Zealand back on track'. National's use of artificial intelligence to create images for Facebook attack advertisements was controversial (New Zealand Herald 2023). With National and ACT far ahead in fundraising (Malpass 2023) and all the major newspaper companies paywalling some content, there were strong incentives for Labour and the minor parties to rely heavily on social media for campaigning during the 2023 election.

References

- Aimer, P. 1989. 'Travelling Together: Party Identification and Voting in the New Zealand General Election of 1987.' *Electoral Studies* 8(2): 131–42. doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794(89)90030-9.
- Allcott, H., and M. Gentzkow. 2017. 'Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election.' *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31(2): 211–35. doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211.
- Arceneaux, K. 2012. 'Cognitive Biases and the Strength of Political Arguments.' *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2): 271–85. doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00573.x.
- Bean, C. 1992. 'Party Leaders and Local Candidates.' In *Electoral Behaviour in New Zealand*, edited by M. Holland, 141–68. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Benoit, W.L. 1999. *Seeing Spots: A Functional Analysis of Presidential Television Advertisements, 1952–1996*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Beyer, S., and E.M. Bowden. 1997. 'Gender Differences in Self-Perceptions: Convergent Evidence from Three Measures of Accuracy and Bias.' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23(2): 157–72. doi.org/10.1177/0146167297232005.
- Boydston, A.E., A. Ledgerwood, and J. Sparks. 2019. 'A Negativity Bias in Reframing Shapes Political Preferences Even in Partisan Contexts.' *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 10(1): 53–61. doi.org/10.1177/1948550617733520.
- Bradley, A. 2023. 'The Hatred and Vitriol Jacinda Ardern Endured "Would Affect Anybody".' *Radio New Zealand*, 20 January. Available from: www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/482761/the-hatred-and-vitriol-jacinda-ardern-endured-would-affect-anybody.
- Chyi, H.I., and O. Tenenboim. 2019. 'Charging More and Wondering Why Readership Declined? A Longitudinal Study of U.S. Newspapers' Price Hikes, 2008–2016.' *Journalism Studies* 20(14): 2113–29. doi.org/10.1080/1461670x.2019.1568903.
- Cooke, H. 2020. 'National MPs are Twisting Jacinda Ardern's Words on Social Media.' *Stuff*, [Wellington], 24 September. Available from: interactives.stuff.co.nz/2020/08/election-2020-the-whole-truth/#/1193324691/national-mps-are-twisting-jacinda-ardern-s-words-on-social-media.
- Cooke, H. 2021. 'Covering the 2020 Election: Platforms and the Plague.' In *Politics in a Pandemic: Jacinda Ardern and the 2020 Election*, edited by S. Levine, 141–48. Wellington: Te Herenga Waka University Press.
- Daalder, M. 2023. 'Chris Hipkins Wants to Make Politics Boring Again.' *Newsroom*, [Auckland], 23 January, [Updated 28 January]. Available from: www.newsroom.co.nz/chris-hipkins-want-to-make-politics-boring-again.
- Dalton, R.J. 2021. 'Party Identification and Its Implications.' In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.72.
- Davidson, M., and J. Shaw. 2021. 'Growing Green Support from a Position of Government.' In *Politics in a Pandemic: Jacinda Ardern and Labour's 2020 Election*, edited by S. Levine, 81–87. Wellington: Te Herenga Waka University Press.
- Druckman, J.N., M.J. Kifer, and M. Parkin. 2009. 'Campaign Communications in U.S. Congressional Elections.' *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 343–66. doi.org/10.1017/S0003055409990037.
- Edwards, B. 2017. 'Political Roundup: The Jacinda Ardern Effect Characterised By "Relentless Positivity".' *New Zealand Herald*, 2 August. Available from: www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/political-roundup-the-jacinda-ardern-effect-characterised-by-relentless-positivity/24WPOZIV4GGC5KYMGNPKYSR6IU/.

- Enli, G., and L.T. Rosenberg. 2018. 'Trust in the Age of Social Media: Populist Politicians Seem More Authentic.' *Social Media + Society* 4(1). doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764430.
- Fenoll, V., J. Haßler, M. Magin, and U. Russmann. 2021. 'Campaigning for Strasbourg on Facebook: Introduction to a 12-Country Comparison on Parties' Facebook Campaigns in the 2019 European Parliament Election.' In *Campaigning on Facebook in the 2019 European Parliament Election: Informing, Interacting With, and Mobilising Voters*, edited by J. Haßler, M. Magin, U. Russmann, and V. Fenoll, 3–21. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73851-8_1.
- Flanagan, T. 2014. *Winning Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. doi.org/10.1515/9780773590366.
- Gibson, R.K. 2020. *When the Nerds Go Marching In: How Digital Technology Moved from the Margins to the Mainstream of Political Campaigns*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195397789.001.0001.
- Greaves, L., and E. Morgan. 2021. 'Maori and the 2020 Election. In *Politics in a Pandemic: Jacinda Ardern and New Zealand's 2020 Election*, edited by S. Levine, 316–27. Wellington: Te Herenga Waka University Press.
- Greive, D. 2020. 'Bauer's Shocking Fall Reveals the Government's Poisonous Media Dilemma.' *The Spinoff*, [Auckland], 3 April. Available from: thespinoff.co.nz/business/03-04-2020/bauers-shocking-fall-reveals-the-governments-poisonous-media-dilemma.
- Haynes, A.A., and S.L. Rhine. 1998. 'Attack Politics in Presidential Nomination Campaigns: An Examination of the Frequency and Determinants of Intermediated Negative Messages against Opponents.' *Political Research Quarterly* 51(3): 691–721. doi.org/10.1177/106591299805100307.
- Hendricks, J.A., and D. Schill. 2017. 'The Social Media Election of 2016.' In *The 2016 US Presidential Campaign: Political Communication and Practice*, edited by R.E. Denton, jr, 121–50. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52599-0_5.
- Holt, K. 2018. 'Alternative Media and the Notion of Anti-Systemness: Towards an Analytical Framework.' *Media and Communication* 6(4): 49–57. doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i4.1467.
- Hopmann, D.N., P. Van Aelst, and G. Legnante. 2012. 'Political Balance in the News: A Review of Concepts, Operationalizations and Key Findings.' *Journalism* 13(2): 240–57. doi.org/10.1177/1464884911427804.

- Iseke-Barnes, J.M., and D. Danard. 2007. 'Indigenous Knowledges and Worldview: Representations and the Internet.' In *Information Technology and Indigenous People*, edited by L.E. Dyson, M. Hendriks, and S. Grant, 27–37. Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi.org/10.4018/978-1-59904-298-5.ch003.
- Kamira, R. 2003. 'Te Mata o te Tai—The Edge of the Tide: Rising Capacity in Information Technology of Maori in Aotearoa-New Zealand.' *The Electronic Library* 21(5): 465–75. doi.org/10.1108/02640470310499858.
- Karp, J.A. 2010. 'How Voters Decide.' In *New Zealand Government and Politics*, edited by R. Miller, 287–301. 5th edn. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- King, A. 2002. *Leaders' Personalities and the Outcomes of Democratic Elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi.org/10.1093/0199253137.001.0001.
- Kreiss, D., R.G. Lawrence, and S.C. McGregor. 2018. 'In Their Own Words: Political Practitioner Accounts of Candidates, Audiences, Affordances, Genres, and Timing in Strategic Social Media Use.' *Political Communication* 35(1): 8–31. doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1334727.
- Krewel, M. 2022. *The New Zealand Social Media Study, Wave 1–3*. [Computer file].
- Krewel, M., and J. Vowles. 2020a. Codebook: New Zealand Social Media Study (NZSMS). Unpublished document.
- Krewel, M., and J. Vowles. 2020b. 'From Dirty Dairying to Dirty Campaigning? The Duel between Jacinda Ardern and Judith Collins on Facebook.' *Election 2020: Key Social Media Trends*, [Blog], 2 October. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington. Available from: www.wgtn.ac.nz/research/strengths/election/The-Facebook-duel-between-Ardern-and-Collins.
- Krewel, M., and J. Vowles. 2020c. 'Negative Campaigning, Fake News, and Half-Truths among the Minor Parties. And the Question: Is Advance New Zealand Really "Populist"?' *Election 2020: Key Social Media Trends*, [Blog], 16 October. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington. Available from: www.wgtn.ac.nz/research/strengths/election/is-advance-new-zealand-populist.
- Krewel, M., and J. Vowles. 2020d. '#nzwotes: The Dynamics of Campaign Communication on Facebook.' *Election 2020: Key Social Media Trends*, [Blog], 27 October. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington. Available from: www.wgtn.ac.nz/research/strengths/election/facebook-campaign-communication?fbclid=IwAR2otnQiaqBg7Ylw0BtC_FrXKhC6j6h4bOyOr9iDM07TQazpKCXR3TCq3A4.
- Kung, S., M. Doppen, M. Black, T. Hills, and N. Kearns. 2021. 'Reduced Mortality in New Zealand during the COVID-19 Pandemic.' *The Lancet* 397(10268): 25. doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32647-7.

- Loan, J., K. Murray, R. Pauls, and K. Woock. 2021. *The Implications of Competition and Market Trends for Media Plurality in New Zealand*. A report for the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, November. Wellington: Sapere Research Group. Available from: www.mch.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-10/sapere-report-media-plurality-nz-feb22.pdf
- Lup, K., L. Trub, and L. Rosenthal. 2015. 'Instagram #Instasad?: Exploring Associations Among Instagram Use, Depressive Symptoms, Negative Social Comparison, and Strangers Followed.' *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 18(5): 246–52. doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2014.0560.
- Magalhães, P.C., J.H. Aldrich, and R.K. Gibson. 2020. 'New Forms of Mobilization, New People Mobilized? Evidence from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems.' *Party Politics* 26(5): 605–18. doi.org/10.1177/1354068818797367.
- Malpass, L. 2023. 'ACT Declares Almost \$1 Million In One Day from Big Money Donors.' *Stuff*, [Wellington], 25 March. Available from: www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/131600565/act-declares-almost-1-million-in-one-day-from-big-money-donors.
- McGregor, S.C. 2018. 'Personalization, Social Media, and Voting: Effects of Candidate Self-Personalization on Vote Intention.' *New Media & Society* 20(3): 1139–60. doi.org/10.1177/1461444816686103.
- McGregor, S.C., R.G. Lawrence, and A. Cardona. 2017. 'Personalization, Gender, and Social Media: Gubernatorial Candidates' Social Media Strategies.' *Information, Communication & Society* 20(2): 264–83. doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1167228.
- Meta. 2022. 'CrowdTangle: About us.' [Online]. Menlo Park, CA: Meta. Available from: help.crowdtangle.com/en/articles/4201940-about-us.
- Moffitt, B. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style and Representation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. doi.org/10.1515/9780804799331.
- Muchison, A. 2016. 'Online Media in New Zealand.' In *Politics and the Media*, edited by J. Kemp, B. Bahador, K. McMillan, and C. Rudd, 214–25. Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- Newshub. 2023. 'Newshub-Reid Research Poll Results: Nearly Half of New Zealanders Believe Christopher Luxon is Out of Touch.' *Newshub*, [Auckland], 14 May. Available from: www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2023/05/newshub-reid-research-poll-results-nearly-half-of-new-zealanders-believe-christopher-luxon-is-out-of-touch.html.

- New Zealand Herald. 2023. 'National Party Uses AI in Attack Ads: Christopher Luxon "Not Aware".' *New Zealand Herald*, 23 May. Available from: www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/national-party-uses-ai-in-attack-ads-luxon-not-aware/EA32SU4L35D7LFCHTJ5PGCFRCA/.
- New Zealand Social Media Study (NZSMS). 2020. Victoria University of Wellington. Available from: www.wgtn.ac.nz/hppi/centres/isprl/new-zealand-social-media-study.
- Niederle, M., and L. Vesterlund. 2011. 'Gender and Competition.' *Annual Review of Economics* 3(1): 601–30. doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-111809-125122.
- Robinson, C. 2019. *Promises, Promises: 80 Years of Wooing New Zealand Voters*. Auckland: Massey University Press.
- Ross, K., S. Fountaine, and M. Comrie. 2015. 'Facing Up to Facebook: Politicians, Publics and the Social Media(ted) Turn in New Zealand.' *Media, Culture & Society* 37(2): 251–69. doi.org/10.1177/0163443714557983.
- Ross, K., S. Fountaine, and M. Comrie. 2023. 'Gender, Party and Performance in the 2020 New Zealand General Election: Politicking on Facebook with Jacinda and Judith.' *Media, Culture & Society* 45(2): 388–405. doi.org/10.1177/01634437221127366.
- Sachdeva, S. 2020. 'Labour Put Its Chips On "Positive Politics" In Election Year.' *Newsroom*, [Auckland], 24 January. Available from: www.newsroom.co.nz/labour-puts-its-chips-on-positive-politics-in-election-year.
- Schoenbach, K., J. De Ridder, and E. Lauf. 2001. 'Politicians on TV News: Getting Attention in Dutch and German Election Campaigns.' *European Journal of Political Research* 39(4): 519–31. doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.00586.
- Semetko, H.A., and H. Tworzecki. 2017. 'Campaign Strategies, Media, and Voters: The Fourth Era of Political Communication.' In *The Routledge Handbook of Elections, Voting Behavior and Public Opinion*, edited by J. Fisher, E. Fieldhouse, M.N. Franklin, R. Gibson, M. Cantijoch, and C. Wlezien, 331–43. London: Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9781315712390-25.
- Shoemaker, P. 1991. *Gatekeeping: Communication Concepts 3*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. doi.org/10.4324/9780203931653.
- Shoemaker, P. 2006. 'News and Newsworthiness: A Commentary.' *Communications* 31(1): 105–11. doi.org/10.1515/COMMUN.2006.007.
- Shoemaker, P., and T. Vos. 2009. *Gatekeeping Theory*. London: Routledge.

- Smalley, S. 2022. 'Meta Won't Comment on its Plans to Abandon CrowdTangle.' *Factually*, 18 August. St Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute for Media Studies. Available from: www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2022/meta-wont-comment-on-its-plans-to-abandon-crowdtangle/.
- Tsang, S.J. 2022. 'Issue Stance and Perceived Journalistic Motives Explain Divergent Audience Perceptions of Fake News.' *Journalism* 23(4): 823–40. doi.org/10.1177/1464884920926002.
- Vallone, R.P., L. Ross, and M.R. Lepper. 1985. 'The Hostile Media Phenomenon: Biased Perception and Perceptions of Media Bias in Coverage of the Beirut Massacre.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 49(3): 577–85. doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.49.3.577.
- Vowles, J. 2014. 'Putting the 2011 Election in Its Place.' In *The New Electoral Politics in New Zealand*, edited by J. Vowles, 27–52. Wellington: Institute for Governance and Policy Studies.
- Vowles, J., F. Barker, J. Hayward, J. Curtin, and L. Greaves. 2022a. *2020 New Zealand Election Study*. [Online]. ADA Dataverse, V3. doi.org/10.26193/BPAMYJ.
- Vowles, J., H. Coffé, J. Curtin, and G. Cotterell. 2022b. *2014 New Zealand Election Study*. [Online]. ADA Dataverse, V3. doi.org/10.26193/MF9DNL.
- Vowles, J., G. Cotterell, R. Miller, and J. Curtin. 2022c. *2011 New Zealand Election Study*. [Online]. ADA Dataverse, V3. doi.org/10.26193/YZDMF3.
- Vowles, J., K. McMillan, F. Barker, J. Curtin, J. Hayward, L. Greaves, and C. Crothers. 2022d. *2017 New Zealand Election Study*. [Online]. ADA Dataverse, V3. doi.org/10.26193/28JJFB.
- Walker, M., and K.E. Matsa. 2021. 'News Consumption Across Social Media in 2021.' News, 20 September. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Available from: www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2021/09/20/news-consumption-across-social-media-in-2021/.
- Walls, J. 2020. 'Election 2020: Judith Collins in "Bittersweet" Campaign Launch, Attacks Labour as "Erratic" and "Lazy".' *New Zealand Herald*, 20 September. Available from: www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/election-2020-judith-collins-in-bittersweet-campaign-launch-attacks-labour-as-erratic-and-lazy/AC3W2IHWY37ZDNB5DJZTVZR47E/.
- Williams, D. 2018. 'The Future of Newspapers.' *Newsroom*, [Auckland], 8 January. Available from: www.newsroom.co.nz/summer-newsroom/the-future-of-news-papers.

Wilson, S. 2020. ‘Three Reasons Why Jacinda Ardern’s Coronavirus Response Has Been a Masterclass in Crisis Leadership.’ *The Conversation*, 6 April. Available from: theconversation.com/three-reasons-why-jacinda-arderns-coronavirus-response-has-been-a-masterclass-in-crisis-leadership-135541.

Appendix 3.1

Table A3.1 Model of party leader approval for Jacinda Ardern

Variables	(1) Ardern as 10	(2) Strongly like (8–10)
Female	0.637*** (0.092)	0.454*** (0.088)
Age	0.014*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)
Attends church more than once a year	–0.286** (0.114)	–0.406*** (0.108)
Asian	0.382** (0.153)	0.426*** (0.149)
Pasifika	1.396*** (0.268)	0.661** (0.295)
Māori	0.618*** (0.129)	0.441*** (0.137)
Labour identifier	1.598*** (0.104)	1.860*** (0.142)
National identifier	–1.773*** (0.169)	–1.476*** (0.112)
Green identifier	0.469*** (0.172)	0.762*** (0.191)
New Zealand First identifier	0.006 (0.452)	0.085 (0.400)
ACT identifier	–3.296*** (1.243)	–2.120*** (0.442)
Māori Party identifier	–1.112* (0.579)	–0.628 (0.471)
TOP identifier	–1.408* (0.721)	–0.789* (0.434)
Anti-establishment identifier		–3.975*** (1.269)

3. BETWEEN SELFIES AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Variables	(1) Arden as 10	(2) Strongly like (8–10)
Politicians trustworthy, neither, don't know, or missing	–0.243** (0.119)	–0.276** (0.119)
Politicians trustworthy, distrust strongly/ somewhat	–0.302*** (0.108)	–0.733*** (0.106)
Follow TV or papers = 2, rarely, or not at all	–0.318*** (0.123)	–0.888*** (0.115)
Follow talkback = 3, rarely, or not at all	0.462*** (0.125)	0.715*** (0.113)
Visited Facebook for information	0.264** (0.103)	0.259** (0.101)
Visited Instagram for information	0.439*** (0.161)	0.019 (0.167)
Constant	–2.319*** (0.245)	–0.493** (0.225)
Observations	3,029	3,063

*** p < 0.01

** p < 0.05

* p < 0.1

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

Table A3.2 Model of party leader approval for Judith Collins

Variables	(1) Strongly dislike (0–3)	(2) Like (0–10)
Age		–0.004 (0.003)
Female		0.127 (0.106)
Attends church more than once a year	–0.226** (0.101)	0.612*** (0.128)
Asian	–0.379*** (0.138)	0.531*** (0.182)
Pasifika	0.227 (0.239)	–0.299 (0.317)
Māori	0.471*** (0.123)	–0.603*** (0.159)
Labour identifier	1.097*** (0.100)	–1.680*** (0.135)

A TEAM OF FIVE MILLION?

Variables	(1) Strongly dislike (0–3)	(2) Like (0–10)
National identifier	-1.832***	2.365***
	(0.131)	(0.141)
Green identifier	1.268***	-1.641***
	(0.195)	(0.234)
New Zealand First identifier	0.715*	-0.486
	(0.405)	(0.554)
ACT identifier	-0.632**	0.835**
	(0.321)	(0.418)
Māori Party identifier	0.681	-1.387**
	(0.513)	(0.644)
Anti-establishment identifier	-0.226	-0.057
	(0.426)	(0.598)
TOP identifier	0.545	-1.279**
	(0.426)	(0.591)
Another party identifier	0.289	-1.876
	(1.477)	(2.135)
Follow TV or papers, sometimes, rarely, or not at all		0.190*
		(0.110)
Follow talkback rarely or not at all	0.622***	-0.746***
	(0.107)	(0.133)
Visited Facebook for information		-0.209*
		(0.120)
Visited Twitter for information	0.372*	-0.355
	(0.205)	(0.256)
Visited Instagram for information	0.521***	-0.513**
	(0.153)	(0.201)
Constant	-0.657***	4.716***
	(0.113)	(0.261)
Observations	3,055	3,127
R-squared		0.251

*** p < 0.01

** p < 0.05

* p < 0.1

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

This text is taken from *A Team of Five Million?: The 2020 'Covid-19' New Zealand General Election*, edited by Jennifer Curtin, Lara Greaves and Jack Vowles, published 2024 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

doi.org/10.22459/TFM.2024.03