

## Can Political Parties Change People's Perceptions and Ideology?''

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This paper uses data from six waves of the New Zealand Election Survey along with longitudinal data from the Comparative Manifesto Project to examine how the ideology of political party manifestos affects both how individuals perceive the ideology of these parties and how they perceive their own ideology. To identify causal relationships, we examine how individuals react to changes in parties manifestos using both cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis and focus on subsets of voters and parties where new information is most likely to impact people's perceptions. New Zealand is an ideal country for examining these questions as it has a unicameral legislature which is elected using a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system. Hence, each party's share of the seats in Parliament roughly mirrors its share of the overall nationwide party vote. Furthermore, any party with at least a 5% overall vote share or one directly elected member is represented in Parliament, which typically results in between five and eight parties being included. Hence, unlike in many countries that use First Past the Post voting systems, individuals are potentially well informed about the agendas of parties that cover a wide range of the political spectrum.