

Supplementary Appendix

The meaning of Left and Right across time and space (footnote 13)

Several studies suggest that the patterns of ideological structuring underlying the left-right scale may differ between Eastern and Western Europe (e.g., Evans and Whitefield 1993) as well as across countries and time (Evans and Whitefield 1998; Harbers, De Vries, and Steenbergen 2012; Linzer 2008; Markowski 1997). Nevertheless, there are strong arguments that suggest the left-right ideological dimension can be a useful framework for analyzing political competition in post-communist democracies. Marks et al. (2006: 169) report that the “theory of party positioning developed for Western European political parties does, indeed, apply to Central and Eastern Europe.” Survey-based studies suggests that respondents in postcommunist Europe are as likely to place themselves on the left-right scale as in other countries, and to base their voting decision on these positions (Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2010, 2011; see also McAllister and White 2007). Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2012, 92-93) similarly state, “The results make plain that citizens in W[estern] E[urope] and CEE have, broadly viewed, developed a similar understanding of left-right ideology regarding the economic dimension.”¹

Additionally, Linzer (2008), using a cross-national sample of countries, demonstrates that voters’ interpretation of the left-right scale is likely to differ across countries. Harbers, De Vries and Steenbergen (2012) reach a similar conclusion studying three Latin American countries. However, Linzer does not find that the CEE countries are systematically different from their western neighbors: the left-right spectrum structures public opinion in some countries better than others *within both regions*. For example, based on evidence presented on p. 122, left-right has a stronger role in structuring public opinion in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Germany than in France, Poland, and Italy.

We account for any possible cross-country differences by conducting a number of additional robustness checks. First, we normalize the policy distance by the distribution of voter preferences (measured by the standard deviation of left-right self-placements) and the average party distance in a political system (given in Equation 3 and 4 on pp. 13-14 of the manuscript). In alternative analyses, presented below (see Tables S2f-S4g, pp. S13-S16), we also (a) control for country fixed effects and (b) cluster standard errors by country. These analyses compare parties within the same system (not across systems), i.e., they compare the electoral fate of extremists vs. moderates in the same country, within the same left-right context. These additional analyses make it especially clear that our findings are not directly affected by any cross-national differences in the meaning of left-right.

¹ The authors also find that in WE (but not in CEE), the left-right dimension also correlates well with “new politics” issues (e.g. immigration, attitudes towards same-sex couples), which suggests that these countries are still in the process of incorporating these issues into their national debates, along the lines of the “issue evolution” literature in the United States (Carmines and Stimson 1989) and Europe (De Vries 2007).

Individual-level analyses (footnote 22)

We performed a series of additional individual-level analyses in order to evaluate whether the arguments that we make in the paper also hold on the individual level. We thank an anonymous reviewer for encouraging us to explore these relationships. Specifically, focusing on the party level, we have argued the following: (a) uncertainty repels voters, (b) centrist positions generate uncertainty, and (c) extremism is especially likely to reduce uncertainty in new democracies. Given this, we also expected that, in new democracies, non-centrist policy positions are likely to be electorally more beneficial than the centrist ones. Note that because our arguments and expectations in the main text are cast at the party level, there is a danger of committing ecological fallacy by trying to deduce individual-level relationships from the correlation of the variables collected at the party level. Still, since several of these arguments (especially (a) and (b)) draw on assumptions about individual level behavior, we will here provide preliminary tests of these relationships at the individual level. Specifically, we will explore whether (a) a voter is less likely to support a party the more ambiguous (i.e., less certain) its position, and (b) a voter is more certain about the positions of non-centrist parties (and especially so in new democracies). Finally, we will test whether an individual voter is more likely to vote for a more extreme than a moderate party. The results of these individual level analyses are generally consistent with the aggregate level results reported in the main text. We would like to stress, though, that these results are preliminary. A full exploration of the individual-level relationships (including developing more explicitly an individual-level theory and building more extensive individual-level models) remains beyond the scope and purpose of our paper and would require a separate study. We also note in the results that we report below, and as we comment in the conclusion of the main text, that follow up studies will need to do more to explain the cross-national findings that we report in the paper.

Uncertainty repels voters (Individual-level analyses that correspond to Table 4 in text)

We found that parties whose positions are uncertain attract less electoral support. The individual level assumption underlying this conclusion is that a voter is less likely to support a party whose position is uncertain. Therefore, we need to estimate vote choice based on the level of certainty about party position. Including all parties from the 31 countries would require running separate conditional logit models for the 31 countries and trying to compare results from the 31 separate analyses. In order to avoid such non-trivial complication, we decided to concentrate only on the respondents that voted for one of the top two parties in the election (i.e., the parties with the highest and second highest totals). All other respondents (including those who did not indicate a vote choice) are dropped from the data set. We constructed the dependent variable [*Voted top left*] so that it equals 1 if the respondent voted for the top party on the left and 0 if the respondent voted for the top party on the right. This allows us to pool all the observations together and compare logit estimates directly.

We construct a crucial independent variable that is designed to capture an electorate's willingness to place the top left and top right party on the 0-10 left-right scale. Specifically, *Relative willingness to place* is calculated as follows:

[*Relative willingness to place*]: [willingness in the electorate to place the top left party on the left-right scale] - [willingness in the electorate to place the top right party on the left-right scale]

For all observations, we expect that the coefficient on *Relative willingness to place* will be positive. In other words, we expect that the higher the overall proportion of people in the electorate placing the top left party (as compared to the top right party), the higher the likelihood of an individual to vote for the left party (as compared to the right party). More certainty about party’s positions is associated with a higher likelihood of voting for it. In addition, we also include controls for age, gender, marital status, education, household income, and an index of political information.² The parameter estimates for this model specification are reported in Table i4, and they support the assumption that individual voters are more likely to vote for a party whose position is certain. (This result also holds when the sample is split into postcommunist and advanced democracies and the effect is estimated separately for each.)

Table i4. The Effect of Voter Certainty on Voting for the Top Left Party
Advanced and postcommunist democracies

Relative willingness to place	6.079*** (.376)
Age	-.001* (.001)
Gender	.078*** (.019)
Marital status	.011 (.009)
Education	-.001 (.006)
Household income	-.076*** (.008)
Political knowledge	-.032*** (.009)
Constant	.294*** (.067)
N	46703
Pseudo-R ²	.007

Note: Table entries are coefficients from a logit model with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Voted top left*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

² The index is based on a battery of three “knowledge” questions that each CSES survey includes. Despite considerable variation in terms of content and format across the different surveys, these questions provide the best proxy for political knowledge (see Elff 2009). The final measure is an additive index of the three items with correct answers to each of the items coded as 1 and wrong answers as 0.

Extremism reduces uncertainty (especially in new democracies)
(Individual-level analyses that correspond to Table 3)

According to the results presented in Table 3, extreme policy positioning increases voter certainty about party positions, and the effect is stronger for postcommunist democracies more than for the established ones. On the individual level, this presumes that an individual voter is more certain about the position of an extremist than a centrist party. Accordingly, we estimate the probability of a respondent's willingness to place a focal political party on an ideological scale. The dependent variable, *Willing to place*, equals 1 if the respondent placed the party on the 0-10 left-right scale, and 0 otherwise. The crucial independent variable, *Party policy distance*, is calculated as the mean perceived left-right distance of the party from the mean voter position. We expect the effect of this variable to be positive in both postcommunist and established democracies, and the size of the effect to be greater in postcommunist democracies. We also control for several additional variables that plausibly influence individuals' willingness to place parties at the individual-level. These include a party's absolute vote share as well as the respondent's age, gender, marital status, education, household income, and an index that measures political information (measured as previously described). The parameter estimates, for postcommunist and established democracies, are presented in Table i3, and they are in line with the aggregate effects that we present in Table 3 of the manuscript. That is, respondents are more willing to place extreme than moderate parties, and this effect is stronger for postcommunist than for established democracies.

Table i3. The Effect of Party Policy Distance on Voter Certainty

	Advanced democracies	Postcommunist democracies
Party policy distance	.176*** (.006)	.214*** (.007)
Party's absolute vote share	.004*** (.000)	.009*** (.001)
Age	.006*** (.000)	.000 (.000)
Gender	-.624*** (.011)	-.476*** (.016)
Marital status	-.013*** (.005)	.005 (.007)
Education	.192*** (.003)	.220*** (.006)
Household income	.134*** (.004)	.159*** (.006)
Political knowledge	.334*** (.005)	.468*** (.007)
Constant	.497*** (.039)	-.528*** (.055)
N	350059	113568
Pseudo-R ²	.069	.112

Note: Table entries are coefficients from a logit model with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Willing to place*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

**In new democracies, non-centrist policy positions attract more voter support than the centrist ones; the opposite is true in the advanced democracies
(Individual-level analyses that correspond to Table 2)**

We argued that because uncertainty repels voters and, especially in new democracies, non-centrist positions generate more voter certainty about party positions, these non-centrist positions should be electorally more beneficial than the centrist ones in the context of new democracies. We did not articulate an individual-level expectation for the last part of the argument but one can argue the equivalent relationship is to estimate vote choice based on the policy distance between the individual and the party. Accordingly, we use the same set-up for the individual level analyses as discussed above (Table i4). The dependent variable [*Voted top left*] equals 1 if the respondent voted for the top party on the left and 0 if the respondent voted for the top party on the right. As before, this allows us to pool all the observations together, (and not have to run separate conditional logit models for the 31 countries and try to compare results from the 31 separate analyses) and compare logit estimates directly. We construct a crucial independent variable that is designed to capture the policy distance of the top left party, relative to the party distance of the top right party. Specifically, *Relative top left distance* is calculated as:

[*Relative top left distance*]: [distance between mean voter position and mean perceived top left position] - [distance between mean voter position and mean perceived top right position]

We expect that the coefficient on *Relative top left distance* will be positive for the postcommunist countries and negative for the established democracies. In addition, we also include controls for age, gender, marital status, education, household income, and an index measure of political information. Finally, similar to the main analyses presented in Table 2 of the text (see p. 18), we test for curvilinear effects in the distance measure by including a squared measure of *Relative top left distance* in the model specifications.

Table i2. The Effect of Party Policy Distance on Voting for the Top Left Party

	Advanced democracies	Postcommunist democracies
	(1)	(2)
Relative top left distance	-.125*** (.018)	-.161*** (.019)
Squared relative top left distance	.057*** (.008)	.145*** (.016)
Age	-.003*** (.001)	.010*** (.001)
Gender	.132*** (.021)	-.012 (.041)
Marital status	.013 (.007)	-.016 (.020)
Education	.013** (.007)	.002 (.014)
Household income	-.095*** (.009)	-.039** (.017)
Political knowledge	.001 (.010)	-.024 (.019)
Constant	.086 (.078)	-.305** (.146)
N	36661	10042
Pseudo-R ²	.012	.021

Note: Table entries are coefficients from a logit model with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Voted top left*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

These individual level results indicate a more complex relationship between distance and vote choice than was the case with the party-level analyses. Overall, however, they point in a similar direction. First, the negative parameter estimate on the *relative top left distance* variable in the analyses for advanced democracies in Model 1 Table i2 supports the conclusion of Table 2 in the main text. As the relative top left distance measure increases (that is, as the distance to the top left party increases in comparison to the distance to the top right party) the likelihood that a respondent will report voting for the top left party decreases. The positive coefficient estimate for the squared relative top left distance measure indicates that the strength of the effect decreases as relative top left distance increases. It reaches its minimum at a relative top left distance of around 1.1. While this means that in elections with top left distance >1.1 (meaning that the top left party is more than 1.1 units further away from the mean voter than the top right party) the effect turns into a positive one, only about 20% of respondents in advanced democracies fall into this category. Furthermore, when calculating predicted probabilities of voting top left against the observed distance measures, it appears that the relationship in the case

of advanced democracies resembles exponential decay rather than a U-shape, and approximates a linear negative relationship. In short, when the top right party is extreme, respondents are more likely to vote for the top left party. Conversely, as the top right party's extremism decreases (and the top left party is becoming more extreme), the likelihood of supporting the top left party decreases.

In postcommunist countries the relative top left distance parameter estimate is negative, which is inconsistent with our results because it indicates that when the distance of the top left party increases (compared to the top right party), the probability of voting for the top left party decreases. However, the coefficient estimate for the squared relative top left distance measure is positive, statistically significant, and large. Specifically, when the top left party is extreme relative to the right party (i.e., when relative top left distance $> .55$), the likelihood of voting for it increases, which is *consistent* with our expectations. Note that compared to advanced democracies, the coefficient for the squared term is more than two times greater (.15 as compared to .06), and the positive effect emerges at a shorter distance (at .55 compared to 1.1). This indicates that, as opposed to the advanced democracies, where the negative relationship dominated, in the case of postcommunist democracies it is the positive relationship that is more dominant. This is confirmed when observing predicted probabilities of voting top left against the observed distance measures: the negative effect is produced by only a handful of outlying cases, with a sizeable share of cases falling on an upward sloping line.

Furthermore, we believe that by focusing on the top two parties, we are performing an extremely conservative test of the argument given that all of our countries are multi-party democracies. This is especially relevant in the case of postcommunist democracies, where the top two parties' combined vote share is likely to be less than top two parties' combined vote share in established democracies. Voter behavior with regard to these parties may not be fully representative of the behavior of the entire electorate, which may also account for the discrepancies between the party-level and individual-level findings in Tables 2 and i2. Nevertheless, the results support the finding that individuals are more likely to support extreme parties in postcommunist democracies than in established democracies.

Robustness tests for the aggregate level analyses

A) Absolute vote shares and effective number of (electoral) parties

Table S2a. The effect of party policy distance on absolute vote share

	Advanced democracies		Postcommunist democracies	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-2.28*** (.70)		2.27* (1.12)	
Relative party policy distance		-3.94*** (1.36)		3.53 (2.29)
Effective number of parties	-2.67*** (.54)	-2.71*** (.60)	-1.52** (.55)	-1.65** (.60)
Constant	35.64*** (2.83)	35.86*** (3.23)	21.46*** (4.31)	22.84*** (4.54)
N	245	245	90	90
R ²	.13	.13	.14	.12

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Absolute vote share*. *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation 4 in the text. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S4a. The effect of voter certainty on absolute vote share, all countries

	(1) Proportion willing to place party	(2) Standard deviation of placements
Proportion willing to place party	.12*** (.05)	
Standard deviation of placements		1.41 (1.08)
Effective number of parties	-2.20*** (.50)	-2.26*** (.43)
Constant	19.19*** (4.20)	26.65*** (2.74)
N	335	335
R ²	.101	.090

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Absolute vote share*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

B) Absolute vote shares and number of parties receiving over five percent of the vote**Table S2b. The effect of party policy distance on absolute vote share**

	Advanced democracies		Postcommunist democracies	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-2.15*** (.66)		2.22* (1.12)	
Relative party policy distance		-3.94*** (1.36)		3.53 (2.29)
Number of parties 5+	-4.16*** (.47)	-4.24*** (.46)	-2.47** (1.06)	-2.92** (1.18)
Constant	43.53*** (2.72)	44.20*** (2.77)	26.96*** (6.14)	29.94*** (6.83)
N	245	245	90	90
R ²	.20	.20	.11	.09

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Absolute vote share*. *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation 4 in the text. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S4b. The effect of voter certainty on absolute vote share, all countries

	(1) Proportion willing to place party	(2) Standard deviation of placements
Proportion willing to place party	.14*** (.05)	
Standard deviation of placements		-.80 (1.06)
Number of parties 5+	-4.03*** (.47)	-4.01*** (.44)
Constant	27.66*** (4.09)	40.76*** (3.35)
N	335	335
R ²	.154	.137

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Absolute vote share*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

C) Logged vote shares

Table S2c. The effect of party policy distance on logged normalized vote share

	Advanced democracies		Postcommunist democracies	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-.12*** (.04)		.13** (.06)	
Relative party policy distance		-.20** (.08)		.27** (.12)
Constant	4.52*** (.06)	4.52*** (.07)	4.07*** (.14)	4.05*** (.15)
N	245	245	90	90
R ²	.04	.03	.06	.06

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation 4 in the text. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S4c. The effect of voter certainty on logged normalized vote share, all countries

	(1) Proportion willing to place party	(2) Standard deviation of placements
Proportion willing to place party	.008*** (.003)	
Standard deviation of placements		-.045 (.055)
Constant	3.63*** (.24)	4.41*** (.11)
N	335	335
R ²	.024	.001

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is the natural logarithm of *Normalized vote share*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

D) Clustered on election**Table S3d. Regression Coefficients for Party Policy Distance When Estimating Voter Certainty**

	Postcommunist democracies		Advanced democracies	
	Proportion willing to place party (1)	Standard deviation of placements (2)	Proportion willing to place party (3)	Standard deviation of placements (4)
Party policy distance	4.62*** (1.01)	-.11** (.05)	1.27** (.48)	-.03 (.03)
Constant	67.16*** (4.38)	2.54*** (.11)	82.50*** (1.54)	2.08*** (.09)
N	90	90	245	245
R ²	.17	.08	.02	.00

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. Dependent variables are noted in column headings. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

E) Clustered on party

Table S2e. The effect of party policy distance on normalized vote share

	Advanced democracies		Postcommunist democracies	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-10.12** (4.64)		10.01* (5.19)	
Relative party policy distance		-18.10** (8.75)		20.17** (9.31)
Constant	106.88*** (10.23)	107.66*** (11.10)	73.59*** (11.57)	72.20*** (11.65)
N	245	245	90	90
R ²	.04	.03	.04	.04

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on party) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation 4 in the text. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S4e. The effect of voter certainty on normalized vote share, all countries

	(1) Proportion willing to place party	(2) Standard deviation of placements
Proportion willing to place party	.56* (.31)	
Standard deviation of placements		-2.38 (6.92)
Constant	44.17* (25.16)	95.34*** (15.86)
N	335	335
R ²	.014	.001

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on party) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

F) Clustered on country

Table S2f. The effect of party policy distance on normalized vote share

	Advanced democracies		Postcommunist democracies	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-10.12** (4.75)		10.01** (4.39)	
Relative party policy distance		-18.10* (9.68)		20.17* (10.28)
Constant	106.88*** (8.04)	107.66*** (9.54)	73.59*** (11.01)	72.20*** (11.80)
N	245	245	90	90
R ²	.04	.03	.04	.04

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on country) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation 4 in the text. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S3f. Regression Coefficients for Party Policy Distance When Estimating Voter Certainty

	Postcommunist democracies		Advanced democracies	
	Proportion willing to place party (1)	Standard deviation of placements (2)	Proportion willing to place party (3)	Standard deviation of placements (4)
Party policy distance	4.62** (1.54)	-.11 (.06)	1.27** (.49)	-.03 (.04)
Constant	67.16*** (6.47)	2.54*** (.11)	82.50*** (2.07)	2.08*** (.11)
N	90	90	245	245
R ²	.17	.08	.02	.00

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on country) in parentheses. Dependent variables are noted in column headings. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S4f. The effect of voter certainty on normalized vote share, all countries

	(1) Proportion willing to place party	(2) Standard deviation of placements
Proportion willing to place party	.56** (.25)	
Standard deviation of placements		-2.38 (5.39)
Constant	44.17* (21.36)	95.34*** (10.53)
N	335	335
R ²	.014	.001

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on country) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

G) Country-specific (fixed) effects

Table S2g. The effect of party policy distance on normalized vote share

	Advanced democracies		Postcommunist democracies	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-10.51*** (3.66)		12.65** (5.52)	
Relative party policy distance		-18.10* (6.35)		20.17* (10.25)
Constant	107.56*** (7.13)	107.66*** (7.21)	68.63*** (12.07)	72.20*** (12.01)
N	245	245	90	90

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with from a fixed effects model with country-specific effects, standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation 4 in the text. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S3g. Regression Coefficients for Party Policy Distance When Estimating Voter Certainty

	Postcommunist democracies		Advanced democracies	
	Proportion willing to place party (1)	Standard deviation of placements (2)	Proportion willing to place party (3)	Standard deviation of placements (4)
Party policy distance	1.76*** (.44)	-.06** (.03)	.66* (.37)	-.01 (.02)
Constant	72.51*** (.97)	2.45*** (.06)	83.55*** (.73)	2.01*** (.04)
N	90	90	245	245

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with from a fixed effects model with country-specific effects, standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are noted in column headings. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S4g. The effect of voter certainty on normalized vote share, all countries

	(1) Proportion willing to place party	(2) Standard deviation of placements
Proportion willing to place party	3.22*** (.57)	
Standard deviation of placements		-1.81 (9.86)
Constant	-174.87* (46.83)	94.15*** (21.06)
N	335	335

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with from a fixed effects model with country-specific effects, standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

H) Incumbency and economic effects**Table S5h. Interaction models of the effect of party policy distance and control variables on normalized vote share**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-10.12*** (3.13)	-7.55*** (2.73)	-7.46*** (2.75)	-7.92*** (2.67)
Postcommunist x Party policy distance	20.13*** (5.96)	11.42* (5.86)	11.77* (6.13)	15.69** (6.11)
Postcommunist	-33.29** (13.42)	-16.83 (12.16)	-14.86 (13.75)	-20.23 (14.27)
Incumbency		51.47*** (7.79)	60.70*** (7.25)	94.48*** (13.94)
Incumbency x GDP growth		2.64* (1.56)		
GDP growth		-.00 (1.03)		
Incumbency x Inflation			-.34 (.46)	
Inflation			-.08 (.11)	
Incumbency x Unemployment				-4.75** (1.83)
Unemployment				.16 (.60)
Constant	106.88*** (5.41)	90.02*** (6.10)	89.57*** (5.01)	88.50*** (5.75)
N	335	335	335	335
R ²	.04	.23	.23	.25

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

I) Incumbency and economic effects**Table S5i. Interaction models of the effect of party policy distance and control variables on absolute vote share**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-2.30*** (.69)	-1.71*** (.58)	-1.70*** (.59)	-1.77*** (.57)
Postcommunist x Party policy distance	4.46*** (1.26)	2.50** (1.16)	2.73** (1.22)	2.89** (1.20)
Postcommunist	-8.40*** (2.60)	-4.76* (2.46)	-5.19* (2.67)	-5.27** (2.40)
Incumbency		12.00*** (1.44)	13.99*** (1.33)	19.09*** (2.63)
Incumbency x GDP growth		.56* (.32)		
GDP growth		.03 (.16)		
Incumbency x Inflation			-.09 (.07)	
Inflation			-.04 (.04)	
Incumbency x Unemployment				-.74** (.34)
Unemployment				.12 (.13)
Effective number of parties	-2.11*** (.41)	-1.90*** (.36)	-1.97*** (.36)	-1.90*** (.36)
Constant	32.98*** (2.44)	27.99*** (2.19)	28.19*** (2.15)	27.22*** (2.17)
N	335	335	335	335
R ²	.13	.34	.34	.34

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Absolute vote share*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

J) Communist successors and economic effects**Table S5j. Interaction models of the effect of party policy distance and control variables on normalized vote share**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-10.12*** (3.13)	-10.03*** (3.16)	-10.09*** (3.14)	-10.13*** (3.17)
Postcommunist x Party policy distance	20.13*** (5.96)	16.24** (7.46)	15.88** (7.68)	15.74* (7.97)
Postcommunist	-33.29** (13.42)	-31.18** (13.62)	-27.46* (14.98)	-25.68* (15.33)
Communist successor party		15.79 (45.12)	16.91 (28.33)	-14.62 (44.70)
Successor x GDP growth		1.71 (7.74)		
GDP growth		.40 (.88)		
Successor x Inflation			.51 (.53)	
Inflation			-.22** (.10)	
Successor x Unemployment				3.84 (5.10)
Unemployment				-.93** (.44)
Constant	106.88*** (5.41)	105.75*** (6.24)	107.36*** (5.42)	112.90*** (6.07)
N	335	335	335	335
R ²	.04	.05	.05	.05

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

K) Communist successors and economic effects**Table S5k. Interaction models of the effect of party policy distance and control variables on absolute vote share**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	-2.30*** (.69)	-2.27*** (.69)	-2.30*** (.70)	-2.30*** (.69)
Postcommunist x Party policy distance	4.46*** (1.26)	3.58** (1.47)	3.71** (1.48)	3.31** (1.51)
Postcommunist	-8.40*** (2.60)	-8.01*** (2.72)	-8.19*** (2.94)	-7.39*** (2.57)
Communist successor party		9.09 (5.92)	3.75 (4.78)	3.13 (7.16)
Successor x GDP growth		-.91 (1.03)		
GDP growth		.14 (.17)		
Successor x Inflation			.09 (.09)	
Inflation			.02 (.04)	
Successor x Unemployment				.20 (.73)
Unemployment				-.00 (.21)
Effective number of parties	-2.11*** (.41)	-2.17*** (.37)	-2.20*** (.42)	-2.11*** (.41)
Constant	32.98*** (2.44)	32.86*** (2.43)	33.33*** (2.48)	33.00*** (2.52)
N	335	335	335	335
R ²	.13	.13	.13	.13

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Absolute vote share*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

L) Incumbency

Table S3l. Regression Coefficients for Party Policy Distance When Estimating Voter Certainty

	Postcommunist democracies		Advanced democracies	
	Proportion willing to place party (1)	Standard deviation of placements (2)	Proportion willing to place party (3)	Standard deviation of placements (4)
Party policy distance	4.72*** (1.25)	-.13** (.05)	1.37* (.70)	-.03 (.04)
Incumbency	-1.04 (4.09)	.25 (.16)	2.22 (1.38)	.06 (.07)
Constant	67.16*** (3.34)	2.54*** (.10)	81.85*** (1.48)	2.06*** (.09)
N	90	90	245	245
R ²	.17	.12	.03	.01

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on party) in parentheses. Dependent variables are noted in column headings. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S4l. The effect of voter certainty on absolute vote share, all countries

	(1) Proportion willing to place party	(2) Standard deviation of placements
Proportion willing to place party	.08** (.04)	
Standard deviation of placements		.60 (.94)
Incumbency	13.90*** (1.17)	14.06*** (1.15)
Effective number of parties	-1.98*** (.40)	-2.00*** (.37)
Constant	18.92*** (3.52)	24.20*** (2.31)
N	335	335
R ²	.326	.321

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Absolute vote share*. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

M) Multidimensional (advanced) democracies**Table S2m. The effect of party policy distance on normalized vote share**

	Multidimensional democracies	
	(1)	(2)
Party policy distance	-18.33*** (3.76)	
Relative party policy distance		-37.96*** (7.25)
Constant	120.37*** (6.70)	126.66*** (7.44)
N	164	164
R ²	.10	.12

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on election) in parentheses. The dependent variable is *Normalized vote share*, which is calculated as the party's vote share multiplied by the number of competitive parties in the election (see Equation 1 in the text). *Relative party policy distance* is described in Equation 4 in the text. Countries identified as unidimensional or multidimensional according to Benoit and Laver (2006). * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Table S3m. Regression Coefficients for Party Policy Distance When Estimating Voter Certainty

	Multidimensional democracies	
	Proportion willing to place party	Standard deviation of placements
	(3)	(4)
Party policy distance	1.12 (.95)	-.05 (.04)
Constant	81.93*** (1.95)	2.19*** (.09)
N	164	164
R ²	.01	.00

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on party) in parentheses. Dependent variables are noted in column headings. Countries identified as unidimensional or multidimensional according to Benoit and Laver (2006). * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

N) Addressing endogeneity between voter certainty and party size

Table S3n. Regression Coefficients for Party Policy Distance When Estimating Voter Certainty

	Postcommunist democracies		Advanced democracies	
	Proportion willing to place party (1)	Standard deviation of placements (2)	Proportion willing to place party (3)	Standard deviation of placements (4)
Party policy distance	4.16*** (1.23)	-.11* (.06)	1.42** (.70)	-.02 (.04)
Absolute vote share	.18 (.12)	-.00 (.00)	.06 (.06)	.00 (.00)
Constant	64.72*** (3.91)	2.56*** (.13)	81.05*** (2.00)	2.03*** (.13)
N	90	90	245	245
R ²	.19	.09	.02	.01

Note: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors (clustered on party) in parentheses. Dependent variables are noted in column headings. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

Countries, Election Years, and Political Parties Included in the Empirical Analysis

Advanced democracies

Country, Election Year (Mean Voter Position)	Political Party	Left- Right Party Position	Vote Percentage
Australia			
1996 (5.46)	Labor	4.33	38.70
	Liberal	6.45	38.60
	National	6.50	8.20
	Australian Democrats	4.69	6.70
2004 (5.34)	Liberal	7.04	40.47
	Labor	4.31	37.64
	Green	3.21	7.19
	National	6.59	5.89
2007 (5.29)	Labor	4.35	43.38
	Liberal	6.85	36.28
	Green	3.61	7.79
	National	6.57	5.49
Austria			
2008 (4.82)	SPÖ	3.02	29.30
	ÖVP	5.72	26.00
	FPÖ	7.91	17.50
	BZÖ	7.28	10.70
	Green	2.62	10.40
Belgium-Flanders			
1999 (5.19)	Flemish Liberals and Democrats	5.75	23.40
	Christian People's Party	5.83	23.30
	Socialist Party (Flanders)	3.70	16.20
	Flemish Block	7.04	15.90
	Agalev	3.60	11.60
	VU/ID	5.31	9.10
Belgium-Walloon			
1999 (4.64)	Socialist Party (Wallonia)	5.72	23.60
	PRL-FDF	3.08	23.50
	Ecolo	3.80	17.00

	Social Christian Party	6.96	13.60
Canada			
1997 (5.33)	Liberal	5.41	38.50
	Reform	5.96	19.40
	Conservative	5.91	18.80
	New Democratic	3.36	11.00
	Bloc Québécois	3.60	10.70
2004 (5.13)	Liberal	5.07	36.73
	Conservative	6.28	29.63
	New Democratic	3.38	15.68
	Bloc Québécois	3.68	12.39
Denmark			
1998 (5.56)	Social Democrat	4.35	35.90
	Liberal	7.55	24.00
	Conservative	7.23	8.90
	Socialist People	2.52	7.60
	Danish People	8.64	7.40
2001 (5.54)	Left, Liberal Progress	7.32	31.20
	Social Democrat	4.38	29.10
	Danish People's Party	8.13	12.00
	Conservative	6.98	9.10
	Socialist People	2.78	6.40
	Radical Left, Social Liberal	4.61	5.20
Finland			
2003 (5.57)	Center Party	6.19	24.70
	Social Democrat	4.73	24.50
	National Coalition	7.46	18.60
	Left Alliance	2.34	9.90
	Green League	4.74	8.00
	Christian Democrats	5.85	5.30
2007 (5.67)	Center Party	6.57	23.11
	National Coalition	7.98	22.26
	Social Democrat	4.16	21.44
	Left Alliance	1.87	8.82
	Green League	4.77	8.46
France			
2002 (5.12)	UMP	6.66	33.30
	Socialist	3.61	24.10
	Front National	7.85	11.30

2007 (5.47)	UMP	7.99	39.54
	Socialist	3.54	24.73
Germany			
1998 (4.09)	SPD	3.36	43.90
	CDU	5.71	32.20
	CSU	6.30	7.30
	PDS	2.91	5.10
2002 (4.22)	SPD	3.35	38.50
	CDU	6.08	29.50
	CSU	6.59	9.00
	Green	3.01	8.60
	FDP	4.90	7.40
2005 (4.41)	SPD	3.60	34.20
	CDU	6.08	27.80
	FDP	5.23	9.80
	PDS	1.23	8.70
	Green	3.34	8.10
	CSU	6.54	7.40
2009 (4.44)	CDU	6.43	27.27
	SDP	3.66	23.03
	FDP	5.81	14.56
	Left	1.12	11.89
	Green	3.28	10.71
	CSU	6.96	6.53
Iceland			
1999 (5.56)	Independence	8.41	40.70
	Alliance	3.65	26.70
	Progressive	5.71	18.30
	Left Greens	2.39	9.10
2003 (5.41)	Independence	8.31	33.68
	Social Alliance	4.08	30.95
	Progressive	6.03	17.13
	Left Greens	2.25	8.81
	Liberal	5.49	7.38
2007 (5.50)	Independence	8.16	36.60
	Social Alliance	4.85	26.80
	Left Greens	2.18	14.30
	Progressive	5.57	11.70
	Liberal	5.51	7.30
2009 (5.15)	Social Alliance	4.25	29.80
	Independence	8.15	23.70

	Left Greens	2.17	21.70
	Progressive	5.64	14.80
	Civic Movement	4.11	7.20
Ireland			
2002 (5.81)	Fianna Fail	6.44	41.50
	Fine Gael	6.06	22.50
	Labour	3.61	10.70
	Sinn Fein	3.06	6.50
2007 (5.78)	Fianna Fail	6.55	41.60
	Fine Gael	6.26	27.30
	Labour	4.00	10.10
	Sinn Fein	3.13	6.90
Israel			
1996 (5.16)	Avoda	3.12	27.50
	Likud	7.46	25.80
	Shas	6.21	8.70
	Mafdal	7.32	8.10
	Meretz	1.51	7.50
2003 (5.77)	Likud	7.75	29.39
	Labor	2.88	14.46
	Shinui	4.88	12.28
	Shas	7.00	8.22
	National Union – Mafdal	8.24	5.53
	Meretz	1.76	5.21
2006 (5.70)	Kadima	5.16	22.02
	Labor (Avoda)	3.96	15.06
	Shas	6.03	9.53
	Likud	6.84	8.99
	Beytenu	7.54	8.99
	Ihud Leumi – Mafdal	7.35	7.14
Italy			
2006 (5.13)	Forza Italia	4.57	23.71
	Olive Tree	1.91	31.27
	National Alliance	4.84	12.34
	Union of Christian and Centre		
	Democrats	3.32	6.76
	Communist Refoundation Party	1.17	5.84
Netherlands			
1998 (5.36)	PvdA	4.25	29.00

	VVD	7.18	24.70
	CDA	6.23	18.40
	D66	5.07	9.00
	Green-Left	2.84	7.30
2002 (5.21)	CDA	6.30	27.93
	List Pim Fortuyn	7.56	17.00
	VVD	7.03	15.44
	PvdA	3.43	15.11
	Green-Left	2.31	6.95
	Socialist Party	2.36	5.90
2006 (5.29)	D66	4.44	5.10
	CDA	6.75	26.51
	PvdA	3.59	21.19
	Socialist Party	2.63	16.58
	VVD	7.19	14.67
	PVV	7.54	5.89
New Zealand			
1996 (5.57)	National	7.68	33.90
	Labour	3.83	31.00
	New Zealand First	5.44	13.40
	Alliance	2.68	11.20
2002 (5.16)	Labour	3.96	41.26
	National	6.85	20.93
	New Zealand First	6.48	10.38
	ACT	7.29	7.14
	Green	2.65	7.00
	United	5.58	6.69
2008 (5.66)	National	6.85	44.93
	Labour	3.66	33.99
	Green	2.54	6.72
Norway			
1997 (5.18)	Labor	4.80	35.00
	Progress	8.30	15.30
	Conservative	8.04	14.30
	Christian People's Party	5.77	13.70
	Center Party	4.15	7.90
	Socialist Left	2.41	6.00
2001 (5.51)	Labor	4.58	24.30
	Conservative	8.04	21.20
	Progress	8.09	14.60
	Socialist Left	2.77	12.50

	Christian People's Party	5.89	12.40
	Center Party	4.46	5.60
2005 (5.21)	Labor	3.99	32.69
	Progress	8.36	22.06
	Conservative	8.03	14.10
	Socialist Left	2.50	8.83
	Christian People's Party	6.15	6.78
	Center Party	4.40	6.48
	Liberal	4.78	5.92
Portugal			
2002 (5.34)	PPD/PSD	7.31	40.21
	PS	4.62	37.79
	CDS/PP Popular	7.72	8.72
	CDU Unitary Democratic Coalition	1.91	6.94
2005 (5.10)	PS	4.68	45.03
	PPD/PSD	6.93	28.77
	CDU Unitary Democratic Coalition	2.14	7.54
	CDS/PP Popular	7.33	7.24
	BE Left Bloc	1.68	6.35
2009 (5.15)	PS	5.02	36.56
	PPD/PSD	6.96	29.11
	BE Left Bloc	6.47	10.43
	CDS/PP Popular	2.11	9.81
	CDU Unitary Democratic Coalition	2.59	7.86
Spain			
1996 (4.40)	PP	7.84	38.70
	Socialist	4.02	37.60
	IU	2.28	10.50
2000 (4.71)	PP	7.11	45.20
	Socialist	3.70	34.70
	IU	2.25	5.50
2004 (4.15)	Socialist	3.30	42.59
	PP	7.82	37.71
Sweden			
1998 (4.96)	Social Democratic	3.48	36.40
	Moderate Rally	9.02	22.90
	Left	1.24	12.00
	Christian Democratic	6.97	11.80
	Centre	5.43	5.10
2002 (4.79)	Social Democratic	3.52	39.85

	Conservative	8.95	15.26
	People Party's Liberals	6.54	13.39
	Christian Democratic	7.13	9.15
	Left	1.31	8.39
	Centre	5.74	6.19
2006 (5.23)	Social Democratic	3.55	34.99
	Conservative	8.50	26.23
	Centre	6.25	7.88
	People Party's Liberals	6.75	7.54
	Christian Democratic	6.89	6.59
	Left	1.34	5.85
	Green	3.54	5.24
Switzerland			
1999 (5.19)	SVP-UDC People's	7.60	22.50
	SP/PS Social Democratic	3.29	22.40
	Freethinking Democrats	6.16	19.90
	CVP/PDC Christian Democratic	5.54	15.80
	GPS/PES Green	3.03	5.00
2003 (5.05)	SVP-UDC People's	8.17	26.73
	SP/PS Social Democratic	2.82	23.33
	FDP/PRD Radical Democratic	6.22	17.30
	CVP/PDC Christian Democratic	5.48	14.38
	GPS/PES Green	2.91	7.40
2007 (5.30)	SVP-UDC People's	8.12	28.90
	SP/PS Social Democratic	2.86	19.50
	FDP/PRD Radical Democratic	6.11	15.80
	CVP/PDC Christian Democratic	5.35	14.50
	GPS/PES Green	3.02	9.60
United Kingdom			
1997 (5.03)	Labour	3.97	43.20
	Conservative	7.17	30.60
	Liberal Democratic	4.71	16.70
2005 (5.21)	Labour	4.65	36.14
	Conservative	6.71	33.23
	Liberal Democratic	4.40	22.65
United States			
2004 (5.83)	Republicans	6.68	49.90
	Democrats	4.09	47.40

Postcommunist democracies

Country, Election Year (Mean Voter Position)	Political Party	Left- Right Party Position	Vote Percentage
Albania			
2005 (5.71)	Democratic Party of Albania	8.84	44.06
	Socialist Party of Albania	1.51	39.44
	Socialist Movement for Integration	2.80	8.23
Bulgaria			
2001 (5.71)	National Movement – Simeon II	6.54	42.74
	United Democratic Forces	8.80	18.18
	Bulgarian Socialist Party	1.70	17.15
	Movement for Rights and Freedoms	5.12	7.45
Croatia			
2007 (5.14)	Croatian Democratic Union	7.61	34.91
	Social Democratic Party of Croatia	2.03	32.50
	Croatian People's Party	3.98	7.05
	Croatian Peasant Party	5.36	6.77
	Croatian Social Liberal Party	4.89	6.77
Czech Republic			
1996 (5.78)	Civic Democratic Party	8.93	29.60
	Czech Social Democratic Party	3.38	26.40
	Communist	0.60	10.30
	Christian Democratic Union - Czech		
	People's Party	6.20	8.10
	Association for the Republic	5.93	8.10
	Civic Democratic Alliance	7.38	6.40
2002 (4.68)	CSSD Social Democratic Party	2.70	30.20
	ODS Civic Democratic Party	8.24	24.47
	Communist	0.77	18.51
	Christian Democratic Union - Czech		
	People's Party	5.74	14.27
2006 (5.44)	Freedom Union	6.92	14.27
	ODS Civic Democratic Party	8.76	35.38
	CSSD Social Democratic Party	2.90	32.32
	Communist	1.04	12.81
	Christian Democratic Union - Czech	6.10	7.23

	People's Party		
	Green	6.19	6.29
Hungary			
1998 (4.87)	Socialist Party	2.93	29.00
	Alliance of Young Democrats	6.48	25.70
	Independent Smallholder's	7.13	12.10
	Alliance of Free Democrats	3.99	7.30
	Justice and Life	7.91	5.10
2002 (4.79)	MSZP Hungarian Socialist Party	1.87	42.05
	Fidesz	8.10	41.07
	SZDSZ Alliance of Free Democrats	2.87	5.57
	MDF Democratic Forum	7.68	41.07
Poland			
1997 (5.57)	Solidarity	8.15	33.80
	Democratic Left Alliance	1.66	27.10
	Freedom Union	5.61	13.30
	Peasant	3.74	7.30
	Reconstruction	7.44	5.60
2001 (4.59)	Democratic Left Alliance	1.32	41.04
	Citizen's Platform	6.34	12.68
	Self Defence	4.63	10.20
	Law and Justice	6.65	9.50
	People's	4.31	8.98
	Polish Families	7.21	7.87
	AWSP	8.07	5.60
2005 (6.06)	Law and Justice	7.34	26.99
	Civic Platform	6.63	24.14
	Self Defence	4.57	11.41
	Democratic Left Alliance	1.40	11.31
	Polish Families	6.48	7.97
	Peasant	4.41	6.96
2007 (6.23)	Civic Platform	6.30	41.51
	Law and Justice	7.04	32.11
	Left and Democrats	1.97	13.15
	Peasant	4.91	8.91
Romania			
1996 (6.10)	Peasant and Christian	6.78	30.10
	Social Democracy	3.84	21.50
	Democratic	5.32	12.90
	Democratic Union of Hungarians	5.28	6.60

2004 (5.78)	Social Democratic	4.14	36.80
	National Liberal Party	6.86	31.48
	Democratic	6.77	31.48
	Greater Romania	3.76	12.99
	Democratic Union of Hungarians	4.81	6.20
	Humanist	4.67	36.80
Russia			
1999 (5.15)	Communist	1.89	24.20
	Unity Inter-regional/Social Democrats	6.87	23.30
	Fatherland All Russia	5.10	13.30
	Union of Right Forces	8.10	8.50
	Zhirinovsky	5.13	5.90
	Yabloko	6.08	5.90
Slovenia			
1996 (4.94)	Liberal Democratic	3.90	27.00
	People's	5.88	19.30
	Social Democratic	6.18	16.10
	Christian Democratic	6.57	9.60
	United List of Social Democrats	3.44	9.00
2004 (5.01)	Slovenian Democratic	6.96	29.08
	Liberal Democratic	3.19	22.80
	United List of Social Democrats	3.51	10.17
	Christian People's Party	6.96	9.09
	People's	6.10	6.82
	National	5.34	6.27
Ukraine			
1998 (4.63)	Communist	1.80	24.70
	People's Movement	7.32	9.40
	Socialist	2.97	8.50
	People's Democratic Party	5.65	5.00

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