

Bridging Spatial and Saliency Theory: Party Size and Issue Selection in Campaigns

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Abstract

I propose a unified explanation for parties' joint policy and emphasis decisions which bridges saliency theory and spatial analyses of party campaigns. Party platforms are anchored by the policy preferences of activists, core supporters and target voters, leading parties to disproportionately emphasize issues where their policies are popular with all key constituencies. However, which voters a party targets relates to its historical electoral performance ('party size'). Traditionally successful ('major') parties emphasize issues where the policies preferred by activists and core supporters are generally popular, but smaller ('minor') parties emphasize issues where their preferred policies may be unpopular but are distinctive. Using recent European data and various empirical strategies, I show that this account has significant explanatory power beyond existing party typologies and theories of issue selection.

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In the 2010 general election, the British Liberal Democratic party achieved its highest ever vote share. Curiously, in the preceding campaign, the party devoted considerable time to some of its less popular policies—such as amnesty for illegal immigrants or opposition to nuclear power—instead of spending that time on its more popular and more moderate economic policies, such as raising the income tax threshold.¹ This is evident from the parties’ social media campaigns in 2010. Compared to Labour and the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats referenced policies on taxation and public services considerably less often, and policies on the environment considerably more often, in their official tweets.² Might emphasizing its more extreme and less popular policies have been a vote-winning strategy for a party like the Liberal Democrats – and if so, why?

Drawing on both saliency theory and spatial analyses of party competition, I propose a unified theory of parties’ joint policy and emphasis decisions which can explain patterns like the above. Following Wagner (2012), I distinguish between the policy *position* adopted by a party on an issue and how much it *emphasizes* the issue in its campaigns. As previously noted (Aldrich 1983; Miller and Schofield 2003; Bawn et al. 2012), I observe that party platforms are frequently anchored by the policy preferences of activists and core supporters, leading political parties to adopt some policies which may be unpopular with their target voters. However, if parties are able to increase the electoral salience of an issue by emphasizing it, they can limit any negative electoral fallout from unpopular positions by disproportionately emphasizing the issues where the policies preferred by their activists and core supporters are also popular with target voters.

Crucially, in a departure from previous work on party strategy, I argue that which voters a party targets not only depends on characteristics like its nicheness (Meguid 2005), governing experience (van de Wardt, Vries and Hobolt 2014) or party organization (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013), but also past electoral performance. I suggest that historically successful parties—‘major parties’—will tend to target the median voter, but parties that have often struggled to secure a parliamentary foothold—‘minor parties’—will instead pursue voters with distinctive policy preferences. That minor parties, even ostensibly ‘centrist’ ones, may actually benefit by emphasizing their more distinctive positions is consistent with the experience of the Liberal Democrats – a canonical example

¹A majority of British respondents have consistently supported some reliance on nuclear power (Corner et al. 2011).

²Whereas Labour and the Conservatives mentioned taxation and public services in about 20% of official tweets, the Liberal Democrats did so in 10.8%. Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrats devoted five times as many tweets as the Conservatives to the environment, and ten times as many as Labour (author’s calculations, based on all tweets posted by @LibDems, @Conservatives and @UKLabour between 6 April and 6 May 2010).

of such a party.³

Analyzing cross-sectional party-issue level data on the issue emphases of 178 parties in 27 Eastern and Western European countries, I present evidence consistent with this account. In particular, I show that, throughout Europe, both major and minor parties adopt more extreme policies when their core supporters are more extreme on an issue. However, whereas major parties de-emphasize their more extreme issue positions, minor parties typically emphasize these positions. Perhaps surprisingly, even minor parties that are often considered ‘centrist’ typically emphasize their more extreme issue positions.⁴

These differences between major and minor parties appear to be induced by differences in these parties’ past electoral performance, rather than simply because major and minor parties are different in other fundamental respects. I suggest that it may be electorally optimal for major and minor parties to behave in this way if major parties are preferred to minor parties by voters, all else equal. I also discuss a range of alternative explanations for these patterns and find all wanting. For instance, although a party’s issue emphases may influence its vote share, I show that this cannot by itself account for the observed differences between major and minor party emphasis strategy: these differences are well predicted by party performance in 1995, and also if we instrument for each party’s current major or minor status using its seat share in 1995, but not predicted by parties’ current electoral performance. Further, while major and minor parties systematically differ on several criteria, I also show that the observed difference between major and minor party strategy cannot be accounted for by differences in prior governing experience, party organization, nicheness or left-right ideology. Finally, I argue that these differences also cannot entirely be accounted for by activists selecting into certain parties based on the issues they emphasize. Cumulatively, the analyses suggest that whether a party is major or minor has a distinct and substantial effect on its electoral strategy.

³British psephologists have previously suggested that emphasizing ‘radical’ rather than ‘centrist’ policies might be a vote-winning strategy for the Liberal Democrats (Russell and Fieldhouse 2005; Cutts and Russell 2015). The party has never obtained more than 10% of seats in parliament.

⁴Examples of minor parties with centrist economic platforms which nonetheless disproportionately emphasize their more extreme non-economic issue positions include the Christian Democrats in Finland, the Green and Farmers’ Union in Latvia, and Potami in Greece. All these parties were, on average, located between 4 and 6 on the left-right economic scale in the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Several minor liberal or Christian democratic parties, like the Free Democratic Party in Germany, the Liberal Alliance in Denmark, or the Swedish Christian Democrats, do disproportionately emphasize their economic platforms – but the economic policies they advocate were considered extreme by experts.

1 Related Literature

This paper bridges several distinct but overlapping literatures. Most importantly, in building a theory linking a party’s choice of which issues to emphasize in campaigns to its preferred policies on those issues, I draw on both saliency theory and spatial analyses of party behavior. Saliency theory has long argued that parties will emphasize issues on which they are favored by voters to increase the electoral importance of those issues (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996), whereas spatial analysis has frequently been used to study the origins and effects of parties’ positional choices (Adams 2012). By combining elements from both literatures, I am able to explain why some parties may adopt favorable issue positions and others unfavorable ones, and moreover, why parties with unfavorable issue positions may choose to de-emphasize those issues rather than adopt more favorable positions instead. To date, most work on party strategy has not focused on these questions, instead taking the issues favorable for a party as given.⁵

That said, this paper relates closely to, and builds on, the few studies that also investigate the relationship between party position-taking and emphasis strategy – notably, Wagner (2012) and de Sio and Weber (2014). For instance, Wagner (2012) also suggests that smaller parties will emphasize their more extreme, or distinctive, policies due to the electoral benefits of policy differentiation – whereas larger parties might de-emphasize their more extreme issue positions. I replicate these findings, but clarify that a party’s historical electoral performance—and not just its recent vote share—influences its emphasis strategy, and also show that the effect of party size is distinct from that of its nicheness.⁶ Meanwhile, de Sio and Weber (2014) argue that the issue positions associated with a party are those favored by its core voters, and that parties will emphasize ‘bridge policies’ – issue positions which are popular with both the party’s target and existing voters. This resembles the strategy I suggest should be favored by major parties. However, I show that a different emphasis strategy may be optimal for minor parties, and also discuss the additional constraints that activist and core supporter preferences imply for parties.

A second contribution of this paper is to the literature on party types. I determine

⁵The tendency of a party to be systematically favored by voters on a certain issue has often been termed ‘issue ownership’ (Dahlberg and Martinsson 2015). While some recent studies have explored how and why a party’s issue reputation may evolve, they have not studied the relationship between this and its preferred policies.

⁶Wagner (2012) notes the considerable overlap between party size and niche party type, but seems to suggest that niche parties are a subset of small parties, rather than considering nicheness and size to be orthogonal characteristics of a party (p. 70–71).

that a party’s major or minor status has a separate but complementary effect on its strategy, superseding the effect of other party characteristics identified in the literature. These include whether a party is niche or mainstream (Meguid 2005), whether a party is a challenger or mainstream (Hobolt and de Vries 2012), whether a party is activist-dominated or leader-dominated (Schumacher and Giger 2017), and whether a party is office-seeking or policy-seeking (Schumacher et al. 2015). For instance, the distinction I draw between major and minor parties may resemble that often drawn between mainstream and niche parties, but I show that while niche parties—however measured—are more often ‘minor’, they can be ‘major’, and mainstream parties are about equally likely to be major or minor. Similarly, while minor parties are more likely to be challenger parties than major parties, are slightly more dominated by activists and tend to have lower levels of office-seeking ambition, I show that the distinction in behavior between major and minor parties that I identify survives even after controlling for these factors, as measured by these authors.⁷

A third contribution is to the literature on parties’ electoral incentives for differentiation. I propose that minor parties face stronger incentives to differentiate themselves from their competitors than do major parties, and they do so by emphasizing their more distinctive issue positions. This departs from earlier studies of electoral differentiation that do not consider how these incentives may vary by party type (Cox 1990; Kitschelt 1994). That said, this argument resembles that of (Schofield 2004), who argues that high valence parties have more incentive to locate near the median than low valence parties. This echoes the argument in Section 2, where I posit that, *ceteris paribus*, historically successful parties may be more attractive to the median voter than historically smaller parties, imbuing major parties with a non-policy advantage among voters. However, whereas Schofield focuses on party position-taking, I adapt this reasoning to understand party emphasis strategies instead. The difference in behavior between major and minor parties I identify also reinforces the conclusions of earlier studies arguing that smaller parties face stronger electoral incentives to adopt distinctive policy positions (Abou-Chadi and Orłowski 2016; Spoon 2009).

Finally, this paper complements other work on the origins of parties’ issue reputations (Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans 2009; Dahlberg and Martinsson 2015), as well as on the determinants of parties’ emphasis strategies on positional issues (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010; van de Wardt 2014; van de Wardt, Vries and Hobolt 2014). These

⁷This also suggests that major parties are not necessarily catch-all parties (Katz and Mair 1996), as the difference in major and minor party emphasis strategy survives even after controlling for organizational structure and levels of office-seeking aspiration.

studies identify several other factors which are important for parties' emphasis decisions, such as disagreement among a party's supporters on the issue, governing experience, and the issues emphasized by other parties in the same country or party family. I control for these additional factors in my analyses, and continue to find that a party's major or minor party status influences its emphasis decisions on positional issues.

2 Theory

I distinguish between a party's position on an issue dimension (its policies on the issue) and its emphasis on the issue in public statements (how much it talks about the issue). This differs from work equating positional extremism on an issue with emphasis, clarity or 'intensity' on the issue.⁸ Accepting this distinction allows that parties may emphasize either an extreme position or a centrist position. Likewise, parties may de-emphasize extreme *or* centrist positions. For simplicity, I assume that parties take a position on every issue dimension in a multidimensional Downsian policy space – even if they place no emphasis on this position.⁹ Throughout, I focus on the vote-maximizing incentives faced by both major and minor parties, arguing that such incentives lead these parties to behave differently.¹⁰

I develop a theory where the preferences of a party's activists and core supporters influence the policies adopted by a party and, thereby, the issues it emphasizes in public. The theoretical argument rests on five claims. The first claim is as follows.

Claim 1: *Party platforms are anchored by the preferences of their activists and core supporters.*

This follows trivially if activists are key in internal decision-making: the party leadership is more reliant on activist support for survival, and may need activist approval when devising policy. More generally, party elites must take note of the opinions of "policy-demanding groups" (Bawn et al. 2012), including activists and core supporters, since they rely on their financial and logistical support in campaigns, and this support

⁸This equivalence is implicit in directional theory (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989), and also apparent in more recent work relating to parties' salience strategies (Rovny 2012).

⁹From a voter's perspective, a party that takes no position on an issue is observationally equivalent to a party that places no emphasis on the issue.

¹⁰This is not to say that all such parties are vote-seeking; in any context where parties' legislative influence is increasing in vote share, even office-seeking or policy-seeking party elites will presumably want to maximize votes, all else equal – either to retain office or to obtain greater policy influence.

may be conditional on policy payoffs.¹¹ This is plausible even in an era of increasing electoral volatility and declining party membership (Mair, Müller and Plasser 2004), as canvassing by activists remains an important means by which parties persuade and mobilize likely voters.¹² Meanwhile, core supporters—as distinct from a party’s core *voters*—provide parties with a reservoir of volunteer campaign workers (Scarrow 2015), and may persuade others to support a particular party. As such—and consistent with a large literature (Aldrich 1983; Miller and Schofield 2003; Bawn et al. 2012)—we may expect that, when choosing policies, parties will endeavor to locate close to their activists and core supporters, leading all parties to take non-centrist positions on some issues.

From Claim 1, the following testable hypothesis follows straightforwardly.

H1: *Parties typically adopt positions closer to the median voter on issues where the preferences of their activists and core supporters are more similar to the median voter.*

The second theoretical claim concerns party issue emphases.

Claim 2: *Parties tend to disproportionately emphasize the issues where their policies are more popular with their target voters.*

This claim is based on the premise that a party will be better able to attract its target voters if the election is fought on issues where these voters prefer the party’s policies to those of its opponents. Then, the party may wish to particularly emphasize such issues to increase their importance to target voters. Such a strategy is consistent with previous research on ‘heresthetics’ and saliency theory (Riker 1996), arguing that parties are able to influence voters’ issue priorities by selectively emphasizing certain issues, and that parties disproportionately emphasize electorally favorable issues to increase their salience.

Claim 3: *Historically electorally successful parties typically face strategic incentives to target the median voter.*

This claim builds on fairly standard Downsian reasoning. If there are more moderate than extreme voters on each issue¹³, a party may expect to do best electorally if able to appeal to voters near the median. Then, a party will have a strategic incentive to target

¹¹Here, ‘activists’ refer to a party’s rank-and-file members and campaign workers, while core supporters are those “strong party identifiers who are deeply engaged in the political process” (Egan 2013, 126). Implicitly, I assume that activists are normally also core supporters, but core supporters are not necessarily activists.

¹²Numerous recent studies have found local campaigning by activists to have positive electoral payoffs in diverse contexts (Karp and Banducci 2007; Pons 2018).

¹³This holds so long as voter preferences are approximately single peaked and symmetric on each issue. Empirically, I find that this holds on most issues. Kernel density plots of average European voter preferences by issue are given in Appendix B.1.

such voters if it believes it can win them over. The parties with the most realistic hope of doing so will often be those that have performed well in recent elections. I term such parties ‘major parties’. If major parties can realistically expect to obtain the support of the median voter but historically smaller parties—‘minor parties’—usually cannot, then only major parties will consistently have a strategic incentive to target the median voter.

In combination, Claims 1–3 suggest the following testable hypothesis:

H2: *Major parties typically emphasize the issues on which the party’s position, and the preferences of activists and core supporters, are closer to the median voter than other parties in the same system.*

The reasoning behind **H2** is as follows. If the strategic incentives described in Claim 3 are sufficiently powerful, major parties will tend to target the median voter. Based on Claim 1, if major party platforms are anchored by activist and core supporter preferences, major parties will typically only adopt policies like those preferred by the median voter on issues where their activists and core supporters are also close to the median voter. If voters care about ideological proximity to some degree, then a major party’s policies are likely to be more popular with the median voter on issues where its activists and core supporters are closer to the median voter. Then, based on Claim 2, we may expect major parties to emphasize these issues to increase their electoral salience—so as to appeal to voters near the median—in which case **H2** follows. Although a major party could be more popular with such voters if it adopted a moderate position on all issues, this is not possible if the party is anchored to particular policies by activists and core supporters (Claim 1).

The next claim asserts that minor parties do not have the same strategic incentives as major parties.

Claim 4: *Minor parties do not typically face strong strategic incentives to target the median voter.*

While major parties can often realistically expect a high vote share—and therefore seat share—by appealing to voters near the median, minor parties usually cannot expect this in the short term. As such, targeting the median voter may be a sensible strategy for major parties but not minor parties.

One reason that major parties may be advantaged over minor parties, and so have more success appealing to the median voter, is that a party’s historical electoral performance may shape voters’ expectations regarding the party’s *likely* vote share in future. This may lead some voters to vote tactically for major parties. In particular, the single

largest party in a parliamentary system is likely to either form a single-party government or to be the formateur in a multi-party government (Ansolabehere et al. 2005). Consequently, voters may try to coordinate on parties likely to obtain a plurality of seats. In most cases, these will be major parties, as voters use a party’s past electoral performance as a heuristic for its future viability (Blais, Erisen and Rheault 2014). Provided voters wish to influence the choice of executive, this incentivizes strategic voting for major parties. This applies at the district level under majoritarian electoral systems, and applies at the national level under both majoritarian and proportional electoral systems.¹⁴ As such, studies have found that smaller parties frequently lose votes to large parties due to strategic voting under both types of electoral systems (Abramson et al. 2010).

Therefore, it may be difficult for minor parties to compete effectively with major parties for voters near the median. If a minor party tries to attract the same voters as a major party—by taking similar positions to the major party or by emphasizing similar issues—then tactical considerations may lead such voters to choose the major party regardless. Moreover, there are other reasons voters may prefer the major party to the minor party in such a scenario.¹⁵ For instance, the major party may have more activists and media exposure than the minor party, allowing it to establish a stronger party brand. Major parties may also benefit from more widespread partisan allegiances, and voters may value the major party’s greater legislative experience.

Thus, it may not be viable for a minor party to target the median voter. The next claim proposes that minor parties will instead target voters whose policy preferences are poorly represented by other parties.¹⁶

Claim 5: *Minor parties typically face strategic incentives to target voters who are ideologically distant from the positions taken by other parties.*

If a minor party does not expect to win over many voters targeted by major parties, it is more likely to target voters who feel their preferences on issues salient to them are not being well represented by other parties – including major ones. Such voters may be less easily swayed by tactical or other reasons to support major parties, and so more likely to

¹⁴In some cases, tactical considerations may still encourage support for a minor party over a major party – as “threshold insurance” (Gschwend 2007) or due to a desire for “policy balancing” (Kedar 2005). However, it seems probable that tactical considerations like the above will usually favor major parties over minor ones.

¹⁵I posit that many, but not necessarily most, voters would prefer the major party. There are many reasons why some voters might still prefer the minor party, such as local considerations, or the minor party’s ownership of an issue.

¹⁶A minor party may still want to target the median voter if all major parties hold very extreme positions on some issue. This possibility is discussed after **H3b** below.

support minor parties. One approach by which minor parties can attract these voters is by espousing policies that are distinct from other parties on one or more issues. Then, in many cases, the policies of a minor party that are most electorally valuable will be those that are most distinct from the policies being advocated by other parties. Based on Claim 1, these are likely to be issues where the minor party’s activists and core supporters have views that are most distinct from those supporting other parties. Moreover, based on Claim 2, minor parties should be expected to emphasize the issues where their policies are most distinct from other parties to increase the salience of these issues. This line of reasoning suggests the following testable hypothesis:

H3a: *Minor parties typically emphasize the issues on which the position of the party, and the preferences of its activists and core supporters, are most distinct from those of other parties in the same system.*

So long as there are no issues where all major parties adopt very extreme policies, the issues where a minor party’s policies are most distinctive will necessarily be those where its policies, and activist and core supporter preferences, are most extreme, since its centrist policies are not very distinctive. This in turn suggests another testable hypothesis:

H3b: *Minor parties typically emphasize the issues on which the position of the party, and the preferences of activists and core supporters, are further from the median voter.*

When all major parties hold very extreme positions on an issue, **H3b** may not hold, since a minor party’s most distinctive position may then be a centrist one. Nevertheless, I conjecture that **H3a** will still hold under these circumstances. The example of the British Liberal Democrats discussed in the introduction illustrates the implications of **H3b**. Similarly, the radical right parties of Europe have won considerable electoral support while emphasizing their relatively extreme positions on immigration. These parties have increasingly adopted relatively moderate economic platforms (for instance, of a ‘welfare chauvinist’ hue); nevertheless, they continue to emphasize their positions on immigration considerably more than their economic policies,¹⁷ appealing to voters’ national identities rather than their economic interests (Kriesi et al. 2006).

Major and minor parties may differ in a number of ways that are important for their political behavior. For instance, major parties might be more leader-dominated than minor parties (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013); they may differ in whether they have governing experience (Hobolt and de Vries 2012), in their office-seeking ambitions (Schumacher et al. 2015), or in whether they are mainstream or niche (Meguid 2008).

¹⁷I find this to be true of all radical right parties in the CHES dataset I analyse in Section 4.

Nevertheless, Claims 3 and 4 propose that differences in strategy between major and minor parties partly reflect the different strategic incentives faced by these parties resulting from their past electoral performance. It follows that major and minor parties can be expected to behave differently in part because of their past electoral performance rather than simply due to other differences that may exist between these parties. Moreover, it follows that major and minor party *status* is not simply a consequence of the emphasis strategies that different parties adopt, but itself determines parties' strategic incentives and therefore their emphasis strategies.¹⁸ This implies a further testable hypothesis:

H4: *Differences in issue emphases between major and minor parties cannot be entirely attributed to other long-standing differences between these parties, such as organization, government experience or nicheness.*

In Section 4, I show that hypotheses **H1–H3b** are consistent with recent patterns of party issue emphasis in Europe, and discuss several analyses providing suggestive evidence in favor of **H4**. A full empirical evaluation of **H4** is left to future work. In sum, the evidence provided for **H1–H4** suggests that the underlying theoretical Claims 1–5 characterize the incentives facing political parties in Europe in recent times, and their resulting behavior, to some degree.

3 Data Description

To evaluate the empirical support for hypotheses **H1–H4**, I estimate the effect of variation in the extremism of a party's core supporters on its positional extremism and emphasis decisions across various issues. I combine data from the 2014 European Election Study (EES) and the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) to construct a country-party-issue level measure of core supporter extremism, parties' positional extremism and issue emphasis for eight issues (all the available issues).¹⁹ For each issue, respondents were either asked to place their policy position (in the EES) or that of the party (in the CHES) on an eleven-point scale.²⁰ In the CHES, experts were also asked to identify and rank the three most important issues for each party.

¹⁸Implicit in this analysis is the possibility that major and minor parties might change which voters they target in response to changes in electoral performance. For instance, we would expect that when a formerly major party loses enough support to become a minor party, its emphasis strategy (and target voters) will evolve accordingly. In analyses discussed in Appendix E.8, I show that a party's emphasis strategy depends on its average electoral performance over approximately the previous fourteen years, but not its electoral performance prior to that time.

¹⁹The issues are listed in Appendix B.

²⁰The feasibility of this exercise clarifies the positional character of all eight issues.

In a few analyses, the main outcome variable is a party’s positional extremism on an issue. I measure this by the difference between a party’s position on an issue (according to the CHES) and that of the average voter in its country (according to the EES).²¹²² In most analyses, the main outcome variable is a given party’s emphasis on an issue in a given country. Absent a continuous measure of issue emphasis, I construct an ordinal measure using data from the CHES, which takes values between 0 and 3.²³ For instance, if experts, on average, considered an issue to be the most important issue for a party, the issue is scored 3; the second most important issue for a party is scored 2, and so on. In some instances, two or more issues were, on average, ranked as being similarly important to a party. In such cases, these issues were awarded the same score.²⁴

In most analyses, the key independent variable is either the issue extremism or the ideological distinctiveness of a party’s core supporters. For each country-issue, I measure the extremism of a party’s core supporters by the absolute difference between the average self-placement of core party supporters and the mean voter on that issue in the EES. I measure the distinctiveness of a party’s core supporters on each issue by the absolute difference between the average self-placement of its core party supporters and those of all other parties in the same country. The EES does not ask about political behavior aside from voting; consequently, I cannot use party membership or campaign activity to identify party activists. Thus, I only evaluate the theory with respect to the implications of core supporter preferences for party strategy. As discussed in Section 2, core supporters, like party activists, are valuable to parties not only for their votes, but also for their support during campaigns. Moreover, insofar as the views of core supporters are an accurate proxy for activists’ views, this approach is also informative about the constraints activists impose on parties.

As described in Section 2, a party’s core supporters are those “strong party identifiers

²¹This is certainly imperfect, as we are forcing measures of policy preferences from different surveys onto the same scale. However, this is preferred to a measure locating the average voter at 5 on each issue and measuring party extremism relative to this point, as, first, this may equate the preferences of the average voter with the status quo, and second, the EES reveals that average voter placement in a country frequently deviates from 5, e.g. on immigration.

²²We may be concerned that experts are more likely to assume a party is emphasizing an issue if its policies are particularly extreme, implying a correlation between issue emphases and issue position. However, these variables are virtually uncorrelated ($\rho = 0.04$).

²³I replicate the main analyses using data from the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), reported in Appendix E.1, and obtain substantively and statistically similar results. There, I discuss that the CHES data allows for a larger sample size and so is preferred for the main analysis.

²⁴We might also interpret this variable as measuring how electorally valuable an issue is for a party. Then, my results would still suggest that major parties benefit electorally by emphasizing issues where they are relatively moderate, whereas minor parties benefit by emphasizing their more distinctive issue positions.

who are deeply engaged in the political process” (Egan 2013, 126). Two types of respondents are considered party ‘core supporters’: (i) those ‘very’ interested in politics and ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ close to a party, or (ii) ‘somewhat’ interested in politics but ‘very’ close to a party. Although imperfect, this is the best cross-national measure of core supporter preferences available. By this approach, 6.8% of EES respondents are core supporters of a party, with an average of 27.8 core supporters for each major party and 7.9 core supporters for each minor party. However, my results are robust to eliminating parties with fewer than 15 core supporters from the sample, or using any of the following approaches to identify core supporters: (i) strong partisans with at least moderate political interest, (ii) all partisans with at least moderate political interest, (iii) all strong partisans and (iv) all partisans (see Appendix E.6).

Finally, across specifications, I control for other factors that may be important for party emphasis strategies. Country-issue fixed effects allow that country, issue, or country-issue specific factors may influence party emphasis decisions – for instance, voter polarization (Spoon and Klüver 2015), party system size (Wagner 2012), party system ‘crowdedness’ (Kitschelt 1994) or the prior salience of an issue (Meyer and Wagner 2015). Country-issue fixed effects are also essential to correctly identify the relationships implied by the theory, as I discuss in Appendix C. I also include separate issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties to account for differences in the issues favored by each type of party – as, for instance, major parties are more likely to emphasize economic issues than minor parties. Further, I control for disagreement among core supporters on an issue (Rovny 2013)—measured by the standard deviation in the self-placement of a party’s core supporters on each issue—as well as whether a party has previously held office (Hobolt and de Vries 2012) and the mean emphasis placed on each issue by a party’s coalition partners, if any²⁵ (Sagarzazu and Klüver 2017).

3.1 Types of Parties

Per the discussion in Section 2, I empirically distinguish between major and minor parties based on their recent past electoral performance. In the main specification, parties are classed as ‘major’ if they received at least 13% of seats in the national legislature, on average, between 2000 and 2014, and ‘minor’ otherwise.²⁶ By the baseline measure,

²⁵Only coalition partners as of 1 Jan 2014 (if in government), or pre-electoral coalition partners from the most recent election preceding this date, are considered (details in Appendix B.2).

²⁶In Section 4, I demonstrate robustness to the choice of seat share threshold. In Appendix E.7, I show that the statistical model best explains parties’ emphasis strategies when the time frame used to calculate historical electoral performance is 2000–2014 and the average seat share threshold is 13%.

the median and modal number of major parties in a country is two, and the maximum number of major parties in a country is four. By comparison, the number of minor parties in a country ranges between one and eight, with a median and mode of five. I rely on seat share rather than vote share to measure parties' past electoral performance for two reasons. First, seat share allows us to identify the relative importance of different parties within the same pre-electoral coalition, when the vote shares of individual parties cannot be calculated. Second, when the two deviate, a party's seat share is more indicative of its legislative clout.²⁷

Applying these criteria, I obtain a core sample of 177 parties from 27 Eastern and Western European countries, of which 61 are major parties, and 116 are minor parties. In the main specification, I treat Belgium as two separate countries—Flanders and Wallonia—each with a distinct party system. This is because, with Flemish and Francophone parties only contesting the same seats in the Brussels Capital region, and otherwise contesting seats in Flanders and Wallonia respectively, each party's national performance underestimates its true electoral strength in seats it does contest.²⁸

4 Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents some initial support for **H1–H3b**. Models 1 and 2 report results from OLS regressions with country-issue fixed effects, regressing parties' positional extremism on the extremism of their core supporters with and without additional controls. The positive and statistically significant coefficient on supporter extremism in both models, in conjunction with an insignificant coefficient on the interaction term between major party status and supporter extremism, is consistent with **H1** – suggesting major and minor parties respond similarly to supporter extremism when choosing policies. Next, Models 3 and 4 regress party issue emphases on their positional extremism. Now, the positive and statistically significant coefficient on positional extremism in Model 4 suggests that minor parties emphasize their more extreme issue positions (**H3b**). However, for major parties, positional extremism decreases party emphasis on the issue, since the combined effect on party emphasis implied by the constituent and interaction term is negative

Data on historical electoral performance was compiled using the Comparative Political Data Set, the Parliaments and Governments database (Parlgov) and the Parties and Elections in Europe website.

²⁷The two are especially likely to deviate in less proportional systems. However, in my sample, historical vote and seat share are highly correlated ($\rho = 0.95$), and the results are substantively and statistically identical when parties are classified using historical vote share instead.

²⁸I treat the Brussels-Capital region as part of Wallonia as Francophone parties are overwhelmingly dominant in this officially bilingual region. My results are robust to treating Belgium as a single country.

and statistically significant (**H2**). In these analyses—and in all analyses where issue emphasis, an ordinal variable, is the dependent variable—I estimate an ordinal logit model – using the BUC fixed effects ordered logit estimator proposed by Baetschmann, Staub and Winkelmann (2015) in order to allow for country-issue fixed effects.²⁹

As stated in **H1**—**H3b**, we would expect an analogous relationship between the positional extremism, or positional distinctiveness, of parties’ core supporters and the issue emphasis strategies of major and minor parties. Table 2 reports results consistent with these expectations. Models 1 and 2 regress party issue emphases on core supporter extremism. Model 1 presents the baseline specification, with no controls except country-issue fixed effects and issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties. Model 2 adds controls for disagreement among supporters on an issue, parties’ prior office experience and mean emphasis by coalition partners. In both specifications, the magnitude and statistical significance of the coefficients indicate that an increase in supporter extremism on an issue is associated with a substantial increase in minor party emphasis on that issue, but a *decrease* in major party emphasis on the issue. As discussed in Section 2, in the unlikely event that *all* major parties advocate very extreme policies on an issue, a minor party may prefer to emphasize an issue where their relatively moderate position is distinctive (**H3a**). To account for this possibility, Models 3 and 4 replicate Models 1 and 2 while substituting the policy distinctiveness of a party’s core supporters as the main independent variable. The results are also robust to this alternative specification.

The decision to classify a party as major based on a 13% average seat share threshold may seem arbitrary. Figure 1 shows the robustness of estimates to varying this threshold. For very low thresholds, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between supporter extremism and emphasis, but for high thresholds—beyond approximately 12%—the sign reverses. In fact, Figure 1 displays a function that looks almost discontinuous at a 12% seat threshold, supporting the view that emphasis strategy is qualitatively different for parties above and below this threshold. This is confirmed by a comparison of the in-sample fit of the regression analyses reported in Table 2 with statistical models using a continuous measure of historical electoral performance instead (results reported in Appendix E.2).

One may wonder if these results are due to reverse causality. That is, parties em-

²⁹Appendix C provides more detail on the BUC estimator and empirical specification. In their survey of available estimators for an ordered logit model with fixed effects, Riedl and Geishecker (2014) show that the BUC estimator consistently delivers the most efficient, consistent and least biased parameter estimates. Nevertheless, in Appendix E, I demonstrate robustness to using an unconditional fixed effects ordered logit estimator or a linear fixed effects estimator.

Table 1: Positional Extremism and Party Emphasis Strategy

	Dependent Variable:			
	Positional Extremism		Issue Emphasis	
Supporter Extremism	0.098*	0.352***		
	(0.046)	(0.083)		
Supporter Extremism \times Major	0.082	0.022		
	(0.103)	(0.121)		
Positional Extremism			0.111	0.204**
			(0.062)	(0.071)
Positional Extremism \times Major			-0.306**	-0.392***
			(0.097)	(0.101)
Supporter Disagreement		0.176*		-0.286***
		(0.074)		(0.083)
Prior Office Experience		-0.496***		0.114
		(0.138)		(0.207)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis		-0.142		0.100
		(0.087)		(0.091)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,298	1,154	1,415	1,154
R ²	0.247	0.319		
Adjusted R ²	0.096	0.158		
Log Likelihood			-1,851.537	-1,480.597

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Models 1 and 2 present OLS estimates from a linear fixed effects model, and Models 3 and 4 BUC estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of party issue emphases. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties and country-issue fixed effects. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

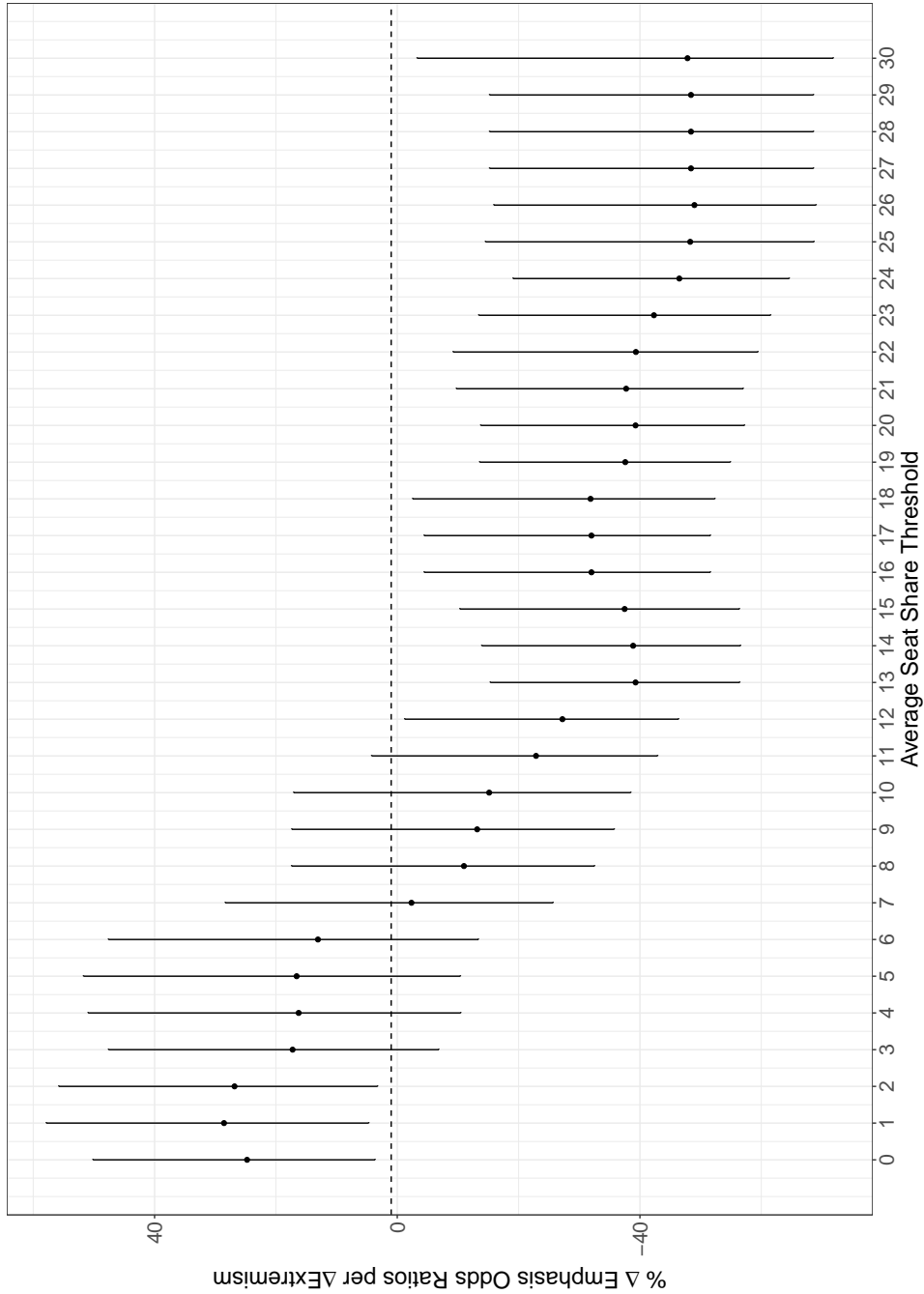
Table 2: Emphasis Strategy for Major and Minor Parties

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Supporter Extremism	0.209*** (0.055)	0.346*** (0.099)		
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.328** (0.115)	-0.607*** (0.155)		
Supporter Distinctiveness			0.200** (0.065)	0.272*** (0.081)
Supporter Distinctiveness \times Major			-0.354*** (0.099)	-0.436*** (0.105)
Supporter Disagreement		-0.195** (0.075)		-0.228** (0.077)
Prior Office Experience		0.158 (0.204)		0.154 (0.196)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis		0.075 (0.085)		0.087 (0.084)
Observations	1,298	1,154	1,298	1,154
Log Likelihood	-1,687.195	-1,477.450	-1,686.272	-1,478.329

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of party issue emphases. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties and country-issue fixed effects. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

Figure 1: Effect of Supporter Extremism on Issue Emphasis by Seat Share Threshold



Note: This figure plots exponentiated BUC coefficient estimates for fixed effects ordered logit model of party issue emphases, while varying the average seat share threshold for a party to be included in the sample. All models include country-issue fixed effects and control for parties' prior office experience, supporter disagreement and mean coalition partner emphasis on each issue. Exponentiated 95% confidence intervals are reported, based on standard errors clustered by country-issue.

phasizing their more moderate positions are more likely to become major, and those emphasizing their more extreme positions are more likely to remain minor. However, in additional analyses presented in Appendix D, I show that *even if this is the case*, this cannot credibly account for my findings. Rather, it is more plausible that major parties prefer to emphasize their more moderate positions, and minor parties typically emphasize their more extreme positions. In these analyses, I first show that the difference in behavior between major and minor parties we observe is better predicted by historical electoral performance than more recent electoral performance. Next, I show that the observed difference in emphasis strategy between major and minor parties survives if we, first, use party seat share from 1995 as a proxy, and second, as an instrument, for parties' current electoral performance. Together, these analyses strongly counter the suggestion that party emphasis strategies are primarily driving their electoral performance, rather than the reverse.

The only remaining alternative explanation for my findings is that there exists some other extremely persistent factor that is highly correlated with whether a party is major or minor, or which determines a party's historical electoral performance and also its current emphasis strategy. Further analyses reported in Appendix D suggest that none of the following long-standing party characteristics can fulfill this role: (1) a party's left-right ideology³⁰, (2) party family³¹, (3) whether a party is mainstream or niche (Meguid 2005), (4) whether a party has held ministerial office in the post-war period (or its challenger party status) (Hobolt and de Vries 2012), (5) whether a party is leadership or activist-dominated³² (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013), and (6) how frequently a party has been in office since its foundation (a measure of the party's latent office aspirations) (Schumacher et al. 2015). This provides suggestive evidence in favor of **H4**. That even leadership-dominated or office-seeking minor parties may prefer to emphasize issues where their preferred policies are relatively extreme need not be surprising, as this strategy may be more likely to win the party votes than emphasizing an issue where the minor party's position is more moderate but less distinctive.

Finally, the selection of core supporters into parties cannot plausibly explain the observed difference in emphasis strategy between major and minor parties. This requires that, not only do activists and core supporters select into parties based on their policies,

³⁰Measures of each party's overall left-right placement are taken from the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

³¹Party family designations are taken from the Comparative Manifesto Project.

³²Information on the extent to which the leadership dominates a party's formal structure is taken from the Integrated Party Organization Dataset (Schumacher and Giger 2017).

but that they do so differently depending on party size. This argument requires that, for major parties, individuals with more extreme preferences on an issue are more likely to support a party that emphasizes the issue *less*, but for minor parties, individuals with more extreme preferences on an issue prefer to support a party that emphasizes the issue *more*.

5 Conclusion

How do parties remain popular while advocating unpopular policies? And why advocate unpopular policies at all? This paper argues that party platforms are anchored by the preferences of their activists and core supporters. To limit any negative electoral fallout from adopting unpopular policies, parties turn to “salience strategies”: disproportionately emphasizing the issues they would prefer voters to prioritize. However, I suggest that whether this nudges a party towards emphasizing its more centrist *or* its more extreme issue positions rests on its electoral performance in recent decades. I conjecture that traditionally successful parties—major parties—do best by emphasizing the issues where their preferred policies are relatively moderate, whereas traditionally smaller parties benefit from emphasizing their relatively distinctive, and potentially extreme, issue positions. Consistent with this theory, I find a clear difference in the emphasis strategies of major and minor parties in my analyses. Throughout, major parties de-emphasize issues on which their core supporters are relatively extreme, whereas minor parties emphasize issues on which their core supporters are relatively extreme or distinctive. In this respect, a party’s historical performance emerges as an important determinant of electoral strategy in addition to other long-standing characteristics, such as prior office experience, party organization or whether a party is mainstream or niche.

This paper is deliberately ambitious in trying to develop a joint theory of party position-taking and emphasis decisions that can account for key patterns in party behavior. Inevitably, such an endeavor entails substantial generalization and requires making many assumptions that may be contested. A definitive empirical verification of all aspects of this theory is well beyond the scope of this study. As such, I focus on only evaluating the empirical support for the four hypotheses that I set out in Section 2, relating the preferences of a party’s activists and its historical electoral performance to its preferred emphasis strategy. Nevertheless, I suggest that the empirical support that I uncover for all four hypotheses suggest that the underlying theoretical claims are, at least, worth taking seriously. Further empirical investigation and evaluation of this theory is left to

future work.

This opens the door to many other avenues for future research. While I rely solely on cross-sectional data, a time-series analysis would allow us to analyze the effects of changing activist and supporter composition on party emphasis strategies. Further, this line of reasoning raises the possibility that minor parties may move to emphasizing their less distinctive issue positions if their electoral performance improves with time. Conversely, previously major parties might move to emphasizing their more extreme issue positions if their electoral position decays to the point that they cease to be major. Future work could also evaluate the evidence for these processes.

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Online Appendix

The online appendix is organized as follows. Appendix A presents a list of parties classified by whether they are mainstream or niche, as well as by major and minor party status. Appendix B provides more information on the coding and characteristics of variables from the main analyses. Appendix C discusses the BUC estimator and preferred empirical specification at greater length. Appendix D presents additional analyses that address and refute a series of alternative hypotheses that could potentially explain my results. Finally, Appendix E demonstrates that the results in the paper are robust to other measures of party emphasis and core supporters, alternative estimators and measures of key variables, and the exclusion of any particular country or issue. Appendix E also includes evidence that the chosen seat share threshold and time frame used to calculate historical electoral performance, 2000–2014, provide the best model fit.

Appendix A List of Parties

Table A.1: Classification of Parties by Party Family and Size

Country	Large Mst. ¹	Large Niche	Small Mst.	Small Niche
Austria	ÖVP, SPÖ	FPÖ	NEOS	BZÖ, GRUNE
Bulgaria	GERB, SDS		ABV	DPS, ATAKA
Croatia		HDZ, SDP	HSLs, HSS	IDS, ORaH, HSP, HL-SR, HDSSB
Czech Republic	ODS, ČSSD	KSČM	ANO 2011, KDU-CSL, TOP 09, SVO- BODNI	SZ
Denmark	V, SD		KF, LA, RV	DF, SF
Estonia	EK, ER		IRL, SDE	EER
Finland	KESK, SDP, KOK		KD, PS	VAS, VIHR, RKP/SFP
Flanders	CD&V, VLD, SPA	VB, N-VA		Groen
France	PS, UMP			EELV, FN, PG
Germany	CDU, SPD		FDP	Linke, Grunen, AfD, Piraten

Table A.1: **Classification of Parties by Party Family and Size**

Country	Large Mst. ¹	Large Niche	Small Mst.	Small Niche
Greece	ND, PASOK		Potami	ANEL, DI-MAR, KKE, LAOS, SYRIZA, XA
Hungary	Fidesz, MSZP			DK, JOBBIK, LMP, E14
Ireland	FF, FG			GP, SP, Sinn Fein
Italy	PD, FI		Fdl, UDC	NCD, SEL, M5S, LN
Latvia	SDPS, ZZS		V	LKS
Lithuania	DP, LSDP, TS-LKD		LRLS, TT	LVZS, LLRA
Poland	PO, PiS, SLD		KNP, PSL, SP, RP	
Portugal	PSD, PS		PP	MPT, BE
Romania	PNL, PSD		PC, PDL, PMP	UDMR, PP-DD
Slovakia	SDKU-DS, Smer-SD		KDH, SaS, NOVA, OLaNO	MH, SMK-MKP, SNS
Slovenia	SDS, SD		PS, SLS	DeSUS
Spain	PP, PSOE		UpyD	EAJ/PNV, CC, ERC, C's, BNG, Podemos
Sweden	M, SAP		C, KD, FP	SD, PIRAT, FI, MP, V
The Netherlands	CDA, PvdA, VVD		D66	GL, PvdD, PVV, SP
United Kingdom	CONS, LAB		LIBDEM	Plaid, SNP, Green, UKIP
Wallonia	PS, MR		cdH, PP	ECOLO

Appendix B Data

B.1 Data Description

In the analyses included in the body of the paper, the main variables of interest are the policy extremism of core party supporters, the ideological distinctiveness of core party supporters, and the level of emphasis parties place on different issues. For these analyses, I use data from the 2014 European Election Study and the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey to construct measures of supporter extremism, supporter distinctiveness and party emphasis for eight issues. These sources allow for a better measure of both these variables than earlier versions of the same surveys, as well as other cross-national surveys of a similar nature.

First, for what seems the first time, experts were asked to classify the importance of issues for parties with reference to virtually the same issues as appeared in the European Election Study in the same year. Second, the 2014 European Election Study asks respondents to place themselves on an eleven-point scale on each issue, rather than simply asking whether, and how much, they agreed or disagreed with an issue position. The former generates a better measure of respondents' policy preferences as conceptualized here; the latter seems better suited to measuring respondents' preferences as conceptualized within a 'directional' framework (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989). This is because, by the second measure, stronger disagreement may not necessarily indicate that a respondent has more extreme preferences, only more intensely held preferences.

Third, the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey improves on earlier expert measures of party emphasis by asking experts to identify, and rank, the three most important issues for each party. By contrast, earlier surveys asked experts to identify the salience of an issue for each party on an eleven-point scale. This provides greater room for measurement error due to contamination, as experts, like voters, may misconstrue a party with a more extreme position as also placing more emphasis on that position. In my case, this kind of measurement error would be particularly problematic, as such contamination might spuriously imply that parties emphasize issues on which they are more extreme. Further, the new measure is more clearly zero-sum: an increase in emphasis on one issue by a party implies a decrease in emphasis on some other issue.

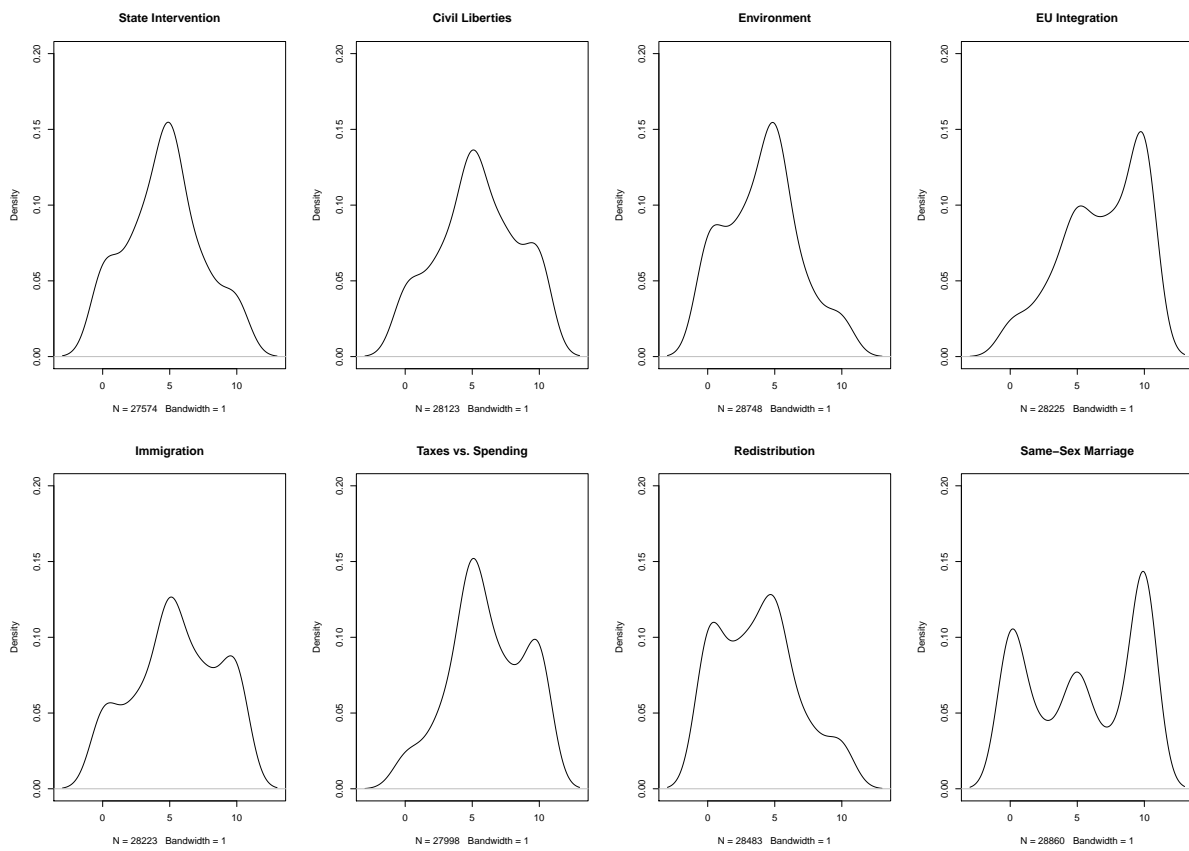
¹Here, parties are classified as mainstream or niche based on party family, with ethnic, nationalist, green, communist and protest parties classified as niche, and liberal, socialist, social democratic, agrarian, conservative, and Christian democratic parties as mainstream. I consider alternative approaches to classifying mainstream and niche parties in Appendix D. Party family designations are taken from the Comparative Manifesto Project.

Table B.1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.
Full Sample				
Party Emphasis	0.48	0.00	0.00	3.00
Supporter Extremism	1.44	1.10	0.00	8.86
Supporter Distinctiveness	1.91	1.58	0.00	8.19
Major Parties				
Party Emphasis	0.56	0.00	0.00	3.00
Supporter Extremism	0.99	0.78	0.00	6.70
Supporter Distinctiveness	1.85	1.54	0.00	8.19
Minor Parties				
Party Emphasis	0.44	0.00	0.00	3.00
Supporter Extremism	1.72	1.39	0.00	8.86
Supporter Distinctiveness	1.95	1.61	0.01	7.85

Table B.1 reports descriptive statistics for party emphasis, core supporter extremism and core supporter distinctiveness for each issue. As might be expected, major party supporters are, on average, less extreme relative to the mean voter than minor party supporters. Figure B.1 presents kernel density plots of average European voter preferences on each issue. Recall that the argument laid out in Section 2 assumes that voter preferences on any given issue are approximately single-peaked and symmetric – implying that there are more voters with moderate rather than extreme policy preferences on each issue. Figure B.1 makes evident that this assumption is satisfied except in two cases: EU integration, where voter preferences are, on average, highly right-skewed, and same sex marriage, where voter preferences are, on average, trimodal. Nevertheless, my results are robust to excluding these two issues from the analyses.

Figure B.1: Density Plots of Average European preferences by Issue



B.2 Coding Decisions

Table B.2: Coding Issue Emphasis by Parties

EES 2014 Voter Survey ²	CHES 2014 MIP Issue Category
Q17.1 You are fully in favour of state intervention in the economy.	1. State Intervention
Q17.2 You are fully in favour of the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in (<i>country</i>).	2. Redistribution
Q17.3 You are fully in favour of raising taxes to increase public services.	3. Public Services vs. Taxes
Q17.4 You are fully in favour of same-sex marriage.	4. Social Lifestyle
Q17.5 You fully support privacy rights even if they hinder efforts to combat crime.	5. Civil Liberties
Q17.6 You are fully in favour of a restrictive policy on immigration. ³	6. Immigration; Multiculturalism
Q17.7 The EU should have more authority over the EU Member States' economic and budgetary policies.	7. EU Integration
Q17.8 Environmental protection should always take priority even at the cost of economic growth.	8. Environment

²For each issue, respondents were asked to place themselves on a scale from 0 to 10. The '0' end of the scale for each issue is given below.

³Observations for this issue were recoded so that '10' measures the most right-wing position possible on this issue.

Table B.3: **Coding Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis**

Country	Parties in Coalition c. 1 Jan 2014 ⁴
Belgium	CD&V, Open VLD, MR, Sp.A, CdH
Bulgaria	BSP, DPS
Croatia	Kukuriku coalition: IDS, HNS-LD, HSU, SDP
Czech Republic	ČSSD, ANO 2011, KDU-CSL
Denmark	SD, RV, SF
Estonia	ER, IRL
Finland	KOK, SDP, VAS, VIHR, RKP, KD
France	(A) PS, PG, EELV (B) UMP, NC, PRV, AC
Greece	PASOK, ND, DIMAR
Hungary	(A) Fidesz, KDNP (B) MSZP, E14, DK
Ireland	FG, Labour
Italy	(A) PD, SEL, CD (B) FI, LN, FdI
Lithuania	LSDP, DP, TT, LLRA
Poland	PO, PSL
Romania	(A) Social Liberal Union: PSD, PNL, PC (B) Right Romania Alliance: PDL, other small parties
Slovenia	SDS, SLS, DeSUS
Sweden	Alliance: M, C, FP, KD
Netherlands	VVD, PvdA
United Kingdom	CONS, LIBDEM

⁴For each party j , this variable is coded as the average emphasis placed on the issue by all coalition partners except party j . If a party has no coalition partners in the dataset, the variable takes the value 0.

Appendix C Empirical Strategy

I estimate the effect of, variously, supporter extremism, supporter distinctiveness or party positional extremism on parties' emphasis decisions using the BUC fixed effects ordered logit estimator proposed by Baetschmann, Staub and Winkelmann (2015). The latent model that I estimate is the following:

$$Y_{ijk}^* = X_{ijk}\beta_1 + X_{ijk}M_j\beta_2 + \mathbf{Z}_{ijk}\boldsymbol{\beta} + M_j\gamma_k + \alpha_{ik} + \epsilon_{ijk}$$

$$Y_{ijk} = n \iff \lambda_{ik}^n \leq Y_{ijk}^* < \lambda_{ik}^{n+1}$$

Here, for each country i , Y_{ijk}^* measures each party j 's (unobserved) level of emphasis on issue k , X_{ijk} measures the extremism, or distinctiveness, of party j 's core supporters on issue k (or the extremism of the party's own position), and \mathbf{Z}_{ijk} is a vector of control variables. M_j is an indicator variable that takes the value 1 if party j is a major party, and 0 otherwise. Parties' observed level of emphasis on each issue k is measured by an ordered categorical response variable Y_{ijk} , which takes the value n when the unobserved value of Y_{ijk}^* is between λ_{ik}^n and λ_{ik}^{n+1} .

The theory developed in Section 2 suggests that a party's emphasis on an issue *relative to its opponents* will depend on the extremism of its core supporters *relative to its opponents' supporters*, with a party's optimal emphasis strategy depending on whether it is a minor or a major party. In particular, all parties face an incentive to disproportionately emphasize the issue which, if it were the only issue important to voters, would mean the party would be preferred to all its opponents by the voters it is targeting. The implications of this incentive for parties' salience strategies are the following. On a particular issue, the major party that is most centrist on the issue *relative to its opponents* will prefer to place more emphasis on that issue *than its opponents*. This may lead such a party to disproportionately emphasize an issue on which its position is more extreme than on other issues, but more centrist than its opponents on that issue. Analogously, among minor parties, the party with the most extreme position on the issue *relative to its opponents* will prefer to place more emphasis on that issue *than its opponents* – which may lead such a party to place less emphasis on an issue on which its position is, in absolute terms, more extreme. While some parties will be more centrist than others on average, across all issues, each party will have some issue positions which are more centrist relative to its opponents' positions on those issues, and some positions which are more extreme relative to those of its opponents.

To assess the empirical evidence for this precise relationship, I include an interaction

term between X_{ijk} and the indicator variable M_j , and also include country-issue fixed effects, denoted α_{ik} in the regression equation above. Country-issue fixed effects ensure that only variation in emphasis and supporter extremism *between* parties on an issue in a given country is used to identify the desired effect. Without these fixed effects, we might, for instance, spuriously identify a positive association between supporter extremism and party emphasis if it is the case that all parties place more emphasis on issues on which parties' core supporters are, on average, more polarized in a country – even if it is the case that, in a given country and for a particular issue, the party with more extreme supporters places less emphasis on the issue than its opponents. The inclusion of country-issue fixed effects also controls for country, issue, and country-issue specific factors that may lead parties to emphasize some issues more than others. For instance, in a particular country the issue of immigration might be especially salient, leading all parties to place relatively more emphasis on this issue, regardless of their core supporters' preferences. I also estimate issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties, denoted $M_j\gamma_k$ in the regression equation above, to account for the differences in the issues favored by each type of party.

In performing this analysis, the BUC fixed effects ordered logit estimator (hereafter BUC estimator) proposed by Baetschmann, Staub and Winkelmann (2015) is preferred to an unconditional fixed effects ordered logit estimator and to a linear fixed effects model estimated by OLS. The BUC estimator generalizes the conditional logit estimator to accommodate ordered dependent variables. The conditional logit estimator (Chamberlain 1980) allows us to consistently estimate coefficients in a model with both a binary dependent variable and fixed effects, when using an unconditional fixed effects logit estimator would produce coefficient estimates that are inconsistent as well as severely biased. When dealing with an ordered dependent variable in a model with fixed effects, researchers have frequently recoded the dependent variable as a binary variable and used a conditional logit estimator to obtain consistent parameter estimates (Kassenböhmer and Haisken-DeNew 2009; Senik 2004). However, this requires the researcher to arbitrarily choose a threshold above which the dependent variable takes the value one, and discards potentially important variation. A variety of approaches have been suggested for estimating an ordered logit model with fixed effects; in their survey of available estimators, Riedl and Geishecker (2014) show that the BUC estimator consistently delivers the most efficient, consistent and least biased parameter estimates.

The BUC estimator is a binary recoded conditional logit estimator, where the original dependent variable with N categories is recoded into $N - 1$ different dichotomizations

using $N - 1$ thresholds. Each observation in the original dataset is then duplicated $N - 1$ times. In this analysis, this entails recoding the original dependent variable using three different dichotomizations, and duplicating each country-party-issue observation three times. Parameter estimates are obtained by applying a standard conditional logit estimator to the new dataset, with standard errors clustered by country-party-issue, as the new observations are dependent by construction. In all specifications, I report standard errors clustered by country-issue, which allows for dependence between observations within country-issue clusters and so within country-party-issue clusters as well.

Beck (2015) observes that an unconditional fixed effects logit estimator is consistent when the number of observations per group is large, as there is no incidental parameters problem. However, when group sizes are small, the unconditional fixed effects logit estimator is inconsistent. Further, although Katz (2001) and Coupé (2005) show that the bias in unconditional fixed effects logit estimates is small when the average group size is greater than sixteen, in my analysis, the average number of observations within each country-issue group is 6.81. Consequently, an unconditional fixed effects logit estimator is inappropriate in my case.

As with conditional logit estimates, it is not possible to recover marginal effects when using the BUC estimator. For this reason, Angrist and Pischke (2009) suggest that practitioners use a linear probability model with a binary dependent variable in contexts where the incidental parameters problem may be a concern.⁵ However, in my case, a linear fixed effects estimator assumes cardinality of the dependent variable, which seems a heroic assumption. Cardinality would require, for instance, that the gap in emphasis between a party's third most important issue and its second most important issue is the same as that between its third most important issue and any issue outside the top three. By comparison, the BUC estimator, like any ordered logit estimator, estimates values for the cutpoints dividing the latent issue emphasis scale into the emphasis categories we observe. This allows, for instance, the gap in emphasis between a party's third most important issue and its second most important issue to be smaller than that between its third most important issue and any issue outside the top three. By doing so, we address yet another potential concern: measurement error in the dependent variable, as we cannot distinguish between, for example, the fourth and fifth most important issue for a party using the available data. Although the loss of information from using a four point rather than an eight point scale means that our estimates are still inaccurate, the

⁵See Beck (2015) for a discussion of the incidental parameters problem as it is encountered in political science research.

loss of efficiency is diminished when using an ordered logit estimator instead of OLS. Further, Beck (2015, 11-17) notes that when there are very few observations within a group fixed effect, an OLS estimator produces less accurate estimates than a conditional logit estimator.

Regardless, using either an unconditional fixed effects ordered logit estimator or a linear fixed effects model produces substantively similar results to those I report in the paper, as demonstrated in Section E of this document.

Appendix D Alternative Hypotheses

D.1 Do Emphasis Decisions Determine Major Party Status?

It is possible that the parties that emphasize their more moderate positions are more likely to become major parties, and parties that emphasize their more extreme positions are more likely to remain minor parties. However, the following analyses suggest that this cannot credibly account for the findings in Section 4. Rather, it is more plausible that traditionally large parties prefer to emphasize their more moderate positions, and traditionally small parties prefer to emphasize their more distinctive and typically extreme positions.

First, consider Table D.1, which suggests that changes in party seat share pre-date rather than post-date the issue emphasis decisions I have highlighted. For convenience, Models 1 and 3 repeat the analyses from Table 2, which find the expected relationships between party size, supporter extremism, supporter distinctiveness and issue emphasis when using average historical electoral performance to classify major and minor parties. However, when these analyses are replicated using parties' current seat share⁶ to classify parties, we find no statistically significant difference between the emphasis strategies of major and minor parties in response to supporter extremism (Model 2), and estimate a smaller z-statistic for the interaction term between major party status and supporter distinctiveness than before (Model 4).

That the difference between major and minor parties we observe is better predicted by their average historical electoral performance than their current electoral performance

⁶When measuring a party's 'current' seat share, I use the seat share received by each party in the national legislature following the election most proximate to 1 January 2014. This includes elections that were held after the completion of fieldwork for the 2014 European Election Study and the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. However, I contend that these figures better reflect the party's electoral position at the time of fieldwork than its vote share in an election held more than four years prior.

Table D.1: Classifying Parties Using Current vs. Past Seat Share

	(1) Model 2 (Past)	(2) Model 2 (Current)	(3) Model 4 (Past)	(4) Model 4 (Current)
Supporter Extremism	0.346*** (0.099)	0.272** (0.98)		
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.607*** (0.155)	-0.155 (0.183)		
Supporter Distinctiveness			0.272*** (0.081)	0.275*** (0.076)
Supporter Distinctiveness \times Major			-0.436*** (0.105)	-0.367*** (0.105)
Supporter Disagreement	-0.195** (0.075)	-0.148* (0.072)	-0.228** (0.077)	-0.171* (0.077)
Prior Office Experience	0.158 (0.204)	0.272 (0.192)	0.154 (0.196)	0.317 (0.192)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis	0.075 (0.085)	0.122 (0.089)	0.087 (0.084)	0.134 (0.087)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154
Log Likelihood	-1,477.45	-1520.004	-1,478.329	-1,514.05

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC coefficient estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of parties' issue emphasis decisions. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties and country-issue fixed effects. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

is corroborated by analyses which use party seat share from 1995, first, as a proxy, and second, as an instrument for current electoral performance.⁷ These results are reported in Table D.2. Again, for convenience, Table D.2 reproduces Model 2 from Table 2 in Section 4 (now Model 1). Model 2 in Table D.2 repeats the same analysis using party seat share from 1995 as a proxy for current seat share when coding major party status.⁸ This coding decision means parties which have only recently achieved substantial electoral success are classed as ‘minor’ rather than ‘major’. We continue to find the expected statistically significant relationship between party size, supporter extremism and issue emphasis, and also a statistically and substantively significant difference between how major and minor parties, thus coded, respond to changes in supporter extremism ($p < 0.001$).

Models 3 and 4 use party seat share from 1995 as an instrument for current seat share when coding major party status. There are two prevailing approaches that have been used to extend the linear two-stage least squares (2SLS) approach to non-linear models: two-stage predictor substitution (2SPS) and two-stage residual inclusion (2SRI) (Blundell and Smith 1989; Terza, Basu and Rathouz 2008).⁹ While 2SPS is more frequently used in a non-linear context, only 2SRI delivers consistent estimates in general. Model 3 presents estimates using the 2SPS approach to instrument for current major party status, and Model 4 presents estimates using the 2SRI approach.¹⁰ Both approaches produce statistically and substantively similar results, and also similar results to the original analyses.

The evidence presented in this section strongly counters the suggestion that party emphasis strategies are driving their electoral performance, rather than the other way around. Suppose otherwise. Then, we would expect parties’ current seat share (and major party status) to be very well correlated with their emphasis strategies, but historical seat share to be less so – since parties’ current emphasis decisions are likely imperfectly correlated with their past emphasis decisions. The results presented in Tables D.1 and D.2 show the reverse to be the case: the difference between major and minor party

⁷This variable is coded using the seat share received by each party following the election most proximate to 1 January 1995, and includes information from elections ranging between 1993 and 1997.

⁸In cases where a party did not contest the most proximate election to 1 January 1995 – like, for example, the Five Star Movement in Italy – its 1995 seat share was coded as zero.

⁹Like the 2SLS approach, the 2SPS approach requires that we substitute fitted values from the first-stage regression for the endogenous regressor in the second-stage equation. However, unlike 2SLS, this does not necessarily produce consistent estimates in the non-linear case. In the 2SRI approach, we instead include the first-stage residuals as additional regressors in the second-stage equation, while retaining the endogenous regressors. To adjust for the additional uncertainty our estimates as a result of these procedures, I present bootstrapped standard errors, accounting for the dependence of observations within each country-issue cluster by randomly drawing country-issue clusters.

¹⁰The first-stage F-statistic is 511.96.

Table D.2: Using Past Seat Share to Instrument for Current Major Party Status

	(1) Original	(2) Proxy	(3) 2SPS	(4) 2SRI
Supporter Extremism	0.346*** (0.099)	0.362*** (0.094)	0.474*** (0.123)	0.459*** (0.133)
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.607*** (0.155)	-0.589*** (0.145)	-0.841*** (0.241)	-0.928*** (0.253)
Supporter Extremism \times First Stage Residual				0.660 (0.370)
Supporter Disagreement	-0.195** (0.075)	-0.118 (0.076)	-0.068 (0.089)	-0.119 (0.100)
Prior Office Experience	0.158 (0.204)	0.252 (0.198)	0.383 (0.292)	0.256 (0.300)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis	0.075 (0.085)	0.088 (0.085)	0.046 (0.096)	0.039 (0.097)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,154	1,106	1,106	1,106
Log Likelihood	-1,477.45	-1,441.729	-1,438.13	-1,408.261

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC coefficient estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of party issue emphases. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties and country-issue fixed effects. For Models 1 and 2, standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue; for Models 3 and 4, bootstrapped standard errors are reported.

emphasis strategy we observe is well predicted by their past electoral performance (or that component of current electoral performance that is predicted by their past performance), but not by parties' current electoral performance.

D.2 Other Alternative Hypotheses

The only remaining possibility is that there exists some other extremely persistent factor that is highly correlated with whether a party is major or minor, or which determines a party's historical electoral performance and also its current emphasis strategy. In the analyses reported in Table D.3, I show that none of the following long-standing characteristics of parties fulfill this role: (1) a party's left-right ideology, (2) party family, (3) whether a party is mainstream or niche, (4) whether a party has previously held ministerial office and (5) whether a party is leadership or activist-dominated.

Models 1 and 2 in Table D.3 consider the possibility that the observed distinction in emphasis strategy between major and minor parties is driven by selection by party ideology or party family into these categories (Williams, Seki and Whitten 2016). For instance, we might worry that these results are an artefact of social democratic parties in Europe being overwhelmingly 'major parties', emphasizing redistribution, and locating close to the median voter on this issue. To assuage these concerns, I allow for an issue-specific effect of parties' overall left-right position on their issue emphasis in Model 1¹¹, and control for the average emphasis placed on each issue by parties in the same family in Model 2.¹² We continue to find a statistically significant difference between major and minor party emphasis strategy in response to changes in core supporter preferences, suggesting that selection by ideology or party family cannot explain the differences we observe.

Model 3 considers the possibility that the difference in behavior between major and minor parties that I find may just reflect the different strategies preferred by 'mainstream' and 'niche' parties (Meguid 2005; Wagner 2012*b*; Meyer and Wagner 2015; Bischof 2017) – since mainstream parties are often 'major' and niche parties usually 'minor'. However, the results in Table D.3 suggest that the distinction between major and minor parties still has considerable explanatory power with respect to this aspect of party emphasis strategies, even after accounting for whether a party is mainstream or niche. In fact, I will go on to show that major and minor parties exhibit considerable variation in their

¹¹Measures of each party's overall left-right placement are taken from the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey

¹²Party family designations are taken from the Comparative Manifesto Project.

Table D.3: Alternative Explanations for Major vs. Minor Party Emphasis Strategy

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Supporter Extremism	0.344*** (0.098)	0.379*** (0.091)	0.223* (0.108)	0.249 (0.271)	0.393** (0.123)	0.401* (0.192)
Supporter Extremism × Major	-0.299* (0.146)	-0.359* (0.163)		-1.004*** (0.266)	-0.498** (0.166)	-0.629 (0.324)
Mean Party Family Emphasis		1.644*** (0.124)				
Supporter Extremism × Major Mainstream			-0.522*** (0.157)			
Supporter Extremism × Minor Niche			0.203 (0.153)			
Supporter Extremism × Major Niche			0.280 (0.663)			
Supporter Extremism × Leadership Domination Index				0.809 (0.422)		
Supporter Extremism × Prior Office Experience					-0.224 (0.177)	
Supporter Extremism × Proportion of Years in Office						0.184 (0.477)
Supporter Disagreement	-0.127 (0.079)	-0.148* (0.074)	-0.162* (0.077)	-0.019 (0.184)	-0.206** (0.075)	-0.151 (0.187)
Prior Office Experience	0.439* (0.186)	0.194 (0.197)	0.062 (0.198)	0.356 (0.251)		0.325 (0.265)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis	0.095 (0.088)	-0.053 (0.075)	-0.004 (0.078)	0.013 (0.093)	0.044 (0.080)	0.020 (0.087)
Issue-Specific Controls for Party Ideology	✓					
Party Family Dummies		✓				
Observations	1,154	1,154	1,154	559	1,154	559
Log Likelihood	-1,326.411	-1,271.749	-1,406.627	-628.661	-1,448.461	-650.115

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of party issue emphases. All models include country-issue fixed effects, and all except Model 3 include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties. Model 3 includes issue-specific intercepts for major mainstream, major niche, minor mainstream and minor niche parties, while Models 4, 5 and 6 also allow for leadership domination, prior office experience and a party's governing history, respectively, to have an issue-specific influence on party emphasis. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

‘nicheness’, regardless of the measure used.

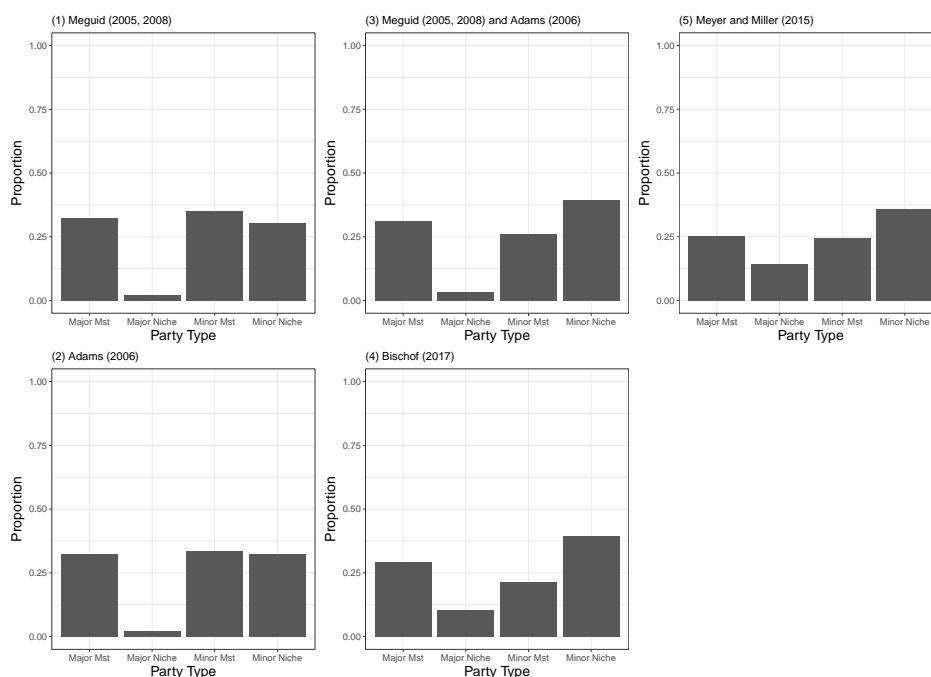
There is considerable debate as to how best to classify parties as mainstream or niche. Early research on this topic distinguished mainstream and niche parties on the basis of party family (Meguid 2005; Adams et al. 2006); more recently, researchers have argued that party ‘nicheness’ is a continuous variable, relating to the number or nature of issues parties emphasize (Wagner 2012*a*; Meyer and Miller 2015; Bischof 2017). For Model 3 in Table D.3, I classify all parties considered by either Meguid (2005) or Adams et al. (2006) as ‘mainstream’ to be such, and all others as ‘niche’ – leading me to classify only socialist, social democratic, liberal, conservative, agrarian and Christian democratic parties as mainstream, and all others as niche.¹³ However, I show below that the results reported in Table D.3 are also robust to four alternative approaches to classify parties as either mainstream or niche. These are: (1) the classification scheme proposed by Meguid (2005, 2008), where only green, radical right and ethnoterritorial parties are labeled ‘niche’ and all other parties mainstream; (2) the classification scheme preferred by Adams et al. (2006), where communist, green and extreme nationalist (or radical right) parties are classified as niche parties, and socialist, social democratic, liberal, conservative and Christian democratic parties as mainstream; (3) the continuous measure of a party’s ‘nicheness’ suggested by Bischof (2017), which defines a party’s ‘nicheness’ as the extent to which it focuses its attention on a particular ideological segment of the political market; (4) the alternative continuous measure of ‘nicheness’ proposed by (Meyer and Miller 2015). When implementing the last two approaches, I classify the parties which obtain an above-median ‘nicheness’ score as niche, and the remainder as mainstream.

Figure D.1 demonstrates that even if parties’ major party status and ‘nicheness’ are negatively associated¹⁴, there is considerable heterogeneity in the ‘nicheness’ of major and minor parties, regardless of the approach used. In particular, around half the mainstream parties in the sample are small, rather than large, mainstream parties, and small mainstream parties constitute between a quarter and a third of parties in the sample. These are parties like the Free Democratic Party in Germany or the Christian Democrats in Sweden – parties which are commonplace in governing coalitions across Europe, and often assume the role of kingmaker in coalition negotiations. Meanwhile, there also exist several examples of large niche parties – such as the Freedom Party of Austria or the

¹³As in Meguid (2005, 2008) and Adams et al. (2006), party family designations are taken from the Comparative Manifesto Project.

¹⁴An LPM analysis of the association between major party status and party nicheness, with country fixed effects, finds a strong and statistically significant negative association between the two, by either measure.

Figure D.1: Distributions of ‘Nicheness’ by Party Size



Note: These figures plot the distribution of ‘nicheness’ for major and minor parties, demonstrating that there is heterogeneity in the ‘nicheness’ of minor parties, and also of major parties, to some degree. In Figure C.1.1, following Meguid (2005), parties are classified as mainstream or niche on the basis of party family, with green, radical right and ethnoterritorial parties classified as ‘niche’ and all others mainstream. In Figure C.1.2, following Adams et al. (2006), communist, green and radical right parties as niche and all others mainstream. Figure C.1.3 classifies all parties considered by Meguid (2005) or Adams et al. (2006) to be ‘mainstream’ as such and all others as ‘niche’. Figure C.1.4 classifies parties with above-median nicheness scores in Bischof (2017) as niche and the remainder as mainstream. Figure C.1.5 repeats this procedure using nicheness scores from Meyer and Miller (2015). Per the discussion in Section 3.1, I classify those parties which obtained at least 13% of seats, on average, between 2000 and 2014 as ‘major’, and the remainder as ‘minor’.

New Flemish Alliance in Flanders — although fewer in number.

Table D.4: Mainstream and Niche Party Behavior by Party Size

	(1) Meguid (2005)	(2) Adams (2006)	(3) Bischof (2017)	(4) Meyer & Miller (2015)
Supporter Extremism	0.223 (0.115)	0.115 (0.096)	0.268 (0.189)	0.326 (0.199)
Supporter Extremism × Major Niche	0.073 (0.129)	-0.314 (0.612)	-0.394 (0.418)	-0.606 (0.339)
Supporter Extremism × Minor Niche	0.242 (0.205)	0.348* (0.136)	0.216 (0.232)	0.126 (0.277)
Supporter Extremism × Major Mainstream	-0.505*** (0.153)	-0.367* (0.161)	-0.622** (0.213)	-0.613** (0.208)
Supporter Disagreement	-0.203* (0.080)	-0.181* (0.080)	-0.137 (0.101)	-0.102 (0.106)
Prior Office Experience	0.120 (0.208)	0.098 (0.207)	0.295 (0.225)	0.242 (0.221)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis	-0.076 (0.077)	0.032 (0.082)	0.007 (0.080)	0.037 (0.082)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,154	1,154	1,058	1,058
Log Likelihood	-1,379.705	-1,408.085	-1,282.421	-1,312.295

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC coefficient estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of party issue emphases. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major mainstream, major niche, minor mainstream and minor niche parties, as well as country-issue fixed effects. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

Table D.4 replicates Model 3 from Table D.3 using the four alternative classification strategies discussed above. As in the original analysis, the estimates strongly support the view that minor mainstream parties behave more like minor niche parties than larger mainstream parties when choosing issues to emphasized – evidenced by the consistently positive coefficient on supporter extremism, alongside the robustly negative and statistically significant coefficient on the interaction between supporter extremism and major mainstream party status.

Next, Model 4 in Table D.3 explores the possibility that systematic differences in the organizational structure of major and minor parties may be driving their differences in emphasis strategy. Empirically, major parties are more often leadership-dominated, whereas minor parties are more likely to be activist-dominated.¹⁵ Leader-dominated parties might

¹⁵I find this to be the case by a small margin in my dataset, using information on membership influence within parties available in the Integrated Party Organization Dataset (Schumacher and Giger 2017).

have emphasis strategies more focused on the median voter, and therefore be more electorally successful, and activist-dominated parties might have emphasis strategies that are more focused on voters similar to party activists, and so are less electorally successful. To evaluate this possibility, I interact a measure of the degree to which the formal party structure is dominated by the party leadership with the extremism, or distinctiveness, of the party’s core supporters – using the measure developed by Schumacher and Giger (2017) to measure the extent of leadership domination within a party. This measure considers the degree to which a party is activist-dominated or leadership-dominated.¹⁶ However, as this variable is only available for a subset of the parties in my full sample, the number of observations I rely on for my inferences shrinks considerably in the following analyses.¹⁷ To allow activist-dominated parties to emphasize different issues from leader-dominated parties, I allow leadership domination to have an issue-specific effect on party emphasis. We continue to find a substantively and statistically significant difference between major and minor party emphasis strategy – suggesting the dominant role of party leaders vs. activists within some parties cannot explain the difference we observe between major and minor parties’ emphasis strategies.

Model 5 in Table D.3 examine the possibility that the difference in behavior between major and minor parties we observe is actually being driven by systematic differences in the ‘challenger party status’ of these two types of parties – major parties typically being ‘mainstream’ and ‘challenger’ parties typically minor. A party type first identified by Hobolt and de Vries (2012), challenger parties are parties with no post-war experience of office – in contrast with ‘mainstream’ parties, which have some (relatively recent) experience of government. However, while there is substantial overlap in the parties which are major and parties which are ‘mainstream’ by this account, many of the parties I label ‘minor’ do, in fact, have substantial cabinet experience as junior coalition partners. Indeed, while 95.1% of major parties have post-war office experience, so do 43.9% of minor parties – implying that the major-minor party distinction may still be meaningful even after challenger party status is accounted for. Model 5 evaluates this possibility

¹⁶In my sample, this measure ranges between -0.25 and 1 with a standard deviation of 0.248 , with larger values indicating that a party is more leadership-dominated. The measure is constructed using responses to expert surveys collected by Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2012). They define leadership domination as in Schumacher, de Vries and Vis (2013), with leadership-dominated parties being characterized by “a limited number of internal veto players and a concentration of power among a select group of party leaders”, whereas activist-dominated parties those in which “decision-making and veto power is dispersed among large groups of party activists, organized in local, regional and national party branches or civil society organizations” (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013, 464).

¹⁷This data is only available for the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

by including an additional interaction term between supporter extremism and whether a party has held office in the post-war period. As in previous analyses, I allow challenger parties to emphasize different issues from mainstream parties by allowing prior office experience to have an issue-specific effect on party emphasis. We continue to find a large and statistically significant difference between major and minor party emphasis strategy, suggesting that the observed difference is not a consequence of major parties' disproportionate presence among the ranks of governing parties.

Finally, Model 6 explores the possibility that the observed difference is a consequence of systematic underlying differences in the office aspirations of these two types of parties. That is, perhaps minor parties tend to emphasize their more extreme or distinctive policy positions because they are policy-seeking rather than office-seeking, and thus remain small, whereas major parties are those whose leaders aspire to, and therefore can achieve, higher political office. I evaluate this possibility by interacting a measure of each party's office aspirations with the extremism, or distinctiveness, of the party's core supporters. Following Schumacher et al. (2015), I measure a party's latent office aspirations using its historical success or failure in achieving office.¹⁸ We continue to find a substantial difference in emphasis strategy between major and minor parties, one which falls very narrowly short of conventional levels of statistical significance ($p=0.052$). This suggests that, even after controlling for the revealed office aspirations of a party, minor parties are systematically more likely than major parties to emphasize issues where their policies are further from the median voter than those of their competitors.¹⁹

¹⁸This is operationalized using the proportion of years a party has been in office since its foundation. Information on each party's governing history is taken from the Integrated Party Organization Dataset (IPOD) constructed by Giger and Schumacher (2015).

¹⁹Relatedly, it might be argued that whether a party is vote-seeking or policy-seeking depends on how long it has been out of government. To investigate this possibility, I reestimate Model 6 using time out of government rather than the Schumacher et. al. measure of fraction of years in government. The two measures are, unsurprisingly, correlated. I find that the substantive results of Model 6 are unchanged in this case (results available upon request).

Appendix E Robustness Checks

E.1 Replication of Baseline Results with Manifesto Data

Table E.1: Table 2 Results Replicated with Manifesto Data

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Supporter Extremism	0.425 (0.294)	1.419* (0.564)		
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.590 (0.436)	-1.860* (0.832)		
Supporter Distinctiveness			0.287 (0.215)	0.645* (0.328)
Supporter Distinctiveness \times Major			-0.570 (0.309)	-1.004* (0.393)
Supporter Disagreement		0.063 (0.256)		-0.130 (0.284)
Prior Office Experience		-0.001 (0.627)		0.073 (0.621)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis		0.090 (0.069)		0.092 (0.069)
#Party-Issue Observations	803	719	803	719
R ²	0.683	0.697	0.682	0.690
Adjusted R ²	0.604	0.607	0.603	0.599

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report OLS coefficient estimates from a fixed effects linear model of parties' issue emphasis decisions. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

Table E.1 replicates Table 2 from the paper using data from the 2017a release of the Comparative Manifesto Project to measure parties' issue emphases in place of expert

assessments from CHES (Volkens et al. 2017). Although available for the widest range of country-election observations, and asking experts to consider virtually the same issues as in the 2014 EES, CHES data only provides an indirect measure of party emphasis decisions. Alternatively, data from party manifestos provides us with a direct and continuous measure of party emphasis on various issues.²⁰ However, data from CHES is preferred for the baseline analyses, as the CMP does not contain information for as many minor parties, and has not yet incorporated manifestos from elections most proximate to 2014 for many countries I am able to include in the analysis when using CHES data.²¹ As a consequence, the size of the sample falls by more than a third when we move from using CHES to CMP data to measure party issue emphases. Nevertheless, so long as we control for other factors important for party emphasis strategies (Models 2 and 4), we continue to find a statistically significant difference between major and minor party emphasis strategy in response to changes in core supporter preferences.

E.2 Replication of Baseline Results with Continuous Measure of Historical Performance

In the paper, following the discussion in Section 2 and 3.1, I distinguish between major and minor parties on the basis of differences in their historical electoral performance. However, given the analyses I present in Figure 1—revealing a near-discontinuous difference in party strategy between parties that obtained less than 11 or 12% of seats, on average, between 2000 and 2014, and those that exceeded this threshold—I argue for a qualitative difference in the strategies preferred by parties I class as major, and those I class as minor. Nevertheless, Table E.2 replicates Table 2 while interacting the extremism of party’s core supporters with a continuous measure of historical electoral performance instead. The coefficient on this interaction term is negative and statistically significant across specifications, consistent with the argument that parties which were historically more successful are more likely to de-emphasize issues where their core supporters are more extreme. However, a comparison of Akaike Information Criterion (or Bayesian Information Criterion) scores reveals that Model 2 from Table 2 provides a better fit for the

²⁰CMP coded quasi-sentences were assigned to issues as follows: civil liberties (per201, per605), state intervention in the economy (per401–407, per409, p411–415), redistribution (per503), same sex marriage (per603–604), environmental protection (per416, per501), restrictions on immigration (per601.2, per602.2), taxes versus public spending (per505–507), EU integration (per108, per110).

²¹CMP data for the relevant election is only available for the following countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

data than Model 2 from Table E.2, suggesting that the effect of historical electoral performance on its emphasis strategy tapers off after a party’s historical electoral performance surmounts some threshold near 12% of seats.

Table E.2: Table 2 Results Replicated with Continuous Measure of Historical Performance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Supporter Extremism	0.203*** (0.058)	0.339*** (0.100)		
Supporter Extremism × Average Historical Seat Share	−0.009* (0.004)	−0.014** (0.005)		
Supporter Distinctiveness			0.211** (0.067)	0.277*** (0.083)
Supporter Distinctiveness × Average Historical Seat Share			−0.011*** (0.003)	−0.012*** (0.003)
Supporter Disagreement		−0.182* (0.078)		−0.210** (0.078)
Prior Office Experience		0.182 (0.215)		0.214 (0.207)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis		0.053 (0.085)		0.072 (0.086)
Observations	1,298	1,154	1,298	1,154
Log Likelihood	−1,685.799	−1,482.017	−1,683.554	−1,481.588

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC coefficient estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of parties’ issue emphases. A party’s average historical seat share is its average seat share in national legislative elections between 2000 and 2014. All models include country-issue fixed effects and allow historical seat share to have an issue-specific effect on party emphasis. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

E.3 Replication of Baseline Results by FE Ordered Logit

Table E.3 replicates Table 2 from the paper using an unconditional fixed effects ordered logit estimator in place of the BUC estimator. The BUC estimator is preferred to the unconditional fixed effects logit estimator as the latter produces estimates that are inconsistent as well as severely biased when group sizes are small (Beck 2015; Katz 2001; Coupé 2005). Regardless, the results we obtain are substantively and statistically similar: in

all cases, we find a large and statistically significant difference between major and minor party emphasis strategy in response to changes in core supporter preferences. Moreover, our estimates imply that major parties will tend to place less emphasis on an issue when core supporters have more extreme preferences on the issue, whereas minor parties will increase their emphasis on the issue under similar circumstances.

Table E.3: Table 2 Results Replicated by FE Ordered Logit

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Supporter Extremism	0.253** (0.092)	0.435** (0.148)		
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.413* (0.164)	-0.797** (0.257)		
Supporter Distinctiveness			0.259** (0.091)	0.343** (0.122)
Supporter Distinctiveness \times Major			-0.469*** (0.141)	-0.568*** (0.162)
Supporter Disagreement		-0.309** (0.113)		-0.326** (0.115)
Prior Office Experience		0.218 (0.283)		0.219 (0.276)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis		0.145 (0.186)		0.183 (0.191)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,298	1,154	1,298	1,154
Log Likelihood	-778.134	-679.0436	-775.9729	-679.2799

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report coefficient estimates from an unconditional fixed effects ordered logit model of parties' issue emphasis decisions. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

Relative to the results obtained when using a BUC estimator, the size of the effects implied by the coefficient estimates are consistently larger in magnitude – whether for

major parties or minor parties. However, this is likely a result of bias in our estimates, as previous analyses have shown that when the number of observations in a group is 2, $\hat{\beta} \rightarrow 2\beta$ as $N \rightarrow \infty$ (Andersen 1973, 66). In my analysis, the average number of observations within each country-issue group is 6.81.

E.4 Replication of Baseline Results by OLS

Next, Table E.4 replicates Table 2 in the paper using OLS in place of the BUC estimator. In cases where the incidental parameters problem may pose a concern, researchers have frequently advocated using OLS instead of a conditional logit or an unconditional fixed effects logit estimator, as this allows us to recover marginal effects uncontaminated by any inconsistently estimated fixed effects (Angrist and Pischke 2009; Greene 2005, 697). However, there are three concerns with using an OLS estimator in my case. First, when there are very few observations within a group fixed effect, it emerges that an OLS estimator produces estimates that are less accurate than those produced by a conditional logit estimator (Beck 2015, 11–17). Second, an OLS approach assumes a cardinal dependent variable – a heroic assumption in my case, as this requires, for instance, that the gap in emphasis between a party’s third most important issue and its second most important issue is the same as that between its third most important issue and any issue outside the top three. Third, as the BUC estimator estimates values for the threshold parameters in addition to the regressors, it reduces the loss of efficiency that results from using a four point scale rather than an eight point scale to measure the distribution of party emphasis across eight issues.

Still, the results we obtain using OLS are very similar to those obtained using the BUC estimator, albeit with estimates for the effect of supporter extremism on parties’ issue emphasis decisions that are smaller in magnitude. However, this might be explained by any attenuation bias that results from assuming cardinality of the dependent variable in OLS. This seems likely, as there are several issues which both major and minor parties place little emphasis on, when emphasis is measured using a four point scale – for instance, civil liberties and the environment. Consequently, for some issues, there is likely considerable unmeasured variation in the dependent variable, which is accounted for to some extent by allowing the threshold parameters to vary (as in the BUC estimator).

Table E.4: Table 2 Results Replicated by OLS

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Supporter Extremism	0.088** (0.028)	0.169** (0.051)		
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.120* (0.052)	-0.252*** (0.075)		
Supporter Distinctiveness			0.069** (0.026)	0.118** (0.040)
Supporter Distinctiveness \times Major			-0.124** (0.042)	-0.187*** (0.054)
Supporter Disagreement		-0.059 (0.032)		-0.078* (0.031)
Prior Office Experience		0.039 (0.082)		0.044 (0.082)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis		0.085 (0.094)		0.093 (0.093)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,298	1,154	1,298	1,154
R ²	0.386	0.413	0.385	0.411
Adjusted R ²	0.263	0.275	0.262	0.272

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report coefficient estimates from a fixed effects linear model of parties' issue emphasis decisions. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

Table E.5: Robustness to Excluding Particular Issues

Excluded Category	Supporter Extremism	Supporter Extremism \times Major
Civil Liberties	0.415*** (0.106)	-0.740*** (0.158)
Environment	0.251* (0.101)	-0.544*** (0.152)
EU Integration	0.397*** (0.113)	-0.733*** (0.165)
Immigration	0.379*** (0.103)	-0.732*** (0.146)
Public Spending vs. Taxation	0.411*** (0.119)	-0.897*** (0.213)
Redistribution	0.416*** (0.103)	-0.336* (0.166)
Same Sex Marriage	0.343** (0.107)	-0.631*** (0.157)
State Intervention	0.377*** (0.101)	-0.718*** (0.161)

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

E.5 Robustness to Influential Observations

In cross-sectional analyses, a possible concern is that the results may be very sensitive to the exclusion of particular cases. To eliminate this possibility, I replicate Model 2 from Table 2 in the paper while excluding issues and countries one at a time. The results of this exercise are presented in Tables E.5 and E.6. We see that the relevant coefficient estimates and standard errors are exceedingly stable across specifications.

Table E.6: Robustness to Excluding Particular Countries

Excluded Category	Supporter Extremism	Supporter Extremism \times Major
Austria	0.337*** (0.101)	-0.537*** (0.154)
Bulgaria	0.341*** (0.099)	-0.591*** (0.154)
Croatia	0.361*** (0.102)	-0.636*** (0.159)
Czech Republic	0.403*** (0.097)	-0.650*** (0.165)
Denmark	0.345*** (0.103)	-0.607*** (0.160)
Estonia	0.339*** (0.100)	-0.550*** (0.152)
Finland	0.297*** (0.100)	-0.599*** (0.159)
Flanders	0.347*** (0.102)	-0.659*** (0.151)
France	0.336*** (0.100)	-0.621*** (0.161)
Germany	0.328*** (0.101)	-0.591*** (0.155)
Greece	0.352*** (0.110)	-0.650*** (0.168)
Hungary	0.331*** (0.100)	-0.575*** (0.155)

Table E.6: Robustness to Excluding Particular Countries

Excluded Category	Supporter Extremism	Supporter Extremism × Major
Ireland	0.338*** (0.101)	-0.616*** (0.159)
Italy	0.359*** (0.104)	-0.628*** (0.163)
Latvia	0.353*** (0.100)	-0.613*** (0.156)
Lithuania	0.361*** (0.102)	-0.619*** (0.158)
Poland	0.346*** (0.100)	-0.626*** (0.159)
Portugal	0.338*** (0.100)	-0.624*** (0.162)
Romania	0.361*** (0.105)	-0.618*** (0.159)
Slovakia	0.365*** (0.103)	-0.628*** (0.158)
Slovenia	0.353*** (0.100)	-0.594*** (0.158)
Spain	0.355*** (0.100)	-0.576*** (0.156)
Sweden	0.275** (0.104)	-0.565*** (0.168)
The Netherlands	0.339*** (0.102)	-0.562*** (0.159)
United Kingdom	0.404*** (0.098)	-0.648*** (0.157)
Wallonia	0.346*** (0.099)	-0.611*** (0.156)

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

E.6 Alternative Measures of Core Supporters

Table E.7: Table 2 Results with Alternative Measures of Core Supporters

	(1) >10 Supporters	(2) >15 Supporters	(3) Approach A	(4) Approach B	(5) Approach C	(6) Approach D
Supporter Extremism	0.592** (0.204)	0.266 (0.283)	0.289* (0.089)	0.195** (0.064)	0.447** (0.173)	0.373*** (0.094)
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.814** (0.267)	-0.734* (0.353)	-0.425** (0.150)	-0.206* (0.096)	-0.750* (0.264)	-0.521* (0.218)
Supporter Disagreement	-0.331 (0.228)	-0.469 (0.335)	-0.055 (0.072)	-0.353** (0.118)	-0.100 (0.134)	-0.115 (0.101)
Prior Office Experience	0.213 (0.299)	0.097 (0.300)	0.144 (0.217)	0.072 (0.197)	-0.333 (0.432)	0.081 (0.182)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis	0.004 (0.104)	0.051 (0.106)	0.033 (0.082)	0.072 (0.085)	-0.214 (0.184)	0.044 (0.084)
#Party-Issue Observations	576	424	1042	1252	420	1,373
Log Likelihood	-655.716	-471.142	-1,299.158	-1,622.397	-483.347	-1,794.978

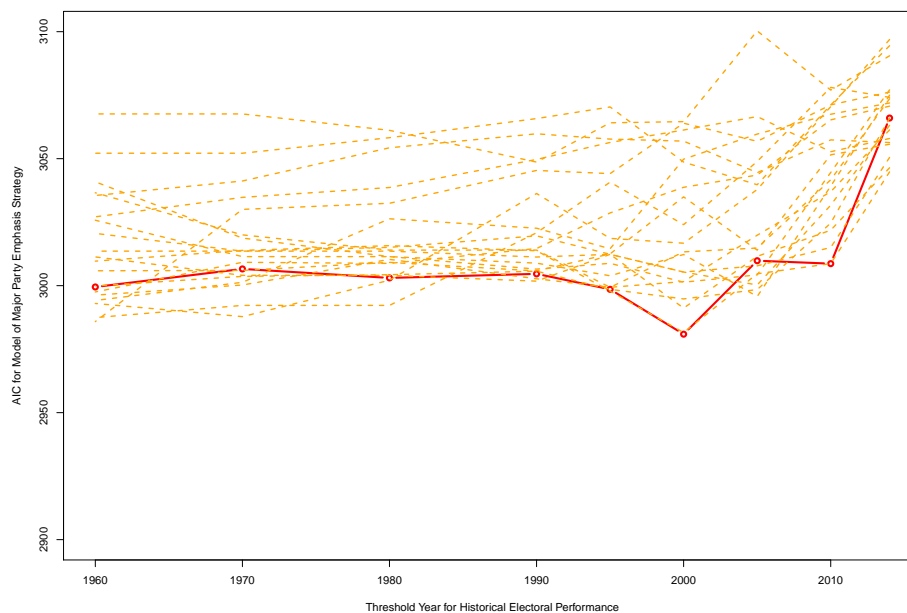
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC coefficient estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of parties' issue emphasis decisions. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

For the main analyses, two types of respondents are coded as 'core supporters' of a party: (i) strong or weak partisans with high political interest, and (ii) strong partisans with moderate political interest. This approach leads to 6.8% of EES respondents being classified as core supporters of a party, with an average of 28.8 core supporters for each major party and 8.1 core supporters for each minor party. Table E.7 explores the implications of requiring that a party have at least 10 or 15 core supporters to be included in the sample (Models 1–2), as well as using four other approaches to identify core supporters (Models 3–6): (A) strong partisans with at least moderate political interest, (B) all partisans with at least moderate political interest, (C) all strong partisans and (D) all partisans. Again, across specifications, we continue to find a substantively and statistically significant difference between major and minor party emphasis strategy in response to changes in core supporter preferences.

E.7 Alternative Thresholds for Major Party Classification

Figure E.1: Trend in Model Fit as Threshold for Historical Electoral Performance Varies



In the paper, I identify major and minor parties on the basis of their average seat share in national legislative elections between 2000 and 2014, with parties that received at least 13% of seats, on average, in this period being classed as ‘major’ and the remainder ‘minor’. Figure E.1 demonstrates that the statistical model best explains parties’ emphasis strategies when this is the selected combination of time frame and seat share threshold, and that a different time frame reduces model fit (when measured using the Akaike Information Criterion).²² To generate this figure, I re-estimate Model 2 from Table 2 in the paper, using a different combination of year threshold and average seat share threshold to classify parties as major and minor each time. The red line in Figure E.1 plots the trend in AIC score when the year threshold moves from 1960 to 2014, holding the average seat share threshold constant at 13%. The remaining trend lines in Figure E.1 (plotted in orange) depict the trend in the AIC score when the average seat share threshold is instead held constant at other values between 1% and 20%. We arrive at the same conclusion when the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) is used to measure

²²A lower Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) score indicates better in-sample model fit.

model fit instead.

E.8 Moving Between Major and Minor Party Status

In Section 2, I observe that an implication of the theory is that major and minor parties might change which voters they target in response to changes in their electoral performance. In particular, it seems likely that when a formerly major party loses enough support to become a minor party, its emphasis strategy will evolve accordingly. Likewise, a minor party with growing electoral support may increasingly prefer to emphasize its less distinctive, and more popular, issue positions in order to win support among a broader electorate. In order to fully explore this possibility, a panel analysis of change in party emphasis strategy is necessary. However, as data on both the preferences of party supporters on a range of issues *and* on the emphasis placed by parties on these issues is only available for multiple countries for one year (2014), such an analysis is infeasible at this stage. However, in this section, I use the available data to evaluate whether parties that have only recently surmounted the 13% seat share threshold behave similarly to parties that have long cleared that threshold. Table E.8 reports results from a series of analyses that speak to this question.

Building on the analyses in Section E.7, I replicate Model 2 in Table 2 while gradually lengthening the time frame used to determine a party's historical electoral performance, and therefore, its major party status. I find that there is no statistically significant difference in the emphasis strategy of parties that obtained more than 13% of seats in the most recent election to 2014 and those that did not (Model 1); however, we begin to observe a statistically significant difference in emphasis strategy between parties that surpassed this threshold, on average, in the last four years, and those that did not (Model 2). However, the coefficient on the relevant interaction term increases in magnitude, and the fit of the statistical model (as reflected by the models' AIC/BIC scores) continues to improve, when parties' electoral performance over a longer time frame is taken into account – stabilizing in magnitude as well as fit after about fourteen years. These analyses also speak to the question of how long it takes for a minor party that is electorally successful to begin behaving like a major party – that is, moving from disproportionately emphasizing its distinctive policies to de-emphasizing those issues. The estimates reported in Table E.8 suggest that it takes about fourteen years of surpassing (or falling short of) this threshold, on average, before changes in a party's electoral trajectory are fully reflected in its emphasis strategy.

Table E.8: How Long Does It Take To Become A Major Party?

	Party Considered 'Major' if Obtained $\geq 13\%$ of Seats Between:								
	(1) 2014-2014	(2) 2010-2014	(3) 2005-2014	(4) 2000-2014	(5) 1995-2014	(6) 1990-2014	(7) 1980-2014	(8) 1970-2014	(9) 1960-2014
Supporter Extremism	0.272** (0.098)	0.336*** (0.097)	0.336*** (0.099)	0.346*** (0.099)	0.372*** (0.096)	0.353*** (0.092)	0.351*** (0.092)	0.355*** (0.092)	0.329*** (0.094)
Supporter Extremism \times Major	-0.155 (0.183)	-0.560*** (0.153)	-0.472** (0.151)	-0.607*** (0.155)	-0.648*** (0.205)	-0.619*** (0.156)	-0.663*** (0.154)	-0.677*** (0.159)	-0.544*** (0.152)
Supporter Disagreement	-0.148* (0.072)	-0.170* (0.074)	-0.172* (0.074)	-0.195** (0.075)	-0.175* (0.075)	-0.159* (0.075)	-0.177* (0.076)	-0.174* (0.077)	-0.188* (0.078)
Prior Office Experience	0.272 (0.192)	0.209 (0.201)	0.219 (0.200)	0.158 (0.204)	0.200 (0.205)	0.250 (0.202)	0.236 (0.202)	0.220 (0.202)	0.192 (0.204)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis	0.122 (0.089)	0.086 (0.089)	0.087 (0.083)	0.075 (0.085)	0.074 (0.083)	0.079 (0.085)	0.089 (0.085)	0.086 (0.085)	0.073 (0.085)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154	1,154
Log Likelihood	-1,520.004	-1,491.336	-1,491.915	-1,477.450	-1,486.280	-1,489.325	-1,488.526	-1,490.295	-1,486.744
Akaike Information Criterion	3066.007	3008.672	3009.830	2980.900	2998.561	3004.651	3003.053	3006.591	2999.488
Bayesian Information Criterion	3122.927	3065.591	3066.750	3037.820	3055.480	3061.570	3059.972	3063.510	3056.408

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC coefficient estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of parties' issue emphasis decisions. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties as well as country-issue fixed effects. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

That the evolution of a party from major to minor status is likely a gradual but converging process is also corroborated by the analyses reported in Table E.9. Models 1 and 2 in Table E.9 replicate Models 1 and 2 from Table 2 in the main paper while adding a second interaction term, this time between the policy extremism of a party's core supporters and its electoral performance between *immediately prior* to the relevant timeframe. In particular, a party is coded as "Past Major" if its average seat share between 1990 and 2000 exceeded 13%. If it were the case that current major party emphasis strategy was also substantially influenced by its electoral performance more than fourteen years prior, we should observe a negative and statistically significant coefficient on this interaction term as well. We do not observe this in either case.

Models 3 and 4 further embellish the case that the process of evolution between major and minor party status is gradual, finding no evidence that 'rising' and 'declining' major parties differ in their responses to the extremism of their core supporters. To evaluate this, I code parties which gained seats in the most recent election as "rising parties" and those that lost seats in the most recent election as "declining parties", and allow for a possible interaction affect between whether or not a party is "rising", its major party status and the extremism of its core supporters. If rising major parties are more likely to de-emphasize issues where their core supporters are extreme than declining major parties, we should observe a negative and statistically significant coefficient on this interaction term. I find no statistically significant difference in emphasis strategy even

between declining and rising major parties, suggesting that while major parties may move towards their core voters, in left-right terms, following a loss of votes or seats (Adams et al. 2004; Adams 2012), they may continue to emphasize the issues where their positions are relatively centrist until they lose enough support to become minor parties.

Table E.9: Declining, Rising, Past vs. Current Major Party Emphasis Strategy

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Supporter Extremism	0.205*** (0.058)	0.350*** (0.100)	0.159** (0.060)	0.297* (0.120)
Supporter Extremism × Major	-0.354** (0.119)	-0.473 (0.270)	-0.402** (0.135)	-0.573*** (0.165)
Supporter Extremism × Past Major	0.024 (0.103)	-0.178 (0.258)		
Past Major	0.150 (0.263)	0.387 (0.316)		
Supporter Extremism × Rising			0.187 (0.098)	0.108 (0.143)
Supporter Extremism × Rising × Major			0.007 (0.165)	-0.156 (0.208)
Rising			-0.363 (0.199)	-0.167 (0.225)
Supporter Disagreement		-0.197** (0.076)		-0.201** (0.077)
Prior Office Experience		0.127 (0.209)		0.172 (0.208)
Mean Coalition Partner Emphasis		0.069 (0.085)		0.084 (0.086)
#Party-Issue Observations	1,298	1,154	1,298	1,154
Log Likelihood	-1,686.308	-1,476.194	-1,683.202	-1,475.801

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Note: Cell entries report BUC coefficient estimates from a fixed effects ordered logit model of parties' issue emphasis decisions. All models include issue-specific intercepts for major and minor parties. Standard errors are robust and clustered by country-issue.

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