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Do parties perceive their voter potentials correctly? Reconsidering the spatial logic of electoral competition

Electoral Studies

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

for

Lichteblau, Josephine,* Giebler, Heiko and Wagner, Aiko (2020): *Do parties perceive their voter potentials correctly? Reconsidering the spatial logic of electoral competition*. Electoral Studies.

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A) Additional tables and figures

	Left/Right	Policy issues	Combined model
Perceived left-right proximity	0.25 *** (0.02)		0.18 *** (0.02)
Perceived proximity immigration		0.18 *** (0.02)	0.13 *** (0.02)
Perceived proximity economy/welfare		0.04 *** (0.02)	- 0.01 (0.02)
Perceived proximity nuclear power stations		0.10 *** (0.02)	0.08 *** (0.02)
BIC	3454.86	3484.84	3418.06
Pseudo R ²	0.05	0.05	0.07
N	6,094	6,094	6,094

TABLE A1: Results of conditional logit models predicting vote choice on ideological and issue proximities

Note: Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b). Standard errors are presented in brackets.

*** = $p < 0.001$, ** = $p < 0.01$, * = $p < 0.05$.

	Combined model (AME)	
Perceived left-right proximity	0.04	***
	(0.00)	
Perceived proximity immigration	0.02	***
	(0.0)	
Perceived proximity economy/welfare	0.00	
	(0.00)	
Perceived proximity nuclear power stations	0.01	***
	(0.00)	

TABLE A2: Average marginal effects of ideological and policy issue proximities on vote choice

Note: Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b). Standard errors are presented in brackets.
 *** = $p < 0.001$, ** = $p < 0.01$, * = $p < 0.05$.

In order to validate our claim that the left-right scheme still serves as a crucial heuristic for voters, we calculated three conditional logit models regressing vote choice on perceived ideological and policy issue proximities based on data of the post-election cross-section survey of the GLES 2017. For the ideological proximity, we calculated absolute distances between the respondents' positions and the perceived party positions with regards to the left-right dimension, both measured on an 11-point scale and recoded so that high values represent high proximities. The same procedure was applied for three policy issues that are also measured on an 11-point scale. These issues refer to a) the redistribution of income (from *“lower taxes/less government spending on health, education and social benefits”* to *“more government spending on health, education and benefits/higher taxes”*), b) the restriction of immigration (from *“immigration laws should be relaxed”* to *“immigration laws should be more restrictive”*) and c) the future of nuclear power stations (from *“more nuclear power stations should be build”* to *“all should be closed down today”*). The first model represents the full model including all four proximity measures, the second model is the policy issue model only including the policy issue proximities and in the third model ideological proximity is the sole predictor of vote choice. The results suggest, firstly, that ideological congruence does not only exert an independent but also –

according to the average marginal effects (AMEs) – the strongest effect of all four proximity measures on vote choice. Secondly, comparing the BICs of the ideological and the policy issues model, we see that the former actually fits the data better than the latter. Thus, we can conclude that voters still use the left-right dimension as a heuristic when making their vote choice.

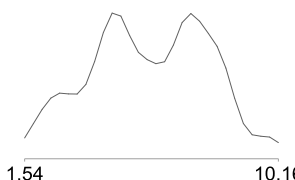
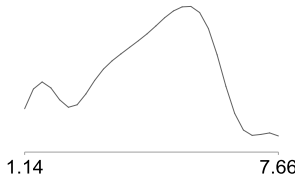
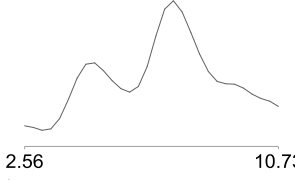
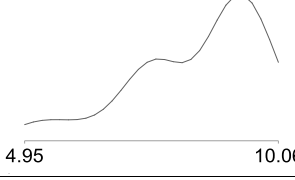
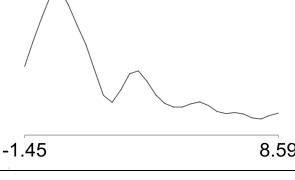
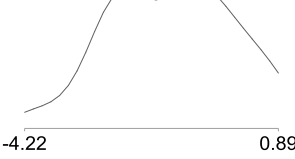
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Distribution
Perceived voter potential (PVP)	5.78	2.22	1.54	10.16	
Actual voter potential (AVP)	4.34	1.81	1.14	7.66	
Parties' perceived left-right proximities (PLRP)	7.08	2.02	2.56	10.73	
Voters' perceived left-right proximities (VLRP)	8.38	1.35	4.95	10.06	
Voter potential misperception (PVP minus AVP)	1.45	2.60	-1.45	8.59	
Differences in left-right perceptions (PLRP minus VLRP)	-1.30	1.30	-4.22	0.89	

TABLE A3: Summary Statistics of variables from the main models

Note: Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b).

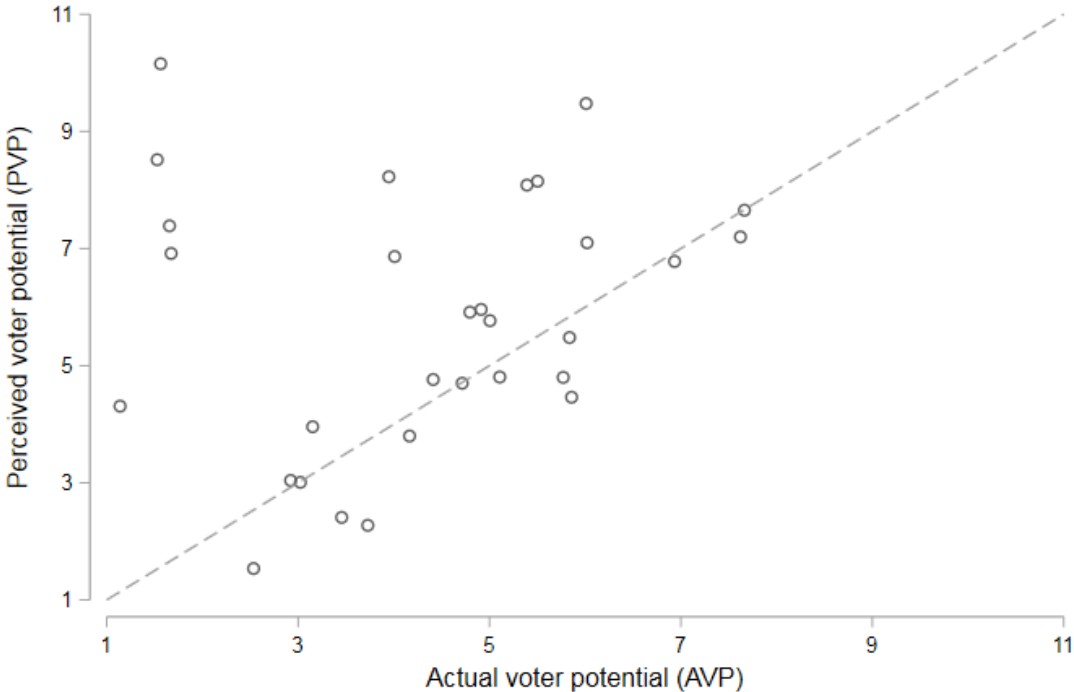


FIGURE A1: Perceived voter potential (PVP) and actual voter potential (AVP)

Note: Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b).

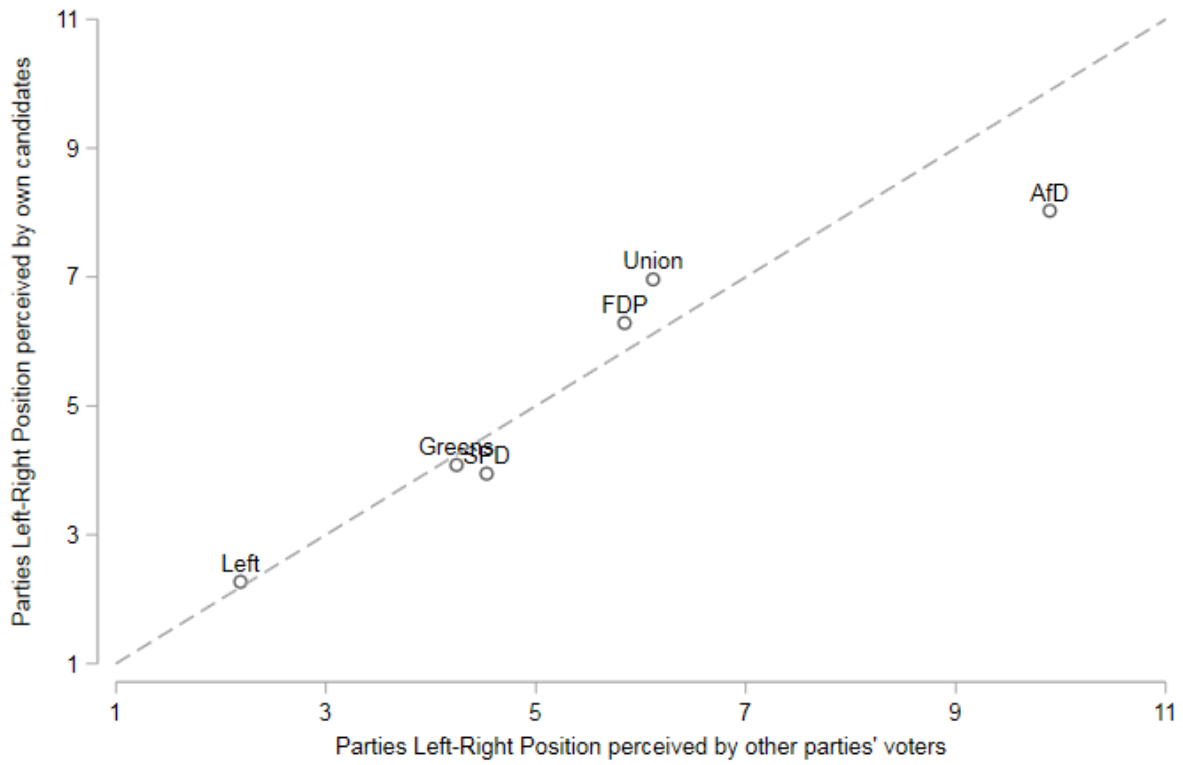


FIGURE A2: Left-right placements of parties by respective party candidates and left-right party placements by other parties' voters

Note: Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b).

B. Robustness-Checks

To validate our findings, we conducted a number of (identical) robustness checks for both of our main models, the PVP model (Table 1 in the paper) and the PVP-minus-AVP model (Table 2 in the paper). We calculated several additional models, the results of which are presented in Tables B2 (PVP-models) and B3 (PVP-minus-AVP models).

First of all, the number of cases to test our theoretical argument is small resulting in vulnerability to outliers and influential cases. Therefore, we conducted Jackknife tests for both of our main Models (Models M1 in Tables B2 and B3). Here, we used the jackknife routine implemented in STATA. We also looked for outliers from a theoretical perspective. With the AfD, our analyses include a party showing very large deviations between PVP and AVP. Furthermore, the AfD was a rather new party in 2017, which makes it more difficult for other parties to evaluate their voter potentials among this specific target party's electorate. Therefore, we calculated two additional models for each main model: one in which we excluded all cases containing the AfD as the receiving party (Models M2) and one that excluded all cases containing the AfD as the target party (Models M3). Furthermore, we calculated four additional PVP- and PVP-minus-AVP models each, for which PVP- and PLRP-scores were aggregated across four different subsamples of individual candidates: experienced vs. inexperienced candidates (M4a and M4b) and MP's vs. unelected candidates (M5a and M5b).

Secondly, we applied our analytical models to a different context, namely to that of the German Federal Elections of 2013 (Models M6). Here, we used data from the GLES 2013 candidate survey (Rattinger et al., 2014) and post-election voter survey (Rattinger et al., 2017). All variables used for our main analyses of the 2017 elections are also part of the 2013 surveys and have the same coding. Therefore, the operationalization of our dependent and independent variables is identical to that described in the research design section of our paper. Furthermore, we calculated a model pooling the 2013 and 2017 observations (M7).

Thirdly, to make sure that no omitted variable is at hand, we added a number of control variables to our main models, each at a time. We controlled for several party size related factors: the receiving and target parties' size (Models M8 and M9), vote gains (Models M10 and M11) as well as their relative vote gains (Models M12). Additionally, we added a variable indicating whether the two members of the party pair belong to the same political camp to our main models

(Models M13). Descriptions of these control variables and some summary statistics are presented in Table B1.

Finally, we calculated our main models using an alternative operationalization of our dependent variables. Here, we calculated our PVP and PVP-minus-AVP measures using the median of the PTWV- and PTV-distribution (Models 14).

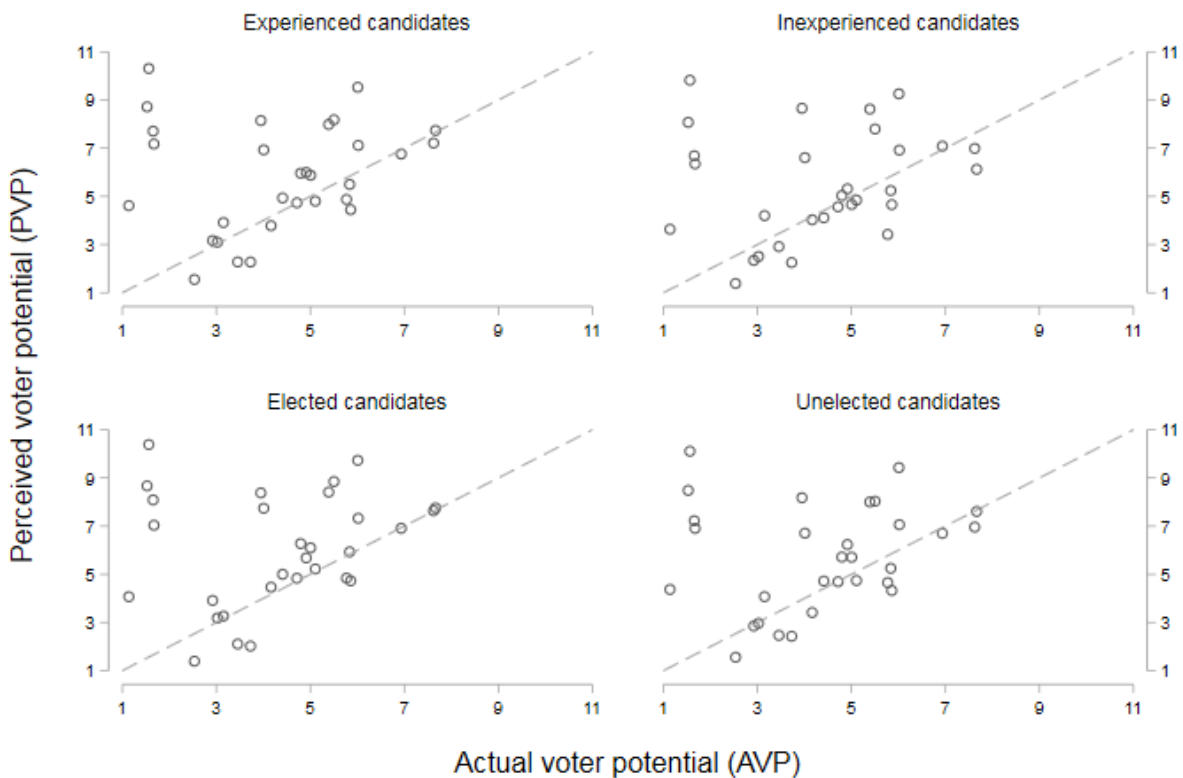


FIGURE B1: Perceived voter potential (PVP) and actual voter potential (AVP) of experienced vs. inexperienced and elected vs. unelected candidates

Note: Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b).

Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum	Distribution (%)
Size of receiving/target party	Vote share at last election, measured at receiving/target-party level.	15.80	8.73	8.90	32.90	
Vote gains of receiving party/target party	Vote gain in percentage points, measured at receiving/target-party level. The AfD did not stand for election in 2013. For the 2013 models, we took the AfD's vote share in 2013 (4.7 percent) for the vote gain.	0.2	5.87	-8.60	7.90	
Relative vote gains of receiving/target party	Vote gain of receiving party in percentage points minus vote gain of target party in percentage points; negative values = receiving party's vote gain is smaller than target party's vote gain; positive values = receiving party's vote gain is bigger than target party's vote gain; measured at the party-pair level.	0	9.09	-16.5	16.5	
Political camp	1= members of party pair belong to the same political camp (Union and FDP or SPD and Greens); 0 = members of party pair do not belong to the same political camp; measured at the party-pair level.	0.13	-	0	1	

TABLE B1: Description of control variables and summary statistics

Political experience	A candidate is considered politically experienced, if he or she reported to have ever (been) one or more of the following:					
	- held a local or regional party office					
	- held a national party office					
	- been elected or appointed as mayor					
	- been member of a local government/parliament	0.87	0	1		
	- been member of a regional parliament					
	- been member of a regional government					
	- been member of the European Parliament					
- been member of the Bundestag.						
Elected candidate	Candidates who gained a mandate for the Bundestag after the 2017 election	0.23	-	0	1	

TABLE B1 continued: Description of control variables and summary statistics

Note: Own calculations based on data from the Federal Returning Officer (Bundeswahlleiter, 2017), Roßteutscher et al. (2018a) and own research.

	M1	M2	M3	M4a	M4b	M5a	M5b	M6	M7	M8
Perceived left-right proximity by parties (PLRP)	1.01 (0.17)	*** 1.06 (0.12)	*** 1.09 (0.15)	*** 1.01 (0.13)	*** 0.92 (0.15)	*** 1.01 (0.13)	*** 1.02 (0.13)	*** 0.94 (0.09)	*** 0.94 (0.08)	*** 1.02 (0.13)
Size of receiving party										-0.06 (0.08)
Size of target party										
Vote gains of receiving party										
Vote gains of target party										
Relative vote gains										
Political Camp										
Election year									0.36 (0.27)	
Intercept	-1.37 (1.27)	-2.28 (0.98)	* -2.11 (1.35)	-1.33 (1.14)	-1.33 (1.38)	-1.11 (1.13)	-1.48 (1.16)	-1.24 (0.88)	-1.22 (0.84)	-0.48 (1.69)
Random effects parameters										
σ^2 party pair-level	1.17	0.82	1.16	1.14	3.03	1.24	1.18	0.90	1.06	1.16
σ^2 target party-level	0.36	0.28	0.32	0.35	0.34	0.43	0.35	0.00	0.15	0.36
σ^2 receiving party-level	2.41	0.87	2.59	2.46	3.03	2.27	2.47	1.46	1.80	2.69
N party pairs	30	25	25	30	30	30	30	30	60	30
N receiving parties	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
N target parties	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

TABLE B2: Additional PVP-models for robustness checks

	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14
Perceived left-right proximity by parties (PLRP)	0.96 (0.13)	*** 1.02 (0.13)	*** 0.96 (0.13)	*** 0.93 (0.13)	*** 0.97 (0.16)	*** 1.24 (0.15)
Size of receiving party						
Size of target party	0.05 (0.03)					
Vote gains of receiving party		0.14 (0.11)				
Vote gains of target party			-0.06 (0.05)			
Relative vote gains				0.07 (0.04)		
Political Camp					0.26 (0.77)	
Election year						
Intercept	-1.83 (1.17)	-1.45 (1.13)	-1.00 (1.16)	-0.81 (1.09)	-1.15 (1.26)	-3.02 (1.32)
Random effects parameters						
σ^2 party pair-level	1.22	1.17	1.22	1.26	1.24	1.45
σ^2 target party-level	0.19	0.35	0.29	0.23	0.34	0.68
σ^2 receiving party-level	2.15	2.12	2.16	1.59	2.36	3.07
N party pairs	30	30	30	30	30	30
N receiving parties	6	6	6	6	6	6
N target parties	6	6	6	6	6	6

Note: Results of cross-classified models with two higher-level as described in the methods section; regression coefficients. Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b) ; Rattinger et al. (2014; 2017). Standard errors are presented in brackets.

Models:

M1 = Jackknife test
M2 = exclusion of AfD as receiving party
M3 = exclusion of AfD as target party
M4a = experienced candidates only
M4b = inexperienced candidates only
M5a = elected candidates only
M5b = non-elected candidates only
M6 = application to the 2013 Federal election
M7 = pooled model
M8 = size of receiving party as control
M9 = size of target party as control
M10 = vote gains of receiving party as control
M11 = vote gains of target party as control
M12 = relative vote gains as control
M13 = political camp as control
M14 = calculation of dependent variable based on median

TABLE B2 continued: Additional PVP-models for robustness checks

	M1	M2	M3	M4a	M4b	M5a	M5b	M6	M7	M8
PLRP minus VLRP (left-right differences)	0.81 (0.19)	*** 0.66 (0.18)	** 0.86 (0.22)	** 0.80 (0.19)	*** 0.80 (0.25)	** 0.78 (0.19)	** 0.84 (0.20)	*** 0.71	** 0.72 (0.14)	*** 0.82 (0.20)
Size of receiving party										-0.10 (0.10)
Size of target party										
Vote gains of receiving party										
Vote gains of target party										
Relative vote gains										
Political Camp										
Election year									-0.27 (0.27)	
Intercept	2.50 (0.35)	*** 1.55 (0.63)	* 2.47 (0.98)	* 2.56 (0.95)	** 1.93 (1.06)	* 2.72 (0.95)	* 2.47 (0.95)	* 2.64	* 2.65 (0.84)	*** 4.11 (1.78)
Random effects parameters										
σ^2 party pair-level	0.96	0.73	1.02	0.93	1.40	1.12	0.95	1.39	1.07	0.96
σ^2 target party- level	0.86	0.77	0.97	0.85	0.84	1.10	0.80	0.30	0.58	0.84
σ^2 receiving party- level	3.90	0.84	3.98	4.00	5.31	3.69	4.00	2.67	3.31	3.79
N party pairs	30	25	25	30	30	30	30	30	60	30
N receiving parties	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
N target parties	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

TABLE B3: Additional PVP-minus-AVP models for robustness checks

	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14
PLRP minus VLRP (left-right differences)	0.79 (0.19) ***	0.79 (0.19) ***	0.77 (0.20) **	0.75 (0.20) **	0.92 (0.26) ***	0.92 (0.26) **
Size of receiving party						
Size of target party	0.08 (0.04)					
Vote gains of receiving party		0.23 (0.11)				
Vote gains of target party			-0.09 (0.07)			
Relative vote gains				0.13 (0.06)		
Political Camp					-0.54 (0.72)	
Election year						
Intercept	1.21 (1.07)	2.43 (0.78) *	2.47 (0.93) *	2.42 (0.77) *	2.72 (0.96) *	2.83 (1.09) *
Random effects parameters						
σ^2 party pair-level	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.97	0.99	1.71
σ^2 target party- level	0.41	0.83	0.70	0.69	0.90	1.04
σ^2 receiving party- level	3.84	2.27	3.86	2.32	3.60	5.01
N party pairs	30	30	30	30	30	30
N receiving parties	6	6	6	6	6	6
N target parties	6	6	6	6	6	6

Note: Results of cross-classified models with two higher-level as described in the methods section; regression coefficients. Own calculations based on Roßteutscher et al. (2018a; 2018b) ; Rattinger et al. (2014; 2017). Standard errors are presented in brackets.

Models:

- M1 = Jackknife test
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- M4a = experienced candidates only
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- M7 = pooled model
- M8 = size of receiving party as control
- M9 = size of target party as control
- M10 = vote gains of receiving party as control
- M11 = vote gains of target party as control
- M12 = relative vote gains as control
- M13 = political camp as control
- M14 = calculation of dependent variable based on median

TABLE B3 continued: Additional PVP-minus-AVP models for robustness check

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