Paper Stones Revisited:

Class Voting, Unionization and the Electoral Decline of the Mainstream Left

Line Rennwald (Université de Genève)

and

Jonas Pontusson (Université de Genève)

for presentation at workshop on "Unions and the Politics of Inequality,"

Université de Genève, April 13-14, 2018

Abstract

Relying on post-election surveys, this paper analyzes how class and union membership condition voters' abandonment of mainstream Left parties and the alternatives chosen by former mainstream-Left voters in the period 2001-15. Inspired by Przeworski and Sprague's *Paper Stones* (1986), our analysis shows that Left parties face a trade-off between appealing to workers and non-workers and that unionization renders workers more loyal to Left parties that mobilize non-workers. Unionization also renders middle-class employees less likely to abandon the mainstream Left and increases the likelihood that voters who abandon the mainstream Left remain on the Left. The latter effect operates in class-specific ways. For workers, union membership reduces the probability of abstaining from voting and increases the likelihood of voting for the radical Left. For non-workers, union membership increases the likelihood of voting for the radical Left and Greens rather than Center-Right parties.

Pundits and scholars alike have conceived recent elections in liberal democracies as an epic struggle between, on the one hand, establishment politicians and parties and, on the other hand, "populist" challengers. In this paper, we wish to bring to the fore and shed light on another, related, feature of recent elections: the sharp decline of support for mainstream Left parties. The most dramatic manifestation of this phenomenon is the collapse of the Greek Socialist Party (PASOK), whose vote share fell from 43.9% in 2009 to 12.3% in 2012 and then to 6.3% in 2015. At the other end of Western Europe, the Social Democratic Alliance of Iceland nearly replicated this spectacular collapse, falling from 29.8% of the vote in 2009 to 12.9% in 2013 and 6.6% in 2016. Under less crisis-ridden circumstances, in core EU countries, the Dutch Labor Party and the French Socialists also collapsed at the polls in the first half of 2017 (falling from 24.8% to 5.7% and from 29.4% to 7.4% respectively). Other mainstream Left parties have averted disaster, but Anglophone Labour parties, Northern European Social Democratic parties and Southern European Socialist parties have all suffered major setbacks in recent elections.

Relying on the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), we present results for two separate analyses of election surveys from sixteen countries over the period 2001-15 (for a total of 40 elections).[1] Restricted to survey respondents who (by their own account) voted for mainstream Left parties in the previous election, the first analysis addresses the question of who has abandoned these parties. Restricted to survey respondents who voted for the mainstream Left in the previous election but not in the current election, the second analysis addresses the question of where

former mainstream-Left voters have gone. Did they stop voting altogether or did they turn some other party family (the radical Left, the Greens, the Center-Right or the radical Right)?

Our discussion is inspired by *Paper Stones*, the classic 1986 book by Adam Przeworski and John Sprague. Famously, Przeworski and Sprague (1986) argue that socialist parties face an electoral dilemma: they need middle-class support in order to obtain a parliamentary majority, but they tend to loose working-class support as they appeal to middle-class voters. In addition, Przeworski and Sprague argue that unions reinforce the class identity of workers and thereby mitigate the electoral dilemma of socialist parties. Following Przeworki and Sprague's reasoning, we hypothesize that union decline—a pervasive trend across OECD countries over the last 20-30 years (see Pontusson 2013)—renders the trade-off between appealing to workers and non-workers and thus accounts for some of the electoral difficulties that mainstream Left parties are currently experiencing.

To anticipate, our analysis of voting behavior distinguishes between workers and non-workers. We find that workers are more likely to abandon mainstream Left parties that primarily mobilize non-workers. We also find that union membership renders workers less likely to abandon mainstream Left when they appeal to non-workers. Union membership also renders non-workers more loyal to mainstream Left parties, but this effect appears to be less sensitive to the party's class profile.

The results of our analysis of the trajectories of the leavers can be summarized as follows. Controlling for union membership, we find that workers who leave mainstream Left parties are more likely to stop voting and to vote for the radical Right

than non-workers, while non-workers who leave are more likely to vote for Greens and mainstream Center-Left parties. Interacting class with union membership, we find that union membership increases the likelihood that working-class voters who abandon the mainstream Left continue to vote and that they vote for the radical Left. For non-workers who abandon the mainstream Left, union membership increases the likelihood of voting for Greens and the radical Left rather than mainstream Center-Right parties.

In what follows, we begin by documenting the decline of mainstream Left parties. We then discuss *Paper Stones*, present descriptive data as background, and articulate the specific hypotheses that we set out to test. In the third section, we briefly discuss data and methodology. The fourth section presents our analysis of how union membership and the class profile of parties condition the probability of workers and non-workers to abandon the mainstream Left. The fifth section in turn presents our analysis of where the leavers have gone and the sixth section concludes.

1. The electoral decline of the mainstream Left

As noted above, the analyses that we will present below are based of election surveys over the period 2001-15. Pooling all of the election surveys that we use, 32% of mainstream-Left voters in the previous election either abstained from voting or voted for another party while 26% of mainstream-Left voters in the current election were newcomers. By comparison, electoral support for Center-Right parties far more stable over this period, with 19% of their voters leaving and newcomers accounting for 21% of their electorate.[2] While newcomers outnumbered leavers by two

percentage points for Center-Right parties, leavers outnumbered newcomers by six percentage points for the mainstream Left.

For the sixteen countries included in our analysis, Table 1 tracks the electoral decline of mainstream Left parties over a longer period of time, based on official election results. The first column records the post-war election year in which the vote share of the mainstream Left party peaked and the second column records the most recent election.[3] In the following three columns, we adjust for extraordinary elections by reporting the average vote share of the mainstream Left party over two elections: (1) for the peak election and the immediately following election; (2) for the best two elections in the 1990s; and (3) for the two most recent elections. Finally, the last two columns of Table 1 report on changes in the average vote share from the 1990s to the most recent elections, with change measured first in percentage points and then as a percentage of the 1990s vote share.

[Table 1]

Four heuristic purposes, Table 1 sorts mainstream Left parties into four groups. The first group consists of the three Social Democratic parties that most successfully mobilized working-class voters in the wake of democratization—the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Social Democrats. Aided by the fragmentation of the Center-Right (Castles 1978), these parties held a position of political dominance for several decades, starting in the 1930s. The second group consists of Left parties that became one of the two main electoral contenders in the post-war period, competing with a unified Center-Right party. This group includes the Anglophone Labour parties, operating under more or less majoritarian electoral rules, but also the

Austrian and German Social Democratic parties. The third group consists of an assortment of Left parties that have in common that they have always faced strong competition from at least two Center-Right parties. Some of these parties have been confined to a more or less permanent minority status. Finally, the fourth group consists of the French, Greek and Spanish Socialists, who made dramatic electoral advances in the early 1980s, emerging as one the two main electoral contenders and, in the Greek and Spanish cases, briefly appeared to be on the verge of becoming dominant parties.[4]

For our purposes, the most striking feature of Table 1 is that the average vote share of all mainstream Left parties, regardless of their past performance, fell from the 1990s to the most recent elections. Across the sixteen countries, the decline in the average vote share from the 1990s to the two most recent elections averaged 10.3 percentage points. It should come as no surprise that when change is measured in percentage points, small parties have generally done better than large parties. When we instead measure change relative to initial levels, the Greek Socialists and the Icelandic Social Democratic Alliance stand out as the mainstream Left parties that have done worst at the polls while the British and Irish Labour, along with the French and Swiss Socialists, are the parties whose vote shares have held up best.[5]

One other feature of Table 1 deserves to be noted. With two exceptions (Finland and Iceland), all these parties peaked well before the 1990s and suffered substantial vote-share losses from their peak to the 1990s. Due to data availability, our analysis focuses on the period 2001-14. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the electoral decline of the mainstream Left that occurred over this period is the

continuation of general trend that dates back to the 1970s. Arguably, the recent rise of right-wing populist parties with a significant working-class base should be seen as a late manifestation (rather than the cause) of the electoral decline of the mainstream Left.

2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

The analytical history of electoral socialism that Przeworski and Sprague present in *Paper Stones* (1986) proceeds from the "constructivist" (or Gramscian) propositions that the activities of political parties determine the voting behavior of individuals and that there is nothing natural about politics being organized on the basis of class divisions in society. In Przeworski and Sprague's words, "the claims of workers are particularistic, and when workers organize as a class they seek to impose upon the entire society the image of classes, each endowed with particularistic interests." By contrast, capitalists represent themselves as a class "only in moments of folly." Their response to the particularistic claims of the working class "is not a particularism of the bourgeoise but ideologies which deny altogether the salience of class interests, either by posing a universalistic model of society composed of individual-citizens whose interests are in harmony or by evoking alternative particularisms of religion, language, ethnicity, etc." In short, the salience of class for politics and, in particular, for the political behavior of workers depends on the presence of political parties that seek to mobilize workers as a class (Przeworski and Sprague 1986:8-10).

Przeworski and Sprague proceed to document that, contrary to the expectations of Marxists and other 19th-century socialist thinkers, the development of industrial capitalism did not usher in the demise of the middle classes and the proletarianization of society as a whole. Farmers, shopkeepers and artisans were displaced, but they were replaced by middle-class employees as well as (manual) workers. In no country did the working class ever become the majority of the electorate in the wake of democratization. Indeed, Przeworski and Sprague's census-based estimates for seven West European countries indicate that manual workers as a proportion of the electorate peaked some time between 1900 and 1950. Workers constituted just about 50% of the Belgian electorate in the early 1920s, but in the other six countries their share of the electorate never exceeded 40% (Przeworski and Sprague 1986:39).

Recognizing that the mobilization of working-class voters could not possibly deliver the electoral majority that would make societal reform by democratic means possible, socialist parties began to court other electoral constituencies—in the first instance, small farmers and farm laborers, but also, increasingly, the new middle classes. In pursuing what Przeworski and Sprague refer to as "supraclass strategies," they abandoned or, at least, postponed some of their more radical transformative ambitions.

This is a familiar story and its retelling by Przeworski and Sprague is not terribly distinctive. What makes *Paper Stones* an exciting and important book is the light that it sheds on the following puzzle: firmly committed to democratic principles and pursuing supraclass strategies, socialist parties have rarely succeeded in

mobilizing a majority of voters. Their rapid rise in the wake of democratization was followed, from the 1940s onwards, by a long period of electoral stagnation. Przeworski and Sprague's explanation of this stagnation boils down to the following proposition: seeking to mobilize support among non-workers by making supra-class appeals, socialist parties undermine the salience of class to workers and thereby enable other political parties to compete for the working-class vote.

Analyzing aggregate voting patterns in seven countries from 1900 to 1980, Przeworski and Sprague identify a persistent trade-off: as socialist parties have gained support among other classes, they have invariably lost support among workers. Their analysis also shows that the steepness of this trade-off varies considerably across countries and, as a result, so does the "carrying capacity" of socialist parties. Historically, the trade-offs faced by Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Social Democrats have been less steep than the trade-offs faced by their Belgian, Finnish, French and German counterparts. In other words, the Scandinavian parties suffered smaller losses among working-class voters as they expanded their electoral base beyond the working class.

In seeking to explain why the trade-off varies across countries (and to some extent over time as well), Przeworski and Sprague suggest that the nature of the competitors that socialist parties face matters, but their main line of argumentation has to do with unionization. Unions, they argue, serve to sustain the class identity of workers and thereby reduce the need for socialist parties to emphasize class politics in order to preserve the electoral support of workers. According to Przeworski and Sprague, the union effect on the electoral trade-off faced by socialist parties is

particularly strong when union membership in concentrated in a single confederation and when collective bargaining is centralized.[6]

Leaving individual-level implications aside for the time being, Przeworski and Sprague's argumentation suggests that the unionization rate affects the carrying capacity of Left parties. Plotting changes in the average vote share of mainstream Left parties from the 1990s to the two most recent elections (as reported in Table 1) against changes in union density from 1990 to 2013 (as reported by Visser 2016), there does not appear to be any relationship between these two variables. As reported in Table 2, however, the picture changes if we estimate a simple OLS regression model with a couple of dummy variables as controls. The first dummy variable takes the value of 1 for countries in which mainstream Left parties are not faced with any significant competition from the radical Right or the Left (Australia, New Zealand and the UK). The second dummy variable takes the value of 1 for countries in which the mainstream Left held government power for at least part of the economic crisis that began in 2007-08 and the crisis was very severe (Greece, Iceland and Spain). When both of these variables are included in the model, the absence of radical competition is associated with a smaller decline in the vote share, the combination of incumbency and crisis is associated with a (much) larger decline in the vote share and, most importantly for our purposes, union decline is associated with a substantial decline in the vote share (.434 per one percentage-point reduction in union density). While the results of this simple exercise are obviously not definitive, they suggest that that union decline may be a factor behind the electoral decline of mainstream Left parties.[7]

[Table 2]

As noted by Sainsbury (1990), Przeworski and Sprague's empirical analysis proceeds from a narrow and arguably old-fashioned conceptualization of the "working class" as consisting exclusively of manual workers employed in mining, manufacturing, construction, transport and agriculture. Sainsbury (1990:34) also points that Przeworski and Sprague do not directly observe of the proportion of workers voting socialist; instead, they impute this critical parameter based on the proportion of workers within the population eligible to vote and official election results.

Our individual-level analysis of survey data is meant to complement Przeworski and Sprague's macro-level analysis of election results. Analyzing survey data allows us to observe the class profile of Left party electorates directly and to determine whether or not there exists a trade-off between workers and non-workers at the individual level—in other words, to determine whether or not working-class voters become less loyal supporters of Left parties as these parties mobilize other voters. As cross-nationally comparable survey data are only available for a relatively short and recent period, however, we cannot address the question of whether or not the electoral trade-off has changed over time, nor can we estimate the slope of the trade-off for different countries.

Following Przeworski and Sprague, our individual-level analyses rely on a simple dichotomy between workers and non-workers, but our definition of "the working class" is broader than theirs. As documented by Oesch (2006) and many others, low-skilled individuals employed in services occupy disadvantageous

positions in the labor market that are comparable to (or worse than) the positions of production workers in terms of job security, occupational status and earnings. These individuals are less likely to be unionized and may be less likely to self-identify as "working class" than production workers, but they are surely part of the working class as defined by objective criteria.

Matching occupations in the CSES dataset with Oesch's (2006) occupation-based class schema, we code production workers and service workers as "workers" and voters with other occupations as "non-workers." By this definition, the share of workers in the total electorate has declined since the 1970s, but not nearly as much as the share of production workers. Averaging across the five countries for which Rennwald (2015) provides data, the share of production workers in the total electorate fell from 33% to 19% while the share of service workers rose from 12% to 20% from the first half of the 1970s to the second half of the 2000s. Overall, then, the working-class share of the electorate across these five countries has fallen by about thirteen percent since the 1970s.[8]

Pooling CSES data for 2001-15, Table 3 reports our estimates of the size of the working class in percentage of total electorate in each of the sixteen countries included in our analysis.[9] In addition, Table 3 divides non-workers into two groups: middle-class employees (junior managers, professionals and semi-professionals and office clerks) and other non-workers (large employers, small business persons, farmers, self-employed professionals). By our broad definition, the working class constitutes 22-25% of the total electorate in Switzerland, Australia and Greece, 30-32% in Norway, the Netherlands and New Zealand and 37-44% in the remaining ten

countries. Though far from an electoral majority, the working class remains a large a large electoral constituency, which Left parties ignore at their own peril. With the notably exception of Spain, middle-class employees constitute the vast majority of non-workers in all these countries. Not surprisingly, the results that we obtain if we restrict the sample to working-class and middle-class voters are very similar to the results that we report in this paper.

[Table 3]

It goes without saying that we loose precision by focusing on the dichotomy between workers and non-workers. In particular, our analysis in this paper ignores the distinction between old and new middle classes that features so prominently in recent literature on electoral realignments (e.g., Kitschelt and Rehm 2015, Häusermann and Kriesi 2015). We do not wish to deny the distinctiveness of "socio-cultural professionals" or, more generally, the relevance of work experience—in Oesch's terminology, "work logics"—for political behavior. To reiterate, our main objective is to evaluate the trade-off thesis advanced by Przeworski and Sprague. For this purpose, the critical question is how working-class voters respond to Left parties' efforts to mobilize middle-class support and there is no obvious reason why this response should differ depending on the segments of the middle class that Left parties target. It should also be noted that existing studies suggest that the distinctiveness of socio-cultural professionals, relative to other middle-class employees, primarily has to do with their proximity to Greens and other "New Left" parties. The proximity of the new middle class(es) to mainstream Left parties is less clear and varies a great

deal across countries (see Müller 1999, Dolezal 2010, Oesch 2013, Arndt 2014, Rennwald 2017, Oesch and Rennwald 2017).

In principle, the trade-off argument pertains to voters switching to Left parties as well as abandoning Left parties. For the time period covered by our analysis (2001-15), it makes sense, we think, to focus on voters leaving the mainstream Left. The core hypothesis derived from Paper Stones is the following:

> **H1:** *Workers are less likely to abandon the mainstream Left than non-workers when the working-class profile of the mainstream Left is strong (and, conversely, more likely to abandon the mainstream Left than non-workers when the working-class profile of the mainstream Left is weak).*

We propose two different measures of the working-class profile of mainstream Left parties. The first measure is the percentage of workers in the party's electorate in previous election divided by the percentage of workers in the electorate as whole in the previous election. A ratio greater than 1 means that the working class was overrepresented in the party's electorate in the previous election while a ratio smaller than 1 means that the working class was underrepresented in the party's electorate. The second measure takes the same form, but refers to the class composition of new voters for the party rather than the class composition its voters in the previous election, with a ratio greater than 1 meaning that workers were overrepresented among new supporters of the party (first-time voters as well as voters who switched to the party). We operationalize both measures based on recalled vote choices as recorded in election surveys.[10] Appendix 3 provides descriptive statistics. Based on the class composition of party electorates in the

previous election, the working-class profile of mainstream Left parties ranges between 0.70 (Switzerland in 2011) and 1.53 (Sweden in 2014). Based on the class composition of new voters, it ranges between 0.81 (Switzerland in 2011) and 2.08 (Greece in 2012).[11]

Following Przeworski and Sprague, we suppose that class profiles reflect party strategy. As suggested by recent literature that emphasizes "supply-side" explanations of class voting (e.g. Evans and De Graaf, 2013; Rennwald and Evans 2014, Rennwald 2015), parties seeking to appeal to working-class voters are likely to emphasize different issues in their election campaigns and to position themselves differently on some issues than parties seeking to appeal to middle-class voters. Arguably, group-based appeals of a rhetorical or symbolic nature also matter (Thau 2017). We suppose that class profile of new voters captures what parties say and do between two elections while the class profile of their electorate in the previous election captures the cumulative effect of strategic choices made in the past and treat the (relative) "weight of the past" as an empirical question.

Przeworski and Spague's discussion of the role of unions in turn implies the following hypothesis:

> **H2:** *Unionized workers are less responsive to the class profile of the mainstream Left than unorganized workers; i.e., they are less likely to abandon the mainstream Left when its working-class profile is weak.*

Relative to *Paper Stones*, we seek to break new ground not only by adopting a broader definition of the working class, but also by exploring the effects of union membership among middle-class voters. Przeworski and Spargue conceive unionization as exclusively a working-class phenomenon, but we know that unionization spread to middle-class employees grew in the 1960s and 1970s.[12] It seems reasonable to suppose that unionization of middle-class employees makes it possible for Left parties to mobilize middle-class support on terms that enable them to preserve the loyalty of their working-class supporters. To explore this hypothesis fully would require us to construct yet another macro variable (unionization among middle-class supporters of Left parties) and to interact this variable with the class profile of Left parties as well as individual characteristics of survey respondents (class and union membership). With survey data for only 40 elections in 16 countries, we are wary of engaging in such an exercise. Hence we restrict ourselves to testing the non-worker equivalent of our second hypothesis:

> **H3:** *Unionized non-workers are less responsive to the class profile of the mainstream Left than unorganized non-workers; i.e., they are less likely to abandon the mainstream when its working-class profile is strong*.

The nature of the electoral competition faced by mainstream Left parties arguably also affect the trade-off between working-class and middle-class support. This brings us to the question of where the voters who abandon the mainstream Left go. As noted above, Przeworski and Sprague's core argument is that supra-class strategies appeal to voters as individual citizens and thus turn workers into issue-oriented voters without strong partisan attachments (e.g., Przeworski and Sprague

1986:51). The implication would seem to be that workers who abandon the mainstream Left should not be expected to behave differently from non-workers. At the same time, however, Przeworski and Sprague (1986:79) suggest that the existence of rival parties that appeal to workers on the basis of class or some other "particularistic" identity renders the Left more vulnerable when it adopts supra-class strategies. While their discussion of this point focuses on competition between socialist and communist parties, they also observe that the existence of "confessional, linguistic and ethnic parties" that appeal to workers renders the trade-off between appealing to workers and non-workers stronger (Przeworski and Sprague 1986:74).

Going beyond *Paper Stones*, there can be little doubt that working-class households have fared badly by comparison to middle-class households in terms of income growth and economic insecurity since the 1990s. Globalization in general and immigration in particular threaten the economic status of workers to a far greater extent than they threaten the economic status of middle-class professionals. Meanwhile, it seems to be generally true that the policy platforms on which mainstream Left parties have campaigned in elections (and implemented in government) have prioritized fiscal consolidation, at the expense of redistributive social spending, and structural reforms designed to promote labor-market flexibility, supplemented by "social investment."[13] Against this background, we hypothesize that workers who abandon the mainstream Left do so with other options in mind than their middle-class counterparts. Specifically, we propose the following hypotheses:

> **H4**: *Relative to non-workers, workers who abandon the mainstream Left are more likely to abstain from voting.*

H5: *Workers who abandon the mainstream Left are more likely to vote for "anti-establishment" parties of the radical Left and the radical Right*.[14]

H6: *Workers who abandon the mainstream Left are less likely vote for Greens and Center-Right parties*.

Once again, we expect union membership to condition the effects of class. Many studies show that union members are more likely to vote and there is at least some evidence to suggest that the association between union membership and electoral participation is strongest for citizens with low socio-economic status (e.g., Kerrissey and Schofer 2013, Rosenfeld 2014). Other studies have shown that union membership is associated with support for redistribution (Mosimann and Pontusson 2017) and with support for immigration (Donnelly 2016). Moreover, Mosimann and Pontusson (2017) show that the union effect on support for redistribution is strongest for individuals with high incomes (i.e., middle-class employees). Drawing on these studies, we propose three additional hypotheses:

H7: *Union membership reduces the propensity of workers who abandon the mainstream Left to abstain from voting*.

H8: *Union membership reduces the propensity of workers who abandon the mainstream Left to vote for the radical Right*.

H9: *Union membership increases the propensity of workers and non-workers to abandon the mainstream Left in favor of the radical Left*.

3. Data, variables and model specifications

As noted already, the two sets of analyses that we present below are based on data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, which gathers and harmonizes national post-election surveys from around the world.[15] Relying on CSES modules 2–4, we restrict our analysis to advanced industrialized countries in which there is mainstream Left party that has historically sought to mobilize the working class on the basis of a more or less coherent reformist ideology.[16] Again, this leaves us with 40 elections in 16 countries (see appendix 1).

As the data are nested, we estimate hierarchical models with country-elections as the level-2 units. In addition, our models include country dummies to take account of the fact that we have data for several elections in ten countries. The dependent variables in both sets of analyses are dichotomous. While many political scientists who seek to identify determinants of dichotomous variables opt for a logistic regression model, we have opted for linear probability models on pragmatic grounds.[17]

At the individual level, the independent variables of theoretical interest are social class and union membership. Based on Oesch's (2006) occupation-based classification scheme, we use a dummy for workers to capture the class affiliation of survey respondents (with non-workers as the reference category). Similarly, union membership is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 for survey respondents who belong to a union. In addition, all the analyses presented below include individual-level controls for age, gender and residence (village, small or medium city, suburbs, large city). These are standard socio-demographic control variables and have been shown to be relevant predictors for mainstream Left voting, but we do not

have strong theoretical expectations as to how they might affect probabilities of abandoning the mainstream or trajectories of voters who abandon the mainstream Left.

4. Who has abandoned the mainstream Left?

Let us begin with the decision of individual voters to abandon the mainstream Left. For this purpose, we restrict the sample to respondents who say that they voted for the mainstream Left party in the previous election. The dependent variable takes the value 1 for respondents who did not vote for the mainstream Left party in the election that just took place and 0 for those who again voted for the mainstream Left party.[18]

We are interested in the effects of class and union membership, as individual-level variables, and how they interact with the class profile of the mainstream Left party to determine the probability that an individual will abandon the mainstream Left. In addition to the individual-level control variables mentioned above, our models include two macro-level control variables: the effective number of parties and incumbency during the crisis. Taken from Armingeon *et al*. (2016), the effective number of parties is measured based on the outcome of the previous election.[19] The motivation behind including this variable is the idea that Left parties are likely to do badly when faced with many competitors (and, in particular, with competition from the radical Left and the Right). "Incumbency during crisis" is a dummy variable that

takes the value of 1 if the mainstream Left party held the office of prime minister and the economic crisis of 2008-10 was particularly severe. As the only Spanish election included in the CSES database predates the crisis, this dummy effectively controls for the extraordinary circumstances of the Greek election of 2012 and the Icelandic election of 2013.

The results of estimating four different models are presented in Table 4. The left-hand panel presents results with class profile measured on the basis of the mainstream Left party's electorate in the previous election while the right-hand panel presents results with class profile measured on the basis of the inflow of new voters. The first model includes class profile and the number of parties as well as all the individual-level variables.[20] In the second model, we add the dummy for incumbency during the crisis. In the third model, we interact class affiliation of respondents with the class profile of parties and in the fourth model, finally, we interact three variables: class affiliation, union membership and the class profile of the party.[21]

[Table 4]

Regarding the direct effects of individual-level variables, we find that union members and older individuals are less likely to abandon the mainstream Left than unorganized and younger individuals. Voters in rural areas and small towns are more inclined to turn away from Left parties than voters in large cities and their suburbs. By contrast, there is no significant difference between workers and non-workers in their propensity to abandon the mainstream Left, nor between men and women.

The effective number parties is weakly associated with greater average propensity to abandon the mainstream Left party in Model 5 (with class profile based on new voters), but the significance of this association disappears once we control for incumbency during the crisis.[22] The coefficient for incumbency during the crisis is consistently significant across all models: not surprisingly, we find that voters abandoned the Greek Socialists in 2012 and the Icelandic Social Democrats in 2013 with much greater frequency than they have abandoned other mainstream Left parties (and the same parties in earlier elections).

As for the direct effects of class profile, we find that over-representation of workers among new voters is associated with a greater propensity for voters to leave the mainstream Left. In general, parties that have mobilized primarily workers seem to have suffered larger electoral losses than parties that have primarily mobilized non-workers. On the other hand, we do not find any association between class profile in the previous election and the propensity of voters to abandon the mainstream Left.

Turning to the trade-off between the electoral support of workers and non-workers, the meaning of the raw results presented in Table 4 is far from self-evident. Following conventional practice, Figure 1 shows our estimates of the probabilities of workers and non-workers abandoning the mainstream Left conditional on its class profile in previous election (Model 3 in Table 4) and the class profile of its new voters (Model 7 in Table 4). Also based on Models 3 and 7 in Table 4, Figure 2 in turn shows the average marginal effect of class—i.e., the effect of a respondent being a worker rather than a non-worker—conditional on the degree to which the working-class

voters were overrepresented in party's electorate in the previous election (left-hand panel) or in the inflow of new voters (right-hand panel).

[Figures 1-2]

As shown in Figure 1, our results suggest that there is indeed a trade-off along the lines suggested by Przeworski and Sprague: workers are more likely than non-workers to abandon the mainstream Left when its working-class profile is weak and non-workers are more likely than workers to jump ship when the party's working-class profile is strong. The same tendency can be observed with both measures of the class profile. For parties with very strong working-class profiles, workers seem to be 3-4 percentage points less likely to abandon the mainstream Left. We hasten to note that the trade-off is not very strong from a statistical point of view. As shown in Figure 2, average marginal effects of class fail to clear the 90% threshold of statistical significance across the range of class profiles based on previous election outcomes, but they do clear the 90% threshold for strong working-class profiles measured by the inflow of new voters. (With only 40 observations of class profile, a 90% threshold of statistical significance strikes us as appropriate).

Incorporating the role of unionization into this picture, Figure 3 plots the effect of union membership conditional on class profile for workers while Figure 4 does the same for non-workers (based on Models 4 and 8 in Table 3). Consistent with Hypothesis 2, the point estimates shown in Figure 3 suggest that unionized workers are less likely than unorganized workers to abandon Left parties that appeal to non-workers. The point estimates for predominantly middle-class Left parties clear the 95% significance threshold with both measures of class profile. Our results confirm

the proposition that that working-class unionization enables Left parties to reach out to non-workers without losing support among workers. For non-workers, we find a strong negative effect of union membership on the probability of abandoning the mainstream, but, contrary to our third hypothesis, this effect is not conditioned by the class profile of Left parties. Regardless of class profile, unionized non-workers are less likely to abandon the mainstream Left than non-workers who are not union members.

[Figures 3-4]

5. Where did they go?

We now turn to the question of where voters who abandoned the mainstream Left have gone or, more precisely, where they went at the time they abandoned the mainstream Left. An important limitation of our analysis is that CSES data do not allow us trace voter transitions over more extended periods of time. It is, of course, quite possible that some of these voters returned to the mainstream Left in a subsequent election or moved again, to yet another option.[23]

As indicated at the outset, we consider the following options available to voters who abandon the mainstream Left: (1) non-voting, (2) vote for a Center-Right party, (3) vote for a Green party, (4) vote for a radical Left party or (5) vote for a radical Right party. Again, we are interested in how class and union membership and the interaction between them affect choices among these options. Our analysis here is restricted to "leavers," i.e., to survey respondents who say that they (a) voted for the mainstream Left in the previous election and (b) did not vote for the mainstream

Left in the current election. As a result, the total number of observations at the individual level is much smaller than in our analysis of the choice to abandon (or stay with) the mainstream Left.

Pooling all 40 elections, the distribution of choices by the 3,889 respondents who abandoned the mainstream Left is as follows: 45% voted for a Center-Right party, 16% voted for the radical Left, 16% did not vote at all, 15% voted for the Greens and 8% voted for the radical Right. The small number of leavers who turned to the radical Right comes as something of a surprise, but other studies (notably Evans and Mellon 2016) show that radical Right parties primarily draw voters from the Center-Right and that mainstream-Left leavers who end up voting for the radical Right commonly transition through the Center-Right. It should also be kept in mind that our dataset does not include very recent elections, in which radical Right parties have done well and have perhaps become more direct competitors of the mainstream Left.

For each of the options, we estimate a separate linear probability model with a dichotomous dependent variable: choosing the option or not. As the class profile of the mainstream Left party is no longer relevant, we do not include any macro variables in this analysis. We do include the individual control variables identified earlier. In the models designed to predict voting for Greens, radical Left and radical Right, we drop countries and elections where these parties are not meaningful electoral competitors.[24] Needless to say perhaps, non-voting and voting for a Center-Right party are always an option.[25]

We begin by estimating models that do not interact class and union membership and then estimate models with interaction terms added. Reported in

Appendix 4, the first set of models are less vulnerable to the "small-N problem" and, in any case, provide the most appropriate tests of our baseline hypotheses concerning differences between workers and non-workers who abandon the mainstream Left (hypotheses 4-6). Figure 5 summarizes these results graphically. Keeping in mind that the class dummy takes the value of 1 for workers, the results confirms our hypotheses that, relative to non-workers, workers who abandon the mainstream Left are more likely to stop voting (H4) and less likely to vote for Greens and Center-Right parties (H6). Regarding hypothesis 5, the evidence is mixed: working-class leavers are more likely to vote for the radical Right, but they are not more likely to vote for the radical Left.

[Figure 5]

As shown in Figure 5, the direct effects of union membership are consistently significant and straightforward: controlling for class, union members who abandon the mainstream Left are less likely to stop voting and less likely to vote for the Center-Right Right. They are more likely to vote for the radical Left, but also for Greens. Simply put, union members who abandon mainstream Left parties are more likely to remain on the Left, broadly conceived, than leavers who are not union members. The only exception concerns the radical Right: union members who abandon the mainstream Left are as likely to vote for the radical Right as non-union members.

Figure 6 in turn reports predicted probabilities of choosing any one of the five options, based on estimating models that interact class affiliation and union membership. Setting statistical significance tests aside for the time being, voting for the Center-Right is by far the most common choice of all four types of mainstream-

Left leavers. For working-class leavers who are not union members, the rank order of the other options is as follows: (2) non-voting, (3) radical Left, (4) radical Right, and (5) Greens. For non-workers who are not union members, the rank order is distinctly different: (2) Greens, (3) radical Left, (4) non-voting and (5) radical Right. In terms of rank ordering, the class-specific effects of union membership can be summarized as follows: for unionized workers who abandon the mainstream Left, voting for the radical Left trumps non-voting; and for unionized non-workers, voting for the radical Left marginally trumps voting for Greens.

[Figure 6]

Table 5, finally, shows the class-specific marginal effects of union membership on the probability of leavers choosing each of the five options (based on the interaction models). Our results confirm the hypothesis that union membership reduces the propensity of workers who abandon the mainstream Left to abstain from voting (H7). They also confirm the hypothesis that union membership increases the propensity of both workers and non-workers to abandon the mainstream Left in favor of the radical Left (H9). On the other hand, the negative effect of union membership on the propensity of working-class leavers to vote for the radical Right is not statistically significant, calling our eight hypothesis into question. Beyond the hypotheses with which we set out, we also find that union membership reduces the probability of non-workers to abandon the mainstream Left for the Center-Right and that it increases their probability of abandoning the mainstream Left for Green parties.

[Table 5]

6. Conclusion

To summarize very briefly, the preceding analysis of CSES data for 2001-14 suggest that the electoral trade-off identified by Przeworski and Sprague (1986) continues to haunt mainstream Left parties. As suggested by Przeworski and Sprague, unionization mitigates this dilemma by making workers less likely to abandon mainstream Left parties when they appeal to non-workers and also renders middle-class employees less likely to abandon the mainstream Left.

In addition, our results suggest that unionization makes the likelihood that voters who leave mainstream Left parties remain on the Left and that this effect operates in class-specific ways. For workers, union membership reduces the probability of abstaining from voting and increases the likelihood of voting for radical Left parties. For non-workers, union membership increases the likelihood of voting for Greens and the radical Left rather than Center-Right parties.

In closing, let us briefly mention what we consider to be the main limitations of the preceding analysis and promising avenues for future research. An obvious limitation is that the analysis in this paper does not take into account party platforms or the policies that mainstream Left parties have pursued in government.

Another limitation is that our analysis does not capture cross-national and overtime variation in the effects of class, conditional on union membership and the class profile of parties. To address the question of whether or not electoral trade-offs have become more severe for mainstream Left parties, it would be worthwhile to replicate the macro-level analysis in *Paper Stones* with more recent data, but it would also be

interesting to explore election surveys for individual countries going back to the 1960s.

Less obviously perhaps, the preceding analysis assumes that the "union membership" has similar implications across countries and individuals. We have not taken into account that some unions are more closely affiliated with Left parties than others (see Arndt and Rennwald 2016) and that some are more solidaristic than others (Mosimann and Pontusson 2017). There are significant data constraints, but also exciting research opportunities in this domain. Finally, we are keen to explore electoral trade-offs by distinguishing between different segments of the working class and the middle class.

References

Afonso, A. and Rennwald, L., 2017. Social Class and the Changing Welfare State Agenda of Radical Right Parties in Europe. Manow, P., Schwander, H. and Palier, B., eds. 2017. *Welfare State Reforms and Electoral Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Arzheimer, K., 2013. Working-class parties 2.0? Competition between centre-left and extreme right parties. Rydgren, J., ed. 2013. *Class Politics and the Radical Right.* London; New York:Routledge, pp.75-90.

Armingeon, K., Isler, C., Knöpfel L., Weisstanner, D. and Engler S., 2016. *Comparative Political Data Set 1960-2014*. Bern: Institute of Political Science, University of Berne. http://www.cpds-data.org/

Arndt, C., 2014. Social democracy's mobilization of new constituencies: The role of electoral systems. *Party Politics,* 20 (5), pp.778-790.

Arndt, C. and Rennwald, L., 2016. Union members at the polls in diverse trade union landscapes. *European Journal of Political Research,* 55 (4), pp.702–722.

Becher, M. and Pontusson, J., 2011. Whose interests do unions represent? In Brady, D., ed. Research in the Sociology of Work, vol. 22B. London: Emerald Press, pp. 181–211.

Beck, N., 2015. Estimating grouped data models with a binary dependent variable and fixed effects: What are the issues?, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology, University of Rochester, July 2015.

Castles, F.G., 1978. *The social democratic image of society: a study of the achievements and origins of Scandinavian social democracy in comparative perspective.* London, etc.: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Dolezal, M., 2010. Exploring the Stabilization of a Political Force: The Social and Attitudinal Basis of Green Parties in the Age of Globalization. *West European Politics,* 33 (3), pp.534-552.

Donnelly, M.J., 2016. Competition and solidarity: union members and immigration in Europe. *West European Politics,* 39 (4), pp.688-709.

Evans, G. and De Graaf, N.D., 2013. Explaining Cleavage Strength: The Role of Party Positions. Evans, G. and De Graaf, N.D., eds. 2013. *Political Choice Matters. Explaining the Strength of Class and Religious Cleavages in Cross-National Perspective.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, G. and Mellon, J., 2016. Working Class Votes and Conservative Losses: Solving the UKIP Puzzle. *Parliamentary Affairs,* 69 (2), pp.464-479.

Häusermann, S. and Kriesi, H., 2015. What Do Voters Want? Dimensions and Configurations in Individual-Level Preferences and Party Choice. In Beramendi et al., eds. *The Politics of Advanced Capitalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.202-230.

Hainmueller, J. and Hangartner, D., 2013. Who Gets a Swiss Passport? A Natural Experiment in Immigrant Discrimination. *The American Political Science Review,* 107 (1), pp.159-187.

Hix, S. and Noury, A., 2016. Government-Opposition or Left-Right? The Institutional Determinants of Voting in Legislatures. *Political Science Research and Methods,* 4 (2), pp. 249-273.

Horn, A. 2018. The Asymmetric *Long-Term* Consequences of Unpopular Reform. Paper for presentation at the Annual International Conference of Europeanists, Chicago, March.

Kerrissey, J. and Schofer, E., 2013. Union Membership and Political Participation in the United States. *Social Forces,* 91 (3), pp.895-928.

Kitschelt, H. (1994). *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge ; New York etc.: Cambridge University Press.

Kitschelt, H. and Rehm, P., 2015. Party Alignments: Change and Continuity. In Beramendi et al., eds. *The Politics of Advanced Capitalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.179-201.

Laakso, M. and Taagepera, R., 1979. "Effective" Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to West Europe. *Comparative Political Studies,* 12 (1), pp.3-27.

Lindgren, K., Oskarsson, S. and Dawes, C.T., 2017. Can Political Inequalities Be Educated Away? Evidence from a Large-Scale Reform. *American Journal of Political Science,* 61 (1), pp.222-236.

Mosimann, N. and Pontusson, J., 2017. Solidaristic Unionism and Support for Redistribution in Contemporary Europe. *World Politics,* https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887117000107

Müller, W., 1999. Class Cleavages in Party Preferences in Germany - Old and New. Evans, G., ed. 1999. *The End of Class Politics?* Oxford: Oxford University Press. , pp.137-180.

Oesch, D., 2013. The class basis of the cleavage between the New Left and the radical right. An analysis for Austria, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland. Rydgren, J., ed. 2013. *Class Politics and the Radical Right.* London and New York: Routledge, pp.31-51

Oesch, D., 2008. Explaining Workers' Support for Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Evidence from Austria, Belgium, France, Norway and Switzerland. *International Political Science Review,* 29 (3), pp.349-373.

Oesch, D., 2006. *Redrawing the Class Map. Stratification and Institutions in Britain, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Oesch, D. and Rennwald, L., 2017. Electoral Competition in Europe's New Tripolar Political Space. Class Voting for the Left, Centre-Right and Radical Right, EUI Working Paper MWP 2017/02 http://cadmus.eui.eu//handle/1814/45528.

Pontusson, J., 2013. Unionization, Inequality and Redistribution. *British Journal of Industrial Relations,* 51 (4), pp.797-825.

Pontusson, J. and Weisstanner, D., 2017. Macroeconomic conditions, inequality shocks and the politics of redistribution, 1990–2013. *Journal of European Public Policy,* http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1310280

Przeworski, A. and Sprague, J., 1986. *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rathgeb, P., 2017. *Strong Governments, Precarious Workers: Labour Market Policy-Making in the Era of Liberalisation.* Book manuscript.

Rennwald, L., 2017. Losing the Working Class and Catching Them All? Social Democracy and its Class Basis in the 21st Century, Working paper.

Rennwald, L., 2015. *Partis socialistes et classe ouvrière. Ruptures et continuités du lien électoral en Suisse, en Autriche, en Allemagne, en Grande-Bretagne et en France (1970-2008)*. Neuchâtel: Editions Alphil-Presses universitaires suisses.

Rennwald, L. and Evans, G., 2014. When Supply Creates Demand: Social Democratic Party Strategies and the Evolution of Class Voting. *West European Politics,* 37 (5), pp.1108-1135.

Rosenfeld, J., 2014. *What Unions No Longer Do.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sainsbury, D., 1990. Party Strategies and the Electoral Trade-Off of Class-Based Parties. *European Journal of Political Research,* 18 (1), pp.29-50.

Thau, M. 2017. How Political Parties Use Group-Based Appeals: Evidence from Britain 1945-2015. Forthcoming in *Political Studies.*

Visser, J. 2016. ICTWSS Database, version 5.1. Institute for Advanced Labour Studies, University of Amsterdam (http://www.uva-aias.net/en/ictwss).

Table 1: The vote share of mainstream Left parties

	election years		average vote share			change since 1990s	
	post-1960 peak	most recent	peak+1	best 2 in 1990s	2 most recent	absolute	percentage
1. long-term dominant parties:							
Denmark	1960	2015	42.0	36.7	25.6	-11.1	-30.3
Norway	1957	2017	47.6	36.0	29.1	-6.9	-19.2
Sweden	1968	2014	47.7	41.5	30.9	-10.6	-25.5
2. long-term contenders:							
Australia	1972	2016	49.2	42.2	34.1	-8.1	-19.2
Austria	1979	2017	49.3	40.5	27.7	-12.8	-30.6
Germany	1972	2017	44.2	38.7	23.1	-15.6	-37.0
New Zealand	1972	2017	44.0	36.9	31.0	-5.9	-28.7
UK	1966	2017	45.6	39.1	35.2	-3.9	-10.0
3. permanent also-rans:							
Finland	1995	2015	25.6	25.6	17.8	-7.8	-30.5
Iceland	2003	2017	28.9		8.9	-20.0*	-69.2*
Ireland	1969	2016	15.4	14.9	13.0	-1.9	-12.8
Netherlands	1977	2017	31.1	26.5	15.3	-11.2	-42.3
Switzerland	1963	2015	25.1	22.2	18.8	-3.4	-15.3
4. post-1980 risers:							
France	1981	2017	34.0	22.3	18.3	-4.0	-17.9
Greece	1981	2015	47.0	44.2	9.3	-34.9	-79.0
Spain	1982	2016	46.4	38.2	22.3	-15.9	-41.6

See text for explanation. * = change from peak+1 (rather than 1990s). Source: Armingeon *et al* (2016), supplemented by data from Wikipedia (recent election results).

Table 2: Correlates of change in the vote share of mainstream Left parties since the 1990s (OLS regression results, with p-values in parentheses).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Δ union density	-.075	.163	.207	.434
	(.770)	(.613)	(.238)	(.038)
no radical competitor		8.236		7.921
		(.247)		(.063)
crisis+incumbency			-17.234	-17.133
			(.000)	(.000)
constant	-11.743	-10.518	-5.235	-4.095
	(.006)	(.013)	(.068)	(.117)
Observations	16	16	16	16
Adj R-square	-.065	-.030	.584	.666

See text for sources and explanation.

Table 3: The class composition of the entire electorate, average percentage shares for 2001-14.

	working class	middle class	other non-workers
Australia	23	60	17
Austria	37	47	16
Denmark	37	54	9
Finland	43	44	13
France	41	52	7
Germany	37	52	11
Greece	25	45	30
Iceland	38	44	17
Ireland	39	43	18
Netherlands	30	58	12
New Zealand	29	51	20
Norway	32	58	10
Spain	42	27	32
Sweden	41	49	10
Switzerland	22	63	15
UK	38	51	12
average	33	52	15

Source: Own calculations based on CSES data.

Table 4: Determinants of abandoning the mainstream Left (multilevel linear probability regression models)

	Class profile based on the previous election				Class profile based on inflow			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
Union member	-0.062***	-0.062***	-0.061***	-0.074***	-0.062***	-0.062***	-0.062***	-0.073***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Worker	-0.004	-0.005	-0.005	-0.019	-0.005	-0.005	-0.006	-0.019
	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Age	-0.004***	-0.004***	-0.004***	-0.004***	-0.004***	-0.004***	-0.004***	-0.004***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Female	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.004
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Residence (ref.=large city)								
Village	0.037**	0.037**	0.037**	0.037**	0.037**	0.037**	0.037**	0.037**
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Small/Med city	0.036**	0.036**	0.036**	0.036**	0.036**	0.036**	0.036**	0.037**
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Suburbs	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.015	0.015
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
WC profile	-0.319	0.024	0.048	-0.002	0.334***	0.153*	0.171**	0.154*
	(0.195)	(0.142)	(0.145)	(0.150)	(0.069)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.068)
No parties	0.040	-0.009	-0.009	-0.010	0.066+	0.010	0.010	0.009
	(0.043)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.035)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Incumb&Crisis		0.461***	0.464***	0.473***		0.362***	0.358***	0.365***
		(0.067)	(0.067)	(0.067)		(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)
WCprofile*Worker			-0.057	-0.082			-0.070+	-0.071
			(0.067)	(0.098)			(0.041)	(0.049)
WCprofile*Umemb				0.094				0.045
				(0.076)				(0.048)
Umemb*Worker				0.033+				0.032+
				(0.018)				(0.018)
WCprofile*Umemb*Worker				0.021				0.013
				(0.122)				(0.079)
Constant	0.500***	0.542***	0.543***	0.546***	0.570***	0.562***	0.560***	0.564***
	(0.049)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.044)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Random effects								
Level 1 variance	0.004***	0.004***	0.004***	0.004***	0.005***	0.003***	0.003***	0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Level 2 variance	0.202***	0.202***	0.202***	0.202***	0.202***	0.202***	0.202***	0.202***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Random slope class	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***	0.000***	0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Interc-slope cov.	0.002	-0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
N level-1	11987	11987	11987	11987	11987	11987	11987	11987
(N level-2)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)
AIC	15023	14995	14996	14996	15007	14990	14989	14990
BIC	15237	15216	15225	15247	15222	15211	15218	15242
ICC	0.017	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.025	0.014	0.014	0.014
Log likelihood	-7483	-7467	-7467	-7464	-7475	-7465	-7463	-7461

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; $^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. All models include country dummies (not shown).

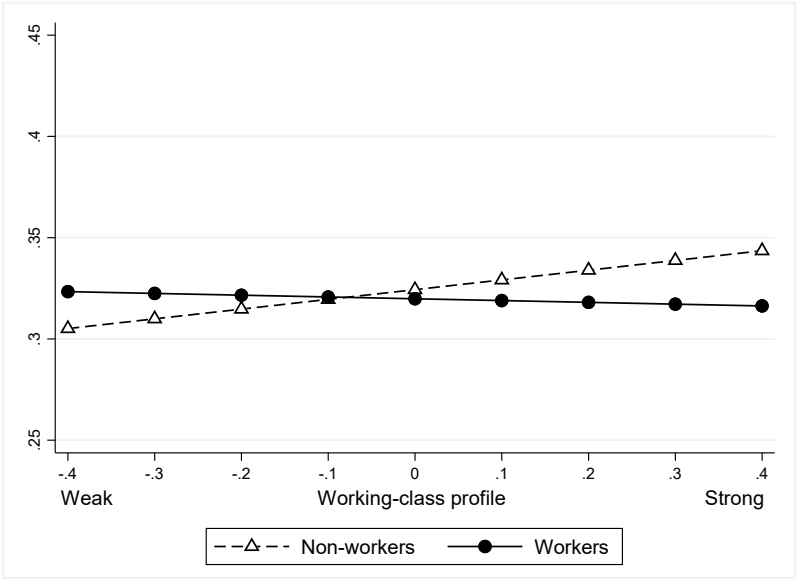
Table 5: Condition marginal effects of union membership on the choice of options

	Non-workers	Workers
Center-Right	-8.2*	+1.1
non-voting	-2.7+	-7.6*
radical Left	+10*	+7.1*
Greens	+5.4*	+1.6
radical Right	-0.9	-0.9

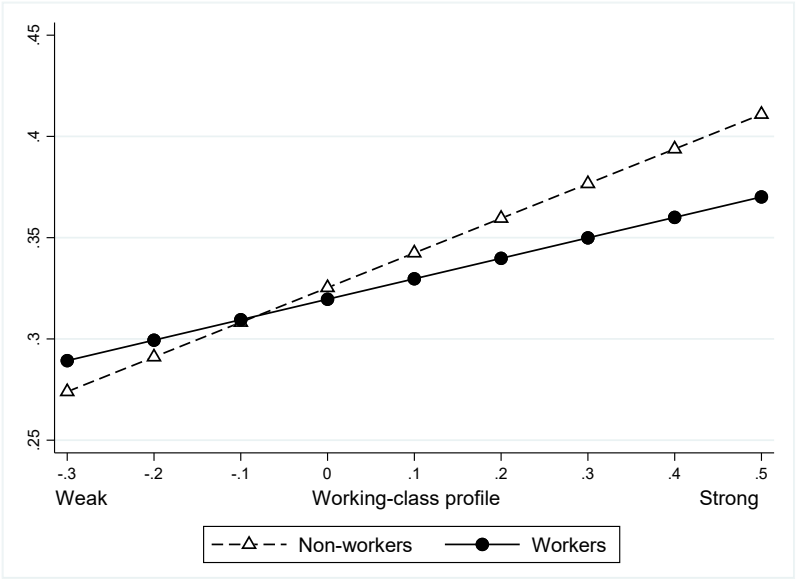
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$

Figure 1: Predicted probabilities of leaving the mainstream Left by social class conditional of working-class profile

a) Previous election



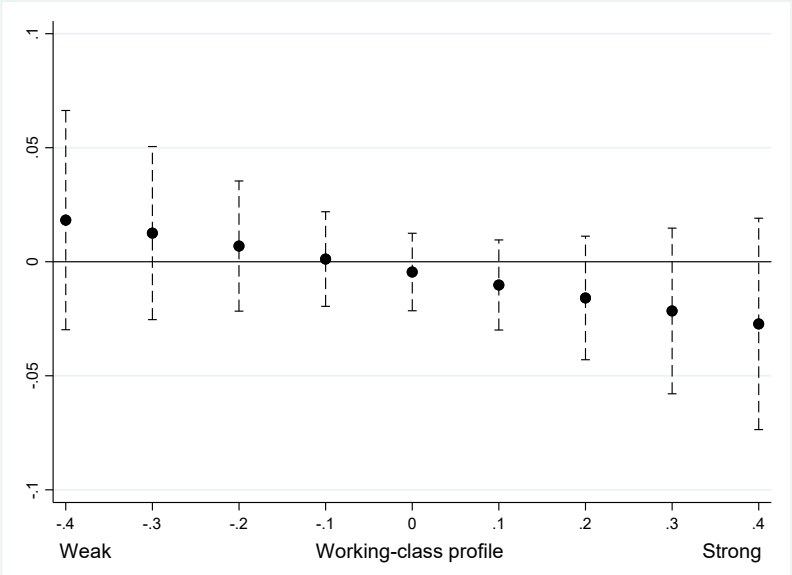
b) Inflow



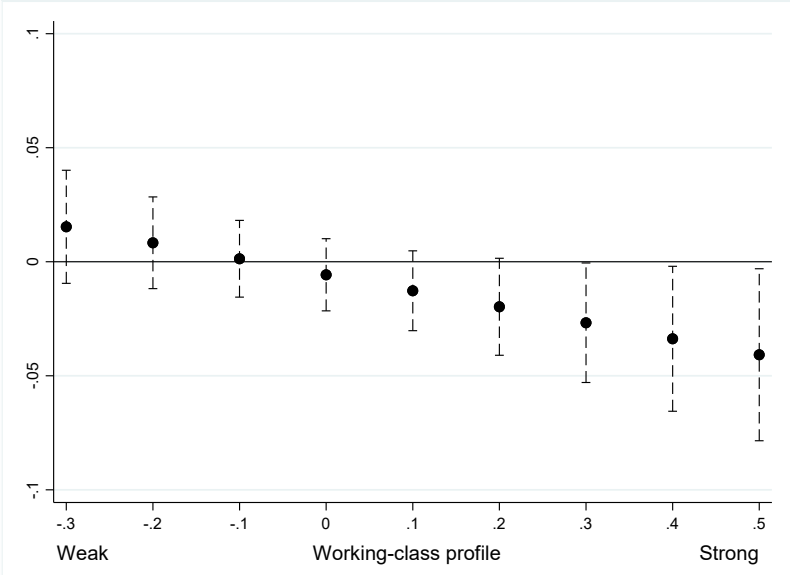
Based on Models 3 and 7 in Table 4.

Figure 2: The average marginal effect of class on leaving the mainstream Left conditional on working-class profile, with 90% confidence intervals

a) Previous election



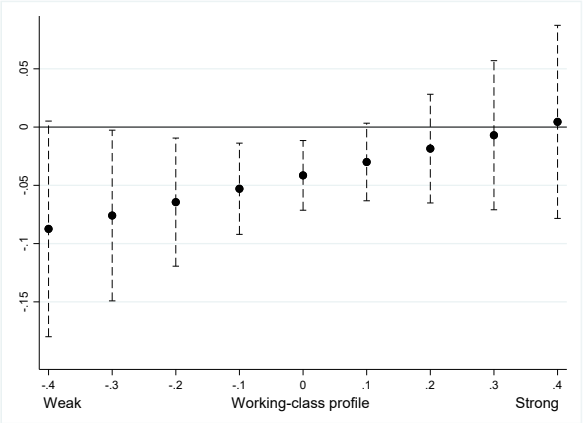
b) Inflow



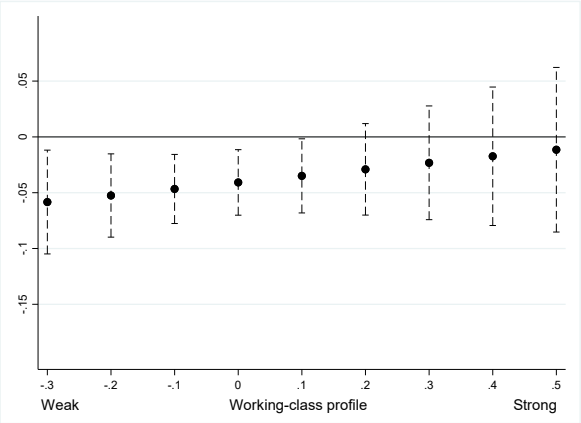
Based on Models 3 and 7 in Table 4.

Figure 3: The average marginal effect of union membership on leaving the mainstream Left conditional on working-class profile, workers, with 95% confidence intervals.

a) Previous election



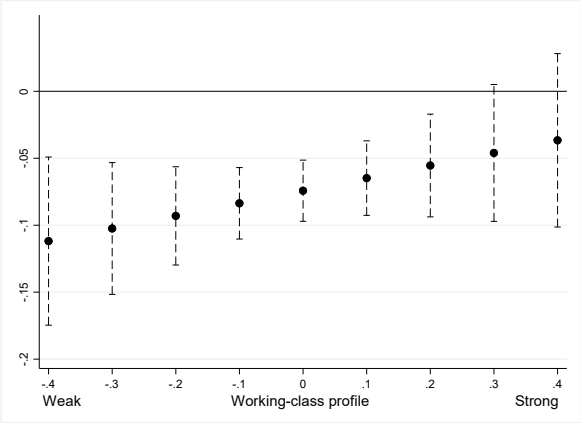
b) Inflow



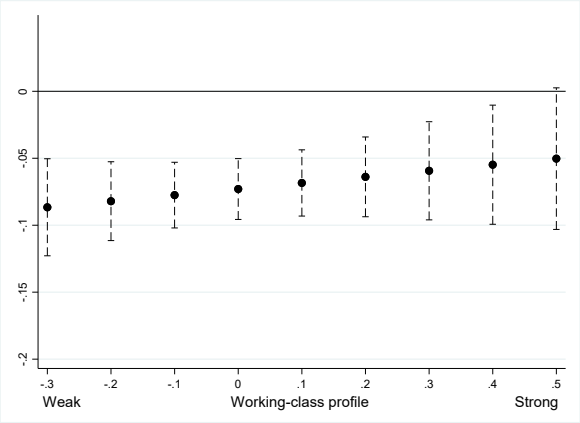
Based on Models 4 and 8 in Table 4.

Figure 4: The average marginal effect of union membership on leaving the mainstream Left conditional on working-class profile, non-workers, with 95% confidence intervals.

a) Previous election

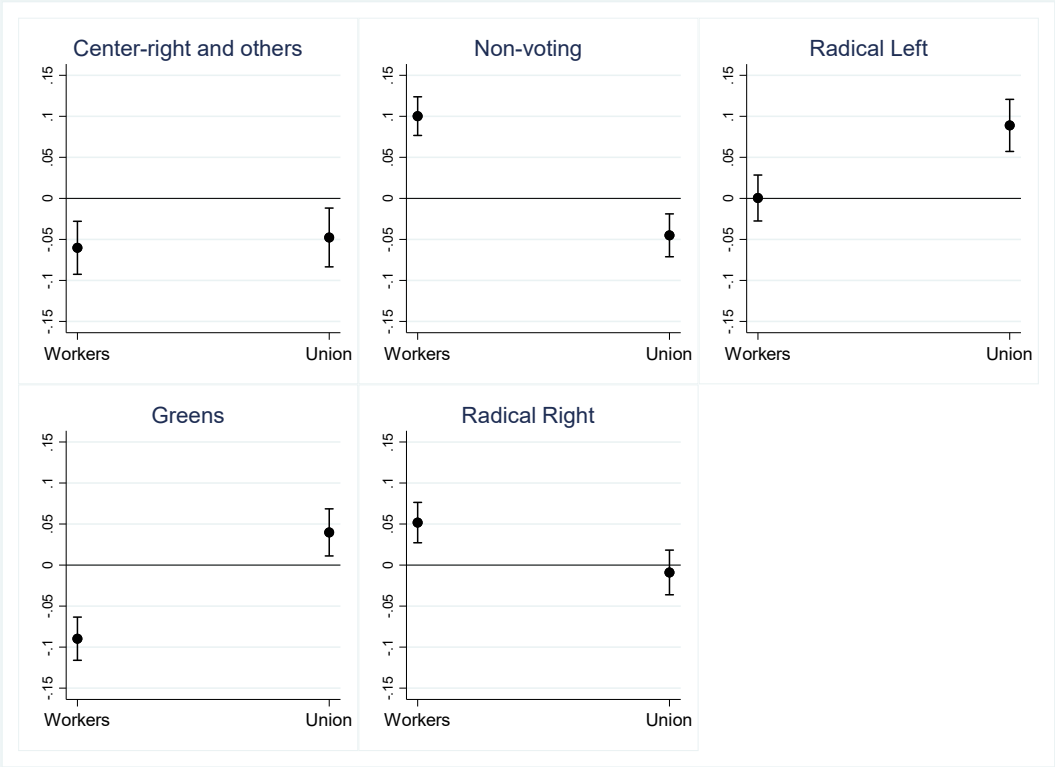


b) Inflow



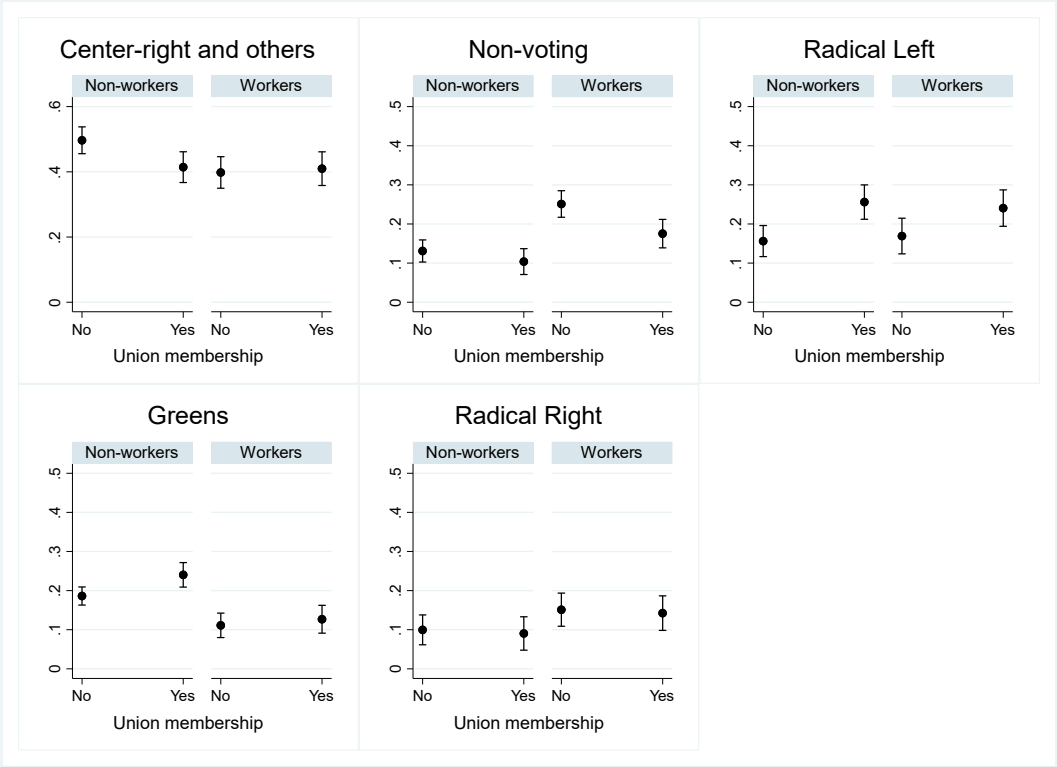
Based on Models 4 and 8 in Table 4.

Figure 5: Average marginal effects of class and union membership on the choice of options, with 95% confidence intervals.



See Appendix 4 for full regression results.

Figure 6: Predicted probabilities of choosing the options for combinations of class and union membership, with 95% confidence intervals



Full regression results available upon request.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Countries and elections included in the analysis

Countries	Elections
Australia	2004, 2007, 2013
Austria	2013
Denmark	2001
Finland	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015
France	2012
Germany	2002, 2005, 2009, 2013
Greece	2009, 2012
Iceland	2003, 2007, 2009, 2013
Ireland	2002, 2007
Netherlands	2002, 2006, 2010
New-Zealand	2002, 2008, 2011, 2014
Norway	2001, 2005, 2009, 2013
Spain	2004
Sweden	2002, 2006, 2014
Switzerland	2011
United Kingdom	2005, 2015

Appendix 2: Classification of parties

	Mainstream Left	Radical Left	Greens and other left parties	Center-Right and other parties	Radical Right
Australia	• Australian Labour Party		• Australian Greens	• Liberal Party of Australia • National Party of Australia • Liberal National Coalition • Australian Democrats • Smaller parties (e.g., Liberal Democrats, Christian Democratic Party, Palmer United Party, etc.) Others • Minor parties (e.g., Wikileaks Party) • Independent	• One Nation
Austria	• Social Democratic Party of Austria	• Communist Party of Austria	• The Greens	• Austrian People's Party • Liberal Forum • The New Austria and Liberal Forum • Team Stronach • Citizens' Forum Austria (Fritz) Others • Pirate Party	• Freedom Party of Austria • Alliance for the Future of Austria
Denmark	• Danish Social Democratic Party	• Socialist People's Party	• Red-Green Unity List	• Liberal Party (Venstre) • Conservative People's Party • Christian People's Party • Centrist Democrats • New/Liberal Alliance Others • Danish Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre)	• Danish People's Party
Finland	• Finnish Social Democratic Party	• Left Alliance • Communist Party of Finland • For Peace and Socialism – Communist Workers' Party • Finnish workers' Party	• Green League	• National Coalition Party • Centre Party of Finland • Christian Democrats • Swedish People's Party of Finland • Liberal Party • Progressive Finnish Party Others	• True Finns/Finns Party

				• Minor parties (e.g., Forces for Change in Finland, Finnish Senior Citizen Party, Change 2011, Pirate Party, etc.)	
France	• Socialist Party	• Left Front • French Communist Party • Workers' Struggle • New Anticapitalist Party • Workers' Party	• Greens/Europe Ecology • José Bové • Radical Party of the Left	• Union for a Popular Movement • Democratic Movement/Union for French Democracy • Hunting, Fishing, Nature and Traditions • Movement for France • Arise the Republic • New Centre	• National Front
Germany	• Social Democratic Party of Germany	• Left Party/Party of Democratic Socialism	• Alliance 90/Greens	• Christian Democratic Union • Christian Social Union • Free Democratic Party Others: • Minor parties (e.g., Ecological Democratic Party, Party of the Rule of Law, etc.)	• Alternative for Germany • The Republicans • German People's Union • National Democratic Party of Germany
Great-Britain	• Labour Party		• Green Party	• Conservative Party • Liberal Democrats Others: • Scottish National Party • Plaid Cymru	• United Kingdom Independence Party
Greece	• Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement	• Communist Party of Greece • Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza)	• Ecologists-Greens • Democratic Left (DIMAR)	• New Democracy	• Golden Dawn • Independent Greeks • Popular Orthodox Rally
Iceland	• Social Democratic Alliance/ Social Alliance Party • Icelandic Movement	• Left-Green Movement		• Independence Party • Progressive Party • Liberal Party • Christian Democracy Party Others • Minor parties (e.g., Citizens' Movement, New Movement, Households Party, etc.)	•
Ireland	• Labour Party	• Sinn Fein • Workers' Party • Irish Socialist Network • Socialist Party	• Green Party	• Fianna Fail • Fine Gael • Progressive Democrats Others • Independents	

				• Minor parties (e.g., Christian Solidarity)	
Netherlands	• Dutch Labour Party	• Socialist Party	• Green Left • Party for the Animals	• Christian Democratic Appeal • People's Party for Freedom and Democracy • Christian Union Others • Democrats 66 • Political Reformed Party • Minor parties	• List Pim Fortuyn • Freedom party
New Zealand	• Labour Party	• Jim Anderton's Progressive Coalition/ Party • Alliance	• Green Party	• National Party • Conservative Party • Act New Zealand • United Future Others • Minor parties (e.g., Christian Heritage, Outdoor recreation, Maori Party, etc.)	• New Zealand First
Norway	• Norwegian Labour Party	• Socialist Left Party • Red Electoral Alliance/Red	• Green Party	• Conservative Party • Centre Party • Christian People's/Democratic Party • Liberal Party (Venstre)	• Progress Party
Sweden	• Swedish Social Democratic Party	• Left Party	• Green Party • Feminist Initiative	• Moderate Party • Liberal Party • Christian Democratic Party • Centre Party	• Sweden Democrats
Switzerland	• Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland	• Swiss Labour Party	• The Greens • Left parties	• The Liberals/Radical Democratic Party • Liberal Party • Christian Democratic Party • Christian Social Party • Evangelical People's Party • Conservative Democratic Party • Green Liberal Party • Right parties, Centre parties Others • Federal Democratic Union	• Swiss People's Party • Ticino League • Geneva Citizens' Movement • Swiss Democrats • Freedom Party

Appendix 3: The working-class profile of mainstream Left parties, 2001-14.

	Previous election			Newcomers		
	Average	First election	Last election	Average	First election	Last election
Australia	1.19	1.17	1.15	1.25	0.90	1.43
Austria	1.18			1.38		
Denmark	1.40			0.89		
Finland	1.34	1.37	1.37	1.07		
France	0.97			0.99		
Germany	1.11	1.16	1.06	0.89	1.06	0.81
Greece	0.98	0.96	1	1.46	0.83	2.08
Iceland	0.91	0.95	0.69	0.98	1.10	1.08
Ireland	0.94	0.90	1	0.93	0.98	0.86
Netherlands	1.02	0.94	0.94	0.88	0.85	0.93
New-Zealand	1.18	1.07	1.26	1.31	1.18	1.24
Norway	1.12	1.02	1.19	0.93	0.98	0.83
Spain	1.09			1.23		
Sweden	1.32	1.31	1.53	1.19		
Switzerland	0.70			0.81		
United Kingdom	1.18	1.14	1.20	0.83	0.97	0.75

Note: The first column displays the average working-class profile over the entire period or the working-class profile in a given election in the only election included in our dataset.

Appendix 4*:* Linear probability of choosing one option vis-à-vis all others among mainstream-Left leavers

	M1 Center-right	M2 Non-voting	M3 Radical Left	M4 Greens	M5 Radical Right
Union member	-0.048**	-0.045***	0.089***	0.040**	-0.009
	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.014)
Workers	-0.060***	0.100***	0.000	-0.090***	0.052***
	(0.016)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Age	-0.000	-0.001*	0.001**	-0.001**	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Female	-0.016	-0.004	0.024+	0.050***	-0.051***
	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Residence (ref.=large city)					
Village	0.064**	0.008	-0.038+	-0.059**	0.005
	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Small/Medium city	0.035+	0.004	-0.035+	-0.027	-0.004
	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Suburbs	0.059*	-0.019	-0.026	-0.028	0.003
	(0.023)	(0.017)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.018)
Constant	0.398***	0.171***	0.170**	0.261***	0.020
	(0.062)	(0.043)	(0.055)	(0.034)	(0.049)
Random effects					
Level 1 variance	0.009***	0.004***	0.008***	0.001***	0.006***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Level 2 variance	0.221***	0.117***	0.135***	0.127***	0.083***
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
N level-1 (N level 2)	3889	3889	3122	3364	2423
AIC	5279	2813	2722	2666	926
BIC	5435	2969	2861	2807	1054
ICC	0.041	0.035	0.056	0.010	0.071
Log likelihood	-2614	-1381	-1338	-1310	-441

Note: Separate multilevel linear regression models for each of the options. Standard errors in parentheses; $^{+}$ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. All models include country dummies (not shown).

Endnotes

[1] See Appendix 1 for a list of countries and elections included in our analysis.

[2] The label "Center-Right parties" is shorthand for "Center-Right and other parties." In our analysis, this category includes all parties that are not coded as mainstream Left, radical Left, Greens or radical Right. See Appendix 2 for our coding of parties.

[3] The identification of the mainstream Left party is straightforward except for France and Iceland. For France, Table 1 refers to the Socialist Party (not the Communist Party) and, for Iceland, it refers to the Social Democratic Alliance, which was formed in 2000 by the Social Democratic Party and smaller leftist parties. Note that the Icelandic Social Democratic Party never exceeded the vote shares of the Social Democratic Alliance in the early 2000s. Note also that for all mainstream Left parties other than the Swedish Social Democrats, the post-war peak is also the all-time peak. (The Swedish Social Democrats peaked in 1940, with 53.8% of the vote).

[4] With vote shares based on the first round of parliamentary elections, the figures in Table 1 do not fully capture the electoral strength of the French Socialists, who won 3 out 7 presidential elections between 1981 and 2017.

[5] The French figure for recent elections is the average of an exceptionally good performance in 2012 and an exceptionally bad performance in 2017.

[6] Przeworski and Sprague's view of unions as enablers of the pursuit of supraclass electoral strategies by socialist parties stands in marked contrast to the view advanced by Kitschelt (1994). Very much influenced by the advances made by Southern European socialist parties in the 1980s, Kitschelt argues that strong unions represent a constraint on the ability of mainstream Left parties to reposition themselves in response to new political issues and cleavages.

[7] Our coding of the dummy for Left party incumbency and economic crisis might be questioned. The British Labour Party, the Austrian Socialists and the Norwegian Social Democrats were also in power (here defined as holding the office of prime minister) during the crisis. Recoding the UK as a case of incumbency and crisis strengthens the Model 4 results, but recoding Austria and Norway makes the association between changes in union density and vote share statistically insignificant. There can be little doubt that the economic crisis of 2008-10 was far more severe in Greece, Iceland and Spain than in the other three cases of Left

incumbency. Note also that the results presented in Table 2 are robust to recoding the UK as a case with competition from the radical Right (on account of UKIP being a credible alternative in 2015) and that they are robust to controlling for the level of unionization in 1990 (itself not a significant correlate of vote-share change) or measuring changes in vote share and union density in percent of initial levels.

[8] By the broad definition, the working-class share of the total electorate held constant, at 39%, in France. Country-specific estimates of the decline of the other four countries are as follows: UK, 53% to 43%; Austria, 49% to 39%; Germany, 44% to 42%; and Switzerland, 41% to 34% (see Rennwald, 2015:71)

[9] These estimates of the class composition of the total electorate include non-voters. For Modules 2-3 of the CSES, our coding of the class variable is based on the two-digit level of the 1988 version of the ILO's International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISC0); for Module 4, it is based on the three-digit level of the 2008 version. Unemployed and retired survey respondents as well as home-keepers are assigned a class based on their prior occupation or dropped for lack of information on prior occupation. For European countries, the estimates in Table 3 are similar to estimates derived from the European Social Survey (see Rennwald 2015: 71, 2017: 29).

[10] There are good reasons to be concerned about the accuracy of respondents' recall of how they voted, especially their recall of how they voted in the previous election (often four or five years ago). To reassure ourselves in this regard, we have explored the correlations between our survey-based estimates of the vote shares of Left parties and official elections as reported by Armingeon *et al* (2106). For vote shares in the current election, the correlation is .963 ($p < .001$); for vote share in the previous election, the correlation is .837 ($p < .001$); and for vote-share changes from the previous election, the correlation is .774 ($p < .001$). Note also that respondents who do not declare any party (or abstention) in the current election represent 6.9% of all respondents in the CSES surveys on which we draw and those who do not declare any party choice in the previous election represent 13.9% of all respondents. These respondents are dropped from our sample.

[11] It is noteworthy that working-class profile in the previous election is correlated with the overall vote share of the mainstream Left party at 0.48 ($p < .001$): the electorate of large Left parties tends to be more working-class than the electorate of small Left parties.

[12] We sorely lack good comparative data on unionization by occupational categories. As reported by Becher and Pontusson (2011), union density rates in the upper half of the income distribution are commonly higher (sometimes much higher) than union density rates in the lower half of the income distribution.

[13] See Rathgeb (2017) and Horn (2018) and, on the OECD-wide retreat from redistribution since the mid-1990s, Pontusson and Weisstanner (2017).

[14] See Oesch (2008), Arzheimer (2013) and Afonso and Rennwald (2017) on the appeal of right-wing populist parties for working-class voters.

[15] For more information, see http://www.cses.org/

[16] This restriction leads to the exclusion of election surveys from Canada, Japan, the US and Eastern Europe. We cannot use surveys from CSES module 1 because they lack information about vote choice in the previous election.

[17] Recent contributions to political science that use linear probability models include Hainmueller and Hangartner (2013), Lindgren, Oskarsson and Dawes (2016) and Hix and Noury (2016). See also Beck (2015).

[18] To repeat, voters' recall of votes cast broadly corresponds to actual election results (see note 10).

[19] The measure is based on the share of votes obtained by political parties in a given election and calculated according to the formula proposed by Laasko and Taagepera (1979).

[20] Working-class profile and effective number of parties are centered at their mean value.

[21] Note that all models include a random slope for social class at the country-election level. Not reported in Table 3, the null model shows that the country-election context accounts for 8.4% of the variance in the decision to abandon the mainstream Left. The ICC score drops to 4.7% when we add country dummies.

[22] We come to a similar conclusion if we use alternative measures of party competition (e.g., specific competition from radical Left and/or radical Right parties).

[23] According to Evans and Mellon (2016), the Conservatives lost more votes to UKIP than Labour did in the British election of 2015, but many UKIP voters were former Labour voters who either did not vote or voted for the Conservatives in 2010.

[24] In estimating the models of voting for the radical Left, we dropped all Australian and British elections and the New Zealand election of 2014; in estimating models of voting for Greens, we dropped all Icelandic and British elections; and in estimating models of voting for the radical Right, we dropped all British, Icelandic, Irish and Spanish elections as well as the Swedish election of 2002 and the Australian elections of 2007 and 2103. Literally no mainstream-Left leavers voted for these options in the cases that we dropped. Note the total number of observations used to estimate the model of voting for the radical Right is only 2,423 (see Appendix 4).

[25] In principle, voting is mandatory in Australia, but the law is no longer strictly enforced and we do have Australian mainstream Left leavers who stopped voting in our dataset. In the most recent Australian election (2016), voter turnout was 91.0%.